

# Stereo Review

DECEMBER 1974 • ONE DOLLAR

## A TURNTABLE CHRISTMAS



Rt. 5 Box 268-C  
Phenix City, AL 36867

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E GLENN SMITH  
409 LAUREL HNR ESTS  
PHENIX CITY AL 36867

The latest integrated circuitry.  
 2.0  $\mu$ V FM Sensitivity.  
 Solid-State Ceramic FM IF filters.

**S-7210**

MINIMUM RMS POWER  
 OUTPUT @ 0.8% TOTAL  
 HARMONIC DISTORTION,  
 BOTH CHANNELS DRIVEN:  
 26 WATTS PER CHANNEL  
 @ 3 OHMS, 20-20,000 Hz.

50 watts per channel @ 8 ohms,  
 40-20,000 Hz. 32 watts per  
 channel @ 8 ohms, 1 KHz. 36  
 watts per channel @ 4 ohms,  
 1 KHz.

Solid-State Ceramic FM IF filters.

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 4-channel decoder [doubles as  
 second tape monitor].

Built-in Dynaquad 4-channel  
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 BOTH CHANNELS DRIVEN:  
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40 watts per channel @ 8 ohms,  
 40-20,000 Hz. 43 watts per

channel @ 8 ohms, 1 KHz. 50  
 watts per channel @ 4 ohms,  
 1 KHz.

Solid-State Ceramic FM IF filters.  
 Phase lock look Multiplex.  
 1.8  $\mu$ V FM Sensitivity.

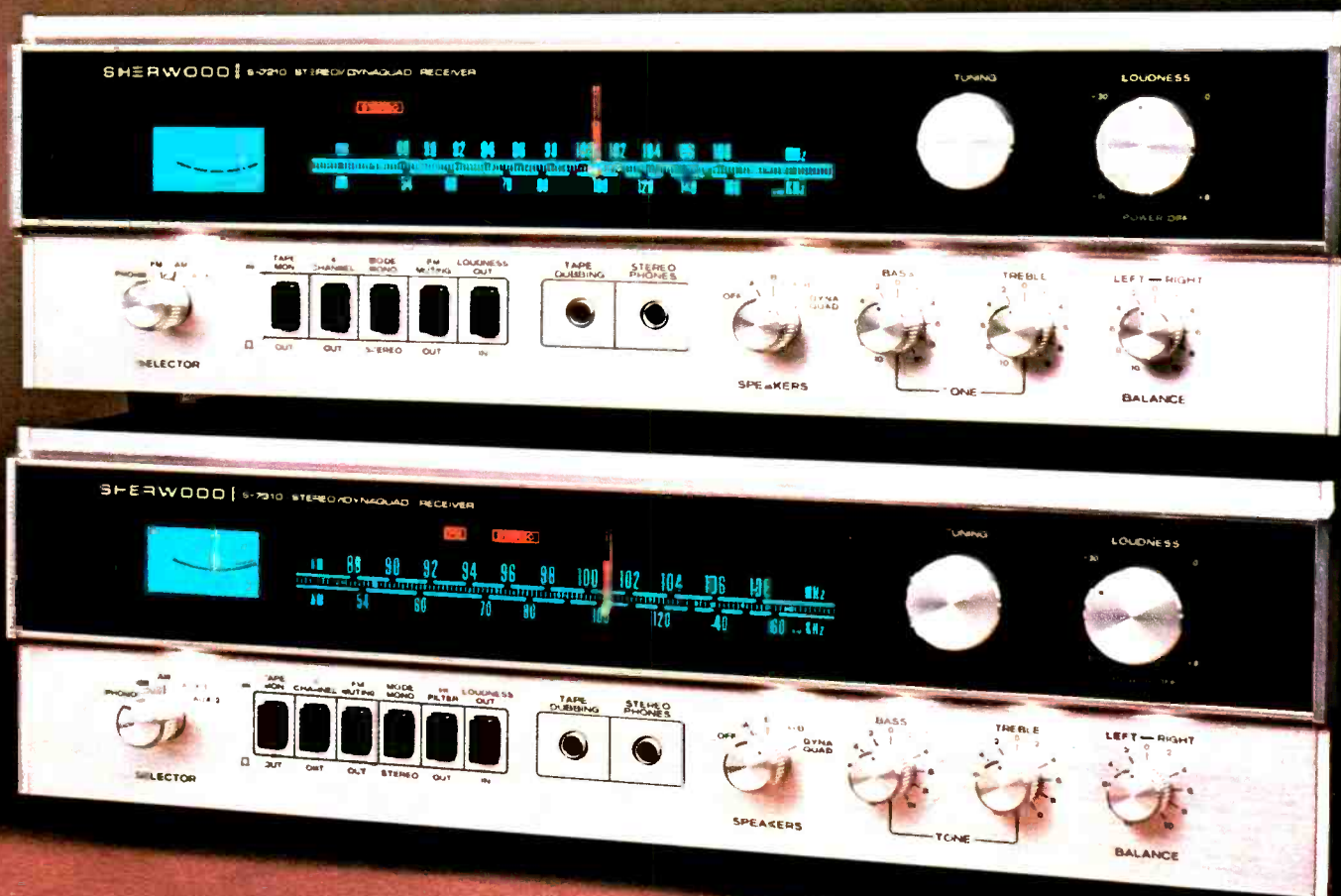
Front Panel switching of  
 4-channel decoder [doubles as  
 second tape monitor].

Built-in Dynaquad 4-channel  
 matrix circuit.

Sherwood Electronics Laboratories  
 4300 North California  
 Chicago, Illinois 60618

**Sherwood**

The word is getting around.



# If you can't afford the State-of-the-Art...

## S-7900A

MINIMUM RMS POWER  
OUTPUT @ 0.3% TOTAL  
HARMONIC DISTORTION,  
BOTH CHANNELS DRIVEN:  
60 WATTS PER CHANNEL  
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65 watts per channel @ 8 ohms,  
1 KHz. 90 watts per channel @ 4  
ohms, 1 KHz.

Direct-coupled output circuitry  
with electronic relay protection.

Front panel four-channel  
provision [doubles as second  
tape monitor].

Ceramic FM IF Filtering; FET's,  
microcircuits.

Four-gang tuning capacitor.

Built-in Dynaquad 4-channel  
matrix circuit.



# you can still enjoy most of the benefits.

Considering the Best Buy ratings and favorable reviews, it's not surprising that a growing number of audiophiles are settling for nothing less than Sherwood's top-of-the-line stereo receiver.

Of course, not everyone needs the high power output and operational flexibility offered by the S7900A. Which is why we produce other, more economical models.

Like the S7900, each piece of equipment in the Sherwood line provides a performance capability unsurpassed in its price category.

There are no useless gimmicks.

No misleading claims. And no disappointments. The specifications we post for our products are generally quite conservative. And we utilize only the finest of proved componentry.

After all, you shouldn't have to sacrifice quality, just because you require a little less than the state-of-the-art.

## S-7010

MINIMUM RMS POWER OUTPUT @ 0.9% TOTAL HARMONIC DISTORTION, BOTH CHANNELS DRIVEN:  
10 WATTS PER CHANNEL @ 8 OHMS, 40-20,000 Hz  
12 watts per channel @ 8 ohms,

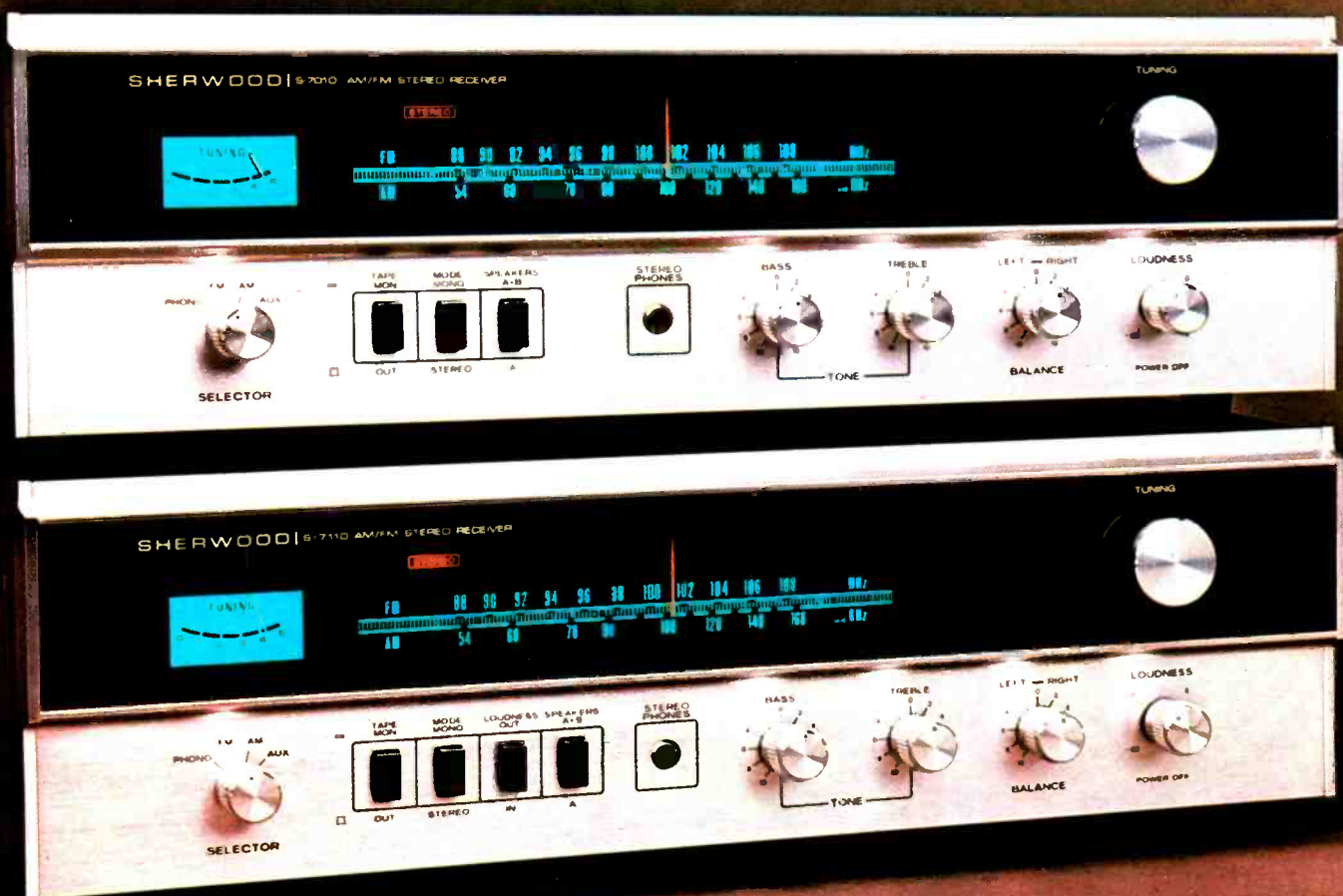
1 KHz. 14 watts per channel @ 4 ohms, 1 KHz.

Provisions for 2 set of stereo speakers. 2.8  $\mu$ V FM Sensitivity [IHF] FET Front End.

## S-7110

MINIMUM RMS POWER OUTPUT @ 0.9% TOTAL HARMONIC DISTORTION, BOTH CHANNELS DRIVEN:  
17 WATTS PER CHANNEL @ 8 OHMS, 40-20,000 Hz.  
20 watts per channel @ 8 ohms, 1 KHz. 24 watts per channel @ 4 ohms, 1 KHz.

Direct-coupled amplifier power bandwidth of 9-50 KHz.



RIVER

**TUNING**      **LOUDNESS**

98 100 102 104 106 108 MHz  
160 120 140 160 x10 KHz

20  
60  
80  
POWER OFF

LEFT — RIGHT  
2 0 2  
4 4  
6 6  
8 8  
10 10  
**BALANCE**

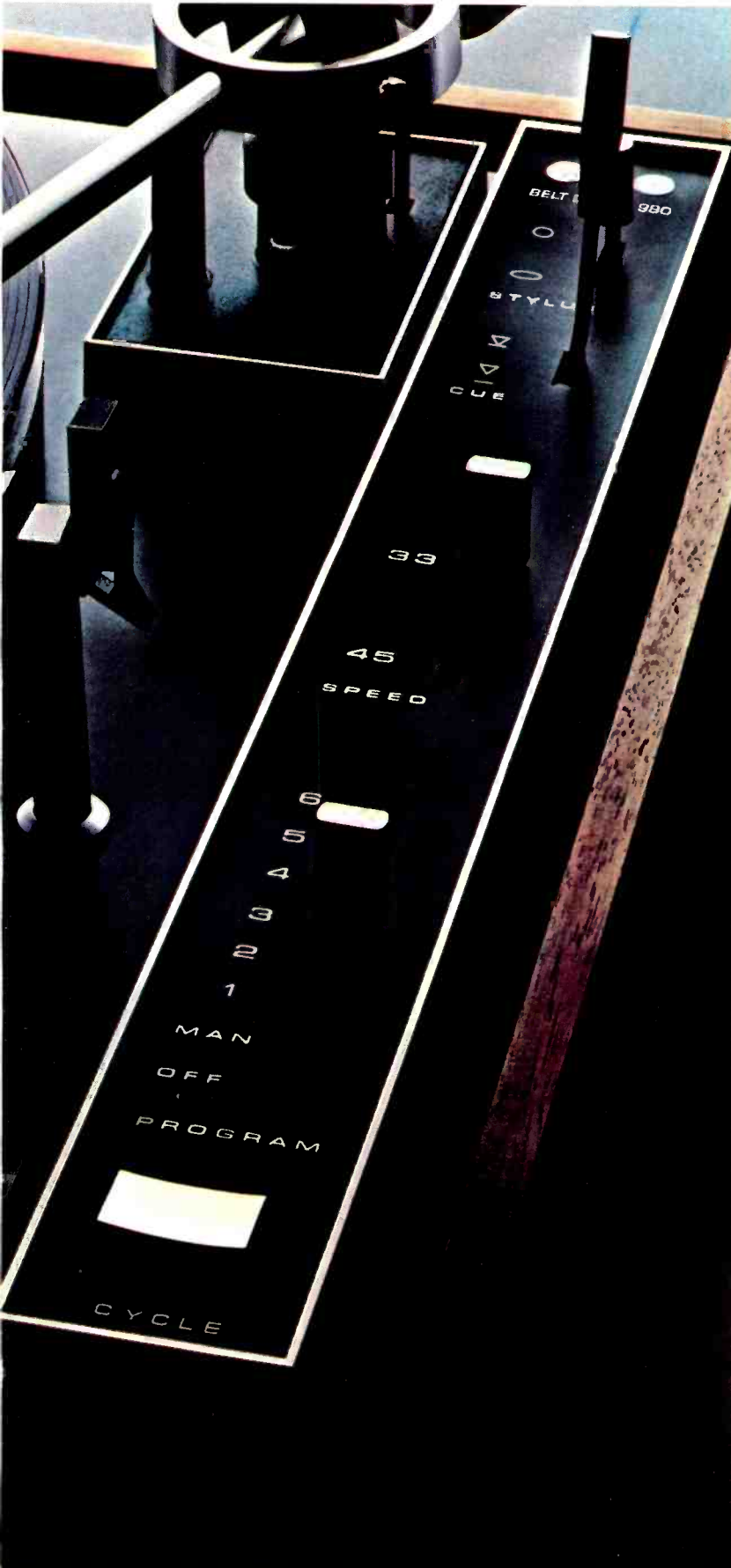
TAPE DUBBING      STEREO PHONES

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

NORM      NORM      FLAT      OFF      ON      SPEAKERS (DYNAQUAD)

IN  
OUT

# THIS IS A PROGRAM PANEL. WITH IT YOU CAN MAKE B·I·C™ PROGRAMMED TURNTABLES DO THINGS NO TURNTABLE HAS EVER DONE BEFORE.



The B·I·C 980 and 960, like many fine turntables, use a belt drive system.

What's unusual, however, is that B·I·C turntables can be programmed to play a single side as many as 6 times... or to play as many as 6 records in series. 'Til now, no belt-drive turntable has been able to do that.

## How it works

The program lever (second from the bottom in the picture at left) gives you 22 possible ways to play your records in manual and automatic modes.

By moving the lever to "MAN", the turntable is turned on and can be operated as a manual unit.

By moving the lever to "1", and tapping the cycle button lightly, one record can be played fully automatically.

By moving the lever to 2, 3, 4, 5 or 6, you can play a single record 2, 3, 4, 5 or 6 times.

And this same program lever controls multiple play. If, for example, you want to play 2 records, simply put them on the spindle and move the lever to "2". Or move the lever to "3" and the second record will repeat once. Or move it to "4" and the second record will repeat twice. And so on, and so forth.

## Must be seen to be appreciated

This program system is news all by itself. But it's far from the whole story.

The B·I·C tone arm has features found on no other tone arm.

The B·I·C motor is a major improvement over motors in other belt and idler drive turntables.

But features aside, what's truly worth close scrutiny is how all these new ideas are welded into a perfectly balanced system which performs impeccably.

We'll send you more information about the 980 and 960 if you write to:

Andrew Stephens, Dept. 12C,  
British Industries Co., Westbury, L.I. 11590.

But you really must examine them, touch them and compare them, to appreciate their fundamental excellence. After you've looked them over at your B·I·C dealer's (the leading audio specialist in your area) we think you'll be impressed.



This is the 980 with solid state speed control and strobe. About \$200.

The 960 is identical except for these two features.

About \$150.



# Stereo Review

DECEMBER 1974 • VOLUME 33 • NUMBER 6

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# THE CURE FOR

## Here's a healthy dose of straight talk about 4-channel.

A lot of people who would probably like 4-channel have delayed making the conversion from stereo. And their reasons might seem good.

But because we at Fisher think 4-channel sounds so terrific, and because we think it will ultimately be the universally accepted mode of music reproduction; and frankly, because we want to sell 4-channel equipment now and in the future, we're going to kill some of the rumors, myths and misconceptions about 4-channel.

### Myth #1.

#### "4-channel isn't perfect yet."

That's the same kind of line that kept millions of people from enjoying color tv and air conditioners and

everything from indoor plumbing to eyeglasses. Sure 4-channel is new, and not perfect, and will be somewhat better ten years from now. But it's so incredibly good right now that millions are enjoying it; and you're really hurting yourself by waiting till someone declares it's perfect.

### Myth #2.

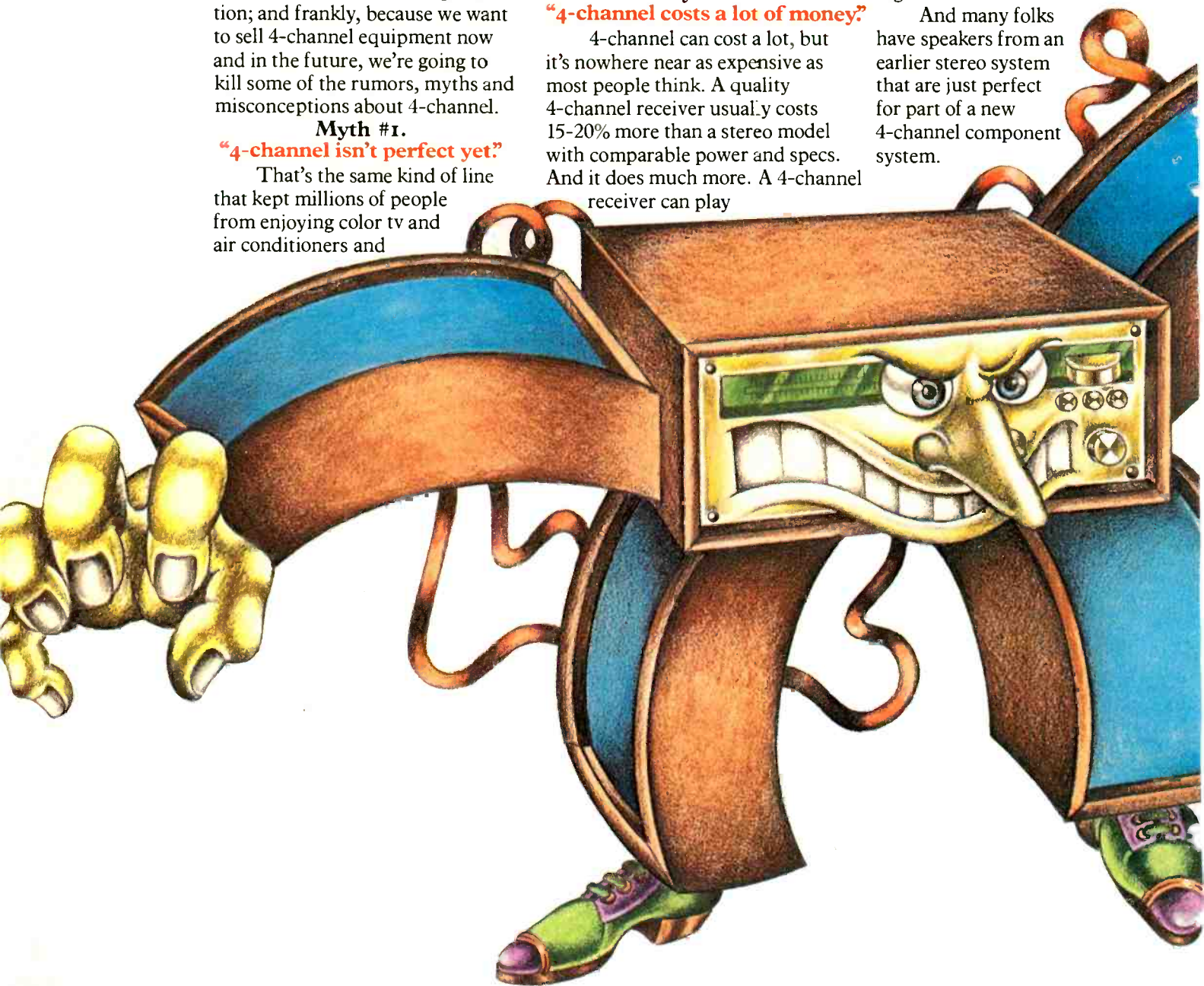
#### "4-channel costs a lot of money."

4-channel can cost a lot, but it's nowhere near as expensive as most people think. A quality 4-channel receiver usually costs 15-20% more than a stereo model with comparable power and specs. And it does much more. A 4-channel receiver can play

4-channel or stereo. A stereo unit only plays stereo.

Naturally, four speakers cost more than two, but a lot of people are quite satisfied with less elaborate speakers in 4-channel than they feel they need for stereo. Because four small speakers can make just as much sound as two big ones.

And many folks have speakers from an earlier stereo system that are just perfect for part of a new 4-channel component system.





# QUADRAPHOBIA.

## Myth #3.

### **"It will be obsolete in a year."**

Instant obsolescence was a big problem for the first few years of 4-channel. But now the audio industry has standardized on two kinds of 4-channel "coding," SQ and CD-4. And reliable and inexpensive integrated circuits make it possible to include both

systems, even with elaborate separation-boosting "logic circuits," in a complete receiver that's better and cheaper than anything you could get just one year ago.

## Myth #4.

### **"There's not enough to listen to."**

All the major record companies are releasing the important new recordings in 4-channel, and older big-sellers are being remixed and re-released for quad. All told, there are nearly 1000 4-channel records and tapes on the market.

## Myth #5.

### **"I'll have to get all new records."**

One thing that many people seem to forget or ignore is the ability of a 4-channel receiver to synthesize 4-channel from stereo records, for some fantastic audio effects. You'll find that lots of your old stereo recordings will sound better than ever as synthetic 4-channel. And naturally, you can play any of your old records in stereo or mono if you prefer.

## Myth #6.

### **"There's not much equipment."**

Wrong again. Fisher makes four different receivers. We have the latest decoding circuits, a wide range of power, and a host of innovative and convenient features.

We give you a few details here, but write for a complete catalogue, and visit a Fisher Studio Standard dealer for an audition.

Fisher Radio, Dept. SR-12,  
11-40 45th Road, Long Island  
City, N.Y. 11101.

**Studio-Standard**  
**by Fisher**



**Fisher 634.** CD-4 and Full-Logic SQ. 34 WRMS/chan. in 4-Channel, 66 WRMS/chan. in Stereo, across the bandwidth of 20-22k Hz @ 0.5% THD, 8 ohms.



**Fisher 434.** CD-4 and Front/Back Logic SQ. 15 WRMS/chan. in 4-Channel, 28 WRMS/chan. in Stereo, across the bandwidth of 28-22k Hz @ 0.8% THD, 8 ohms.



**Fisher 334.** CD-4 and Standard SQ and SQ Blend. 10 WRMS/chan. in 4-Channel, 19 WRMS/chan. in Stereo, across the bandwidth of 30-22k Hz @ 1.0% THD, 8 ohms.



**Fisher 234.** Standard SQ and SQ Blend. 10 WRMS/chan. in 4-Channel, 19 WRMS/chan. in Stereo, across the bandwidth of 30-22k HZ @ 1.0% THD, 8 ohms.

# Stereo Review

PUBLISHER  
EDGAR W. HOPPER

EDITOR  
WILLIAM ANDERSON

MANAGING EDITOR  
WILLIAM LIVINGSTONE

MUSIC EDITOR  
JAMES GOODFRIEND

TECHNICAL EDITOR  
LARRY KLEIN

ART DIRECTOR  
BORYS PATCHOWSKY

COPY EDITOR  
LOUISE GOOCH BOUNDAS

ASSOCIATE TECHNICAL EDITOR  
RALPH HODGES

POPULAR MUSIC EDITOR  
STEVE SIMELS

ASSISTANT MUSIC EDITOR  
VIVIENNE WINTERRY GOODMAN

PRODUCTION EDITOR  
PAULETTE WEISS

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

CHRIS ALBERTSON  
MARTIN BOOKSPAN  
ROBERT S. CLARK  
NOEL COPPAGE  
RICHARD FREED  
DAVID HALL  
JULIAN D. HIRSCH  
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JOEL VANCE  
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ADVERTISING DIRECTOR  
JAMES J. SULLIVAN

ADVERTISING SERVICE MANAGER  
LINDA BLUM

GROUP VICE PRESIDENT  
ELECTRONICS & PHOTOGRAPHIC  
FURMAN HEBB

ASSOCIATE PUBLISHER  
STANLEY NEUFELD

EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT  
PEGI MCENEANEY

Editorial and Executive Offices  
Ziff-Davis Publishing Company  
One Park Avenue, New York, New York 10016  
212 725-3500  
Eastern Advertising Manager: Richard J. Halpern  
Midwestern Office: The Pattis Group  
4761 West Touhy Ave., Lincolnwood, Ill 60464  
312-679-1100  
Arnold S. Hoffman  
Western Office  
9025 Wilshire Boulevard  
Beverly Hills, California 90211  
213 273-8050; 272 1161  
Western Advertising Manager: Bud Dean  
Japan: James Yagi  
Oji Police Aoyama, 6-25, Minami Aoyama  
6-Chome, Minato-ku, Tokyo, Japan  
Telephone: 407-1930/6821, 582-2851  
Circulation Office  
P.O. Box 2771 Boulder, Colorado 80302

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## EDITORIALLY SPEAKING

By WILLIAM ANDERSON

### MUSIC AND PATRIOTISM

I AM probably wrong, but it seems to me that *most* symphony-concert programs in this country used to begin with the playing of the *Star-Spangled Banner*. I am just as probably right in noting that the custom, if custom it was, has been only rarely observed of late. Which explains my complete surprise and pleasure, on the night of September 30 at New York's Avery Fisher Hall, when conductor Eugene Ormandy strode onstage, cued the touring Philadelphia Orchestra, and pulled the audience to its feet in Pavlovian response to the first three notes of that unsingable anthem. It was a promising beginning only partly fulfilled. The *S-SB* was followed by Strauss' *Don Juan*, once thought dissonant but now seen to be an almost shameful orgy of consonance. Ideally, it should build up and overwhelm the listener like some great Hokusai wave of sound, but I was sitting in the loge, the hall's acoustical problems (at least to my ears) are far from solved, and the whole thing collapsed like a whoopee pillow. (Neither the Philadelphia nor the Boston orchestras will be returning to Fisher Hall next season, choosing instead the warmer acoustic delights of Carnegie Hall, parking problems, drafty outer lobby, and all.) Next came *Scenes and Arias*, a work by the British composer Nicholas Maw. It was one of those pieces of profileless international chic, as unfocused as its title, caught somewhere between birdsong and *Star Trek*. It deployed three able sopranos to waste their sweetness, on notes never less than the fourteenth interval apart, singing charming (according to the notes in the program) macaronic verses not one word of which was intelligible. It was also overlong, and I wondered as I walked out on it why it is necessary to *import* this sort of thing when it is done just as badly by any number of composers here at home. The intermission served only to emphasize the vastness of the gulf separating these *Scenes* from a work of absolutely breathtaking brilliance—Prokofiev's burstingly confident, ego-filled, show-off dazzler, the Concerto No. 2 in G Minor. The pianist was the American Tedd Joselson, making his debut in an omniscient performance every inch the equal of the towering work. Joselson is young and slight of frame, but he looked taller, broader, and especially longer of arm on stage—a very effective way for a pianist to look. RCA (they signed him to a contract immediately) will be bringing out the Prokofiev shortly.

To get back, however, to the *Star-Spangled Banner*: the Philadelphia makes it a custom to begin each of its tour series with the anthem, but hearing it that evening alerted me to other current manifestations of musical patriotism. I was not overly surprised to find two more examples in the trade journals of the record industry: full-page announcements of singles by Donna Fargo (*U.S. of A.*) and Jud Strunk (*My Country*). Miss Fargo's effort owes not a little to Kate Smith's renowned *God Bless America*, a ditty that helped, some believe, get us through the worst days of the Depression. But though it aims higher, it falls (sorry, Donna) just this side of pretentious. And it contains a lovely howler, the result of succumbing to a tempting half rhyme at the cost of common sense: "...and, when one of my brothers makes a mistake, be he *peasant* or president..." (emphasis mine). Miss Fargo sings half, recites half her song, but Jud Strunk's is all recitation (against a background of *America, Battle Hymn of the Republic*, etc.), reminding us of the worst excesses of those post-midnight, AM-radio poetry seminars of unlamented memory. It, too, is a head-turner, coming as it does from a down-East (Maine) comic (*Laugh In*) whose humor, I have been forced to conclude, is an acquired taste: "And I have had my brothers beaten in the jungles of the cities/And I have seen them raped and pillaged on the plains..." Sloppy. There is nothing *wrong* with patriotism, of course, though scoundrels have given it a bad name and far too many bad poets have made it their first refuge. We need *some* kind of national comforting these days, but the deep feelings of patriotism deserve more than ditties and doggerel.

# After 87 years, almost everybody is still evading the problem of tracking error.



Our leading position in the industry carries the obligation to solve the nagging little problems, too.

We spent seven years of our corporate life to devise a method that would keep the tonearm head at a constant 90° angle to the line drawn through the stylus tip and the turntable spindle.

So there'd be no distortion *at all* from that source.

The basic concept was simple. Why not put a hinged rather than a fixed head on the tonearm? Then the head could keep correcting its angle during play.

It was the execution of the concept that took all that time. We had to develop a whole new approach to tonearm engineering, from pivots to inertia distribution.

The result is available in the top models of the current Garrard line. The Garrard Zero Tracking Error Tonearm. Nobody else has anything remotely like it.

How important is the new development? *High Fidelity* magazine called it "probably the best arm yet offered as an integral part of an automatic player." And the first Garrard turntable to incorporate it received the Emile Berliner award for "An Outstanding Contribution to the World of Sound."

That's poetic justice.

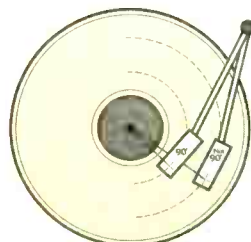


The tonearm of the original Emile Berliner gramophone of 1887 had tracking error.

Why? Because it was a pivoted arm with a fixed head, traveling across the record in an arc. Just like *almost every* tonearm today.

The main difference is that today's tonearms don't have a big horn attached to them. But they have tracking error for the same inescapable reasons. The laws of geometry.

Mr. Berliner didn't talk about tracking error. He had bigger news for the world — and more important causes of distortion in his machine.

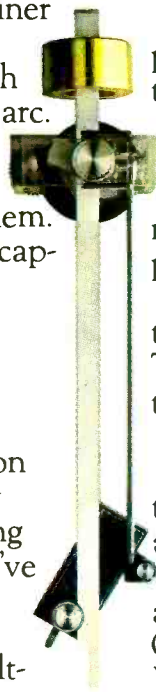


All conventional arms with a fixed offset have tracking error.

and they don't like to think about that irreducible minimum.

Except us. Garrard.

Today's manufacturers, on the other hand, have every reason to talk about tracking error, but they don't. They've refined their designs to the point where they call the tracking error and the resulting distortion "minimal,"



**Garrard**  
Division of Plessey Consumer Products

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For your free copy of *The Garrard Guide*, a 16-page full-color reference booklet, write to Garrard, Dept. G-12, 100 Commercial Street, Plainview, N.Y. 11803.



Accuphase

There's a new idea around. Someone finally decided to see just how well High Fidelity electronics could be built, and whether there were enough persons who cared to justify it.

We did.

We're TEAC, and you probably know we build quality, reliable products. We now are offering to you Accuphase Electronics. These are built to such high quality standards that they probably are, in fact, extravagant. The specifications are conservative to the point of pessimism, and in spite of that, they're the best around.

Exotic engineering usually leads to reliability problems. That need not be true—overdesign with understressed components of aerospace (not computer) grade will solve the problem. It's just that, until now, no company had the courage to charge what the solution would cost.

We did.

# Accuphase. The Extravagant Teacs.

And to demonstrate the conviction of our courage, we will

keep all these Accuphase Electronics at their original specifications for five full years. That includes both parts *and* labor. For five years, you can't spend a cent to maintain the performance you originally paid for.

And just to make *sure* you're getting it, we'll test every parameter for you every year and we'll bring each one up to spec for you, if necessary. We don't charge you for this service—we don't expect it to be *necessary*. That might sound like we believe in these products.

We do.

You owe it to yourself to check us out, just to see how far the limits of technology can be stretched. Listen too, to hear what the stretching does for the music: that's why it was done.

Not many retailers offer Accuphase, because not much of it can be produced. Those who do are worth knowing.

Accuphase from TEAC. Extravagantly.  
The Leader. Always has been.

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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Keep Those Cards and Letters Coming

● I am writing to praise what I feel is an outstanding feature of your magazine: Letters to the Editor. I read them every issue and find the content informative, stimulating, interesting, insightful, and at times extremely funny.

No criticism of the staff intended, but no staff column has such a diverse and varied content as Letters. To all those who write, I am grateful. To the staff that stimulates these outbursts, I salute you. Readers, keep those letters coming. I can hardly wait for the next issue.

ROBERT DELL'ARINGA  
Chicago, Ill.

### Mean to Barbra?

● Correct me if I'm wrong, but can it be that STEREO REVIEW has not reviewed Barbra Streisand's "The Way We Were" solo album? In the past few months I have seen reviews of albums by everyone from Cybil Shepherd to Lena Zavaroni, but I can't recall seeing a review of the Streisand LP. Is it going to be reviewed at all, and if not, why not? Can it be that Lena Zavaroni rates more space in your magazine than Barbra Streisand? Heaven help us all!!

J. B. HUNTINGTON  
Buffalo, N.Y.

*Well, it's rather complicated. The album was reviewed, but the review was "killed" after it was set into type. It was killed not because it was unfavorable (it was) but because it was too old. And it was too old because in any given month we prefer to run good reviews (accentuate the positive!) first. Barbra's review thus got shoved aside several months in a row, and when it became stale news, we killed it. Now, of course, other "bad" reviews did get space in the magazine in the meantime; this is because they were newer and because we try to balance out each issue's subject matter with some kind of fairness for differing tastes. Therefore, we are being neither kind to Lena nor mean to Barbra—she merely got caught in the squeeze.*

### Loser's Game

● So it's true that "rock 'n' roll's a loser's game"! You would have to remind me (*Rock & Riches*, October) just as I was mustering a little confidence, with some notion of finding a band to sing with. But it's probably just as

well: I'm not that good anyway, and while I wouldn't necessarily mind not *making* piles of money, with my luck I'd be sure to wind up *owing* \$17,000 instead . . . so why should I still so dearly love to try?

LINDA FREDERICK  
Lebanon, Ohio

### That's Show-Biz

● Josh Mills' "Gladys Knight and the Pips" (September) was a farce. It was one of the most insincere pieces of mumbling I've encountered to date. He states that "After an hour [into the interview with the group], it's a bit stifling, something like a Heckle-and-Jec-kle routine." He continues with utter insolence: "The interviewer becomes entrapped in the skit. Whatever they say, you're given the feeling they've already said it to someone else before." Has it ever occurred to Mr. Mills that this group, after being in show business for twenty years, has heard different interviewers ask the same, boring questions hundreds of times? Maybe he should have asked more interesting questions.

BILL WORSLEY  
Atlantic City, N.J.

*The Editor replies: Mr. Worsley really ought to be grateful that Mr. Mills has let him in on a part of What Every Journalist Knows—to wit, that in any interview situation the interviewer is almost always at a disadvantage. The interviewee not only has the advantage of knowing the subject inside out, so to speak, but, in the case of someone who has risen above the Pal Joey level, has already been interviewed dozens of times. Now, a performer's business is performing, not interviewing, so it is little wonder that at some point or other (usually after the first interview) he should apply those performing skills to this aspect of his public image also. Consciously or even unconsciously, a little script gets written called "the interview bit"; it is worked over and polished at every opportunity, the good lines (those that get laughs—or, in this case, get published) stay in, the bad ones go out. Some subjects get so good at it that the act becomes impenetrable, the little fictions become true, art becomes life. And why not? There really are no new questions, and a performer's energies are therefore much better spent on stage than squandered in a dressing room before pad, pencil, or tape recorder.*

*Another fact of journalistic life is that it is really impossible to "interview" a group. The interviewer is simply outnumbered, and he will inevitably find himself, as Mr. Mills puts it, "entrapped in the skit." Mr. Mills nimbly sidestepped both these hazards, giving us not a formula interview, but an amusing piece about a formula interview. It will doubtless be done again, but not, I think, any better. And, of course, Gladys and the Pips were there to help!*

### The People's Opera?

● Music Editor James Goodfriend effectively counter-argues Tom Koskinin's letter on nationalizing the Met (September), but he fails to point out the fallacy in Mr. Koskinin's basic argument, that the Met is available to only 1/100 of 1 per cent of the total U.S. population. In arriving at this figure, Mr. Koskinin makes three limitations on who can go to the Met: (1) those rich enough to afford subscriptions, (2) those rich enough to afford "decent seats," and (3) residents of the New York City area.

Seats at the Met start at \$4.50, hardly elitist in these times. That subscriptions are available for as few as four or five operas further rebuts his elitist theory on opera attendance. As far as "decent seats" go, Mr. Koskinin must remember that in a hall of several thousand, *most* people will not be in front-row-center, and in a sold-out house, some will be in the rear corners regardless of price. Not being able to afford front-row-center seats is surely no reason not to go the Met.

Finally, Mr. Koskinin shows little awareness of how many people actually are within geographic reach of the Met. Aside from the 15,000,000 or so in the metropolitan area (whom he acknowledges), he fails to include those within a 150-mile radius of New York who can benefit from the Saturday matinee or evening performances. For opera buffs, this is well worth the journey. The facts reveal that Mr. Koskinin's 1/100 of 1 per cent of the U.S. population is more like 10 per cent of the population, excluding those who attend the Met on a less frequent basis (tourists and the tens of thousands who see free performances in the parks every year). Potential patrons of the Met therefore constitute a sizable minority of the population of the U.S., not just an insignificant elite.

MARK GORSETMAN  
Bronx, N.Y.

### About That Peanut Butter

● The Noel Coppage piece on some lower form of life named Jimmy Buffett (September) prompts this first negative letter to STEREO REVIEW in some fifteen years of reading a fine magazine. Nothing in the article seemed to justify the waste of space. We learn he has no respect for the property of others, finding it natural to stand on the hood of someone else's car to look for his own. And what eloquence: "shit-faced drunk" is pure poetry, not to mention "we gave him a whole ration of shit, and he beat the hell out of both of us."

Being such a sensitive soul he doesn't have to be honest. "I was a fantastic shoplifter. Had to, you know. I was playing in a rock-and-roll band and we never had any money for anything but amplifiers. I can still get a whole chicken in my pants."

What a philosopher! "Life [we learn] is nothing but a tire swing." And, to top it all, he tells us that he is just a part of an innocent

(Continued on page 12)

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**STEREO REVIEW, *America, July 1973***

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**STEREOPLAY, *Italy, May 1974***

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**AUDIO SCENE, *Canada, November 1973***

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**ELECTRONICS TODAY INTERNATIONAL,  
*Australia, August 1974***

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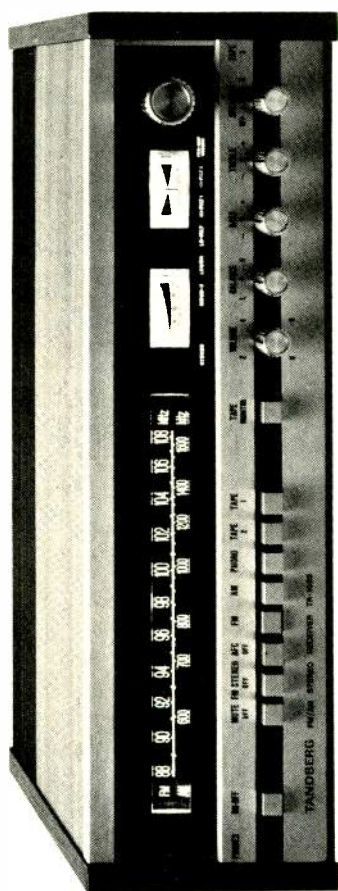
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group of "not very avid tuner-uppers." After admitting to being a foul-mouthed thief, he somehow charms the seemingly unshockable Coppage into referring to him as "Innocent . . . but not naive."

Obviously a letter such as this could come only from an aged, right-wing geriatric. Sorry, I am damned close to Buffett's age. I have a pretty good idea that Coppage and Buffett would censure the has-been ex-President for Watergate. But no doubt Buffett, who likewise has his own special sense of morality, would also say, "I'm not a crook."

Ah, well, perhaps it will be another fifteen years before you run anything as bad again.

CHRIS CLARKE  
San Anselmo, Calif.

*The Editor replies: Poor Victor Hugo must be spinning in his grave. Jean Valjean gets five years in the slammer for pinching a pot of peanut butter and nineteen more for breaking out, but Clifford Irving is treated like the Media Hero of the Week for ripping off McGraw-Hill for over half a million (if I may preserve the alimentary metaphor) clams. It is a strange anomaly of our ethical lives that we seem to reserve the bitterest measure of our contempt for misdemeanors and other student mischief and that the larger the villain, the larger the crime, the closer the undisputed felon moves in our opinion toward the status of Robin Hood. If Ma Barker, Pretty Boy Floyd, Bonnie and Clyde, or even Dillinger himself were to return to us tomorrow, several talk-show talent scouts would be killed in the rush to sign them up, and the Nielsen ratings would doubtless go right off the charts.*

*I have always stoutly defended the generations younger than mine against recklessly unfounded and easily refuted charges that they are smarter, more virtuous, or more compassionate than their elders. I have even gone so far as to maintain that they have a sense of humor, and it will take more than Mr. Clarke to change my mind. Jimmy Buffett's style—big-brag wickedness ("chicken in my pants"), naughty words ("..."), and tongue-in-cheek, phonus-balonus philosophy ("life is . . . a tire swing") is transparently in the direct line of traditional American folk humor, and drawing-room shock and outrage are sadly . . . um . . . inappropriate. Liberate that I am, I even find Mr. Buffett's characterization of the degree of his inebriation, yes, a kind of poetry, infinitely more exact (and therefore more communicative) than the "exceedingly drunk" Mr. Clarke might have preferred. Profanity can be condemned, but only when it is out of place. The interview was, in short, a damn fine piece, and I thank Mr. Clarke for giving me the opportunity to say so.*

## Mus. Ed. 101

● Since subscribing to STEREO REVIEW a while back, I have received three issues and would like to compliment you on your equipment tests and reviews, which are excellent. This raises an intriguing question: what good is all this hi-fi gear if there isn't anything to play on it?

Now like most musical ignorants, I used to think there were plenty of first-class artists around; that was before I started really reading your magazine. I thought Chicago was a good band; their mixture of stylized brass and winds applied to rock really knocked me out. That was before Peter Reilly opened my eyes

(ears) to this "pap" masquerading as music. Then came Elektra's Carly Simon, whom Steve Simels so deftly exposed as wanting "to be Phillip Roth but only has the talent to be Erich Segal." Apparently the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences was unjustified in bestowing upon her the award as best new artist of 1971. The story is the same with Emerson, Lake & Palmer, who almost received the same award in 1972. Listening to their *Karn Evil 9* had me imagining all sorts of stuff; I got the idea they were telling a kind of epic in prose about a hero who stopped an evil threat embodied in a carnival . . . and then Joel Vance exposed the entire theme as "Evil Lurks." Likewise, Simels has exposed Helen Reddy, Lori Lieberman, Anne Murray, and Suzi Quatro (a favorite of Los Angeles Times critics) in one paragraph. Let's not forget Noel Coppage's exposé of Elton John in the August issue and Peter Reilly's refutation of Les Summers' letter (August) which points out that the Carpenters have talent (they do seem good to me). Guess it's time to mothball the old \$400 stereo.

PAT BARR  
South Gate, Calif.

*The Editor replies: Ignorance disabused is the beginning of learning. Mr. Barr has discovered that not everyone lives on received opinion. It's a bit of a shock sometimes, but you can get used to it. For instance, I've decided I can live with the fact that there's a guy out in North Dakota who thinks Frank Sinatra is a lousy singer, Fred Astaire can't dance, and Sir Lawrence Olivier couldn't sell a Polaroid camera to a French-postcard peddler.*

## Rock & Riches

● Regarding Allan Parachini's article in the October issue ("Rock & Riches"): David Geffen has not been with the management team of Geffen-Roberts for some time. He left them to become full-time president of Asylum Records and then became director of Elektra/Asylum/Nonesuch Records in late August of 1973. The artists named in Mr. Parachini's article, Eagles and Linda Ronstadt, are managed by Frontline Management (Mr. Irving Azoff) and Mr. Peter Asher, respectively.

KARIN BERG  
Elektra/Asylum/Nonesuch Records  
Los Angeles, Calif.

## Judy

● In Peter Reilly's wonderful two-page review of MGM's "That's Entertainment!" soundtrack (August), he asks a question concerning Judy Garland's recording of the *Annie Get Your Gun* score—" . . . whatever happened to those tapes?" Well, they've been made into a soundtrack album by Sound/Stage Recordings (2302). It's a limited edition for the Judy Garland Fan Club. It took me a month of searching the local record shops for this certainly uncommon recording before I finally found it, after having seen it originally a year ago and, unfortunately, not snatching it up then. So keep searching, Garland fans, it's out there somewhere!

ROBERT LANE  
Rolling Hills, Calif.

## Ives' Sonatas

● We enjoyed reading David Hall's review (October) of our recently released set of Charles Ives' Sonatas for Violin and Piano (Nonesuch HB-73025) performed by Paul  
*(Continued on page 14)*



# Keep on trackin'

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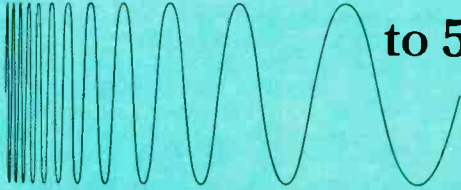
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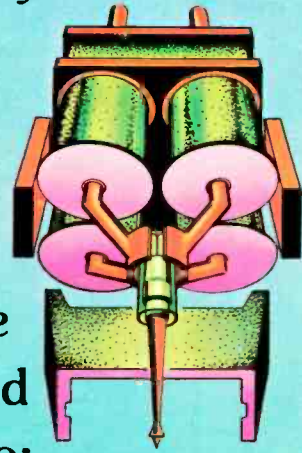
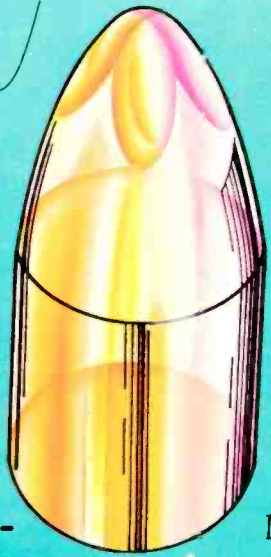
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Zukofsky and Gilbert Kalish. In the final paragraph of his article, however, Mr. Hall comments upon an apparent "over-balance of piano at the expense of the violin line in the first part of the slow movement of the First Sonata. . . ." It should be noted that Ives' manuscript and the printed edition both specifically indicate muting of the violin throughout the movement and in certain passages call for enormous crescendos for an extended length of time in the piano—while admonishing the violinist to refrain from any increase in volume whatsoever. It is clearly a deliberate device by Ives to create a sense of the violin in the distance, receding and emerging. The resulting "over-balance" in the piano is intentional, and fidelity to the composer's wish dic-

tates the unorthodox balance between the violin and piano heard in the Zukofsky-Kalish recording.

Another point worthy of mention is that our recording of the separate *Largo* in Paul Zukofsky's violin-piano edition is not the first by these artists: they presented it originally in a Columbia album (M-30230) along with the trio version of the same piece (violin, clarinet, and piano), in which Charles Russo performed with Messrs. Zukofsky and Kalish.

TERESA STERNE  
Nonesuch Records  
New York, N.Y.

*Mr. Hall replies: I stand corrected with regard to the violin-piano version of the Largo,*

*which is indeed included on the 1970 Columbia disc (I was reviewing the Nonesuch disc in my summer home, far from my Connecticut library).*

*As for the comments on violin-piano balance in bars 16-35 of the slow movement in Sonata No. 1, I plead guilty only to imprecise wording. Though the relative dynamics between the con sordino-non cresc. violin stand as wholly correct both in the Nonesuch and the Folkways performances by Zukofsky and Kalish, the effect of overbalance is rendered more pronounced (to the point of being disconcerting) in the Nonesuch recording due to the greater resonance of the piano—a function of the recording-locale acoustics rather than any oversight on the part of the performers. As anyone who has been stuck with a slightly over-reverberant master tape recording knows, it is no problem to add resonance to a somewhat dry-sounding original, but it is virtually impossible to subtract it. I therefore stand by my remarks regarding a very minor flaw in an otherwise wholly admirable achievement by all concerned.*

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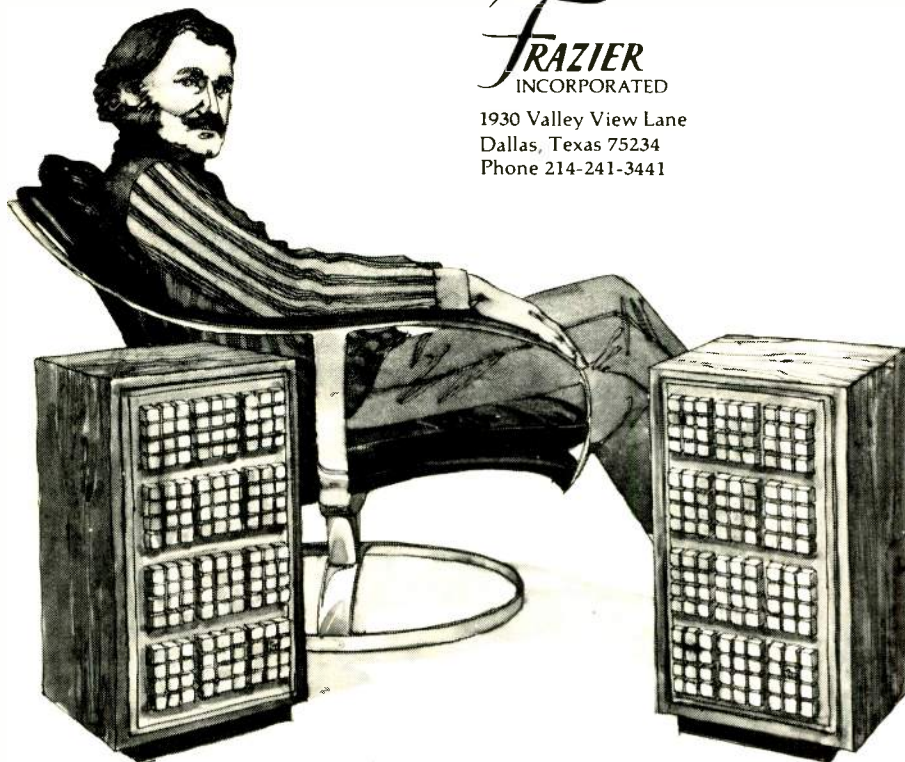
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### Schlagoper

● I greatly enjoyed William Anderson's review of "Viennese Operetta Favorites" (September). Those of us who, like Mr. Anderson, are "crazy about Viennese operetta" seldom get any attention at all from the record companies. With the exceptions of *Die Fledermaus* and *Die Lustige Witwe*, there are almost no available recordings of complete operettas. Recordings with performers like Rothenberger, Schock, Gedda, and Holm are on sale in Vienna, and companies such as Eurodisc and Telefunken have recently released operetta records to the English market; perhaps these will eventually be made available to us. By the way, despite the recent increases, record prices in New York are still much lower, even for European imports, than record prices on the European continent.

PAUL COHEN  
Brooklyn, N.Y.

### Disc Quality

● Here is a true irony: a composer will pour his heart and soul into a piece of music; an artist will spend half a lifetime perfecting his art so as to give his best for the recording; the record company will spare no effort to achieve an outstanding recording, zealously guarding every step of the operation—taping, editing, mastering. Production is never authorized before a test pressing is approved. Sometimes it takes as many as six tests before that is done. And then what? It is a sad reflection on the state of commercial record pressing in the U.S.A. that, with the finest of materials and equipment (and prices certainly among the finest, and growing finer all the time!), the average U.S.-made pressing is no match for its European counterpart.

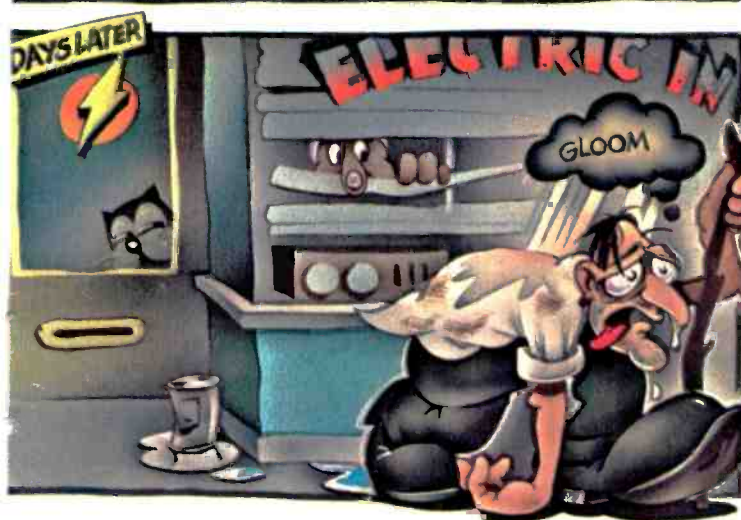
The nub of the problem is that the record industry in the U.S. is pop-oriented. The sound levels of most popular-music records is such that surface quality matters hardly at all. With classical pressings accounting for (we are told) less than 5 per cent of the total, it is hardly surprising that pressing plants are indifferent to the plight of the classical manufacturer. Importing pressings is obviously not the answer. Any suggestions?

GIVEON CORNFIELD  
Orion Master Recordings  
Malibu, Calif.

See page 54.

STEREO REVIEW

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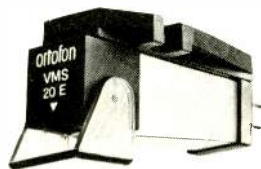
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*Circle 115 on reader service card*

## Ampzilla Stereo Power Amplifier



● THE first product from G.A.S. (Great American Sound Company) is the

Ampzilla stereo power amplifier, affording 200 watts per channel continuous into 8 ohms at any frequency from 20 to 20,000 Hz with less than 0.05 per cent harmonic or intermodulation distortion. The amplifier is offered with or without meters, and in kit or factory-wired versions. The heat-sink assembly is made up of interleaved vertical plates cooled by a built-in fan. The signal-to-noise ratio of the Ampzilla is 112 dB; damping factor is 200. About 1.6 volts of signal

into the input impedance of 75,000 ohms drives the amplifier to full power. Frequency response is better than 1 to 100,000 Hz  $\pm 1$  dB. The basic Ampzilla costs \$365 as a kit, \$500 factory wired. The optional meters, which read directly in watts for 8-ohm loads, have four switch-selected sensitivity ranges. The metered versions of the amplifier (shown) are priced at \$400 for the kit, \$550 factory wired.

*Circle 116 on reader service card*

## Concord CD-1000 Stereo Cassette Deck



● THE Concord line of audio products from Benjamin now includes a front-

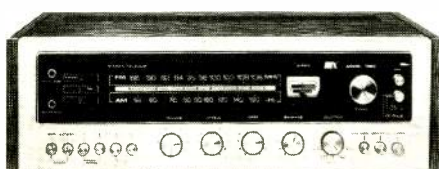
loading stereo cassette deck, the Model CD-1000, with Dolby B-type noise reduction and solenoid activation of the principal transport functions. The deck accepts both microphone and line inputs (with a switch to choose between them), and it has concentrically mounted recording- and playback-level controls acting independently on the two channels. Frequency response is 30 to 13,000 Hz (30 to 16,000 Hz with chromium-dioxide tape), and the basic signal-to-noise ratio is 50 dB, improving to 58 dB with Dolby noise reduction. Wow and flutter are 0.09 per cent. A C-60 cassette can be

fast-wound in a bit less than 80 seconds.

The CD-1000's tape selector has three positions, for regular, low-noise, and chromium-dioxide tape. Transport functions include PAUSE and EJECT and a memory-rewind counter. A switchable lamp illuminates the interior of the cassette well to assist in head cleaning. The two microphone jacks, plus a stereo headphone jack (which will drive 8-ohm phones), are located on the front panel. The CD-1000 has dimensions of  $15\frac{3}{4} \times 5\frac{7}{8} \times 12\frac{5}{8}$  inches overall. Price: \$369.95.

*Circle 117 on reader service card*

## MX AM/Stereo FM Receivers



● THE new MX brand name, created by Magnavox for a line of high-quality stereo and four-channel receivers as well as other components, features the Models 1570 and 1580 AM/stereo FM receivers. The two units are essentially identical except for their power outputs: 35 watts per channel in the case of the 1570 and 60 watts per channel for the 1580 (shown). These ratings are for continu-

ous power output, both channels driven simultaneously into 8-ohm loads across the full 20- to 20,000-Hz range. At rated output, harmonic and intermodulation distortion are 0.5 and 0.8 per cent, respectively, for both. Signal-to-noise ratios are 80 dB for the high-level inputs, 70 dB for the magnetic phono inputs.

The principal controls on the receiver are knobs for volume, balance, bass, treble, and input selection (two auxiliary inputs, plus phono, FM, and AM). Tape monitor, loudness compensation, mono/stereo mode, speaker selection (two pairs accommodated), and high-cut filter are all switched by pushbuttons (the Model 1580 also has a low-cut filter). Among the unusual features of the receivers are tuning meters that can be

switched to read signal strength or channel center, an "automatic off" function that permits the specially equipped MX automatic turntables to turn off the entire system after the last record (the turntable is plugged into a special a.c. outlet on the rear panel), and an FM "blend" feature that reduces noise in weak stereo FM broadcasts with a slight sacrifice of stereo separation. The receivers also incorporate a matrix network at the speaker terminals that produces a simulated four-channel effect when rear speakers are connected to the remote speaker terminals and an adjacent switch is thrown. The front panel has two stereo headphone jacks.

FM specifications, identical for both  
*(Continued on page 20)*

# Hardheaded. The new Sansui SC-737.



Sansui's Exclusive  
Magni-Crystal Ferrite  
Record/Play Head

For years Sansui has produced hard-headed and solid stereo components. Our latest hard-headed development is the SC-737 cassette deck, with new Magni-Crystal Ferrite heads. These super-hard heads are virtually impervious to wear, one of the major causes of tape deck quality erosion. Along with new heads, the SC-737 gives you Dolby\* circuits for quiet record and playback, bias equalization for standard or chromium based tapes, peak reading VU meters and a "radarscope" tape travel indicator.

The SC-737's motor is something special, too. A 4-pole hysteresis synchronous type keeps speed constant regardless of voltage changes. Photoelectric shutoff and microphone mixing, including center channel input, make the SC-737 the cassette deck for even the most hardheaded audiophile. Hear it at your nearest franchised Sansui dealer.

\*Dolby is a trademark of Dolby Laboratories Inc.

**Sansui**

**SANSUI ELECTRONICS CORP.**

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CIRCLE NO. 68 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

# NEW PRODUCTS

THE LATEST IN  
HIGH-FIDELITY  
EQUIPMENT

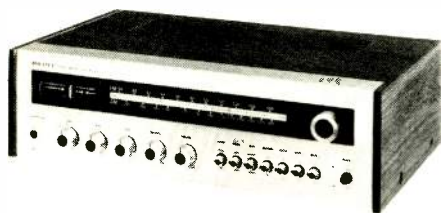
models, are: IHF sensitivity, 1.8 microvolts; 50-dB quieting sensitivity, 2.5 microvolts; AM suppression, 45 dB; capture ratio, 1.5 dB; image rejection, 97 dB; spurious-response rejection, 94 dB;

alternate-channel selectivity, 75 dB. FM harmonic distortion is 0.2 per cent for mono, 0.3 per cent for stereo, and stereo separation is 50 dB at 1,000 Hz. The receivers are the same size—19 x 6 x 15

inches—and are housed in cabinets finished with walnut veneers. Prices: Model 1570, \$399.95; Model 1580, \$479.95. Cabinets are included.

*Circle 118 on reader service card*

## Scott R36S AM/Stereo FM Receiver



● H. H. SCOTT's latest stereo receiver, a moderately priced unit of medium power output, is designated the Model R36S. Rated continuous power is 30 watts per

channel into 8 ohms over the full range of 20 to 20,000 Hz, with less than 0.5 per cent harmonic distortion and 0.6 per cent intermodulation distortion. Signal-to-noise ratios are 70 dB for the phono inputs, 80 dB for high-level inputs. FM specifications include an IHF sensitivity of 1.9 microvolts, a 2.5-dB capture ratio, 46 dB alternate-channel selectivity, and stereo separation of 35 dB at 1,000 Hz. FM signal-to-noise ratio for 100 per cent modulation is 60 dB or better.

The conservatively styled layout scheme of the R36S's front panel provides knob controls for volume, balance, bass, treble, and input selection (AM, FM,

PHONO, and EXTRA). Seven pushbutton switches control loudness compensation, mono/stereo mode, tape monitoring, FM interstation-noise muting, high-cut filter, and the two pairs of speakers that can be connected to the receiver. In addition there are signal-strength and channel-center tuning meters, and a stereo headphone jack. Rear-panel features include an unswitched a.c. convenience outlet, 300- and 75-ohm antenna connectors, and speaker fuses for each channel. Dimensions are 18 x 5½ x 13 inches overall, including the wood cabinet supplied. Price: \$329.95.

*Circle 119 on reader service card*

## B•I•C Automatic Turntables



● THE new line of automatic turntables from B•I•C includes two models, the 980 (shown) and 960, both employing belt-driven platters—a highly unusual feature on turntables that change records. The two models are identical except for the electronic speed regulation of the 980's motor (which facilitates the inclusion of a fine-tuning platter-speed control with a range of  $\pm 3$  per cent) and

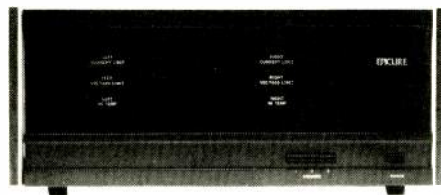
its illuminated stroboscopic indicator to assist in adjusting for correct speed. The turntables use low-speed (300-rpm) motors affording two platter speeds—33⅓ and 45 rpm. The platters themselves are 12-inch nonferrous castings. Up to six records can be stacked on the changing mechanism, which does not sense the presence of records in the usual manner, but is instead “programmed” by means of a selector slider to play (or repeat) anywhere from one to six record sides. Manual operation can also be selected, and a single-play spindle that rotates with the platter is provided as an accessory.

The tone arm used on the B•I•C turntables is a slim tubular design, balanced by a rotating counterweight, with stylus force and anti-skating adjustments located side by side on the gimbal pivot assembly. Levers on the motorboard oper-

ate the damped cueing mechanism (with the lift and descent rate adjustable from one to three seconds) and preset the calibrations of the anti-skating adjustment for spherical or elliptical styli. Incorporated in the removable cartridge shell are adjustments for stylus overhang and vertical tracking angle. Performance specifications are identical for both models. They include wow and flutter of 0.03 per cent, and a rumble level of -65 dB. The entire turntable is isolated from external vibration by four rubber shock mounts. Prices: Model 980, \$199.95; Model 960, \$149.95. Bases and dust covers are optional, with a solid walnut base costing \$16.95, and a molded matte-black base available for \$7.95. A dust cover costs \$9.95. The overall dimensions of both models, with base and dust cover, are approximately 17 x 14¾ x 7 inches.

*Circle 120 on reader service card*

## Epicure Model One Stereo Power Amplifier



● THE new Model One power amplifier from Epicure is rated at 125 watts per channel continuous with both channels driven into 8 ohms over the full 20- to

20,000-Hz range, with less than 0.2 per cent harmonic or intermodulation distortion. Overload indicators for voltage, current, and temperature are provided in the form of bright red legends that light up behind the black-out face plate of the unit whenever overload conditions exist. In addition, the amplifier is fully protected against shorted or open circuits and load mismatch. The a.c. power line and speaker outputs are individually fused, and thermal cut-outs act to interrupt the amplifier's circuits should heat-sink temperatures reach 75 degrees centigrade. Pushbuttons permit the switching of up to three pairs of speakers. The

rear panel of the unit has input-level controls for both channels, oscilloscope jacks for a visual display of the amplifier's outputs, and switches to test the operation of the front-panel overload lights. The signal-to-noise ratio of the Model One exceeds 100 dB. The input impedance is 10,000 ohms minimum, and the damping factor is 100 or greater. Frequency response is 10 to 100,000 Hz  $\pm 0.5$  dB. The amplifier is unconditionally stable when driving any load from 2 to 20 ohms. Dimensions of the Model One are 18½ x 7½ x 12½ inches, and the weight is 58 pounds. Price: \$649.

*Circle 121 on reader service card*



**For those people who don't care how much their audio equipment costs as long as it's the best, we offer a line of audio equipment which we don't care how much it costs to build.**



Epicure Corporation is that division of Epicure Products, Inc. that has been designated as spawning ground for all the company's state-of-the-art products.

Think of the luxurious position that puts us in:

We don't worry about the economics of the products we develop. We just worry about the quality of them.

The result of this approach, as you can well imagine, is a collection of remarkably good audio equipment. Not surprisingly, it's not inexpensive.

The Epicure Model One Power Operating Amplifier, for example, is an incredible piece of equipment that uses multiple emitter-site epitaxial output devices, resulting in a phenom-

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enal power bandwidth and tremendous current and thermal capability.

The Model One is easily years ahead of its time. It goes for \$649.\*

Or, for \$1600, an audio perfectionist might own the Epicure Model Two Audio Function Center. This may seem high for

a pre-amplifier; but the Model Two is, in fact, the beginning of a whole new generation of pre-amplifier.

Then there's our speaker line that ranges in price up to \$1000 each. This line includes our new Model 400 Plus — an improved version of a speaker that

was already top-rated by Stereo Review.

And soon you'll be hearing about a new tuner from Epicure. Not an inexpensive tuner, perhaps. But a good tuner. A very good tuner.

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Perhaps you're not ready to make the commitment to high-priced stereo equipment. Or maybe you need a good second system. Then look into the modestly-priced Superscope line of receivers, components, tape decks, tape players and speaker systems.

Superscope products are **designed and engineered by the same people who bring you world-famous Marantz stereo.** And they're backed by the same, strong, 3-year guarantee\* that stands behind Marantz. So with Superscope

stereo you're getting **quality** at very modest prices. Your nearest Superscope dealer has a full line of equipment starting as low as \$89.95.\*\* You'll find him in the Yellow Pages.

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CIRCLE NO. 78 ON READER SERVICE CARD

# AUDIO QUESTIONS and ANSWERS

By LARRY KLEIN *Technical Editor*



## Noise Definition

**Q.** *Your test reports frequently refer to "non-audible" noise. Isn't that a contradiction? Is it "noise" if you can't hear it?*

VINNIE FICARA  
New Hope, Pa.

**A.** Our definition of "noise" is drawn from communication science rather than everyday speech. In this area noise is defined as *any* electrical or sonic element that accompanies the desired "message" or "signal" without adding anything of communicative value to it. Note that nothing is said about audibility, the degree of interference, or even the nature of the noise. A radar pulse on a scope is an example of a desired non-audible signal that can be accompanied by undesired non-audible (but visible) noise.

## Speaker Reconing

**Q.** *I would like to recone an old speaker I own and wonder if some company has such a kit available?*

STEVE MCMAHON  
Houston, Texas

**A.** Speaker reconing is a job best left to a professional—preferably one who works directly or indirectly for the company that produced the speaker in question. The characteristics of the speaker-cone assembly, which usually includes its outer and inner suspensions, are very critical in regard to the speaker's overall performance. The cone assembly largely determines the frequency response, distortion, and dispersion characteristics. And so simply installing a cone that "works" in no way insures that the original performance will be restored. Contact the manufacturer, ask him how much a repair will cost, and where to have it done. If the speaker is unlabeled (usually meaning it was never intended for hi-fi use), or if the cost seems high in comparison with the price of a new speaker, forget it.

## Automatic Taping

**Q.** *I am considering buying a tape machine and would like to be able to tape FM programs off the air when I'm not at home. I've been told that all tape machines are not able to do this. Can you explain why—and what I should look for? Also, do you have any suggestions as to the kind of timer I should use?*

KIRK STEVENS  
Chicago, Ill.

**A.** You are right: all tape machines are *not* suitable for timer-operated off-the-air taping. In order to be able



to tape off the air, a machine has to be able to be set up in the record mode while its a.c. power is off and then—without any further control manipulation—be able to make a recording when the a.c. is applied. Many machines cannot do this, usually because of some sort of solenoid fail-safe circuit that causes them to switch out of the record mode when there is even a momentary loss of a.c. line power.

It's simple enough to check a recorder's suitability for timer operation. Set up the machine to record an FM program and then, while the tape is in motion, pull the a.c. plug from the wall socket. Obviously, the machine will stop. If, when the plug is reinserted in the wall outlet, the machine restarts in the record mode, then it can be used with a timer. Most cassette machines can be timer operated, and most expensive open-reel machines can't. However,

there are a few solenoid-operated machines that do have a timer switching option built-in or have a timer adapter available as an accessory.

Those machines that are not solenoid-operated obviously have to be left "in gear" (but without power) before the timer turns them on. Although the capstan will be pressing against the rubber idler wheel, there's probably no harm in this for short periods. It is best, however, to avoid leaving the machine engaged for, say, a week at a time, since a dent may develop in the rubber idler.

As far as the timers themselves are concerned, there are many different types available, some intended for industrial use, others for home application. The best and most inexpensive 24-hour multiple-program timers I've come across are made by Intermatic (models EB-11, EA-11, and D-211.) These can be set by using removable tabs to turn equipment on and off any number of times during a 24-hour period. The minimum "on" time is 30 minutes. Various models are available for flush or surface mounting (see photo above) from about \$14 to \$20. For further information write to Intermatic Inc., Dept SR, Spring Grove, Illinois 60081.

## Wrong-side-out Tape

**Q.** *A friend who works in a recording studio recently gave me some used 7-inch reels of 1/4-inch tape from his job. Oddly enough, they seemed to be wound on the reel wrong side out, and after I rewound them correctly they played back a very weak, distorted signal. Can't recording studio tape be used with home machines?*

ROBERT AGEE  
Bronx, N.Y.

**A.** Yes, but not when you've rewound it so the oxide is on the opposite side of the tape from the heads. The tape your friend gave you was wound correctly, even though the dull side was out and the shiny side in. The dull side was not the oxide coating, as you thought, but rather a special backing used on some top-quality tapes to enhance their winding and playing performance. The shiny side of the tape is the oxide side (highly polished), and hence is the side that should contact the head. Although recorded studio tapes are usually stored "tail out" (meaning that the tape will have to be rewound before playing), it's safe to assume that the oxide side of the tape will always be facing the reel center.

*Because the number of questions we receive each month is greater than we can reply to individually, only those letters selected for use in this column can be answered. Sorry!*

# DAWN OF A NEW AGE



designed by: FRIK & FRAK, Inc.

A new age in the development of sound reproduction. A sound evolution that will make all other systems obsolete. Obsolete by the creation of a unique system known as "Dynamic Damping."

"Dynamic Damping" is the exclusive patented principle developed by Magnum Opus to give you the finest quality sound reproduction now known to man. This innovative system employs an internal woofer which is phased and positioned in such a way that it controls the front-firing main woofer, thereby preventing cone break-up, frequency doubling and other types of distortion. And the results truly speak for themselves. Superb bass response and a larger and fuller dimensional and orchestral ambience that is truly unparalleled by any other speaker system on the market.

A "truer" sound, capable of adding yet another dimension in realism, a spaciousness of sound that you can feel as well as hear.

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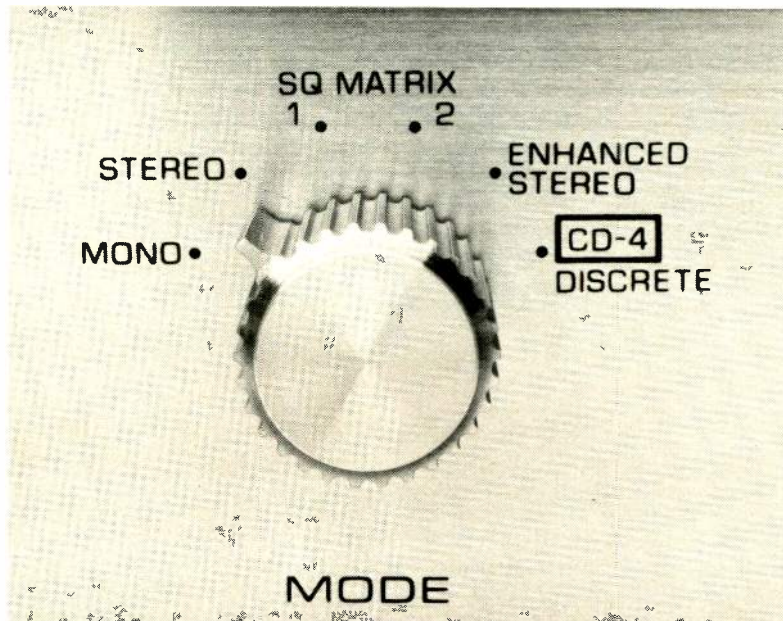
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OPUS** a sound  
as different as  
our name

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Circle No. 46 On Reader Service Card

# The 800+.

## It's six of the best receivers you can buy.



If you'd stop reading this and and go listen, we'd both be ahead of the game. If words could do it you'd be into poetry, not music.

The harman/kardon 800+ gives you both kinds of four channel now. Built-in CD4 now. Built-in SQ now. No waiting. (Anyone who tells you to wait for four channel has a hole in his receiver.) The 800+ will play any four channel record you can buy now. With four separate amplifiers delivering a glorious 22 watts continuous power. Each.

Mono and stereo, of course. Pure stereo. Some four channel systems play stereo like they only half mean it. (They turn off two of their four channels and call it "stereo.") If you're playing stereo on the 800+ you get the whole sound. A simple switch blends the power of four channels into two – more than doubling their quad output. 50 watts continuous power per channel!

Then, two kinds of stereo you've never seen before:

Stereo/Stereo. Listen to your tape deck in the living room. Listen to FM in the bedroom. At the same time.

Enhanced Stereo. An incredible bit of electronic magic that makes your entire stereo library think it's quad. (We know an unnerving number of music buffs who say that enhanced stereo is better than quad. You listen. You decide.)

Six receivers: mono, stereo, stereo/stereo, enhanced stereo, CD4 and SQ.

Words, words, too many words. Go hear the 800+. Listen to it do what it does.

One last word: \$500. The six receivers are yours for \$500. Which figures out to \$83.33 a receiver.

That's music.

The harman/kardon 800+.	Frequency Response (AMP) 4Hz to 70,000Hz ± 1.0 dB
Power output: 4 x 22 watts continuous per channel: all channels driven into 8 ohms from 20Hz to 20,000 Hz. (Stereo mode 2 x 50 watts RMS)	Hum & Noise: Better than 85 dB (unweighted)
Harmonic Distortion: Less than 0.5% THD	FM Sensitivity: 2.0 micro- volts (IHF)
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Then listen to our  
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They're the same!

If you're into rock, B·I·C VENTURI™ is your speaker. It delivers tight, solid bass. It's so efficient it plays louder than other speakers with just a few watts. And it can handle such high power that it takes even the hardest rock in stride.

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No matter what your musical preference, B·I·C VENTURI is your speaker. Its DYNAMIC TONAL BALANCE circuit (pats. pend.) compensates precisely for the ears' deficiencies in hearing bass and treble at moderate and low listening levels. It preserves the dramatic effects of music at all levels. So, listen to your speaker at your B·I·C VENTURI dealer. For brochure, write: SR-12

British Industries Co., div. of Avnet Inc.,  
Westbury, New York 11590.  
Canada: C. W. Pointon, Ont.



CIRCLE NO. 11 ON READER SERVICE CARD

# AUDIO BASICS

By RALPH HODGES



## GLOSSARY OF TECHNICAL TERMS—14

● **Flat** is an informal term that describes a component or system with a uniform response across its frequency range—that is, its output is in perfect proportion to its input within the band of frequencies being considered. A frequency-response graph of such a system is a straight horizontal (“flat”) line.

● **Fletcher-Munson effect**, named for the two researchers who documented it, describes the average ear’s sensitivity to different frequencies at various loudness levels, and particularly the ear’s rapidly *diminishing* sensitivity to low and (to a lesser extent) high frequencies as loudness levels are reduced. For example, the original Fletcher-Munson data suggests that a tone of very low frequency (30 to 40 Hz) must exceed the intensity of the softest perceptible mid-frequency tone by roughly a million times (60 dB) in order to be heard.

Most amplifier and receiver manufacturers acknowledge the existence of the Fletcher-Munson phenomenon by providing automatic *loudness compensation* (which can be switched off) in their products to boost low- and sometimes high-frequency response as the volume control is turned down. This feature is designed to help maintain a more natural frequency balance at low listening levels.

● **Flutter** is a spurious waver in pitch imparted to reproduced music, usually as the result of cyclic speed irregularities introduced by some mechanical part of a recording or reproduction system. Common causes of flutter are slippages or out-of-round conditions in the drive mechanisms of tape decks and turntables. Generally, “flutter” refers to waverings that take place at a rate of ten per second or higher. Slower rates of fluctuation are called “wow.” Very high rates of flutter may lose their wavery quality and instead impose a veiled or roughened character on the music that can easily be mistaken for other forms of distortion.

Amounts of flutter are expressed in percentages that specify the deviation of a flutter test tone from its nominally “correct” frequency. Most flutter specifications conform to a “weighted rms” standard in which flutter exceeding 0.1 per cent by any significant amount will be audible on certain types of music.

● **FM** (frequency modulation), sometimes described as the “high-fidelity” form of radio broadcasting, employs a transmission signal (carrier) that is modulated (varied) in frequency so that it deviates above and below an assigned center frequency in accordance with the audio signal the station is broadcasting. The *higher* the frequency of the audio signal, the more rapid the deviation rate of the carrier as it “swings” up and down around the center frequency; the *louder* the audio signal, the wider the deviations from center—up to a maximum of 75,000 Hz (75 kHz) in either direction, which is the “full modulation” permitted to U.S. FM stations. In this way, the audio is broadcast as frequency shifts of a radio carrier signal to be later reconverted to audio by the receiver. The U.S. FM band extends from 88 MHz to 108 MHz (megahertz), with station-frequency assignments positioned 400 kHz apart on the dial in any particular reception area.

The great benefit of FM is its low noise. Since an FM tuner is designed to be insensitive to amplitude variations, it suffers much less from noise-producing interference (which appears principally as an amplitude modulation) than AM (amplitude-modulated) radio does.

FM broadcasts in stereo compatible with mono receivers are achieved by adding the audio information required to produce two separate channels in the form of a 38-kHz AM signal. This, along with the main audio channel and a 19-kHz “pilot” signal required to synchronize the multiplex (stereo) circuits in the receiver, is then converted into FM and broadcast by the station.



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During the past three decades, the consummate skill and precision of Japanese technology has become unquestionably recognized throughout the world. Some of the finest values in cameras, cars, motorcycles, appliances, computers and a myriad of other sophisticated products that now contribute to the pleasure of western culture come to us through the accomplished hands of the eastern craftsman. Today, "Made in Japan" means "Made with pride." □ In that tradition, Nikko Electric Corporation has used its 40 years of experience in electronic research and development to create the finest values in home music equipment available anywhere — the all-new line of Nikko receivers, tuners and amplifiers. Here the very latest advancements in solid state of the art have been carefully combined to deliver more sound, more features and more quality for the dollar than ever before possible. □ Before you choose your next music system, make sure you're getting all the performance your money can buy. Listen to Nikko. Proudly made in Japan to bring you the sound of pure value.

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NIKKO Electric Corp. of America

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Van Nuys, CA 91406

218 Sherwood Ave.,  
Farmingdale, N. Y. 11735



The Nikko STA-9090 stereo receiver. It offers a full complement of sophisticated features designed to satisfy the most demanding listener. See your Nikko dealer for power output and other specifications. Suggested retail price: \$499.95.

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It took Altec.



The same Altec you'll hear in our super-line of high fidelity loudspeaker systems. The same experience. The same knowledge. The same craftsmanship. The only differences are that we've dressed them up for your use. Some are small. Some large. Some are powerful. Some are very powerful.

And they're all made to satisfy the ears of just one very important listener.

You.

Before you buy your next speaker system, stop by your local dealer and listen to Altec. Championship performance for more than three decades.

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CIRCLE NO. 5 ON READER SERVICE CARD

**ALTEC**  
*the sound of experience.*

# New Realistic® Receiver Line...

There's only one place you can find it ... Radio Shack!

The 1975 line that's not "me too". Honestly rated, built by or for Radio Shack with numerous exclusive features: Like Quatravox® for 4-channel excitement from stereo sources and Auto-Magic™ for FM fine-tuning that's electronically perfect. Each includes a walnut veneer or wood grain case and is U.L. listed for electrical safety.

## Stereo Receivers



STA-15



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# TECHNICAL TALK

By JULIAN D. HIRSCH

● **TIME CONSTANTS AND EQUALIZATION:** Most STEREO REVIEW readers are probably aware that frequency "equalization" is used in all areas of audio, but they may be confused about some of the terminology employed, such as the matter of *time constants*. Just what is a time constant, and why is this term used to describe what is actually a frequency-response characteristic?

First of all, let us briefly review, as a convenient example, the purpose of playback equalization in tape recording. If magnetic tape is recorded with a constant magnetic flux at all frequencies, and if it is played through a perfect tape head with no playback equalization, it will have an electrical output that falls at a rate of 6 dB per octave as the frequency decreases. To achieve a flat frequency response, an equalization circuit must be used to provide a complementary response—in this case, one that *rises* at 6 dB per octave with decreasing frequency.

It is obvious that this 6-dB-per-octave low-frequency boost cannot go on indefinitely, since theoretically that implies infinite gain at "zero" frequency (d.c.). In addition, low-frequency noise, especially power-line hum, would be amplified greatly. And so it is necessary to "level off" the equalization characteristic at some low-frequency "break point" below which the playback gain remains constant. (The break point is also sometimes referred to as the "knee" or "turn-over" frequency.) For open-reel tapes, this frequency has long been set at 50 Hz; in the original Philips cassette standard, it was 100 Hz, and the bass boost supplied during playback was less than required for "flat" response. However, given the primitive state of early cassette technology, and the fact that no one at that time envisioned cassettes as ever being suitable for high-fidelity recording, the reduction in low-frequency noise and hum pickup in playback made possible by eliminating the boost below 100 Hz

certainly justified using this approach.

Eventually it appeared that cassettes *did* have a genuine potential for high-fidelity performance. The frequencies below 100 Hz could be preserved by introducing, during the recording, an equalization bass boost in the 50- to 100-Hz region. However, this tended to saturate the tape with high-level, low-frequency material, causing severe distortion. It was necessary, therefore, to apply the boost during playback—which resulted in a revised low-frequency equalization standard for cassettes, corresponding to the 50-Hz "break point" used with open-reel tapes. Most cassette

cassettes, and 2,270 Hz for chromium-dioxide cassettes.

Figure 1 shows a family of playback-equalization curves with the break points idealized. All the curves are set at 0 dB at 1,000 Hz. Note that if there were no "break" frequencies, the slope of the curve would go on indefinitely. Keep in mind that, all else being equal, a high-frequency break point for the treble recording equalization also reduces the hiss in the playback output.

Returning to the earlier question of why the points at which the equalization characteristic changes its "slope" are described in terms of a time constant rather than frequency: first, a frequency-response slope of 6 dB per octave can be achieved by a circuit using a single resistor and capacitor. Such a network does not produce a sharp break, but rather a smooth transition from a flat response to the ultimate slope. (The response diverges by 3 dB from what would be its unequalized value at that frequency at which the reactance of the capacitor equals the resistance. Mathematically, this is  $f = 1/2\pi RC$ , where  $f$  is frequency in hertz,  $R$  resistance in ohms, and  $C$  capacitance in farads.)

Figure 2 shows the difference between the idealized curve and the actual equalization response, using the NAB tape characteristics of 3,180 and 50 microseconds as illustration. The two curves differ by 3 dB at the theoretical break frequencies, and one must go about two octaves farther before the actual and the theoretical curves begin to truly coincide.

When one is concerned with the effect of such a resistor/capacitor (RC) circuit on a *transient* signal (a pulse or a step function, say, which is not usually the case with the audio recorders we are considering), the concept of a time constant is more meaningful than a steady-state frequency-response characteristic would be. Theoretically, an infinite amount of time is required for a sudden

## TESTED THIS MONTH



**Kenonic C-200 Preamplifier**  
**Kenonic P-300 Power Amplifier**  
**Rotel RX-402 AM/FM Receiver**  
**ESS AMT-5 Speaker System**  
**Marantz 4300 AM/FM Receiver**

recorders intended for use in high-fidelity systems now incorporate this new characteristic.

Now let us examine the situation at the *upper* end of the audio range. Practical recording heads lose their effectiveness at high audio frequencies, requiring some high-frequency boost to maintain a flat response. Part of this is supplied by equalization during recording and part during playback. The playback equalization is achieved by changing the downward slope of the equalization to a flat response above some high-frequency break point. The most widely used high-frequency break points are 3,180 Hz for 7½-ips and 15-ips open-reel tapes, 1,325 Hz for 3¾-ips open-reel and ferric-oxide

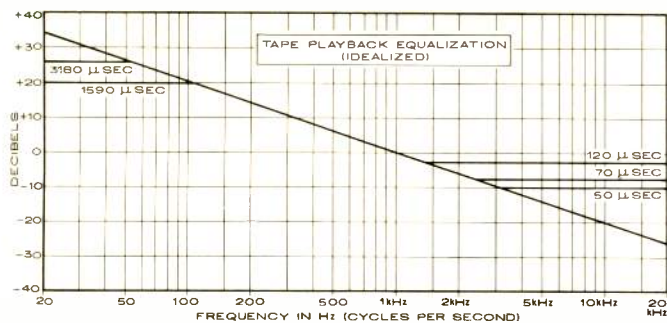


Fig. 1. Time constants and break points for various equalizations.

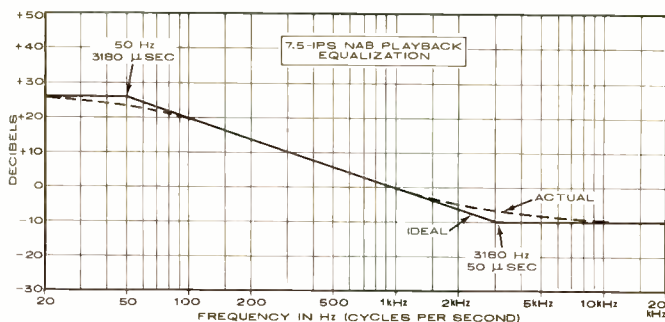


Fig. 2. Ideal vs. actual response of equalization characteristics.

change of input level to produce a final, steady-state output level through a simple RC network. However, it reaches 63 per cent of its ultimate value in a time  $t = 1/RC$ . The product  $RC$  (resistance  $\times$  capacitance) is what we refer to as the *time constant* of the circuit.

Since both the break frequency and the time constant are determined by the  $RC$  product alone, we are really talking about the *same* thing, but we are describing it in two different ways. In fact, the frequency at which response is 3 dB down (the break point) is  $f = 159,000/t$ , where  $f$  is in hertz and  $t$  is the time constant in microseconds (159,000 is  $1/2\pi$  times one million). It is therefore possible to describe the 100-Hz low-frequency break point as a 1,590-microsecond time constant and the 1,325-Hz upper break point (for cassettes and for 3 $\frac{3}{4}$ -ips tapes) as a 120-microsecond time constant.

A similar situation exists in FM

broadcasting, where it is customary to boost the high frequencies at the transmitter at a 6-dB-per-octave rate starting at 2,120 Hz (a 75-microsecond pre-emphasis). In the FM receiver, a 75-microsecond *de*-emphasis network is used to restore flat response while reducing high-frequency noise added during the transmission and reception process. The actual values of  $R$  and  $C$  can vary widely, so long as their product equals 75 microseconds. For instance, if  $R = 100,000$  ohms, then  $C = 750$  picofarads; if  $R = 75,000$  ohms, then  $C = 1,000$  picofarads. Recently the FCC approved a change to a 25-microsecond pre-emphasis by stations using Dolby processing. With the 25-microsecond characteristic, the transmitting high-frequency boost begins at 6,360 Hz. When received by a tuner having the normal 75-microsecond *de*-emphasis, it would be expected to sound dull and lacking in highs. However, since Dolby encoding boosts the

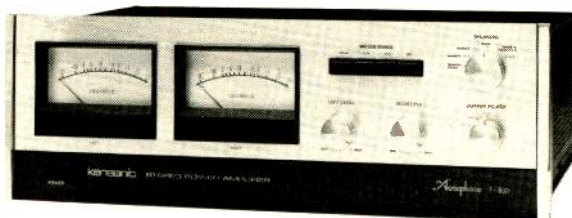
high frequencies at low levels, a non-Dolby receiver with 75-microsecond *de*-emphasis should produce a more balanced sound from a Dolbyized transmission. A receiver with *both* 25-microsecond *de*-emphasis *and* Dolby circuits will recover the full program in its correct frequency balance, and with perhaps 10 dB of Dolby noise reduction as well.

This has probably been somewhat heavy going for a number of readers, but there are some concepts that simply do not lend themselves to simple explanations. A *definition*, however, can be a bit more manageable. And so, to summarize, a time constant is a simple (!) way to describe the frequency at which the slope of a given response curve begins to change by 6 dB per octave, and the time constant is derived from the mathematical product of the values of the resistor/capacitor elements making up the equalizing network.

## EQUIPMENT TEST REPORTS

By Hirsch-Houck Laboratories

### Kenonic Accuphase C-200 Stereo Preamplifier and P-300 Stereo Power Amplifier



● THE Kenonic "Accuphase" line of deluxe high-fidelity components, distributed in this country by Teac, are products on which no expense has been spared in respect to quality of materials and workmanship. We tested the Kenonic C-200 stereo preamplifier and the P-300 power amplifier, which are designed as companion pieces.

Both units employ completely push-pull, complementary-symmetry circuits in every stage, from the phono preamplifier to power-output stages. The preamplifier tone controls are separate, eleven-position bass and treble controls for each channel. At the right side of the panel of the C-200 are four operating-mode controls. The MODE switch prov-

ides stereo, reversed stereo, mono (L + R), and either the L or R input through both output channels. The INPUT SELECTOR offers a choice of MIC (through two front-panel jacks), two DISC (phono) inputs, TUNER, two high-level AUX inputs, and a third front-panel AUX input. Two tape decks can be connected to the

(Continued on page 38)

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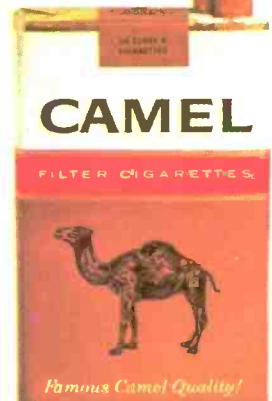
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Almost everyone at the corral today has a gimmick. Find the one who doesn't.  
**1.** No. He's Brandon Kowz. Gimmick: Rides tall in the saddle (ever since he sat on a branding iron). Smokes "Quick Draw" cigarettes—one draw and the taste is shot.  
**2.** No. He's Sid E. Slicker. Outfit is his gimmick: He looks like something that fell off a wedding cake.  
**3.** No. She's May Aiken Bach. Buys every camping gimmick made. Even her horse opens up into

a sofa. Tried an orange-flavor cigarette, but didn't know whether to smoke it—or squeeze it into her drink.  
**4.** Nope. He's Harry Decamp Kunsler. Wears gimmick on back, especially during hunting season. Was later attacked by a moose—who couldn't read.  
**5.** Right. He goes back to nature to get away from the fads and gimmicks. Likes his cigarettes natural and honest, too. Camel Filters. No nonsense. All flavor.  
**6.** No. He's Tim Berwulf. Gimmick: "Expert" tracker. He once followed tracks into a cave—and shot a train.

**Camel Filters.**  
**They're not for everybody**  
**(but they could be for you).**



Warning: The Surgeon General Has Determined That Cigarette Smoking Is Dangerous to Your Health.

19 mg. "tar," 1.3 mg. nicotine av. per cigarette, FTC Report MAR. '74.

# Introducing the Classic Cassette with ferri-chrome.

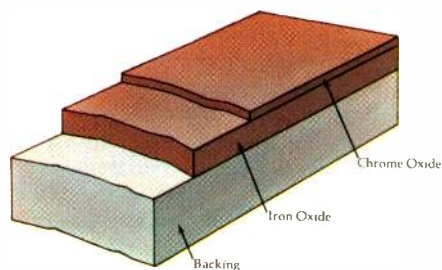




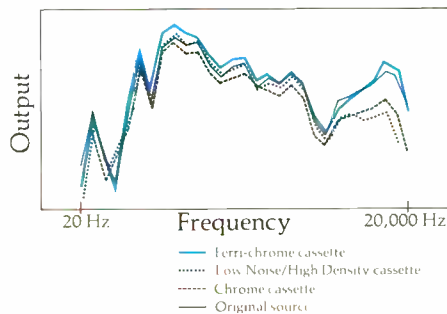
# Truer than chrome. Truer than iron oxide. Compatible with all cassette recorders.

Its secret is a tape double-layered with oxide. Through advanced 3M technology, ferri-chrome literally combines the best characteristics of two coating formulations into one. Its chromium dioxide coating delivers high output and brilliant high frequencies; its gamma ferric iron oxide provides superb mid-range and rich low frequencies and low noise levels. Together they give you full-range performance you've never heard before in any cassette.

This ferri-chrome combination gives "Scotch" brand Classic cassettes



fidelity that often deceives the sharpest ear. Included in a variety of test procedures was the use of a Brüel and Kjaer Model 3347 spectrum analyzer. We began with the original play (record) of a broad-spectrum piece of music, first measuring output levels versus frequency from the record, then the Classic cassette recording of the record, and finally, the record recorded on our low noise/high density cassette and on our chrome cassette. Our graph shows the results:



Compatibility is another ferri-chrome bonus. It means Classic cassettes will deliver optimum performance on any quality machine. (On machines with a chrome switch position use the HIGH or NORMAL switch position.)

"SCOTCH" IS A REGISTERED TRADEMARK OF 3M CO.

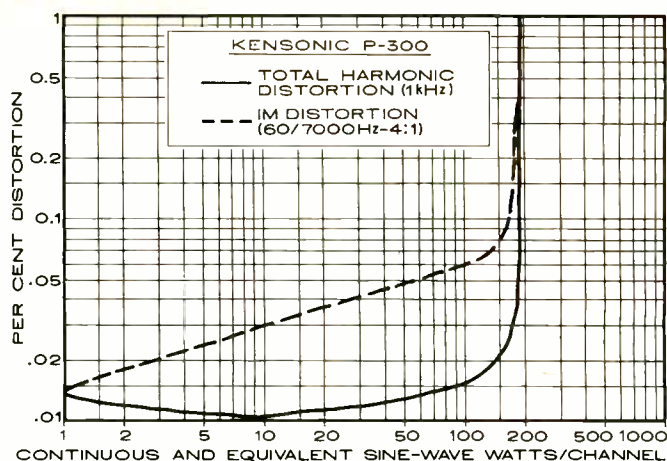
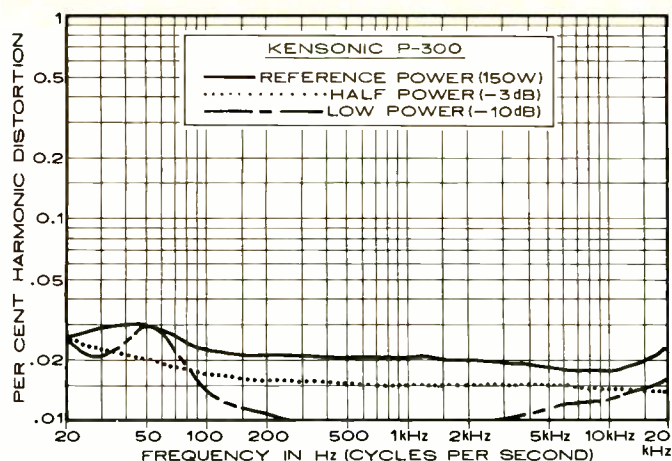
Along with Classic cassettes, we've also developed an outstanding Classic 8-Track cartridge and Classic open-reel tape. Both with their own special oxide formulation which offers sound brilliance beyond previously unsurpassed "Scotch" brand standards. Super quiet. Utterly responsive.

The Classics — cassette, cartridge, and open-reel tape — are quite simply and clearly the best we've ever made.



**3M**  
COMPANY

## Scotch brand. The Master Tape.



preamplifier's rear jacks, and a TAPE COPY switch interconnects them for dubbing a tape from either machine onto the other without disturbing the normal program playing through the system. A separate TAPE MONITOR switch connects the preamplifier to the playback output of either tape deck or to that of a third tape recorder plugged into front-panel jacks. There is also a pair of front-panel tape-output jacks for use by a third machine.

A large knob operates the master VOLUME control, and the BALANCE control is detented at its center position. Across the center of the panel are nine pushbuttons with blue lights above them indicating when they are engaged. One activates the tone-control circuits (which are otherwise bypassed), and the next two select turnover frequencies of 200 or 400 Hz (bass), and of 2,500 or 5,000 Hz (treble). There are LOW- and HIGH-cut filters, with cutoff frequencies of 30 and 5,000 Hz and slopes of 18 dB per octave and 12 dB per octave, respectively. A third SUBSONIC DISC filter operates only on the phono inputs and has a 25-Hz cutoff with a 6-dB-per-octave slope. The COMP switch introduces loudness compensation, and there are selector buttons for MAIN and REMOTE speaker systems. The latter operate at the output of the power amplifier through an optional relay control box.

Pressing the black strip along the bottom of the front panel causes it to swing down to reveal the various front-access inputs and outputs previously mentioned, plus a separate POWER AMP switch that energizes one of the rear a.c. outlets independently of the setting of the preamplifier power switch. The stereo PHONES jack is driven by separate output stages designed to drive 8-ohm phones, and a second pair of output jacks parallels the ones in the rear. The two MIC jacks are also located behind the hinged panel. A small knob adjusts the phono-cartridge load resistance to 20k, 30k, or the standard 47k (47,000) ohms. Another knob marked DISC LOW ENHANCE adds a small low-frequency boost (either 0.5 or 1 dB) to the phono play-

back signals. The rear panel of the Kenonic C-200 contains all the input and output jacks, plus four knobs that separately adjust the phono gains over a 10-dB range to match the cartridge outputs to those of high-level input sources. There is a MONO output as well as the normal L and R outputs. A socket accepts the optional speaker remote-control accessory. There is one unswitched a.c. outlet and six switched outlets that will accept a total load of 600 watts.

Removing the black metal covers from the Kenonic C-200 reveals another complete set of internal shield covers, beneath which are seven plug-in circuit boards. The internal structures of the C-200 are supported by heavy extruded side brackets, and the end result is an exceptionally rugged (and heavy—31 pounds) piece of equipment. The C-200 is 17½ inches wide, 6 inches high, and 14 inches deep. Price: \$600.

The companion P-300 power amplifier, like the C-200 control amplifier, uses push-pull stages throughout and is rated to deliver 150 watts per channel into 8 ohms. The heavy-duty power supply has a very large power transformer and two 40,000-microfarad filter capacitors—the largest we have seen used in such an amplifier. The amplifier is fully protected against overload or short-circuit damage by a relay and electronic circuits (the meter lights blink when these are activated).

The two large illuminated power meters are calibrated in decibels, with 0 dB corresponding to the rated 150-watt output into 8 ohms. Pushbuttons change the meter range by 10 dB and 20 dB (in the latter instance an output of only 1.5 watts produces a 0-dB meter reading), or shut them off completely. There are separate input-level controls for the two channels, and a SPEAKERS switch that connects the MAIN speakers, either of two pairs of REMOTE speakers or MAIN + REMOTE 1. Other positions of this same switch turn off all speakers, or connect the amplifier outputs to a pair of front-panel speaker outputs. An OUTPUT POWER switch limits the maximum output of the P-300 to 50 or 25 per cent of its rated power for use with speakers

not designed to handle the full power.

The hinged lower section of the front panel swings down when pressed to reveal a headphone jack, four speaker-output jacks on standard ¾-inch centers for twin banana plugs, and a second pair of input jacks. A small knob connects the amplifier inputs either to these jacks or to the normal rear inputs. Another knob provides a choice of wide-band frequency response or a response limited to 20 to 20,000 Hz. The rear of the P-300 contains the three pairs of speaker outputs (screw-type barrier terminals), the signal inputs, and an unswitched a.c. outlet.

The construction of the Kenonic P-300 power amplifier is of the same quality as that of the C-200, with large heat sinks and six output transistors for each channel. As the massive power-supply components suggest, the P-300 is a heavy amplifier weighing 55 pounds. Its external dimensions and styling match those of the C-200 preamplifier. Price: \$750.

● **Laboratory Measurements.** Up to its rated 10-volt maximum output, the harmonic and intermodulation (IM) distortion of the Kenonic C-200 preamplifier did not exceed 0.01 per cent, except for a rise to 0.025 per cent at 20 Hz and 10 volts! To put this in perspective, it should be stated that no power amplifier we know of requires more than about 2.5 volts of input signal. The output waveform clipped at about 13 volts, and the 200-ohm output impedance will let the preamplifier easily drive any power amplifier input impedance (the P-300's input impedance of 100,000 ohms, incidentally, is high enough to avoid problems with any preamplifier).

The C-200's input sensitivity, for a 1-volt reference output, was 94 millivolts (mV) on high-level inputs and 0.94 mV on the phono inputs. The respective noise levels (unweighted) were very low at -78 dB and -74 dB—both referred to a 1-volt output. The Kenonic C-200 had by far the greatest dynamic range on the phono input we have ever measured:

(Continued on page 40)

# Introducing the SL-1300. The precision of direct drive. The convenience of automation.

Now Technics adds convenience to perfection.

The SL-1300. The fourth and newest Technics direct-drive turntable. And the first with convenient, fully automatic operation.

Auto-Start. Auto-Stop. Auto-Return. Auto-Repeat. And the kind of outstanding specifications that are normally found only in a manual turntable.

The SL-1300, like all Technics turntables, uses our electronically controlled DC motor. But with an improvement. The platter is part of the motor. Making the drive even more direct. It also reduces parts, increases reliability and produces an ultra-thin profile.

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while maintaining flawless balance.

Our anti-skating control requires only one scale for all types of styli. While gold-plated contacts in the head shell assure reliable contact and help prevent hum.

And we haven't forgotten the more refined details. Like Memo-Repeat. So you can play a record from one to five times. Or indefinitely. There's also a

new prism strobe. Two-speed variable pitch controls. Dust cover. Feedback-insulated legs. And low capacitance phono cables for CD-4 records.

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200 PARK AVE., NEW YORK, N.Y. 10017. FOR YOUR NEAREST AUTHORIZED TECHNICS DEALER, CALL TOLL FREE 800 447-4700. IN ILLINOIS, 800 322-4400.

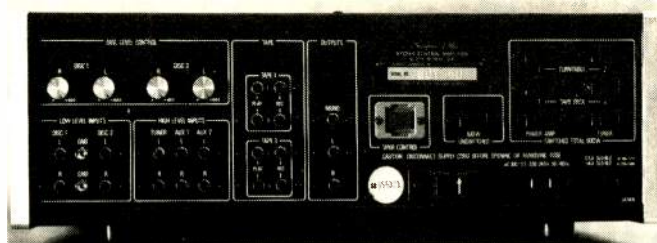
WOW & FLUTTER	0.03% WRMS
RUMBLE	-50dB (DIN A), -70dB (DIN B)
LONG-TERM DRIFT	Less than 0.1% (over 30 min.)
MIN. STYLUS PRESSURE	0.25 grams
TRACKING ERROR	$\pm 1.6^\circ$

# Technics

by Panasonic



CIRCLE NO. 80 ON READER SERVICE CARD



The rear panel of the Kenonic P-300 (above, left) has connectors for three pairs of speakers. These can be switched at the P-300's front panel or through a remote-control box that connects to the rear of the C-200 preamp (above, right) and activates its speaker switches.

overload occurred at a 440-mV input with maximum phono sensitivity, and at 1.35 volts with the minimum-sensitivity phono-input setting.

The tone controls permitted a wide range of frequency-response tailoring with minimal effect on the mid-range frequencies. The loudness compensation was relatively mild, boosting only the low frequencies to a maximum of 8 dB. The filters were among the best conventional types we have used. The low-frequency filter had no effect above 60 Hz, yet reduced the 20-Hz response by 10 dB. The high-frequency filter response was down 3 dB at 5,500 Hz and sloped off at a 12-dB-per-octave rate above that point.

The RIAA phono equalization was accurate within  $\pm 0.5$  dB over its full range. The subsonic disc filter began to roll off below 100 Hz, to  $-6$  dB at 20 Hz. The low-frequency enhancement circuit raised the output below about 1,000 Hz by either 0.5 dB or 1 dB. Because of the differential amplifier circuitry of the C-200, the phono-equalization circuits are completely unaffected by the inductance of the phono cartridge used.

The P-300 power amplifier outputs clipped at about 184 watts per channel, with both channels driven into 8 ohms. Into 4 ohms, the output at clipping was 280 watts; 110 watts were available into 16 ohms. The harmonic distortion with a 1,000-Hz test signal was under 0.02 per cent at all power levels up to the rated 150 watts, while the IM distortion decreased smoothly from 0.08 per cent at 150 watts to about 0.015 per cent at usual listening levels and rose only

slightly to 0.055 per cent at a few milliwatts output. At rated power, the harmonic distortion was 0.03 per cent or less from 20 to 20,000 Hz (typically 0.02 per cent), and it decreased at lower power outputs. At 15 watts, for example, the distortion was 0.01 per cent over most of the audio range, reaching 0.03 per cent only at 50 Hz and below.

An input signal of 0.2 volt drove the amplifier to a reference 10-watt output at maximum gain. We could not measure the output noise, which was less than our minimum meter reading of 100 microvolts (roughly  $-100$  dB referenced to 10 watts). The power-limiter circuit reduced the power at clipping to 69 watts (50 per cent setting) and 30 watts (25 per cent setting) with 8-ohm loads. The meter calibrations were very accurate and provided a valid indication of the amplifier output into 8-ohm loads.

The frequency response of the P-300 in its wide-band condition was down less than 0.4 dB at 10 Hz and 30,000 Hz, and down 2.6 dB at 200 kHz. The square-wave rise time was 1.5 microseconds at maximum gain, and a  $-6$ -dB setting of the level controls increased the rise time to 5 microseconds. With the band-pass filter switched in, the amplifier response was down 1.3 dB at 20 Hz and 0.9 dB at 20,000 Hz. The filter slopes were quite steep, cutting the response to  $-31$  dB at 5 Hz and  $-17$  dB at 50,000 Hz.

The amplifier's protection circuits appeared to be foolproof. Any serious overload actuated the relay instantly, while an output short circuit shut down the amplifier and caused the meter lights to blink on and off as an unmistakable warning.

● **Comment.** We judged the Kenonic C-200 and P-300 from three distinctly different viewpoints: construction quality, human engineering (including operating flexibility), and sound quality. In ruggedness, attention to detail, and quality of electrical and mechanical components, the Kenonic products fully live up to advance publicity. These components show no sign of the cost-cutting techniques that are routine in even the best mass-produced audio equipment. All the operating controls had a combination of silky smoothness and positive

action that is equally rare in equipment of any price. Everything feels "right" — no "slop" or looseness in any control action, no electrical switching transients or other unwanted side effects, and there is a sense of precision which could not fail to impress even the most casual user.

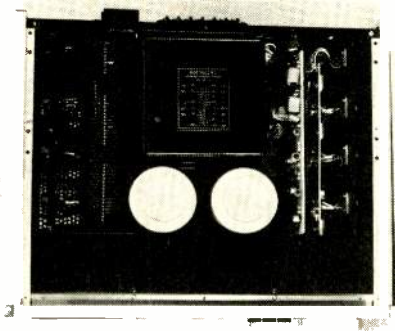
With provision for four high-level inputs, two phono inputs, and three tape decks—all of which can be set up in any reasonable combination from the front panel—the C-200 has extreme versatility. The tone controls and filters are more effective than most, although we suspect that in this respect the Kenonic resembles its top-ranking competitors. The low-frequency phono enhancement system was rather too subtle for us—we could not hear any significant difference when using it, and certainly not enough to warrant the inclusion of a separate control and the necessary circuit elements. On the other hand, it is possible that some users with a given combination of speakers, records, listening-room acoustics, and hearing acuity will find this feature worthwhile.

The ruggedness and conservative design of the P-300 power amplifier should make it a component that can literally be installed and forgotten. While we hesitate to call it "blowout proof"—there is always *some* way to destroy an amplifier—we never found the combination of conditions that would do that job. We feel that the band-pass filter of the power amplifier is a really worthwhile feature that should be incorporated in most amplifiers. Although it produces no audible change in the sound character, it should prevent certain forms of transient intermodulation distortion and also protect speakers against damage from excessive subsonic levels. On the other hand, we did not find the power-limiting feature to be particularly useful. It seems pointless to buy such an expensive and powerful amplifier and use it with speakers that could not handle its output.

With regard to the sound quality of the two components, since they add neither noise nor distortion, there is little to be said. If you are looking for the proverbial "straight wire with gain," this combination meets all the requirements. Its noise level is extraordinarily low on all inputs, no phono cartridge we have ever seen

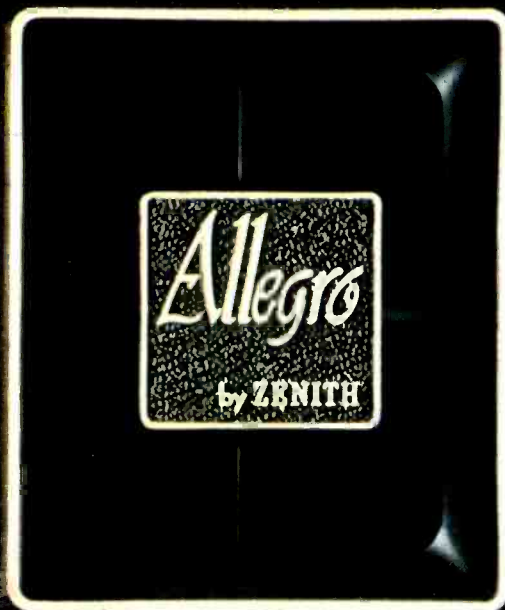
(Continued on page 42)

A view of the P-300's large power transformer and 40,000-microfarad filter capacitors.



# There's a reason Zenith Allegro® gives you deeper, richer sound.

## This tuned port.



Zenith Allegro is a sound system with a difference. The tuned port.\*

Where a lot of speakers (even air-suspension types) trap deep, rich bass inside the speaker cabinet, Allegro's tuned port gives it a way out. So you hear more of what you're supposed to hear.

In fact, with a specially-designed woofer for solid bass and mid-range tones, plus a horn-type tweeter for crystal-clear high notes, Allegro delivers virtually the full range of sound of the original performance. And does it so efficiently that other systems with comparable-size air-suspension speakers need amplifiers with twice the power in order to match Allegro's overall sound performance.

But there's more behind the deep, rich sound of Allegro than just the tuned port.

There are ten powerful solid-state tuner/amplifier/control centers to choose from, with AM/FM/stereo FM, built-in or separate precision record changers, and cassette or 8-track tape players and recorders.

And of course Allegro also gives you a choice of complete 4-channel systems, each with a full range of matching options and accessories.

So, now that you know what Allegro is, and why, there's just one question left to ask yourself:

Which.

\*patent pending



The Prestwick model F594W



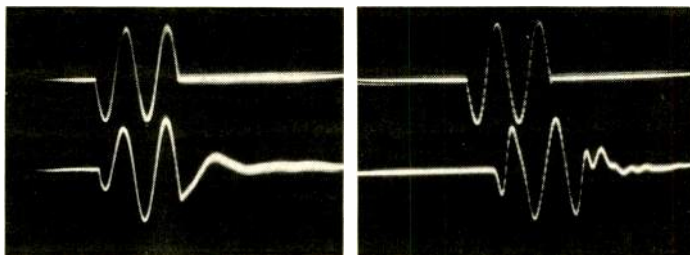
CIRCLE NO. 85 ON READER SERVICE CARD

### The surprising sound of Zenith.



The quality goes in before the name goes on®

Oscilloscope photos of typical tone bursts (100 and 5,000 Hz are shown) indicate good response for the AMT-5.



over frequency, which appeared to be about 1,500 Hz.

The lower-mid-range response, from 100 to 500 Hz, varied only  $\pm 1$  dB, and there was a modest 2-dB rise at 75 Hz before the bass roll-off began. As is our practice, we measured the low-frequency response up to about 300 Hz with close microphone spacing to eliminate room effects, and joined the resulting curve to the higher-frequency measurements to obtain the overall composite frequency response. The highs, as we had found with the original Heil tweeter, were strong and smooth to the highest audible frequencies, and the overall frequency response was within  $\pm 4$  dB from 40 to 20,000 Hz.

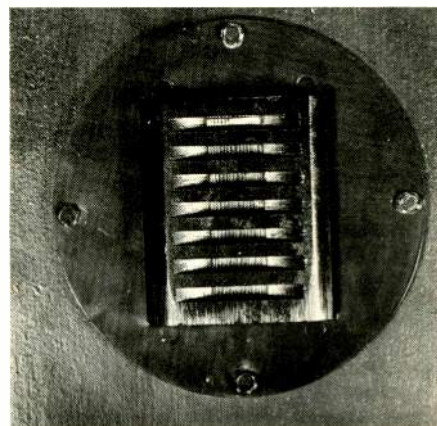
The low-frequency distortion was unusually low, reading under 1 per cent down to 50 Hz and increasing to only 3 per cent at 40 Hz and 6 per cent at 30 Hz with a one-watt drive level. When the drive was raised to 10 watts, the distortion rose only slightly. The efficiency of the ESS AMT-5 was typical of acoustic-suspension systems of similar size. We would judge that at least a 25-watt-per-channel amplifier would be required to drive the speaker. An input of one watt in the octave centered at 1,000 Hz produced a 90-dB sound-pressure level at a distance of one meter. The tone-burst

response, in the operating frequency range of either driver, was good and showed no signs of sustained ringing or other undesirable behavior. There was the expected transient at the beginning and end of each burst, caused by the crossover network, but these are not indicative of any driver deficiencies.

● *Comment.* When we listened to the ESS AMT-5, it was apparent from the first moment that the speaker's response was very smooth, and in particular that the energy output was sustained up to the extreme high frequencies. The sparkle and clarity of the sound strongly reminded us of the ESS AMT-1, which unfortunately was not at hand for a side-by-side comparison. Almost all conventional woofers have some tendency to sound more or less heavy in the mid-bass, especially on male voices, and this one is no exception. However, it seemed to be considerably better in this respect than the early model of the AMT-1 we tested.

The simulated live-vs.-recorded test amply confirmed the verdict of our test instruments. On most program material, the AMT-5 did an essentially perfect job of imitating our recorded "live" material. Sometimes the extreme high end seemed a bit too strong, and a reduction of about

3 dB in the 5,000- to 10,000-Hz octave and 10 dB in the 10,000- to 20,000-Hz octave restored optimum balance. Since our listening room is slightly bright, chances are good that in a normal "soft" living room the correct balance would be achieved without equalization. In any case, we preferred to leave the speaker's



The tweeter's pleated diaphragm is just visible through the slots of the Heil device.

brilliance control in its normal position, since the control provided a boost or cut of about 2 dB at all frequencies above 1,500 Hz, and therefore had as much effect on the middles (which needed no modification) as on the highs. If you were favorably impressed by the ESS AMT-1 (as we were) but ruled it out because of its unconventional styling or its price, the new AMT-5 may be just what you are looking for. To us, it sounded every bit as good as the AMT-1; it is at least 40 per cent less expensive, and it should be at home, visually as well as acoustically, in almost any room.

Circle 107 on reader service card

## Marantz 4300 AM/FM Four-Channel Receiver



● THE Marantz Model 4300 is a versatile and powerful two-channel/four-channel receiver with built-in Dolby B noise reduction (using separate circuits for encoding and decoding) and provision for an optional plug-in SQ decoder. It is conservatively rated at 40 watts per channel (all channels driven into 8-ohm

loads) from 20 to 20,000 Hz, and the front and rear channels can be "strapped" to convert the 4300 to a two-channel stereo amplifier conservatively rated at 100 watts per channel.

The FM-tuner section uses eight stages of ceramic-filter i.f. amplification for high selectivity with linear phase

characteristics (important for low distortion and good channel separation). An integrated circuit (IC) performs the multiplex demodulation, and another serves as virtually the entire AM-tuner section. The rest of the receiver, including the Dolby system, employs discrete (non-IC) circuits.

The Marantz 4300 has inputs for phono, FM, AM, an external discrete four-channel source (such as a CD-4 demodulator or a four-channel tape deck), and two more tape sources. This last function is partly duplicated by the tape-monitor switch, which controls two tape decks and connects the playback channels to the selected input or to either of the tape-deck outputs.

(Continued on page 50)

# Empire Speakers named "Best buy of the year"



Empire Speakers were named "1974 Best Buy of the Year" by Consumers Digest Stereo•

Quadrasonic buyers guide. Consumers Digest was enthusiastic about our moderate priced, wide ranging well balanced sound with its rich lush bass and exemplary high frequency dispersion. With their optional imported marble tops they felt "that Empire Speakers were handsome pieces of furniture that don't look like just speakers."

Designed for super stereo or exciting 4 channel, Empire's unique cylinder speaker produces the kind of sound no ordinary box can deliver. The all-around sound is simply

phenomenal... it radiates in all directions: front, rear, left and right. These perfect 3-way systems use a heavy down-facing woofer for bass you can feel as well as hear. A powerful mid-range for crisp, clear alto and voice tones and an ultra-sonic tweeter with 180 degree dispersion. The power handling capacity of Empire Speakers is awesome. They can take all the power your receiver can give them without overload, burnout or strain.

Thousands of satisfied Empire owners agree. Here are comments from just a few of them: "Superior sound over anything near it in price"

J.A. Hyattsville, Md. "This speaker is truly a work of art!"  
J.F. Vancouver, B.C. "Full sound even at low levels,"  
W.G., Alexandria, Va. "Can handle large amounts of power,"  
D.M., Huntsville, Ala. "Fantastic bass,"  
A.H., Burke, Va. "No ugly grill cloth,"  
B.M., Newark, N.J. "Incredible fidelity,"  
K.K., Dallas, Texas.

Ask your favorite dealer to let you hear Empire's great speakers and write for our free full color "Guide to Sound Design."

EMPIRE SCIENTIFIC CORP.,  
Garden City, N.Y. 11530.

**EMPIRE**

Mfd. U.S.A.



Model 9500 M II

Model 7500 M II

Model 6000 M II

CIRCLE NO. 90 ON READER SERVICE CARD

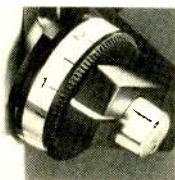
**The Dual 1229Q.  
Why many music lovers  
will settle for nothing less.**





Many serious music lovers are not satisfied unless every component in their system is the very finest in its class, with cost secondary. The 1229Q, Dual's highest-priced multi-play turntable, is one of these "no compromise" components.

The 1229Q is a full-sized turntable with a twelve-inch dynamically balanced platter that weighs a full seven pounds. Its massive platter is driven by Dual's powerful Continuous-Pole/synchronous motor.

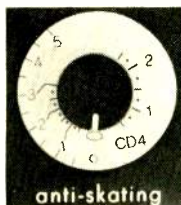


Tracking force is applied directly around the vertical pivot, maintaining perfect balance in all planes.

The 8-3/4" tonearm is mounted in a true gyroscopic gimbal that centers and balances it within both axes of movement. All four tonearm

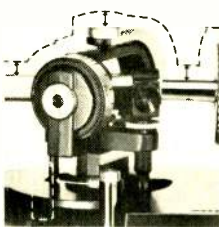
pivots turn on identical low-friction bearings permitting flawless tracking at as low as 0.25

gram. And since a turntable of the 1229Q's calibre is used most frequently in the single-play mode, the tonearm is designed to track at precisely the correct angle in that mode. With the exclusive Mode Selector, tracking angle can be instantly adjusted for correct tracking at mid stack in the multi-play mode.



Separate anti-skating calibrations for conical, elliptical and CD-4 styli are provided on every Dual turntable.

Low capacitance tonearm leads and an anti-skating system with separate calibrations for conical, elliptical and CD-4 styli, make the 1229Q compatible with any stereo and four-channel cartridge available or likely to be available in the foreseeable future. Other features include a calibrated illuminated strobe with adjustable viewing angle, and cueing damped up as well as down to prevent bounce.



The Mode Selector parallels the tonearm to center stack in multi-play mode; to single-record in single-play.

The 1229Q is too new for test reports to have appeared, but reports on its immediate predecessor, the Dual 1229, indicate why it was the



Dual 1225, \$129.95

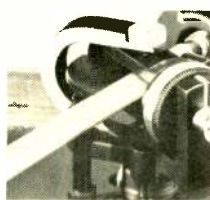
Dual 1226, \$159.95

Dual 1228, \$189.95

Dual 1229Q, \$259.95

largest selling quality turntable ever made. Stereo Review called its rumble measurements "among the best we have yet made on a turntable." High Fidelity commented that, "It takes one step further the progressive improvements that have made top Dual models among the most popular turntables in component systems for the better part of a decade, to judge by readers' letters."

Stereo & HiFi Times' review noted, "I unhesitatingly recommend it to anyone looking for the best possible record playing equipment."



Tonearms of the 1228 and 1229Q are suspended in a true four-point gyroscopic gimbal.

Popular Electronics rated it "the equal of any combination of record playing components known to us."

Of course, not everyone can afford the 1229Q's price: \$259.95. But every Dual turntable, starting with the 1225 at \$129.95, provides the same high quality materials, carefully finished parts and meticulous quality control that have long earned Dual its reputation for reliability.

Thus which Dual you select is not terribly important. Your choice can be made in terms of the level of refinement you require. And if, like many music lovers, you require every refinement it is possible to have in a multi-play turntable, chances are you too will choose the Dual 1229Q.

**Dual** **United Audio Products**  
120 So. Columbus Ave., Mt. Vernon, N.Y. 10553  
Exclusive U.S. Distribution Agency for Dual

There are separate tone controls for bass, mid-range, and treble. Each is a concentric pair for separate adjustment of front and rear channels. The mode switch selects 2 CH or MONO operation (in which the rear channels carry the same program as the front channels), four-channel DISCRETE, and two matrix-decoding positions. One is the VARI-MATRIX, which is used on a number of Marantz receivers and amplifiers in conjunction with a DIMENSION control. These vary the phasing of the derived rear channels over a wide range to optimize the synthetic pseudo-quadraphonic effect from stereo material. Matrixed records can also be decoded with this circuit, but the intended directionality may be altered.

The last switch position, SQ DECODER, is inoperative unless an optional decoder module is plugged into the receptacle underneath the receiver. Our unit came equipped with a full-logic SQ decoder.

The DOLBY control performs a number of switching operations that extract the greatest utility from the Dolby circuits. Moving it from OFF to PLAY connects the playback Dolby decoder into the signal path regardless of the program source. The next position, FM DOLBY, operates only when the main-input selector is set to FM. Two factory-adjusted screwdriver controls in the rear of the receiver are used to establish the correct Dolby level for FM decoding. A slide switch in the rear converts the normal FM 75-microsecond de-emphasis to the 25-microsecond characteristic of present Dolby transmissions. Since this special de-emphasis is effective only in the FM Dolby mode, the switch can be left in the 25-microsecond position without affecting the frequency balance of non-Dolby FM programs.

In the RECORD I position of the Dolby switch, a non-Dolby signal will receive Dolby processing before it goes to the receiver's tape-recorder outputs, and the playback from the recorder passes through the receiver's Dolby decoding circuits so that a fully processed (encoded-decoded) signal will be heard as the program is being monitored. The

last position, RECORD II, is for recording a Dolbyized signal "as is," but the playback from the recorder still passes through the receiver's decoding system so that a flat response is heard when monitoring.

The channel-balance controls are three horizontal sliders just above the main group of knobs. They adjust left-right balance separately for front and rear speakers, and the overall front-to-rear balance. To their right are six push-button switches for loudness compensation, FM interstation-noise muting, high- and low-cut filters, and two sets of speaker outputs. Above them is the horizontal flywheel tuning control that has long been a feature of Marantz styling.

At the left side of the panel are six controls for the Dolby system. One button supplies a standard Dolby-level (580-millivolt) signal to the recorder's inputs for calibration. The tuner's signal-strength meter is automatically switched to read the audio levels coming from the tape recorders when the Dolby system is used, and one of the pushbuttons switches it between the left and right channels. Two controls adjust the playback levels (preferably using a standard Dolby-level tape), after which the remaining two record-level controls are used (the recorder's own controls cannot be used for this since the Dolby calibration will be disturbed).

The tuner-dial scales occupy the upper center of the panel, with the two meters (signal-strength and zero-center FM tuning) to their left. Illuminated words above the dial scales indicate the status of the various controls (input SOURCE, two- or four-channel mode, STEREO FM, and DOLBY operation). In addition to the controls and connectors mentioned previously, the rear of the Marantz 4300 has an FM muting-threshold adjustment, an output for any future discrete FM four-channel decoder that may be introduced, a socket for an optional remote volume/balance control accessory, and two a.c. outlets, one of which is switched. The speaker and antenna connectors are insulated spring clips, and there is a hinged AM ferrite-

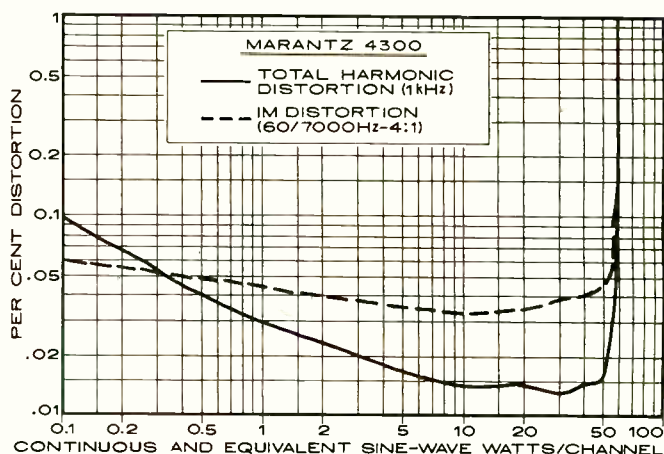
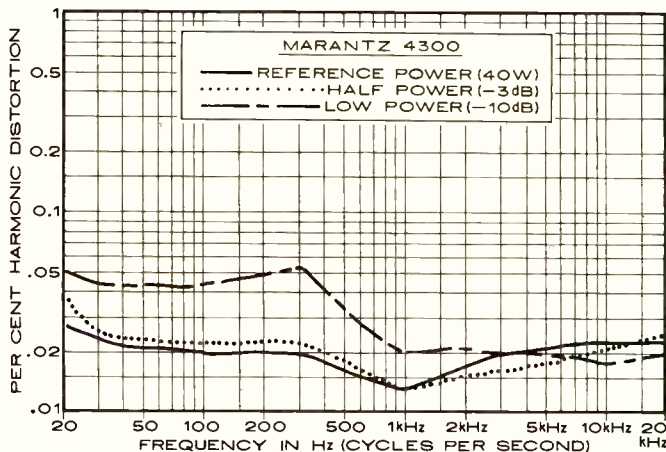
rod antenna. The Marantz 4300 is large and heavy, as might be expected from its power and complexity. It is about 19 inches wide, 6 inches high, and 16 inches deep, and weighs about 51 pounds. Price: \$899.95. The full-logic SQ decoder module sells for \$79.95; the remote volume/balance control, \$39.95.

● **Laboratory Measurements.** The audio amplifiers of the Marantz 4300 were tested with all four channels driven simultaneously into 8-ohm loads. The outputs clipped at 55 watts per channel with a 1,000-Hz test signal. With 4-ohm loads, the power at clipping was 88.5 watts per channel. In the two-channel "strapped" mode the output was a prodigious 163 watts per channel into 8 ohms.

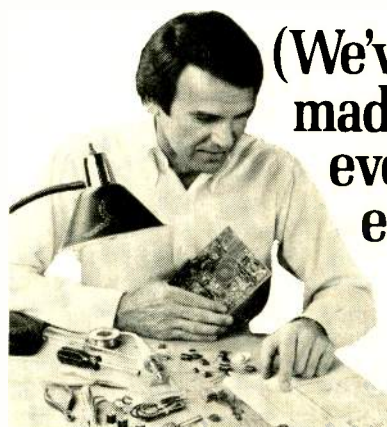
Total harmonic distortion (THD) at 1,000 Hz was about 0.015 per cent from 7 watts to just over 50 watts output. It rose at lower power levels to 0.1 per cent at 0.1 watt, but this was almost entirely non-audible random noise rather than distortion products. The intermodulation distortion was about 0.05 per cent from 0.1 to 55 watts, increasing at levels of a few milliwatts to about 0.3 per cent. At the rated output of 40 watts and at half power, the THD was typically about 0.02 per cent from 20 to 20,000 Hz. At one-tenth power (4 watts) it was also 0.02 per cent above 1,000 Hz, but at lower frequencies a small amount of non-audible residual hum increased the readings to about 0.05 per cent (our Radford distortion analyzer has a filter that removes hum components when measuring at 500 Hz or above).

For a reference power output of 10 watts, the AUX high-level inputs required an 85-millivolt signal and the phono inputs required 0.91 millivolt. The respective noise levels were exceptionally low: -81 dB and -77 dB. Phono overload occurred at a high input of 105 millivolts. The RIAA equalization was accurate to within  $\pm 0.5$  dB over its full range. The effect of cartridge inductance was to reduce the output about 1.5 dB at 10,000 Hz and a little over 2 dB at 15,000 Hz. However, all the cartridges used in this

(Continued on page 52)



# If you want a better receiver... build it yourself.



(We've made it even easier, in the Heathkit AR-1500A)



## How to improve a classic

The Heathkit AR-1500 set new standards for stereo performance when it was introduced in 1971. So, in designing the AR-1500A, we set out with two goals in mind: first, to make our best receiver even better and second, to make it even easier to build than before.

## The "inside" story

To start with, the FM tuner ranks as one of the finest in the industry, with its 4-ganged FET front-end; sensitivity under 1.8  $\mu$ V; two computer-designed 5-pole LC filters delivering over 90 dB selectivity; a 1.5 dB capture ratio. It all means you'll hear more FM stations, less noise and practically no interference.

Our new phase lock loop multiplex demodulator maintains excellent separation at all frequencies, not just 1000 Hz so FM stereo will sound even better. And the new multiplex section requires only one simple adjustment.

Even the AM rates hi-fi status — with two dual-gate MOSFETS, one J-FET and a 12-pole LC filter. And we improved the Automatic Gain Control to keep AM signals rock steady.

The amplifier is so good we had a hard time improving it — 60 watts per channel at 8 ohms, less than 0.25% total harmonic distortion, 0.1% or less intermodulation distortion. So we refined it by adding an impedance-sensing device to the protective circuitry. It prevents false triggering at low frequencies, which means deep, solid bass with less noise.

**HEATHKIT ELECTRONIC CENTERS —**  
Units of Schlumberger Products Corporation.  
Retail prices slightly higher.

ARIZ.: Phoenix; CALIF.: Anaheim, El Cerrillo, Los Angeles, Pomona, Redwood City, San Diego (La Mesa), Woodland Hills; COLO.: Denver; CONN.: Hartford (Avon); FLA.: Miami (Hialeah), Tampa; GA.: Atlanta; ILL.: Chicago, Downers Grove; IND.: Indianapolis; KANSAS: Kansas City (Mission); KY.: Louisville; LA.: New Orleans (Kenner); MD.: Baltimore, Rockville; MASS.: Boston (Wellesley); MICH.: Detroit; MINN.: Minneapolis (Hopkins); MO.: St. Louis (Bridgeton); NEB.: Omaha; N.J.: Fair Lawn; N.Y.: Buffalo (Amherst), New York City, Jericho, L.I., Rochester, White Plains; OHIO: Cincinnati (Woodlawn), Cleveland, Columbus; PA.: Philadelphia, Pittsburgh; R.I.: Providence (Warwick); TEXAS: Dallas, Houston; WASH.: Seattle; WIS.: Milwaukee.

Who can build it? Anyone!

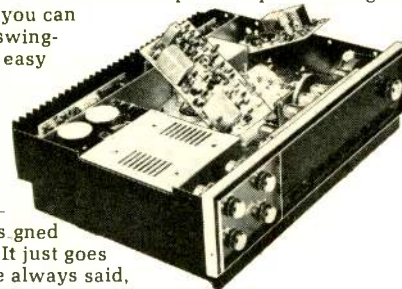


You can build the AR-1500A even if you've never built a kit before. The illustrated assembly manual guides you step by step and a separate check-out meter tests the work as you go. The parts for each subassembly are packed separately and a wiring harness eliminates most point-to-point wiring.

And since you built it, you can service it. The meter and swing-out circuit boards make it easy to keep your AR-1500A in peak operating condition year after year.

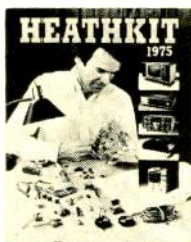
Without a doubt the AR-1500A is one of the world's finest stereo receivers. It ought to be — it's been painstakingly designed to be handcrafted by you. It just goes to prove what people have always said, "if you want it done right, do it yourself."

Kit AR-1500A, less cabinet, 53 lbs., mailable ..... **399.95\***  
ARA-1500-1, walnut veneer case (as shown), 8 lbs., mailable.. **24.95\***



AR-1500A SPECIFICATIONS — AMPLIFIER — Power Output at 8 ohms: 60 watts per channel with less than 0.25% total harmonic distortion from 20-20,000 Hz, both channels driven. Frequency response (1 watt level): 1 dB, 9 Hz to 80 kHz. Harmonic Distortion: Less than 0.25% from 20 Hz to 20 kHz at 60 watts output. Intermodulation Distortion: Less than 0.1%, with 60 watts output. Damping Factor: Greater than 50. Channel Separation: Phono, 55 dB. Output Impedance: 4-16 ohms, optimized for 8 ohms. FM SECTION (Monophonic) Sensitivity: 1.8  $\mu$ V. Selectivity: 90 dB. Image Rejection: 100 dB. IF Rejection: 100 dB. Capture Ratio: 1.5 dB. Harmonic Distortion: 0.5% or less. Intermodulation Distortion: 0.1% or less. (Stereophonic) Channel Separation: 40 dB or greater at midfrequencies, 35 dB at 50 Hz, 25 dB at 10 kHz. AM SECTION Sensitivity: 50  $\mu$ V with external input, 300  $\mu$ V per meter with radiated input. Selectivity: 20 dB at 10 kHz, 60 dB at 20 kHz. Image Rejection: 70 dB at 600 kHz, 50 dB at 1400 kHz. IF Rejection: 70 dB. Dimensions: Overall: 18 1/2" W x 5 1/2" H x 13 1/2" D. \*Rated IIF (Institute of High Fidelity) Standards

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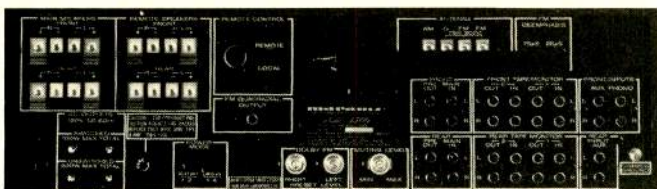
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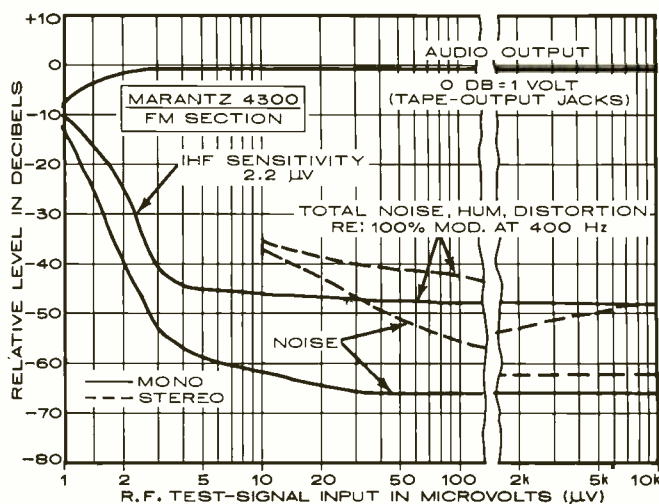
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Prices & specifications subject to change without notice

HF-290



Directly below the Marantz legend on the 4300's rear panel are the Dolby FM calibration controls and the threshold adjustment for FM interstation-noise muting. The remote-control unit plugs in above.



The levels of both random noise and total noise plus distortion are compared with the audio-output level as input-signal strength increases. Both mono and stereo are shown.

test were affected almost identically by the phono inputs.

The tone controls had conventional characteristics, with a sliding bass-turn-over frequency. The mid-range control action was centered at 1,000 Hz and had a maximum range of  $\pm 6$  dB. The filters had gradual 6-dB-per-octave slopes, with the  $-3$ -dB response points being 80 and 6,500 Hz. The loudness compensation introduced a moderate boost at both low and high frequencies.

The FM tuner section had an IHF sensitivity of 2.2 microvolts ( $\mu$ V). The 50-dB quieting sensitivity in mono was 2.7  $\mu$ V (very good) with 1.3 per cent distortion, and in stereo it was at 44  $\mu$ V with 0.9 per cent distortion. The ultimate quieting was 66 dB in mono and 62.5 dB in stereo, and the ultimate distortion was about 0.5 per cent in both modes.

The other FM performance parameters were also very good. The capture ratio was 1.5 dB, AM rejection was 69 dB, and alternate-channel selectivity averaged 79 dB. Image rejection was better than our test equipment's ability to measure it: in excess of 100 dB. The automatic-stereo and muting thresholds were both between 6 and 7  $\mu$ V with the factory settings. The stereo FM frequency response was within  $\pm 0.75$  dB from

30 to 15,000 Hz. Channel separation was an excellent and very uniform 40 dB from about 150 to 7,000 Hz, 28.5 dB at 30 Hz, and 37 dB at 15,000 Hz. The 19-kHz pilot-carrier leakage in the tuner output was  $-65$  dB. The AM-tuner frequency response was down 6 dB at 40 and 4,500 Hz, and its sound quality was quite good, with very low background noise and a striking absence of the usual interfering whistles as one tuned across the band.

● **Comment.** Because of its unusual versatility, the Marantz 4300 requires careful study of its instruction manual. However, after a period of familiarization with its various operating modes, it is not at all difficult to use. The combination of Dolby FM with the 25-microsecond de-emphasis (if your area is served by a Dolby-equipped station) provides impressively low background-noise levels on FM broadcasts, limited in most cases by the noise inherent in the program source. Tuning is noncritical, and the slight time delay in the muting system gives an ideal characteristic, free of noise bursts or other unwanted sounds.

The Vari-matrix function, though of limited value for decoding matrixed records, does a fine job of synthesizing the

rear channels from stereo programs. The DIMENSION control can be adjusted to eliminate center-front (mono) signals from the rear speakers almost completely, leaving them to handle only the out-of-phase ambience information. We judged the SQ decoder subjectively with a variety of SQ records. With respect to its "discrete" properties, it acquitted itself admirably, with very positive four-channel directional effects. However, we sometimes heard the "gain-riding" action as one channel shut off to favor another one. Although the effect was somewhat more obtrusive than with some of the latest separate SQ decoders we have tested recently, it is certainly a vast improvement over unassisted or partial-logic decoders.

Although the Marantz 4300 lacks built-in CD-4 or RM facilities, either or both can be added externally, of course. Its Dolby facilities may not be required with cassette recorders (most of the better units have their own built-in Dolby systems), but there are not many open-reel machines with this feature, and the few we have seen are very expensive. If you use the open-reel format, the Marantz 4300 offers the bonus of Dolby noise reduction with full monitoring capability. A separate add-on four-module Dolby unit with equivalent performance is likely to cost at least \$250, which begins to make the not-inconsiderable price tag of the Model 4300 look rather reasonable. In addition, the audio power capabilities and low distortion of the Model 4300 speak for themselves. In its four-channel mode, this is a powerful receiver, and in the strapped mode it has a true "super-power" stereo amplifier section which in itself could cost a large fraction of the price of the entire receiver.

If you want a beautifully styled, do-almost-everything, all-in-one receiver (instead of an assortment of separate components, adaptors, and accessories), then the Marantz 4300 is a close-to-ideal, excellent-performance unit selling for a not-unreasonable price.

Circle 108 on reader service card



# Build a Heathkit/Thomas Organ... you'll make beautiful music together

They're almost as much fun to build as they are to play. The beautiful cabinets come preassembled and finished. You do the assembling and installation of the electronics following the illustrated instructions. It's a project the whole family can enjoy.

Minutes after you sit down at your completed organ, you'll be playing your favorite tunes. Color-Glo keys guide your fingers even if you've never played an instrument before. And the proven Thomas Organ Course teaches you to read music and play chords. You'll learn in your own home, at your own pace — without expensive lessons.

Add that to the hundreds of dollars you'll save by building it yourself — that's music to anyone's ears.

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# Is it possible we are already living in **THE CASSETTE ERA?** At least two listeners seem to think so

**Julian Hirsch**  
*Hirsch-Houck Laboratories*

ALTHOUGH cassette tape recording has been for some time (potentially, at least) a true high-fidelity medium, most commercially recorded cassettes fall well short of phonograph records with respect to frequency response, distortion, and noise level. It is for that reason frustrating and limiting for the owner of a high-quality cassette deck to suffer through the inferior quality of these cassettes, particularly when he compares them with those he has made himself, either off the air, live, or dubbed from a good disc.

Advent Corporation, which was a major influence in the popularization of high-fidelity cassette machines, has just released a series of prerecorded cassettes whose overall quality perfectly complements the current state of the art in cassette playback hardware. They differ from ordinary commercial cassette recordings in several important respects. Perhaps most important, they are duplicated on equipment designed and built by Advent to operate at only four times normal playing speed (as contrasted with the usual sixteen or thirty-two times duplication speed). Like most recently released high-quality cassettes, they are made with Dolby "B" encoding; unlike the others, however, the Advent CR/70 series uses chromium-dioxide tape, whose superior high-frequency energy storage helps to achieve low hiss levels coupled with extended frequency response.

The mechanical difficulties that have plagued cassette tapes in the past have been minimized in the Advent CR/70 series by using premium-quality, screw-assembled tape housings which are repairable in the event of internal jamming or tape breakage. Furthermore, each cassette is individually sampled on an actual cassette player for sonic and mechanical quality before packaging. And finally, any cassette that fails in a properly operating player can be returned by the user to Advent for no-charge repair or replacement.

Advent CR/70 cassettes are designed to be played with the now-standard 70-microsecond CrO<sub>2</sub> playback equalization characteristic, which provides the optimum signal-to-noise ratio for this tape. Most modern cassette decks are designed with this characteristic. With the "normal" 120-microsecond equalization and a high-quality deck, the sound will be somewhat bright, but it can usually be balanced satisfactorily with the amplifier's tone controls.

We listened to the entire repertoire released by Advent to date, using high-quality playback equipment, to judge for ourselves how close Advent has come to matching the fidelity obtainable in cassette "master" recordings. The playback machine used was a Technics RS-676US feeding a Phase Linear 4000 preamplifier and a Phase Linear

400 power amplifier driving a pair of AR-LST1 speakers. The fast-responding, peak-reading meters of the Technics machine helped us judge the maximum as well as the average recorded levels on the tapes, relative to the standard Dolby reference level used for cassette recording.

Most of the CR/70 tapes were made from master tapes of Nonesuch Records and Connoisseur Society. We did not have earlier-generation open-reel tapes or disc pressings of these masters with which to compare the cassette playback, so each was judged on its own merits. (Note that the noise reduction and the dynamic-range expansion facilities of the Phase Linear 4000 preamplifier were *not* used in these tests.)

Some characteristics were common to all the tapes we listened to. Their background-noise level was very low, comparable to that of a first-generation recording made on a top-quality cassette machine. The cleanness and freedom from audible distortion were impressive, and we believe that only the very best phonograph records played with the very best phono cartridges would be able to match the quality of these cassettes. As Advent points out, the background-noise level of the CR/70 cassettes is lower than that of many of the master tapes, so that the appearance and disappearance of tape hiss between selections can often be heard when listening at high volume levels.

Although the average recording level varied widely, depending on the particular selection, we noticed that the maximum dynamic range of the tape was fully exploited in every case. Most of the tapes reached peaks of 0 dB (relative to the Dolby reference level, or about +3 dB on the meters of the playback machine) quite frequently, even though their average levels might be only about -10 to -15 dB. On some of the tapes, crescendos drove the meters to their stops (more than +3 dB), but we never heard any distortion from tape saturation or overloaded electronics.

**M**ANY of the recordings were of solo piano or of two-piano teams. Occasionally we noticed a tendency toward muddiness or excessive emphasis in the low and middle bass on these recordings (particularly the Bartók Suite for Two Pianos and the Liszt Operatic Fantasies, but it is possible that this was due to an unfortunate interaction between the miking of the original recording and our listening-room acoustics.

One of the most striking recordings we have ever heard, from the standpoint of dynamics, was the solo piano of the Debussy selections. Judging from the manner in which the level meters slammed against their stops, we would say the peaks were at least +5 to +6 dB above zero, yet there was no evidence of distortion.

We were also impressed to find the Advent CR/70 cassettes fully competitive, with respect to price, with phonograph records.

Given all the advantages of cassettes—resistance to damage, high information-storage ability, and compactness—and the superior sonic quality of these offerings from Advent, one would be tempted to suggest that the record companies take another long, hard look at the recorded music scene pronto. The disparities in both price and quality between the CR/70 tapes and many disc releases, to say nothing of other commercially recorded cassettes, eight-track cartridges, and open-reel tapes, are too glaring to be overlooked. Have we been ignoring the solution to the vinyl shortage?

**Richard Freed**  
*Contributing Editor*

**I**N terms of sonic deterioration, at least, tape is the most durable medium yet devised for home playback of recorded music. Compared with the disc it rates a negative in respect to convenience, however: individual selections or sections of a musical work are much harder to locate than on a disc surface, and though cartridges and cassettes do not, open-reel tapes do have to be carefully threaded on the machine before playing and often have to be rewound as well. The cartridge, in addition to being hardly a high-fidelity medium, has the problem of between-track gear shifting to be accommodated. There is much to be said, however, for the cassette: it is compact, space-saving, easy to handle, and not subject to wear. Its drawback has been that even the finest prerecorded cassettes have not matched the overall sound quality of the finest discs.

For those of us old enough to recall how wiry and restricted many of the first micro-groove discs sounded in 1948 as compared with the rich sound being achieved on some 78's then, it seemed only a matter of time until someone would apply the available technology to the problem of making a prerecorded cassette as good as—and perhaps even better than—the disc. Advent's entry into the prerecorded-cassette field is a breakthrough that suggests that the gap between the potential and the actual may be closable right now.

Advent makes strong claims for its product: "... cassettes of unprecedented fidelity . . . a level of sonic performance so high that for the first time the critical listener can consider cassettes as a viable alternative to disc recordings." No one familiar with this company's exceptionally conscientious approach to both production and marketing would regard such a claim as mere puffery, but I was quite unprepared for the really exciting aural corroboration. I can only say that what Advent calls "Process CR/70" yields the most stunning sound yet achieved on cassettes, and that at least a half-dozen of the eighteen examples I've heard strike me as clearly superior to the disc editions of the same recordings.

Ideally, these cassettes should be played on equipment incorporating both a Dolby "B" system and a bias adjustment for chromium dioxide tape (I used the Advent 201 cassette deck, which has both), but even without these features a fair compromise can be achieved simply by cutting the treble; the superiority of these cassettes will be evident on any good system.

The initial release of twenty-eight cas-

ettes is drawn from three sources: the disc catalogs of Connoisseur Society and Nonesuch and a series of new recordings produced by Advent itself. Prices are no higher, and in many cases lower, than those for other labels' cassette releases. As indicated in the listing below, \$6.95 buys up to 103 minutes of Leslie Jones' robust Haydn, and for a dollar less there is the late Jascha Horenstein's Mahler First plus fifty-six minutes of blank tape for recording.

One of the items that impressed me as superior to its disc counterpart is the Nielsen Fifth Symphony, performed by the New Philharmonia Orchestra under Horenstein, a Nonesuch release obtained from Unicorn of England. Nielsen's tone poem *Saga-Drøm* is included, as on the disc, but both works are on side one of the cassette. (Advent is offering quite a few recordings in this unprecedented single-side format. Connoisseur Society's superb Tchaikovsky Fourth, the aforementioned Nielsen and Mahler conducted by Horenstein, Ivan Moravec's Chopin Preludes, the Schütz program in Advent's own series, and Elsas-er's Widor are the others.)

Kosler's Tchaikovsky, surely one of the three or four finest performances of the Fourth now available, is perhaps even more impressive than the Nielsen as a demonstration of what can be achieved in the cassette format. It may not sound better than the disc (which in this case was itself quite a knock-out), but I think Kosler's recording of Mozart's *Prague* Symphony does, and Leslie Jones' Haydn symphonies most definitely do. Mahapurush Misra's "Indian Drums," too, with its *Pierrot Lunaire*-ish opening, is especially vivid, and so are the Carter Quartets. But nothing among these releases is less than excellent.

Artistically, Advent's own productions needn't take a back seat to the disc-derived material. Two of the Bach cantatas—Nos. 44 and 101—have not been recorded before in any medium, and all three are done with stylish conviction. "Courts and Chapels . . ." comprises no fewer than twenty-six intriguing secular and sacred pieces, concluding with a sequence labeled "Christmas in Provence: the Avignon Cathedral circa 1600." My pick of this batch is "Songs of a Traveling Apprentice."

As if the layout convenience and the blank side to be used for your own recording in some of the cassettes were not bonus enough in addition to the superior sound of these releases, Advent is offering something else no other cassette producer offers, as far as I know: really comprehensive annotation. Each cassette includes not only a capsule program note (many by STEREO REVIEW's Music Editor James Goodfriend), but also a postage-paid card with which the buyer can obtain the full set of notes as printed for the disc edition of the respective recording—or, in the case of the original productions, new annotations with full texts and translations for the vocal works.

The thoughtfulness and care evident in every aspect of Advent's production are quite beyond anything in my experience with cassette recordings. This is a huge and significant step forward; if other companies will match this quality (they can if they care to), there could be a considerable tide of conversions in format listening preferences.

## Original Productions

**BACH:** *Cantata BWV 7, "Christ unser Herr zum Jordan kam"; Cantata BWV 44, "Sie werden euch in den Bann tun"; Cantata BWV 101, "Nimm von uns, Herr, du treuer Gott."* Cantata Singers and instrumental ensemble, John Harbison dir. ADVENT D1016 \$5.95 (72 min.).

**LISZT:** *Transcendental Etudes (complete).* Russell Sherman (piano). ADVENT D1010 \$5.95 (75 min.).

**SCHÜTZ:** *Musikalische Exequien, SWV 279-281; Motet, "Selig sind die Toten." SWV 391; Motet, "Die Himmel erzählen die Ehre Gottes." SWV 386; Motet, "Ich bin ein rechter Weinstock." SWV 389.* Can-

tata Singers and instrumental ensemble, John Harbison dir. ADVENT C1030 \$4.95 (43 min.).

**COURTS AND CHAPELS OF RENAISSANCE FRANCE:** *Music for Voice and Early Instruments from Paris, Dijon, Geneva, and Avignon (ca. 1450-1600).* Camerata of the Museum of Fine Arts and Brandeis Early Music Ensemble, Boston, Joel Cohen dir. ADVENT C1008 \$4.95 (48 min.).

**SONGS OF A TRAVELING APPRENTICE:** *Vocal and Instrumental Music from Germany, Flanders, and Italy (ca. 1500).* Cambridge Consort, Joel Cohen dir. ADVENT C1023 \$4.95 (41 min.).

## Connoisseur Society Recordings

**BARTÓK:** *Suite for Two Pianos, Op. 4b; Fourteen Pieces from "Mikrokosmos."* Richard and John Contiguglia (piano). ADVENT E1012 \$6.95 (42 min.).

**BEETHOVEN:** *Sonata No. 8 ("Pathétique"); Sonata No. 14 ("Moonlight"); Für Elise.* Ivan Moravec (piano). ADVENT E1026 \$6.95 (38 min.).\*

**CHOPIN:** *Etudes, Opp. 10 and 25.* Ilana Vered (piano). ADVENT E1018 \$6.95 (62 min.).

**CHOPIN:** *Préludes, Op. 28.* Ivan Moravec (piano). ADVENT E1024 \$6.95 (42 min.).\*

**CHOPIN:** *Waltzes.* Antonio Barbosa (piano). ADVENT E1006 \$6.95 (46 min.).

**DEBUSSY:** *Children's Corner Suite; Clair de Lune; Préludes, Book I, Nos. 4, 5, and 10; Book II, Nos. 7 and 12.* Ivan Moravec (piano). ADVENT E1029 \$6.95 (46 min.).

**DVOŘÁK:** *Slavonic Dances, Op. 46, Nos. 1, 3, and 8; Op. 72, Nos. 2, 5, and 7.* **MOZART:** *Symphony No. 38, in D Major (K. 504, "Prague").* London Symphony Orchestra, Zdenek Kosler cond. ADVENT E1025 \$6.95 (51 min.).

**LISZT:** *Réminiscences de Don Juan;*

*Tscherkessenmarsch; Réminiscences de Norma; Sonnambula Fantasy.* Richard and John Contiguglia (piano). ADVENT E1027 \$6.95 (48 min.).

**SCARLATTI:** *Twenty-three Sonatas.* Anthony di Bonaventura (piano). ADVENT F1014 \$7.95 (85 min.).

**TCHAIKOVSKY:** *Symphony No. 4, in F Minor, Op. 36.* London Symphony Orchestra, Zdenek Kosler cond. ADVENT E1020 \$6.95 (47 min.).\*

**ALI AKBAR KHÂN, MASTER MUSICIAN OF INDIA:** *Râga Chandranandan; Râga Gauri Manjari.* Ali Akbar Khân (sarod); Pandit Mahapurush Misra (tablâ). ADVENT E1004 \$6.95 (41 min.).

**INDIAN DRUMS:** *Roopak-tal; Slow tin-tal; Dadra-tal; Kaharwa-tal; Jhap-tal.* Mahapurush Misra (tablâ). ADVENT E1021 \$6.95 (40 min.).

**JUERGA!:** *Manitas de Plata (guitar); José Reyes and Manero Ballardo (vocals).* ADVENT E1022 \$6.95 (41 min.).

**MANITAS DE PLATA, FLAMENCO GUITAR:** *Manitas de Plata (guitar); José Reyes and Manero Ballardo (vocals).* ADVENT E1028 \$6.95 (42 min.).

## Nonesuch Recordings

**CARTER:** *String Quartets Nos. 1 and 2.* Composers Quartet. ADVENT D1007 \$5.95 (57 min.).

**HAYDN:** *Symphonies Nos. 93, 94, 102, and 103.* Little Orchestra of London, Leslie Jones cond. ADVENT E1001 \$6.95 (103 min.).

**HAYDN:** *Symphonies Nos. 95, 97, 100, and 101.* Little Orchestra of London, Leslie Jones cond. ADVENT E1002 \$6.95 (101 min.).

**HAYDN:** *Symphonies Nos. 96, 98, 99, and 104.* Little Orchestra of London, Leslie Jones cond. ADVENT E1003 \$6.95 (102 min.).

**MAHLER:** *Symphony No. 1, in D Major.* London Symphony Orchestra, Jascha Hor-

enstein cond. ADVENT D1019 \$5.95 (56 min.).\*

**MAHLER:** *Symphony No. 3, in D Minor.* Norma Proctor (contralto); Ambrosian Singers; Wandsworth School Boys' Choir; London Symphony Orchestra, Jascha Horenstein cond. ADVENT E1009 \$6.95 (95 min.).

**NIELSEN:** *Symphony No. 5, Op. 50; Saga-Drøm, Op. 39.* New Philharmonia Orchestra, Jascha Horenstein cond. ADVENT D1005 \$5.95 (44 min.).\*

**WIDOR:** *Organ Symphony No. 5, in F Minor, Op. 42, No. 1.* Richard Elsasser (organ). ADVENT D1017 \$5.95 (37 min.).\*

**JOPLIN:** *Eight Rags.* Joshua Rifkin (piano). **JOPLIN:** *Two Rags.* Other works by Joplin/Chauvin, Turpin, Lamb, Scott, Roberts, Bolcom, and Albright/Bolcom. William Bolcom (piano). ADVENT E1013 \$5.95 (65 min.).

\*In cassettes indicated by asterisk, all the music is recorded on side one; side two is left blank for possible recording by the user.

THE Lyric Opera of Chicago opened its 1974 season in September with a new production of Giuseppe Verdi's *Simon Boccanegra*. Since it is not among Verdi's most popular works, it was a somewhat unusual choice for opening night. But this was an unusual season in that the Lyric, which has survived longer than any other opera company in Chicago history, was celebrating its twentieth anniversary, and the management wanted something out of the ordinary for the occasion.

In connection with the celebration Chicago was host to the Fourth International Verdi Congress, organized by the Lyric Opera and the Istituto di Studi Verdiani, of Parma, Italy. Like the previous Verdi congresses (all held in Italy), this one was a convention of musicologists, critics, theater managers, and others concerned with contemporary Verdi scholarship.

The presence of the delegates in Chicago added some extra glamour to the opening night, for which Chicago society turned out in its best furs, feathers, and jewels. I saw a couple of top hats and even one tiara. Among the celebrities were Schuyler Chapin, general manager of the Metropolitan Opera, Massimo Bogianckino, artistic director of La Scala in Milan, Lord Harewood, director of the English National Opera in London, Maria Caniglia, retired Italian diva now living in Chicago, soprano Anna Moffo (in town for the Congress), and I don't know who all.

As for the opera itself, the cast included Piero Cappuccilli and Ruggero Raimondi, both of whom are on the new RCA recording of *Simon Boccanegra*, plus Martina Arroyo and Carlo Cossutta. It was conducted by Bruno Bartoletti. The local critics liked the performance and the new production better than most of the out-towners did. Robert C. Marsh of the Chicago *Sun-Times* called it "the most powerful opening-night performance for several seasons," and Richard Christiansen of the *Daily News* said it was "a triumphant example of grand opera at its most sublime."

WITH so many critics attending the Congress and also covering the performance, you could find a certified authority to support any point of view you cared to take. For me it was a special occasion—my first Lyric Opera performance—and I went in a mood to have a good time. I was especially impressed by Cappuccilli in the title role and by the work of the chorus, and I thoroughly enjoyed the evening.

In one way or another I also enjoyed all the meetings of the Congress that I was able to attend. Holding the convention in Chicago was made possible by a gift of \$50,000 from a Chicago attorney, Lee A. Freeman, Sr., and his wife. The Congress drew a lot of musical big guns from this country and abroad to read scholarly papers, participate in round-table discussions, and indulge in a certain amount of intrigue. As one critic put it, "It's fun to see one's friends again, and sometimes even more amusing to see one's enemies in a different setting."

I missed the opening addresses by novelist Saul Bellow and composer Luciano Berio, but I got to Chicago in time for a round-table discussion on Verdi and the American critical press moderated by Irving Kolodin,

dean of American record critics and a contributing editor of this magazine. The discussion went in all directions, but some interesting points were made.

Kolodin said that critics are overly impressed by *theory* and therefore may be wrong, but laymen are impressed only by results and can be wronger. Martin Bernheimer, of the Los Angeles *Times*, said that America has treated Verdi's music well, but has treated his drama, about which he cared so much, very poorly. John Rockwell, rock critic of the New York *Times*, called for an effort to make Verdi's work more popular among the young, as it was in the composer's own time. Michael Steinberg, critic of the Boston *Globe* and also a teacher, replied that it is hard to teach Verdi to today's young people because they seem to have no interest



## THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL VERDI CONGRESS

A report by Managing Editor  
William Livingstone

in any music that requires a strong commitment to romantic love.

The open question period that followed turned into a discussion of interpolated high notes in Verdi's operas. Opinions were solicited from Anna Moffo and tenor Richard Tucker, who were in the audience, and both advocated following the printed score. Then there was a free-for-all on applause during performances. Bernheimer hates it; Steinberg said that listening to the now available absolutely complete recordings of Verdi's operas reveals that he *expected* applause after the big numbers and wrote music not only to whip it up but to prolong it.

This remark was one of the very few references made to recordings during the Congress, which brings up my chief criticism of it: in a convention that lasted eight days there was *no* discussion of Verdi on records. This was a serious omission, considering the excellent work now being done by Philips, for example, in recording such rarely performed Verdi works as *Attila*, *I Lombardi*, and *Un Giorno di Regno* (see Best of the Month in this issue). There was time for lectures on Verdi in Scandinavia, Japan, Mexico, and Russia and even on Verdi and his works in *Turkey* since the reforms of 1839, but apparently no time to compare the three complete recordings of *Simon Boccanegra* on Angel, Everest, and RCA.

Just as recordings take opera to millions unable to attend live performances, radio performs a similar service. In Chicago the opening night performance was broadcast (quadrphonically!) by WFMT. When I discussed the broadcast with Norman Pellegrini, program director of the station, he

said that WFMT, which has broadcast Lyric Opera in four channels for some time, turned to SQ matrix this year (they have previously broadcast in QS) because they believe it provides better compatible sound for listeners with only two-channel stereo. Pellegrini was unable to estimate how many WFMT listeners have quadrasonic equipment, but audio salons in Chicago reported a run on it when the four-channel opera broadcasts began.

CHICAGO is a hospitable city, and the delegates were entertained royally by individuals and local firms. At one dinner party I became aware of some of the tensions that exist between musical scholars and journalists. A prominent professor at my table said, "We musicologists do our research, write our books, and teach our students. We become a little isolated. Perhaps it is good for us to get out and meet these stupid critics and socialites, but once is enough for me."

When asked whether he prepared his students for the fact that the music world has next to no jobs for young holders of bachelor's degrees in musicology, he answered (irresponsibly, I thought), "We prefer not to think about that. The ones I know are working as carpenters or weavers. The most successful are those who have learned to be painting contractors."

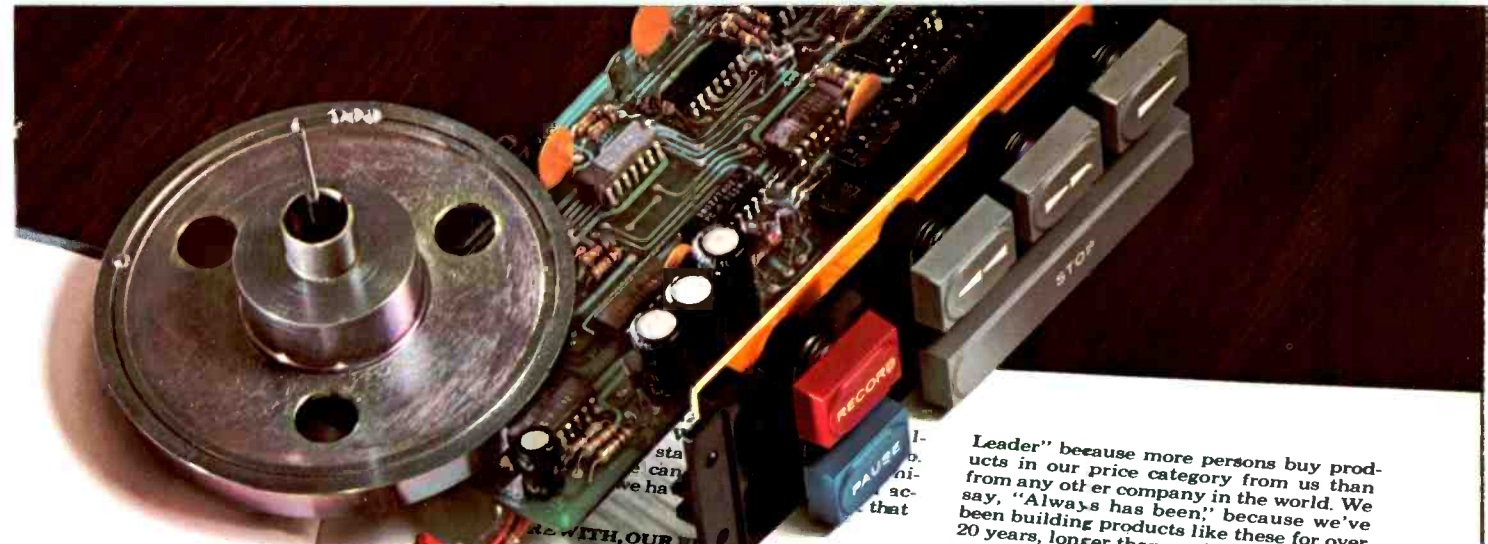
Student intrepidity is impressive, however. A young graduate student at the Congress, Elizabeth Ostrow of Indiana University, told me she had with difficulty won approval for a master's thesis on performance practices in the early twentieth century, basing her research on early piano recordings supplied to her by the International Piano Archives in New York. This is a significant victory for common sense, of course, for it is to my knowledge the first time a major American university has been willing to accept recordings as legitimate *documents* in musical research.

Among the happiest delegates was John Ardoin, of the Dallas *Morning News*, who had just received the first copies of his handsome new book *Callas*. And no delegate got more attention than Maria Callas herself when she delivered her Verdi paper. On the question of interpolated high notes, she said that the public wants them and when she had some very good ones she gave of them generously. She scandalized the urtext worshipers by advocating the standard cuts in Verdi's operas and saying she would even omit the baritone aria in *La Traviata*.

OTHER lectures and papers varied widely in quality—alternately urbane, informative, paralyzingly tedious, and simply entertaining. I especially enjoyed Roman Vlad and his keyboard demonstrations of the improvements Verdi made in his revised version of *Simon Boccanegra*, and Desmond Shawe-Taylor on the singers of the first performances of the two versions.

If you are interested in all the minutiae, wait a couple of years and you can read the papers when they are published by the Verdi Institute. The proceedings of the last congress, which took place in Milan in June, 1972, were distributed (hot off the press) in Chicago. The paperback volume weighs two pounds and fifteen ounces and runs to 617 pages—no fewer than four of which are on the subject of recordings.





This statement of philosophy is from the TEAC White Paper on tape technology. For a copy, write to TEAC, 7733 Telegraph Road, Montebello, CA. 90640.

... philosophy is a series of decisions, usually proposed as solutions to crucial issues or problems.

We say that TEAC is "The Leader. Always has been." We firmly believe this too. But unless we state our attitudes and philosophies, we can only hope that you accept them; we have no right to expect that you will.

#### HEREWITH, OUR PUBLIC STATEMENT.

A philosophy is a series of decisions, usually proposed as solutions to crucial issues or problems. Every design effort, from automobiles to tape recorders, is a series of decisions about alternatives — to gain one desirable item, another usually must be sacrificed. For example, an automobile may have a soft, floating comfortable ride, but usually this is at the expense of agile, positive handling. It may have enormous power, but usually at the expense of fuel economy.

This is purely a matter of design and marketing philosophy. The same technology is available to both Porsche and General Motors, but the design and marketing philosophies are significantly different. We believe that neither is intrinsically right or wrong — that decision is entirely the province of the purchaser. Different strokes for different folks.

The same is true in tape recorders. There are no secrets to design: the principles are known to any competent engineer. The differences you see in the products on an audio retailer's shelf lie in the alternatives chosen at each design and marketing decision point. For example, one unit may have greatly extended high frequency response; but achieved only at the expense of added noise (tape hiss).

Because of some very basic design decisions we have made at TEAC, our products cost a lot of money. But they are not "expensive." To us, an expensive product is one which costs more than it should. No TEAC product has ever been expensive; none ever will be. We call ourselves "The

Leader" because more persons buy products in our price category from us than from any other company in the world. We say, "Always has been," because we've been building products like these for over 20 years, longer than anybody else.

The persons who design and build our products are craftsmen; and a craftsman is a person who builds something better than it has to be. They feel that the pride in owning a TEAC is almost as great as the pride in building one. They come up with design innovations years ahead of the current state of the art, and most of them will never see the light of day. Because at this point, the craftsman attitude comes into play.

Before they will put them into production, they build lots of prototypes and use them, abuse them, do their best to make them break. Each time they succeed, they refine. Break and refine, again and again. Until it doesn't break anymore.

By this time, another company may have developed the same innovation, but the tyranny of the profit motive put it into production immediately: field testing is thus often done by consumers.

TEAC, on the other hand, maintains recording studios in both Los Angeles and Tokyo. In Los Angeles we also retain a large group of professional musicians, record producers and recording engineers, whose sole purpose at TEAC is to beat up our new products and tell us what's wrong with them. By the time we're satisfied, and they're satisfied, we know you will be. At TEAC, field testing is done by us.

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(F)



(G)



(H)



(I)

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(B)



(C)



(D)



(E)

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(A)

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(B)



(C)



(D)

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(A)

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# THE SIMELS REPORT

By STEVE SIMELS



## DREAM SEQUENCE

BY now you've probably seen *Rock Dreams*, Guy Peellaert and Nik Cohn's brilliant pictorial fantasy-history of rock-and-roll (Popular Library, \$7.95) and you know just how great it is; you know how uncannily *true* the fantasy situations in which Peellaert has painted the various rock figures ring, and I'm sure you've got your favorites. I certainly do—Diana Ross in the back seat of her limousine, as she returns to the ghetto she denies ever having lived in; a short-haired Mick Jagger (the final segment of the Stones sequence) dressed in a smoking jacket, alone in his room and looking for all the world like a pop Dorian Gray; Creedence Clearwater Revival's John Fogerty (and where is *he* now that we need him?) in a rowboat on his way through the Louisiana bayou he conjured up so wonderfully without ever having seen; and a bedraggled and broken Jerry Lee Lewis standing alone in the rain, crying in his beer.

Obviously, a long-winded analysis of the book is unnecessary, even presumptuous: like rock itself, it is in many ways *above* analysis. But I do have two observations that I think are worth bringing up. First of all, some critics have noted that the only place the book's vision falters is in its portrayal of the latter-day heroes—Bowie, Bolan, and Lou Reed—who are treated simply as traditional portrait subjects, and have chalked this up to the fact that Peellaert, because of his age, is perhaps a little distanced from these contemporary mythical figures. I suspect it's not quite that simple; it's especially instructive to compare his gorgeous representation of the Velvet Underground (with Lou Reed) to his rendering of Reed today, at the same time bearing in mind the music each represents. The former has the capacity to haunt the imagination, while the latter is simply *there*. Peellaert, it seems, is a much more perceptive rock critic than many of those who do it for a living.

Secondly, the book, great as it is, is in

a way quite depressing. Like it or not, it's a retrospective, a summing up; I don't think it could have been done even five years ago, simply because the music and the musicians were much too vital. But in 1974, I find myself much more excited about the book *Rock Dreams* than about almost any recent rock *album*, and if that suggests to you what it does to me—that rock-and-roll as we knew and loved it is indeed as decadent and played out as many have observed—then it becomes an almost painful experience to finish it. To paraphrase Dave Marsh, I don't *want* to hang up my rock-and-roll shoes myself, but I'll be damned if I can give you a good reason why I shouldn't. *Rock Dreams*, for all its power, doesn't give me that reason, and I don't like *that* at all. But get it anyway.

\* \* \*

I don't know if you've noticed, but the rock press is dreadfully out of touch with the real world these days. Even the best critics seem to have little or no idea of what it is the audience is listening to. For example, take an act like Chicago. The plain fact is that this is probably the biggest band in America; they can sell out major concert halls for a week at a stretch, young girls think they're sexy, and they now have the longest track record for consistent single hits of any group in the country. And yet you rarely read a good word about them. It's not even the Grand Funk phenomenon: the critics don't *despise* Chicago (except perhaps in private) so much as they ignore them. But the band continues to prosper and broaden its following, manifesting a popularity that is almost frightening because it's such a well-kept secret. *Creem* will of course never put them on its cover, and the release of "Chicago IX" will elicit nothing but yawns from reviewers everywhere. Nonetheless, when their recent television show was aired (an outing that was, if possible, even schlockier than the Bowie *Midnight Special*), I can person-

ally attest to the fact that the entire teenage population of Dumont, New Jersey, was off the streets. Meanwhile, the rock press prattles on about glitter, Bryan Ferry, and the return of the pop sensibility. Egad.

Now Chicago puts *me* to sleep too, in all honesty, but from our reader mail alone it has become clear to me that I am in a minority. So I talked to Robert Lamm (Chicago's keyboard man) early last September in an attempt to find out what the hell was going on here. In vain. I say in vain because Lamm (an extremely charming fella in an all-American sort of way) seemed unwilling or not able to philosophize about his group's importance, although he did have an unswerving confidence in the validity of what he was doing ("All our albums, with perhaps two exceptions, have been artistic successes," he told me quite firmly). For example, when I asked him why of all the horn bands that had flourished briefly in the late Sixties, playing largely similar material, only his had been the one that survived, he replied, "Because they were *all* on Columbia." Frankly, this little bit of music-biz pragmatism was not what I had been groping for, but it's probably true: there are only so many bands you can promote at one time, and Columbia chose Chicago.

Later, when I brought up the subject of their phenomenal singles success, he pooh-poohed it.

"We don't even pick them," he averred. "It's a waste of time."

This, from the singles champs of the Seventies? Surely, I suggested, they must have some idea when they're writing the tunes which are going to be hits?

"We just don't bother about it," he said. "Occasionally, when we finish an album, we hear some bit that makes us say, 'Hmm, that might be a single,' but inevitably the record people pick something else. We don't have anything to do with it and we don't want to."

Realizing that I was not about to get any of the answers I was after, we drifted onto more general matters—musical background, current preferences—although I couldn't resist bringing up the subject of their now infamous "with this album, Chicago devotes all its energies to *The Revolution*" jacket blurb of a few years ago. (Lamm's comment: "In retrospect, that was a little naïve. But sincere.") Finally, I asked if it ever rankled him that the rock press didn't take them seriously—did he ever get annoyed that *Rolling Stone* hadn't sent Truman Capote to follow them around on tour?

"Not at all," he said. "If Truman wants to come by, we'd be glad to see him, but I'm not upset that he hasn't."

"Of course," he added wistfully, "I guess he wouldn't enjoy hanging around with a bunch of ex-jocks." Which may also explain why Chicago didn't make it into *Rock Dreams*.



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# GOING ON RECORD

By JAMES GOODFRIEND  
*Music Editor*



## THE HERO AS THROWBACK

THE United States has produced a few internationally regarded great violinists (Isaac Stern and Yehudi Menuhin, for example), and it has attracted a host of others to live and work here, but it is hardly a violinistic country of the likes of Russia or Hungary. Nor does it have an equivalent of their violinistic traditions. Whatever American musical traditions there are, particularly performing traditions, are products of the twentieth century—and not the early years of the century either. And so, if there *were* an American tradition of violin playing, one would expect it to be characterized by the same qualities evident in other aspects of American musical life: near machine-like precision and technical ability, literalness, fairly far-ranging musical interest, and independence of the "grand style" and the European traditions. How delightful, then, that our first violinistic hero in some time, a young man who comes from Colorado and wears jeans and boots when he isn't wearing tie and tails, hardly fits that prescription at all.

Eugene Fodor, who is twenty-four years old, was, along with two Russians, Ruben Agaranyan and Rusudan Gvasaliya, awarded a silver medal in the Tchaikovsky Violin Competition in Moscow this year. No gold medal was awarded because, according to the Soviet News Agency, as reported by Britain's *The Guardian* and on the jacket of Mr. Fodor's first RCA recording, "none of the finalists succeeded in performing evenly at all stages of the difficult competition." That there were some who believed that Fodor deserved the gold medal all to himself is intriguing but a little beside the point, which is that an unlikely young American barged in where he wasn't expected and so astounded both audiences and judges with his abilities that what was probably a pre-ordained future, as far as the contest results were concerned, had to be modified to take account of him.

Fodor himself remarked that the audience response was "so unbelievable it was funny. My pianist walked on to accompany me with Tchaikovsky's Valse-Scherzo, and the audience would not stop clapping. She sat there looking terribly serious and the judges sat there looking amazed." I find it interesting that the judges seemed to be amazed not at the playing but at the audience response to the playing, for that in itself says something about the way Fodor plays.

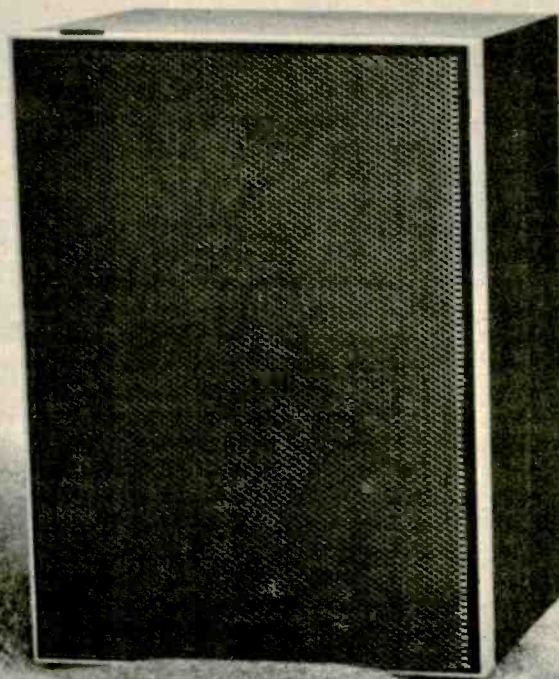
His new RCA recording (ARL 1-0735) gives us a pretty good idea of how Fodor plays, and what. The repertoire comprises Wieniawski's Polonaise Brillante, Op. 4, and Scherzo-Tarantelle, Op. 16; Ysaÿe's Sonata for Violin Solo, Op. 27, No. 3; Tchaikovsky's Valse-Scherzo, Op. 34, and *Sérénade Mélancolique*, Op. 26; Paganini's Solo Caprices Op. 1, Nos. 17 and 24, and Prokofiev's March from *The Love for Three Oranges* as transcribed by Heifetz. The excellent, if somewhat effaced, piano accompanist is Jonathan Feldman.

I think it is significant that in an age when young pianists, at least, choose to make their debuts with Prokofiev or Bartók, the only thing of that nature on Fodor's record is the *Love for Three Oranges* selection, and it is one of those transcriptions made not to throw any new light on the music, nor even as a modest bow toward modernism, but simply to show that the violin, in the right hands, can do things of which we would not think it capable.

The remainder of the repertoire on the disc is straightforward "throwback" material, nineteenth-century violinists' music rather than music written for the violin. It is the repertoire of the "grand style," of a generation much older than Fodor's, and it reflects, if not the Russian tradition, then one that actually preceded the Russian one, the Polish-Belgian axis of Vieuxtemps, Wieniawski, Ysaÿe, and others.

(Continued on page 68)

# MEET DAVID



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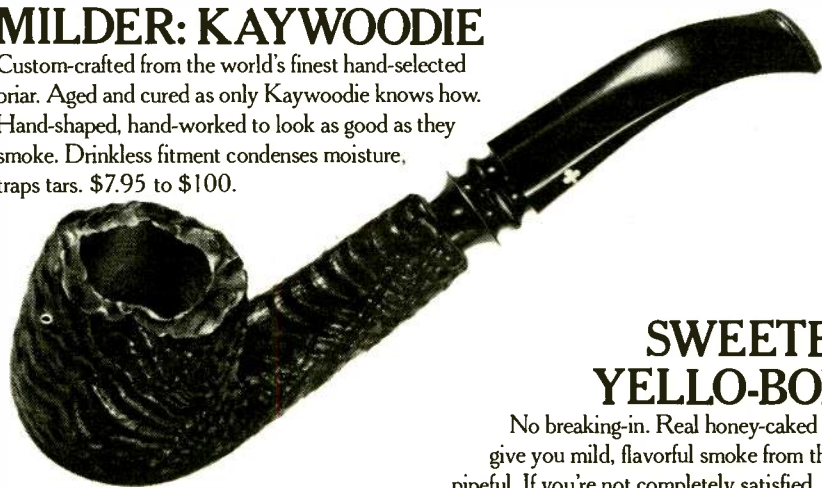
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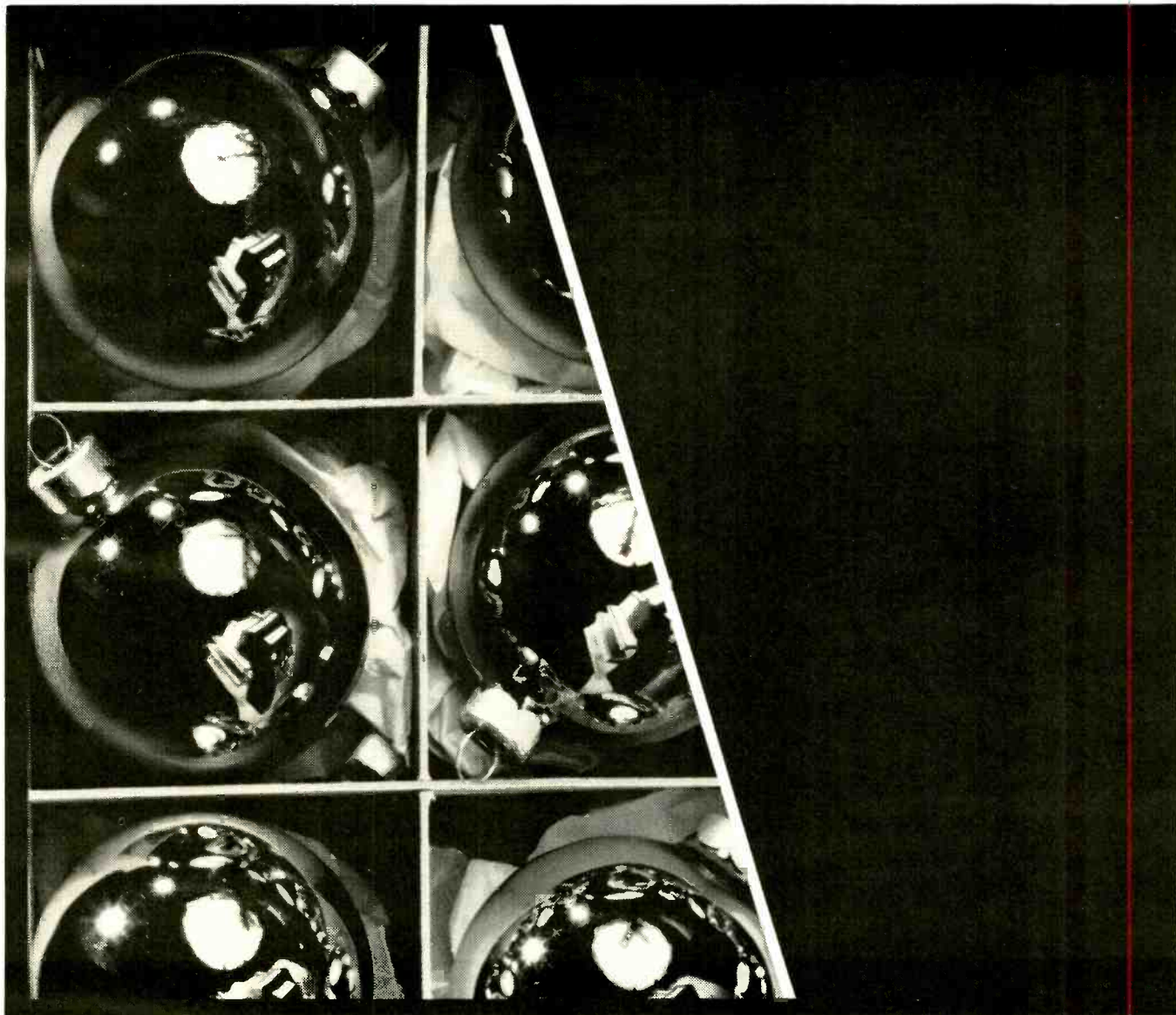
The grand style of violin playing demands of the performer one thing (apart from technique) above all others: the ability to take bad music seriously. Getting through the notes of the Wieniawski pieces, for example, is not enough; one must convey the belief, while getting through those notes, that the music itself is important. Some musicians accomplish this quite naturally; they honestly, if mistakenly, believe that the music is important. Others do it through a talent for duplicity. Which is the case with Fodor I am not prepared to say, but it's been a long time since I've heard a young violinist play any of this repertoire *as if* he truly meant it, and Fodor does precisely that.

Such an ability, when coupled with astonishing technical facility (and this Fodor unquestionably has) gets through to an audience like nothing else in this world. For, to hear an essentially simple-minded piece of music rendered with brilliance and charm, and, at the same time, to be utterly convinced of the music's great importance, totally disarms the critical faculties of listeners: the music *cannot* be bad for it *sounds* so good. Nothing is duller than violinists' music played for the notes alone: little is more exciting than the same music played with flair.

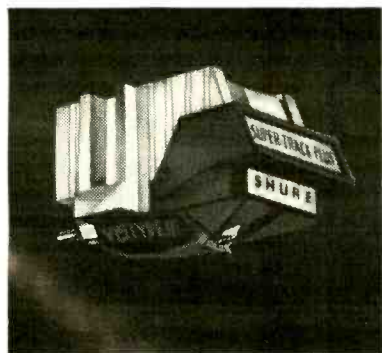
ONE can tell nothing about Fodor's musicianship from this record: musicianship cannot be determined from such repertoire. What can be told are technique and showmanship, and these he obviously has in abundance. He goes through the octave double stops in the Caprice No. 17 with perfect intonation and at a whizz-bang tempo, making recordings by several other eminent violinists today sound plodding and tentative. He tackles the curlicues of the Wieniawski pieces with total assurance and every bit of the flair shown by Jan Kubelik on his ancient recording, and he further squeezes the maximum effect from the complexities of the Ysaÿe (which sound, to be sure, more profound than they really are). The Prokofiev March elicits a rhythmic firmness, near-orchestral sonorities, and double-stopped crescendos that (to twist Dr. Johnson's metaphor) make this particular "dog" sound like he's been standing on his hind legs all his life.

If there is a weakness in the record it is in the Tchaikovsky *Sérénade*, in which the violin is called upon to sustain a long, lyrical line completely out in the open. The assurance and the intonation waver a bit, and Fodor, poor boy, must bow to Heifetz. Being able to juggle a dozen eggs does not also imply the ability to walk on them successfully.

But, in all, this is paradoxically the debut of a major European violinist of the nineteenth century. How he will fare in America in the twentieth tantalizingly remains to be seen.



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# THE BASIC REPERTOIRE • 176

By MARTIN BOOKSPAN

## DEBUSSY'S PRÉLUDE À L'APRÈS-MIDI D'UN FAUNE

THE French poet Stéphane Mallarmé, leader of the Symbolist movement, was born in 1842. It was when he was in his early thirties that he formulated his revolutionary ideas about poetic style. His first poem of real importance, *L'Après-midi d'un Faune*, was rejected for publication by the prestigious journal *Parnasse Contemporain* in 1875, whereupon Mallarmé proceeded to have it published at his own expense the following year. A contemporary writer and critic, Edmund Gosse, suggested that Mallarmé's purpose in the deliberately obscure writing was "to use words in such harmonious combinations as will suggest to the reader a mood or a condition which is not mentioned in the text, but is nevertheless paramount in the poet's mind at the moment of composition." Mallarmé was delighted with this perceptive statement of his intent and wrote Gosse a letter thanking him. Gosse, in turn, wrote: "To say that I understand it bit by bit, phrase by phrase, would be excessive. But, if I am asked whether this famous miracle of unintelligibility gives me pleasure, I answer, cordially, yes."

Some eighteen years later, there was a concert in Brussels made up entirely of music by Claude Debussy, the thirty-one-year-old French composer who, a year earlier, had begun to impress musically knowledgeable Parisians with his String Quartet and *La Damoiselle Élue*. These two works were scheduled for the Brussels concert, along with two songs and an unpublished new score in manuscript titled *Prélude, Interlude, et Paraphrase Finale pour l'Après-midi d'un Faune*. Shortly before the concert, however, Debussy withdrew the new work as not yet ready for performance. Only after painstaking revision and polishing was the score, Debussy's first for orchestra alone, ready to be submitted for performance and publication. The second and third parts, which had never been more than fragmentary sketches,

were scrapped, and the *Prélude à l'Après-midi d'un Faune* was scheduled by conductor Gustave Doret for the concerts of the Société Nationale in Paris on December 22 and 23, 1894.

Composer Charles Koechlin, who was there, reported that the acoustics of the hall were poor, the *Prélude* had had inadequate rehearsal, and the performance was bad. Nevertheless, it was highly successful and had to be repeated at the first performance. Mallarmé was enthusiastic about the piece and wrote to a friend: "This music prolongs the emotion of my poem and fixes the scene much more vividly than color could have done."

Debussy himself gave a succinct explanation of his *Prélude*: the music evokes "the successive scenes in which the longings and the desires of the faun pass in the heat of the afternoon." A much more elaborate description was given by French writer Louis Laloy. When the solo flute announces the chief theme, Laloy said, "one is immediately transported into a better world; all that is leering and savage in the snub-nosed face of the faun disappears; desire still speaks, but there is a veil of tenderness and melancholy. The chord of the woodwind, the distant call of the horns, the limpid flood of harp-tones, accentuate this impression. The call is louder, more urgent, but it almost immediately dies away, to let the flute sing again its song. And now the theme is developed: the oboe enters in, the clarinet has its say; a lively dialogue follows, and a clarinet phrase leads to a new theme which speaks of desire satisfied; or it expresses the rapture of mutual emotion rather than the ferocity of victory. The first theme returns, more languorous, and the croaking of muted horns darkens the horizon. The theme comes and goes, fresh chords unfold themselves; at last a solo violoncello joins itself to the flute; and then everything vanishes, as a mist that rises in the air and scatters itself in flakes."

The recorded performances of the music—there are currently some twenty of them—fall into three main categories: those that present the music in a deadpan, totally objective manner; those in which the conductor brings more of himself into the presentation by way of dynamic shading, *rubato*, and so on; and those in which the conductor luxuriates in the sensuality of the music and the expressive opportunities it affords. A prime example of the first approach is the recording by the young French conductor Jean-Pierre Jacquillat (Angel S-36518). If the notes and just the notes are what you're looking for in this music, Jacquillat provides them, period. Be warned that the principal horn player of the Orchestre de Paris plays with that saxophone-like quality that characterizes the tone production of many horn soloists of the French school.

MOST of the recorded performances quite naturally fall into the second category. Several outstanding versions in this group are those conducted by Sir Thomas Beecham (Angel S-35506), Pierre Boulez (Columbia MS 7361), Charles Munch (RCA LSC-2658), Eugene Ormandy (RCA □ARD1-0029, cassette ARK1-0029, reel ERP1-0029), and Michael Tilson Thomas (Deutsche Grammophon 2530145, cassette 3300187, reel L 3145). An excellent example of this genre—a performance conducted by Pierre Monteux—is apparently no longer available as a disc or cassette, but it can still be found as a reel-to-reel tape (London L 80108).

An example of the sensual approach to Debussy's *Faune* is Leonard Bernstein's recording (Columbia MS 7523, cassette 16-11-0206, reel MQ 522), but the reigning *locus classicus* performance of this sort is the one recorded by Leopold Stokowski in the spring of 1972 in London as part of the celebration of his ninetieth birthday (London SPC 21109, cassette M 521109; included, with other material, on reel 475091). If the faun of Mallarmé's poem was unsure of his romantic exploits, Stokowski, with his languor and eroticism, sweeps all such doubts aside.

The curious may wish to hear one of the several available recordings of the *Faune* as transcribed by the composer for piano duet. Alfons and Aloys Kontarsky's performance (included in the two-record set Deutsche Grammophon 2707072) is marginally more attractive than that by Bracha Eden and Alexander Tamir (London CS 6754), though the rigidity of both teams of performers vitiates the atmosphere and perfume of the music—and the original colors fade in the monochromatic keyboard transfer.

\* Mr. Bookspan's 1973-1974 UPDATING OF THE BASIC REPERTOIRE is now available in convenient pamphlet form. Send 25¢ and self-addressed #10 envelope to Susan Larabee, Stereo Review, 1 Park Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10016 for your copy. \*



Sidney Cowell

Composer Cowell and cat Pepper at work on *Symphony No. 14*.

Stereo Review presents the twenty-first article in the  
American Composers Series

# HENRY COWELL

*"I have more ideas than I can ever use. This  
is a happy state and I wish the same to all of you."*

By *OLIVER DANIEL*

At an international music conference held in Warsaw in 1973 there was much new Polish music performed. One orchestral concert featured a new organ concerto, the *Fantasia Elegiaca* by Kazimierz Serocki, a quasi-aleatory work that relied heavily, in the solo part, on tone clusters: small clusters flapped by the palm of the hand, often with astonishing rapidity; huge, massive clusters using hands and forearms, covering as many notes as possible; even clusters on the pedals. Great massive waves of sound flooded the hall. At the



end the audience burst into wild applause and bravos. A distinguished elder German critic who was sitting near me leaned over and said, "I first heard Henry Cowell play this way forty years ago and it produced a riot."

As an innovator, Cowell foreshadowed and realized much that has become part of the expressive vocabulary of today's young composers. He introduced tone clusters, aleatory procedures, experiments in harmony built on seconds (adjacent notes) instead of thirds (two notes, one note apart), the prepared piano, the free sliding string glissandos that Penderecki and the Poles seem to have rediscovered during the Fifties, rhythmic complexities which required new notation, and electronic experiments (in collaboration with Leon Theremin) which resulted in the invention of the rhythmicon, an instrument capable of producing a vast combination of rhythmic relationships.

His use of massive clusters suggests a conscious programming of noise long before Varèse's *Tonisation* (which Cowell published), and his suggestion of the use of natural sounds as far back as 1919 foreshadowed the development of *musique concrète*, which first bloomed in Paris during the late Forties. He produced works of indeterminacy such as his *Mosaic* Quartet in which he uses five exquisite miniatures to be played or repeated in any sequence. He invented "elastic form" as an outgrowth of music for dancers in which single measures and phrases are to be assembled as the performer requires or desires. Stockhausen erroneously thought he had originated the procedure in his *Klavierstück XI*, where he uses nineteen fragments in the same manner as Cowell had done when Stockhausen was probably about five years old.

Cowell maintained a lifelong interest in the musics of other cultures and felt as strong an affinity for those of India, Japan, and the Near East as many of his confreres have felt for those of France, Italy, or Germany. "At moments in world history when many different cultures have crossed, mankind seems to be shocked into enlarging the areas of conscious thought," he noted. "There are a thousand possibilities for the application of the personal creative impulse by combining new techniques with old traditions."

Cowell was unfettered by formal training, a fact which doubtless helped his fecund imagination to run wild. Pieces that he wrote to be played directly on the piano strings have the eerie wash of sound that presaged the world of electronic timbres which were to become the *materia musica* of composers writing two and three decades later. To find new sonorities on the piano, which was his most available source, he inserted knives, a darn-

ing egg, coins, even his hands to mute and color the strings, and fingers and palms to deaden reverberation—all long before his student John Cage won fame for the same procedures.

Cowell's music is both vast and comprehensive, and, as Virgil Thomson observed in 1953, it covers a wider range in both expression and technique than that of any other (then) living composer. And, considering the composers alive then, such a statement is impressive indeed. "No other composer of our time," Thomson wrote, "has produced a body of work so radical and so normal, so penetrating and so comprehensive. Add to this massive production his long and influential career as pedagogue, and Henry Cowell's achievement in music becomes impressive indeed. There is no other quite like it. To be fecund and right is given to few."

**H**ENRY COWELL'S story reads almost like fantasy fiction. His parents made an odd and fascinating couple. Harry, his father, a handsome, vital Irishman and son of an Episcopal dean of Kildare, was born in Carlow, Ireland in February 1866. He came to America while still in his teens for what was to be a kind of grand tour in reverse, and, after a series of adventures and misadventures, he ended up in San Francisco where he became part of the bustling literary set.

Another who moved in these same circles was Clarissa Dixon, poet, author, and woman of spirit and independence. She hailed from Hennepin, Illinois, where she was born on November 30, 1851. In 1893 Clara, then forty-two, and Harry, twenty-seven, were married in Oakland, California, and shortly thereafter Harry built a two-room cottage in the hills of Menlo Park not far from Stanford University. Their son Henry was born there on March 11, 1897. Clara busied herself with her writing while Harry earned a rather meager and insecure living as a writer and printer in San Francisco.

Henry, even at five, was fascinated with sounds and was delighted when Clara bought him a violin. No duckling ever took to water more naturally than Henry took to the violin, and he soon began his first music lessons with a seventy-year-old Englishman named Henry Holmes. Both Clara and Harry were proud of their son—particularly Harry, who perceived the possibility of Henry's becoming a prodigy in the mold perhaps of a Mozart. He took him to play for friends, colleagues, music lovers, and patrons, and even to one of the better photographers of San Francisco to have portrait photos made, one holding his violin and another seated at an old upright piano. They are sweet pictures of a child of seven, with a nimbus of long blond hair; the ambitious parents of Menuhin and Ricci could not have been more hopeful or expectant.

But family harmony had been less ordered and regular than the music the young prodigy studied and played. Clara was beginning to show the first signs of failing health, and Harry was roving. So, with a vision rare in such circumstances, Clara divorced Harry so that he could be free. But they remained close friends. Clara and young Henry moved to a house on Laguna Street near Post and took in roomers. This new location was adjacent to the Oriental district of San Francisco, and Henry's first contact with both the music and mores of the Orient was lasting and significant. During this time the violin lessons continued, and Harry, concerned with his son's progress as a prodigy, pressed him into performance whenever he could. But stress, both emotional and physical, became

### CREDO

"Music is my weapon," said Cowell when Edward R. Murrow asked him to express his credo for the brief program, called *This I Believe*, which CBS aired on radio during the late Fifties. "I believe in music," said Cowell, "in its spirituality, its exaltation, its ecstatic nobility, its humor, its power to penetrate to the basic fineness of every human being.

"As a creator of music, I contribute my religious, philosophical and ethical beliefs in terms of the world of creative sound—that sound which flows through the mind of the composer with a concentrated intensity that baffles description, the sound which is the very life of the composer, and which is the sum and substance of his faith and feeling."



Broadcast Music Inc.

*The composer in 1904, at age seven, a violin pupil of Dr. Henry Holmes of San Francisco.*

apparent, and the doctors who examined the now eight-year-old virtuoso diagnosed his apparent ailment as chorea, a nervous disorder that produces spasmodic twitching. Violin lessons were ordered stopped, and his career as a violin virtuoso ended as he and his mother moved back to the house in Menlo Park.

Following the San Francisco earthquake, Clara and Henry left California to stay with relatives in the Middle West. In Des Moines, Clara obtained a job as editor of a women's page on a local paper called *Successful Farming*. With the meager financial assurance of her editorial position, Clara and Henry moved into a modest house of their own on Walnut Street in Des Moines. She enrolled Henry in the local public school, but the experience was traumatic for him. He remained in school during most of the year, but soon experienced another bout with chorea.

Henry and his mother, now once again calling herself Clara Dixon, arrived in New York during the winter of 1907-1908. She was fifty-six, an author, having had numerous articles printed, and now she had a book ready to show to publishers. Her immediate masterpiece was a novel, *Janet and Her Dear Phoebe*, and the publisher gave her an advance of \$100. But the fame and fortune Clara had hoped to attain did not materialize, so she arranged to act as a caretaker during the renovation of a house on West Twelfth Street. Here, Henry remembered, he played on the scaffolding and, too, wrote his first composition, a setting of Longfellow's *Golden Legend*. This bit of juvenilia has been lost, except for a fragmentary theme which survives in his piano piece *Antinomy*.

But for all the literary gifts of Clara and the quite prodigious talent of her son, they seemed able to do nothing to bring in any money. After a few months on Twelfth Street, Henry and his mother moved into a furnished room. Clara continued to write but was not able to sell anything. Henry helped by acting as a delivery boy for a card manufacturer, but he could not earn enough even for the simple necessities. A sympathetic friend calling on them found both Henry and his mother in bed, ill and suffering from malnutrition. The Society for the Improvement of the Condition of the Poor came to their aid and provided a small apartment for them and a minimal amount of food and clothing. When the Society finally discovered a property owner in the family — Aunt Jennie out in Kansas — the two were shipped westward. It was a painful trip. Clara would have been happier returning to

California, but the funds provided by the Society were simply to send them to Kansas. Clara did not want to descend on her relatives, nor did they particularly welcome her and her frail eleven-year-old son. Farm life meant work, hard physical work; this the family understood. But culture, particularly music, was for them a subject more of contempt than of interest. They put up with Clara and Henry but ridiculed her for the time she spent writing. After a year and a half, Clara finally received a substantial check, instead of a rejection slip, for one of the many stories she had sent to a publisher. It came just as an inexpensive excursion rate to California was announced, and mother and son eagerly and happily returned to Menlo Park.

Their homecoming was not a warm one. The little house had been ransacked and was practically uninhabitable. When things were finally put in order, Henry began a series of odd jobs which were to provide the sole support for him and his mother. He became the janitor for the Las Lomas High School at a salary of \$12 a month, cleaned the chicken coops of a Captain Lyons for \$4 a month, collected and sold plants, and also herded cows.

While trying to keep the cows off a neighbor's property, Henry met its owner, Professor Lewis M. Terman. This fortuitous meeting was to be one of the most significant in Henry's early life. Terman had made an extensive study of geniuses of the past and as an outgrowth of this interest he began to study gifted children, conceiving the idea that intelligence tests could be used to select the ablest. He developed the Stanford-Binet test and was a prime mover in developing IQ testing during World War I. At the time of his meeting with Henry Cowell he was at work on his *Genetic Studies of Genius*, the first of three volumes published by the Stanford University Press covering the *Mental and Physical Traits of a Thousand Gifted Children*. He immediately recognized in the tousled young cowhand an ideal subject for his work. An extensive period of interviews and tests were begun, and Terman thoughtfully gave Henry fifty cents an hour for two-hour sessions several times each week. Since Terman was interested in the relative independence of native intelligence and formal schooling, Henry was a perfect specimen.

**T**HOUGH he obviously had some familiarity with the keyboard, Henry never had a piano of his own until 1910, when he bought his first piano with sixty dollars he had managed to save. Even before he had acquired any proficiency he began to compose. In exchange for tending her garden, he had weekly piano lessons from a Mrs. Boylan.

The piano was for him a musical magic lantern; he could give sound now to tones he had heard only in his mind. He had been composing mentally for as long as he could remember. "As a child," he wrote in *The Process of Musical Creation*, published by Stanford University, "I was compelled to make my mind a musical instrument because between the ages of eight and fourteen years I had no other, yet [I] strongly desired to hear music frequently. I could not attend enough concerts to satisfy the craving for music, so I formed the habit, when I did attend them, of deliberately rehearsing the compositions I heard and liked, in order that I might play them over mentally whenever I chose." At first he could hear only a melody and snatches of harmony; he had to make a great effort to imagine correctly the sound of a violin without having it melt into some other tone color. But he soon learned to

discipline his musical thinking so that he could control the sounds and "turn on a flow of them at will."

By the time he was fifteen, Henry had studied with various local piano teachers. But it was on his own, and in his strikingly individual way, that he composed constantly. Some of his works were in the form of letters to friends. He met the poet John Varian, who was a kind of bardic figure who interested him in the Irish legends that became an early literary inspiration for his piano pieces. Through the help of many who were interested in the young prodigy he made his debut in a recital sponsored by a San Francisco music club in the Hotel Fairmont, March 12, 1912. The program included his startling *Tides of Manaunaun* with its great, roaring tone clusters played by his forearms up to the elbows.

By the time Henry was sixteen he had written over a hundred compositions, and his proud father began taking him to various musicians in the Bay Area to get their opinion of the budding young composer. One he consulted was the composer Charles Seeger, who recognized in Henry "the first brilliant talent" of his teaching career. "He played his *Adventures in Harmony* with fists and elbows," Seeger recalled, and "I showed him some of my scores, and played him Schoenberg's Op. 11, Scriabin's Op. 74, and some Stravinsky." Ruefully, Seeger mused, "My conservative friends have always wondered why I did not teach him to be a respectable musician. My liberal friends have never given me credit for teaching him anything."

But truly, to teach Cowell anything at this stage was difficult. At sixteen he was the "most self-sure autodidact" Seeger had ever met, and in an attempt to channel the boy's surging creative energies, Seeger offered three alternative plans of study: (1) abandonment of "free" composition and total devotion to academic disciplines; (2) maintenance of free composition, but keeping clear of all "teaching"; or (3) concurrent but entirely separate pursuit of free composition and academic disciplines. The third was obviously the only tenable one. And that was it! Both Henry and Seeger felt that he had gone too far in his

*Cowell shows Joseph Szigeti some techniques of brushing and plucking piano strings in preparation for a 1944 performance.*



Wide World Photos

individual way to submit to a system of conventional formal training which was already beginning to show signs of disintegration in both Europe and America. At this same time Cowell was brought to the attention of Samuel Seward of Stanford University, and in the fall of 1914 Henry began courses in English with him while he spent mornings at the University of California in Berkeley studying harmony and counterpoint with E. G. Strickland and a single afternoon each week with Seeger exploring the resources of twentieth-century music.

It was a remarkable leap from grade school to the university. Work with Seward was intense, and many of Henry's essays from that period have survived; the most important of them were incorporated in his *New Musical Resources*, which he worked on between 1916 and 1919. During the fall of 1916, he came to New York at the urging of his mentors. His stay was brief. He enrolled in the Institute of Musical Art and began work with Frank Damrosch. As might be expected in anyone of Cowell's independent temperament, the relationship between him and Damrosch was immanently explosive. Henry, as an experiment, handed in a chorale as it had been arranged by Bach, and when it was returned with red-mark corrections he demanded a refund of his tuition.

At the end of his single term in New York he returned to California and continued his work there as before, giving increasing amounts of time to the preparation of his *New Musical Resources* for publication. It was not his aim, he said, "to delve into questions of aesthetics, into any philosophical discussions of what is good or bad, what should or should not be done, or what may or may not be done." He attempted to explain and rationalize some of his own experiments, and this led him into a penetrating study of the laws of acoustics. He immersed himself in a study of overtones and discovered, with an Einstein-like vision, "that the sense of consonance, dissonance, and discord is not fixed, so that it must be immovably applied to certain combinations, but is relative."

At the time he was preoccupied with solving many of the problems of rhythmic developments based on his theory of overtones. Cowell composed a number of works which utilized most of the complex harmonic and rhythmic cross-relationships his mind had conjured up. Two works of this period are the two quartets: *Quartet Romantic* (1917), for two flutes, violin, and viola, in which tonal durations and pitches are coordinated according to ratios of the overtone series; and *Quartet Euphometric* (1919), for string quartet, with meters derived from ratios of the overtone series, requiring such note lengths as  $\frac{1}{5}$  and  $\frac{1}{7}$  of a whole note. Though Cowell conceived and heard these works in his own mind, he realized that the meters were so complex that they were "obviously unperformable by any known human agency, and I thought of them as purely fanciful." He anticipated by two generations the young computer-oriented composers who would be fascinated to realize his creations. "If the day should come when the first movement of the *Romantic*, with all its rhythmical complexities, is actually playable, I should like to point out that it was conceived as something human that would sound warm and rich and somewhat rubato; whatever the electronic or other means used for it, its composer hopes that it need not sound icy in tone nor rigid in rhythm." But human ability must not be underestimated, for the Griller Quartet performed one movement of the *Quartet Romantic* and all of the *Euphometric* in Philharmonic Hall in 1964.

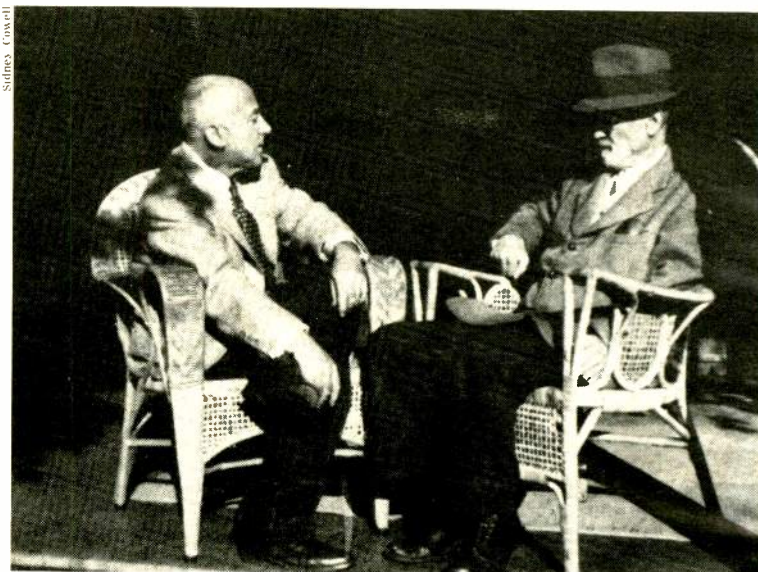
On February 23, 1918, Henry Cowell enlisted for the duration of World War I. After spending ten days on Angel Island in San Francisco Bay, he was sent to Camp Crane at Allentown, Pennsylvania, via New Orleans, where the blooming trees and shrubs so impressed themselves upon his mind that they were still a vivid memory in 1965. At Camp Crane he was promoted from foot soldier to cook and, in this capacity, served for three months. Through his initiative and the encouragement of the camp's commanding officer, a band was formed with Cowell as its conductor. Since he had never conducted a band, he welcomed the arrival of a professional bandmaster, and gladly turned over his baton to become an assistant conductor and band arranger. A full ambulance unit of eighty-one men was detailed as a band. At first they used their own instruments, but in October the camp commander purchased all new instruments on the installment plan to be paid for out of the camp's entertainment fund.

At the end of the war in November, the band was caught up in one of those nightmares of military bureaucracy. As Cowell remembered it, it seems that the camp commander at Port Ontario in Oswego, New York, was willing to assume responsibility for the unpaid band instruments—if he could have a band on his own post. Hence the entire unit, instead of being mustered out, was ordered to proceed from Camp Crane to Port Ontario. Letters were written to Secretary of War Baker on Cowell's behalf, and finally he and most of his colleagues were mustered out on May 6, 1919. Charles Seeger, who was active in the letter-writing project, put it this way: "Cowell has something better to do with his time!"

Returning to New York, he lived for a time in St. Mark's Parish House and made his first New York concert appearances at St. Mark's in the Bowery and in the auditorium of Wanamaker's department store nearby. Although these events preceded his official New York debut, one of the concerts was reviewed by Louis Bromfield—Henry's first New York review and Bromfield's first essay in music criticism. The concert was also covered by the perceptive Pitts Sanborn, who wrote in the *New York Globe*, May 12, 1922: "Cowell is a musician of unusually interesting quality. He is a thinker and a theorist on the future of the tonal art as well as a composer of intriguing talent. In his essays in musical 'futurism' there is nothing hit-or-miss or vaguely adumbrated. He knows what he is about, and his work is marked by that knowledge and intention. But quite apart from technical considerations, he is a composer of marked individuality, with something very personal to say for himself."

Reviews of Cowell's concerts were always animated, ranging from the ecstatic to the abusive. The critic of the *New York Sunday World* covered his first solo recital in Carnegie Hall on February 4, 1924, as if it were a sporting event: "It was a bare-fisted affair, not softened by gloves or guided by Marquis of Queensberry rules. There was much gouging, pushing, elbow work, and hitting in the clinches. . . . Mr. Cowell is such a modern composer that he makes Stravinsky look like the creator of *The Maiden's Prayer*."

In 1923 Henry embarked on the first of five European tours he was to make during the next decade, and he continued his annual tours of the States. Leipzig was the scene of his European debut on November 4, 1923. The response was riotous. The outraged conservatives began their booing and demonstration almost at once. The more



Cowell and Ives were musically and socially very nearly opposites, but each possessed the ability to understand the other.

radical element countered. It resulted in a brawl as violent as that which had been triggered by the premiere of Stravinsky's *Le Sacre* in Paris. In other cities it was the same, and as Cowell slammed his fists and forearms over the keys, producing sonorities none had ever heard before, as he plucked the strings delicately and ran his hands over them to produce Aeolian whispers or banshee shrieks, the controversy mounted. Warsaw, Dresden, Prague, Budapest, Copenhagen, Stockholm, Amsterdam, Milan, Vienna—all the music capitals of Europe heard the controversial young composer-pianist.

Following a London concert, Cowell was invited by a member of the Soviet Embassy to visit and play in Russia. At this time press-agency about movie stars, conductors, tenors and sopranos, pianists, and the like were usually embroidered to add more color and glamour, so the first version of the trip to Russia had it that Henry went in a private car, *à la* Paderewski, into which he gallantly invited Olin Downes, who was also Moscow bound, and that because of a lack of hotel space he spent his first nights on a park bench.

A simpler version, written by Henry himself, appeared in *The San Franciscan* for December 1930: "I went to Russia as a musician invited by the Soviets. . . . I did not go in a party. . . . I entered alone. . . . I took a third class sleeper. It is different from anything I have ever seen elsewhere. There is a very hard wood seat, flat, and a wooden board of a shelf which lets down on hinges and forms an upper berth. There is no bedding supplied; one either takes bedding along or rents it from the porter." On arriving in Moscow he took a taxi to the home of the composer Samuel Feinberg, who tried unsuccessfully to find him a hotel room. "At about 10:30," he wrote, "I composed myself on a park bench, prepared to spend the night." At about midnight a hotel page to whom he had given his park bench address informed him that a room was vacant. His room, he said, was palatial. "It should have been, as the bill later proved to be \$18.00 for the night."

The important part of the Russian experience was the keen interest shown by Russian composers, teachers, and students. Henry performed repeatedly at the Conserva-

tory, and arrangements were finally made for a public concert. He then went on to Leningrad where he gave another successful recital. Officially, the Committee of Russian Composers found his music too radical at first, but the enthusiasm generated by students at the Moscow Conservatory broke down their resistance. His first performance at the Conservatory had been scheduled to last for one hour but was extended to four, with Henry being asked to repeat many works several times. Recordings were made of his works, and finally the Committee of the Composers Union recommended that compositions of his be published. Hence, *Tiger* and *Lilt of the Reel* became the first compositions by an American to be first published in Russia.

But Cowell had things to do back home quite in addition to astonishing European audiences. In 1927, without any financial backing, he established *New Music*, a quarterly journal devoted to publishing the works of modern composers. On about 8,000 of the 9,000 circulars he had printed, he scribbled personal notes, dispatching them to composers, critics, libraries, conservatories, and schools here and abroad. Seven hundred subscriptions came in at \$2 each, and with a capital of \$1,400 he launched his first issue.

The first publication was the score of Carl Ruggles' *Of Men and Mountains*, and, upon receiving their copies, half the subscribers immediately canceled their subscriptions. But an encouraging letter arrived from Charles Ives, who sent a check for twenty-five additional subscriptions. When he came to New York in the fall of 1927, Cowell went to the Cedar Street office of Ives and Myrick, where he met Charles Ives for the first time. They talked animatedly about music, and Ives invited him to his house on East Seventy-fourth Street where Henry played many of his piano pieces for him. Ives was impressed and pleased with the fresh, experimental nature of the music. Of all the modern music that he had heard, he wrote in a letter to Violet Duncan (July 2, 1929), "Mr. Henry Cowell's is the most interesting to me. It has a fine underlying feeling with exceptional rhythmic and harmonic ideas and is of good substance."

On March 11, 1929, Nicolas Slonimsky conducted his Chamber Orchestra of Boston in a remarkable concert in Jordan Hall which included a Suite for Solo Strings and Percussion Piano with Chamber Orchestra by Cowell with the composer as keyboard soloist. The Suite was an assemblage of three of his piano pieces (*The Banshee*,

*The Leprechaun*, and *Fairy Bells*) with an added orchestral accompaniment. The Boston critics centered their attention on Cowell. "USES EGG TO SHOW OFF THE PIANO," headlined a review in the *Boston Post* by critic Warren Storey Smith. Then, in slightly smaller type, a second headline added, "Lead Pencil Also Put to Tonal Task by Cowell." A particularly unfavorable review by H. T. Parker appeared in the *Boston Transcript*, and it impelled Cowell to write to Slonimsky: "The reason his case is really so tenetless, is because of a lack of fine hearing of distinctions of tone, and some fundamental misconceptions. The interest in *The Banshee*, for example, is not that it suggests a Banshee, but in the remarkable number of subtle qualities of tone, and the way in which they are built into musical form. The name of *The Banshee* was added after the piece was written, to give the musical idea to people who do not have good enough ears to take interest in the music itself, without some exterior prop, such as a literary suggestion. . . . The interest in building a new musical form from percussion values should not dwindle if the auditor is led on a bit by the title of *The Leprechaun*."

**D**URING his many solo concerts throughout Europe, Cowell had become aware of the general ignorance of American serious music there. His suggestion that a series of European orchestral concerts be planned struck fire at once with the Pan American Association of Composers (which included Cowell, Carlos Chávez, Wallingford Riegger, Edgard Varèse, and others). Charles Ives became most enthusiastic and offered to underwrite the project. Concerts were planned for Berlin, Paris, Madrid, Vienna, and other cities. The first, in Paris, presented the world premiere of Cowell's *Synchrony*, along with works of Ives, Adolph Weiss, Carl Ruggles, and Amadeo Roldán, a Cuban composer. The second Paris concert featured works of Chávez, Riegger, Varèse, Carlos Salzedo, and Alejandro Caturla. When the programs were sent to the Boston papers, Philip Hale wrote an editorial for the *Boston Herald* (Tuesday, July 7, 1931). "Nicolas Slonimsky of Boston, indefatigable in furthering the cause of the extreme radical composers, has brought out in Paris orchestral compositions by Americans who are looked on by our conservatives as wild-eyed anarchists . . . the composers represented were not those who are regarded by their fellow-countrymen as leaders in the art, nor have they all been so considered by the conductors of our great orchestras." In place of Cowell, Ives, Riegger, Varèse, Ruggles, and Chávez, Hale suggested that the cause might have been better served had the programs contained instead works by Charles Loeffler, Edward Burlingame Hill, Deems Taylor, and Arthur Foote. But neither Cowell, Ives, nor any of the others should have been too upset, for this was the same Philip Hale who allegedly advocated the erection of signs in Symphony Hall reading "Exit in Case of Brahms." Ives reacted almost apoplectically. He called Hale "a nice old lady with pants on."

Undaunted by the mixed reviews from European critics, the Pan American group, with Ives' enthusiastic support, planned a second European concert series. For it, Cowell decided to compose a new work that would really create a stir. It was to be the first performance of a work for the new electronic instrument he and the Russian scientist Leon Theremin had been working on, a Concerto for Rhythmicon and Orchestra. Henry had conceived the idea of an instrument that could play rhythmic combina-

Dorothy Maynor performs with Cowell, the composer characteristically with a hand inside the piano rather than on the keys.



Breitbart Music Inc.

tions beyond the mathematical competence of performers. He had strong ideas about what pitch it should have and the relation between pitch and rhythm. He also conceived the idea of using the principle of "broken-up light" playing on a photoelectric cell. He took this concept to Theremin, and the inventor did the rest. A receipt for \$200 paid by Cowell on March 7, 1931, signed by Theremin is in the Americana collection in the New York Public Library. That was, presumably, a down payment. Cowell set to work at once on the composition of the Concerto for Paris and Berlin performances. Before the end of 1931 he had completed it and titled it simply *Rhythmicana*, a work in four movements with full orchestra. A second work for rhythmicon and violin was presented in San Francisco in 1932.

In appearance the rhythmicon looks a bit like a celeste with an odd assortment of levers. While the rhythmic problems were apparently solved, the sonic ones were not, and the tones that were produced were a set of peculiar beeps and bumbles. A second, improved instrument was ordered by Ives. In a letter to Slonimsky in January 1932, Ives wrote: "I had a long talk with Henry the day after you left. I told him what I told you about the 'rhythmicon' situation as I had got to thinking about it after our meeting—and we went into it from all angles. It relieved my mind to know especially that the new one would be nearer to an instrument, than a machine. There will be a 'lever' that can readily change the 'tempo' with pedals and also the 'tones' etc. . . . but the main question is whether it is yet time to present it at Paris—and if so how is the best way to do it. . . . I sent the remitted check to Mr. Theremin yesterday—and he's started the building." But the new instrument too seemed inadequate, and the projected performance of the Concerto was deleted from the Paris concert. Henry's own rhythmicon finally found its way to a basement at Stanford University and was ultimately dismantled; the second was sold by Slonimsky to Joseph Schillinger, who later attempted to take credit for the invention of the instrument.

And so it was that the first performance of Cowell's historic work was not given until forty years after its completion—on December 3, 1971, by the Stanford Symphony Orchestra conducted by Sandor Salgo. The previous year I had discussed *Rhythmicana*\* with composer Leland Smith, who was then deeply preoccupied with various aspects of computer techniques, and he decided to realize the rhythmicon part on a computer following Cowell's original instructions, which, miraculously, had been preserved by Slonimsky. Smith's translation of the score to computerized sounds reveals the work as a masterpiece and a real precursor of electronic music; it is one of the most advanced of all of Cowell's compositions and one that should be made available in recorded form, for it identifies Cowell at a stroke as one of the true pioneers of twentieth-century music.

**D**URING the early Thirties, Cowell was living in Berlin working on a Guggenheim grant. He had submitted his application to the foundation in November 1930. The application is unique. He begins with his ACCOM-

\*To avoid confusion that might possibly arise over the title *Rhythmicana*, I must point out that there are actually *two* works of that name: the one discussed here, which is the Concerto for Rhythmicon and Orchestra—the new title chosen by its publisher—which uses a unique notation for the electronic instrument, and a second *piano* piece in two contrasting movements, in which the right and left hands are written in fascinating counter rhythms.

PLISHMENTS and starts off saying, "I have never held a regular position anywhere," and then lists twenty-one orchestras and performers and "many others" who had performed his music. He adds a list of twenty major European cities, "etc.," and eighteen American cities (again "etc.") where he had played. He requested the grant in order to enable him to make a comparative study of all the different sorts of musical materials used by the different peoples of the world, those which were not customarily included in Western musical systems. He planned to work with the eminent musicologist Erich von Hornbostel, whose Phonogramm-Archiv contained not only a vast amount of Asiatic material, but also an extensive collection of American Indian music which Hornbostel himself collected in America beginning in 1906.

While in Berlin, Cowell joined a tennis club and frequently played with Arnold Schoenberg. "We were the two worst tennis players in the club," Henry admitted. Schoenberg invited him to perform for his classes and also to attend a series of lectures devoted to an analysis of the quartets of Mozart. (Although he attended the lectures, Cowell disagreed sharply with Schoenberg's theories. He felt that twelve-tone internationalism eliminated everything that has been developed as a national style. He was convinced that another kind of "internationalism" was possible, one in which "musical materials developed in a single culture are carried beyond the customs of that culture according to a logic inherent in the basic materials themselves." This retrospection was written in 1946 at approximately the same time as a conversation between Schoenberg and his former son-in-law, Felix

Cowell and Thomas Scherman try out a group of Indian tablas in preparation for the premiere of *Symphony No. 13* ("Madras").



Greissle, took place during which Schoenberg remarked, "Of course there are differences between him and me, differences of approach, of style, and even of opinion. But most important, he has always an aim. That is in essence all you can ask of a composer. It places him on my side."

The cultural and political climate of Berlin had begun

to change rapidly as the Thirties rolled in. During the post-war decade of the Twenties, Berlin had been a brilliant city; wicked, perhaps, but enormously exciting. Throngs of students from America, England, and other areas gravitated to it. Christopher Isherwood wrote in his *Berlin Diary* (winter 1932-1933): "The dead cold grips the town in utter silence. . . . Berlin is a skeleton which aches in the cold." The musical climate too was frigid. The conductor Hermann Scherchen wrote, shortly before his death, that by 1933 modern music, being considered "an excrescence of Jewish-Bolshevist decadence," was officially forbidden

Slonimsky's Berlin concert (the first of two) took place



Sidney and Henry Cowell, on tour in Ceylon, get firsthand instruction in correct performance on indigenous instruments.

in the Beethovensaal on March 5, 1932. Heinrich Strobel, who should have known better, wrote in the *Borsen-Courier*: "For two hours Nicolas Slonimsky bore down on the Philharmonic musicians until they finally made no secret of their ugly disposition. For an hour and three quarters the public submitted to the noise . . . pandemonium broke loose."

In the *Allgemeine Musikzeitung*, Paul Schwerts remarked, "Cowell's *Synchrony* begins with a silly little solo of the muted trumpet. The bone-softening trills of this milk-dripping introduction aroused irrepressible hilarity among the listeners. The program says that the particular distinction of this self-made man is the invention of so-called tone clusters, which are 'played' on the piano with fists and forearms. Well, this screechy and banging piece of so-called music is beyond any doubt a mighty *Tonkleister*."

"Why so coy?" asked Paul Zschorlich in the *Deutsche Zeitung*. "With one's behind one can cover many more notes! The musical inmates of a madhouse seem to have held a rendezvous on this occasion."

I have not found the name of Schwerts or Zschorlich in any current dictionaries; however, one of their contemporaries who achieved considerable fame shared similar views. "To me a single German military march is worth more than all the junk of these new musicians," wrote Adolf Hitler. "These people belong in a sanatorium."

Amid all of his concert activities, Cowell reached a peak in creativity between 1925 and 1930 when he composed some of the most original and exciting works of the period: *The Banshee*, *Ensemble* (which was to become his *Sinfonietta* in 1928), *Tiger*, *Pièce pour piano avec cordes*, *Synchrony*, his monumental Piano Concerto, *Sinister Resonance*, the Suite for Woodwind Quintet, and the Concerto for Rhythmicon and Orchestra.

In 1925 he composed *Ensemble* for strings and thunder sticks. Thunder sticks were instruments used by the Indians of the American Southwest in some of their ceremonies. They are also called "bull roarers." Actually they are sticks from a foot to a yard long attached to a leather thong; they are "played" by being whirled above one's head. They produce sounds ranging from a purr to a roar, depending upon the speed with which they are twirled. This sound of controlled thunder was one Henry conceived as being an essential element in his piece for strings. One movement, the Adagio, was for solo cello with three thunder sticks as accompaniment.

The first performance of the *Ensemble* created an uproar to match that of the thunder sticks. What might have been merely another concert of (then) modern music became a sensation far beyond the musical content, and Cowell gained additional notoriety for having very nearly killed a music critic: the story quite naturally profited from embellishment as it spread, but a thunder stick flying loose (there was one) *might* have struck someone a wicked blow. Two movements of *Ensemble* call for three thunder sticks swung by three thunder stickers. The *New Yorker*, intended for "caviar sophisticates" and also making its first appearance in 1925, treated the affair in its typical fashion: "Henry Cowell, who introduced 'tone clusters' last season, has returned, bearing thunder sticks, which . . . made their debut at one of the musicales of the International Composers' Guild. . . . The end of Mr. Cowell's stick declined to be party to the affair, and flew off the handle, seeking refuge in the general direction of Lawrence Gilman."

Deems Taylor observed too that Cowell made Bartók sound tame and conventional. Leonard Lieblich, who sat next to Lawrence Gilman, wrote in the *New York American*, "I whispered to Lawrence Gilman: 'I'm wondering what would happen if one of those things would fly off the string?' The next instant one did fly off and hit the side of Aeolian Hall an awful whack. 'There's your story,' remarked Gilman. So I left."

But Gilman did better. He was the only critic who seems to have listened to the music. "If he, Cowell, was aiming at those critics who sit on the left aisle, God was merciful to the unloved creatures, for the missile went wide of the shining mark which they presented, and the audience merely laughed. We resented all this, for we should like to have listened to Mr. Cowell's *Ensemble* undisturbed. . . . His music is closely knit, free of surplusage; it has tang and substance and profile. . . ." Although the score was published by Breitkopf and Härtel, no other performances of the work took place for nearly forty years.

In addition to his incessant concert activity and lectures at the New School in New York, Cowell found time to produce another book in 1933. It was a symposium called *American Composers on American Music*, published by the Stanford University Press. Though some of the material had been published before, most was entirely new. It gives us remarkable insight into the attitudes of

## THE MUSIC OF COWELL: A SELECTIVE DISCOGRAPHY

Cowell in 1924, caught by the camera in the midst of performing a work involving the use of piano tone clusters.



WE are fortunate that Henry Cowell recorded so many of his remarkable piano pieces, for no one else could have done them with such flair and such obvious authority. One of his earliest recordings as piano soloist was a performance of his *Tales of Our Countryside* with Leopold Stokowski and his All-America Youth Orchestra—a sadly inadequate recording, and, even sadder, now a rare collector's item (Columbia X 235, two 78-rpm discs). In 1950 he recorded twenty piano pieces plus a bonus disc with spoken commentary for the now-defunct Circle label; this is now available on Folkways. A few years later he did a similar collection (with better sound) for Composers Recordings, Inc., and in it all of his inventive, antic keyboard ways are demonstrated. He flings out tone clusters with arms and hands with virtuosic élan, he strokes the strings caressingly and eerily, he dampens notes to produce strange, percussive sonorities. As Debussy did with his *Préludes*, Cowell named his pieces with suggestive titles, usually added after the fact. And again, like Debussy's, the works are full of wonderful tonal sonorities.

Cowell's world was all sound, and one will never find it burdened by the emotional weight of romanticism, the depressing constructivism that plagued many followers of both Schoenberg and Hindemith, nor even an easily predictable sameness. An additional set of nine Cowell piano pieces, brilliantly recorded by Herbert Rogers for CRI, shows another pianistic side of Cowell entirely, for there is nary a tone cluster or sonic trick in the lot. Confluent through all of Cowell's music, however, is a dominant lyricism, a sense of experimentation, strong Irish as well as Oriental influences, and a natural Americanism. His chamber and orchestral compositions display a remarkable sense of individuality, imagination, and color. At times

some of his fast buzzing movements seem positively lepidopterous. Cowell's music ranges from the almost primitive simplicity of his *Hymn and Fuguing Tunes*, to the high sophistication of his quartets and the 26 *Simultaneous Mosaics*, and on to his fascinating *Concerto for Rhymlicon and Orchestra*.

To appreciate his virtuosity and originality in handling orchestral material, we have his *Symphony No. 11 (Seven Rituals of Music)*, Louisville 545-2, which covers a broad stylistic gamut, and his stunning *Variations for Orchestra*. His remarkable affinity for and understanding of the music of the Orient and Near East are best illustrated in his Japanese-inspired *Ongaku*, his *Persian Set*, and his *Homage to Iran*. Cowell's musical legacy is a veritable horn of plenty, and for those just discovering his music there is a rich treasure waiting to be enjoyed in the current catalog.

### Orchestral Music

*Ancient Desert Drone*. Janssen Symphony of Los Angeles, Werner Janssen cond. EVEREST 3118E.

*Ballad; Hymn and Fuguing Tunes Nos. 2 and 3*. Louisville Orchestra, Jorge Mester cond. LOUISVILLE S-682.

*Music 1957*. Japan Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra, Akeo Watanabe cond. COMPOSERS RECORDINGS 132.

*Ongaku for Orchestra*. Louisville Orchestra, Robert Whitney cond. LOUISVILLE 595.

*Persian Set*. Orchestra, Leopold Stokowski cond. COMPOSERS RECORDINGS 114.

*Sinfonietta*. Louisville Orchestra, Jorge Mester cond. LOUISVILLE S-691.

*Symphony No. 5*. Vienna Symphony Orchestra, Dean Dixon cond. DESTO 6406E.

*Symphony No. 7*. Vienna Symphony Orchestra, William Strickland cond. COMPOSERS RECORDINGS 142.

*Symphony No. 15 ("Thesis")*. Louisville Orchestra, Robert Whitney cond. LOUISVILLE 622.

*Symphony No. 16 ("Icelandic")*. Iceland Symphony Orchestra, William Strickland cond. COMPOSERS RECORDINGS 179.

*Synchrony; Variations for Orchestra*. Polish National Radio Orchestra, William Strickland cond. COMPOSERS RECORDINGS S-217.

### Chamber and Solo-instrument Music

*Homage to Iran*. Leopold Avakian (violin); Mitchell Andrews (piano); Basil Bahar (Persian drum). *Quartets: No. 2 ("Movement for String Quartet"); No. 3 ("Mosaic"); No. 4 ("United")*. Beaux Arts Quartet. COMPOSERS RECORDINGS 173.

*Ostinato Pianissimo for Percussion Orchestra*. New Jersey Percussion Ensemble, Kenneth Hosely cond. NONESUCH 71291.

*Piano Music: Tides of Manaunau; Exultation; The Harp of Life; Lilt of the Reel; Advertisement; Antinomy; The Aeolian Harp; Sinister Resonance; Anger Dance; The Banshee; Fabric; What's This?; Amiable Conversation; Fairy Answer; Jig; The Snow of Fujiyama; The Voice of Lir; Dynamic Motion; Trumpet of Angus Og; Tiger*. HENRY COWELL (piano). FOLKWAYS 3349.

*Piano Music: Six Ings Plus One; Episode; Invention*. Herbert Rogers (piano). COMPOSERS RECORDINGS S-281.

*Piano Music: Advertisement; The Banshee; Sinister Resonance; The Aeolian Harp; The Tides of Manaunau; Lilt of the Reel*. Henry Cowell (piano). *Prelude for Violin and Harpsichord*. Robert Brink (violin); Daniel Pinkham (harpsichord). COMPOSERS RECORDINGS 109.

*Sonata No. 1 for Violin and Piano*. Joseph Szigeti (violin); Carlo Bussotti (piano). COLUMBIA SPECIAL PRODUCTS 4ML-4841.

*Trio for Violin, Cello, and Piano*. The Philharmonia Trio. COMPOSERS RECORDINGS 211.

*Triple Rondo for Flute and Harp*. Claire Polin (flute); Phyllis Schlomovitz (harp). EDUCO 4031.

### Vocal Music

*The Donkey*. John McCollum (tenor); Edwin Biltcliffe (piano). DESTO S-6411/6412.

"... if He please" for Chorus and Orchestra. Norwegian Choir of Solo Singers; Oslo Philharmonic Orchestra, William Strickland cond. COMPOSERS RECORDINGS 165; 217.

*Toccata for Soprano, Flute, Cello, and Piano*. Helen Boatwright (soprano); Carleton Sprague Smith (flute); Aldo Parisot (cello); John Kirkpatrick (piano). COLUMBIA SPECIAL PRODUCTS 4ML-4986.



most of the prominent American composers toward one another and about their various issues and problems. By 1937, he had completed another work, comparable to his farsighted *New Musical Resources*, called *The Nature of Melody*; regrettably, it has never been published.

**I**N 1941 Henry Cowell and Sidney Hawkins Robertson were married. Mrs. Cowell is a remarkable woman about whom a fascinating biography could be written. She is an intrepid collector of folk songs, a fine musician in her own right, a brilliant photographer, and a writer of consummate skill. Her influence on the second period of Henry's life was profound. Together they collaborated on innumerable articles and wrote the first complete biography of Charles Ives. It was through Sidney that Henry became interested in William Walker's shape-note collection of modal folk hymns, the same "primitive" music he had heard on visits to Kansas and Oklahoma. Walker had used many of the works of Billings and his school along with newer works in similar style. Henry began to wonder what might have happened to this native idiom if it had been allowed to develop naturally into a twentieth-century art music, and he produced some twenty or more attractive two-movement answers to this question, in addition to movements of his symphonies that incorporate hymns, fuguing tunes, and country song styles.

In 1942 the Cowells bought a modest frame house on a magnificent mountainside covered with evergreens and laurel in the town of Shady in the Catskills. This was their real home, though they divided their time between it and their various West Side apartments near Columbia University. With Sidney, a new kind of order came into Henry's life. The hectic round of recitals gave way to one of teaching and lecturing at the New School for Social Research, Mills College, Peabody Institute in Baltimore (1951-1956), and Columbia University (from 1951 until shortly before his death). He became an active participant in literally every organization involved in contemporary music. He wrote streams of articles and criticisms for *Modern Music*, *The Musical Quarterly*, and numerous other publications. Add to this his prolific musical output during the succeeding decades, and the totality of solid accomplishments seems staggering indeed. The experimental trend, save for a few exceptions, gave way to an interest in broader expression. In 1942 he composed his *Gaelic Symphony*; it was his third, and it was to be

Henry Cowell, Leopold Stokowski, and soloist Kimio Eto in 1964 after the premiere of Cowell's *Concerto for Koto and Orchestra*.



Adrian Stiesel for BMI

followed in fairly quick succession by *seventeen* more. In 1946 he completed his Fifth Symphony; its haunting slow movement became the opening signature for the CBSTV *Omnibus* program. In 1952 he completed two more symphonies, and in 1953 wrote three of his finest and most mature works: Symphonies Nos. 9, 10, and 11. The last was a commission from the Louisville Orchestra and was recorded in their series. Subtitled *Seven Rituals of Music*, it is one of his most imaginative and frequently performed works. He wrote two symphonies each year during 1960, 1962, and 1964, and his Twentieth was completed shortly before his death in 1965.

Despite this array of works, the title of "symphonist" does not become Cowell, for the works more closely resemble suites than any prototypical symphonic form. But little matter, for here is some of the most natural, melodiously rich music in any twentieth-century composer's output, and every aspect of Cowell's restless creativity is to be found here. His scherzos are invariably built on Irish jigs and reels. The long ballad melodies in several of the symphonies (and in other works) relate to the typical Irish ballad style of the "come-all-ye." Movements of sustained dissonance often precede or follow ones of utter concordance; experimental ideas from the piano works turn up in orchestral dress. He often inserts hymns and fuguing tunes that were used elsewhere, and freely adds Oriental characteristics that blend in with utter ease.

Although he had long been interested in the Orient, Cowell had never been west of California, and he eagerly looked forward to hearing, in its native surroundings, more of the music that had so moved him and which had become such a natural part of his musical vocabulary. During the fall of 1956, he and his wife Sidney therefore set out on a world tour under the sponsorship of the Rockefeller Foundation and the U.S. Information Agency. Starting in Ireland, they traveled through Germany and on to Turkey, the Near East, and finally to India and Japan. At the special invitation of the government of Iran, the Cowells spent the winter in Teheran. It was not his first official contact with Iran, for during World War II the Shah of Iran wrote to President Roosevelt and asked him to recommend a composer who could set Walter Camp's "Daily Dozen" physical exercises to Persian rhythms for use by the Iranian army. At the time Cowell was acting as music editor for the Office of War Information and the State Department asked him to do the job.

In Teheran, he spent much of his time at the new Iranian radio station, and he became fascinated by much of the music he heard. He, in return, paid tribute to his hosts by composing a number of works not based on any actual ethnic material but written in the style and spirit of Persian music. One was his *Homage to Iran*, and another, which he originally thought of as *An American in Iran*, happily became *Persian Set*.

The winter in Iran was not easy, and the cold weather and altitude were trying on both the Cowells. On March 1, 1957, after flying over a series of 16,000-foot ridges in small planes, they arrived in Pakistan, where they were immediately registered in a nice hymn-singing hospital in Karachi in which *Nearer My God to Thee* and *Jesus Is the Best of All* were served with breakfast.

They were discharged from the hospital shortly, though, and managed to accomplish much in a few days. In a letter dated March 6, Henry wrote, "I have done right well in Karachi, which I leave today. There have

been broadcasts of my Eleventh and Tenth Symphonies, and also a half-hour program on which I played and was interviewed, and now there are two programs of recorded music . . . one on my birthday . . . I can hardly realize that I'll be sixty." The occasion was well celebrated on the island of Ceylon, where Henry and Sidney were invited to the Government College of Music and Dancing. As a special birthday tribute students and teachers danced and performed on various native instruments. By the middle of April the Cowells had reached Japan.

JAPAN was another world for the Cowells, particularly after the long cold winter in Iran. The tone of their letters is joyful. One from Sidney described a visit to a Temple of the Zen sect. "We were presented to its abbot, he in a thin purple robe over his black kimono, with an orange sash. . . . The Buddhist prayers especially arranged for us made a marvelous ostinato under the slow melody of five flute players with urgent drum beats and triumphant deep gong tones to begin each 'verse' of the prayer." Very soon Henry began to think in terms of Japanese music. On May 23, he wrote that he had been asked for a second work to be recorded by the Louisville Orchestra. The result, a piece called *Ongaku*, which literally means the art and science of sound, is one of his best, a unique blend of Japanese essence and Western means. Also emerging from his stay in Japan was his Concerto for Harmonica, in which he uses the instrument in the style of the Japanese sho. Two koto concertos came later. Upon returning home, Henry completed his *Madras* Symphony for Thomas Scherman, who gave the premiere in Madras with his Little Orchestra which was touring the Orient. He repeated it in New York later in the season.

It was not until the last decade of his life that real success, great recognition, numerous honors, and a measure of financial security came to Cowell. Unfortunately, it was also a time of illness; in 1957 he had the first of a series of strokes. Cowell's works increasingly received performances by major orchestras, and critical reaction was totally unlike that inspired by his piano concerts years before. His Symphony No. 11 attained a sudden popularity and critical acclaim. "Composer Cowell was given an ovation as he was summoned by conductor Paul Paray," stated a Detroit *News* critic. Ormandy took the work on tour, and Irving Kolodin commented in the *Saturday Review*: "It is delicately, robustly, winsomely, wanglingly written for a large orchestra with a vast array of percussive effects from the Balinese to the Harlemaesque." New York critic Louis Biancolli called it "one of the most impressive additions to the American repertory of recent years." There were still misunderstandings, however. When the symphony was played in Savannah, the *News* reported: "It was a highly successful introduction to modern music on the part of the orchestra. The composition, however, has something reminiscent of the *New World* Symphony by Debussy" (*sic!*).

The year 1962 was a banner year for Cowell. It marked the fiftieth anniversary of his debut as composer and pianist and also his sixty-fifth birthday. A handsome booklet was published by BMI with photos and tributes. William Schuman called him ". . . a founding father of Twentieth-century American music." Telegrams arrived from the mayor, the governor, and one from the President: "You hold a place of high honor in American arts, and you have been a source of stimulus to many students and performers of music. I join with your many

friends and admirers in paying my respects and congratulations. John F. Kennedy."

Many all-Cowell concerts were given, and numerous conductors programmed his works. In New York, Stokowski introduced his Symphony No. 15, called *Thesis*, which was commissioned by BMI, and also played his *Ensemble* (minus the thunder sticks) to an enthusiastic audience. In July he received a letter from the Department of State stating that the U.S. Mission in Berlin had been asked by the Senat of Berlin to invite Cowell to participate in the First Berlin Music Festival to be held there in April 1963. While in Berlin he was taken ill and rushed to a hospital. Complications developed, and in his final years Cowell was physically debilitated.

Curiously, however, his musical interest and ability seemed unimpaired. Frail as he was, he continued to compose and to attend concerts to hear his own music. Botanists have long observed how a dying plant will often put out a profusion of blossoms before it succumbs. Henry was such a phenomenon. Not long after a series of operations, he was bent on hearing the New York premiere of his just completed *Simultaneities*—twenty-six simultaneous mosaics which harked back to his early experimental days. And the very next month, in December 1964, he was at the Philadelphia Academy of Music to hear Stokowski perform his new Koto Concerto with the blind Japanese virtuoso Kimio Eto playing. It was a brilliant and colorful affair, and Cowell, wan and frail, accepted the enthusiastic applause. The reception inspired him to re-orchestrate the slow movement for orchestra alone to give it added life; he called it simply *Carol*. In January, at a concert of the Contemporary Music Society in the Guggenheim Museum, he conducted from his seat in the auditorium a performance of the movement from his *Ensemble* that had produced the thunder stick incident. This time bamboo wind chimes were used, played by four composers: Alan Hovhaness, Chou Wen Chung, Henry Brant, and Shinichi Yuize. "The work drew bravos last night," wrote Theodore Strongin of the *New York Times*. "It is a short eloquent melodic statement to which the rustle of the wind chimes adds an edge of animation,"

IN May, Cowell went to Dartmouth for the premiere of his Koto Concerto No. 2 (1965). On August 8, he heard the first performance of his Trio, also a product of 1965. On September 22, he attended his last concert to hear his last choral work performed by Augusto Rodríguez and the Chorus of the University of Puerto Rico. Confined by then to a wheel chair, he heard the chorus from the back of Philharmonic Hall. It is appropriate that the text of the work should be *Ultima Actio*. And though this was his final hearing of any of his compositions, music continued as always to tenant his mind. With thoughts of a Twenty-first Symphony singing in his imagination, he died at his home in Shady on December 12, 1965.

He had once said, "I like to think that Charles Ives was right when he declared: 'There is always something more to be said.' For myself, I have more ideas than I can ever use. This is a happy state and I wish the same to all of you."

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Oliver Daniel, musicologist, writer, and specialist in American music from the eighteenth century to the present, is Vice President, Concert Music Administration, Broadcast Music Inc.

# A TURNTABLE CHRISTMAS

AS this month's cover suggests, it looks (from this vantage point at least) like a record Christmas, and we thought we'd remind you of a few of the more imposing packages it would be pleasurable to give or receive this year. You could have the whole batch (twenty-three of them) for \$607.29 less whatever discount you can wangle, but let's be practical. Left to right, top row, you might choose: Volume 10 of Telefunken's Bach Cantata Series (S+W 17/1-2 \$13.96), Warner Bros. Records' "Fifty Years of Film Music" 3-CD 2737 \$13.98, and the first volume of RCA's five-album release of the piano art of Sergei Rachmaninoff (ARM-3-3260 \$20.98). Second row: the Smithsonian Institution's "Classic Jazz" collection (PS 320), Philips' EMI recording of Wagner's "Ring" (6747.037 \$19.70), Angel's new "Otello" (SCLX 3809 \$21.98, reviewed in this issue), and Columbia's 100th anniversary Charles Ives box (M4 32504 \$27.98). Third row: Philips' prize-winning set of Monteverdi madrigals (6799.006 \$39.90), Volume 1 of Deutsche Grammophon's complete Bach organ works (Archiv 2723 008 \$51.32), London's complete "Ring" (RING S \$120),

RCA's very new "Hansel und Gretel" (ARL 2-0637 \$13.98) and their even newer "Bohème" (ARL 2-0371 \$13.98, reviewed in this issue). Fourth row: London's new "Così Fan Tutte" (OSA 1442 \$27.98), Angel's just-released, not-yet-reviewed "A da" (SCLX 3815 \$21.98), Columbia's recording of the late Pablo Casals' "El Pessebre" (M2-32966 \$13.58, also reviewed in this issue), Philips' recording of Berlioz's "Trojan" (6709.002 \$39.90), and then the London "Bohème" (OSA 1299 2) \$13.96. Fifth row: Telefunken's bulging box of Gesualdo madrigals (SJA 25086 \$48.86), Columbia's splendid Bessie Smith collection "CP 33" \$5.98, London's "Iberia" by Alicia de Larrocha (CSA 225 S \$3.56), and Volume 8, latest in the same company's series of the complete Haydn symphonies (STS 15210/15 \$20.94). Sixth row: one of the Musical Heritage Society's albums of the chamber music of Gabriel Fauré (MHS 1286/90 \$3.50 each), and finally the comprehensive "History of Cante Flamenco," available either from Murray Hill (S-436C \$7.95) or from Everest (3366/5 \$14.95)—ah, the mysterious record industry! Good shopping, and Merry Christmas! —Ec.





# Country music's TRIPSIN' WOMEN

By Noel Coppage

“WHAT do these women want?” Sigmund Freud is supposed to have said. “What do they want?” Possibly other men have posed similar questions, but there is still at least one province of American culture where they seldom pose them out loud. That is the enclave known as country music, in recent years fairly invaded by little ladies who seem, on the surface, as placid and uncomplicated as their Indian-fighting, berry-preserving, calf-birthing grandmas . . . women who keep telling us they want just about what Patsy Montana said she wanted, 'way back before some of us were even born, in the first million-selling country record by a female: *I Want to Be a Cowboy's Sweetheart*.

Yessir. Not only do the women sing about how they want to stand by their men, they *do* it, at least in front of microphones. Country music has had this thing about couples as long as the makings of couples have been available. There were Porter and Norma Jean, Buck and Bonnie, George and Mel-

ba—and then Porter and Tammy, Merle and Bonnie, Charlie and Melba, and Buck and Susan, and then Porter and Dolly, and George and Tammy—in addition to Bill and Jan, Ferlin and Jean, Conway and Loretta, Jack and Jeannie, David and Barbara, and, for audiences averaging sixteen and a half years of age, Johnny and Tanya. This is only a partial listing and does not include the more-or-less permanently formed duets such as Lula Belle and Scotty or Wilma Lee and Stony, whose members weren't trying to forge separate solo careers. A touring country show more than likely will have one woman in it but not two, and there *are* women in the field now starting to speak out about tokenism, about being used for decorative purposes (and they do tend to be as pretty as speckled pups) and for wifely identification purposes during the duets. But there are still several being quoted the way Jack Greene's other singing half, Jeannie Seely, was quoted by *Music City News*: “I don't like to be alone and traveling alone was really getting to

me. . . . I got to where I'd get so depressed I was not enjoying what I was doing. Forming a band of your own is a great responsibility and mostly when the girls do it they've got a husband who can travel with them and kind of share the responsibility."

Jeannie's husband, Hank Cochran, has to stay around Nashville and take care of his business, which is pegged to the songs he writes—many of them for female singers. The one that really put him in business was *I Fall to Pieces* for Patsy Cline. Most of the songs country women sing were written by men, which is one reason why the women still appear to share Patsy Montana's ambition, one reason why the singers so often sound like Hemingway women transplanted to the South: the stuff of a Good Old Boy's daydreams. Marty Robbins puts into Loretta Lynn's mouth the words: "When we made love, it brought a newness to my life;/You taught me a brand-new way to live,/But now it's doubtful if I'll ever be your wife./'Cause I gave everything a girl in love/Should never give." Jerry Crutchfield has Barbara Fairchild waiting patiently

in line for another old boy: "So helplessly I've had to just stand by,/And watch her hurt you so much I could die;/So maybe now I'll have the chance to try/To kiss away your tears and help them dry."

Other male writers, and some female ones, have supplied female singers with cheatin' songs and others aimed at creating a "fast woman" image (poor Norma Jean has had her share of brazen-hussy numbers), which is just another side of the same old daydream. From either side, the country woman's repertoire is mostly an unreal hash of romanticism: the little lady is stuck on the subject of home and family (the kid being brought into it mainly to be quoted as asking tearfully, "Where has Daddy gone?"), and her complaint is stuck with the same three whimpering chords. When men write for themselves, or for one another, they like to look beyond their own picket fences—in fact, they are loath to admit they *have* picket fences. Waylon Jennings seems to want to be a cowboy, but not the kind that enjoys just *one* sweetheart; Tom T. Hall sings of Watergate, small-town funeral processions, other public affairs; Mel Tillis goes into what it must be like to come back from the war with some part maimed or shot off. The outside world is men's; women are concentrating on making a place for themselves in a home of some kind, starting with the search for Mr. Right . . . and usually becoming stalled there, a good man being *so* hard to find that a gal can't seem to help worrying about that disaster so terrible it has to be spelled out, as Bobby Braddock and Claude Putman spelled it out for Tammy Wynette, D-I-V-O-R-C-E.

**B**UT women are just now becoming a force in country music. Ten years ago, they were as rare as marijuana smokers at a Young Republicans rally. And already The Pedestal is crisscrossed with hair-line cracks. Dolly Parton has gone solo after several years as Porter Wagoner's duet partner, and is leading her own band around the country. Melba Montgomery, who has a distinctive, verge-of-crying sound when she sings and a marvelous Alabama drawl when she talks, is making her move to become known by something other than the company (first George Jones, then Charlie Louvin) she keeps onstage. "One of my problems," she told me, "is that I feel like in the past I've been cast as a duet partner. I've had that image. I'm trying to concentrate on solos now. . . . I feel like I'm just now getting confidence in my voice. Been recordin' for twelve years, and I'm just now starting to do my best singing."

*Country Music* magazine some time ago elicited comments from several female personalities on

## THE ORIGINAL TRAIPSIN' WOMAN

*Traipse*, v.i. & t. *Colloq.* a To walk; trudge. b To wander about idly; to gad.



Courtesy: Journal and Louisville Times

One of the near-legends of country music, and certainly a spiritual precursor of today's female country singers on the "fried-chicken circuit," is Jeanette Bell Thomas (born 1881). A stenographer, Miss Thomas traveled from courthouse to courthouse in Kentucky, collecting as she went the folk tunes and ballads the mountain people sang for her. She organized a number of folk festivals in Kentucky and wrote half a dozen books, including one called *The Traipsin' Woman*, the nickname given her by the hill people. —Ed.

various subjects, and Tammy Wynette, the same one who sold two million copies of *Stand By Your Man*, as much as said the men-know-best doctrine is nonsense. And she *did* say she is teaching her four daughters that they are the equal of any male. Dottie West likened having to stay in the home all the time to being in prison. Dolly Parton said what's fair for the gander is fair for the goose. *But* Tammy also intimated that one should not pull too radical an image change on one's fans, Dolly suggested that fooling around on the road is the wrong thing for a man *or* a woman to do, Lynn Anderson said she worried about her image, Dottie said she liked the "country lady" image, and Donna Fargo said she wore pantsuits onstage so she could move around without making the women think she was trying to vamp their men. And Jean Shepherd said country entertainers still like to let *men* wear the pants.

Marti Brown, whose first Atlantic album was entitled "Ms. Marti Brown," greeted me with: "I'm not a women's libber. That's the first thing people ask me, because of that album title, but that was just a gimmick they thought up and it's given me an image I've got to get rid of somehow." And Melba Montgomery assured me that "women's liberation is a thing I'm not really concerned about—I travel a lot, but when I'm home, I'm a typical housewife and mother."

Then again, there's Jeannie C. Riley's revolt against the miniskirt. A few years back, it would have seemed just so much commonplace (read reactionary), "sex-is-dirty" covering up by a good, run-of-the-mill, Christian girl—but now there's this sex-object politics attached to it. In her case, it wasn't so much her one big song, *Harper Valley PTA* (written by Tom T. Hall), that typed her, but flacks and managers who wanted her to dress like the song's heroine. She has stopped wearing minis and stopped doing songs like *Good Enough to Be Your Wife*.

Country women seem to have a *lot* of image problems, but they are all liberated, to varying degrees, by the traveling they do. Jody Miller may stay

around the ranch more than most, but she was mainly being a spokesperson for housewives, not one herself, when she answered Roger Miller's *King of the Road* several years ago with *Queen of the House* (a typical example of the difference in male and female viewpoints—according to country songwriters). I pulled into a Holiday Inn in Olney, Illinois, to meet Marti Brown—who was about to do a virtually unrehearsed show there with a local three-piece roadhouse band—and found the slot in front of her room occupied by an International Scout. "How do you like my travelin' machine?" she asked. "It belongs to the guy I go with. I've got an almost new Pontiac, but I leave that thing in the driveway and take this whenever I can. I get a kick out of driving it, and I can fold down the back seat and make a play area for Leah Ann—and it gets good gas mileage, which is important if you haven't had a hit record yet." Leah Ann is her four-year-old daughter. Marti, who is D-I-V-O-R-C-E-D, usually takes the child on the road with her. They stay in Holiday Inns a lot because the motel chain provides babysitters. "We've stayed in so many of them," said Marti, "that when we pulled into one in Valdosta, Georgia, Leah Ann stretched out her arms and said, 'Ah, it's good to be home again.'"

**T**HOSE who *have* had a few hits may be able to avoid scrounging for babysitters, but they aren't able to travel as light as Marti. Traveling with her own band, as opposed to traveling for years with Porter Wagoner's, would seem a sudden and heavy responsibility for Dolly Parton. But Dolly seems to be a natural at most of the things she tries, and I wouldn't be surprised if she has some innate resources for dealing with a picker who's "tard of takin' orders from a woman." She *could* melt him with her smile, of course, melt him right down and remold him, but she's also what they call a spunky kind of a gal who might take an eyeball-to-eyeball approach. Dolly is, in any case, a groundbreaker. Loretta Lynn has won more awards and was the first female to win a country-music entertainer-of-



the-year award (libbers, looking back, think Patsy Cline *should* have won something like that), and Loretta has right smart of that mountain-child spunk also, but Dolly is the first one to distinguish herself as a top-grade writer as well as singer. She not only writes the woman-contemplating-man staple better than the men who are pitching songs to her colleagues, but she also gets into other things: communing with nature, what to do with a juvenile-delinquent daughter, and, where others are rewording television-commercial slogans, real plays on words such as, "He's a real go-getter;/When she gets off work, he'll go get her." Her melodies are among the best in town, modal-influenced, *mountain-influenced* (she's a native of East Tennessee), and they stand out like laurel above the junkyard-flatland recycled progressions attached to the songs most country girls sing. Dolly seems to write and sing mostly by instinct; she has a vibrato that couldn't be learned and a mountaineer's unconsciousness of self when it comes to phrasing. No one else's is better and only Loretta's may be as good.

Loretta Lynn is another mountain girl (from Eastern Kentucky), and she generally comes off as more of a scrapper than Dolly. She literally invited one "other" woman to put up her dukes (duchesses?) in *Fist City*. She doesn't mind singing a good cheatin' song, and often sings the kind that tells men she knows what it's like Out There; she's the best there is at delivering such a line as "It just dawned on me what sundown does to you." And Loretta writes a fair number of songs, but I'm bound to say her singing is about forty times as remarkable as her writing. She has the mountain accent in her singing voice but doesn't use it much in her writing voice. Her vocals are purer than Dolly's, a little less stylized, and by any standard lovely. Her tone as a writer, though, is pretty much straight Nashville. Even *Coal Miner's Daughter*, with its slightly unusual subject matter, had one of those formula melodies that have about got me convinced that not only do most country songs have the same bridge, but they

have the steel guitar doing the same things through the bridge.

Jeanne Pruett has written several songs—used to turn them out for Marty Robbins when her husband was his lead guitarist. They've been competent but not notorious goose-bump raisers. Her big hit, when it finally came, was *Satin Sheets*, written by John E. Volinkaty. Jeanne has an authoritative delivery, but her sound is nasal and strident. I'd enjoy bumping egos with her about as much as I'd like to hear her do three of your garden-variety whining bitch songs in a row. She can affect an interesting zingy-metallic sound, though, especially when they turn the treble up during the mixing, as it sounds like they did in *Satin Sheets*.

Tammy Wynette has done some highly commercial writing in collaboration with others, particularly her producer, Billy Sherrill, but her songs haven't been all that influential—possibly because her *singing* has attracted so much attention. Tammy perfected the aborted-sob-delay treatment in phrasing (Ferlin Husky tried it earlier but never could quite make it behave), she has a nice tonality to go with it, and that's an especially good combination for singing milady's day-to-day complaint. Loretta's voice carries some of the beauty and toughness of mountain people, and Dolly's suggests the idyllic if not the metaphysical factors at work on the rawboned set, mountaineers and red-dirt hillbillies alike. But Tammy's is breath-to-ear with those whose dreams are more materialistic: beauticians, truck-stop waitresses, honky-tonk queens, high-school girls yearning to be stewardesses. Her voice is a reminder that, in music, country doesn't necessarily mean rural.

**D**ONNA FARGO has shown promise as a writer, having found a nice lilt for some of her up-tempo melodies and lines that do seem to try to help the girl singer define herself as a whole person. *Superman* even took on the male ego. She has resorted to the formula too often, though, for one who seems to have such potential. She does have this image as the Happiest Girl in the Whole U.S.A. to think about.



Barbara Fairchild has done a little writing and shows some promise. She sounds something like a young Brenda Lee (as Donna sounds something like a younger Tammy Wynette), while the real Brenda Lee has developed a few cracks in her voice and sounds more believable than she used to. Barbara is unquestionably country, though, as the term is defined nowadays, and it was always questionable whether Brenda was. She helped pioneer the rockabilly sound, and nowadays is recording songs written by Paul McCartney and Stevie Wonder. She does use steel guitars, though.

Dottie West co-wrote the Coca-Cola commercial and then converted it into the song *Country Sunshine*, and she has written other tunes of about that quality but not that catchy. Dottie has been rather influential as a singer, teaching little girls it's all right to sing country and *not* sing it through the nose. Her approach is rather studied, though, it seems to me, and sometimes has the singer seeming to be estranged (if not divorced) from the emotional meat of the song.

Marti Brown, not a writer, but formerly a jazz singer and clarinet player ("In college I was a fan of Stan Kenton and Julie Christie," says she, who is now an admirer of Nancy Wilson), has been able to warm up Dottie's straight-pop phrasing for excellent results when the song will allow it; her reading of Donna Fargo's *Sing for My Supper* is one of the undiscovered true nuggets of country-music gold. Diana Trask, who not only tried first to be a jazz-pop singer but was born in Australia, occasionally stands writing by her man, Tom Ewen, but the few of those efforts I've heard—like Diana's torchy singing—sound as if they're trying too hard to be country. Her drawl sounds a little forced, as good as Laurence Harvey's in *Walk on the Wild Side* but not as good as Peter Ustinov's offhand samples on the talk shows. But Diana's delivery *is* dynamic; she could holler the "Chew Mail Pouch" lettering off the side of a Tennessee barn.

Melba Montgomery, who wrote the hit *We Must Have Been Out of Our Minds* for herself and

George Jones in 1963, is still writing occasionally, sometimes with her husband, session musician Jack Solomon. "I'm not a consistent writer," she told me. "I like to have a pretty good idea before I write anything down." Melba's singing is much more distinctive than her songs, being one of the most melancholy sounds in the field. Like Dolly's, her style should be just about impossible for anybody else to imitate.

It would be fast work, indeed, if a great number of women *were* writing as well as most of them are able to sing country music. When Kitty Wells sang *It Wasn't God Who Made Honky Tonk Angels* in the early Fifties, answering Hank Thompson's *Wild Side of Life*, there were hardly any other girl singers in the business. Molly O'Day, who fronted a band in the Forties (hiring, at one time, Mac Wiseman), must have been quite a phenomenon. Kitty Wells, technically a terrible singer, had an extraordinary amount of hill-country soul in her nasal twang—just about the same sort as her sponsors, Johnny and Jack, had. Kitty and Johnny Wright still travel together, making tours and recordings (and being married to each other), and, to many a country-bred child of the Fifties, she'll always be the queen of country music.

**P**ATSY CLINE, who won an Arthur Godfrey Talent Scouts award in 1957, was technically a pretty good singer and brought her own kind of small-town, hard-time soul to the fray. She had extraordinary impact. The corny backing she usually had only made her voice seem more classy, contrast working the way it does, and she really did sound as if she was falling to pieces when that was what the song said. She lived what they call a checkered life: her parents divorced, she left school when she was sixteen to take a job, started singing nights while working days as a drugstore clerk in Virginia, and later was married and divorced, seriously injured in an automobile accident, and killed in a plane crash, along with Cowboy Copas and Hawkshaw Hawkins. The Country Music Hall of Fame in Nashville





displays one of her effects found in the wreckage, a music-box cigarette lighter that plays *Dixie*. Patsy befriended Loretta Lynn when Loretta came to town in 1961. One of the few other new girls in town in those days was Dottie West, although Jean Shepherd and Ferlin Husky were getting their duet roles sorted out (remember *A Dear John Letter?*) somewhere along in there.

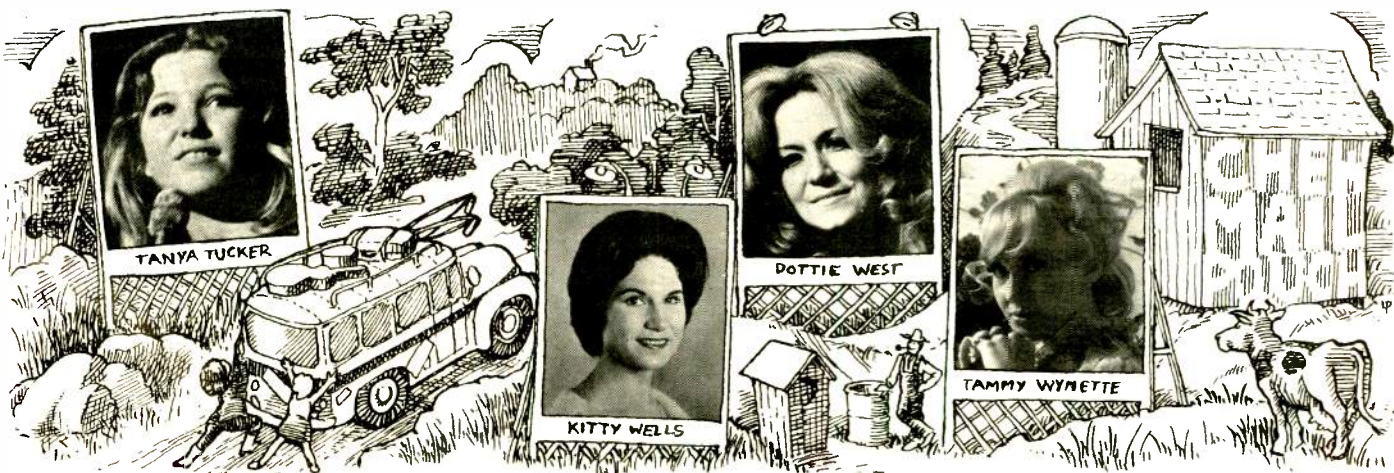
Today a certain number of female singers are classified as country rather than pop only because, well, because that's the way it is. Lynn Anderson (whose mother Liz is a writer of some success) has been trafficking in violins rather than fiddles for several years now, and doesn't seem to mind having an image as a pop-fringe figure—although she *does* wear a cowboy hat sometimes. The major agent in the making of her image was Joe South's pop song *Rose Garden*; Lynn sang it with a bit of a country lilt and more than a bit of pop blandness. Jody Miller has a marvelous, flawless voice, but one that's pop all the way, a sure thing in Las Vegas if I ever heard one. Barbara Mandrell, who is outrageously beautiful and strums the banjo besides, has sung some nice harmonies with semi-slicker David Houston, but as a solo singer she gives only the most casual attention to any possible meanings a song's words might have. In the right setting, she could pass for a pop singer of the Thirties. Olivia Newton-John, born in Wales, reared in Australia, now living in England (what in tarnation *is* going on here, one may well ask), seems to have snared Brenda Lee's old rockabilly crown. Her voice seems capable, but her material so far has been as shallow as it is commercial; she *has* brought back male bass voices in the choruses, though. Tanya Tucker, in her middle teens, has brought kids out in droves to the country-music shows, and twenty-three-year-old Johnny Rodriguez, her sometime touring partner, has helped with that. Tanya is, well, another torch singer, throatier and meaner sounding than Diana Trask but not quite as ripe, not quite as convincing. Every time I hear her singing *Would You Lay with Me (In a Field of Stone)*, I want to

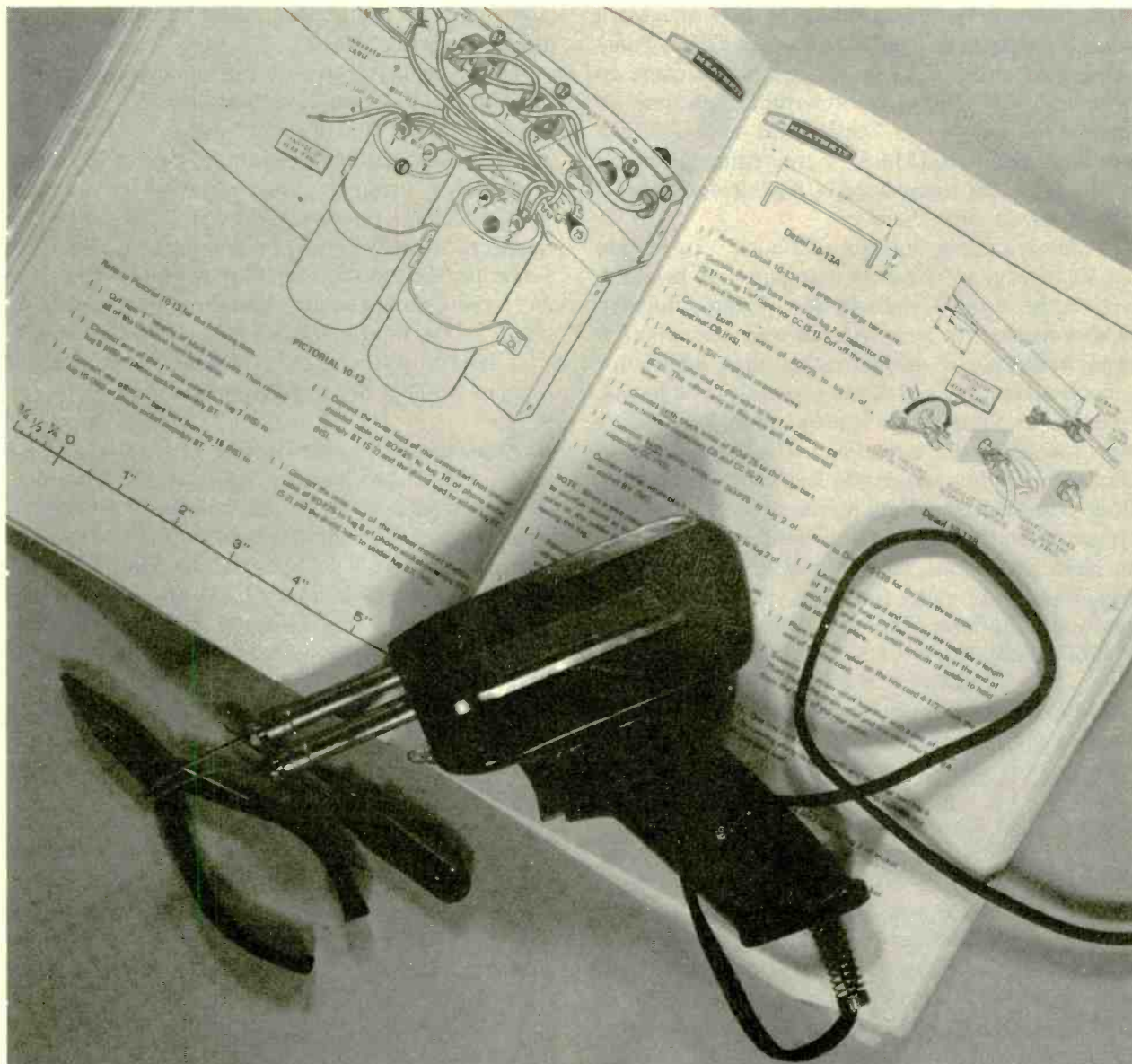
add another parenthetical phrase having to do with the legal age of consent.

The thing that makes some of these recordings "country," I suppose, is the legend "Visit the Country Music Hall of Fame" printed on their jackets. It's all a matter of degree, of course: to really old hands in the genre, most of today's commercial stuff, whether it be purveyed by males or females, is suspect. "I don't do any of this modern country," Grandpa Jones told a reporter from *Country Music*, "about men running around on their wives and all. . . . Us old-timers call that stuff *skin songs*. . . . If you want to hear real country, you've got to go to a college or a university beer joint."

**O**LD-TIMERS do seem to like Dolly Parton, and some of them like Loretta Lynn, but the great majority of female singers think their place in country music is out along the fried-chicken circuit, where the people know a lot more about Dottie West's Coke commercial than they know about traditional country music. Working women travel this circuit in \$100,000 custom-decorated, two-bedroom Silver Eagle buses, in little International Scouts, and in various other vehicles. Some of them hire other women to ride along and keep them company. It no doubt becomes repetitive, pulling onto those same drugstore-and-courthouse main streets, singing those same three chords, mouthing those same good-girl/bad-girl lyrics, but it's a living, it gets a girl out of the house—and it makes a few days at home all the sweeter. Especially when it affords the kind of home Tammy and George Jones managed to buy south of Nashville, a fifteen-room mansion with columns and everything on 340 acres of meadows and woods . . . or if it affords a *whole town* of your own, which Loretta Lynn purchased.

And *is that* what these women want? Well, as they gain confidence, courage, and skill in speaking for themselves, they'll no doubt elaborate on whether it's the satin sheets or the *power* money can buy that interests them. God knows what the Good Old Boys will daydream about then.





Associate Technical Editor Ralph Hodges suggests you try giving yourself

## A KIT FOR CHRISTMAS

**I**t is unfortunate, but of all the practical and pleasing gifts you *could* choose for friends or relations during this holiday season, an electronic kit is probably not one of them. In fact, when I consider my own little family circle, I can think of nothing more likely to nonplus or even terrify them than to give any one of them, without prelude, a box of loose electronic bits and pieces accompanied by an instruction book on Christmas morning. And as for my several friends who *do* build kits regularly, I

would hardly presume to select their next project for them.

But giving *oneself* a kit for Christmas—that's a different story. Not only is it excellent therapy for the post-holiday doldrums, when leisure tasks of a creative, absorbing nature can refresh mind and body, but it also affords a chance to escape, discreetly, those same kith and kin when your first delight in their company around the Yuletide fire has waned a little.

When looked at in the proper light, the several benefits of building a kit can be very persuasive. First, there is the cash saving, typically about \$100 over the equivalent factory-wired unit (if one such is available) for something like an integrated stereo amplifier, a bit more or less for other types of equipment, depending on their complexity. Second, there is the sense of accomplishment, the feeling of having acquired at least some slight mastery over a mysterious but potent element in one's environment (in the case of complicated electronics this may be illusory, but the satisfaction is there nonetheless). Third, for some people, there is the simple, uncomplicated pleasure of successfully employing whatever manual talents they possess. Kit building is not difficult, but it can be time-consuming. It is perhaps best described as a form of "busy work" for both mind and hands, as relaxing as the sometimes almost automatic activity of knitting, but more stimulating and satisfying because it requires the active exercise of the mental faculties.

So why, then, isn't *everyone* building kits? Well, there are many answers to that question beyond the easy one of simple indolence: let me set some of them up so that I may knock them down with appropriate rebuttals.

● *Item:* I don't know anything about electronics.

Irrelevant. An orangutan, unless he could read, would probably find kit building beyond him, but a patient child, given a soldering iron and an instruction manual, would not. Kit building requires no knowledge of electronics. And, by the same token, the construction process, in and of itself, will *teach* you nothing about electronics either. You will, however, learn to distinguish a resistor from a capacitor, a diode from a Philips-head screw, but you will get no closer to an electrical engineering degree than that unless the kit inspires you to embark on a course of study—and the Heath people *do* have home-study courses available as well.

● *Item:* I want the best hi-fi components for the price, not some do-it-yourself plaything.

Contrary to frequently expressed belief, the audio kits of a given manufacturer differ not at all from the same company's factory-wired counterparts, and available kits include some of the most highly respected audio components on the market (see accompanying box). Many of them are eagerly bought in factory-wired versions by people who lack the time or the self-confidence to build a kit. And no matter who builds a component, the factory or yourself, the really difficult and critical sections of an amplifier or tuner are preassembled, tested and in working order ahead of time, and any problems that may arise are seldom of a really serious

nature. Harmonic distortion, for example, doesn't rise a couple of per cent just because your chassis wiring looks a little sloppy. Stereo separation or signal-to-noise ratio will occasionally suffer a bit if certain wires aren't properly located. But, in such cases, the kit manual tells you explicitly how to route them to avoid trouble, and that's that. Poor solder connections or faults of mechanical assembly usually don't degrade performance subtly; they simply prevent a kit—or certain parts of it—from working at all, and are easily set to rights.

● *Item:* So I build a kit and it doesn't work. Where am I then?

In good hands. Dynaco and Heath, the major kit manufacturers, spend months preparing each of their assembly manuals. The first drafts are distributed to people of both sexes, in all walks of life, many of them with no kit-building experience at all. The mistakes made by these amateur constructors are collated and studied, and instructions or assembly procedures are then redesigned to prevent recurrence of error. The new procedures are then tested in the same way. This makes sense when you consider that a kit manufacturer can't afford the time or manpower to handle great numbers of factory returns. The two companies mentioned have been in the kit business—profitably—since pre-stereo days, and they have in that time honed their communication techniques down to a fine art. Any mistake you're likely to make they've already seen and forestalled in the instructions.

**B**UT what if you do hit a highly original snag or two? Though the manufacturer cannot take the whole kit back and exchange it for a new one so you can take another crack at it, and though he cannot refund your money, he is standing by to give you help in correcting your trouble through direct mail or phone contact with experienced technical advisors at the factory or at a local warranty station. (Heath even packs a *photo* of the man to get in touch with for help in every kit!) I've dealt with a number of these people over the years (yes, I've had my troubles too), and have found them to be invariably polite, alert, and helpful—amazing when you consider the kind of work day they must put in.

In the event a factory return becomes necessary, the policies of the major kit companies are similar and reasonable. For repair or minor corrective service, a *maximum* fee is usually specified. Even if you must pay this maximum, it is never so large as to negate entirely the savings realized by building a kit in the first place. The cost of parts that were defective when supplied is always absorbed by the company, and in those instances when the customer

was clearly not to blame for a problem, every consideration is given. Incompletely assembled or thoroughly botched kits get a certain amount of individual attention. Occasionally, if rarely, the factory will even undertake to rebuild a kit on terms worked out with the customer in advance. But in general the manufacturer tries to persuade the customer himself to do as much of the time-consuming (and therefore costly) corrective work as possible.

A diplomatic approach is advisable when dealing with customer-service departments, since the way in which they handle your problem is to a certain extent discretionary on their part. It is good to remember first that the trouble, if trouble there is, can more than likely be traced to your own error, and second that though such departments cannot be anything other than net losses to their companies, the personnel are genuinely eager to help. Coming on like gangbusters will do little to *increase* that eagerness.

Should you decide that kit building is for you, it would be well at the start to face up to a few caveats. First, and rather more important than it might at first appear (boredom is a terrible thing), is the necessity of realizing that no kit as complex as, say, a tuner or an amplifier (and especially a receiver) can be completed in a single evening. Even a full weekend may not suffice, since it is advisable to rest every three or four hours or so to recoup your powers of concentration. You must therefore gear up mentally for the long haul—rushing inevitably results in mistakes. The mistakes are harmful not because they go undetected (if you follow the kit book faithfully, you'll usually catch your error by discovering that a part required for step 98 has already been erroneously installed at step 37), but because the trouble of correcting them will exasperate you and lead to further errors.

Because you know the job can't be finished in one sitting, it is better to begin methodically, pausing often to inspect and even to admire your handiwork. Along the way you'll figure out techniques that may speed things up. For example, I recently discovered to my surprise that hook-up wire, which frequently comes coiled in thick hanks from which you cut off the length required, is much easier to handle and install in the chassis if you straighten out all the bends and kinks (by running them between your fingers) ahead of time. You'll be well repaid for the extra trouble when you find that there are ten or more wires that have to follow the same route through the chassis.

Most kit instruction manuals are similar in format. They begin, after a few laudatory words about the product and how clever you were to select it,

with an inventory of parts: transistors, diodes, capacitors, resistors, switches, controls, nuts, bolts, and heat sinks. For identification, drawings of each part accompany the list—good, unmistakable drawings. Somewhere in the beginning of the book you are given a short course in soldering (or referred to such instruction in a supplementary booklet). Soldering is easy, but it is absolutely mandatory that you practice first by making two or three “joints” on unessential items. You can use bits of the hook-up wire that comes with the kit for this, since a foot or two extra is always provided.

You'll also find a description of the tools the kit assembly will require: a pencil soldering iron (about \$5 to \$15, depending on its versatility), a pair of long-nose pliers (under \$2 if you shop at a discount store—the pliers don't have to be heavy-duty), a device to cut the plastic insulation off the wires (a wire stripper is available at any radio or electrical shop for a dollar or so), a wire cutter (diagonal cutters are easiest to work with), and, finally, a good screwdriver.

**A**SSEMBLY comes next. All kits—and all factory-wired components, for that matter—consist of a sheet-metal shell (the chassis) with knobs, switches, and a decorative panel on the front, input and output connectors on the rear, and maybe a wooden case to enclose and ornament the exterior. Inside the shell are circuit boards—wafers of resined glass fiber or phenolic material having holes through which are fed the wire leads of transistors, resistors, etc. Where the leads emerge on the opposite side of the board they are soldered to a metal-foil pattern that connects them to the other parts they'll be working with. Your job, since all the chassis parts come pre-shaped and punched with all the necessary holes, is simply to (1) insert the parts into the circuit board and solder them in place (but not always—some kit manufacturers do even this for you), (2) bolt the controls, transformers, large filter capacitors, and connectors to the chassis, and (3) interconnect them all with specified lengths of hook-up wire. Typical pages from a Heath manual are shown at the head of this article; just follow their instructions—and a couple of hundred others like them—and the job is done.

The obvious next question is, of course, just which kit you should build first. Few kits present any significant difficulties in actual assembly, but they do test your perseverance in differing degrees, depending, for the most part, on their complexity and the number of assemblies involved. If you're the sort who can stick with an enormous jigsaw puzzle right to the bitter end, you may be capable of



\* \* \* HOW ONE GUINEA PIG FARED \* \* \*

WHEN the article subject of kit building was first proposed some little time ago in *STEREO REVIEW*'s editorial offices, it was decided that we should find an utter novice at kit building, turn him (or, in this case, her) loose on a typical kit, and describe the results, calamitous or otherwise (not that we really expected failure, of course). An apt subject was found in Production Editor Paulette Weiss, willing volunteer—willing, that is, after we had used various tried and tested persuasive tactics.

The kit we chose was the Dynaco SCA-80, an integrated stereo amplifier that was judged to be a desirable and fairly straightforward "first" kit for a beginner. We had done all we could to stack the deck in as "typical" an arrangement as we could manage, not exactly wishing for but perhaps expecting some "typical" difficulties. For these purposes Paulette was a total loss. She disdained advice and supervision, worked steadily and productively while we endured a beery exile in the next room, and emerged at last, after several construction sessions, with a perfectly respectable facsimile of the unit pictured in the kit book. What's more, when we gathered around in pyromaniacal glee to watch her plug it in, the thing lit up and functioned in an absolutely normal fashion, producing pleasurably undistorted music when hooked up to speakers and record player. There was nothing for us to do but pack up our fire extinguishers and go home.

Kidding aside, Paulette did make one minor error: the speaker switch was wired backwards, apparently because she was looking at the wiring diagram upside down when she completed that step. As a result, since she could not be persuaded to check over the wiring ("Get lost, Ralph" were her words, as I recall), the music emerged from the wrong speakers—a small matter, and easily corrected. But let Paulette tell it.

—Ralph Hodges

WHEN I was first approached on the subject of kit building by Ralph Hodges, I must admit I hesitated a bit. I had seen him wandering about the office wringing his hands and muttering to himself as usual, but when his wildly rolling eye fiendishly and finally alighted on me, I knew Something Was Up. The clever ploy of beating me into submission with a rolled-up copy of *Ms.* magazine worked admirably, and I agreed to play guinea pig to Ralph's scientific observer. Within a few weeks, and much to everyone's surprise, I produced a functioning facsimile of an amplifier. Yes, folks, I did it, and if I can do it, anyone can.

Perhaps I should begin by explaining those "few weeks" which should normally be several hours. The kit was built on weekends at the home of a friend, Ed Buxbaum, Art Director of our sister publication *Popular Electronics*, who provided the necessary tools and working space. The former were minimal—a soldering iron, a screwdriver, a pair of pliers, and a combination wire cutter and stripper. (The latter, I found, was absolutely *de rigueur*.) A kit builder's life is made easier if all the parts can be spread out during the building process and left that way from session to session until completion. This was made impossible in my tiny studio apartment by two charming but inadvertently destructive cats whose chief delight in life is batting small objects about the floor until they disappear forever among the dust bunnies under my bed. The Dynakit I was taking on provided the exact number of screws, lugs, and other small pieces of hardware, so to lose one would have meant a long wait for an extra from the manufacturer or the delay of a trip to the hardware store.

A brief lesson in soldering from the Buxbaum-Hodges team, a table and chair placed near a window with adequate lighting, a radio tuned in to my favorite FM rock station, and I was ready to go. The building of a kit imposes

a sense of organization on the most flighty of sensibilities. As the other editors around the office will readily agree, my head can often be found drifting about on someone else's shoulders or lying unused in some dusty corner, yet even I was forced into an orderly approach to the thing. The Dynakit instruction manual is written clearly and simply in step-by-step form. Once completed, each step, no matter how small, must be checked off by the builder in the manual. (This system tells you exactly where to return to if you have paused for a snack or some such and have lost your place.) The small hardware for different sections of the project comes in individual envelopes, and I found it convenient to segregate the pieces in each package in small individual tin trays (ash trays will do).

The building went smoothly and swiftly after the initial session, in which I learned how to make a perfect, smooth solder joint without soldering my hair into my jeans zipper. I worked for only a few hours each weekend, and within that time I gradually developed a steady, comforting rhythm that was only occasionally disturbed by Ralph's motherhen clucking outside the door. My only difficulty was a very minor one: a control knob for the face of the completed amplifier had been poorly machined so that the screw would not fit into the bored hole, and the knob had to be replaced. Other than that, I had absolutely no manufacturer-caused problems.

The plugging-in ceremony was one whose solemn splendor I shall never forget. As my trembling hand brought the line cord to the wall outlet and Ralph covered behind a sofa, Ed softly hummed a melody which swelled into the thundering *Hallelujah* chorus as the power-switch light flashed on. So filled was I with the sweet satisfaction of accomplishment that I cried out, "Told you so, Ralph!" I immediately regretted this display of *hubris*, fearing the gods would strike my amplifier dead, but when wired up to speakers and turntable it functioned nicely.

The project taught me nothing of the actual electronic technology which goes into such an amplifier, but I did emerge with a sense of having completed a vast and difficult Chinese puzzle and also with a more open attitude toward things mechanical and electronic than I would have believed possible. An appetite I didn't even know existed had been whetted. I began opening up and repairing broken clocks or toasters, and eventually took an audio course given by the Society of Audio Consultants. I am now a certified Audio Consultant, and have written several equipment articles for *Rock* magazine. However, the production of the amplifier was an end in itself, and quite sufficient. The rest is mere accidental bonus.

—Paulette Weiss

tackling any kit on the market. But if your patience or attention span is somewhat limited, start small for your first effort. The easiest kits tend to be power amplifiers (with the exception of the Dynaco Stereo 400, which contains rather complex protective circuits). Integrated amplifiers are the next step up, and receivers are the most time-consuming of all. Tuners are difficult to classify; most of them are easier than an integrated amplifier, but an extravaganza like the Heath AJ-1510 is a major project by any standard.

Note that units festooned with elaborate controls and switches on their front panels must also be similarly festooned with elaborate wiring inside to connect them to all the circuits they control. This is not

pointed out with any intention of discouraging you from attempting such ambitious kits, but merely to keep you from kicking yourself after you have bought a kit with a dozen illuminated control legends that require the painstaking wiring of a dozen little lamps to the proper selector switch.

As you settle down to work, keep the mood light and free-wheeling. Accept the fact that building this kit is going to take some time, and go about it carefully, step by step. Unplug the TV set, put that football game out of your mind (there will always be another one), and ease yourself into a contemplative attitude. You may find that you have made yourself the merriest little Christmas you've had in a long time.

### \* \* \* WHERE TO GET YOUR KITS \* \* \*

THE two old pros in the kit business are Heath and Dynaco. Their eminence and success has brought about two side benefits for the consumer: they have extensive product lines and they provide elaborate, expertly prepared assembly manuals. This is not to say that any kit manufacturer can't provide adequate wiring instructions. Over the years, however, the experience gained by these two companies in writing and pretesting their manuals has made most of their kits beginner-proof. That they take such pains suggests that the companies anticipate a long product life for their individual designs, and this is true. Dynaco, for example, has never stopped making (and selling in substantial quantities, it is reported) *tube* amplifiers similar to those that were among its very first products.

A certain emphasis on the simple and functional prevails at Dyna. The face plates of the company's products are, well, *plain*. But, as long-time Dynakit builders will attest, their innards are loaded with personality and an overall excellence of design that makes most Dynakits instant classics as soon as they appear. And happily, their usually modest prices belie the sophistication that goes into them.

The Dynakit line consists of tuners, preamplifiers, power amplifiers, and integrated amplifiers. It includes as well one of the most powerful stereo power amplifiers available (the Stereo 400) and what is certainly the most powerful *four-channel* power amplifier now on the market (the QSA-300). The company makes no attempt to furnish a product for every price level, but a fairly wide selection of transistorized and tube equipment is available. Most Dynakits are also offered in factory-wired form, and these sell briskly to non-do-it-yourselfers.

The Heathkit line is the perfect market companion for the Dyna product: appearance counts heavily at Heath, as evidenced by their kits' chromed face plates, softly glowing front-panel illumina-

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#### AUDIO KIT MANUFACTURERS

- Ace Audio Co., 25 Aberdeen Drive, Huntington, N.Y. 11743 (preamplifiers)
- Dynaco Inc., P.O. Box 88, Blackwood, N.J. 08012 (for components offered, see text above)
- Great American Sound Co., Inc., 8789 Shoreham Drive, West Hollywood, Calif. 90069 (400-watt stereo power amplifier, 1,000-watt mono power amplifier, and a four-channel preamplifier to come)
- Heath Co., Benton Harbor, Mich. 49022 (for components offered, see text above)
- Prokit (Gately Electronics), 57 West Hillcrest Road, Havertown, Pa. 19083 (professional gear, including preamplifier/mixer, portable mixer, equalizer, echo unit)
- Schober Organ Corp., 43 West 61st Street, New York, N.Y. 10023 (power amplifier)
- Southwest Technical Products, 219 West Rhapsody, San Antonio, Texas 78216 (preamplifier, power amplifiers)

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nation, and the function-indicator lights that bedeck much of their equipment. Internally, Heath designs are best described as conservative and very thoroughly worked out. The line is vast, and includes tuners, integrated amplifiers, and receivers in two- and four-channel versions in all price ranges, as well as cassette decks, TV sets, marine elec-

tronic equipment, calculators, and various types of test equipment. Several well-known speaker systems from other manufacturers are also offered by Heath in kit form, and they provide styling alternatives along with price savings. Virtually all the Heath consumer products are available *only* as kits, although at one time the AR-1500, certainly one of the most celebrated stereo receivers ever built, was offered factory-wired in response to popular demand. If the company has a *pièce de résistance*, it is probably the AJ-1510 FM tuner, a digital-readout, frequency-synthesizing device that represents some sort of ultimate in electronic sophistication for a consumer product.

There are a few assembly differences worth noting between the Heath and Dyna products. Dyna supplies most printed-circuit boards with the parts already installed on them; all you have to do is bolt and wire the boards into the circuit. You must usually install these parts yourself on Heath's boards—an easy procedure that can be done in almost furious haste once you train yourself to be accurate. On the other hand, most Dynakits require that you cut and strip the hook-up wire to specified lengths for point-to-point wiring, while Heath frequently provides a wire "harness." This is a bundle of wires strapped together, already cut to length and stripped. You simply bend it into the proper shape, flop it into the chassis, and connect the ends to the designated terminals. It's hard to say which approach saves the most time. I would guess that I usually come out about even when building these companies' kits, taking into account their differing complexities. But it is possible that someone would *rather* assemble circuit boards than do point-to-point wiring, or vice versa. If so, these distinctions become meaningful. —R.H.

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



## CLASSICAL

### MORE EARLY VERDI: *UN GIORNO DI REGNO*

*Conductor Lamberto Gardelli outdoes himself in bringing the comic opera to life for Philips*

THE triumphant reception in Milan of Giuseppe Verdi's first opera, *Oberto* (1839), resulted in two new commissions for the twenty-six-year-old composer. Unfortunately for him, the management of La Scala insisted that the first of these be a comic opera. Apart from the fact that Verdi was by nature a rather somber young man temperamentally not attuned to the "buffo" spirit, La Scala's project caught him at a time when family woes overshadowed the pleasures of his newly acquired fame. In the space of four months he had lost his infant daughter and son, and no sooner had he begun work on the new opera than his young wife also died. It was therefore a brokenhearted, grieving Verdi who hammered away at *Un Giorno di Regno* (a comic subject he had chosen reluctantly over a number of other candidates he liked even less), and it reached the stage on September 5, 1840. It failed dismally and with such brutal effect that Verdi resolved never to compose another opera. Not too long thereafter, the subject of what was to become his *Nabucco* caused him to reconsider, but comic opera remained a field he would not explore again until *Falstaff*, which came more than fifty years later.

It is essential to know this background, if for no other reason than to marvel at the unfathomable ways of genius. For this unwanted, ill-omened work, *Un Giorno di Regno*, as revealed to us in a brilliant new

recording from Philips, is an absolute delight. It is a long way from perfection in the Verdian sense, of course: its libretto, for example, is so carelessly written (by the experienced Felice Romani, no less) that a Verdi in full control of his mature artistic judgment would never have accepted it. (The full text is available with the recording, but listeners are urged to read Martin Sokol's accompanying essay as well, for, in the absence of a synopsis to make sense of it, the plot will remain an enigma.)

*Un Giorno di Regno* is not a really funny comic opera. At no point does it possess either the ebullient hilarity of Rossini's *The Barber of Seville* or the broad comedy of the Dulcamara scenes in Donizetti's *L'Elisir d'Amore*. It is rather a lighthearted play

about a gallant French officer who assumes the identity of an exiled Polish king while said king extricates himself from political difficulties at home. There are romantic interludes, intrigues, and misunderstandings, all duly resolved in time for a happy ending. Verdi's music is always appropriate and not the least bit adventurous (this is, by the way, the only Verdi opera in which *secco* recitatives are used). Rossini's influence is evident in the sparkling Overture and in the finales of both acts, but the musical language is Verdi's own, looking ahead to the lighter moments of his *Un Ballo in Maschera*. The arias are conventional in construction but melodically engaging; the duets



LAMBERTO GARDELLI  
*Exceptional affinity for Verdi*

are ingenious and beautifully worked out. The more ambitious ensembles are laid out with competence, but the contrapuntal skill Verdi possessed in 1839 must not be compared with that exhibited in his *Rigoletto* (1851) or *Ballo* (1859).

Considering that this opera has not had much of a performance history, it is remarkable that Lamberto Gardelli and his excellent cast bring it to life for us with such conviction and naturalness in this recording. The infectious spirit of the performance belies the fact that these singers have learned unfamiliar parts expressly for recording purposes. In his previous Philips projects (*Attila* and *I Lombardi*), Maestro Gardelli demonstrated his exceptional affinity for the vigorous spirit and dynamism of the early Verdi operas. He has outdone himself in the present effort, and I hope he will next undertake *I due Foscari*—and as soon as possible.

A cast like the one assembled for this recording is likely to delight any conductor, to say nothing of any listener. Tenor José Carreras is perfectly right in a lyric tenor role to which he brings excellent style, lovely tone, and an engagingly youthful image. Mezzo Fiorenza Cossotto is surprisingly cast in a soprano role, but her virtuosic performance justifies the choice. Playing a younger girl, but one whose music calls for a more “dramatic” voice, Jessye Norman reveals voluptuous tones that are at times of breathtaking beauty. She cannot as yet unfailingly sustain her singing at this level, nor does she command a facile technique, but *what a talent!*

There are three baritones in the cast, and you will need the libretto to tell them apart. Ingvar Wixell encompasses the demanding role of the bogus king with great skill and lively vocal characterization, though his resonant tones tend to lose focus on occasion. Wladimiro Ganzarolli and Vincenzo Sardinero play the intriguers in the plot, and Verdi gives them three delicious buffo duets in the (yet unwritten!) Malatesta-Don Pasquale vein. Both singers are excellent, though Sardinero sounds too youthful for the part of the tenor’s aging uncle.

When *Un Giorno di Regno* was exhumed in the Verdi anniversary year of 1951 after a rest of nearly a century, the Italian magazine *L'Europeo* headlined the event in this manner: BETTER A FAILURE BY VERDI THAN A SUCCESS BY . . . (NAME YOUR OWN COMPOSER). That, I should think, just about sums it up.

*George Jellinek*

**VERDI: *Un Giorno di Regno*.** Fiorenza Cossotto (soprano), Marchioness; Jessye Norman (soprano), Giulietta; José Carreras (tenor), Edoardo; Ingvar Wixell (baritone), Chevalier Belfiore; Vincenzo Sardinero (baritone), Treasurer Della Rocca; Wladimior Ganzarolli (baritone), Baron de Kelbar; William Elwin (baritone), Delmonte;

Ricardo Cassinelli (tenor), Count Ivrea; Ambrosian Singers; Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Lamberto Gardelli cond. PHILIPS 6703 055 three discs \$23.94.

## EDDA MOSER: NOTHING SHORT OF SENSATIONAL

*The challenges of Mozart's virtuoso arias are serenely met in an EMI recital album*

MOZART can charm the senses, move the spirit, or uplift the soul, and when it comes to merely challenging and exploiting an artist’s vocal and interpretive skill, he can certainly do that too with unexcelled mastery. Soprano Edda Moser’s new EMI disc of six challenging virtuoso arias is a case in point: they call for supreme agility, extended range, remarkable endurance, and, with all that, the secure musical discipline Mozart’s writing usually requires. The composer was inspired in writing this music by the availability of a number of extraordinary sopranos to sing them, among these being his prodigiously gifted sisters-in-law, Josefa and Aloysia Weber. Four well-known and two relatively unfamiliar arias make up the program, and Miss Moser delivers them with an artistry that is nothing short of sensational.

The two Queen of the Night arias from *The Magic Flute* open the first side. They reveal an appropriate rage and passion along with an uncommonly clean coloratura: the climactic high F in “*O zittre nicht!*” is not feebly stabbed at, as is sometimes the case, but neatly sustained, and the *staccati* in “*Der*

JOSÉ CARRERAS AND FIORENZA COSSOTTO: *perfectly cast*







EDDA MOSER: she sings, too

*Hölle Rache*” are like so many glistening pearls in a row. Dramatic projection blends with superlative singing in “*Martern aller Arten*,” and for once Donna Anna’s “*Non mi dir*” is all we could ask for—Miss Moser sails smoothly through the tranquil *Larghetto* section of the aria without getting shipwrecked in the treacherous *Allegretto* that has undone so many sopranos before her.

The two concert arias are so elaborately written as to rule out almost entirely the possibility of dramatic interpretation. Both are filled with exposed high writing, triplets, *staccati*, and all kinds of bravura challenges. Edda Moser copes with all that fiendishness with remarkable skill, hitting an F-sharp above high C in the K. 368 aria that is simply a stunner, and even managing two quite inhuman high G’s of decent quality in the K. 316.

JESSE WINCHESTER AND TAD: just starting to warm up



As a result of what must have been mutual inspiration of the highest order, the orchestral and engineering contributions match the extraordinary level of the singing. This record is not to be missed.

George Jellinek

**MOZART: Virtuoso Arias.** *Die Zauberflöte: O zittre nicht, mein lieber Sohn; Der Hölle Rache. Don Giovanni: Non mi dir, bell'idol mio. Die Entführung aus dem Serail: Martern aller Arten. Popoli di Tessaglia! . . . Io non chiedo, eterni dei (K. 316); Ma che vi fece, o stelle . . . Speri vicino il lido (K. 368).* Edda Moser (soprano); Bavarian State Opera Orchestra, Wolfgang Sawallisch (in *Zauberflöte* arias) and Leopold Hager cond. EMI-ELECTROLA C 063-29082 \$6.98 (or from Peters International, 619 W. 54th St., New York 10019, \$7.98 postpaid).

POPULAR

LEARNING TO LOVE  
JESSE WINCHESTER

*At least sixty-three per cent of his new album on the Bearsville label is downright excellent*

JESSE WINCHESTER is on my list of Real People. I have this list of seven to nine Real People among the singers and songwriters (hint: Elton John is not on it), and young Jesse is stuck in there somewhere between Tom Rush and Ry Cooder. By Real I mostly mean Honest, but I prefer to call them Real to allow for additional nuances, such as the possibility of high-enough bribe offers. But it amounts largely to people who haven’t bullshotted us yet, and if you haven’t noticed anything else about Jesse Winchester, you must have noticed that about him.

I would guess from his work that he is not feeling particularly optimistic these days, which is not to assume he ever did. Ironically, his new album came out when the talk of amnesty for such Canadian-exiled draft resisters as Jesse was just starting to sound warm. Maybe that’s why, whether out of pessimism or some other ache or pain, it is actually, for Jesse, only about two-thirds of an album. He uses four songs he didn’t write, and he even lets someone else sing one of them: *Third Rate Romance* is sung, I assume, by its writer, Russell Smith—it wouldn’t have hurt them to put a credit line in there somewhere.

The *Roosevelt* thing comes off well, with some great harmony singing by (it sounds like—again, no credits) some friends of Ian and Sylvia. But Smith’s songs are just so-so, and among Jesse’s there are two with pleasant-enough melodies but with lyrics in a foreign tongue, which is a lot for a folkie (Joan

Baez, until lately, always made do with one per album). The other non-Winchester song is *I Can't Stand Up Alone* by that old country-gospel oddity Martha Carson, and it is given an *a cappella* vocal-harmony treatment that enables the negative, downer aspect of the lyrics to dispatch the faith part in straight sets.

That leaves about sixty-three per cent of the album that is downright excellent. *Mississippi, You're on My Mind* is the most excellent of all, and only a Southerner like Jesse could have made it so believable: illusionless affection is what it is, and it may be done this well oh, once in ten years. *Every Word You Say* is another great song, one whose secondary job is to speak for a mood that, by definition, doesn't normally speak for itself.

Jesse, working up there in Montreal, has become an accomplished producer. His spartan approach to instrumentation makes his vocals all the more haunting, and he knows how to sneak in a little reverb—or at least a hard-wall bounce—to haunt you just a little bit more. It's the kind of album that shows you a Real Person going three-for-five is still quite something. *Noel Coppage*

**JESSE WINCHESTER:** *Learn to Love It.* Jesse Winchester (vocals, guitar, flute); Amos Garrett (guitar); other musicians. *Wake Me; Every Word you Say; How Far to the Horizon; L'Air de la Louisiane; Mississippi, You're on My Mind; Third Rate Romance; Defying Gravity; Tell Me Why You Like Roosevelt; Pharaoh's Army; Laisse les Bons Temps Rouler; The End Is Not in Sight; I Can't Stand Up Alone.* BEARVILLE BR 6953 \$6.98.

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## NINA SIMONE HAS ONLY JUST BEGUN

*An album full of stunning music making  
by one of the very best song stylists*

**N**INA SIMONE is back, still burning bright and still prowling through her repertoire like a fastidious tigress. When she comes across a song such as Hoyt Axton's powerful *The Pusher*, she spits and snarls the lyrics, building to a stinging climax of contempt and loathing for those who profit from the lives—if they may be so called—of the helpless and totally defeated. Her repeated "God damn! . . ." at the end of the song is a stark wail of frustration and hopelessness.

When she is feeling more playful, however, she bats at a *Funkier Than a Mosquito's Tweeter* or an *I Want a Little Sugar in My Bowl* with the mock-



NINA SIMONE: *an artist to be cherished*

ferocious, claws-retracted tenderness of a mama tiger boxing with her cubs. Her *Mr. Bojangles* is a lovely performance, gallant and full of insightful nuance, wrapped in the shimmer of dust particles floating through a shaft of sunlight in an otherwise dim room. Her two show-pieces here are *Dambala* and *Obeah Woman*, and they are both stunning examples of music making. Her production and arrangements on these are superb, as they are on the other tracks, and her performances of this unfamiliar material are so assured and so directly affecting that I began to wonder why I had once thought she was a bit mannered. No, what we get from Simone is *style*, a uniquely individual mode of expression honed to a glittering edge.

Nina Simone doesn't record enough, and her albums have a habit of disappearing from the catalog much too soon for my taste. This new release makes it clear that she's come a long way from the moody, introspective cult figure she was a decade ago. She is now without question one of the best all-around musicians we've got. Cherish her. Two small mysteries: this album was recorded live, but there is no indication of where or when, and the title "It Is Finished" is hardly appropriate. Finished? To me it sounds as though it has only just begun!

*Peter Reilly*

**NINA SIMONE:** *It Is Finished.* Nina Simone (vocals and piano); orchestra. *Mr. Bojangles; Dambala; Let It Be Me; Obeah Woman; The Pusher; Funkier Than a Mosquito's Tweeter; I Want a Little Sugar in My Bowl; Com' by H'Yere Good Lord.* RCA APL1-0241 \$5.98, Ⓢ APS1-0241 \$6.95, © APK1-0241 \$6.95.

# Soundsational Advice



You'd really like to move up to a good stereo system, right? But you find stereo components confusing. So many names. So many claims. So many specifications to read. It fairly boggles the mind. Well, don't despair. You don't really need a PHD in audio physics to make a 'sound' decision. With a few helpful hints from KENWOOD and your

own two good ears you can be off to a flying start.

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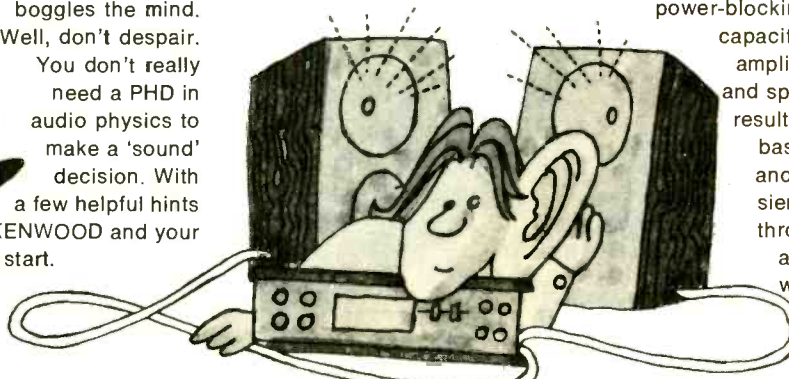


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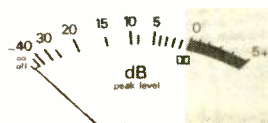
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# POPULAR DISCS AND TAPES

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

## RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

**ABBA: *Waterloo*.** Abba (vocals and instrumentals). *Waterloo*; *Sitting in the Palmtree*; *King Kong Song*; *Hasta Mañana*; *My Mama Said*; *What About Livingstone*; and six others. ATLANTIC SD 18101 \$6.98, ⑧ TP 18101 \$7.97, © CS 18101 \$7.97.

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

If you don't listen much to top-forty AM commercial radio, you may have missed the best 45-rpm single of the year, *Waterloo*, by the Swedish group Abba. Their album is good enough, but the main reason for it is the title track, a minor masterpiece. Produced and written by the group, the song contains every surefire Pavlovian trick of American and British rock of the last twenty-five years. The sax fill-in is à la Little Richard in the Fifties, the lyrics, like those of the Beatles circa 1964, are simple but contain some wit, the production bows to Phil Spector, and two girls sing double harmony lead in the style of Dusty Springfield. *Waterloo* is a wonderful pastiche. If this be bubblegum, let's make the most of it.

The rest of the album contains other skillful pastiches, of lesser import and delight, but all are delivered with cheerful gusto. Abba's achievement is all the more remarkable in that they do not speak English; it's done with phonetics. Their imitations are sometimes better than the English and American originals, and the blonde with the skullcap and the glow-in-the-dark mouth is . . . heh-heh. J.V.

**RICHARD BETTS: *Highway Call*.** Richard Betts (vocals, guitar, dobro); Chuck Leavell (piano); David Walshaw (drums); Johnny Sandlin (bass); Vassar Clements (fiddle); other musicians. *Long Time Gone*; *Rain*;



ABBA  
*Delicious Swedish bubblegum*

*Highway Call*; *Let Nature Sing*; *Hand Picked*; *Kissimmee Kid*. CAPRICORN CP 0123 \$6.98, ⑧ M8 0123 \$6.98, © M5 0123 \$6.98.

Performance: **Yes and no**  
Recording: **Very good**

This is a little strange. Richard Betts (you may have heard him called *Dickie Betts*) is, of course, known for his electric and slide guitar playing with the Allman Brothers and for having sung their big hit *Ramblin' Man*. He's a better picker than singer, perhaps, but it's still rather odd that he'd do a whole side of instrumentals on his solo album. Just about cut the overall worth of the thing in half, I'd say, judging by how well he was doing with the singing side. The first three songs are tuneful and tasty and played in a satisfying, rock-conscious-and-country-graceful style, and *Let*

*Nature Sing* is not quite fatally hackneyed. But *Hand Picked*, which dominates side two, grows very tiresome after some four minutes, and some ten minutes and sixteen seconds after that it has left the mind unfit for dealing fairly with Vassar Clements' *Kissimmee Kid*, which just might be justified as a break in some vocals. Many nice licks are hit during all this, as Betts is the kind of guitarist who bounces off others better than he does the hot-dog soloist bit—but the simple chord structure can't carry on like that for fifteen minutes at a whack and get away with it. Betts' singing is in that familiar nasal league whose pennant was long ago clinched by Danny O'Keefe, but it doesn't hurt to hear it again, seeing as how it's in tune and on the beat. Quite a nice half of an album here. N.C.

**CHÉR: *Dark Lady*.** Chér (vocals); orchestra. *Train of Thought*; *Dixie Girl*; *Rescue Me*; *What'll I Do*; *Make the Man Love Me*; and five others. MCA MCA-2113 \$6.98, ⑧ MCAT-2113 \$6.98, © MCAC-2113 \$6.98.

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

This is Chér's first solo album since the official break-up with Sonny. But "Dark Lady," produced by Snuff Garrett, is still firmly within the now established tradition of her recordings. That means a lot of control-room frills, cosmetic engineering, and arrangements that try to whip up an excitement that Chér herself is never able to project vocally. The most interesting thing about Chér continues to be her actual presence, either on TV or in the realms of fashion coverage she generates with her ugly-beautiful, and highly personal, sense of style. On records she projects almost no style at all, and the result is very mild entertainment. Dave Geffen of Asylum/Elektra is said to have big plans for her both personally and professionally. Several years ago, so did Sonny. And Trilby marches on. P.R.

**JOE COCKER: *I Can Stand a Little Rain*.** Joe Cocker (vocals); Dave McDaniel (bass); Ollie Brown (drums); Nicky Hopkins (piano); Henry McCullough (guitar); Jim Horn (saxophone); other musicians. *Put Out the Light*; *I Can Stand a Little Rain*; *I Get Mad*; *Sing Me a Song*; *The Moon Is a Harsh Mis-*

### Explanation of symbols:

- Ⓜ = reel-to-reel stereo tape
- ⓑ = eight-track stereo cartridge
- ⓐ = stereo cassette
- ⓐ = quadrasonic disc
- Ⓜ = reel-to-reel quadrasonic tape
- ⓑ = eight-track quadrasonic tape
- ⓐ = quadrasonic cassette

Monophonic recordings are indicated by the symbol Ⓜ

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



The Who at the (are you ready?) Shepherds Bush Bingo Hall in 1964

# CATCHING UP WITH THE WHO

Reviewed by Steve Simels

BEING a rock-and-roll fan is (or used to be, anyway) a bit like belonging to a fraternity, and to this day no musicians know this better, or are more aware of the responsibilities it entails, than Pete Townshend and the Who. The band remains, for example, practically the last remaining believer in the throw-away B-side—almost every Who single in recent memory has featured a flip that has not achieved LP status—and there is no nicer gesture you can make to your fans than giving them this little something extra for their money. Furthermore, the various widely bootlegged unreleased Who tracks that many of us have been getting off on for years are rumored to have been leaked to the bootleggers by the band members themselves. (Townshend, in particular, is fascinated by the bootleg phenomenon, to the point that his jacket design for “Live at Leeds” was consciously styled to look like one.)

“Odds and Sods,” the Who’s superb new album, is a collection of things the group has had in the can from various periods, but it should by no means be implied that they were never released because they were deemed to be of insufficient quality. *Little Billy*, for example, a wonderful song in the “Sell Out” mold, was written as an anti-smoking commercial for the American Cancer Society, and it was that august group’s myopia, not the band’s, that kept it from seeing the light of day. Townshend is simply incredibly prolific, and he’ll scrap whole albums if he feels that they’re not up to snuff conceptually, even though he’s well aware that the individual tracks are spectacular.

At any rate, hard-core Who freaks will have a field day with this package, since to my knowledge only four of the songs have already appeared illegally, and one of them only in a live version. For the rest of the audience, considerations like that are of course irrelevant, as “Odds and Sods” is top-flight rock-and-roll throughout; it hangs together even more satisfyingly—dare I say it?—than “Quadrophenia.” One of the tunes in particular, *Naked Eye*, is (for me anyway) as good as anything they’ve ever done, with its plaintive shared Daltrey-Townshend vocals, soaring guitars, and impeccable backing from the rest of the boys. As an extra bonus, they’ve even included *I’m a Face*, their hilarious 1964 flop debut release from the days when they were calling themselves the High Numbers.

The album may well start a trend—Mick Jagger is said to be working up an LP’s worth of Stones stuff from their early years, and God only knows how much killer Beatles material remains mouldering in the EMI vaults. But don’t let what may seem like a museum approach deter you for a moment. “Odds and Sods” may have been programmed with Who fans in mind, but the music is most emphatically for *everyone*.

**THE WHO:** *Odds and Sods*. The Who (vocals and instrumentals). *Postcard; Now I’m a Farmer; Put the Money Down; Little Billy; Too Much of Anything; Glow Girl; Pure and Easy; Faith in Something Bigger; I’m the Face; Naked Eye; Long Live Rock*. TRACK MCA 2126 \$6.98.

*tress*; and five others. A & M SP-3633 \$6.98. Ⓜ 8T-3633 \$7.98. Ⓢ CS-3633 \$7.98.

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

I find Joe Cocker depressing to watch these days—too fat to wear dirty T-shirts with the old aplomb, perhaps, or too desperate about the dragged-out comeback—but he still works pretty well in the studio. His voice still has power, and he still mauls and pummels a song until it yields unto him things it didn’t yield unto the person who wrote it. This doesn’t *always* happen, of course, and there is, as usual, something vaguely unsatisfying about this album. Probably it is a sense of “excitement” being artificial—Reddy-Maid or Pree-Tide or Adjusto-Matic or some such—which may have simply resulted from Joe’s trying too hard. The first three selections have me wondering what he’s so agitated *about*. And then Billy Preston and Bruce Fisher’s *You Are So Beautiful* is picked at by a worrywart vocal treatment way beyond its simple, *saftig* soul, coming off as a bit of a farce. Joe even leaves us with the suggestion that he’s cheating on the high notes, such is the way he screws around with the bridge of Randy Newman’s *Guilty* (with Newman on piano) in the last track. But his range is still there, as listening again to some of the other tracks reaffirms, and his intensity doesn’t double-cross him when the song has the kind of spark that brightens, as opposed to going out, when fanned by his flailings. Cocker takes over two new Jim Webb songs, and *The Moon Is a Harsh Mistress* (Webb on piano) in particular proves that both Cocker and Webb can still be moving in a way that, thank God, defies analysis. Joe’s interpretations of Harry Nilsson’s *Don’t Forget Me* and Allen Toussaint’s *Performance* are as vulgar and delicate as any of the bold revisionist readings of his heyday. The backing tends to center now on horns, now on piano, but it doesn’t fight with Cocker as much as his bands have on other occasions.

So the *sound* of Joe Cocker is once again (or perhaps still) in good shape. As for the rest of Joe Cocker, well, maybe we could try it again with the shirt tucked in. . . . N.C.

**LORRAINE ELLISON.** Lorraine Ellison (vocals); orchestra. *Many Rivers to Cross; I’ll Fly Away; No Relief; Stormy Weather; Walk Around Heaven*; and four others. WARNER BROS. BS 2780 \$6.98, Ⓜ M8 2780 \$6.97, Ⓢ M5 2780 \$6.97.

Performance: **Interesting and effective**  
Recording: **Good**

Lorraine Ellison already has a considerable following among music-business professionals, and with good reason; she’s a gospel singer with a passionate musical approach who can electrify a lyric at will. When she brings it all to bear on something such as *Stormy Weather* she can be sensational, but, unfortunately, when it is focused on such celestial trivia as *Walk Around Heaven* it’s like a Ferrari motor installed in a Volkswagen. Then too, she doesn’t seem to have much sympathy with low decibel rates, so that she doesn’t just ask for the listener’s attention; she *demand*s it with sheer volume. Obviously a serious performer, Miss Ellison needs a more serious audience than the one she’s likely to get with catch-all efforts such as this. P.R.

**ENO:** *Here Come the Warm Jets*. Eno (vocals, noises); Andy Mackay (keyboards); Robert

Fripp (guitar); Paul Rudolph (bass); other musicians. *Needles in the Camel's Eye; The Paw Paw Negro Blowtorch; Baby's On Fire; Cindy Tells Me; Blank Frank*; and five others. ISLAND ILPS 9268 \$5.98.

Performance: **Bad**  
Recording: **Fair**

Eno, the ads say, makes music for non-musicians. I'm not sure what that means, but additional literature on Eno, on the back of the jacket of this album, says he sings and "occasionally plays simplistic keyboards, snake guitar, electric larynx and synthesizer, and treats the other instruments." Perhaps someone is trying to tell us, in a roundabout way, that Eno can't play anything . . . and we soon find out for ourselves that he can't sing either. His "music" seems to amount to four or five riffs interminably repeated and the kind of "shocking" punk-nonsense lyrics that benefit by being buried in the noise. A second-generation glitter-rock exploitation album is what it is. If either David Bowie or P. T. Barnum had been less successful in finding suckers, we probably wouldn't be blessed with this at all. But once a guy who plays electric larynx and treats other instruments has been shown the way by such, ah, *successful* gentlemen as those, what else can we expect? *N.C.*

**GEORGE FEYER:** *George Feyer Plays the Essential George Gershwin.* George Feyer (piano); Tommy Lucas (guitar); George Mell (bass); Sy Salzberg and Edward Caccavale (drums). *Someone to Watch Over Me; Love Walked In; Let's Call the Whole Thing Off; Somebody Loves Me; Soon; Fascinating Rhythm; Love Is Here to Stay; Mine; That Certain Feeling; Liza; An American in Paris (excerpts); I'll Build a Stairway to Paradise;* and twenty-eight others. VANGUARD VSD 61/62 two discs \$9.96.

Performance: **Slick and suave**  
Recording: **Good**

George Feyer, a Hungarian-born entertainer who some years ago abandoned a career as a classical pianist to devote his skills to popular music, was long a familiar figure at New York's Hotel Carlyle and can still be heard filling the air with gentle harmonies at the Rembrandt Room in the Stanhope. Mr. Feyer plays Gershwin, a lot of him, on this two-record set. He plays with much affection but in a cocktail-lounge style more suitable for over-hearing than for conscious listening. The little trills and rills with which he decorates song after song are occasionally *de trop*. Yet, at the same time, he reveals a strong affinity for Gershwin moods, melodies, and rhythms, and never slobbers over a tune or drowns it in mawkishness. Most of his tempos are brisk, and the sets of familiar songs speed by in a pleasant haze. When it comes to the "serious" Gershwin, however, Feyer's approach is simply irritating. His light-fingered run-through of the Prelude No. 2 is inoffensive enough, but when he starts offering his own mini-versions of *An American in Paris* and excerpts from the *Rhapsody in Blue* and Concerto in F, it's all more clever than it's art—and not *too* clever at that, even though it's nimbly done. *P.K.*

**FOCUS:** *Hamburger Concerto.* Thijs Van Leer (organ, piano, harpsichord, flutes, synthesizer, recorder, melotron, vibes, accordion, voices); Bert Ruiter (bass, autoharp, triangles, cymbals, bells); Colin Allen (drums, Chinese gong, timpani); Jan Akkerman

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(guitars, lute). *Delitiae Musicae: Harem Scar-em; La Cathedrale de Strasbourg; Birth; Hamburger Concerto.* ATCO SD 36-100 \$6.98, Ⓢ TP 36-100 \$6.97, © CS 36-100 \$6.97.

Performance: **Needs more salt?**

Recording: **Very good**

Focus has been a spectacularly gimmicky band. The instruments are obviously (too obviously) well played, but so far I've been mainly curious about how someone from a flat country like the Netherlands could yodel like Thijs Van Leer does, and that's been about it. This time Van Leer and Jan Akkerman have written themselves a whole rock "concerto"; it covers side two and starts out with their own variations on a theme by Haydn. I like Brahms' variations more than I like these—for this *Hamburger Concerto* has been stretched out with a little soybean filler or something. The thing comes apart in the cooking, you see, as Focus can't seem to find much connective material in the rock-and-roll condiments that seem to overflow its pantry. We get mighty church organ and classical themes running into an electric guitar riff lifted just about intact from an old Beatles record, and then several minutes of understandable confusion. The shorter pieces on side one work a little better, but they, too, involve isolated good sounds not exactly tied together by the aimless riffing in between. You have to lace your mayonnaise with Elmer's glue to get all of it to stay on the bun. N.C.

**MARVIN GAYE: *Live!*** Marvin Gaye (vocals): instrumental accompaniment. *Distant Lover; Can I Get a Witness; Let's Get It On; Jan;* and eight others. TAMLA T6-333S1 \$5.98, Ⓢ T333T \$6.95, © T333C \$6.95.

Performance: **Routine**

Recording: **Unbalanced**

Marvin Gaye has come a long way since 1961 when he left the Moonglows to join Motown as a single. In this set, recorded at a concert in Oakland, California, he takes us back along that way with a program of past hits ranging from the early *Stubborn Kind of Fellow*, *You're a Wonderful One*, and *Try It Baby* to the more recent *What's Going On*. The audience is in ecstasy, aroused to frenzy by the mere hint of a familiar tune coming on, but Gaye's performance, musically speaking, is rather routine. He is struggling with a heavy band that has a hard time following him and, at times, even modulates into another key before he is ready to do so. The recording is further hampered by imbalance, which, knowing Wally Heider's work, I suspect is a result of the prevailing physical circumstances. The studio recordings of these hits are your best bet. C.A.

### RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

**GRATEFUL DEAD: *From the Mars Hotel.*** Grateful Dead (vocals and instrumentals). *U.S. Blues; Unbroken Chain; China Doll; Money Money;* and four others. GRATEFUL DEAD RECORDS GD 102 \$5.98.

Performance: **Satisfying**

Recording: **Excellent**

Like the Dead or not, you have to respect them: they play in tune and on the beat, and some of theirs are among the very few rock songs with a life expectancy longer than that of the common mayfly. They're often likable,

too. I find I like the way they civilize rock-and-roll, though I could do without the way they petrify jazz. In my terms, this is their best effort in a while. There's no slam-bang, blood-and-thunder rock here, but neither is there much of the effete meandering that went on only recently in "Wake of the Flood." What's here is laid-back, very *tone-conscious*, indirectly blues-based music with almost no cheap or unnecessary licks thrown into it.

The material, most of it by Robert Hunter and Jerry Garcia, is almost uniformly strong. *Loose Lucy* is a bit monotonous and is the only place where cliché riffing is passed off as an arrangement, but *Scarlet Begonias* single-handedly makes up for that *and* for the price of the album, and it's only the song I like *third* best. *China Doll* and *Ship of Fools* are the kind of Grateful Dead songs that should see many generations of mayflies come and go, and *Money* and *U. S. Blues* may hang around for some time, too. I'll even go along, this time, with Garcia's steel guitar exercise. *Pride of Cucamonga*, for it puts air and variety if not exactly great music into the album. It is the kind of recording I like to associate with the Dead: it has a distinctive sound, and it is technically facile but controlled and tasteful, seasoned but not too dry. In addition to all that, there's another fine cover illustration by Kelley Mouse, complete with unreadable runes, and I can't wait to see it on a T-shirt. N.C.

### RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

**B. B. KING: *Friends.*** B. B. King (vocals and guitar): orchestra. *Philadelphia; My Song; Up at 5 AM; Baby I'm Yours;* and three others. ABC ABCD-825 \$5.98, Ⓢ 8022-825 H \$6.98, © 5022-825 H \$6.98.

Performance: **Need you ask?**

Recording: **Excellent**

B. B. King's work needs criticism about as much as Heifetz needs a press agent. He is so solidly *there*, so completely *right* in everything he performs, that to question it would be the sort of impertinence that gives reviewers a bad name. It would take someone years to adequately define what he can do with one phrase in a few seconds, how he can take the most ordinary material and give it urgent life, how he can explain the emotional motives of what to others might seem ragtag, desperate lives. His latest album is another triumph of personality, skill, and musicianship. *Philadelphia* and *I Got Them Blues* are my favorites, but there is nothing here that doesn't pulse with honesty and feeling. A black, modern-day Villon? Perhaps. A great natural artist for sure. P.R.

### RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

**KOERNER, RAY, AND GLOVER: *Good Old Koerner, Ray, and Glover.*** John Koerner (vocals, guitar); Dave Ray (vocals, guitar); Tony Glover (vocals, harmonica). *Black Jack Davy; Down to Louisiana; Too Bad; Dust My Broom; Black Snake Moan; Mumblin' Word; Two Trains; Drunken Instrumental;* and five others. MILL CITY MCR-172 \$3.98.

Performance: **Breathtaking**

Recording: **Poor to pretty good**

Someone told me Spider John Koerner was back in the country, and that must have been what made me stop putting off the day when I  
(Continued on page 106)



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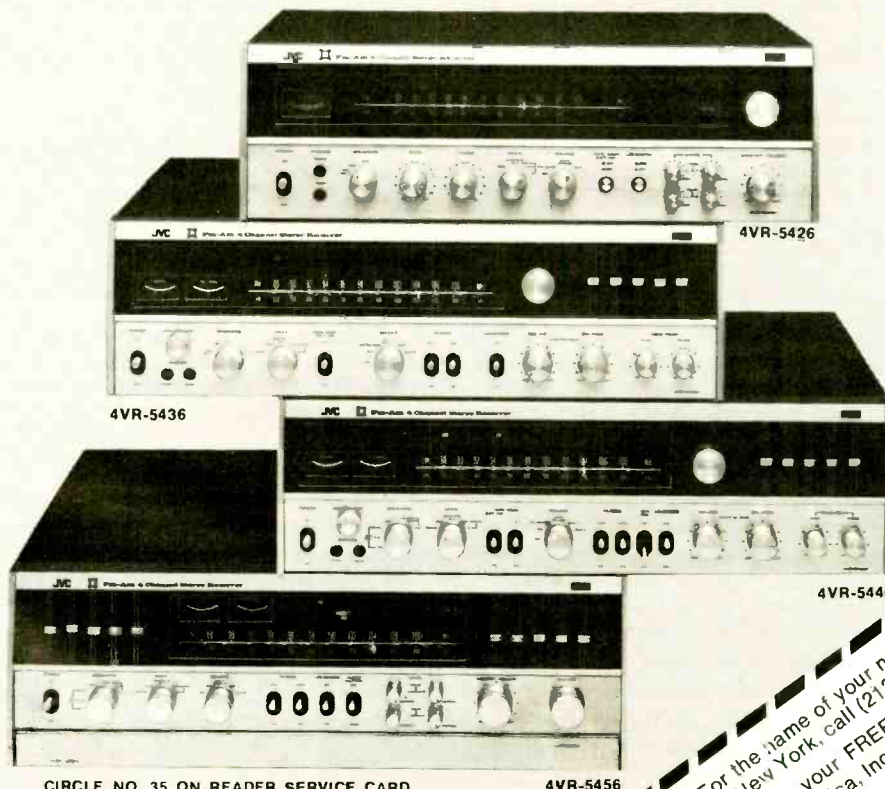
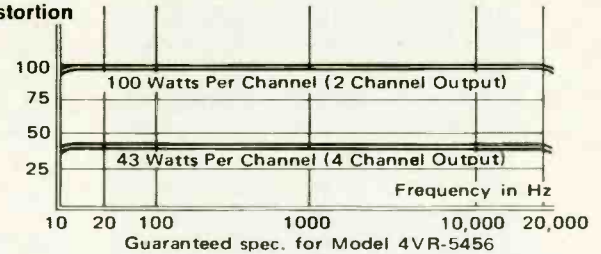
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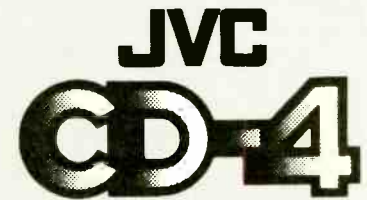
MODEL	Watts Per Channel, Minimum RMS Power, at 8 Ohms From 20 Hz to 20 kHz		Maximum Total Harmonic Distortion
	2 Channel Output	4 Channel Output	
4VR5426	30	13	1.0%
4VR5436	35	15	0.8%
4VR5446	55	21	0.5%
4VR5456	100	43	0.5%

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would deal with this album. I procrastinated, and it languished, because it didn't arrive through regular channels: Mill City is a small label operating out of Minneapolis, and the album, while not (to my knowledge) a reissue, involves music that was recorded on something less than ideal equipment a long time ago—in 1963 and 1964 at the St. Olaf Folk Festivals. Spider John has been in Denmark, his wife's native land. Dave Ray has been building a recording studio in Minnesota, and Tony Glover has been disc-jockeying, New York scene-making, and doing a little writing on pop music.

The album, now supposedly being issued nationally, is a gem not too fussily polished, and proof enough for anyone that *some* white people have the great natural rhythm and funkiness to do right by the blues. Koerner's guitar sounds like one of those old Sears and Roebuck models of the sort people like Blind Blake could afford, and both he and Ray have the knack (that several of the old bluesmen had) for messing with the tempo in mind-bending ways. I'd like to hear a little more of Glover, but anyway there's enough here to indicate *he* has a fine sense of timing, too; his blending with the guitars in the tricky tempo changes in Arthur (Big Boy) Crudup's *Mean Ol' Southern* is just about uncanny.

Ray sounds something like Leadbelly, but not enough to bother anyone who has a thing about originality. He probably sounds as much as he *can* like Leadbelly and two or three other immortals, but there's enough in his voice that's unique to Dave Ray to produce quite a stylish vocal, and his work with the twelve-string guitar is authoritative and idiomatic. Koerner is a wonder on the guitar, a cross between Brownie McGhee and someone I've not identified yet, and he is a sly, snaky singer. The material, of course, is choice quality. I didn't think they made albums like this any more—and perhaps, technically, they haven't in the last decade. *N.C.*

**PEGGY LEE:** Peggy Lee (vocals): orchestra. *How Insensitive; I've Got Your Number; The Best Is Yet to Come; Unforgettable; The Sweetest Sounds;* and four others. EVEREST FS 294 \$5.98.

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

This is a re-release of a recital by the matchless Peggy Lee, probably recorded some time in the mid-Sixties on Capitol, and now exhumed on Everest's "Archive of Folk & Jazz Music" series. It's good to know that Lee, even with her continuing huge popular success today, is already recognized as one of those unique pop artists whose recordings should never be allowed to go out of print. Henry Pleasants' description of her art in his book *The Great American Popular Singers* is probably the definitive one, and I can only add that to listen to her, in any time or era, is to hear what great performing is about. *P.R.*

**LITTLE WALTER:** *Confessin' the Blues.* Little Walter Jacobs (vocals, harmonica); Otis Spann (piano); Robert Lockwood (guitar); Willie Dixon (bass); others. *Rock Bottom; I Got to Go; It Ain't Right; Lights Out; Up the Line;* and ten others. CHESS CHV 416 \$5.98.

Performance: **Excellent**  
Recording: **Over-echoed**

Marion Walter Jacobs (Little Walter) was born in Louisiana, made his first recordings in

1947 at the age of seventeen, and continued recording until the late Sixties when he met a violent death in Chicago. He was one of the most outstanding of the post-War blues men, and few—if any—harmonica players have been able to approach his expertise on that instrument. The first to make commercial use of the amplified harmonica, Little Walter lent his performing skills to many records by other blues men before 1952, when *Juke*, his first big hit, was released on the Checker label. Other successful releases followed, the best of which are contained in a previous reissue entitled "Little Walter, Hate to See You Go" (Chess LP 1535). If you already have that album, this collection—recorded between 1953 and 1963—makes a good companion set. Both are worthy documents of yet another blues artist who came, entertained, influenced, and departed prematurely. *C.A.*

**RAY MANZAREK:** *The Golden Scarab.* Ray Manzarek (keyboards, vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *He Can't Come Today; Solar Boat; Downbound Train; The Golden Scarab;* and four others. MERCURY SRM 1-703 \$6.98.

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

Ray Manzarek was the organist for the Doors. This is, so far as I know, his first solo album, and I hope it's his last. He has appropriated the precise diction, the semi-crooning style, and the schoolteacher condescension that characterized the Door's lead singer, the late and unhappy Jim Morrison. Like Morrison, Manzarek believes he has something important to say and attempts to peddle thoughts of astral significance and cosmic import. If you're interested in that sort of thing, then this album will be satisfying. If not, it will sound like a parody.

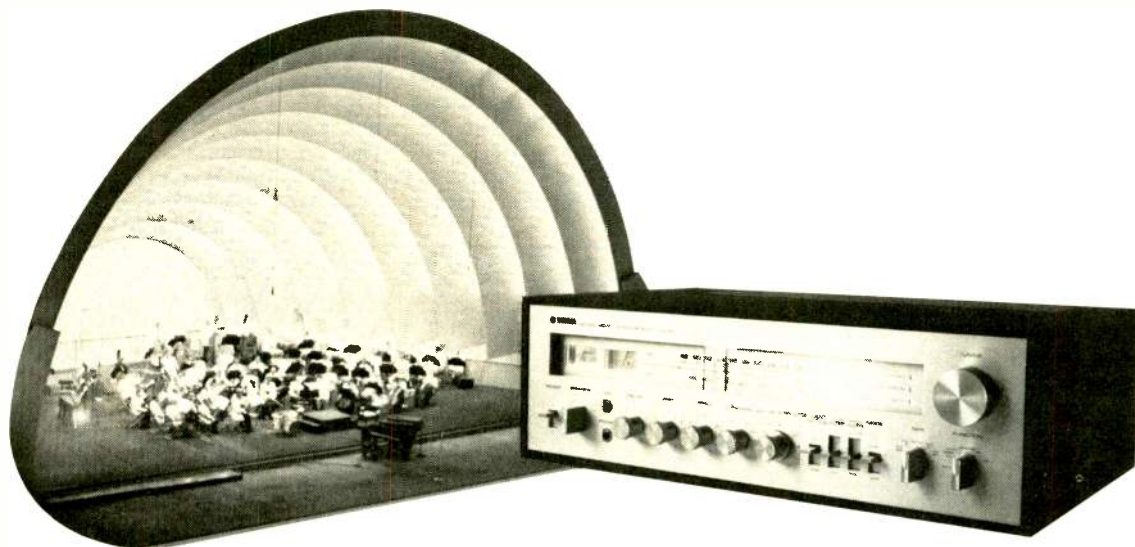
Manzarek's back-up band is a lively crew, and they get things moving every once in a while, so if you ignore the drivel that Manzarek is talk-singing, it is possible to tap your foot. But the overall effect of the album is somewhat like taking a good rock band and putting it on the soundtrack of one of those deadly, silly travelogs that get shown in grade schools.

It is too bad that Morrison was allowed to take himself so seriously, otherwise he might be alive today. It is too bad that Manzarek has been allowed to get away with imitating him. It is too bad that anyone takes this album seriously. It is too bad. *J.V.*

**MIGHTY CLOUDS OF JOY:** *It's Time.* Mighty Clouds of Joy (vocals): instrumental accompaniment. *Time; Stoned World; Laugh; You Think You're Doin' It on Your Own; The Master Plan; Mighty Cloud of Joy; Everything Is Going Up; Heart Full of Love; Time.* ABC/DUNHILL DSX-50177 \$5.98, © 8023-50177 M \$6.98.

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

Among gospel groups, the Mighty Clouds of Joy have a long and honorable history. But this album is a wayward example of the "new" gospel, which combines black Christian sentiments with pop and rock sounds in order to reach a wider audience. The production values are big-budget. The sessions were done in Philadelphia with the local squads of studio sidemen who ordinarily play on the  
*(Continued on page 108)*



## BEFORE WE MADE THE NEW YAMAHA RECEIVER, WE MADE THE ORCHESTRA.

The new Yamaha receiver and other stereo components emerged from a unique eighty-year involvement in music and sound.

Years ago Yamaha established new standards in wind instrument precision, piano sound, guitar craftsmanship, organ electronic technology.

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To reach their goal of maximum truthful reproduction, they had Yamaha's three-quarters of a century sound experience to draw from.

And they developed new technology to match and exceed the kind of quality performance (low distortion) usually found on "separates" at the highest price levels.

### A New Engineering.

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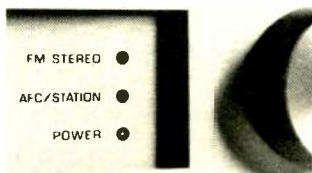
The result is low distortion performance, typically

at .08%, available to receiver and amplifier buyers in all competitive price ranges.

Compare the specs on the new Yamaha components to any of their competition.

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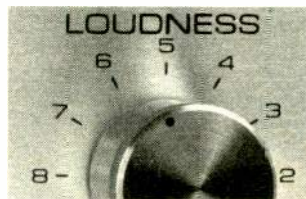
### The Powerful Truth.

The new Yamaha CR-800 receiver, for example, packs a powerful 45 watts per channel RMS (both channels driven, 8 ohms, 20-20 kHz) to give you the full force of a big crescendo, or full audibility of a delicate piccolo solo.

### Sophisticated Tuner.

The CR-800's FM tuner section is the first to utilize negative feedback around the multiplex demodulator. This achieves superb separation (45 dB) and reduces MPX distortion to 0.05%. And Yamaha Auto Touch

tuning allows the electronics to fine tune the station for minimum distortion (and keeps it there).



### Ten position control.

Loudness control takes speaker efficiency, room acoustics, and other factors into consideration, to give you the tonal balance of lows, middles, and highs you like at all volume levels.



### Multiples and Mixes.

For the multiple tape deck owner, the 800 has a five-position tape monitor selector to easily control two stereo tape record/playback circuits for recording on one or both decks simultaneously, for copying from one recorder to another, or for reproducing or monitoring on either.

Other features include a

separate microphone pre-amp and volume control, a two-position low filter (20 Hz-70 Hz) and a two-position high filter (8 kHz-blend). And LED's for critical indications.



### Homemade Philosophy.

The 800 fully incorporates all the years of electronics technology, metal working, machining and wood working pioneered by Yamaha in the music field.

Most of the various parts of Yamaha stereo equipment are made by Yamaha, in our own facilities, for stronger quality control.

And like Yamaha music products, Yamaha components are covered by an unusually long warranty—5 year parts, 3 year labor—and a national service and dealer network.

Audition the Yamaha CR-800, and all our new components, at your nearby Yamaha dealer.



"Philadelphia Sound" soul-pop dates of the Kenny Gamble & Leon Huff stable. They are augmented by Wayne Jackson's wonderful Memphis Horns (although he hasn't written his best arrangements here) and strings from the Memphis Symphony.

But the material hedges. It isn't until the end of the first side that the listener knows this is a gospel group, singing about God, Christ, and the black Christian attitude toward life. Though the renderings are good, the *Mighty Clouds of Joy* could pass for—and I think were intended to pass for—a high-powered, standard "soul" group. Probably the idea was: "Well, we'll suck 'em in with the beat and give 'em the message later." I am not, by the way, arguing a religious point: I'm merely saying that in attempting to present

gospel in a way that will appeal to a mass audience, in the guise of black-pop, the guise is more successful than the gospel.

"New" gospel, by using the pop and rock forms, admits that it is going to make some concessions to commerciality. But this version of it—where Jesus, the central character, is not once named—is not gospel, rock, soul, or pop: it is a compromise that results in a hybrid of neuter gender. That is bad for "new" gospel and bad for the mighty *Mighty Clouds of Joy*, who deserve better. J.V.

#### RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

**THE MIGHTY SPARROW:** *Hot and Sweet*. Slinger Francisco, "The Mighty Sparrow" (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. Spar-

*row Dead; Chinese Love Affair; Jane; Maria; More Cock; Mr. Walker; Hello People; English Diplomacy; Who She Go Cry For; Memories.* WARNER BROS. BS 2771 \$6.98.

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

The *Mighty Sparrow's* real name is (no kidding) Slinger Francisco. He is one of the brightest stars of calypso, that musical form which is an amazing combination of English and Spanish cultures, and whose lyrics raise slang and patois to the level of poetry.

"Hot and Sweet" is one of the few calypso albums made with modern recording techniques, and it contains most of Sparrow's hits. *English Diplomacy* is my favorite, wherein Sparrow invokes the potential perils of a Trinidadian girl being wooed and bedded by a bloke with an Oxford accent: it's not that the narrator minds his girl's being frisky (one has to live, after all), but not to get any recompense for it is awful. If she must do that sort of thing, why doesn't she go with a Yankee, who will at least show her a good time and spend a little money? This, of course, is a narrow description of the song, and gives no indication of its delights, jokes, insights, and bittersweet satire.

A black friend of mine told me many years ago that the worst thing that ever happened to calypso was the famous Harry Belafonte hits of the Fifties. He explained to me that calypso was at once a newspaper, a steam valve, and a continuous and perfectly acted play on the joys and follies of life. Calypso was jazz with literacy. It had teeth. But mostly it was fun: you could learn from it and feel good at the same time.

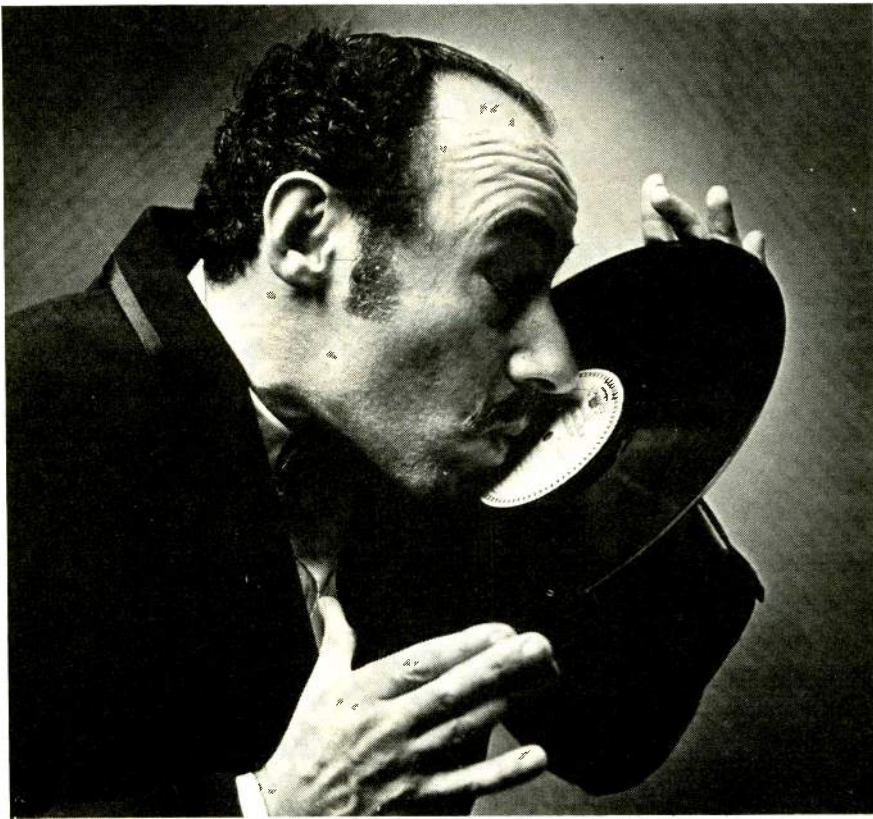
It's true. I can only urge you, for the sake of your entertainment and delight, to hear the *Mighty Sparrow*. He is delicate, blunt, hilarious, ribald, and sentimental, and it is gorgeous to hear the English language betrayed, redeemed, and extended all at the same moment in his Trinidadian accent. J.V.

**MOUNTAIN:** *Avalanche*. Leslie West (vocals, guitar); Felix Pappalardi (bass, keyboards, vocals); Corky Laing (drums); David Perry (rhythm guitar). *Whole Lotta Shakin' Goin' On; Sister Justice; Alisan; Swamp Boy; Satisfaction; Thumbsucker; You Better Believe It;* and three others. COLUMBIA WINDFALL KC 33088 \$4.98, Ⓢ CA 33088 \$6.98, Ⓢ CT 33088 \$6.98.

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

Everything else is a foil for the electric guitar in the conventional hard-rock setup Mountain employs. That was okay in 1967 when Cream was doing it, but the format is wearing thin. Mountain has a better feeling for contrast than, say, Charlie Daniels' Band (which I don't mean to pick on but merely to cite as an example of how, in rock, loudness can become a matter of pride if not honor), but in this album there is contrast between selections, not within a selection. Maybe thinking of a baseball pitcher whose idea of mixing his pitches is to throw all fast balls one inning and all slow curves the next will help pinpoint what troubles me. An electric cut, such as *Whole Lotta Shakin' Goin' On*, is all loud and furious, the guitar drowning out the bass drowning out the vocals.

On top of all that, I find these days I'm troubled by the inherent posturing in this kind of  
(Continued on page 111)

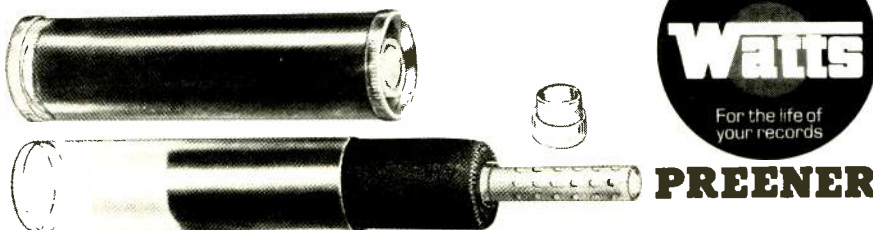


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## SPECIFICATIONS

Specification	Measured In	STR-7065	STR-7055	STR-7045	STR-7035
<b>TUNER SECTIONS</b>					
Sensitivity, IHF	$\mu$ V	2.0	2.0	2.6	2.7
S/N ratio	dB	70	70	70	70
Capture ratio	dB	1.0	1.0	1.5	1.5
Selectivity, IHF	dB	70	70	70	70
Image rejection	dB	70	70	70	70
IF rejection	dB	100	100	90	90
Spurious rejection	dB	90	90	90	90
AM suppression	dB	56	56	56	56
Harmonic distortion (@ 400Hz)	%	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2
Mono	%	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5
Stereo	dB	38	38	38	38
FM stereo separation (@ 400Hz)		20Hz-15kHz -1dB	20Hz-15kHz -1dB	20Hz-15kHz -1dB	30Hz
FM frequency response	%	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8
AM harmonic distortion	dB	50	50	50	50
AM S/N ratio					
Input sensitivity and impedance					
Phono	mV ohms	2.0	47k	2.0	50k 1.8
Phono-low	mV ohms		47k		2.0
Microphone	mV ohms	1.0	47k	1.0	100k 250
Tuner, Aux., Tape, REC/PB	mV ohms	150	50k	150	50k 140
Output voltage and impedance					
Preamp	V ohms	1.0	4.7k	1.0	4.7k
Rec out	mV ohms	250	10k	250	10k 250
REC/PB	mV ohms	30	82k	30	82k 30
THD @ rated output*	%	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2
IM distortion @ rated output**	%	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2
S/N ratio, IHF	dB	72	70	70	70
Phono	dB				
Phono-low	dB	65			
Microphone	dB	90	90	90	90
Tuner, Aux., Tape, REC/PB	dB				
RMS power per channel 20Hz-20kHz					
2-Ch., both channels driven @ 8 ohms	Watts	60	35	30	20
4-Ch., all channels driven @ 8 ohms	Watts				
THD @ rated output	%	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2
2-Ch./4-Ch.	%				
IM distortion @ rated output	%	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2
2-Ch./4-Ch.	%				
Power bandwidth, IHF		15Hz-35kHz	15Hz-35kHz	15Hz-30kHz	10Hz
+0, -1dB		10Hz-100kHz	10Hz-100kHz	10Hz-60kHz	10Hz
+0, -3dB					
Frequency response @ 1W output	dB	110	100	50	
S/N ratio	dB	50	50	50	50
Damping factor (@ 8 ohms)		6" x 18"	6" x 18"	6" x 18"	5" x 18"
x 14"					
Dimensions (height, width, depth)	inches	33 lbs 8oz	33 lbs 11 oz	31 lbs 1 oz	19 lbs
Weight					

\*Aux. input @ 1kHz \*\*Aux. input, 60Hz: 7Hz = 4:1

### STR-7065

"If the tuner section of the STR-7065 were categorized as basically meeting its excellent specification, we'd have to rate the amplifier as one that exceeds its claims by far...THD reached the manufacturer's rated (and very low) value of 0.2% at an incredible 85 watts per channel. Remember, that Sony rates the amplifier at 70 watts mid-band, per channel and, even more conservatively, at 60 watts/channel for all frequencies from 20 Hz to 20,000 Hz. At all power levels below 60 watts, THD measured well below 0.15%, while IM distortion measured under 0.1% for all power levels up to 45 watts, rising to the rated 0.2% at 60 watts and remaining at less than 1.0% even at 65 watts per channel and higher."

— Reprinted from Audio, Nov. 1973

### STR-7055

"The audio amplifiers of the STR-7055 delivered 51.5 watts per channel into 8 ohms at the clipping point with both channels driven..."

— Reprinted from Stereo Rev., Nov. 1973

"Using Sony's rated 35 watts per channel as a reference full-power level, harmonic distortion was under 0.1 per cent from 30 to 20,000 Hz at full power or less, rising to the rated 0.2 per cent at 20 Hz. Typically, distortion was less than 0.05 per cent."

— Reprinted from Stereo Rev., Nov. 1973

### STR-7055

"The overall performance of the Sony STR-7055 left nothing to be desired, and our positive reaction to the receiver was enhanced by the smoothness of its controls, its noncritical tuning, and its noise-free FM muting system."

— Reprinted from Stereo Rev., Nov. 1973

### STR-7045

"The IM distortion, starting from 0.1 percent at 0.1 watt, increased to 0.2 percent at 30 watts and 0.5 percent at 40 watts...IM distortion was less than 0.2 percent at all power levels from 30 watts down to a mere 1 milliwatt!"

— Reprinted from Popular Electronics June 1974

"Sony's conservative power ratings were emphasized by the fact that at the rated 30 watts/channel (or less), the THD was under 0.1 percent at any frequency from 20 to 20,000 Hz and was typically about 0.02 percent."

— June 1974 issue of Popular Electronics

"The published ratings of the STR-7045, good as they are, do not do justice to this fine receiver."

— June 1974 issue of Popular Electronics

# No matter how good we think we are, there are people who think we're better.

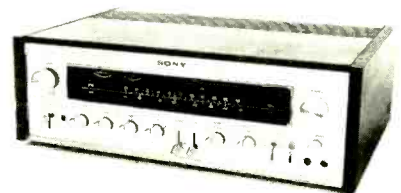
Understatement is as rare in the business of componentry as it is in the business of politics.

Yet respected and responsible audio publications have seen fit, time and time again, to point out that Sony has a curious habit of underrating itself.

Our predilection for this comes from two things. We tend to be conservative because we shudder at the exaggerations

that others fling about. And we know that even though we play ourselves down, our specs still emerge as deeply impressive. And certainly, once you actually *hear* our underrated components, you will be deeply impressed.

You see at Sony, we're not only tough on ourselves *while* we're making our equipment. We're also tough on ourselves after we make it.



## SONY®

**R**ANDY Newman is brilliant—no qualifiers about it, just good old brilliant. Asking me to write about one of his albums is effectively asking if I can avoid the kind of runny rhapsodizing that slurps out of the typewriter when Pauline Kael writes about one of Robert Altman's films, and the answer is probably not. Newman's lyrics are among the few I can look in the face on one of my bad days; they take us to the slightly palsied heart of the American Dream by making straight for the craw and whatever happens to be stuck there. Newman's tunes are convincing evidence that it was worth all the trouble of setting up America if only to see what it would do to the arts. And his performances, rasping, wheezing, sardonic, and cagey, cast just the right interplay of light and shadow on his continual circlings in the ring with romanticism.

On the surface, Newman is clearly antiromantic—satire is, after all, the busting of balloons, and irony is mockery—but I think he is at least grateful to America for being so, ah, colorful in its gawky and comical way, and he certainly is moved to say a lot of funny things about it. I think he may even be fond of it, that he likes, say, a Gershwin tune and is asking, among other things, how about us. It's just that he has to wink when he asks something like that, which seems an altogether sane thing to do.

The Good Old Boy has been America's favorite problem child lately. Lots of folks from Up North have made sport of him. Haven't even been above it myself, in fact, although I began to suspect the fun was about over a few months ago when I read, in one of those "little" magazines famous for solemnity and dull writing, a fashionably unfashionable defense of the redneck. Surely, I thought, *Time* magazine would think of a way, any day now, to nail the subject shut forever. But good writers like Newman can take up old themes and show us several new—and, in retrospect, obvious—ways of holding them up to the light. The most important thing about Newman's "Good Old Boys" is that it is hilarious, but the nifty side benefits include some damned good sociology, if one is into that, and a musical meeting of the high standards Randy set in "Sail Away."

Right off the bat, as they say in Cracker Country, Newman goes ruthlessly about his business in *Rednecks*: "We got no-neck oilmen from Texas/Good old boys from Tennessee/College men from L. S. U./Went in dumb, come out dumb, too/Hustlin' 'round Atlanta in they alligator shoes. . . ." But, slashing as this summary is, Newman refuses to form cheap alliances with some of the people he has set to laughing. Later in the song he says: "Down here we're too ignorant to realize/The North has set the nigger free/Yes, it's 'free' to be put in a cage in Harlem, New York City/It's 'free' to be put in a cage in the South Side of Chicago. . . ." and goes on through a list of our Northern cities famous for their ghettos. From somewhere, Newman found a song written by Huey P. Long (with someone named Castro Carazo—I assume Long wrote the words and sang it when he was campaigning for governor of Louisiana) called *Every Man a King*, and Randy performs that as an introduction to his *Kingfish*, which was Long's nickname and which here

purports to be something like a campaign speech: "Everybody gather 'round/Loosen up yo' suspenders, hunker down on the ground/ . . . Who took the Standard Oil men and whipped their asses?/—Just like he promised he'd do/Ain't no Standard Oil men gonna run this state/Gon' be run by little folks like me and you."



WALTER BRUNS

## RANDY NEWMAN'S GOOD, HARD, NOT NECESSARILY UNSYMPATHETIC LOOK AT THE GOOD OLD BOYS

Reviewed by Noel Coppage

The funniest of all, and—seeing as how it strikes right at the home and famby—the most outrageous, is *Wedding in Cherokee County*, in which an old boy takes a look at his bride on their wedding day: "Her papa was a midget/Her mama was a whore/Her granddad was a newsboy/Till he was eighty-four/(What a slimy old bastard he was). . . ." Another of Newman's old boys seems to be speaking from a nuthouse, going on about how his sister ran away with a rich Negro from the Eastern Shore, and still another, subtler, gets drunk in order to tell *Marie* how much he loves her.

Newman and producers Lenny Waronker and Russ Titelman know that the aesthetics of album-making call for some relief from a theme of this sort, so he has included *Guilty*, already widely accepted as straightforward self-flagellation. The way Bonnie Raitt sings it, it is that: Randy's vocal, of course, makes it start to smell like one of those *He Gives Us All His Love* deals, a matter of enough

exaggeration to put it just this side or just that side of the line separating a romantic from a put-on artist. Bonnie's vocal remains untouchable, but Newman's too has its uses. He has his own way with history again in *Louisiana 1927*, which fits the theme as a backgrounder, recalling apolitically one of the elements—levee-breaking weather—that shaped a good old boy's pappy. *Naked Man* is, pardon the word, bathos that could be set just anywhere, although a number of people seem to think, wrongly, that the South has a corner on incest. And *Rollin'*, arranged with shaky strings hovering above a sashaying piano beat, is an example of Newman being ambiguous (he is never vague) with such an air of finality that the case has got to be stamped **CLOSED, UNSOLVED**: "I never drink in the afternoon/ Never drink alone/But I sure do like a drink or two/When I get home." Is this a redneck talking? Could be. Is it Newman's own voice? Could be. "Never thought I'd make it/But I always did somehow." Is this poking fun at two-bit complacency? Maybe. Is it showing understanding of the tough haul we all face? Maybe. **CASE CLOSED**. It's all right; if you don't like ambiguous songs, just turn it over and listen again to "We're rednecks, we're rednecks/Don't know our ass from a hole in the ground. . . ."

If you were merely smart enough to see the unvarnished truth as clearly as Newman sees it, and to write it down as economically as he does, you would likely come off sounding right but unnecessarily cruel. Newman is just about a black humorist, but with the emphasis on humorist: a good laugh as provoked by Newman is strangely compassionate in its overtones. The bridegroom's final word about his bride could be Newman's final word about this here now culture: "Maybe we're both crazy, I don't know/ Maybe that's why I love her so." There's seldom anything very mitigating in the lyrics, though, when Newman really takes after a subject; the overtones must come from the music. His melodies are not "progressive" or in any way radical; they are constructed of bits and pieces of distinctively American ways of using interval and rhythm. Hearing them makes you think of ragtime, blues, Gershwin, Copland, Uncle Alfred's movie themes, even Charles Ives. The song *Birmingham*, whose lyrics are supposedly the talk of a redneck who has the meanest dog in Alabam', is arranged so the black man's ragtime blends into the white man's country-and-western—forces at work in real life in that city—and I can't help wondering how much less soul and vitality all our musics might have if we were in one of those small, homogeneous countries where it's easier and less painful to become civilized. Scars are good for you, once the pain stops—that's a romantic notion, probably, but somewhere down in the nap of Newman's music I think I hear it confirmed.

**RANDY NEWMAN: *Good Old Boys***. Randy Newman (vocals, piano); orchestra, Randy Newman arr. *Rednecks; Birmingham; Marie; Mr. President; Guilty; Louisiana 1927; Every Man a King; Kingfish; Naked Man; Wedding in Cherokee County; Back on My Feet Again; Rollin'*. REPRISE MS 2193 \$5.98, Ⓜ M8 2193 \$6.98, Ⓒ M5 2193 \$6.98.

album, supposedly perpetuating the idea that powerful and sexy men are making powerful and sexy music. It takes more physical exertion to play a dulcimer than it takes to play an electric guitar. Leslie West need not burn more than half a calorie to blow the back wall off the gymnasium as long as he has a fortune sunk in amplifiers and enough electricity to drive your aunt's wheelchair from Des Moines to Anchorage at freeway speeds. Suspension of disbelief is necessary if one is to appreciate this kind of playing as "powerful," and it doesn't claim to be much of anything else. But, of course, if the songs were more interesting and if someone in the group cared enough about singing to try to learn how to do it, I'd be here suspending my disbelief as readily as I did six or seven years ago. *N.C.*

**THE O'JAYS:** *Live in London.* The O'Jays (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *Love Train; Backstabbers; Put Your Hands Together; Wildflower; When the World Is at Peace; Sunshine.* PHILADELPHIA INTERNATIONAL KZ 32953 \$4.98, Ⓟ ZA 32953 \$6.98, © ZT 32953 \$6.98.

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

The O'Jays are one of the groups described as being part of the "Philadelphia Sound." I doubt that there is such a thing, but if so it is almost wholly the creation of writer-producers Kenny Gamble and Leon Huff, who took available talents from the city and molded them in various images, just as Berry Gordy did in Detroit with his Motown stable. The "Sound" is almost always mechanical and the groups are interchangeable. The justification

for this "live" recording was a "Philadelphia Sound" tour of England following the success, several years ago, of tours by Motown artists and the Stax/Volt "Memphis Sound" (which, in the late Sixties, was genuine—but we'll argue about that some other time).

The O'Jays give a good show. The back-up band is well-drilled, the singing is commendable, and the group tries to make audience contact in the between-song patter. But everything is a little flat until the trio sings their big hits, *Backstabbers* and *Love Train*. Up until then the audience (to judge from the recording) sits on its hands.

Why should this be so? The English relate to black American music the way the French relate to jazz—they take pride in knowing more nit-picking details about it and liking it better than we do. The English have a strong sense of history, and their interest in soul music is composed of glandular response and encyclopedic research. So perhaps this album was recorded on an off-night. Perhaps British audiences are finally becoming what American audiences have been for some time: jaded and myopic. It seems cruel and ugly to me that a group should work this hard and get no response except when they sing their certified smash hits.

By the way, the "Philadelphia Sound" may be mechanical and all that, but *Love Train* is still a rousing tune: a good old corny, tear-jerking, pass the plate, one-eye-to-the-encore stomper. Too bad it doesn't come off here. *J.V.*

**FREDA PAYNE:** *Payne & Pleasure.* Freda Payne (vocals); orchestra. *Didn't I Tell You; A Song for You; Run for Your Life; The Way*

*We Were;* and five others. ABC DSX-50176 \$5.98, Ⓟ 8023-50176 M \$6.98.

Performance: **Kiss me, you fool!**  
Recording: **Overdone**

I'm beginning to have the feeling that Freda Payne spends much more time and energy on her album covers than she does in trying to shade her performances. Her last album showed her in a micro-bikini, and this new one features her reclining on a fur throw, with enough breast and thigh exposed to satisfy even a Fellini childhood fantasy. Unfortunately, her natural physical endowments far outdazzle her natural performing talents. On the record itself she pulls out all the supposed stops: she writhes and teases her way through such innocuous material as *The Way We Were* to the point that one gets the uncomfortable impression that somebody has dropped something illegal into her drink. And she is again surrounded by a huge, noisily distraught production. On her previous album I had thought that tactic a mistake. Now, I'm not so sure, since there is obviously a lot less here than meets the ear. *P.R.*

**PHANTOM:** *Phantom's Divine Comedy, Part 1.* Phantom (vocals, guitar, piano); X (drums); Y and W (bass); Z (keyboards). *Tales from a Wizard; Devil's Child; Calm Before the Storm; Half a Life; Spiders Will Dance;* and four others. CAPITOL ST-11313 \$5.98.

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

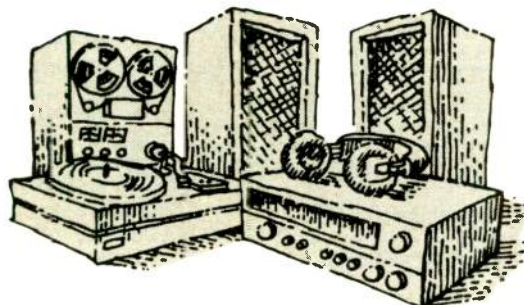
When *Calm Before the Storm* was released as a single, some people thought it was Jim Morrison—either back from the dead or never

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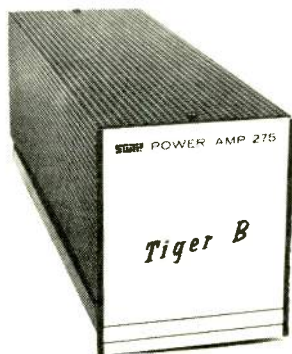
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really dead. There was a rock-and-roll rumor, which I first heard about a year and a half ago, to the effect that Morrison, a notorious boozier, had faked his own death in order to dry out in peace and privacy in another country. But then the Phantom, still not saying what his name was, showed up in the audience at a gig played by another ex-Door, organist Ray Manzarek, who has formed a new band. The Phantom allowed himself to be photographed, which would not be the thing to do if he were merely interested in squeezing the last potential dime out of the rumor. Then again, the photos of him on the album jacket are purposely blurred—out-of-focus color negatives—and he *did* elect to surface in a situation featuring a close associate of Morrison. So I'm confused, if only about how he's working the publicity angle.

The Phantom does sound remarkably like Morrison in *Calm* and in *Black Magic/White Magic*, but not *just* like Morrison everywhere else. His songwriting has that same balance of desperation and resignation that sometimes marked Morrison's, but Jim wasn't generally this vague. I suppose you could learn more about what he's up to if you could concentrate on the lyrics throughout this disjointed theme album, but having to unravel all those pretentious abstractions just to find out what a (presumably smart) publicist is up to offends my sense of priorities. He sings reasonably well—like Morrison's, his voice sounds like the product of vocal cords suspended deep inside a stovepipe—but the music and the backing are just run-of-the-mill rock that, on their own merits, wouldn't attract any special attention. N.C.

WILSON PICKETT: *Pickett in the Pocket*. Wilson Pickett (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *Iron It Out; Isn't That So; Take a Look; I Was Too Nice; Don't Pass Me By*; and four others. RCA APL1-0495 \$5.98, Ⓢ APS1-0495 \$6.98, Ⓒ APK1-0495 \$6.98.

Performance: **Loud but lovable**  
Recording: **Very good**

Wilson Pickett is still doing a thriving business at the stand he established for himself in the Sixties at the corner of Rhythm and Blues, socking out songs about love in a style you couldn't exactly call romantic but which is certainly fervid. In *Iron It Out* he is pleading with some babe or other to give him "a try" at working it out to save whatever they have together. "Don't let our true love die!" he begs at the top of his coruscating voice. One gets the idea she'll either have to let this man back into her life or call the police. And so it goes. *I Was Too Nice* is a whole electrical storm of self-pity, complete with tears. There's also *Young Boy Blues*, a ballad of blighted puppy love, and *Take Your Pleasure Where You Find It*, a sort of shrill soul version of Omar Khayyám hedonism. But most of all there's Pickett shouting, wailing, wooing, and coming on so strong, what with his background singers and the pounding rhythms supplied by the Muscle Shoals Swampers, that you either abandon resistance and let Pickett into your life or turn him off. Personally, I rather enjoyed the whole frenetic display, but I do worry about what's liable to happen to that man's poor abused voice. All those screams! P.K.

MARTHA REEVES. Martha Reeves (vocals); orchestra. *Sweet Misery; Storm in My Soul; Dixie Highway; Wild Night; Power of Love*;

and six others. MCA MCA-414 \$6.98, Ⓢ MCAT-414 \$6.98, Ⓒ MCAC-414 \$6.98.

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

Every day in every way I try to be a fairer reviewer. But there are some days when it ain't easy. Take Martha Reeves, for example. She is professional, she sings well enough, and she seems to take at least a passing interest in lyrics. So why is it that I was sluggish with boredom by the time I got to the third track of her album? Probably because she sounds like literally hundreds of others who have come before her and will come after her. Recordings such as this give me an uneasy feeling that somewhere there is a gigantic roll of prerecorded tape, probably about as big as a pizza, and that every now and then some Huxleyian mastermind is cutting off a few feet and re-



WILLIE MAE FORD SMITH  
A recorded first from a seminal gospel spirit

leasing it with a different title from the last one. Could be. P.R.

### RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

EVANGELIST WILLIE MAE FORD SMITH: *I Believe I'll Run On*. Willie Mae Ford Smith (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *If Jesus Had to Pray; I Just Can't Make It by Myself; The Solid Rock; The Lifeboat Is Coming; Salvation Is Free; If You Just Keep Still; When He Spoke; Peace in the Valley; That's All Right; I've Come So Far*. NASHBORO 7124 \$4.98 (from Nashboro Record Company, 4000 Woodland Street, Nashville, Tenn. 37206).

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

I cannot remember listening ever before to a record by an unfamiliar singer for the first time and being so constantly reminded of having to think of so many things at once. The first thing to hit you (at least it was the first thing to hit me) is the resemblance—in the quality of voice, the phrasing, the enunciation, the melismatic embellishment, the swinging, rhythmic urgency, and the evangelical fervor of the communication—to the art of Mahalia Jackson. Then you remind yourself that the body from which this dark, rich, powerful, lustrous, vibrant contralto pours



forth was sixty-seven years old in 1973 when this album was recorded, and that Mahalia, when she died in 1972, was only sixty.

You recall, too, thanks to Tony Heilbut's book *The Gospel Sound*, that it was Willie Mae Ford Smith who inspired Mahalia to embark on a career as a gospel singer. Mahalia was still running a beauty shop in Chicago and moonlighting as lead singer of Chicago's Greater Salem Baptist Church when she heard Willie Mae and told her. "Willie Mae, I'm gonna leave this beauty shop. I wanna be like you."

Heilbut is the co-producer of this album, and the title is derived from one of his own hymns, *I've Come So Far*, the album's last track. He is responsible, too, for the informative liner notes in which he has caught the album's unique fascination with pardonable hyperbole: "This is simply the most influential female gospel singer of all time, and in the opinion of many, many fans, the greatest. It is the rarest of pleasures to hear Mother Smith make the slurs, runs, note-bends, the subtle but emphatic repetitions ('If Jesus, if Jesus, if Jesus had to pray') that have become the signal characteristic of gospel style. . . and recognize that these are *her* contributions, that we are hearing the words, as it were, from the Burning Bush."

It seems incredible that this woman, whose position in the gospel world is reflected in the affectionate appellation "Mother Smith," who was a seminal influence not only on Mahalia Jackson but on many other gospel singers, and whose own hymns and arrangements have supplied hit records for the biggest names in the idiom, should only now be making her first album. According to Heilbut, she has cut only one other record in her entire career. The explanation undoubtedly lies in the fact that she, more than any other gospel singer, prefers to live the life she sings about.

Born in Fort Rolling, Miss., raised in Memphis, and, since late adolescence, a resident of St. Louis, she has been concerned with the administrative affairs of such organizations as the Rev. Thomas A. Dorsey's National Convention of Gospel Choirs and Choruses and the Education Department of the National Baptist Convention. Since her conversion to the Church of God Apostolic in 1939, she has devoted herself to her mission and responsibilities as an ordained evangelist.

We can be thankful that this great voice and this great spirit have now been captured for the present and future on this well-produced album, and that the voice, miraculously, shows so little evidence of age and usage. There is just a suggestion of wobble on the very slow, sustained numbers. All else—from full-voiced invocation, exhortation, and supplication to the tenderest, caressing, adoring whisper—comes through with almost vernal freshness. We may be thankful too for the simple, idiomatic backing—just piano, electric organ, and drums, no plush string-and-heavenly-choir frills and trappings.

Listeners will have their own favorites among the ten tracks. Mine is the very first track, *If Jesus Had to Pray (What About Me?)*, embodying all that is most eloquent and moving and true in gospel song. If it reminds you of Mahalia, as it will, just remember that this is the source. It is at their sources that river waters run freshest and purest.

*Henry Pleasants*

**SOUTHER-HILLMAN-FURAY BAND.** J. D. Souther (vocals, guitar); Chris Hillman (vo-

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als, mandolin, guitar, bass); Richie Furay (vocals, guitar); Paul Harris (keyboards); Al Perkins (steel guitar); Jim Gordon (drums). *Fallin' in Love; Heavenly Fire; The Heartbreaker; Believe Me; Border Town*; and five others. ASYLUM 7E-1006 \$6.98, Ⓣ ET-81006 \$6.98. © TC-51006 \$6.98.

Performance: **Just another L.A. band**  
Recording: **Very good**

Like most dead horses, the supergroup concept just lies there oblivious to the flailings of J. D. Souther (fresh from the studios, where he produced Linda Ronstadt and others), Chris Hillman (from Manassas), and Richie Furay (from Poco). From the evidence presented here, the SHF Band has no leader—not that having one would make these songs

any better. None of these chaps has a consistent songwriting record, only Furay has any special tools as a vocalist, and only Hillman is known as a good picker. Given that information, you could just about predict what problems the band would have, and the album is redundant in confirming your predictions. The only song that's even catchy is *Rise and Fall*. The voices, in the so-called harmonies, don't even sound compatible, and the instrumentals are energetic but artificially so, without spirit. Hillman's pretty-good mandolin is patched into songs that have nothing special for a mandolin to do—presumably out of a sense of obligation to put *some* kind of picking in there. Paul Harris' keyboards work better than anything else, but, from the sound of it all, nobody on the front lines gave him or the

other all-star backers any very clear-cut directions. The band could jell, of course; Furay is a good singer and does occasionally write something with a little sparkle to it, and the three men in the secondary have solid reputations. But if your part of the country is like my part of the country, you could hear better music than this for the price of a beer at the nearest roadhouse. N.C.

#### RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

**TAMPA RED:** *The Guitar Wizard, 1935-1953*. Hudson (Tampa Red) Whittaker (guitar, kazoo, vocals); various instrumental accompaniments. *Bessemer Blues; She Want to Sell My Monkey; Let Me Play with Your Poodle; Detroit Blues*; and ten others. BLUES CLASSICS Ⓣ BC 25 \$5.98.

Performance: **Blues master at work**  
Recording: **Good transfers**

Tampa Red is eking out only a meager existence in Chicago now, but there was a time when he was the most prolific blues composer and recording artist around. His early recordings with Georgia Tom—now better known as Thomas A. Dorsey, dean of gospel composers—are rare, sought-after classics, and it seems incredible, considering his influence on American music, that this is the first U.S. reissue of an album devoted solely to his work.

Culled from recordings made for the Blue Bird and Victor labels between 1935 and 1953, it offers an excellent sample of Tampa Red's artistry and accompaniments by some of the finest blues players of any time. This is the music that, bastardized, became the rock-and-roll of the Fifties and was further developed into the rock of the Sixties. Much of what you see on today's TV midnight rock concerts is a feeble attempt to capture the beauty found on these tracks; the sad thing is that artists like Tampa Red, though relatively successful in their days, never reaped anything like the financial rewards enjoyed by some of their imitators. C.A.

**JESSE WINCHESTER:** *Learn to Love It* (see Best of the Month, page 97)

**RON WOOD:** *I've Got My Own Album to Do*. Ron Wood (guitar, vocals); Mick Jagger (vocals); Keith Richard (vocals, guitar); Mick Taylor (bass, synthesizer); Rod Stewart (vocals); Andy Newmark (drums); Willy Weeks (bass); Ross Henderson Stirling (steel drums); Jean Rousseau (organ); George Harrison (guitars, vocal); Ian MacLagan (celeste, organ). *I Can Feel the Fire; Far East Man; Act Together; Cancel Everything; Sure the One You Need; If You Got to Make a Fool of Somebody*; and five others. WARNER BROS. BS 2819 \$6.98, Ⓣ M8 2819 \$7.97, Ⓣ M5 2819 \$7.97.

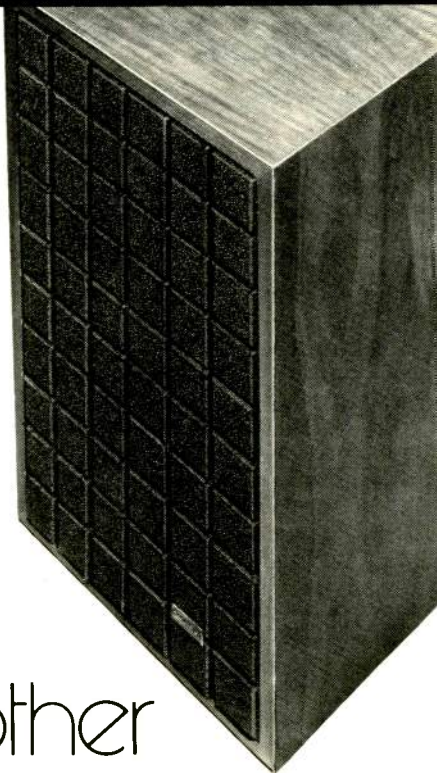
Performance: **Spotty**  
Recording: **Variable**

Ron Wood is the second most famous person in the Faces after Rod Stewart. They have been buddies for some time, they move in the circles of rock's elite, and it was only a matter of time before Wood came to the *de rigueur* form of recorded rock these days: The Solo Album.

One of the conventions of The Solo Album is that the famous person gets all other kinds of famous persons to do guest appearances. (Say, does this remind you of the days when

(Continued on page 116)

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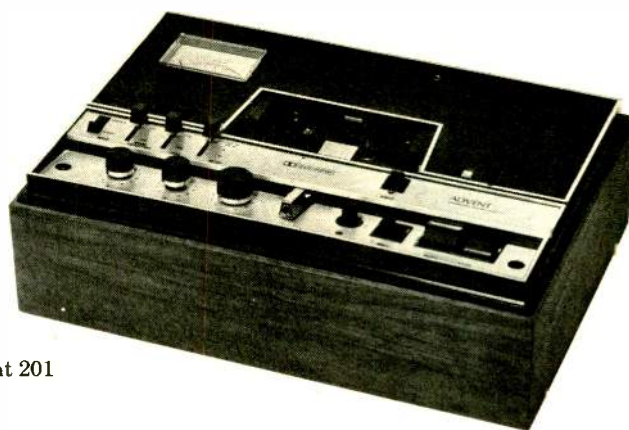
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jazz was sagging as a popular music, when its audience was shrinking to one of sycophants and a few daisy-chain critics? Well, never mind.) Some of the famous people here are Mick Jagger, Keith Richards, and Mick Taylor of the Stones, George Harrison, and Wood's pal Rod Stewart. Wood has collaborated with Harrison for the best song and performance in the album, the lazy and lilting *Far East Man*, which is about as nice a mixture of pop and jazz as you'll hear this year. Wood and Harrison share the vocals and guitar passages; they go together nicely. The Stones contingent shows up in *I Can Feel the Fire*, written by Wood although it sounds as though Jagger and Richard had done it. It's a standard banga-banga jump thing that gets monotonous fairly quickly. The Stones did write two songs, *Sure the One You Need*, a beat-blues of the type the Stones excel at, and *Act Together*, a (cough) ballad with the beginnings of a melody in it (which, I would guess, comes from Richard) and some sour lyrics. I always thought that the purpose of a love song, even a conditional one, is to woo, and I can't think of any ladies outside of masochists or tramps who would permit the lover to say, "Let's get our (bleep) together." But the real trouble with the Stones material, especially since Jagger, Richards, and Taylor are playing in it, is that it sounds like the Stones on an off night. Wood just gets lost.

Rod Stewart shows up as co-vocalist on *Mystifies Me* and *If You Got to Make a Fool of Somebody*. The latter sounds like the Faces on an off night. Again, where's Wood? (Incidentally, I beg anyone out there who knows to please tell me: who was the black singer who had a small hit on *If You Gotta Make a Fool of Somebody* circa 1959-1961? It was the best version I ever heard.)

Now back to Wood. Most of the rest of the songs are his. He doesn't do anything shocking or exciting. He changes his vocal styles from track to track, here sounding like Bob Dylan, there like Doug Sahm. Wood's guitar playing shows rock expertise, but it's more often proficient than original. All in all, the album is something of a dud, with the valuable exception of *Far East Man*. The Solo Album looks good on paper, but in practice . . . ? How do you put a shrug on paper? J.V.

#### RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

**LINK WRAY:** *The Link Wray Rumble*. Link Wray (vocals, guitar, dobro); Mark Jordan (keyboards); Rick Shlosser (drums); Tom Rutley (bass); Boz Scaggs (rhythm guitar); Bernie Krause (synthesizer); other musicians. *It Was a Bad Scene; Good Time Joe; Walkin' Bulldog; I Got to Rumble; Backwoods Preacher Man*; and five others. POLYDOR PD 6025 \$6.98, ⓑ 8F 6025 \$7.98, Ⓒ CF 6025 \$7.98.

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

I don't see how anyone can claim to like the electric guitar and not like Link Wray. He may not be the wizard with the hands that Roy Buchanan is, but Wray was one of the first white rockers to zero in on the raunchy feelings the axe seems best at expressing—one of the first in this category, in fact, to make it express specific feelings at all—and he's still one of the best at playing the snarling, vaguely threatening sounds presaged in *Rumble*, his classic of long ago. He re-records  
(Continued on page 118)

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# LISSEN

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that one here, making it sound even meaner than it used to, if that's possible, and he sings, plays, and leads a band that seems to be slashing its way through the grille cloth of the speakers.

What Wray's been missing, until now, was a truly good, truly sustaining batch of songs, but I don't expect many complaints about most of these. Wray's own *Good Time Joe* is the best of the lot, and, to hit a few more of the high spots, the band does a superb job with Tony Joe White's *Backwoods Preacher Man* and with Link's *She's That Kind of Woman*. Wray's vocals are a little like his guitar playing—a little fainter, of course, and touched with this additional ambiguously regional quality: he sounds like a representative of a cultural enclave *somewhere*, but the mind can shuttle that location around the country without damaging anything. In addition to all that, most of the tunes are done in one or the other of those cherished blues keys, E and A, which simplifies matters for impoverished harmonica players who like to play along with records.

N.C.

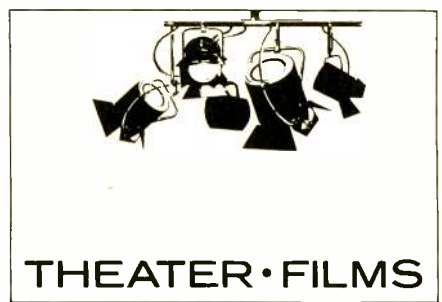
**NEIL YOUNG: *On the Beach*.** Neil Young (vocals, guitar, electric piano, harmonica); Ben Keith (vocals, slide guitar, steel guitar); Tim Drummond (bass); Ralph Molina (drums); other musicians. *Walk On; See the Sky About to Rain; Revolution Blues; For the Turnstiles*; and four others. REPRISE R 2180 \$6.98, Ⓟ L8R 2180 \$7.97, Ⓢ L5R 2180 \$7.97.

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

Neil Young has invoked his own peculiar blues consciousness to produce a fine album. As a singer, he remains technically a mess, but I think it's obvious by now that he's one of the originals. There was some talk about Young having a "new" voice, but what seems to be happening here is merely the use of lower keys than normal, with a little cracking occurring on some of the unfamiliarly low notes. However new this is, it doesn't hurt the album. The only thing that does is its lack of variety, its failure to add a Neil Young Song of readily apparent stature (*See the Sky About to Rain* is, of course, a dandy, and the arrangement of it here is excellent, but this album can't claim to have introduced it). Young does not have the fast hands of a really good guitarist, but he does have an ear for the sound of the instrument and he knows how to play into the arrangement. His use of the electric piano in *See the Sky* is about as effective as any I've heard in a legally recorded album, coming just about when I was preparing to suggest that we chuck that particular instrument for good. *For the Turnstiles* is a fetching, ingenious cut, with only Neil on the *banjo* and Ben Keith on the dobro behind Neil's lead and Ben's harmony vocal.

The album is never far from the blues, but never really in them, either. There are several structural similarities among the songs, and the instrumentation is thinned down to blues (as opposed to rock) proportions—but Young's intense, introverted attitude does not allow for the kind of escape there is in the blues. The man even plays a tense banjo (and, by the way, gets rather a stylish sound out of that lately overexposed instrument, even if you can almost hear him counting between strums). For fans the album's a must; for everyone else—how about a solid B-plus?

N.C.



## THEATER • FILMS

**THE GOLDEN AGE OF THE HOLLYWOOD MUSICAL.** Excerpts from original-sound-track recordings. *Gold Diggers of 1933; Gold Diggers of 1935; Dames; 42nd Street; Footlight Parade*. Dick Powell, Ruby Keeler, Joan Blondell, James Cagney, others (vocals); George Raft (narrator). UNITED ARTISTS UA-1A215-H \$7.98, Ⓟ EA215-H \$7.98, Ⓢ CA215-H \$7.98.

Performance: **Total recall**  
Recording: **Vitaphone deficiency**

What any of us in my old neighborhood wouldn't have given at thirteen, after emerging into the drab light of upper Broadway from a voluptuous Saturday matinee at the local Loew's watching Ruby Keeler and Dick Powell in *42nd Street* or the *Gold Diggers of 1933*, to have a record like this to play on the Victrola! Even the choreographic contributions of Busby Berkeley aren't slighted in this album, for when you open it, up pops an entire chorus of bathing beauties performing the waterfall scene from *Footlight Parade*. And if you keep on opening it you'll find stills, plot analyses, the kind of admiring minute biographies of the stars that could only be written in Hollywood, and encomiums from the press of the period for what Warner Brothers had wrought. Oh, the delicious, overwrought, abstract, enormous inanity of it all!

And the record concealed amid these generous trimmings sustains the whole mood of shameless regression: George Raft reminding us how much escape movies mattered as therapy in shoring up the sagging spirits of Depression-ridden America . . . the main title music from *Gold Diggers of 1933* (it *couldn't* have sounded that bad on the up-to-the-minute sound system at Loew's 175th Street) . . . the entire *I Only Have Eyes for You* subway reverie soundtrack from *Dames*, with Dick Powell's elocution-school enunciation and fruity tenor, and with Ruby Keeler's flat twangy whine and tapping toes joined by a chorus of thousands and three symphony orchestras as the curtain goes up on a stage evidently as big as Shea Stadium . . . Joan Blondell absenting herself from wisecracks long enough to deliver a World Peaceways message nobody heeded in *My Forgotten Men* . . . the *42nd Street* title song production number . . . the splashing, cooing, and mooring of *By a Waterfall* from *Footlight Parade*, and song-and-dance man James Cagney grunting out *Shanghai Lil* . . . *The Shadow Waltz* (a thousand neon-edged violins) and the *Lullaby of Broadway* (a thousand white baby-grand pianos) introducing the surprisingly undated voice of Winifred Shaw. It's all here, Burbank 1933-1935, and better late than never. Who says you can't go home again? With this record as a ticket, you can at least dream your way back to Loew's. P.K.

(Continued on page 120)

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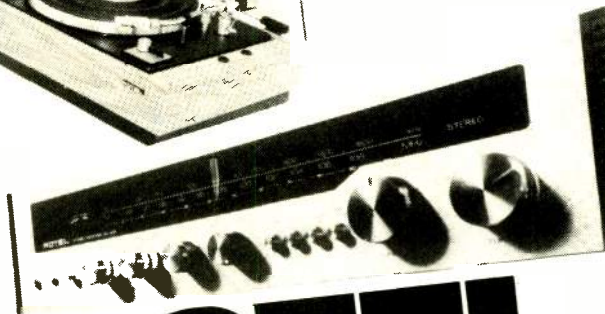
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## JAZZ



### RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

**CARLA BLEY:** *Tropic Appetites*. Carla Bley (voice, recorders, keyboards, percussion); Howard Johnson (voice, reeds, tuba); David Holland (cello, bass, bass guitar); Paul Motian (percussion); others. WATT 1 \$6.98 (available by mail from Watt Works, Inc., 6 West 95th Street, New York, N.Y. 10025).

Performance: **A gem**  
Recording: **Excellent**

In a TV interview last year, Carla Bley stated that the major record companies were not interested in her music because they couldn't tap their toes to it. Well, you powers that be, not only will this album have you tapping every last toe, it is also vastly superior to most of your current output.

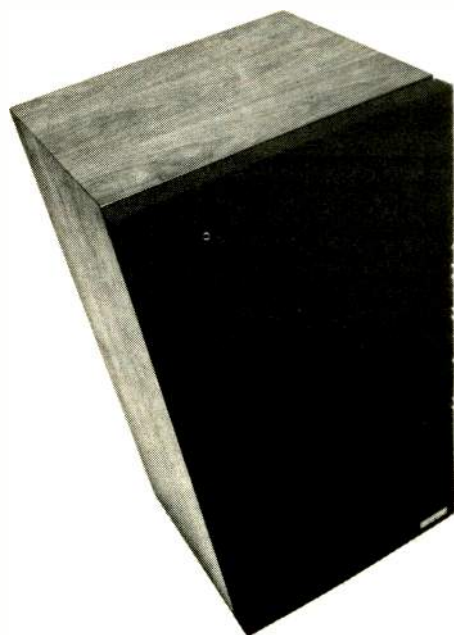
Now in her mid-thirties, Carla Bley is often overlooked as a pianist—although she shouldn't be—but her considerable talent as a composer is widely recognized, especially by musical minds equipped to appreciate her breaks with convention. Here, as in her album "Escalator over the Hill," Ms. Bley teams up with Paul Haines, turning his poetry into a dramatic musical experience. She draws inspiration from such diverse sources as Kurt Weill and the Beatles, but she nevertheless maintains a stamp of originality throughout her music.

This is not any pinpointable *kind* of music. It's Carla Bley, aided by friends and family (her husband, trumpeter Michael Mantler, and their daughter Karen), sopping up the juices of many creativities, adding more than a touch of Bley, and coming up with a most savory blend. Carla Bley has successfully done what so many others (including the rock people) have tried to do—she has turned humor and absurdity into enduring art. *C.A.*

**JOHN COLTRANE:** *The Africa Brass Sessions, Vol. 2*. John Coltrane (soprano and tenor saxophones); various other musicians, including Booker Little (trumpet); Britt Woodman (trombone); Eric Dolphy (reeds); McCoy Tyner (piano); Jimmy Garrison, Reggie Workman, Art Davis (bass); Elvin Jones (drums); Eric Dolphy arr. and cond. *Song of the Underground Railroad: Greensleeves: Africa*. IMPULSE AS-9273 \$5.98, Ⓟ 8027-9273 M \$6.98.

Performance: **Rejects reconsidered**  
Recording: **Good**

This album is really for the Coltrane enthusiast or the scholar who must hear it all. Except for six and a half minutes of *Song of the Underground Railroad*—which I don't recall having heard before—these are alternate takes from a couple of 1961 sessions. *Underground*, though not an alternate, was obviously a rejected take, like the rest of them, so we have here an album of music which no one



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considered satisfactory for release thirteen years ago. Nevertheless, there are good performances on all three tracks, proving, I suppose, that even as we approach the bottom of the Coltrane barrel, there is merit in the scraps. The first volume of "Africa Brass" (Impulse AS-6), however, is obviously the one to get before you add this one to your shelves.

Incidentally, there's an interesting conflict of credits on the album: the notes have, for *Song of the Underground Railroad* and *Greensleeves*, "orchestra arranged and conducted by Eric Dolphy," while they also tell us that these tunes are "traditional, adapted and arranged by John Coltrane." It all smacks of another attempt to pad the Coltrane estate—which is really what this album is all about in the first place. C.A.

**BILLY ECKSTINE:** *If She Walked into My Life*. Billy Eckstine (vocals); Robert Tucker Orchestra. *I Am Yours; Sophisticated Lady; Loving Arms; The Very Thought of You*; and six others. ENTERPRISE ENS-7503 \$5.98.

Performance: **Florid but often fine**  
Recording: **Good**

Eckstine's career stretches back to the Forties: he's had his ups and his downs since his *Flamingo* heyday, but he's kept working steadily in clubs and recording sporadically. This latest album has several bands of vintage stuff for his admirers. The top of his voice is gone and the bottom is often ragged, but it really doesn't matter that much since his main strength has always been stylistic: getting a lyric and rolling it around in his mouth like a lemon drop, savoring it endlessly. This phrasing is always supported by a voluptuous bellows-like wave of sound. It can get monotonous in its complexity, but when his style is applied to the right material, as it so often is here (*The Very Thought of You*, *Sophisticated Lady*, or the title song), you can't help but just relax and enjoy it. Things tend to be a bit overcooked, however, in a few of the songs, such as *All in Love Is Fair*, which is as florid an exercise in nothing as you are ever likely to hear. In short, with standards he's often very, very good, but lesser material collapses under the weight of all his heavy breathing. P.R.

#### RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

**BILL EVANS:** *The Tokyo Concert*. Bill Evans (piano); Eddie Gomez (bass); Marty Morell (drums). *Morning Glory; My Romance; Gloria's Step; Green Dolphin Street; Yesterday I Heard the Rain*; and four others. FANTASY F-9457 \$6.98.

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

Bill Evans began appearing on the New York jazz scene twenty years ago; *Down Beat* critics voted him "New Star" pianist in 1958 and 1959, and his status as a musician to be reckoned with was secured by a close association with Miles Davis. But Bill Evans has come a long way since then, both in renown and—if you compare his recent output to the old Riverside trio recordings—in his music.

He was always extraordinarily lyrical and inventive, and I remember him from those Riverside days as a quiet, almost fragile young man who gave the impression of taking his music so seriously that one hardly dared

(Continued on page 124)

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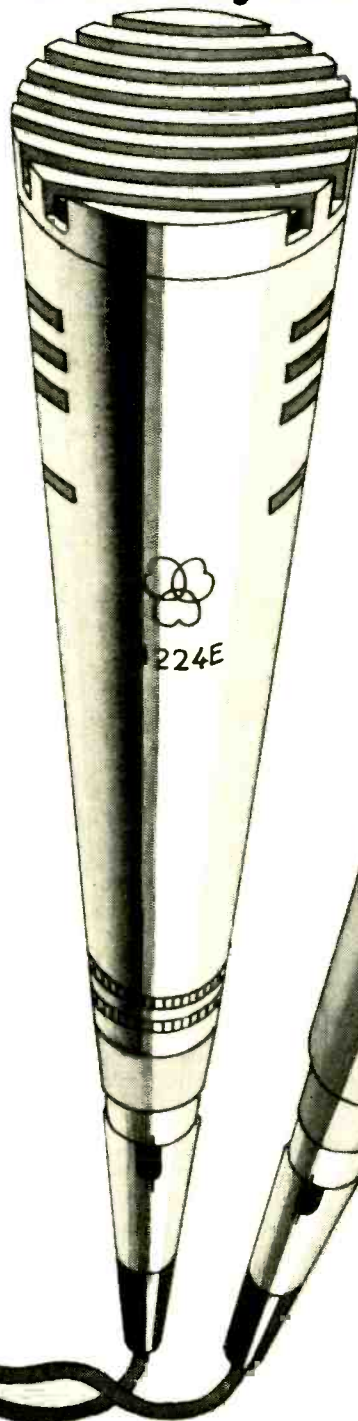
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THE Bix Beiderbecke piano pieces have always been separated from the canon of his cornet work, and for various reasons. First, with the exception of *In a Mist*, the pieces were written toward the end of Beiderbecke's short life, when alcoholism and the emasculating patronage of his stuffy Iowa family had eroded his confidence and filled him with guilt and doubt. Second, because the evaluation of Bix's music has almost always been as romantic as the music itself, the piano pieces have been tenderly dismissed as the sensitive but incoherent and feeble last gasps of the Little Prince of jazz. And third, the musical ancestry of the pieces can be traced much more easily to the work of such harmonic experimenters of the time as Eastwood Lane and such popular composers as George Gershwin than it can to jazz, and once Bix steps outside of jazz some of his most ardent admirers cool off a

A charming and delicate theme will be interrupted by an expedient rocking-on-the-waves figure, as if Bix were trying to prove that he was sensitive and all that, but he was still a regular guy, y'unnerstan'. But can the four works be taken separately as *works*? Must they be taken together as "a modern piano suite"? Or are they an amorphous, jellyfish mass, one piece constantly borrowing from another? What was Bix trying to do?

Well, we now have, at last, some hard evidence that may help answer these questions. This seems to be the Year of Bix. Two major books have been written about him, the more important of which is *Bix: Man and Legend* by Richard M. Sudhalter and Philip R. Evans, with its astonishingly detailed account of Bix's daily life and interviews with friends, admirers, lovers, and business associates. The other major event which will shed some light on the Bix legend is a marvelous—nay, revelatory—new Monmouth Evergreen release of the Bix piano pieces played by a virtuoso guitar quintet, led by Bucky Pizzarelli, in special arrangements made some years ago by Bill Challis. Because of Challis, we now know, at least in part, what Bix was trying to do: he was trying to write a hit.

That is oversimplifying the case, of course, but consider the circumstances. Challis was the brilliant young arranger for the Jean Goldkette orchestra and later for the Paul Whiteman organization. Whiteman, who adored Bix and cheerfully assigned Challis to write special arrangements with big holes for Bix's horn to fill in, formed a music-publishing company with Jack Robbins at about the time *In a Mist* was recorded. Whiteman had premiered Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* in 1924 with the composer at the piano. Now, in 1928, Whiteman and Robbins were looking for another *Rhapsody*. Several composers, including Ferde Grofé, who also arranged for Whiteman, submitted their candidates. Robbins asked Bix for a notated manuscript of *In a Mist* and detailed Challis to bird-dog Bix so he could write it down. During Bix's stay with Whiteman, the bandleader got up one of his famous (now considered notorious) "concert arrangements" for *In a Mist* with three pianos and orchestra and presented it as part of his band's road-tour program.

Whiteman and Robbins were counting on Bix to come up with another *Rhapsody*, then, even after his drinking had caused Whiteman to send him home for a cure (while keeping him, it must be noted, on salary). *In a Mist* was published by Robbins Music, as were *Candlelights*, *Flashes*, and *In the Dark*. Even after Bix's death in 1931, Challis adapted his band tune *Davenport Blues* (1923) for piano, and it, too, was published. So Bix was not writing entirely blindly when he composed the piano pieces. He knew that he had a ready and eager publisher, and he had the encouragement of the most popular and successful bandleader of the time. Bix was not alone, not friendless, not ignored, not misunderstood. He was overcome by emotional problems and bad hooch, but he certainly was not killed by commercial music, as the fans and writers who form the old Bix cabal would have us believe. On the contrary, he had a chance for a whole new musical career. It just might be possible that one of his pieces *would* be

the next *Rhapsody*, and if so, he could become a full-time composer and gentleman farmer.

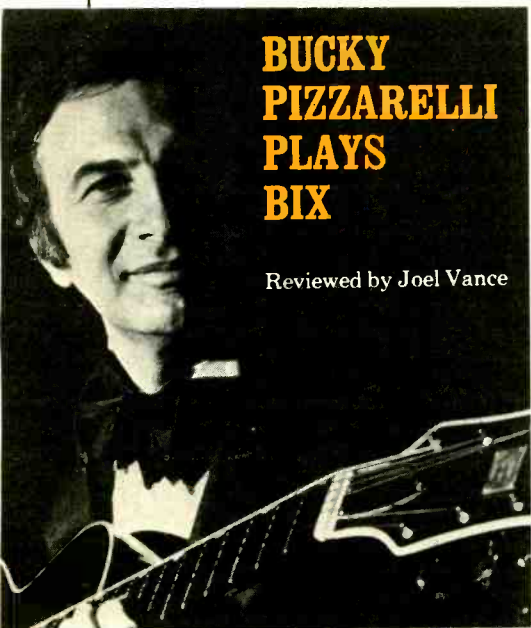
But, although we now have a better idea of what Bix was trying to do in his piano pieces, the question remains: what effect do they have on us as music? To quote Challis, "... I started figuring out that arrangements for five guitars would quite possibly be the best way for me to convey... what Bix's true intent had been. In this way I could demonstrate the inner voices, the percussive qualities, and the impressionistic delicacy of the Beiderbecke compositions."

Mr. Challis was absolutely right. The Bix piano pieces are, I believe, tone poems, and the guitar is a traditional instrument of poets. The pieces are so beautifully realized in this guitar recording that it might not be too much to say that Bix *played* the composer's instrument, the piano, but he *wrote* for the poet's instrument, rather like the man who sets out to build a better mousetrap and winds up a sculptor. This album finally and definitely establishes Bix not as a major composer—he died too soon for that—but as a *serious* composer whose ideas were jelling and who was headed in *his* right direction, and it proves that there is a legitimate musical reason for segregating the Beiderbecke piano works from his cornet canon.

I HAVE been discourteous so far in not referring to the other side of Monmouth Evergreen's important new album, a selection of eight guitar bouquets by Carl Kress and Dick McDonough. Beiderbecke's contemporaries. McDonough was the second greatest jazz guitarist, after the pioneering Eddie Lang, a master craftsman responsible for the demise of the banjo in jazz bands in the Twenties. But McDonough was freer and a better improviser than Lang. He teamed up with Carl Kress to form a unique partnership, carrying on the idea of string chamber-music jazz largely invented by Lang and his wild violinist confederate, Joe Venuti. But, like Lang, McDonough died young. Kress was devastated and wrote the three-part *Afterthoughts* as a memorial.

The Kress/McDonough pieces are a connecting link (the work of Django Reinhardt is another) between Lang and Les Paul's flamboyant and brilliant experiments with the electric guitar in the Forties. They are all part of a limited but fascinating and rewarding history of American composition for the guitar, a musical line which got sidetracked by the easy virtues of rock and has only lately surfaced again in the folk-based, increasingly poetic work of Leo Kottke as it did, before him, in that of John Fahey and Sandy Bull. The Bucky Pizzarelli performances of the Kress/McDonough pieces are formal but faultless.

**BUCKY PIZZARELLI:** *Bucky Pizzarelli Playing Beiderbecke/Challis and Kress/McDonough. Beiderbecke (arr. Bill Challis): Davenport Blues; Candlelights; Flashes; In the Dark; In a Mist.* Bucky Pizzarelli, Artie Ryerson, Barry Galbraith, Allen Hanlon, and Howie Collins or Tony Motola (guitars). **Kress/McDonough:** *Stage Fright; Danzon; Afterthoughts; Sutton Mutton; Peg Leg Shuffle; Love Song.* Bucky and Mary Pizzarelli (guitars). MONMOUTH EVERGREEN MES 7066 \$6.98.



## BUCKY PIZZARELLI PLAYS BIX

Reviewed by Joel Vance

little. The piano works demonstrate that he wasn't really that interested in jazz any more; such heresy is punished by fans and critics who put it down to booze and incorrect thinking, implying that if jazz's wonder kid was silly enough to go high-hat, he deserved to fail.

A further problem in evaluating the Bix piano pieces has been that no one is quite sure what they are or what they're supposed to be. Was Bix trying to create a new kind of music about which he had only the most tentative ideas? Was he trying to mix styles—a little modernity here, a little jazz there? Was he in any physical, mental, or emotional shape to take on such an assignment?

*In a Mist* is one of the most frequently mentioned of his pieces but one of the least frequently played, although several recordings of it are available. Though it was written nearly fifty years ago, it still sounds remarkably modern today. *Flashes*, *Candlelights*, and *In the Dark* were composed between 1928 and 1930, partly while Bix was convalescing at home in Iowa after a particularly gruesome bender in New York. These three pieces are really more interesting than *In a Mist*; there is a great deal more ambiguity in them, and quite a lot more pain.



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approach him with another subject. He is still quiet and serious, but no longer as withdrawn, and his musical sensitivity seems to have heightened. His touch is softer these days, his swing is lighter, his harmonic approaches more complex; few pianists can approach Evans as an interpreter of ballads—he has always been able to create magnificent romantic moods without getting mushy.

Bassist Eddie Gomez and drummer Marty Morell also deserve credit for making this a fine album. Evans' trio recordings of the late Fifties sound as good today as they did back then, and this album, recorded last year, will have lost none of its prepossessing qualities by the turn of the century. C.A.

#### RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

**FREDDIE HUBBARD/STANLEY TURRENTINE:** *In Concert.* Freddie Hubbard (trumpet); Stanley Turrentine (tenor saxophone); Herbie Hancock (piano); Eric Gale (guitar); Ron Carter (bass); Jack DeJohnette (drums). *Povo; Gibraltar.* CTI CT1 6044 \$5.98, Ⓣ CT8-6044 \$6.95, © CTC-6044 \$6.95.

Performance: **First-rate**  
Recording: **Excellent**

Freddie Hubbard and Stanley Turrentine are the nominal co-leaders of these concert recordings made in Chicago and Detroit on two successive days last March, but this sextet is actually made up of all leaders. There is neither the space nor the need to dwell on the individual merits of each player in this formidable group. Suffice it to say that the album consists of two excellent Freddie Hubbard compositions, that all concerned give charac-

teristically noteworthy performances, and—because all-star combinations don't necessarily produce a whole that is commensurate with the talent on hand—that there is splendid rapport throughout. The album is labeled Volume One, and I, for one, shall look forward to Volume Two. C.A.

#### RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

**THE METERS:** *Rejuvenation.* Art Neville (keyboards, vocals); Leo Nocentelli (guitar); George Porter, Jr. (bass); Joseph Modeliste (drums). *People Say; Love Is for Me; Just Kissed My Baby; What'cha Say; Jungle Man;* and four others. REPRISÉ MS 2200 \$6.98.

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

The Meters are an instrumental rhythm quartet from New Orleans who had several single hits in the late Sixties on the now-departed Josie label: *Sophisticated Cissy, Look-A-Py-Py,* and *Ease Back.* These earlier singles were bump-and-grind dance numbers, all based on a series of riffs or extended figures very much like early white jazz (Original Dixieland Jazz Band)—fun to hear once or twice but dull after repeated listening. But there've been some changes made. Unfortunately I missed their first Reprise album, "Cabbage Alley," two years ago, but if "Rejuvenation" is any indication they are now one of the most valuable bands on the planet.

They still use the riff framework but—by Gar—they make the riffs *sound* like a whole song. The quartet was always tight and delicate in earlier days when they were instrumentalists only, but with keyboardist Art

Neville now contributing mellow vocals the effect is delicious. If ever there was an album made to wear out a stereo needle, this is it. The music is honest and natural, unstained by the high-powered commerciality and slicko hack songwriting that defeats most black albums these days. The Meters just play themselves, part of the great tradition of New Orleans musicians doing their own thing.

If you like music for the sake of music and have forty-five minutes to devote to sheer pleasure, I earnestly recommend that you play this album and shut out the rest of the world. Never mind the terrible cover, which ought to win some kind of award for illegibility and eyesore power: just shut your eyes, listen to the Meters, and see if they don't happen to you. Betcha they do. J.V.

**NINA SIMONE:** *It Is Finished* (see Best of the Month, page 98)

**SUN RA:** *Super-Sonic Sounds.* Sun Ra (piano); orchestra, including Julian Priester (trombone), Charles Davis (baritone saxophone), and Victor Sproles (bass). *India; Soft Talk; Super Bronze; Blues at Midnight;* and eight others. IMPULSE AS-9271 \$5.98, Ⓣ 8027-9271 M \$6.98.

Performance: **Old Sun**  
Recording: **Doctored mono**

In his notes for this album, Sun Ra states that "all music which represents only the past is for museums of the past." Except for Sun Ra's own past, I fail to see what these eighteen-year-old recordings could possibly represent. Conventional even for 1956, the music sounds like diluted Ellington charts, and the compositions—all but one by Sun Ra—are trite, riffy things, occasionally made interesting by the solos of trombonist Julian Priester and saxophonists John Gilmore and Charles Davis. The leader's own piano is as unimaginative as his music, yet all this somehow sounds more honest than the pretentious nonsense he has foisted on us in recent years. This is Sun Ra without the incense—but not good enough to warrant museum space. C.A.

**EBERHARD WEBER:** *The Colours of Chloe.* Eberhard Weber (bass, cello, ocarina); Ack van Rooyen (flugelhorn); piano, percussion, and cellos of the Sudfunk Symphony Orchestra, Stuttgart. *An Evening with Vincent van Ritz; More Colours; No Motion Picture; The Colours of Chloe.* ECM 1042 ST \$6.98.

Performance: **Sweeping beauty**  
Recording: **Excellent**

Eberhard Weber is a twenty-four-year-old German whose musical activities of the past couple of years have included recording sessions with Dave Pike, Mal Waldron, Lucky Thompson, and Hampton Hawes. In this album, according to the notes, he seeks to combine "the classic musician's discipline with the spontaneous creativity of jazz musicians," and while this is hardly an original idea, Weber's results are more homogeneous than those of most such endeavors.

Sometimes bordering on the overly romantic, certain passages approach symphonic schmaltz, but they are quickly rescued by stellar improvisations or subtle nuances of less conventional direction. The overall sound is one of sweeping beauty, exquisitely performed and captured with the impressive technical expertise that has marked all ECM releases so far. C.A.

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# CHOOSING SIDES

By IRVING KOLODIN



## BACH FOR FOUR VIOLINS

LIKE Anton Rubinstein and Ignace Jan Paderewski, the late Georges Enesco seems destined to be remembered by one of the least of his life's labors rather than any of the greatest. As Rubinstein has his *Melody in F* (Op. 3, No. 1) and Paderewski his *Minuet in F* (Op. 14, No. 1), so Enesco, though a musician of formidable and varied skills, is remembered today by most people only as the composer of the *Roumanian Rhapsody No. 1* (Op. 11).

In addition to his considerable abilities as a composer of chamber music, songs, operas, and other works, Enesco was a competent cellist and organist, an excellent pianist, and one of the great violinists of his time. The celebrated pedagogue Theodore Leschetizky is on record as saying "It is harder to play six bars well on the pianoforte than to conduct the whole of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony," so, considering all his other skills, it should be no surprise, for those who did not know him in his prime, to learn that Enesco also enjoyed high rank as a conductor—he was a frequent guest with the New York Philharmonic and other American orchestras.

The disc reappearance (on Olympic 8117/3) of Enesco's performances of the Bach Sonatas and Partitas for Solo Violin is therefore more than an event in record history. It is a reminder of a great musician and of a time when it was possible for a man to be both a specialist and a generalist. Enesco's speciality was music, whether it was his own, Bach's for violin, or Brahms' for orchestra. What he generalized was an unquenchable enthusiasm, which he imparted to whatever he touched. On one memorable occasion in 1950 (when he celebrated the anniversary of his debut, sixty years before, at the age of eight) he shared a performance of the Bach Double Concerto with Yehudi Menuhin, played the piano part of his own A Major Sonata with his one-time pupil as violinist, and conducted a miscellany of his own orchestral works (including the inevitable *Roumanian Rhapsody*). It was a demonstration not only of capacity, but of a lifelong involvement with music in *all* of its aspects.

As a violinist, Enesco was, first and foremost, a great musician. Impulse rated higher than discipline with him, especially by the time the performances of the Olympic reissue were originally recorded (1948-1952, approximately). By instinct rather more than by necessity, he was a subscriber to Admiral Farragut's philosophy of "Damn the torpedoes: full

speed ahead." His attack is always firm, the line searched out and strongly displayed, the polyphony not merely drawn to the listener's attention but woven into the fabric of every movement.

On the whole, Enesco plays the three sonatas better than the three partitas. Alike as they are in method, they differ considerably in layout and substance. Each of the sonatas includes a *fuga*, but only the first has a dance movement, and to this *siciliano* Enesco imparts a superb sense of tranquility and elevation in a performance on the order of a Huberman or a Szigeti. But in the *courantes*, *bourées*, *gigues*, and *gavotte* of the partitas, the movement is too rapid for Enesco's finger facility (especially in double stopping). The tone becomes rough and edgy, the intonation something between sharp and flat. And though it is historical fact that Enesco com-

posed in quarter tones, especially in the opera titled *Oedipe*, I doubt that he was consciously experimenting with such effects in his playing of Bach.

There is, characteristically, no concession to technical difficulties, no easing of pace to lessen stress. The *Chaconne*, for example—it, too, is of course a dance movement—is drawn on a monumental scale, with an emotional range to match. When the complexities start to pile up, so does the fuzzy sound and a perhaps more than tolerable number of missed notes. Olympic (a division of Everest) says on behalf of the erratic audio quality: "Our engineers spent literally hundreds of hours tediously splicing, editing, and adjusting to eliminate 'pops' and distortions." As first issued (on the Remington label, as I recall), the audio quality of these recordings was poor; it is now marginally better, but still far below par.

Of three other current ventures with the same Bach repertoire, all are much superior in reproduced sound, but only one challenges Enesco's mastery of subject matter. That is Roman Totenberg's set for the Musical Heritage Society (MHS 1460/1/2). Mention of Totenberg and Bach automatically arouses an association with the violinist's efforts to reestablish (in collaboration with the California luthier John Bolander) the curved bow that was in use during the eighteenth century. Musical Heritage Society is explicit in stating that these performances are non-innovative, having been recorded with Totenberg's "Ames" Stradivarius and his (modern) François Tourte bow.

With these instruments he accomplishes Bach playing that is solid, secure, and responsive to every intellectual requirement. Unlike the performances of Enesco, in which inspiration rates higher than discipline, Totenberg's are all technical capacity, rather short on interpretive impulse. Philosophically, Totenberg's approach is more judicious than impet-



Georges Enesco (1881-1955)  
in a pencil sketch  
by Hilda Wiener

The Granzler Collection

uous, a matter of proceeding "with all deliberate speed" to achieve the objective. He picks his way through the *Bourrée* of the B Minor Sonata, for example, like a sapper exploring a mine field. He discovers a clear path without detonating any hidden explosives, but the risk-taking that is a part of every driving, incisive musical experience is missing, and so is the compulsion that draws the listener onward. And so my attention follows at a respectful distance as Totenberg's bow and fingers achieve no more than the momentum desired in the fast movements.

It would be cause for rejoicing to find in one of the other two performances examined here a level of effort that would combine the virtues of Enesco and Totenberg without their shortcomings. Such, however, is not the case. There is nothing like unaccompanied Bach to separate the men from the boys (and the madames from the mademoiselles) among violinists, and so it works out in the other two versions recently released.

**RUBEN VARGA**, whose recording is available on Audio Fidelity FCS 31, is not to be confused either with cellist Laszlo Vargas or violist Emanuel Vardi, both masterful players of Bach on their instruments, or even with violinist Tibor Varga, who specialized in Bartók. He is Palestinian-born, educated in Budapest and at the Juilliard School in New York. He has a vibrant sound, an exceptionally well-balanced technique, and no lack of vitality. He is, however, given to one violinistic excess that would be disturbing enough in performance with orchestra or piano: it is doubly distressing, in all its naked glory, in solo music: an addiction to a passionate portamento in every possible circumstance—and some impossible ones. It comes from sliding into a higher tone from below by means of the third or fourth finger, both of which are highly responsive to Varga's bidding. But, despite the skill with which he produces it, after the third or fourth instance one can almost anticipate—from the impending musical line—when the sound is going to be heard again, and, sure enough, there it is.

Christiane Edinger (Orion 74151/2) has no compulsive inclination toward a single mannerism. She does, in fact, play very cleanly and easily. But in addition to being innocent of blemishes, her rendition is also largely innocent of the motivating factors that make for an absorbing performance whatever the repertoire. Accents, dynamics, and coloristic detail show her familiarity with the "markings," but not with the *meaning* they should elicit from a mature performer. Perhaps the time will come for Miss Edinger, but it is not now. The six Bach works are, in her case, compressed onto four sides by grouping each type into a sequence of three, splitting the second in each category over two discs. The value of the procedure is more monetary than musical.

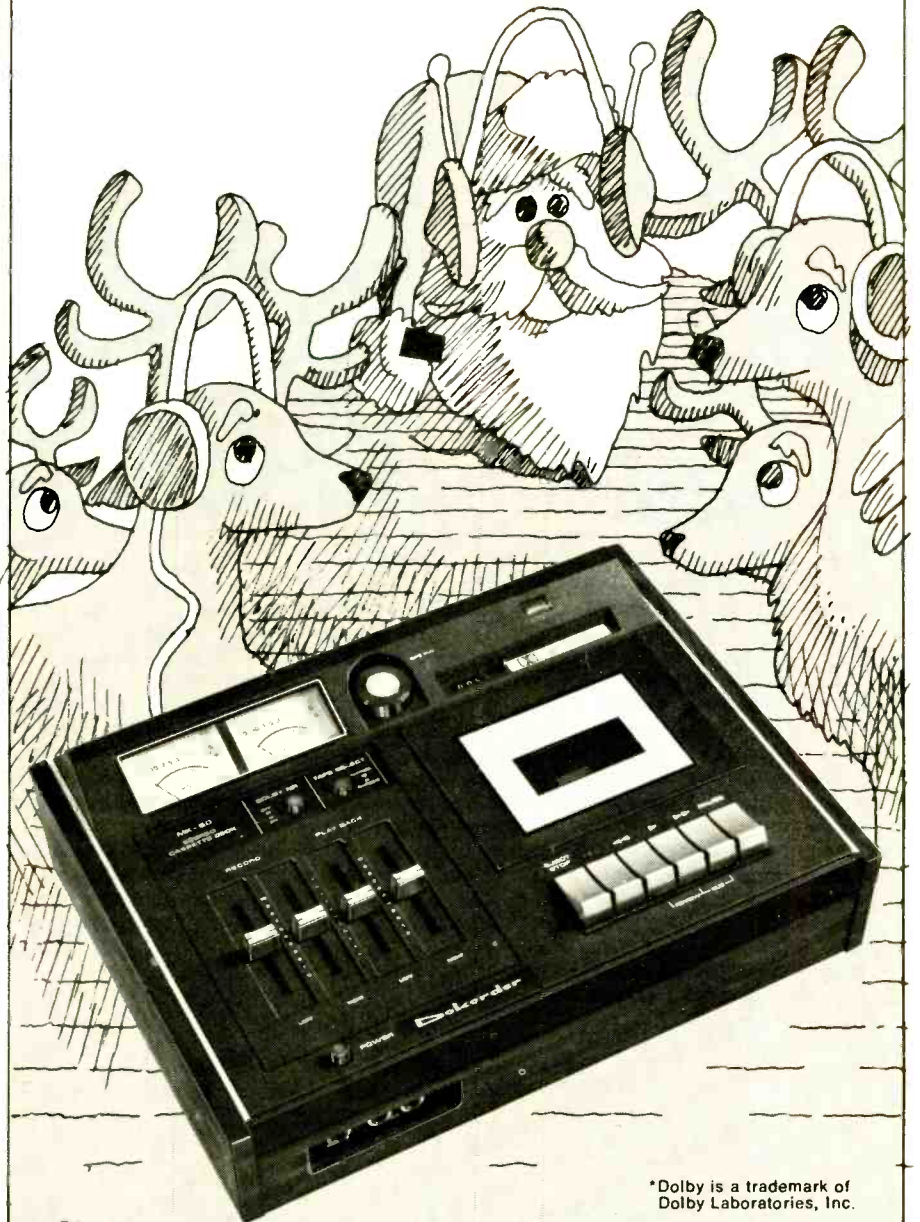
**STUDYING** the list of currently available unaccompanied Bach in the Schwann catalog, one might think there is no version of these works that is irresistibly compelling. However, reference to Schwann-2 (amended for Fall and Winter 1974) shows that there are still available alternatives to those displayed in the *monthly* Schwann: Heifetz on RCA, Szigei on Bach Guild, and Szyryng on Odyssey. Without being perfect themselves, they are all stronger, in their individual ways, than the four other versions just examined.

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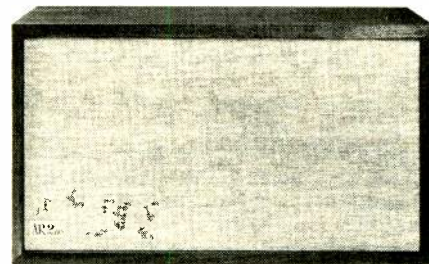
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# CLASSICAL DISCS AND TAPES

Reviewed by RICHARD FREED • DAVID HALL • GEORGE JELLINEK • IGOR KIPNIS  
PAUL KRESH • ERIC SALZMAN

**ALBÉNIZ: *Iberia*.** Francisco Aybar (piano). CONNOISSEUR SOCIETY □ CSQ 2061 two discs \$9.98.

Performance: **Very good**  
Recording: **Excellent SQ quad**

Francisco Aybar, the newest exemplar of Alan Silver's seemingly inexhaustible store of Latin-American piano talent, is from the Dominican Republic and, according to the liner blurb, has performed *Iberia* with particular success in New York, London, and elsewhere. According to the discs themselves, he is an assured and sensitive musician, with a firm grasp of his material and the ability to project it—but, to my ear, several degrees less persuasive than Alicia de Larrocha in either of her two current recordings (Musical Heritage Society MHS 1307/8 and London CSA-2235). Both of those, moreover, offer additional material. Connoisseur does offer the finest piano sound on these specially priced discs, though, and for anyone who requires quad (excellently accomplished here) for this material there is no alternative. *R.F.*

**J. S. BACH: *English Suites (BWV 806-811)*.** Huguette Dreyfus (Hensch 1755-1756, Dubois 1780, and Hensch 1754 harpsichords). DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON ARCHIVE 2533 164/5/6 three discs \$7.98 each.

Performance: **Straightforward and fluent**  
Recording: **Excellent**

As with Mme. Dreyfus' previously issued

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

Archive recording of the complete French Suites, the style of playing here is knowledgeable, technically adroit, and well gauged as to proper tempos for the dance movements. Gigues and other faster dances emerge with



NANCY WILLIAMS  
*Simply marvelous as Bernstein's Dinah*

considerable *esprit*, but, perhaps because of a slightly lackadaisical attitude toward phrasing and articulation (or lack of interest in this essential aspect of Baroque performance practice), many of the slower movements and even several of the fast preludes lack rhythmic verve. This is most apparent in the allemandes, in which notes are made to succeed one another with almost unvarying regularity; there is little tension and not even much feeling for their dance origin. Likewise, the emotional content of the suites is largely unrevealed, particularly in the bland sarabandes.

The use of three historical instruments, one to each disc, will be of considerable interest to harpsichord enthusiasts, and the sound reproduction is fine. Overall, however, this is a set of the English Suites that will satisfy only those who want their Bach played cleanly, accurately, and without much intrusion of interpretive personality. *I.K.*

#### RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

**BEETHOVEN: *Piano Sonata No. 21, in C Major, Op. 53 ("Waldstein"); Piano Sonata No. 30, in E Major, Op. 109*.** Antonio Barbosa (piano). CONNOISSEUR SOCIETY □ CSQ 2068 \$6.98.

Performance: **First-rate**  
Recording: **Lush**

Antonio Barbosa's *Waldstein* is quietly overwhelming. He has the ability to lay back and at the same time accumulate tremendous reserves of power and tension. This technique is present in his performance of Op. 109 as well, but here the focus of energy is the scherzo: the final theme and variations, constructed on another dynamic, climb the late-Beethoven heights. This performance stirs admiration, but its companion elicits astonishment.

The *Waldstein* is, of course, a favorite in the old pianist's game of Beating the Bejesus. None of that here. Barbosa sets his scale right at the start; instead of giving everything away all at once he lays a quiet groundwork for what you know is going to be an imposing structure. His quality of tone and technique are fully up to the size of his conception, and the recorded sound, on the lush side, is equally imposing, in four channels or two. This is an exalted Beethoven on an impressive scale. *E.S.*

#### RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

**BERNSTEIN: *Trouble in Tahiti*.** Nancy Williams (mezzo-soprano), Dinah; Julian Patrick (bass-baritone), Sam; Antonia Butler (soprano), Michael Clarke (tenor), and Mark Brown (baritone), trio chorus; Columbia Wind Ensemble, Leonard Bernstein cond. COLUMBIA KM 32597 \$6.98, □ KMQ 32597 \$7.98, Ⓢ MAQ 32597 \$7.98.

Performance: **Searing satire**  
Recording: **Superb**

Leonard Bernstein had already entertained the world with his scores for the ballets *Fancy Free* and *Facsimile* and the musical *On the Town* (but had not yet composed the music for *Wonderful Town*, *Candide*, or *West Side Story*) when his one-act opera *Trouble in*

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CIRCLE NO. 65 ON READER SERVICE CARD

*Tahiti* opened in 1952 at the first annual Festival of Creative Arts at Brandeis University in Waltham, Massachusetts. There were so many speeches that night that the curtain didn't go up until 11 P.M., but when it finally did, the audience was not disappointed. The opera, a sardonic study of a day in the life of a suburban couple for which Bernstein had also written the libretto, lived up to all the promise of his early work in the Forties in terms of melodic invention, conscientious development, sure-footed parody of familiar forms (in this case, the grandiose sound of a Hollywood musical), gratifying writing for the voice, and absolute mastery of orchestral resources.

Later that year, *Trouble in Tahiti* was seen over NBC-TV, and it ultimately enjoyed a run on Broadway in 1955. The textless original-cast recording with Beverly Wolff as suburban wife Dinah and David Atkinson as her selfish husband Sam, under the musical direction of Arthur Winograd, was reissued on the Heliodor label a year or so ago. Even if you own that one, forget it. It was a good try, but it simply can't compete in any respect with Columbia's smashing new version with the composer himself at the helm.

The ground plan of this bittersweet comic opera is simple enough. It opens with one of those insipid skiddle-dee-doo trios (a perfect sendup of the Fifties style) that conveys us to the "little white house" in suburbia straight out of a full-color magazine ad or a situation comedy, where we have every right to expect the resident couple to be "happy people with happy problems." Acting as a kind of pop Greek chorus, the trio returns from time to time to sing variations on the opening ditty. But in the little white house neither the problems nor the people are particularly happy. They squabble over breakfast; both are revealed as neurotic, high-strung, insecure, and self-centered. Sam would rather play handball than attend his son's performance at the school play. We follow Sam to his office, and Dinah to her analyst. "We have our little house, we have our little child," they sing. "What makes this emptiness?" In the afternoon, Sam goes to his gym, Dinah to a movie. And in her sustained aria describing the "terrible, awful" technicolor musical she has seen called *Island Magic*, Bernstein's brilliance as craftsman and parodist achieves marvelous realization: the whole movie comes to appalling life for us through the sounds of the sighing choruses, tatty South Sea atmospherics, and overblown effects he summons from the orchestra.

The composer was not content, however, with delivering a comedy cartoon. *Trouble in Tahiti*, with its tart episodes and ironical, tentative ending, is as poignant as it is funny. Dated though some of its references may be — pop singers don't croon "ratty boo" any more, and *Life* magazine has now gone to rest — in the ways that matter, and especially in operatic terms, *Trouble in Tahiti* is as relevant as it was two decades ago.

Nancy Williams as the troubled Dinah and Julian Patrick as the scared little boy beneath the handball-playing worshiper of success are simply marvelous, and they make the very most of their big moments — he in the bravura gymnasium solo about winning and losing, she in her tour-de-force monologue about the South Seas movie. Bernstein leads a rousing performance that brims over with jeering energy. It is almost impossible to imagine a recording doing better justice, or a performance

better calculated to make us squirm — which is precisely what the composer set out to do. A complete text is provided. P.K.

### RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

**CASALS: *El Pessebre*.** Olga Iglesias (soprano); Maureen Forrester (mezzo-soprano); Paulino Saharrea (tenor); Pablo Elvira (bass-baritone); Carlos Serrano (baritone); Puerto Rico Conservatory of Music Chorus; Festival Casals Orchestra of Puerto Rico, Pablo Casals cond., Alexander Schneider asst. cond. COLUMBIA M2 32966 two discs \$13.98.

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

*El Pessebre (The Manger)* is not quite like any other oratorio in the repertoire. Its text, in the exotic Catalan language so closely related to Provençal, was composed by the poet Joan Alavedra, shortly after his release from imprisonment for political activities against the Franco regime, as a Christmas present for his ten-year-old daughter. The verses are understood to be spoken, in a language comprehensible to a child, by figurines in a crèche.

Casals first decided to set the poem some years later in 1943, worked on it for two years, abandoned it, and finally, after asking Alavedra to write a final "Adoration" stanza, finished it around 1960. In 1962 Casals broke his own injunction against publishing any of his own music while he was alive, and, until the time of his death, he toured the world with *El Pessebre*. Now at last we have it on records, and it is lovely.

"The difficult thing," Casals told Alavedra, "is to reject facileness and obvious striving for effect, to capture only the most intimate, the most authentic musical vein." Intimate and authentic *El Pessebre* is, and its musical language, for all the detectable influences (Catalonian folk song, Bach, Ravel, even, in places, Stravinsky), turns out to be entirely its own.

The recorded performance features a number of the soloists who took part in the world tour: Olga Iglesias, the Puerto Rican soprano, whose glorious voice is thrilling throughout and especially effective in the great solo passage for the Mother of God; Paulino Saharrea, a Mexican tenor, who has sung the part since the work's premiere; Pablo Elvira and Carlos Serrano, exceptional singers both. Lending enormous strength to the album is the mezzo-soprano Maureen Forrester, who brings to the various moods of the work all the power — and all the delicacy — of a great singer and a sensitive interpreter. The chorus and orchestra are every bit as good as the soloists, and all contribute to a memorable accomplishment. The recorded sound is spacious and exceptionally sonorous. A complete text in both Catalan and plausible English is provided, along with informative notes by Alfredo Matilla and Joan Alavedra's moving recollection of the circumstances of the creation of *El Pessebre*. P.K.

**DEBUSSY: *Prélude à l'Après-midi d'un Faune*** (see *The Basic Repertoire*, page 71)

### RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

**GERSHWIN: *Second Rhapsody*** ("Rhapsody in Rivets"); "*I Got Rhythm*" Variations; *Cuban Overture*; *Three Preludes*; *The Man I Love*; *Do It Again*; *Somebody Loves Me*. Frances Veri (Continued on page 134)

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The love duet: Otello (Jon Vickers) and Desdemona (Mirella Freni)

## A NEW OTELLO FROM ANGEL

The singing is on today's highest level—but it ought to be higher

Reviewed by George Jellinek

**T**HIRTEEN years have passed since I reviewed in these pages, side by side, Herbert von Karajan's first recorded *Otello* (London OSA 1324, with Mario del Monaco in the title role) and Jon Vickers' (RCA LDS 6155, Tullio Serafin conducting). The two stars, conductor and tenor, have often collaborated in this opera since then, particularly on Karajan's home ground, Salzburg. Now there is a new recording from Angel that documents one of these collaborations, with the eminent Canadian tenor heading the conductor's chosen cast.

Karajan is the dominant personage here; his vital contribution therefore must be considered first. The London set demonstrated that he can bring this opera to life with clarity, impact, and—given a good enough orchestra—remarkable technical mastery. This he has done in the new recording, even though his overall approach has become, with the years, ever more mannered and idiosyncratic.

The opera begins rousing with a taut, powerful, and superbly controlled storm scene, and the "Fuoco di Gioia" chorus is done with lightness and brilliance. The Drinking Episode, on the other hand, is somewhat square and heavy-handed, and it is further handicapped by a Cassio who sings his part with a misplaced elegance better suited to an elegiac Bellini scene. Karajan invests the beautiful Love Scene with a languorous, poetic quality that the singers can only partly sustain. There are a number of problems in the second act, but the ensemble in the third act is realized with absolute control and sonic magnificence, and, except for one detail, I find Karajan's handling of the entire final act faultless.

Where the overall interpretation disappoints me is in its occasional lapses in momentum—the relentless forward drive of a Toscanini (and even the Karajan of 1961) is sacrificed to fussy maneuverings in "refinement." There seems to be an obsession here with soft dynamics. Verdi's markings often

ask for subdued dynamics, but this Otello and Iago carry on with so much *mezza-voce* that their Mediterranean vigor and earthiness are compromised in the process. Elsewhere, dynamic levels are reduced to the barest minimum of audibility. The whispered Iago-Roderigo dialogue in the first act thus loses its dramatic point, and Iago is virtually inaudible in the key phrase "Eccolo . . . al posto, all'opra" on sighting the approaching Otello in the second act. Later, during the bawdy discourse between Iago and Cassio in the third act, it is perfectly appropriate for Otello to exclaim in frustration: "Le parole non odo!" ("I don't hear the words!"). He is not *supposed* to hear them, of course, but *we* should be able to get more out of their dialogue because in the theater they are at stage center (Otello is hidden) and should be perfectly audible. One cannot escape the impression here that the singers are suppressed so as to direct undivided attention to the conductor's admittedly superb control of an orchestral *scherzando*. Manner similarly prevails over substance in the exceedingly low dynamic level set for the double basses at Otello's entrance in the final act. Normally, the technical producer should be made responsible for such details, but it is well known that there is room for only one boss in a Karajan production.

And it must have been that same supreme authority who declared that some thirty-eight measures in the Garden Scene chorus of Act II and some forty-five measures in the big ensemble of the third act were dispensable. According to a note in the accompanying booklet, these cuts "correspond to the actual stage production in the Grosse Festspielhaus (of Salzburg). This production has now been filmed in association with the making of this recording." Nonetheless, there can be neither explanation nor excuse for these cuts, and it is lamentable that any one person, no matter how meritorious an artist, should have the power to impose his

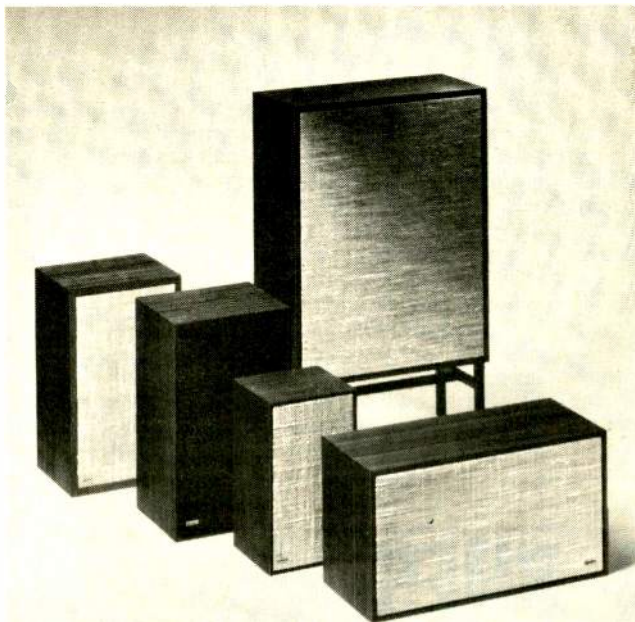
will on a major record company—and on us, for that matter.

Now, at last, to the singing: Jon Vickers, the outstanding Otello of today, has perceptibly deepened his portrayal since his worthy but excessively mannered 1961 recording. There is commanding authority in his projection of a tormented figure, always through *musical* expression. Even the phrase "A terra! e piangi!" uttered in Otello's blackest, nearly incoherent despair, is sung, not screamed. He starts the great Love Duet of the first act with an opening phrase that is firm yet tender, but he cannot sustain the line with perfect security through "Ed io amavi," and the closing "Già la pleiade" sounds perilously close to crooning. He manages to infuse even the martial "Ora per sempre addio" with a pensive air, and, while I don't particularly *like* the effect, I admire the skill that produces it. Vickers' great monologue and the final scene are done movingly and with shattering impact. As a matter of fact, the entire portrayal is thoughtful and deeply committed, but it works more effectively in the theater than in the unsparing mirror of a recording, which reveals rather than disguises tonally displeasing elements.

Peter Glossop is not a consistently pleasing vocalist either, but he does project a properly sinister Iago, and, on those occasions when Karajan allows him to sing at full voice, he discloses tones of dark and ominous power. A natural Verdi interpreter, he nonetheless lacks the firmly centered sound of an Italian voice ("Questa è una ragna" in the third act is realized on only approximate pitches). What a pleasure, then, to report that Mirella Freni supplies that blessed ingredient of intonation in abundance, and that her Desdemona, while light in sound and at times undernourished at the low end, is yet touching, poignant, and noble in its understatement. She can manage sensitive gradations of *piano* without ever becoming inaudible, and projects a touching catch in the voice in the third-act duet with Otello.

Outstanding in the supporting cast is José van Dam, a major artist, as Lodovico. The Cassio, Aldo Bottion, is a fine singer, but he would be happier in *Don Pasquale*: he sounds as though he were serenading someone all the time. A tremulous Emilia and an adequate Roderigo and Montano complete the cast. The Berlin Philharmonic sounds the way you would expect one of the world's outstanding orchestras to sound, but the chorus cannot be judged fairly in the sonic context accorded it. When the engineers are not called upon to engage in unrewarding tricks they do their task superbly. Altogether, it must be said that the singing in this new *Otello* represents today's highest level—but that level ought to be still higher.

**VERDI: Otello.** Jon Vickers (tenor), Otello; Mirella Freni (soprano), Desdemona; Peter Glossop (baritone), Iago; Stefania Malagu (mezzo-soprano), Emilia; Aldo Bottion (tenor), Cassio; José van Dam (bass), Lodovico; Mario Machi (bass), Montano; Michel Senechal (tenor), Roderigo; Hans Helm (baritone), Herald; Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra and Chorus of the Deutsche Oper, Berlin, Herbert von Karajan cond. ANGEL SCLX-3809 three discs \$17.94.



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SR-12

and Michael Jamanis (pianos). CONNOISSEUR SOCIETY □ CSQ 2067 \$6.98.

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

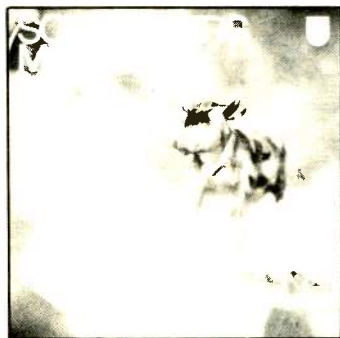
Before George Gershwin tackled what never ceased to him to be the formidable problems of orchestration—he once hired a symphony orchestra to play his Concerto in F while he worked out instrumental changes—he used to prepare a two-piano arrangement of each new serious composition. Then he would get his composer friend Kay Swift, or the ever-eager Oscar Levant, to try out the piece with him in his keyboard version. These two-piano scores have never been recorded before this record (though the two-piano team of Frey and Brajiotti did make a record of their own version

of *Rhapsody in Blue* back in the Thirties). Hearing them, one is struck again by how pianistic were the musical workings of this composer's mind. Moreover, there is a transparency and a purity to the counterpoint that is revealed this way and that sometimes gets muddled in the orchestral scorings. But this achievement of clarity is probably as much to the credit of Veri and Jamanis, the husband-and-wife team who have made an international name for themselves with their two-piano concerts, as to Gershwin's arrangements.

Having heard this couple tackle Gershwin before, I was prepared for a rather Gallic, impressionistic approach rather than the full-blooded bluesy jazz idiom in which the music flowers most naturally and vividly. This time, though, they fooled me. Their version of

the Second Rhapsody—written originally as a "New York Rhapsody" for a Hollywood movie scene in which an immigrant girl played by Janet Gaynor explores the streets of Manhattan—struck me as more worthy of the work, with its subtle shifts of mood and lovely slow theme, than the recently re-released version for piano and orchestra with Leonard Pennario and the Hollywood Bowl Symphony, conducted over-ripenly by Alfred Newman. Their way with the witty *I Got Rhythm* Variations, although not on a par with Earl Wild's as backed by Fiedler and the Boston Pops, again had the virtue of revealing some clever touches usually lost in the orchestral shuffle. I didn't know whether it was Veri or Jamanis playing the Three Preludes (including that affecting, middle "blues lullaby") in the test pressing I received, but I've never heard this early work brought off better. The finished disc reveals it was Michael Jamanis. It also reveals that a mini-program of three Gershwin songs, which sounded as if four hands were at work, was actually played by the two of Frances Veri. Most effective. The recording is clear and atmospheric, and Edward Jablonski's notes are superb. P.K.

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### RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

HAYDN: *Songs. Geistliches Lied; Zufriedenheit; Das Leben ist ein Traum; Gegenliebe; Eine sehr gewöhnliche Geschichte; Der Gleichsinn; Die zu späte Ankunft der Mutter; Lob der Faulheit; Auch die sprödeste der Schönen; Abschiedslied; Kaiserlied; The Spirit's Song; Fidelity; Recollection; Piercing Eyes; She Never Told Her Love; The Wanderer; Sailor's Song.* Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau (baritone); Gerald Moore (piano). EMI-ELECTROLA CO53-01 436 \$6.98.

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

Songs were a matter of casual importance to Haydn, but he still managed to write about fifty of them. His German songs were published in two sets (1782 and 1784), as were his English ones a decade later (1794 and 1795), during his second London visit.

This attractive import contains eleven German and seven English songs. The former group includes the famous *Kaiserlied* (Imperial Austria's national anthem) and the amusing *Lob der Faulheit* (*Praise of Sloth*, surely the last vice Haydn could be accused of). The other, lesser-known (or outright unknown) songs are unpretentious expressions of a romantic, rustic, or religious character. The English group is decidedly more interesting, not only because of the more imaginative piano writing, but also because of their freer, more individual vocal style. *The Spirit's Song*, in fact, is quite memorable, as are the more conventional *The Wanderer* and the spirited *Sailor's Song* (you may remember Elisabeth Schumann's charming version of the latter).

The noble simplicity and relaxed mastery Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau and Gerald Moore bring to these songs may be taken as the definitive word on the subject. Topnotch reproduction, too. G.J.

HOVHANESS: *Avak, the Healer* (see WIDDOES)

KEISER: *Passion According to Saint Mark.* Juliette Bise (soprano); Margit Conrad (alto); Georg Jelden, Charles Vuichard, Edwin Peter  
(Continued on page 136)

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CIRCLE NO. 40 ON READER SERVICE CARD

(tenors); Toni Glauser (baritone); Ulrich Gilgen (bass); Langnau Church Choir; Zweisimmen Mixed Choir; instrumental ensemble, Jörg Ewald Dähler cond. **MUSICAL HERITAGE SOCIETY** MHS 1832/33 two discs \$7.00 (plus 75¢ handling charge from the Musical Heritage Society, Inc., 1991 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10023).

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

Reinhard Keiser (1674-1739) attended the St. Thomas School in Leipzig the year Johann Sebastian Bach was born; he worked in Braunschweig as court conductor, but from around 1696 his main area of activity, except for some excursions to Copenhagen and Stuttgart, was in Hamburg. It was there he made his greatest reputation as a composer of operas at the Goose Market Theater. Even Telemann, who aided in the reorganization of the opera after the theater's bankruptcy and who eventually took over Keiser's position as Hamburg's leading musical citizen, wrote favorably about Keiser's abilities as an opera composer. Toward the end of his life Keiser worked as cantor of the Hamburg Cathedral, where he concentrated more on sacred music, producing such works as the present *St. Mark Passion*.

In contrast to Bach, Keiser, like Telemann, opts for condensed settings. His *St. Mark Passion* contains fifty sections altogether, including the standard continuo recitatives (with, interestingly, a string "halo" similar to Bach's for the words of Christ). The ten arias, even when of the *da capo* type, are remarkably brief, as are the choruses, chorales, and

three instrumental sinfonias. One senses a composer not very far away from the new *galant* style, even in his church music. Although on more than a few occasions he rises to notable harmonically expressive heights (as in the tenor aria, "Weep, oh weep," No. 17), he generally eschews such dramatic effects as the cock crow or even the Evangelist's description of Peter's weeping. There is a certain amount of polyphonic writing, as for instance in the faster choral interspersions, the *turbae*, but for the most part the settings are homophonic, a melody with accompaniment, and this above all was characteristic of the new style of composition.

This Keiser Passion, published by Haenssler-Verlag in Stuttgart, has been recorded twice recently. I have not heard the performance by the German ensemble under the direction of Alois Hochstrasser (Calig-Verlag 417/18), but the present version, which stems from Claves via Musical Heritage Society, is a competent rendition, ably sung and adequately if not outstandingly recorded. Stylistically, there are some lapses, such as missing cadential trills and a somewhat heavy instrumental concept of phrasing, and the harpsichord continuo is of the terribly plain and tedious "plonk-plonk" school. I also think the pacing might have been improved through having shorter pauses at the end of each numbered section. Texts and translations are provided.

I.K.

**MENDELSSOHN: *The First Walpurgis Night, Cantata, Op. 60; Infelice, Concert Aria, Op. 94.*** Edda Moser (soprano, in *Infelice*); Annelies Burmeister (contralto); Eberhard Buch-

ner (tenor); Siegfried Lorenz (baritone); Siegfried Vogel (bass); Leipzig Radio Chorus and Gewandhaus Orchestra, Kurt Masur cond. **ANGEL S-37016 \$6.98.**

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

A strange Goethe poem about pagan druids who, disguised as demons, scare the intruding Christians away from their rituals inspired twenty-two-year-old Felix Mendelssohn to write an unusually lively and vigorous cantata. It is hard to get involved with the text of *The First Walpurgis Night*, but the music is quite irresistible in its Romantic sweep and a kind of stormy excitement not at all common in Mendelssohn's music. (He began composing this cantata in 1831, around the time of the *Scotch Symphony*.)

About ten years ago, Decca offered a good recording of the work with the Musica Aeterna group under Frederic Waldman and a quartet of fine singers headed by Herman Prey. That version is now gone, along with the entire Decca catalog, but Angel's new effort is even better. The vocal soloists are closely matched in quality with those on the Decca recording, Angel's chorus and orchestra sound fuller and more richly reproduced, and the Leipzig conductor favors livelier tempos than Waldman did.

The disc offers as a bonus the first recording of "*Infelice*" (1834), a concert aria in Beethoven's "*Ah, perfido!*" manner, expressive of the usual Lady in Distress sentiments. It is not of much consequence, but fortunately it is not too long for its slender musical interest. (Continued on page 138)



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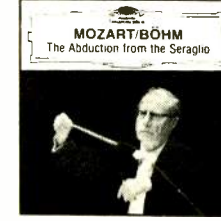
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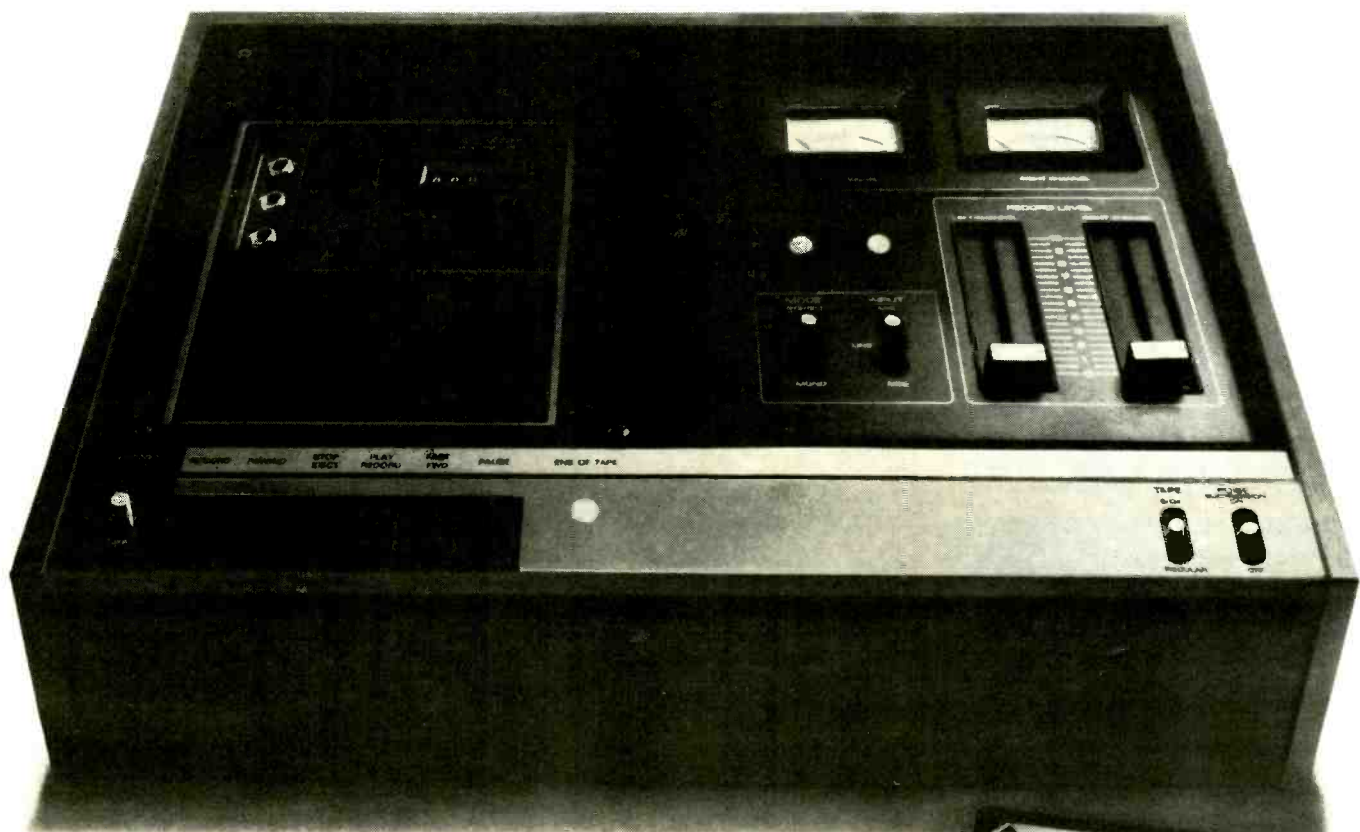
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and it is not just filler, for it is very well sung here by Edda Moser. G.J.

**MOZART: Adagio and Fugue in C Minor** (see SCHUBERT)

**MOZART: Concerto in B-flat Major for Bassoon and Orchestra** (K. 191); **Concerto in A Major for Clarinet and Orchestra** (K. 622). Alfred Prinz (clarinet); Dietmar Zeman (bassoon); Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, Karl Böhm cond. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2530 411 \$7.98.

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

After so many outstanding recordings with the Vienna Philharmonic (and especially the recent Beethoven symphonies and Strauss waltzes for Deutsche Grammophon), it is understandable that Karl Böhm would enjoy recording concertos with the great orchestra's own first-chair men as soloists. But to my ear this Mozart coupling is far less successful than the recent Haydn Sinfonia Concertante in which Zeman and three of his other colleagues share the spotlight. Everything is, of course, very fastidious, but it is also rather bland: the sparkle, the charm, the humor—the qualities that add up to the personality of these concertos—are in short supply, more conspicuously in the Clarinet Concerto than in the lesser work for bassoon. Prinz seemed to have more enthusiasm in his earlier recording under Münchinger (London STS-15071), but that too is a long way from the heady distinction of the Gervase de Peyer/Peter Maag collaboration on London CS 6178. For the Bassoon Concerto, George Zukerman's performance strikes me as being as good as any, and his Turnabout recording (TV-S 34039) boasts an irresistible account of Weber's delicious Andante and Hungarian Rondo. R.F.

**MOZART: Opera and Concert Arias.** *Chi sà, chi sà, qual sia* (K. 582). *Le Nozze di Figaro: Deh vieni, non tardar; Voi che sapete; Non so più cosa son. Così Fan Tutte: Come scoglio. Misera, dove son!* (K. 369). *Vado, ma dove? oh Dei!* (K. 583). *Don Giovanni: Batti, batti, o bel Masetto; Vedrai, carino; Ch'io mi scordi di te?* (K. 505). Elly Ameling (soprano); Dalton Baldwin (piano, in K. 505); English Chamber Orchestra, Edo de Waart cond. PHILIPS 6500 544 \$7.98.

Performance: **Good, most of the time**  
Recording: **Excellent**

In her numerous recital discs, Elly Ameling has repeatedly proved herself an outstanding song interpreter in a varied repertoire. This, her first aria recital, is a qualified success. The Mozartian credentials are all there: she sustains a good legato, phrases sensitively, and pays careful attention to note values and dynamic nuances. Her tone is pure, and in florid passages she displays clean runs and an adequate (not more, alas) trill. In general, however, she is far better suited to characters of tender, subdued sentiments (Zerlina, Cherubino, or the singer of the Concert Aria K. 369) than to the roles calling for more passionate utterances. She just does not have the vocal equipment to deliver "Come scoglio" with the bravura dazzle which that formidable music requires—but, of course, she is too good a singer to be really defeated by it. Similarly, she is somewhat overmatched by the Scene and Rondo of K. 505. This elaborate concert aria foreshadows the music of Donna Elvira

in *Don Giovanni*, and it calls for a voice of built-in drama and naturally passionate vocal expression.

The positive elements in Miss Ameling's art are not to be taken lightly. Nothing here is inadequate, and there are many moments of beauty and charm. But she is not the "universal" singer she or her record company may think. The orchestral accompaniments are neat, not particularly incisive, and occasionally ("Batti, batti") uninspiring. Excellent sound. G.J.

**MOZART: String Quintets** (K. 174, 406, 515, 516, 593, and 614); **Clarinet Quintet in A Major** (K. 581); **Horn Quintet in E-flat Major** (K. 407); **Adagio and Fugue in C Minor** (K. 546); **Serenade in G Major** ("Eine Kleine Nachtmusik," K. 525). Danish Quartet; Serge Collot (viola); Guy Deplus (clarinet); Jacky Magnardi (horn); Johan Poulsen (double-bass). TELEFUNKEN SLA 25097-T/1-5 five discs \$34.90.

Performance: **Acceptable to excellent**  
Recording: **Passable to good**

Except for the early B-flat String Quintet and the lightweight (though delectable) Horn Quintet, this is a package of absolutely prime Mozart. At first glance it is a very tempting compendium for a collector in the first stages of building a record library.

Unfortunately, however, I find neither the playing nor the recording of a quality high enough to warrant purchasing the entire package—particularly in the face of such competition in the string quintets as the Budapest with Trampler (Columbia), the Griller with Primrose (Vanguard), and the excellent buy on Seraphim represented by the Heutling Quartet with Graf. The Danish players are by no means lacking in musicality or basic technical proficiency, but they do not display that certain element of intonational and rhythmic sureness that distinguishes a great ensemble from a merely good one. The performances of the string quintets tend, in general, to represent the current "neo-Romantic" reaction to the strictly Classical style in favor during the first two decades after World War II. But it takes a Furtwänglerian genius to bring this off convincingly. It can't be done imitatively or by half measures; one must dare all and be absolutely sure of what one is doing when taking such a risk.

The Clarinet Quintet performance is by all odds the best thing in the album—a first-rate job by any standards, thanks to the unerring taste and technique of Guy Deplus. It is paired with a lively reading of *Eine Kleine Nachtmusik*, and if the discs of this album were available separately, I would recommend buying it. D.H.

#### RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

**MOZART: Violin Concerto No. 1, in B-flat Major** (K. 207); **Violin Concerto No. 3, in G Major** (K. 216). Pinchas Zukerman (violin); English Chamber Orchestra, Daniel Barenboim cond. COLUMBIA □ MQ 32301 \$7.98, M 32301 \$6.98, © MT 32301 \$6.98. □ MAQ 32301 \$7.98.

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

Mozart's Third Violin Concerto is far superior to his First in every respect. But there is no point in trying to analyze the difference in (Continued on page 140)

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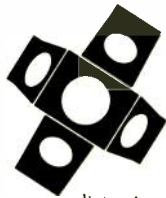
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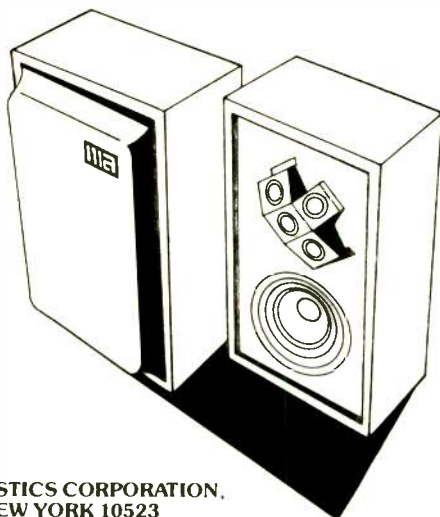
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terms that might apply to the work of other mortals—in terms of increased maturity and sophistication and deepening of artistic resources. Only five months separated the two concertos, and both were written by a nineteen-year-old.

Zukerman and Barenboim refuse to treat the First Concerto as anything but a major work. The opening movement in this performance has great vitality, the adagio is set forth with repose and poignancy, and the finale, while accorded its rightful virtuosic character, is not at all treated as a mere bravura romp. In all, this is an exemplary performance.

Those familiar with the Zukerman-Barenboim approach to the other two major Mozart violin concertos (K. 218 and K. 219, on Columbia M30055) will find here a similarly melodic and thoughtful conception of the C Major Concerto, K. 216. The first movement is deliberately paced: the violinist plays with a rich tone and excellent articulation, and the conductor secures admirably clear textures from the orchestra. Textures are no problem in the discreetly accompanied adagio, and the music sounds as heavenly as it should. The final rondo moves with grace and lilt, with a slight tendency on the part of the soloist to rush his sixteenth-note passages. Some may prefer the outer movements more crisply played, but it is impossible not to be moved by the warmth, affection, and artistic finish displayed here. The unidentified cadenzas played by Mr. Zukerman are reasonably appropriate, and the recorded sound is just about ideal.

The SQ four-channel release, however, though perfectly adequate, does not seem to add much of importance to the stereo. The ambiance provided by the rear channels lets a bit more air into the proceedings, but any attempt to raise the level in the rear channels produces only aural confusion. I find the stereo disc perfectly satisfactory and in need of no "improvement." G.J.

**MOZART: Virtuoso Arias** (see Best of the Month, page 96)

**OFFENBACH: Duet in E Major for Two Cellos; Duet in G Minor for Two Cellos.** Jürgen Wolf and Roselore Blendinger-Poigné (cellos). MUSICAL HERITAGE SOCIETY MHS 1806 \$3.50 (plus 75¢ handling, from the Musical Heritage Society, Inc., 1991 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10023).

Performance: **Fluent**  
Recording: **Warm**

Although the sins of Rossini's old age are well known to us, as well as the delightful chamber music he wrote as a boy, we know nothing of the nontheatrical music of Offenbach, and chamber music is the last thing in the world anyone would associate with his name. The cello was his own instrument: he played it in the orchestra of the Opéra-Comique after Cherubini expelled him from the Conservatoire, and he composed six of these duets in 1847, the year he became conductor at the Théâtre Français. These two are utterly charming, but the manner they are written in is not at all recognizable as Offenbach's. Weber would probably be most listeners' first guess, but there are also passages that suggest Beethoven and Schubert, echoes of Hummel and Rossini—and even a pre-echo of Villa-Lobos' *Bachianas*! The point is that the duets are as thoroughly in the chamber-music idiom as *La Perichole* is in that of *opéra-bouffe*. Especially striking are the long first move-

ment of the G Minor (with one of those so familiar-sounding themes one has never really heard before) and the Polonaise that concludes the E Major, in which the first cello has a melting *cantabile* theme with the second accompanying pizzicato, like the guitar in a serenade. Lovely, flowing, and assured playing; beautifully balanced, warmly realistic recording. *R.F.*

**PUCCHINI: *La Bohème*.** Placido Domingo (tenor). Rodolfo: Montserrat Caballé (soprano), Mimi: Sherrill Milnes (baritone), Marcello: Judith Blegen (soprano), Musetta: Ruggero Raimondi (bass), Colline: Vicente Sardinero (baritone), Schaunard: Noel Mangin (bass), Benoit: Nico Castel (tenor), Alcindoro: others. John Alldis Choir and London Philharmonic Orchestra, Sir Georg Solti cond. RCA ARL-2-0371 two discs \$13.96.

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

With some of the world's most prominent singers in the cast and just about the biggest name among today's conductors heading the excellent London Philharmonic Orchestra, there is no reason why RCA's new *La Bohème* should not be a fine performance. And it is, certainly surpassing the same company's earlier stereo effort (LSC-6095), although not quite a production to make me reach for superlatives.

Solti responds to the music soberly and correctly, and his pacing is free of tempo eccentricities. There is only one instance when the music suffers from "overdrive": in the opening of Act IV, where Rodolfo is caused to

"step on" Marcello's line "*Io pur vidi*" with his "*Mimi*." What I miss, though, is a greater emotional involvement, and the ability to discover the poetry in some of Puccini's subtly contrived "little scenes"—the misplaced key in Act I, the Mimi-Marcello duet in Act III which leads to the trio and what should be a heart-rending climax when Mimi's presence is discovered by Rodolfo. All this is conveyed with dry-eyed efficiency when it should go straight to the heart. (Karajan in his recently issued London OSA 1299 is more responsive to this poetic element in the music. His reading is more richly nuanced and more moving, though also more mannered: surely Solti's direct approach to the Momus scene here is preferable to Karajan's fussy treatment of it.)

Though not in her best voice, Montserrat Caballé provides some lovely moments of perfectly controlled singing. In particular, she delivers the final "*amor*" in the closing scene of Act I with an exquisite *morendo*, joining the phrase to the preceding one without breathing; the effect is stunning. Placido Domingo strains for his own high C in "*Ch'gelida manina*," but his Rodolfo is otherwise first-rate throughout, if not quite as ravishing in sound as Pavarotti's in the new London set. Blegen is a fine Musetta. Milnes a characteristically solid, sonorous, and unsubtle Marcello. The Schaunard of Vicente Sardinero is superior to what this Bohemian usually gets; the Colline of Ruggero Raimondi is stylish and polished, but his light basso is not sufficiently contrasted with his baritone colleagues.

The recorded sound achieves good balance between voices and orchestra within what I regard as a somewhat distant overall perspec-

tive. In this area, too, I find the London set superior. But the buyer's choice in the case of such a much-recorded opera is determined by personal favorites—and devotees of Montserrat Caballé and Plácido Domingo will not be disappointed here. *G.J.*

#### RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

**SAINT-SAËNS: *Caprice on Danish and Russian Airs, for Flute, Oboe, Clarinet, and Piano, Op. 79; Sonata for Oboe and Piano, Op. 166; Sonata for Clarinet and Piano, Op. 167.*** Samuel Baron (flute); Ronald Roseman (oboe); Joseph Rabbai (clarinet); Gilbert Kalish (piano). DESTO DC-7146 \$5.98.

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

Suddenly everybody seems to have discovered Saint-Saëns. Angel has released the First and Second Symphonies, all the piano concertos, and all the tone poems; Vox is about to bring out all these plus all the solo piano music and concerted works for violin and cello; Orion has given us one of the cello sonatas. And now here is Desto with the *Caprice* and the Oboe and Clarinet Sonatas, all attractive works, if not quite irresistible ones. The Clarinet Sonata is not only the longest, but by far the most interesting in its virtuoso demands. These are met—in all three works—with the distinction assured by the names of these musicians, and the recording is first-rate. Desto's new look in cover art is welcome, too, but the annotation is useless. *R.F.*

(Continued overleaf)

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**SCHUBERT:** *Quartet No. 14, in D Minor (D. 810, "Death and the Maiden")*. **MOZART:** *Adagio and Fugue in C Minor (K. 546)*. Cleveland Quartet. RCA ARL1-0483 \$6.98.

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

**SCHUBERT:** *Quartet No. 12, in C Minor (D. 703, "Quartettsatz"); Quartet No. 13, in A Minor, Op. 39 (D. 804); Quartet No. 14, in D Minor (D. 810, "Death and the Maiden"); Quartet No. 15, in G Major (D. 887)*. New Hungarian Quartet. Vox SVBX-601 three discs \$9.95.

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

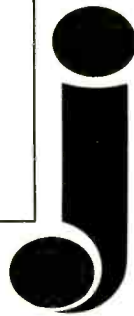
The Cleveland Quartet, whose young members have been playing together five years, has inspired a most enthusiastic critical response and a sizable following eager for a sequel to the group's one previous recording, the three Brahms quartets (RCA VCS-7102). The performances on the new disc are impeccable as far as technique and ensemble balance are concerned, and if there are idiosyncrasies in the interpretation they serve as dramatic demonstrations of the remarkable mutuality that prevails among these four musicians. To my way of listening, though, the Schubert is spoiled by an offhand treatment of the second themes in both of the outer movements that doesn't set well with the overall intensity of the approach. I get the feeling that, while the Clevelanders are not reluctant to dig into the emotion of the work, they are somewhat embarrassed by the Schubertian obviousness of these splendid tunes, and so they tend to toss them off as if trying not to call too much attention to them. The effect is a little smarmy and, as already noted, rather out of joint with the approach in general, which includes penetratingly beautiful accounts of both inner movements. The Mozart is far more satisfying and all-of-a-piece, but this work, I think, benefits from orchestral-string treatment.

The New Hungarian Quartet is a younger ensemble than the Cleveland, though two of its members are twice the age of their Cleveland counterparts. It was organized about two years ago by Dénes Koromzay, the violist of the original Hungarian Quartet throughout its thirty-eight years of activity. Koromzay's associates are the veteran chamber-music-player Andor Toth as first violinist, Toth's son Andor Jr. as cellist, and Richard Young as second violinist (he studied chamber music with the "old" Hungarian Quartet). The four performances in the new group's debut album are free of idiosyncrasy, but they do have personality—a warm, comfortable one which seems to be thoroughly at home in the music and to discourse on it with the naturalness of breathing. There is nothing "towering" about these performances, perhaps, but there is nothing lackluster about them either, and in their utterly unselfconscious way they strike me as understanding fully what Schubert is all about. The only disappointing element is the somewhat flaccid Minuet in Op. 29. *R.F.*

**SCHUMANN:** *Novelletten, Op. 21*. Claudio Arrau (piano). PHILIPS 6500 396 \$7.98.

Performance: **Dull**  
Recording: **Okay**

I got little or nothing out of this. I wasn't moved or exhilarated or lifted up one inch  
(Continued on page 145)



from the blahs. Claudio Arrau's playing seems entirely earthbound—heavy and plodding where it should soar. Certainly he is forceful. He seems to know exactly what he wants, and he is entirely consistent in going about achieving it. But this isn't my kind of Schumann, and I wonder if it's Schumann's kind of Schumann. Where are Florestan and Eusebius? Where's the fun of it? The poetry? The fantasy? *E.S.*

**SCULTHORPE:** *Sun Music III* (see WIDDOES)

**R. STRAUSS:** *Sinfonia Domestica, Op. 53*. Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra. Herbert von Karajan cond. ANGEL S-36973 \$5.98.

Performance: **Brilliant**

Recording: **Brilliant**

My New England Puritan soul has always been thoroughly repelled by the egoistic posturing and vulgar sentimentality of the *Sinfonia Domestica*. Yet I certainly can understand its appeal as a display piece for virtuoso conductors and virtuoso orchestras. Almost every Richard Strauss specialist of the present older and middle generations—Krauss, Reiner, and Szell, among others—has had a shot at it on records. Of the more recent recordings, Zubin Mehta's for London takes the laurels for its visceral excitement and stunning recorded sound.

Herbert von Karajan's new recording is sonically a very close runner-up to Mehta's. It hasn't quite as full-bodied a sound as the London disc, but it does have great brilliance and clarity, and Karajan does respond more poetically to the gentler aspects of the score. My chief reservations have to do with mechanical problems: the tape editors let a glaring trumpet clinker get by toward the end of the first climax of the double fugue on side two, and the side itself is wretchedly and very audibly off-center. *D.H.*

#### RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

**TCHAIKOVSKY:** *Francesca da Rimini, Op. 32*; *Hamlet, Op. 67*; *The Voyevoda, Op. 78*. National Symphony Orchestra, Antal Dorati cond. LONDON CS 6841 \$6.98.

Performance: **Terrific**

Recording: **Excellent**

*Francesca* was only recently given an outstandingly musical presentation under Bernard Haitink (Philips 6500 643, with the *Marche Slave* and *1812*); Dorati's approach, no less disciplined, is even more flexibly dramatic, and if his Washingtonians are not yet the equal of the Concertgebouw Orchestra the gap seems minute in this unusually vivid recording—a heartening demonstration of how far Dorati has come in his project of building the NSO into a first-rate virtuoso ensemble since he took over in 1970. The imaginative choice of companion pieces on the new disc, too, adds greatly to its appeal.

*Hamlet*, I'm certain, has never held together quite so convincingly in any earlier recording: Dorati moves it along just briskly enough to avoid the plodding, episodic effect that usually disfigures the work. Like his *Francesca*, this is a beautifully balanced performance, filled with tension and momentum but with no hint of hysteria, and in both works the orchestra's wind soloists make the most of the several opportunities Tchaikovsky gave them.

(Continued overleaf)

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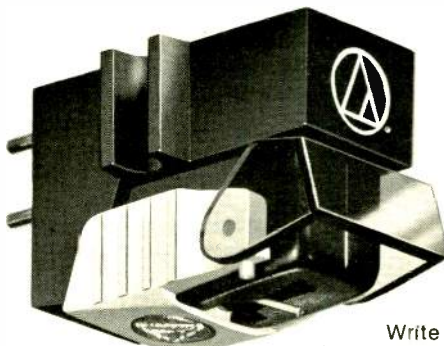
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CIRCLE NO. 55 ON READER SERVICE CARD

No other recording of *Hamlet* comes with a second work on the same side, but here we have a very substantial bonus in the form of the first stereo recording of the "symphonic ballad" *The Voyevoda*. This virtually unknown ten-minute piece, composed in 1890-1891, has nothing to do with the similarly titled opera Tchaikovsky wrote some two dozen years earlier, either in its musical material or in its literary basis, which in the case of Op. 78 is a ballad by Mickiewicz as translated by Pushkin—a tale of a cuckolded district governor whose scheme for revenge backfires and kills him instead of the guilty couple. There are no really memorable themes, but the work's rhythmic activity and color make it a fascinating discovery. (It was in this work and *The Nutcracker*, written about the same time, that Tchaikovsky became the first composer outside of France to use the then-new celesta in his orchestra.)

The rare opportunity to hear *The Voyevoda* is reason enough to invest in this record, but as I hope I have made clear, Dorati's way with *Hamlet* makes that work, too, a "discovery," and his *Francesca* is at least the equal of any other, both interpretively and sonically. Quite a leap forward for the Washington orchestra, and quite an embellishment for the Tchaikovsky discography itself. R.F.

**TCHAIKOVSKY: Overture 1812, Op. 49; Romeo and Juliet, Overture-Fantasia.** Utah Symphony Orchestra, Maurice Abravanel cond. TURNABOUT □ QTV-S 34554 \$3.50.

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

What with Eugene Ormandy and the Philadelphia Orchestra as competition in both these works in the full-price quadraphonic category (Columbia MQ 31276), I fear that the budget price is the only thing going for this particular Turnabout issue in QS (Sansui) four-channel format. Both performances under Maurice Abravanel's baton are musically sound and amply dramatic, if a bit thin in the string department, and the now obligatory track with brass band, bells, and cannon is brought into play at the end with effective partial distribution to the rear channels. However, there is nothing extraordinary about the disc, and I am sure that Turnabout will be coming up with more interesting and even more effective repertoire and performances with which to display its command of the currently "in" sound technology. D.H.

**USSACHEVSKY: The Creation: Prologue; Interlude; Epilogue.** Macalester College Chamber Chorus, Ian Morton cond. (in *Prologue*). University of Utah A Cappella Chorus, Newell Weight cond. (in *Interlude* and *Epilogue*). *Missa Brevis*. Jo Ann Ottley (soprano); Brasses from the Utah Symphony; Chorus of the University of Utah, Newell Weight cond. COMPOSERS RECORDINGS INC. CRI SD 297 \$5.95.

Performance: **Re-worked by composer**  
Recording: **Produced by composer**

These three scenes from *The Creation* are choral settings of ancient and modern versions of creation mythology originally shaped (in 1961) as a tape recording through electronic and tape techniques and now re-worked for this release. The source material stems from the Babylonian *Enuma Elish* (the most ancient surviving creation myth, sung in the original Akkadian language), an English

derivation from it, a passage from Ovid's *Metamorphosis*, and *Spell of Creation* by the English poet Kathleen Raine. This is basically scored-out choral music, rather curiously spliced up and punctuated by electronic bursts. It is somehow always close to being a major work without quite crossing over into the tremendously evocative area of expression that is constantly suggested.

Ussachevsky, although born in China, was brought up in the Russian Orthodox Church, and the sound of Russian choral music pervades both sides of this recording. The *Missa Brevis* is a rare live-performance work in the output of a composer now noted for his electronic music; indeed, it is a relatively traditional work that belies its recent date (1971-1972) and the composer's reputation as an avant-garde experimenter and pioneer at the frontiers of sound. Without wanting to imply that there is no virtue in traditionalism, I have to add that I am more impressed with Ussachevsky's electronic music and tape-music work. E.S.

**VERDI: Un Giorno di Regno** (see Best of the Month, page 95)

### RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

**VICENTINO: Madrigals.** *Amor, ecco ch'io mor'; L'aura che l'verde lauro; Poi che l'mio largo pianto; Inudita pietà; Passa la nave mia; Fiamma gentil. Motet. Responsory Heu mihi Domine. Consort Pieces. Fantasia, Poi che l'mio largo pianto; Canzona, La bella.* Accademia Monteverdiana Consort, Denis Stevens dir.; Jaye Consort of Viols, Francis Baines dir. VANGUARD BACH GUILD HM 34 SD \$3.98.

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

Nicola Vicentino (1511-1576) is a perfect example of a fairly familiar name from music history whose actual compositions are virtually unknown. He was a pupil of Willaert and spent most of his life in service to Cardinal Ippolito d'Este in Ferrara. Though his compositions included five books of madrigals (of which books two through four have not survived) and four books of motets, he is chiefly of importance as a theoretician whose book *L'Antica Musica Ridotta alla Moderna Pratica* (1555) argues for what were believed to have been Greek principles of intervals and scale relationships. Vicentino divided the whole tone into five parts and the octave into thirty-one steps; he experimented with chromaticism, microtones, enharmonic tones, and even instruments, and though he appears to have been a controversial figure, he certainly influenced such contemporaries as Cipriano de Rore and, not least, Gesualdo. Overall, his accomplishments led to the eventual dissolution of the modal scale system. To modern ears the most obvious feature of his music is the extreme chromaticism, which Denis Stevens cleverly displays by beginning this anthology of Vicentino's music with a fairly conventional five-voice madrigal from the composer's first book, published in Venice in 1546, and by following it directly with the startling "*L'aura che l'verde lauro*" ("The breeze, gently sighing") from the fifth book, printed in Milan in 1572. My own favorite here is the setting of a Petrarch sonnet, "*Passa la nave mia*" (which, incidentally, was the sole Italian composition to be published in a Parisian collection of 1572—some indica-



tion of Vicentino's repute); the descending chromaticisms at the words "A rain of tears, a cloud of dark disdain" remind me very much of Gesualdo, although I find Vicentino's writing less interesting rhythmically than Gesualdo's.

I have searched through a number of catalogs without finding any previous recording of any of Vicentino's music, and it is obvious that Prof. Stevens has again put us all in his debt for this enterprising and skillfully varied program. The performances, both vocal and instrumental, are very fine, texts with translations are included, and the sound reproduction is satisfactory. *I.K.*

**VILLA-LOBOS:** *Bachianas Brasileiras No. 7; Chôros No. 6.* RIAS Symphony Orchestra, Berlin, Heitor Villa-Lobos cond. TURNABOUT THS 65002 \$3.98.

Performance: **Spirited**

Recording: **1950's vintage, rechanneled**

Following the death in 1959 of Brazil's colorful and protean Heitor Villa-Lobos, his music went into something of an eclipse, much of it becoming unavailable on records, but a revival seems to be presently in progress.

The Turnabout issue of the *Chôros No. 6* and the *Bachianas Brasileiras No. 7* is a welcome milestone in the label's effort to bring back into circulation recorded performances of major musical and documentary interest, done chiefly in the early LP era and long unavailable—in some instances never even issued by their original producers. The original tapes of this Villa-Lobos disc were made by Remington when László Halász of New York City Opera fame was that label's music director in the middle 1950's. A whole series of interesting and mostly well-produced recordings were done for Remington during the Halász regime, including not only the Villa-Lobos material but a Sibelius series conducted by the composer's son-in-law, Jussi Jalas, plus a whole batch of first recordings of contemporary American works financed by the American Composers' Alliance. So perhaps we shall see a wholesale resurrection of both the earlier-issued recordings and the tapes from which discs were never produced following the cessation of Remington's operations in the late 1950's.

*Chôros No. 6* was released by Remington in a coupling with Enesco conducting his Roumanian Rhapsodies Nos. 1 and 2. The original was quite dry and flat in sound, depriving this prime example of Villa-Lobos' Brazilian jungle/streetdance style of much of its fascinatingly garish color. But Turnabout has done a first-class job of rehabilitation, which has resulted in a realization reasonably faithful to the composer's conception. The *Bachianas Brasileiras No. 7*, one of Villa-Lobos' most expansive essays in this genre, was never released by Remington, and in any event would have been eclipsed in the marketplace by Angel's issue of the same piece, together with No. 4 of the series, with the composer conducting the French RDF Orchestra. But now, since the Angel disc is currently unavailable, the Turnabout issue has no competition. Upon direct comparison, I find the RIAS (Radio in the American Sector) Orchestra performance a good deal more crisp than that of the French ensemble, though the Angel sound is considerably richer in overall sonority and dynamic range. Incidentally, the key to the *Bachianas No. 7* (and this is not

*(Continued on page 150)*

DECEMBER 1974



## The world of **KARAJAN** is a world of **MUSIC.**

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**ORFF:** De Temporibus Fine Comœdia, with Ludwig, Schreier, the 1973 Salzburg Festival cast, Cologne Radio Symphony. A WORLD PREMIERE RECORDING. 2530 432

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CIRCLE NO. 60 ON READER SERVICE CARD

WHO said history doesn't repeat itself? Maybe the Seventies aren't really going to turn out to be a rerun of the Thirties, but the parallels are endless. Leaving aside politics, economics, and the more obvious pop-music throwbacks, consider the notable tendency of the arts toward social consciousness, escapist entertainment, surrealism, and milleniumism—all typical of art, music, theater, and media just before World War II, a period also marked by the beginnings of the first significant attempts at a new contemporary American music theater. Now these elements are again finding their way into the arts, and all are present in varying proportions in the music theater of Stanley Silverman and Richard Foreman.

Foreman's "ontological-hysteric theater," a very special kind of surrealist madness, would, on the face of it, be an unlikely candidate for a new serious/popular music theater, but in fact Foreman has now collaborated three times with Stanley Silverman, and this remarkable team has achieved a certain measure of critical and public success. Silverman's own background is unusual enough to warrant special comment. A superb jazz, classical, and avant-garde guitarist, he also has the very best establishment avant-garde background in composition as well as extensive theater experience.

The first Silverman-Foreman collaboration, *Elephant Steps*, was called an opera and put forth under most distinguished auspices: the Fromm Foundation and the Berkshire Music Center. The second show, *Doctor Selavy's Magic Theatre*, produced by the Lenox Arts Center first in Massachusetts and afterwards (in a substantial run) in New York, is more like a musical show but hardly your garden-variety Broadway piece. A third collaboration, *Hotel for Criminals*, was produced last summer by the Lenox Arts Center. Now the first two works have been released in what are essentially original-cast recordings—*Elephant Steps* in an elaborate Columbia set directed by Michael Tilson Thomas, and *Doctor Selavy* as an unlikely pop album.

The two works have a great deal in common. Both are zany romps through life—the great search for meaning set to music that ranges from early Bach cantata to late Beatles. *Elephant Steps* is the last word in elephant jokes: elephants have nothing and everything whatever to do with it. A man named Hartman (all heart? a hard man?) is looking for someone named Reinhardt (hard and pure? pure in heart?) who is possibly his guru. After various obscure adventures he catches a glimpse of his master; Hartman then, I think, turns into Reinhardt.

Let us remember that Ganesha, the elephant god and the most popular deity in the Indian pantheon, is a remover of obstacles who hovers, like Silverman's music, between the spiritual and the ultra-secular. In the course of this difficult journey we hear electronic music, Stravinskyian neo-Classicism, a Renaissance madrigal, and Baroque harpsichord, some Romantic schmaltz, ragtime, old-time pop ballads, and various rocks and rolls, all managed with great skill. The cast, divided between classically trained singers, pop singers, and actors, is backed up by an orchestra, a rock band, and a young conductor who also makes his singing debut. Michael Tilson Thomas conduct-

ed the Tanglewood premiere of the work in one of his first major East Coast appearances. I will be charitable about his singing, and simply say only that his *conducting* is excellent.

I should add that the two sets of test pressings I heard were a tangle of confused labeling; I trust these problems will be cleared up by release time. The printed libretto *should* be somewhat helpful, but it seems to make no attempt at all to keep straight who is singing what—not much help in trying to figure out a work as curious and confusing as this one.

*Doctor Selavy* is at once simpler, more amusing, and even less clear than *Elephant Steps*. In its staged form, it had a madcap

ther opera nor musical but breaking some new ground in between. In times like these, it is not surprising that such theater should take the form of apocalyptic comedy. And, after generations of modern-musical abstraction, the concrete wit of Silverman's engaging round of quotation, invention, reference, and interpolation is at once a relief and oddly touching. The danger is that the camp-nostalgia-irony qualities will grow dull with repetition and become their own form of abstraction (this sometimes happens in Foreman's theatrical conceptions, where he often repeats certain visual and dramatic gestures and sometimes seems to emphasize a certain mocking stance above all else). These works are simple, clear, and incom-



## MUSIC/THEATER STEPS OUT

Two reviewers examine the works of two composers working in a new genre

quality—the world as insane asylum—that was most engaging. United Artists' collection of songs from the show includes most of this "popular" musical, which, in fact, has almost no spoken dialogue at all (as opposed to the "opera" *Elephant Steps*, which has a good deal). It seems that the songs came first and the show was later devised by Foreman around the songs. The music is a delightful history of pop music in up tempo: this is the way the world ends—with a fox-trot and a calypso.

The performance has plenty of zip, but I think the recorded production is not as strong as it should be; it suffers from studio sound, awkward pauses between numbers, and a general lack of interest in the problem of making this work's wild, uproarious, apocalyptic surrealism come across. *Elephant Steps*, far less unified musically, is much more successful in terms of total recorded production.

Are these works of major significance? Well, I think that they are major—if not elephantine—steps in the *direction* of a new music theater that is, at the moment, struggling to be born. As I never tire of repeating, there is a *great need* for such a theater, nei-

prehensible—thus the quality of terror that lurks just beneath the worldly glee. The fun takes place just exactly where it should take place: comedy, not tragedy, is the contemporary art of the inexpressible; pop songs are the chorales of our latter-day Passions. I enjoyed both of these works very much, and I recommend them for a surprising view of where certain new music and theater is going—as well as, indeed, for their own odd charm.

—Eric Salzman

\* \* \*

ON A NEW Finnadar disc—as once before, in "The Nude Paper Sermon" for Nonesuch—Eric Salzman presents himself as a musician creatively turned on, like Leonard Bernstein, by Theater (give it whatever name you like). In each of the four works offered, he has through-composed in traditional forms, using—or not using—aleatory source-tapes. As, for example, in *Queens Collage*, subtitled "an academic festival overture," thereby disarming any Gay Lib ribaldry from listeners too easily put off by his alchemical manipulation of serious social content. Yet Salzman does not dis-

dain—more credit to his aesthetic convictions—the most primitive form of all in art, which is tension/release. Quite beyond Bernstein's ability to reach. Salzman is an intellectual, albeit of a comparable megalopolitan complexion.

"Wiretap" is, in sum (all titles on the jacket, by the way, are in computer type), the first multimedia-mix music to be released on a CD-4 discrete quadrasonic disc. The whole was produced by the composer and Ilhan Mimaroglu, with Tom Dwyer as the mastering engineer. Their technical hegemony has resulted in a tour de force which is not only traceable with a superior stereo stylus but productive of spatial illusion even in quasi-quadrasonic (which

the tintinnabulations of Messiaen to Take-mitsu's immensely influential *Vocalism Ai*) are not even concealed, suggesting that Salzman is still not entirely relaxed with his materials . . . he is, in fact, still *reaching* for expansiveness, enveloping sensuousness, ecstasy. If only, in some retreat remote from the center of the universe that New York has bidden itself to be, Salzman would risk immersion in the holy waters of Thomas Tallis' *Spem in alium*, he could throw away the chalice of Bernstein's *Mass*. His head might then be freed from an implicit concern to keep pace, to stay abreast, and he could ponder and pursue what now sound like passing fancies of indubitable promise itching nervously to *get on with it*.

*Wiretap* predates Watergate—which in no case does it resemble, even as Daniel Nagrin's voice strives to articulate glottal consonants in a crescendo of multitracked (taped!) vocal lines. The work derives from a previous composition, *The Peloponnesian War*, a full-evening essay in dance theater by one man, to the sound(s) of his own voice expressing moods that range from terror to a vocal riff in cadenza form, and it therefore at least implies the influence of Grotowski.

Elise Ross is the soprano in *Larynx Music*, a work for guitar and four tape tracks that builds in the manner of *Wiretap* from fragmentary articulations of a text of, alas, pompous and paunchy verse by John Ashbery. It sounds, despite some valuable nuggets, as if Salzman still feared the tape tribe might read him out of their ranks if he digressed too distantly from the *de rigueur* that seems to be turning into *rigueur mortis*. It needs the delight of that firming hand and less-afraid resolve that make *Helix* somewhat more than merely the first cut on the first discrete Quadradisc recording of electronic music. —Roger C. Dettmer

**SILVERMAN:** *Elephant Steps*. Karen Altman, Scrubwoman; Susan Belling, Hannah; Luther Ensiad, Max; Roland Gagnon, Doctor; Larry Marshall, Otto; Luther Rix, Rock Singer; Marilyn Sokol, Ragtime Lady; Philip Steele, Hartman; Michael Tilson Thomas, Archangel. Electronic music realized by Pril Smiley at the Columbia-Princeton Electronic Music Laboratory: soloists, chorus, orchestra, and rock band, Michael Tilson Thomas cond. COLUMBIA M2 33044 two discs \$13.98.

**SILVERMAN:** *Doctor Selavy's Magic Theatre, or Swinging at the Stock Exchange*. Denise Delapenha, Fortune Teller; Mary Delson, Female Pirate; Jessica Harper, Rock Singer; George McGrath, Selavy; Steve Menken, Doctor; Jackie Paris, Little Girl; Barry Primus, Patient; Robert Schlee, Shortest Male Doctor; Amy Taubin, Shortest Female Doctor; others. Instrumental accompaniment, Stanley Silverman cond. UNITED ARTISTS UA-LA 196-G \$6.98.

**SALZMAN:** *Wiretap, Helix, Larynx Music, Wiretap, Queens Collage*. Quog Music/Theatre Ensemble (Imogene Howe, soprano; William Zukof, countertenor; Dan Kavanaugh, voice; Tony Elitcher, clarinet; Joseph Bauman, guitar); Daniel Nagrin, voice; Elinor Ross, soprano; Stanley Silverman, guitar; four tape tracks. FINNADAR □ QD-9005 \$6.98.



The Quog Music/Theatre Ensemble

is to say through four speakers from an a + b stereo amplifier).

Salzman's societal windmills are tilted at in the jacket notes for the venturesome to read before (and even, perhaps, after) his music is heard. But a housing is not yet a theater, so let us move on to the music itself, the nitty-gritty of *Wiretap, Helix, Larynx Music*, and *Queens Collage*—a totality of 49' 52". Salzman (not to deny his sense of humor) is a *serious* composer backing out of a *concrète* cul-de-sac, along with every other composer today who prizes real musical communication above mere academic gamesmanship. *Helix*, the first and best music on this record, is also the most recent, the longest, and the most artfully devised to seduce the layman listener on a common ground of recurrent "tonicality." For soprano, countertenor, voice, clarinet, and guitar (a consort that goes by the name Quog Music/Theatre Ensemble), the piece makes a statement about Art as well as about concern for our social ecology—indeed, our very political parameters. It is right now "pretty" music evolving from a composer of vaster expressive potential, one whose forte is really contemplative music. Sources (from

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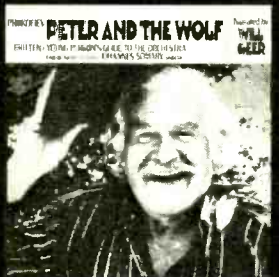


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indicated in the jacket notes) is the composer's use of double titles for each movement, universal-classical and nationalist-Brazilian: *Preludio/Ponteio*, *Giga/Quadrilha caipira*, *Tocata/Desafio*, *Fuga/Conserva*. The first two movements blend Brazilian dance elements with the Bach ambience; the third movement, based on the Brazilian counterpart of an American jazz "cutting contest," is exhilaratingly brilliant, while the concluding fugue makes a suitably monumental close.

D.H.

**WAGNER: Die Walküre: Ride of the Valkyries. Siegfried: Forest Murmurs. Götterdämmerung: Dawn and Siegfried's Rhine Journey; Siegfried's Funeral March. Tannhäuser: Prelude to Act III. Tristan and Isolde: Prelude to Act III.** London Philharmonic Orchestra. Sir Adrian Boult cond. ANGEL S-36998 \$5.98, © 8XS-36998 \$6.98, © 4XS-36998 \$6.98.

Performance: **Splendid**  
Recording: **A little over-resonant**

Sir Adrian Boult's earlier Angel disc (S-36871) of overtures and preludes from *Tristan*, *Tannhäuser*, *Lohengrin*, and *Die Meistersinger* with the New Philharmonia was a revelation. Although few of us had associated this great conductor with the music of Wagner, he not only has lived with it closely all his life, but has developed remarkably fresh insights into it instead of merely sustaining a "tradition." As Boulez set out to do in his *Parsifal*, Boult scrapes away the encrustations of the blurring traditional/ceremonial approach to clarify the structure of these thrice-familiar pieces. At the same time, he has also succeeded in preserving the human and dramatic elements: instead of a mere X-ray, he gives us music with flesh on its bones and blood in its veins. The six performances on this new disc are perhaps less fascinating than those on its predecessor, but they share the same qualities and would be hard to better in any event.

Sir Adrian has done a bit of editing in the *Tristan* excerpt, in which the famous English horn solo is played with an accompaniment adapted from a passage in Act III proper. The *Tannhäuser* Act III Prelude is different here, too, Boult having gone back to the more elaborate original version instead of the shorter revision Wagner substituted for it; this is surely the most interesting part of the program, emerging as a substantial and self-sufficient symphonic poem.

While these emendations are welcome, I wish Sir Adrian had included Siegfried's Death with the Funeral March (hardly anyone except Stokowski does now), and had made the small cut in the first part of the other *Götterdämmerung* excerpt. Most of all, though, I wish Angel would go back to importing English pressings: the sound here is a little bathy—*a "sumptuousness"* added in the American mastering, evidently, at the expense of the real depth, crispness, and definition that characterize the HMV product.

R.F.

## RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

**WIDDOES: Morning Music. SCULTHORPE: Sun Music III. HOVHANESS: Avak, the Healer—Cantata for Soprano, Trumpet, and Strings, Op. 65.** Mary Lee Farris (mezzo-soprano); Leon Ravier (trumpet); Louisville Orchestra, Jorge Mester cond. LOUISVILLE FIRST EDITION LS-735 \$5.95 (from Louis-

ville Orchestra, 321 West Broadway, Louisville, Ky. 40202).

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

This is one of the most notable of recent Louisville releases, and I commend it to your attention. I have commented on the recent tendency of the Louisville Orchestra and Jorge Mester to substitute second-rate Shostakovich for the new-music recording program which originally put the orchestra on the musical map. This record is much closer to the sort of thing that the organization should be doing. In fact, it is a recording of special interest on many counts.

Lawrence Widdoes' *Morning Music* is an evocative, beautifully scored orchestral piece, a kind of contemporary color painting that works very well and is effectively realized here. Peter Sculthorpe is an Australian composer who made his entry into the international avant-garde a few years ago with an effective group of serial and post-serial works built on sliding and cluster sonorities in the Xenakis-Penderecki style. To this, he has now added an array of other colors: modal elements, ostinatos, and some striking color fantasies, all evocative of another world. Again, this is effective music, well played and recorded.

It is curious that a composer like Sculthorpe (and he is not alone in this) has worked his way round from the post-War avant-garde to a position that has a great deal in common with the Orientalism of the American avant-garde of the Thirties—Henry Cowell, Lou Harrison, Harry Partch, and even John Cage. Alan Hovhaness' music really fits in here, too, even though it is more steadfastly and thoroughly modal. Like the other two works on this record, *Avak, the Healer* is an evocation of the fire- and light-giving sun: it differs in that it takes the form, not of scene painting, but of ritual. I find that Hovhaness' endless and somewhat facile flow of modal, melismatic line wears a little thin after a bit. But there is no doubt that, within his limited means, Hovhaness touches something simple and genuine. And Mary Lee Farris and Leon Ravier give excellent, effective performances here.

E.S.

## COLLECTIONS

### RECORDINGS OF SPECIAL MERIT

**BAROQUE RECORDER, VOLUME 3. Vivaldi: Concerto in A Minor for Recorder, Two Violins, and Continuo (P. 77). A. Scarlatti: Sonata in A Minor for Recorder, Two Violins, and Continuo. Frescobaldi: Canzonas 1, 2, and 5 per Canto solo e Basso Continuo (1628). Albinoni: Prelude for Recorder Solo. Ziani: Prelude for Recorder Solo. Matteis: Prelude for Recorder Solo. Gasparini: Prelude for Recorder Solo. Pugnani: Sonata in F Major for Recorder, Harpsichord, and Continuo. Hans-Martin Linde (recorders); Herbert Hover and Jan Kupsky (violins, in Vivaldi and Scarlatti); Michael Jappe (gamba, in Vivaldi, Scarlatti, and Frescobaldi); Eduard Müller (harpsichord, in all except preludes). KLAVIER KS 520 \$5.98.**

**ITALIAN RECORDER SONATAS, VOLUME 2. Frescobaldi: Canzon per Canto solo e Basso continuo ("La Bernadina"). Cima: Concerti ecclesiastici: Sonatas in D Minor and G Minor. B. Marcello: Sonata in D Minor for Recorder and Continuo, Op. 2, No. 11. Cor-**

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elli: *Sonata in F Major, Op. 5, No. 4*. Veracini: *Sonata No. 6, in A Minor, for Recorder and Continuo*. Frans Brüggen (recorders); Anner Bylisma (cello); Gustav Leonhardt (harpsichord and organ continuo). TELEFUNKEN SAWT 9589B \$6.98.

Performances: **Both first-rate**  
Recordings: **Both excellent**

The performers of both of these recorder collections attain levels of instrumental proficiency that could hardly be excelled. As everyone who has ever tried to play a recorder knows, it is an instrument fairly easy to learn but exceptionally difficult to play really well, and those who have tried to master the intricate fingering and articulation techniques suggested by such Baroque tutors as Hotterterre cannot help but be full of admiration for the virtuosity shown in different ways on these two albums. Hans-Martin Linde opts for a more lyric approach and less obvious flamboyance than his Dutch counterpart, Frans Brüggen. Linde's program, which ranges from the early Baroque canzonas of Frescobaldi to the *galant* Pugnani sonata, includes several preludes (not identified by source, unfortunately) by Albinoni, Ziani, Gasparini, and Matteis, which display an almost hair-raising technique and which should be heard by any recorder enthusiast. This disc, incidentally, is the third of Linde's that the California-based Klavier Records has released in this country, and for variety of styles, range of repertoire, and, above all, for Linde's superb playing, I recommend it highly. Moreover, the sound reproduction is very satisfactory.

Brüggen's collection of Italian music is the second of a series, the earlier disc having been issued on Telefunken SAWT 9518-A Ex. He, too, plays one of Frescobaldi's canzonas (a different one), and the earlier portion of his anthology also includes two fascinating, brief, multi-sectional sonatas by Gian Paolo Cima, who was born around 1570 and was based in Milan. Later repertoire includes fairly typical sonatas, mostly in the *da chiesa* format, by Marcello, Veracini, and Corelli, whose Op. 5, No. 4, was of course originally intended for violin but was undoubtedly often rendered on other melody instruments as well. Brüggen performs all of these with consummate skill, and the reproduction is somewhat richer than that provided for Linde's recital. Telefunken is also better than Klavier in supplying information about sources, publication dates, and recorders used. Again, the collection is very much to be recommended. J.K.

**ROBERT GROSS: Twentieth-Century Music for Violin.** Hindemith: *Sonata for Violin Alone, Op. 31, No. 2*. Dallapiccola: *Due Studi*. Swift: *Sonata for Solo Violin, Op. 15*. Schoenberg: *Phantasy, Op. 47*. Webern: *Vier Stücke, Op. 7*. Robert Gross (violin); Richard Grayson (piano). ORION ORS 74147 \$6.98.

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

Eugene Fodor is by no means the first important violinist to come out of Colorado. Robert Gross, born in Colorado Springs and admitted to Juilliard at the age of twelve, has performed widely in America and Europe, specializing in twentieth-century music (he also composes). He is based in Southern California, where he has made several recordings, mostly of new music.

The music on the current disc has a strong-



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ly Expressionist bias, ranging from Webern's early miniatures of 1910 to Richard Swift's twelve-tone sonata of 1957, with Dallapiccola's *Studies* of 1947 and Schoenberg's *Phantasy* of 1949 (his last instrumental work) falling somewhere in between. Only the Hindemith Sonata of 1924 really belongs to a somewhat different tradition, even though it is associated with that composer's Expressionist period; its finale is based on a folk song also used by Mozart.

This is, on the whole, pretty stern (no pun intended) stuff, but Gross, always expressive, is in his element here. Most Expressionist and twelve-tone music is linear in conception and works very well on the fiddle. The violin, especially when it is as effectively played as here, softens the harshness of the style and brings out the expressive, melodic aspects of the music.

Richard Grayson, a fellow faculty member at Occidental College in California and himself a performer-composer, is the excellent pianist here, and the recording is first-rate.

E.S.

#### RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

**LUCIANO PAVAROTTI:** *Pavarotti in Concert*. Bononcini: *Per la gloria d'adorarvi*. Handel: *Care selve*. Scarlatti: *Già il sole dal Gange*. Bellini: *Ma rendi pur contento; Dolente immagine di fille mia; Malinconia, ninfa gentile; Bella Nice che d'amore; Vanne o rosa fortunata*. Tosti: *La Serenata; Luna d'estate; Malia; Non l'amo più*. Respighi: *Nevicata; Poggia; Nebbie*. Rossini: *La Danza*. Luciano Pavarotti (tenor); Orchestra del Tea-

tro Comunale di Bologna, Richard Bonyngne cond. LONDON OS 26391 \$6.98.

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

No operatic tenor before the public today offers more vocal beauty than Luciano Pavarotti: it is a pure, sensuous pleasure to rejoice in the gleaming sound of his effortlessly flowing, perfectly equalized tones. And this big bear of a tenor knows how to sing: his long-breathed phrases are firmly sustained and his dynamics knowingly graded, he can produce a lovely mezza-voce, and his elegant embroideries include a decent trill. In fact, he does nothing wrong. The intelligence and innate good taste he has displayed in opera serve him well in this sagaciously chosen song recital.

Baroque authenticity may be left to artists less bountifully gifted. Pavarotti sings Handel and Scarlatti the way the best Italian tenors have sung these *arie antiche* long before him—fervently and with a generous outpouring of tone—though surely with more restraint and a cleaner line than Gigli did. His work in the Bellini songs leaves me with nothing to criticize and much to praise, particularly the elegiac expression of "*Dolente immagine*," where the mezza-voce calls Schipa to mind. The Tosti songs, as expected, get the full romantic treatment, though that immaculate line falters a bit in *La Serenata* and *Malia*, while nicely shaped, is not particularly moving. The Respighi songs come out rather operatically in this treatment, but, again, criticism pales before the beauty of the singing.

Douglas Gamley's orchestrations are generally subdued, with some felicitous touches



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and a few intrusive ones, but the orchestral backgrounds are effective and so is the overall sound. Pavarotti fans will eat this up, and no wonder—it is fifty minutes of the most gorgeous tenor singing you could ever want to hear.

G.J.

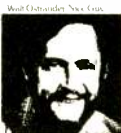
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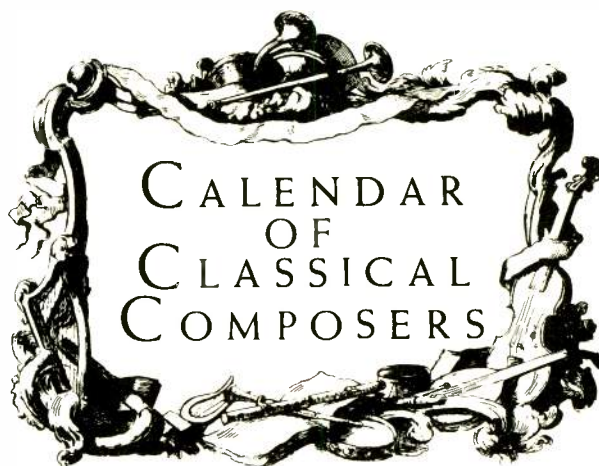
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BACK by popular demand and updated from its original (1966) printing, Music Editor James Goodfriend's *Calendar of Classical Composers* is a listing of the most important composers from the year 1400 to the present, grouped according to the stylistic periods—Renaissance, Baroque, Classic, Romantic, etc.—in which they worked. This 12 x 24-inch aid, guide, and complement to your music listening is printed in color on heavy, nonreflecting stock suitable, as they say, for framing. A key to the calendar, consisting of capsule accounts of the principal stylistic characteristics of each musical period, is included. The whole will be sent rolled in a mailing tube to prevent creases; we pay postage. All you do is send 25¢ to:

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tion of *Aida Favia-Artsay*. **Respighi:** *Re Enzo: Stornellatrice* (two versions). **Billi:** *E canta il grillo*. **Tchaikovsky:** *At the Ball*, Op. 38, No. 3. *Medea Mei-Finger* (soprano). **Tosti:** *Non m'amate più*. **Rachmaninoff:** *At My Window*, Op. 26, No. 10; *Lilacs*, Op. 21, No. 5. **Gretchaninoff:** *Lullaby*, Op. 1, No. 5. **Trad.:** *Song of the Volga Boatmen*. **Dmitri Smirnov** (tenor). **Borodin:** *For the Shores of Thy Native Land; Song of the Dark Forest*. **Vladimir Kastorsky** (bass). **Rachmininoff:** *O Cease Thy Singing, Maiden Fair*, Op. 4, No. 4. **Glinka:** *In My Blood Burns the Fire of Desire*. **Glazunov:** *Oriental Song*. **Antonia Nezhdanova** (soprano). **Trad.:** *Stenka Razin*. **Glinka:** *Prince Kholmky: The Wind Lingers at the Gate*. **Anna Meitschik** (contralto). **Moussorgsky:** *Khovanshchina: Shaklovity's Aria*. **Tchaikovsky:** *Pique-Dame: Tomsky's Aria*. **Pavel Andreyev** (baritone). O.A.S.I. 598 \$5.98 (plus 75¢ handling charge from William Violi, 1231 60th Street, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11219).

Performance: **Extraordinary**  
Recording: **Early electrical**

As a matter of policy STEREO REVIEW does not cover in its pages the myriads of historic vocal reissues that have emanated over the years from a variety of "collectors' labels" here and abroad, most of them produced without benefit of clearance from the companies that produced the original discs. As most knowledgeable collectors in this area know, these reissues vary widely both in quality of transfer from the original source and in documentation of the provenance of the material presented, with the remarkable Vienna-based Preiser series ranking at the top of the scale and the others to be found at varying distances downwards.

I had the opportunity of hearing both the original discs and the LP transfers of the recorded performances issued on this release of the O.A.S.I. label, and because more than half the items are virtually unobtainable in any form, even through the most esoteric collectors channels. I felt (and the editors agreed) that an exception to general policy should be made in this instance.

As the album title indicates, the six singers were all major stars on the Russian operatic scene during the Czarist era, the oldest being the great Italian-born *Medea Mei-Finger* (b. 1859), the youngest being the celebrated tenor *Dmitri Smirnov*. Without question, the *Mei-Finger* sides, done in Russia in 1929, are the most extraordinary ones here, not only in their demonstration of virtually unimpaired vocal quality, but more especially in the degree of musicianship displayed in the gripping interpretation of *Tchaikovsky's At the Ball*. The phrasing and expressive quality displayed by the seventy-year-old artist make for an unforgettable listening experience. The *Smirnov* sides do not rank in rarity with *Mei-Finger's* Russian issues—all the *Smirnov* recordings here were done outside of Russia—but the singing is of great subtlety and expressiveness, particularly in *Lilacs*, one of the most popular of *Rachmaninoff's* songs.



For sheer nobility of both repertoire and rendition, I would rank the *Kastorsky* recordings of the *Borodin* songs as among the real prize items on this disc. The songs of *Borodin* are scarce enough on records of any kind, and to have these two in such impressive performances is a treat indeed. *Nezhdanova*, another great among the Russian sopranos from the turn of the century, seems somewhat

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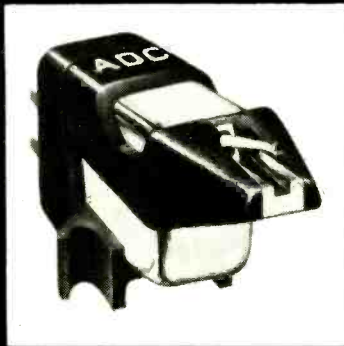
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less impressive vocally than her confreres, but her airy renderings of Rachmaninoff, Glinka, and Glazunov are fascinating in their own particular fashion. My preference is for the Rachmaninoff, with its echoes of the Borodin Polovtsian Dances, but the Glinka and Glazunov items are of more than passing interest in that they are radically differing treatments of the same Pushkin text.

The two Anna Meitschik sides are the only ones on this disc besides those of Smirnoff that originated outside of Russia, these having been issued as part of the American Brunswick "international" series. The timbre of her voice is most unusual—almost male alto in quality and power—and her singing of both the familiar folk song and the most unusual Glinka excerpt has terrific *élan*. This, by the way, was my first encounter with any of the Glinka incidental music for Kukolnik's *Prince Kholmisky*, and it definitely whets my appetite for a recording of the complete score—Melodiya, please note!

Pavel Andreyev is the one singer in this particular galaxy whom I had not heard previously on acoustic issues. The voice is definitely past its prime in these Moussorgsky and Tchaikovsky excerpts, but the interpretation makes up for any vocal shortcomings; Shaklovity's invocation to a troubled Russia is done with great nobility and passion, and Tomsy's toast to the young ladies with irresistible verve.

When I indicated in the prefatory remarks to this review that the majority of transfers to LP of historical recordings issued by "collectors' labels" were extremely variable in quality, what I had in mind was, first, the matter of arriving at the proper pitch, since the originals may vary in the actual speed at which they were cut from 72 to 100 rpm, and second, the matter of abusive filtering and equalization to the point of falsifying the essential character and timbre of the artist's voice. Aida Favia-Artsay, from whose extraordinary collection of Russian discs these recordings came, cannot be faulted on either count. In her virtually definitive volume on the recordings of Caruso, as well as in her columns over the years on historical records that appeared until a few years ago in *Hobbies* magazine, Mrs. Artsay has paid particular attention to the pitching problem and has indicated in her Caruso book the correct speeds for all that legendary tenor's published recordings.

In dealing with the Russian-made sides for this O.A.S.I. issue, she had a real challenge on her hands, finally discovering that correct playback of three of the Mei-Figner sides required a speed of 87.80 rpm, while the second version of the Respighi *Stornellatrice* had to be played at 97.29. So much for speed standardization on early electric recordings from Russia.

It should be noted that the actual disc-to-tape transfers were done in no elaborately equipped studio, but by Mrs. Artsay herself from her own variable-speed turntable. The results inevitably include some awkward lead-ins, abrupt lead-outs, and a good bit of rumble, as well as instances of pitch fluctuation from off-center originals that could have been alleviated with the use of a non-skid mat on a turntable *sans* spindle. But what is important is that the basic pitch and the essential sound of the transfers is honest and free of the falsifications that stem from ignorance or gimmickry. This O.A.S.I. issue is a remarkable piece of documentation, and it makes fascinating listening.

D.H.



## Introducing the Staff...

Since readers from time to time understandably display a natural human curiosity about the backgrounds of the writers and editors who bend their ears each month in these pages, we will be offering, in issues to come, a series of capsule biographies and autobiographies designed to satisfy that expressed need and at the same time to circumvent some of the hazards of mere speculation. —Ed.



Contributing Editor

## Noel Coppage

NOEL COPPAGE claims to be the only pop-music critic to have covered some of Dick Smothers' motor-racing exploits for the sports pages. It appears to be a meaningless distinction, and one too small to be mentioned in *Guinness' Book of World Records*, which must make it very tiny indeed. But he probably has some reason for claiming it . . . other than to observe how Dickie handled the curves pretty well for a straight man. He would go to such lengths for a small pun, of course—he tends to sidetrack serious discussion by backhand-flipping the language, frisbee style, and says the shortest distance between two straight lines is the point—but here I think he is trying to interest us in his ten years as a newspaperman. It was an experience that persuaded him the Apocalypse is indeed *going on*, following an old script once turned down by the Marx Brothers. He feels that if we could understand what current events look like from the press box, day in, day out, we might have a little more sympathy for his view that chaos is inevitable and a nonviolent anarchist is something to be.

● *Portrait of the Artist as an Old Boy.* Born near Owensboro, Kentucky, not far from Walton's Mountain and after the Depression was over everywhere else, he grew up to work for papers in Kentucky, Florida, Colorado, Massachusetts, and Connecticut. He found one place about as sad and funny as the next, but New England seemed to have more style: Connecticut was where he was mashed by fat little mill-town housewives who were trying to cop a feel of Paul Newman during a political rally; and Massachusetts was where he had his go at participatory journalism, managing to jam a few switchboards by writing in the North Adams *Transcript* that something in the water would turn green the skin of anyone who had drunk the stuff lately, April Fool.

So he has settled down to free-lance in the near-mountains of Southern New Hampshire, in a monstrous Victorian house, parts of which he rents to other people, more often than not musicians. A guitar maker has set up shop in the attached barn, the foundation of which is about to let go any minute. Coppage works, if one calls it that, in a large room full of posters on the third floor, and his window looks down on the tops of most of the houses in the village and the tops of some of the trees. He saw a bobcat down there once.

● *Life Is Just a Bicycle Pump.* Sometimes when he is supposed to be working he is instead playing the harmonica or writing fragments of songs and never finishing them, such as *Monk's Chantey*, which starts out, "And it's yo ho, hee hee/The contemplative life for me. . . ." He did finish one called *Peanut Butter Crunch Browns and/or Blues*, and has sung it and one of Blind Lemon Jefferson's, one of Mickey Newbury's, and one of John Prine's songs, and perhaps one or two others, on real stages before actual people. He has the bug, naturally, and is learning to play the dulcimer and the guitar, bass runs being all he talks about for whole days, and he continues to work on disguising stolen Charlie McCoy harp licks.

He has a wife, Chipper, who is independently intelligent, knows a lot about plants and yoga, and can sight-read through a Debussy score on the fifteen-dollar untunable piano. Their daughters, Kimberley, seven, and Amy, four, sometimes ask their parents to stop making noise so that they might sleep. Amy plays thirds, fifths, and chords, in no particular order, on the piano. Kim draws.

● *Warped at an Early Age by Evelyn Waugh.* Another thing Coppage does a lot of besides work and play music is drink coffee. He drinks three quarts a day, black, no sugar, and makes it with a filter gadget and a kettle that leaks and is going to blow up the stove one of these days. He also reads a lot but doesn't get a lot read; he maintains one should read only as fast as he talks, and he's a slow talker. His favorite writers now are Wilfrid Sheed, whose arrogance he admires, and Rust Hills, whose humility he admires.

He believes that impressions are more important to an interviewer than quotes, that power corrupts, and that a Porsche can blow the hide off a Corvette on a good crooked road. And if Dick Smothers takes that as a challenge, he believes he'll be sick. —Noel Coppage

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# TAPE HORIZONS

By CRAIG STARK



## THE SEARCH FOR ZERO

WHEN I first got seriously interested in tape recording I was of the opinion that "0 VU" had a definite, quantitative meaning, like "one volt," or "one milliamperere." Unfortunately, as Fibber McGee's wife Molly used to say, "'Tain't so, McGee." Just what constitutes a 0-VU record level varies with a machine's internal adjustments, its meter, the tape, and the program content.

Developed primarily for broadcast and telephone use, VU meters have had standardized electrical and mechanical characteristics since 1939. And although the record-level indicators used for home tape decks almost always use the same scale markings, they almost never conform exactly to the standard VU meter characteristics. Nor is there any reason why they should.

The problem with some of these indicators, even if they have a VU meter dial, is that they don't provide the same reading when responding to the brief, sudden pulses that characterize both speech and music. If all we wanted to record were steady test tones, all indicators could easily be calibrated to give the same reading. But with rapidly fluctuating signals, the pointer's "ballistic characteristic" (that is, the inertia and damping of the meter movement) becomes important. A genuine VU meter will neither undershoot (fall short) by more than 1 per cent nor overshoot by more than 1.5 per cent when presented with a 300-millisecond pulse of sine-wave signal that, if it were a constant (steady-tone) signal, would register 0 VU.

There's nothing sacred about this particular response time (it has been chosen by Bell Labs, NBC, and CBS), but experience has shown it to be useful. *Peak*-reading indicators (usually oscilloscopes, but some meters are set up to indicate peaks also) can be still more informative, but they are very rare outside professional circles. Unhappily, when testing with the standard 0.3-second pulse, some record level indicators may barely stir above -20 VU, while the

pointers on others leap with such alacrity that they bang against the meter stop.

Whatever its characteristic, the meter is provided to permit you to record at as high a level as possible (maximizing signal-to-hiss ratio) without incurring excessive distortion. But what's "excessive"? A top-quality open-reel machine will be adjusted so that 0 VU is indicated at a record level somewhat below a signal that would result in 3 per cent harmonic distortion. That builds in a margin of safety to account for the fact that the meter indicator lags behind distortion-producing peaks. In practice, this means that a steady signal at a 0-VU level will produce slightly under 1 per cent total harmonic distortion on a high-grade machine. Nothing, however, prevents a recorder manufacturer from adjusting his 0-VU level to a signal that will produce, say, 5 per cent distortion with no safety margin for the meter lag. This might even be desirable in a dictation device, though the result for most music recording would be unacceptable. Again, unfortunately, "0 VU" lacks definition.

Magnetic tapes themselves vary somewhat as to how much signal level should be fed to them to achieve a 0-VU indication. In general, for example, low-noise tapes need not only a higher bias but a higher input signal if you're going to get the full advantage of their improvements over other tapes.

All of this indicates that a record-level indicator—genuine VU meter or not—must ultimately be the servant, not the master, of your ear. It's said that with a VU meter a *practiced* operator can set his record level within 1 dB (1 VU unit) of optimum, and this is true. A harpsichord, for example, does not sound very loud, but because of its transients I take about -6 on the scale as "0 VU." With speech, I know I can "run into the red" without incurring audible difficulties. So, in home tape recordings at least, "0 VU" turns out to be neither absolute nor relative. Perhaps it could be considered relatively absolute—or absolutely relative.

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# Marantz Stereo Electrostatic Headphones—

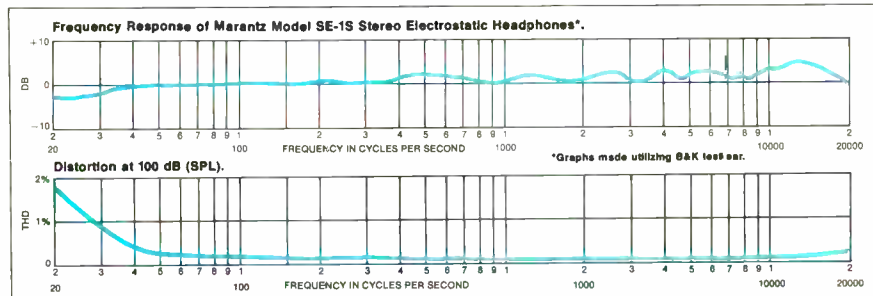
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