

Stereo Review®

FEBRUARY 1975 • ONE DOLLAR

MABEL MERCER AND THE ART OF CABARET



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Amplifiers,



phase distortion, plus substantially better stability with four double tuned phase linear ceramic filters and four monolithic IC's in the IF section.

6-stage limiters

The IF section includes 6-stage limiter circuits. Used in conjunction with differential amplifiers in monolithic IC's, noise interference is completely eliminated with a signal to noise ratio of 75dB.

Exclusive Phase Lock Loop (PLL) IC circuitry in the TX-9100 multiplex section

Developed and used for the first time by Pioneer, the Phase Lock Loop (PLL) circuit is actually an electronic servomechanism. It maintains continuous and precise phasing between the pilot signal and the subcarrier, supplying optimum channel separation. Completely drift free, no alignment is ever required.

The PLL cannot be affected by humidity or temperature since there are no coils or capacitors to be detuned. This provides complete stability and reliability.

New pulse noise suppressor in the TX-9100 operates with computer control

This circuit operates automatically when it is switched on. It effectively blocks radiated noise from airplane and auto ignition systems, neon and traffic lights, etc. It does not interfere with frequency response and stereo separation. Whether the signal is weak or strong, this automatic 'brain' decides when the PNS gate circuit is to operate.

Unique muting control

A 2-position variable muting control uses electronic switching as well as reed relay switching. This eliminates interstation noise and the popping noise of tuning and detuning.

Complete command with a wide variety of controls

Whether it's for AM, FM or headset output levels, Pioneer provides greater operating precision with three independently operated output level controls. A headset may be used without a following power amplifier. Precision tuning is achieved with the aid of signal strength and tuning meters.

AM section highlights IC's

The entire AM section, following the front end, is a unitized IC. A monolithic IC replaces 84 individual components plus a ceramic filter. By using a differential amp circuit and a balanced mixing circuit, there are better spurious characteristics and special AGC amplification.

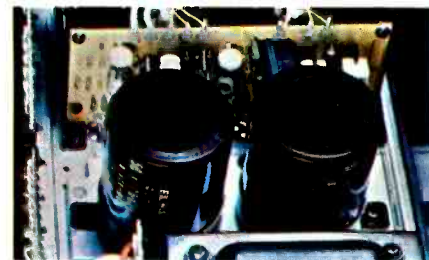
Great specs for great performance

| | TX-9100 | TX-8100 | TX-7100 |
|----------------------|---------|---------|---------|
| FM Sensitivity (IHF) | 1.5uV | 1.8uV | 1.9uV |
| Selectivity | 90dB | 80dB | 60dB |
| Capture Ratio | 1dB | 1dB | 1dB |
| S/N Ratio | 75dB | 70dB | 70dB |
| Image Rejection | 110dB | 100dB | 85dB |
| Stereo Separation | 40dB | 40dB | 40dB |
| Distortion (THD) | | | |
| Mono | 0.2% | 0.2% | 0.2% |
| Stereo | 0.3% | 0.4% | 0.4% |
| Spurious Response | 110dB | 100dB | 100dB |

The Amplifiers: SA-9100, SA-8100, SA-7100

Two separate power supplies utilize 30,000 uF total capacitance

You read it right. The power supply in the SA-9100 uses a total capacitance of 30,000 uF. 15,000 uF each for the balanced positive and negative power supplies. This completely eclipses anything now available in integrated amplifiers. This super high capacitance results in an absolutely pure DC voltage supply. There's constant DC voltage regulation regardless of line voltage changes and signal input.

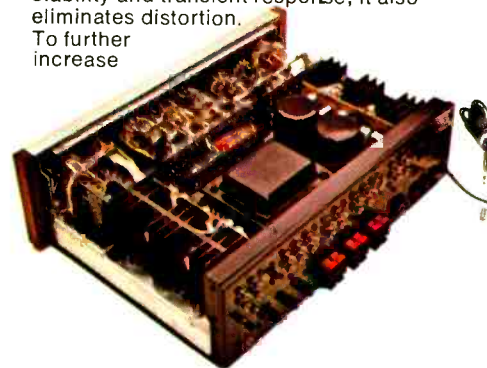


Two 15,000uF power supplies eclipse anything now available in integrated amplifiers.

Even at extremely low frequencies, there's stable power output, excellent transient response and low total harmonic distortion — not greater than 0.1% at any power level up to 60 watts minimum continuous power per channel, at any frequency from 20Hz to 20,000 Hz, using 8 ohm loads.

These positive and negative power supplies provide absolute stability in all stages, even in the equalizer amp and proceeding to the control and power amps. Therefore, the signal lines become zero potential to completely eliminate the usual (and annoying) click noise of operating controls and switches.

Stability is increased even further by the differential amplifier used in the first stages of the equalizer and control amplifiers (also the power amp.) 100% DC negative feedback supplies excellent stability and transient response; it also eliminates distortion. To further increase



Interior view. SA-9100

Critics acclaim...



HIGH FIDELITY: "... The performance of the SA-9100 is so exceptional and the many extras in the way of switching options, and so on, so eminently useful, that we find it the most exciting piece of audio hardware we've yet tested from this company."

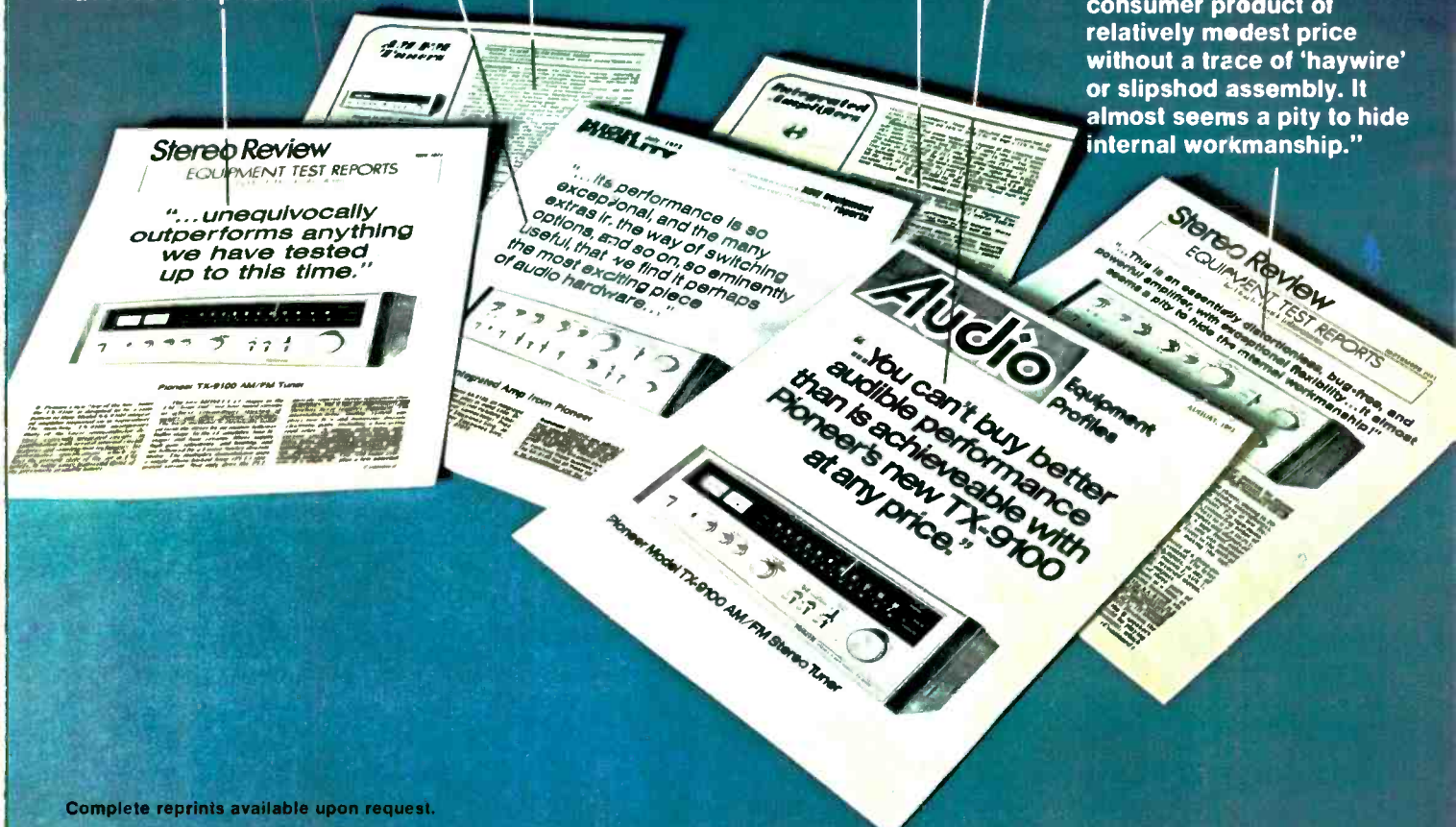
HI-FI STEREO BUYERS' GUIDE: "(The SA-9100) is a powerhouse of sound level, performance and features. Works like something the chief engineer had built for his own use."

AUDIO: "You can't buy better audible performance than is achievable with Pioneer's new TX-9100 (AM-FM stereo tuner) at any price."

STEREO REVIEW: "... The TX-9100 unequivocally outperforms anything we have tested up to this time."

"The Pioneer TX-9100 AM/FM stereo tuner offers notably excellent performance and sound quality."

STEREO REVIEW: "This (SA-9100) is an essentially distortionless, bug-free, and powerful amplifier with exceptional flexibility... A highly complex array of electronic circuitry has been packaged into a consumer product of relatively modest price without a trace of 'haywire' or slipshod assembly. It almost seems a pity to hide internal workmanship."



In tuners and amp Pioneer is the very best.



The time has come to completely re-evaluate the standard you now use to judge high fidelity performance.

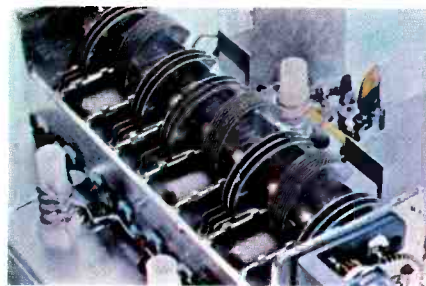
With this new line of tuners and amplifiers, Pioneer presents many ingenious innovations in circuitry that are being used for the first time. However, this exclusiveness is only secondary. While each new circuit can be considered revolutionary by itself, what is even more important is that their combined capabilities achieve precision and performance heretofore unattainable.

The Tuners: TX-9100, TX-8100, TX-7100

FM front end — an engineering triumph

The height of sophistication, the TX-9100's stabilized, drift-free front end replaces printed circuit boards with completely metallized construction. The same used in high precision communications equipment.

Employing three dual gate MOS FET's and a buffer circuit in the local oscillator,

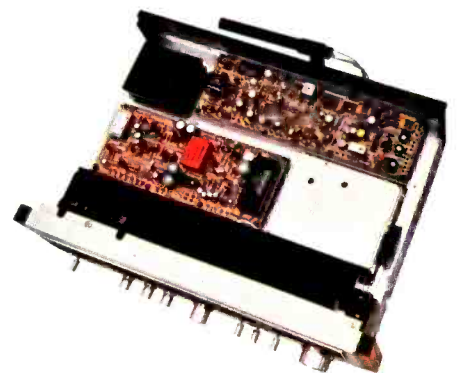


Exclusive heavy gauge die cast aluminum housing assures uncanny stability.

there's exceptionally high gain with extremely low noise. Two tuned RF stages with a 5-gang variable tuning capacitor contribute to the highest selectivity (90dB) and astonishing FM sensitivity (1.5uV). The exclusive use of a heavy gauge die cast aluminum housing assures uncanny stability.

IF section — the epitome of advanced research

In the pursuit of excellence, significant new IF section technology was developed. The result is optimum selectivity with minimum



TX-9100 interior view. Chrome plated shielded front end housing and multiplex section.

stabilization, special electronic regulator circuits are used. Transient response is also improved with a superb damping factor of 70.

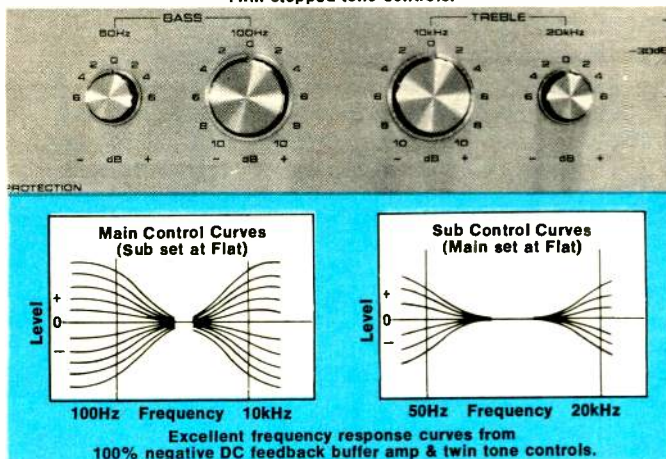
The unique equalizer amplifier

To make certain that extraneous signals do not interfere with the input signal, the equalizer amp is totally enclosed and sealed to shield it against leakage.

There's also extra assurance of precision with special low noise metal film resistors and styrol capacitors. Both are manufactured under continuous computer control to highest laboratory test equipment tolerances: $\pm 1\%$ for resistors; $\pm 2\%$ for capacitors. Until now such precision has been unheard of in hi-fi equipment. Deviation from the ideal RIAA curve is only $\pm 0.2\text{dB}$.

Since a direct-coupled SEPP complementary circuit is used in the equalizer amplifier, virtually any dynamic phono cartridge can be accommodated without overloading or distortion. For example, with 2.5 mV sensitivity, the overload at 1KHz is an unbelievable 250mV, and 1200mV at 10KHz!

Twin stepped tone controls.



The control amplifier: Twin stepped tone controls custom tailor your listening.

Now you can make the most critical bass and treble adjustments with supreme ease. In fact, there are 5,929 tonal combinations to suit your listening room acoustics and to compare or compensate for component frequency response.

On the SA-9100 and SA-8100 four tone controls (two for bass, two for treble) make 2dB (2.5dB with SA-8100) step adjustments for the entire audio spectrum. Working together with the tone controls is a buffer amplifier with 100% negative DC feedback. The main bass control governs $\pm 10\text{dB}$ at 100 Hz; the sub-bass, $\pm 6\text{dB}$ at 50 Hz. The main treble control governs $\pm 10\text{dB}$ at 10KHz and the sub-treble, $\pm 6\text{dB}$ at 20 KHz. This, plus the tone defeat control (described in the next paragraph) makes the SA-9100 the most exciting-to-use amplifier that has ever powered any hi-fi system.

New tone defeat switch

Because of the extremely wide variety (5,929) of frequency adjustments made possible by the twin tone controls, the tone defeat switch adds extra flexibility. Adjusting the tone controls to your satisfaction, you can flip the tone defeat switch. Bass and treble responses instantly become flat. When it is switched off you return to the original tone control settings.

The power amplifier

To sustain the ultra sophistication of the equalizer and control amp sections, the power amp has a direct-coupled pure complementary SEPP circuit, double differential amplifiers and two constant current loads. The combined effect is the achievement of wide power frequency range and excellent transient response. 100% negative DC feedback is supplemented by 66dB dynamic negative feedback for minimum distortion and absolute stability. The pre and power amps can be used independently with a separation switch.

Exclusive direct-coupling in all stages

Until now direct-coupling has been used only with the power amplifier. Pioneer takes it a dramatic step further in the SA-9100 and SA-8100. Direct-coupling in all stages from the equalizer amp to the control amp to the power amp. More effective? Absolutely. It achieves the finest transient response, wider dynamic range, with no greater than 0.1% total harmonic distortion. It's an incredible achievement.

Level set, volume and loudness contour controls adjust to listening preference

Three controls working together adjust to any degree of loudness. The level set control is the primary volume control. Its maximum loudness setting is 0dB.

Successive settings of -15dB and -30dB result in lower gain. Once the desired volume is obtained, the volume control is used for fine adjustments within the given

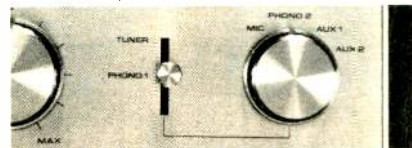
range. While the loudness contour boosts bass and treble, it may also be used with the level set control. The more advanced the position of the level set control, the lower the effective range of the loudness contour.

The original and positive speaker protector circuit

Since the signal is fed directly to the speakers because of direct-coupling, an automatic electronic trigger relay system is incorporated into the power amplifier. This protects the speakers against damage from DC leakage which can also cause distortion. It also prevents short circuits in the power transistors.

Maximum convenience for program source selection

While there is a multiple function rotary switch for microphone, phono 2 and two auxiliaries, Pioneer has included an



Convenient program source selection switch & control lever.

PIONEER

when you want something better

additional convenience. A separate flip type lever control for instant switching between the more widely used tuner and phono 1 and any other single program source. Incidentally, both switches are shielded to protect the input against undesirable extraneous signal pickups.

Two-way tape duplicating and monitoring

There are two separate flip type switches on the front panel of the SA-9100 for tape-to-tape duplicating and monitoring. Two tape decks can be connected for recording, playback and duplicating in either direction, with simultaneous monitoring.

Level controls for phono 2, aux 2

In order to match the level of various inputs, individual level controls are provided for phono 2 and aux 2.

Speaker B control

This special control helps in the use of two pairs of speaker systems of different efficiencies. There is no sacrifice of damping or distortion when switching from one pair to the other.

Impedance selector for phono 2

An easy-to-use switch allows you to employ any phono cartridge input (25K, 50K, 100K ohms).

Two-position high & low filters

The low filter switch on the SA-9100 and SA-8100 has subsonic (below 8Hz) and 30Hz positions. The high filter switch has 12KHz and 8KHz positions.

Maximum versatility in program sources

| | SA-9100 | SA-8100 | SA-7100 |
|------------------|---------|---------|---------|
| Inputs | | | |
| Tape monitor—S/N | 2-90dB | 2-90dB | 2-90dB |
| Phono—S/N | 2-80dB | 2-80dB | 2-80dB |
| Auxiliary—S/N | 2-90dB | 2-90dB | 2-90dB |
| Microphone—S/N | 2-70dB | 2-70dB | 1-70dB |
| Tuner—S/N | 1-90dB | 1-90dB | 1-90dB |
| Outputs | | | |
| Speakers | 3 | 2 | 2 |
| Headsets | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Tape Rec. | 2 | 2 | 2 |

Consistent power for every requirement

Continuous power output per channel, both channels driven into 8-ohm loads, at any frequency from 20 Hz to 20,000 Hz, at no more than the total harmonic distortion indicated.

| Rated Power | Rated Maximum | Total Harmonic Distortion |
|---------------------------|---------------|---------------------------|
| SA-9100 60 watts, minimum | | 0.1% |
| SA-8100 40 watts, minimum | | 0.3% |
| SA-7100 20 watts, minimum | | 0.5% |

This new lineup of Pioneer tuners and amplifiers is unquestionably the most advanced available today. Yet despite this overwhelming sophistication, they're sensibly priced.

See your Pioneer dealer. He'll show you how this series of fine instruments can outperform any units in their price range. All prices include walnut cabinets. SA-9100—\$449.95; SA-8100—\$349.95; SA-7100—\$249.95. TX-9100—\$349.95; TX-8100—\$249.95; TX-7100—\$199.95

While not discussed here, Pioneer is also introducing the SA-5200 stereo amplifier and the TX-6200 stereo tuner for high quality hi-fi on a low budget. Only \$139.95 each, with walnut cabinet.

U.S. Pioneer Electronics Corp., 75 Oxford Drive, Moonachie, New Jersey 07074

West: 13300 S. Estrella, Los Angeles 90248 / Midwest: 1500 Greenleaf, Elk Grove Village, Ill. 60007 / Canada: S. H. Parker Co.

**BELT DRIVE ISN'T NEW.
 MULTIPLE PLAY ISN'T NEW.
 A TURNTABLE THAT COMBINES BOTH IS NEW.
 READ ALL ABOUT IT.**



Back in monophonic times, turntable motors drove platters through a series of wheels called "idlers".

Many automatics and changers still use this system. In those days, records and playback systems were still relatively unsophisticated, so the distortions an idler drive system created didn't matter much.

Today, however, distortion is a critical problem. With recordings of increased dynamic range, wow, flutter and rumble must be reduced to inconsequential levels.

A belt-drive system is light years ahead of idler drive in that department.

And here the belt is driven by a unique motor found only in B-I-C turntables. It is a 300 RPM, 24-pole motor and it is inherently freer from noise and vibration than the 1800 RPM units with from 2 to 16 poles, which are standard in even the best of the conventional automatics.

The advantage of Programmed Multiple Play

The 980 and 960 are not record changers.

They are belt-drive Programmed Turntables which are engineered to play as many as 6 records at a time.

They have a 2-point record support system which is far less complicated and far more reliable than any umbrella spindle we've ever seen.

But an even more important advantage is this.

An automatic record handling system like the one on a B-I-C turntable can handle a single record, or 6 at a time, perfectly. No false drops. No bouncing and skating a diamond stylus across the grooves. It eliminates human error, and human error is what damages the sidewalls of your record grooves forever.

The simplicity factor

The 980 and 960 have the visibly lower profile of single-play manual instruments. They've been engineered to be simple machines, so they have fewer parts and fewer potential problems.

They abound in innovations. In the tone arm, the cartridge shell, the program panel, the entire system.

We can send you more detailed information if you write to Dept. 2C British Industries Co., Westbury, L.I. 11590; or better yet, see them at your local audio specialist.



Copyright 1974 B-I-C is a trademark of British Industries Co., Westbury, New York 11590. A division of Avnet Inc.

This is the 980 with solid state speed control and strobe. About \$200.* The 960 is identical except for these two features. About \$150.*

*Less base and cartridge.

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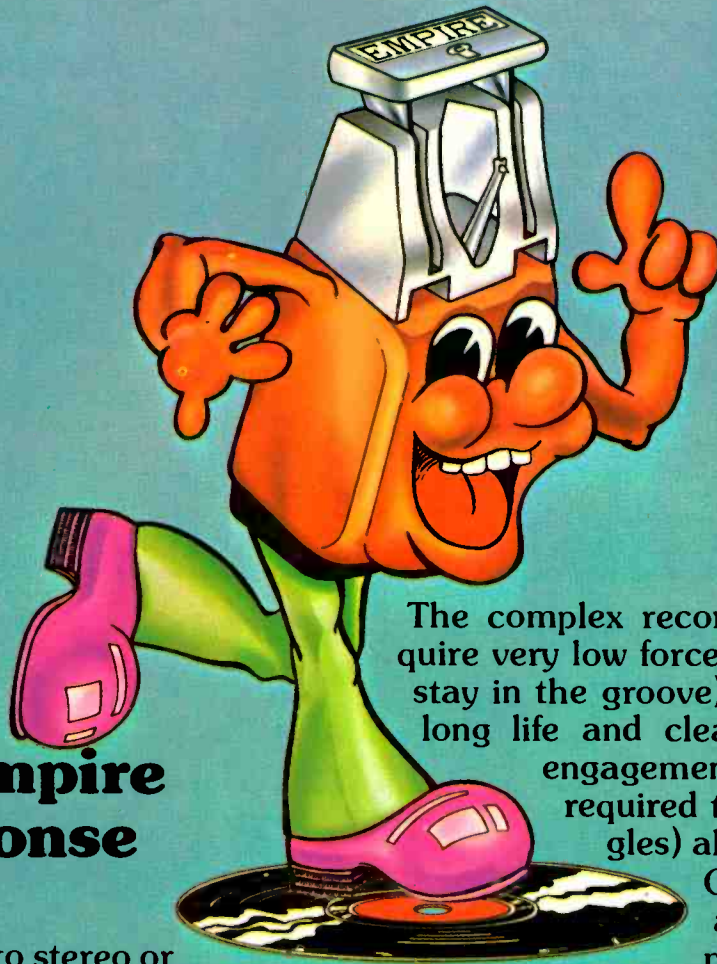
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COVER: Pastel portrait of the young Mabel Mercer by Lisa Rhana

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Keep on

© 1974 Empire Scientific Corp.



With an Empire wide response cartridge.

Whether you're into stereo or quad, wide response means better sound. True music reproduction depends upon frequencies well beyond the range of human hearing (20-20,000 Hz). For example: a perfect square wave requires a harmonic span of 10 times the fundamental frequencies recorded. Listening to a wide response cartridge is truly a unique experience. Close your eyes and you'll swear the sound is live.



The complex records produced today require very low force for tracking (ability to stay in the groove) if they are to achieve long life and clear sound. A radius of engagement as low as .1 mil is required to trace (follow the wiggles) all the way to 50,000 Hz.

Our nude diamond stylii are hand polished to precise bi-radial dimensions for Super Stereo and the even more exacting "4 Dimensional"™ configuration needed for Discrete 4 Channel.

Why Empire cartridges sound better

Every Empire long playing cartridge is fully shielded. Four poles, four coils, and three magnets (more than any other brand) produce better balance and hum rejection.

™ Trademark of the Empire Scientific Corporation









trackin'

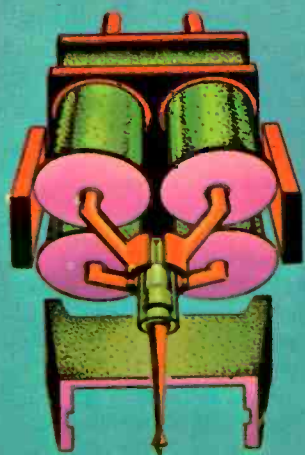
Choose the Cartridge Designed to Play Best in Your System

Plays 4 Channel Discrete (CD4) and Super Stereo

Plays 2 Channel Stereo

Plays All 4 Channel Matrix Systems (SQ, QS, RM)

| Model | 4000 D/III | 4000 D/II | 4000 D/I | 2000 E/III | 2000 E/II | 2000 E/I | 2000 E | 2000 |
|--|---|---|---|---|--|---|---|---|
| Frequency Response in Hz: | 5-50,000 | 5-45,000 | 10-40,000 | 5-35,000 | 6-33,000 | 8-32,000 | 10-30,000 | 10-28,000 |
| Output Voltage per Channel at 3.54 cm/sec groove velocity: | 3.0 | 3.0 | 3.0 | 5.0 | 5.0 | 5.0 | 5.0 | 5.0 |
| Channel Separation | more than 35dB | more than 35dB | 35dB | 35dB | 35dB | 35dB | 30dB | 30dB |
| Tracking Force in Grams: | ¼ to 1¼ | ½ to 1½ | ¾ to 1½ | ½ to 1½ | ½ to 1½ | ¾ to 1½ | 1 to 3 | 1 to 3 |
| Stylus Tip: | miniature nude diamond with .1 mil tracing radius ™4 Dimensional | miniature nude diamond with .1 mil tracing radius ™4 Dimensional | miniature nude diamond with .1 mil tracing radius ™4 Dimensional | nude elliptical diamond .2 x .7 mil | nude elliptical diamond .2 x .7 mil | nude elliptical diamond .2 x .7 mil | elliptical diamond .3 x .7 mil | spherical diamond .7 mil |
| For Use In: | turntable only | turntable only | turntable or changer | turntable or changer | turntable or changer | turntable or changer | changer only | changer only |
| LIST PRICE: | \$149.95 | \$124.95 | \$84.95 | \$69.95 | \$54.95 | \$39.95 | \$34.95 | \$29.95 |
| |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| | (White) | (Yellow) | (Black) | (Clear) | (Blue) | (Green) | (Red) | (Smoke) |



The stylus lever floats free of its magnets imposing much less weight on the record surface than in ordinary cartridges. This means less record wear and lower distortion. Hi Fi Sound Magazine summed it up very well by calling the Empire cartridge "a real hi fi masterpiece...A remarkable cartridge unlikely to wear out discs any more rapidly than a feather held lightly against the groove."

Write for your free "Guide to Sound Design," Empire Scientific Corp., Garden City, N.Y. 11530



EMPIRE

Mfd. U.S.A.

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By WILLIAM ANDERSON

ANIMAL, VEGETABLE, OR CLASSICAL?

THE record industry, like almost everybody else, has a great fondness for the "Hit Parade" system of ordering what would otherwise be random musical events, and that is why the industry journals devote so much time and space to best-seller lists—"top-40" charts, country charts, r-&-b charts, "easy listening" charts, and even classical charts. Since no two views of the world and its needs are likely to be the same, the *Billboard* classical chart appears monthly, that for *Record World* weekly, which explains, I think, why they usually agree only roughly on what's up. *Record World's* classical chart behaves rather like the popular charts—an item can be on one week, off the next, and may never be heard of again. This is often the pattern for new—and particularly novel—opera releases, evidence that the concentrated buying of committed operaphiles can create a noticeable though temporary market surge regardless of their comparatively small numbers. *Billboard's* chart, however, is more ponderous in its movements, reflecting not the weekly (or even the monthly) pattern, but one with a periodicity of, I should judge, at least a year. It therefore favors the kind of release that is not a flash in the pan, so to speak, but one that has slow, steady, and, in the end, impressively mounting sales. It is, in other words, a matter of the short view against the long, with both having their uses.

It so happens that it is the long view that is, for my immediate purposes, the more useful, a view that finds 22.5 per cent (nine out of a total of forty items—and the first three positions to boot) of *Billboard's* November 16 classical chart occupied by discs featuring the music of Scott Joplin (the Joplin wave has of course long since crested on the *Record World* charts). Familiar as I am with the Joplin renaissance over the last couple of years, that figure still impresses me, and I cannot help but wish that it might have a similar effect on the stubborn classical music establishment as well. But is the music "classical"? Funny you should ask, for the same question has been rather testily put only recently within the precincts of the record industry itself—during current NARAS deliberations over this year's soon-to-be-announced Grammy-award winners. One may safely assume that the question was not raised by either Nonesuch or Angel, the two classical companies that have had the most brilliant commercial (and artistic) successes with Joplin. But commercial and ego considerations aside (has a Grammy award ever had any effect on a record's sales?), the question is, from a cultural standpoint, a foolish, even mischievous one.

To begin with, Joplin himself considered his compositions to be in the classical mould—which is to say composer-notated, *finished* works of whose correct performance he was the best judge (no free "interpretations," performer license, or other carryings-on permitted). The current rebirth of the music, moreover, is the direct result of the activities of classical musicians and of classical labels, its initial audience this time around was the one ordinarily thought of as classical, and the later popular manifestations are strictly bandwagon efforts, however winningly so. But there's the ironic rub, for just as Joplin's "classical" music escaped into mass popularity back at the turn of the century, so it has again eluded its largely benevolent custodians (did they not, indeed, slyly hope it would?) and sunk, horror of horrors, to the lowest level of all—the juke box. For this we have Marvin Hamlisch to thank—and I do thank him, for he demonstrated at a stroke, with his score for *The Sting*, that Joplin's music is of that wonderful kind that defies classification, breaks down barriers, and conquers all hearts. Such music is an invaluable cultural resource, for it is the best answer to that preposterous exclusivism that causes the "classical" and "popular" camps to waste so much time thumbing their noses at each other instead of listening to music. The notions that classical means "elitist" and that popular means "common" are two sides of the same worthless coinage. If it's cluttering up your aesthetic exchequer, toss it out.

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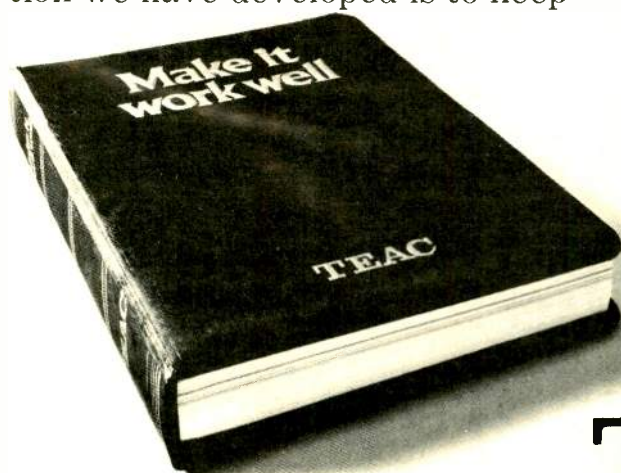
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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Joys of Kit Building

● Congratulations on the best article I've read on electronic kits (December) in the ten years I've been reading audio periodicals. Having built *seven* Dynakit's over the past four years and requiring help with two of the units after assembly, I can attest to Ralph Hodges' accuracy about the excellent customer service divisions of these companies, the "maximum charge" invariably being under 10 per cent of the cost of the kit, and a knowledge of electronics being unessential to kit building. With the exception of being able to recognize electronic parts more readily, my electronic comprehension is just as it was when I built my first kit—nothing past Ohm's Law.

The only thing Mr. Hodges didn't mention is that if one has a perfectionist's tastes and a limited bank account, kits are the best way to reconcile the two. Also, I must confess that I enjoy the music more, knowing that I actively had something to do with its *becoming* music.

JOSEPH M. BOSWELL
Alexandria, Va.

Cowell's Early Symphonies

● Oliver Daniel's excellent and educational article on Henry Cowell in the December issue ignores Cowell's early symphonies as though they never existed. Was the composer so dissatisfied with them that he withdrew them? Are the manuscripts lost? Or are they not up to Cowell's later style?

I have a tape of Cowell's First Symphony, which I recorded from a record via FM in 1968. Even though the tape misses a few measures because I had to turn the reels over in mid-broadcast, it remains one of my favorites, and was my introduction to Cowell. The Schwann and Musical Heritage lists, however, don't even recognize the First Symphony's existence. I wonder how many years old the record was when I chanced to hear it and record it?

Can Mr. Daniel fill in the gaps in his catalog of Mr. Cowell's output—whether or not current recordings exist and if there are any plans by record companies to do more with Mr. Cowell? I would hate to wait until 1996 for a Cowell centennial movement *à la* Ives to give his works the airing I suspect they deserve. It would be interesting to trace Cowell's development through the medium of records,

since that's the only way to expand our musical horizons. But we don't have the records.

HENRY A. BLUMENTHAL
Jacksonville, Fla.

Mr. Daniel replies: I doubt very much that Mr. Blumenthal heard Cowell's First Symphony, since I do not think it was ever played; certainly it was never recorded. There were recordings of Symphonies Nos. 4, 5, 7, 10, 11, 15, and 16, although, being on small labels in the first place and largely out of print in the second, they may be a little hard to find. Perhaps, by 1997, more conductors will discover Cowell the way so many of them are now discovering Ives, and we can all celebrate.

● The article on Henry Cowell in the December issue of STEREO REVIEW is not only a marvelous tribute to Cowell and his music, but an extraordinary contribution to music literature as well.

RONALD FREED
New York, N.Y.

Good Ol' Randy

● My compliments to Noel Coppage for a fine review of Randy Newman's "Good Old Boys" (December). It's really about time the press—and the public—recognizes Randy as a brilliant artist who has a unique talent for writing songs which poke fun at human imperfections as well as the numerous contradictions and absurdities of life. The quality of being a good story teller is rather rare these days; Randy demonstrates this ability in a series of short, pleasant, Chautauqua-like tunes which provoke an emotional response.

RICHARD KOZLOW
Chevy Chase, Md.

Indexing

● Thanks very much for the mention of *Popular Periodical Index* in the November Letters column. But where in the world did you get the Rutherford, New Jersey, address? The correct address is *Popular Periodical Index*, P.O. Box 739, Camden, N.J. 08102.

We now have over one thousand library subscribers with dozens more being added each week. May each and every one of them subscribe to STEREO REVIEW!

BOB BOTTORFF
Rutgers University
Camden, N.J.

Buffett Buffs

● In response to reader Chris Clarke's letter in the December issue: we are eternally grateful to STEREO REVIEW and to Noel Coppage for introducing us to the music of Jimmy Buffett (September). Solely because of Mr. Coppage's review of "Living and Dying in $\frac{3}{4}$ Time," we bought that record—and immediately after hearing it we began searching in record shops for Jimmy Buffett's first record. It took a special order to get it, but since then we've enjoyed *both* of Jimmy Buffett's discs over and over again. He is truly a gifted artist whose rhyming and phrasing are unequaled. Who else would even dream of a line like "Ramar of the Jungle was everybody's bwanana, but only jazz musicians were smokin' marijuana?"

EDGAR E. AND NANCY L. G. HESS
Ridgewood, N.J.

Maria Caniglia

● I found William Livingstone's article on "The Fourth International Verdi Congress" (December) most interesting. My heart skipped a beat when I read that Maria Caniglia is now living in Chicago. For over thirty years, she has been and still is my favorite singer; I don't believe that anyone can come up to her. And now I find she is living *right here!*

ANN SALVADOR
Chicago, Ill.

Verdi Corrected

● As the author of both the program notes and the libretto translation, I was delighted to read your excellent review of the Philips *Un Giorno di Regno* in the December issue. Incidentally, a plot summary was contained in the notes as originally submitted to Philips. Due to the paper shortage—apparently devastating in Holland—they were faced with the choice of eliminating either the background notes or the plot summary, and their feeling was that, since the complete libretto was furnished, the summary was the more expendable.

That biographical sketch that Verdi supplied to Ricordi in 1879 certainly created more problems than it solved. At a distance of forty years, Verdi was confused, mentioning that his two children died within the span of four months. Actually, Virginia died in August 1838 (before the first performance of *Oberto*), while Icilio died in October 1839 (about fifteen months later). Then, eight months later, in June 1840, his wife Margherita died. The four-month figure still stands in most reference books, since the source seemed unimpeachable.

MARTIN L. SOKOL
New York, N.Y.

Larynx Music: Keeping Abreast

● Roger Dettmer's review of my new Atlantic-Finnadar album, *Wiretap* (December), is nothing if not thought-provoking. Intelligent reviews of new music are rare enough these days, and one should, I suppose, leave it at that. Nevertheless, I cannot resist expressing my astonishment at Mr. Dettmer's list of influences. In principle, I admit to every possible influence, but as a matter of reality I thoroughly dislike Messiaen, I cannot recall ever having heard Toru Takemitsu's *Vocalism Ai*, and I categorically refuse to accept any responsibility for the Bernstein *Mass*.

Mr. Dettmer detects a certain desire to stay abreast of the times in works like *Larynx*
(Continued on page 12)

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Music. Perhaps. I always thought that artists, like all the rest of us, had to live and survive in no other times than our very own. In fact, when *Larynx Music* was first conceived almost a decade ago, I felt I was swimming against the fashion of the time. Or, to change the metaphor, *Larynx Music* is an exorcism of the very same devils whose malign influences Mr. Dettmer is busy trying to exorcise. If this is trendy, then Mr. Dettmer's very sophisticated attack on trendiness is equally trendy—in his own words, *de rigueur*.

Incidentally, the soprano who does such a remarkable job with *Larynx Music* is Elise Ross and the guitarist in *Helix* is Joshua Bauman; both names were given incorrectly in the review credits.

ERIC SALZMAN
Brooklyn Heights, N.Y.

Speaking Out

● STEREO REVIEW is beginning to see the light. The significance of mixed mediums (pop, jazz, electronic, blues, classical, etc.) is outlined in Eric Salzman's witty review of *Elephant Steps* (December). I agree with Mr. Salzman on the need for some new kind of musical theater, but he should have told us in detail about the plot. If the musical is so confusing on records, maybe it should be made into a movie, directed by Mel Brooks or Ken Russell and starring somebody like Paul Sand as Hartman. Finally, if Michael Tilson Thomas' singing was that bad (I disagree), Mr. Salzman should have come out and said so.

CAROLYN LEWIS
Lubbock, Tex.

Jackie and Roy

● I was somewhat bewildered by Peter Reilly's review of Jackie and Roy's "A Wilder Alias" (October 1974). First, I came across "Jackie Cain and Roy Kral (vocals and piano); orchestra." There is no orchestra on this date. Then comes the list of compositions, but no mention of vibist Roy Pennington, bassist Harvey Swartz, drummer Steve Gadd, and the added soloists, tenor Joe Farrell and flutist Hubert Laws.

A cryptic inscription, "Performance: Scoo-bee-doo-bee-dah," engendered a bit of skepticism and a great deal of disappointment from me until the last paragraph: "The Krals do have a certain following in the pop press, but I suspect it's generally among critics who have sacrificed objectivity for friendship." Huh? If anything, the pop press has virtually ignored Jackie and Roy due to the stigma "jazz singers" attached to them many years ago, for "jazz" is anathema to the pop world.

"A Wilder Alias" represents a kind of new developmental and "expanded" Jackie and Roy. In order to appreciate and understand it, one has to put aside personal desires and tastes for "objectivity." One should also be at least familiar with the "early" Jackie and Roy to fully realize what this LP represents. But Jackie's pure and unaffected tones and Roy's complementary vocal lines, piano work, and arrangements should appeal to all levels of interest.

LARRY DAVIS
New York, N.Y.

R-&-R R.I.P.

● In reference to the December "Simels Report": *Rock Dreams* sounds like a fantastic book, well worth reading. However, I was greatly disturbed by Steve Simels' put-down of the current state of affairs in rock music.

He says that music and musicians were more vital five years ago, which is absurd. The top rockers today are better than ever—the Allman Brothers Band, Marshall Tucker Band, Elvin Bishop, J. Geils Band, Garcia-Saunders, Stevie Wonder, etc., etc. The hybrids with jazz and country are exciting too. It's Mr. Simels' loss if he wants to hang up his rock-and-roll shoes.

DAVE RICH
Berkeley, Calif.

The Real Elton John

● Since when is Elton John not a Real Person? Noel Coppage says (December) he isn't honest, or Real, as he puts it. Does that mean that Elton John is dishonest? I consider Elton John one of the best "popular" singers to-



day—better than most ear-splitting *hard* rock and some slow-moving blues. By the way, Noel, who is Jesse Winchester?

CLAY DANIEL
Leesburg, Fla.

Ugly Rumors Confirmed

● Concerning Noel Coppage's review of the Grateful Dead's new album, "From the Mars Hotel" (December), the cover by Kelley Mouse can be read by holding the album upside down in front of a mirror. You'll find it says "Ugly Rumors." Just thought I'd let you in on this earth-shattering little piece of information.

HOWARD HURWITZ
Philadelphia, Pa.

● Noel Coppage is one of the few reviewers to discover and write of the *beautiful* music in the Grateful Dead's "From the Mars Hotel" album (December). I mean, one guy even wrote that the album was just too *slow* for him!

MICHAEL WELLBORN
Berkely (Berzerkeley), Calif.

Festivals and Insurance

● I have two questions which may be of general interest to your readers:

1. I intend to travel in Europe this year and would like to attend some musical events. It is impossible to know what all is available, and I would prefer not to have to write to different festivals, opera houses, etc. Is there a clearinghouse in the U.S. for European musi-

cal events which also offers deals on tickets?

2. My record collection has grown to a size where it is best to insure it. My regular agent will only insure it with a three-year depreciation term (a 1½-year-old record is considered to be worth half its purchase price; a three-year-old one is uninsurable). I am not trying to insure irreplaceable records for more than their purchase price, but a three-year term is ridiculous for high-quality records well kept. It seems to me it would be fair to insure them for about 75 per cent of their purchase price across the board. Does anyone know of an insurance company that treats classical music collections more realistically?

SCOTT EDWARDS
Arlington, Va.

Judy Get Your Gun

● In response to Robert Lane's Letter to the Editor (December): the Sound/Stage Recordings (2302) soundtrack album of *Annie Get Your Gun* by Judy Garland is available from The Record House, Inc., 1101 Polk Street (at Post), San Francisco, Calif., 94109, for \$6.00 plus a \$1.00 handling charge, as listed in their current catalog.

JOYCE M. HUNSINGER
Hazleton, Pa.

Mrs. Beach

● Paul Kresh's review (November) of the recent Turnabout disc containing piano quintets by Arthur Foote and Mrs. H. H. A. Beach was of particular interest to me. For the last twenty years and more I have been specializing in nineteenth- and early twentieth-century American and British scores in my record collection and generally "drumming up" interest among my friends and acquaintances. I have long held the opinion that the listening public has been unjustly deprived of a sizable batch of music that is not only beautiful but cannot, as Mr. Kresh puts it, "be dismissed as pedestrian."

Readers who may be interested in sampling Mrs. Beach as a symphonist are advised that her Symphony in E Minor (the "Gaelic") was recorded in England in 1968 by the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra under Karl Krueger, and is available on a stereo disc from the Society for the Preservation of the American Musical Heritage, Box 4244, Grand Central Station, New York, N.Y. 10017.

Mrs. Beach, incidentally, died as recently as 1944, and although, as Mr. Kresh points out, she was indeed one of the first women anywhere to compose a symphonic work, she was well preceded in England by Alice Mary Smith (1839-1884), a pupil of Sterndale Bennett and Macfarren, whose prolific output includes two symphonies.

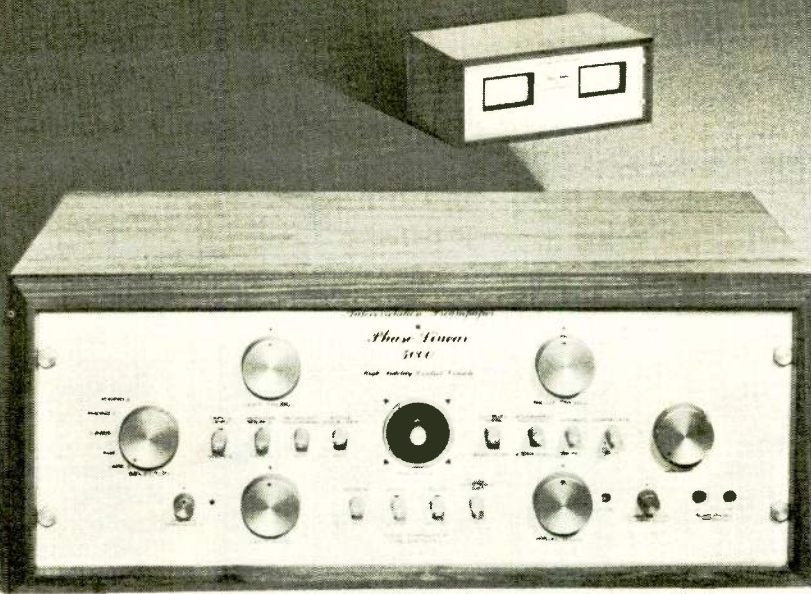
RICHARD K. PATTERSON
Hyde Park, N.Y.

Correction

● There was an error in the Watts Preenor ad which appeared in the December issue. The Preenor price was shown as \$4.00 instead of the correct selling price of \$4.95.

SHELDON BERMAN
Elpa Marketing Industries
New York, N.Y.

PUBLISHER'S NOTICE: Recent fluctuations in the value of the dollar will have an effect on the price of merchandise imported into this country. So, please be aware that the prices quoted in this issue may be subject to change.



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Lissen Audio Care Products

Eastern Pacific Marketing has introduced (under the Lissen brand name) two kits for the cleaning and maintenance of records and tape machines. The RC-1 record-cleaning kit consists of a bottle of quick-drying solution with a spray-top applicator that sprays the liquid directly onto the record surface



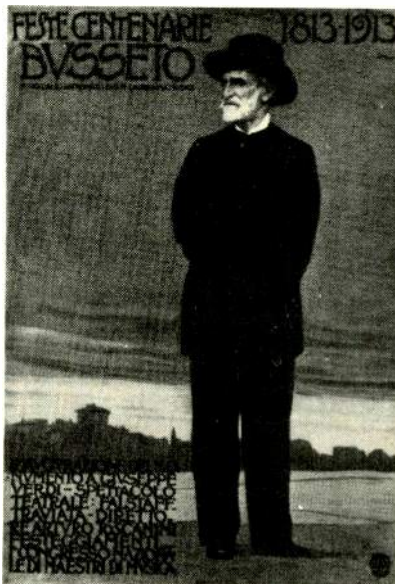
and a cylindrical record brush constructed of deep-pile velvet with a polyurethane core. The brush is intended to remove any liquid residue as well as contaminants on the record. The second item, the HC-1 kit for tape recorders (shown), contains a cleaning solution for rubber parts (such as pinch rollers) and another liquid for metal parts (heads, capstans, and tape guides). Long cotton swabs and a polishing cloth are also supplied. The Lissen kits are packaged in clear plastic snap-open boxes. Prices: RC-1, \$7.95; HC-1, \$5.95. A refill for the record-cleaning solution costs \$5.95.

Circle 115 on reader service card

Ricordi Opera Posters

Fiesta Arts offers twelve full-color reproductions of opera posters originally commissioned by the Italian music publishers G. Ricordi to commemorate operas by Puccini, Wagner, Montemezzi, and others. The posters date from the first decades of this century and reflect, with exuberant melodrama, the stylistic influences of the time. Operas and composers featured include *La Secchia Rapita* (Burgmeim), *Madama Butterfly* (Puccini), *Tosca* (Puccini), *Don*

Giovanni (Alfano), *La Fanciulla del West* (Puccini), *Hellera* (Montemezzi), and *Manon Lescaut* (Puccini). There is



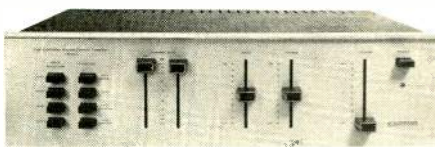
also a poster (shown) for a festival honoring Giuseppe Verdi, conducted by Arturo Toscanini.

All posters are in full color with dimensions of 27½ x 19½ inches. They are packaged in clear plastic envelopes and shipped in heavy mailing tubes. Prices: \$7 each, \$40 for any six, or \$78 for the set of twelve. Circle reader service number or write direct to: Fiesta Arts, Inc., Department SR, Greenvale, N.Y. 11548.

Circle 116 on reader service card

Radford HD 250 Integrated Stereo Amplifier

AUDIONICS, importer of the British-made Radford equipment, has announced the availability of the Model HD250 integrated stereo amplifier providing a power output of 50 watts per channel continuous into 8 ohms (both channels driven) with less than 0.02 per cent harmonic distortion. The Radford



specifications are unusually complete, and include separate noise and distortion

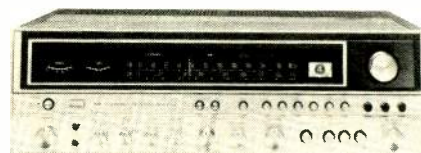
ratings for the phono preamplifier, tone-control section, and power-amplifier section. With "A" weighting, the signal-to-noise ratio at the phono inputs is between 80 and 88 dB under typical input-signal conditions. Corresponding figures for the tone-control section are similar. Both sections have unmeasurable distortion (distortion is below noise level) in typical use. Their respective sensitivities are 2 millivolts and 100 millivolts. The frequency response of the phono preamplifier matches the RIAA equalization characteristic within 0.5 dB above 50 Hz; below 50 Hz a 12-dB-per-octave rolloff is introduced, with response 3 dB down at 30 Hz. Frequency response for high-level inputs is 20 to 32,000 Hz +0, -1 dB.

The uncomplicated control layout of the HD250 features slider-type controls for all level adjustments, including volume, bass and treble (providing a range of approximately ±12 dB at 30 and 20,000 Hz, respectively), and balance. (Balance is adjusted with separate gain controls for each channel.) The amplifier accommodates two tape decks (with off-the-tape monitoring) as well as tuner and phono sources. The HD250 measures 17 x 4¾ x 11 inches. Price: \$650.

Circle 117 on reader service card

Sansui QRX-7001 Four-Channel Receiver

A new four-channel receiver from Sansui, the Model QRX-7001, will play any of the major four-channel program sources—CD-4, QS and SQ matrix-en-



coded material, and discrete four-channel tapes. The built-in CD-4 demodulator, Sansui's own design, is completely switched out of the phono circuit when not in use. The separation and carrier-level adjustments are located on the front panel for ready accessibility. The QS facilities are the four-IC Type A Vario-Matrix decoder, with a synthesizer to provide a four-channel effect from two-channel sources, and a special switch position for decoding SQ programs with enhanced front-to-back separation. The synthesizer function pro-

(Continued on page 16)



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*For a description of this research see the article "Sound Recording and Reproduction" published in *Technology Review (M.I.T.)*, Vol. 75, No. 7, June '73. Reprints are available from BOSE for fifty cents.

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The FM specifications for the QRX-7001 include an IHF FM sensitivity of 1.9 microvolts, 1.5-dB capture ratio, 70-dB selectivity, and image and i.f. rejection exceeding 75 and 90 dB, respectively. Total harmonic distortion is under 0.3 per cent for mono, 0.5 per cent for stereo. Frequency response is 30 to 15,000 Hz ± 0.5 , -3 dB, and stereo separation is better than 40 dB at 1,000 Hz. Power output of the amplifier section is 35 watts per channel continuous, 20 to 20,000 Hz, with all four channels driven simultaneously into 8-ohm loads. Harmonic and intermodulation distortion are both below 0.4 per cent at rated output. Signal-to-noise ratios exceed 70 dB for the phono inputs and 80 dB for high-level inputs. The phono equalization matches the RIAA characteristic within ± 1 dB.

The front panel of the QRX-7001 has separate bass and treble controls for the front and rear channels plus balance controls that adjust left-to-right levels in front and rear and overall front-to-rear balance. Tape-monitor switching for two four-channel tape decks permits dubbing from one to the other. Two quartets of speakers are accommodated, with a selector that chooses either or both. Switchable loudness compensation boosts low and (moderately) high frequencies at low volume-control settings. The low- and high-cut filters introduce 6-dB-per-octave slopes, reducing response by 10 dB at both 50 and 10,000 Hz. There are front-panel headphone jacks for four-channel phones. Dimensions of the receiver are approximately $21\frac{1}{4}$ x $6\frac{1}{2}$ x $15\frac{7}{8}$ inches. Price: \$879.95.

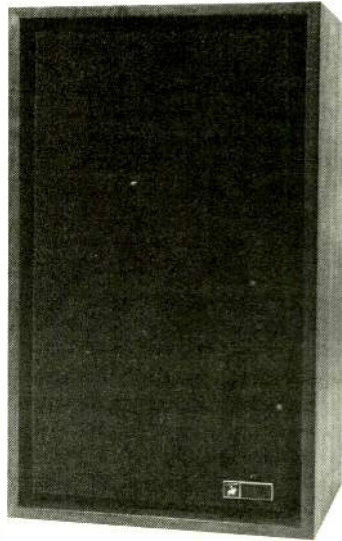
Circle 118 on reader service card

Soundcraftsmen SC-7 Speaker System

A new speaker system from Soundcraftsmen, the SC-7, is an acoustic-suspension design incorporating three drivers: a 12-inch woofer, 5-inch cone mid-range in its own internal sub-enclosure, and a $3\frac{1}{2}$ -inch dome-type tweeter. The cabinet is finished in walnut veneer with solid walnut trim and a black, acoustically transparent foam grille. Two continuously variable level controls adjust the output of mid and high frequencies over a $+6$, -12 -dB range. The crossover points between the three drivers occur at 500 and 4,500 Hz.

The nominal impedance of the SC-7 is

8 ohms, and power-handling capability is 60 watts continuous (100 watts peak), with 10 watts per channel the recom-



mended minimum amplifier power for driving the system. Frequency response is 20 to 20,000 Hz ± 5 dB. Five-way binding posts on standard centers serve as input connectors. The SC-7 is $25\frac{1}{2}$ x 15 x $11\frac{3}{4}$ inches. Price: \$229.50.

Circle 119 on reader service card

All-Test ATD-25 Phono Preamplifier

The All-Test self-powered phono preamplifier is a high-quality device designed to replace the existing phono



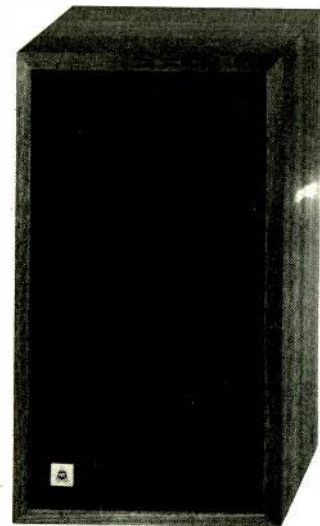
preamplifier of an amplifier or receiver, or to provide a second magnetic-phono input for a system incorporating two record players. The preamplifier has adequate gain for most magnetic-phono cartridges and has a noise level that is 60 dB below a 1-millivolt input. Input overload occurs at 130 millivolts at 1,000 Hz. Maximum output is at least 7 volts into impedances of 10,000 ohms or more, with intermodulation distortion less than 0.01 per cent. Frequency response is within 0.5 dB of the RIAA

curve across the full audio band. The input impedance of the preamplifier is 47,000 ohms; capacitance is 50 picofarads. The ATD-25 has no controls other than an on/off switch. Standard phono jacks mounted on the rear panel serve as input and output connectors. The circuitry is housed in an all-metal case with dimensions of 9 x 3 x 7 inches. Price: \$150.

Circle 120 on reader service card

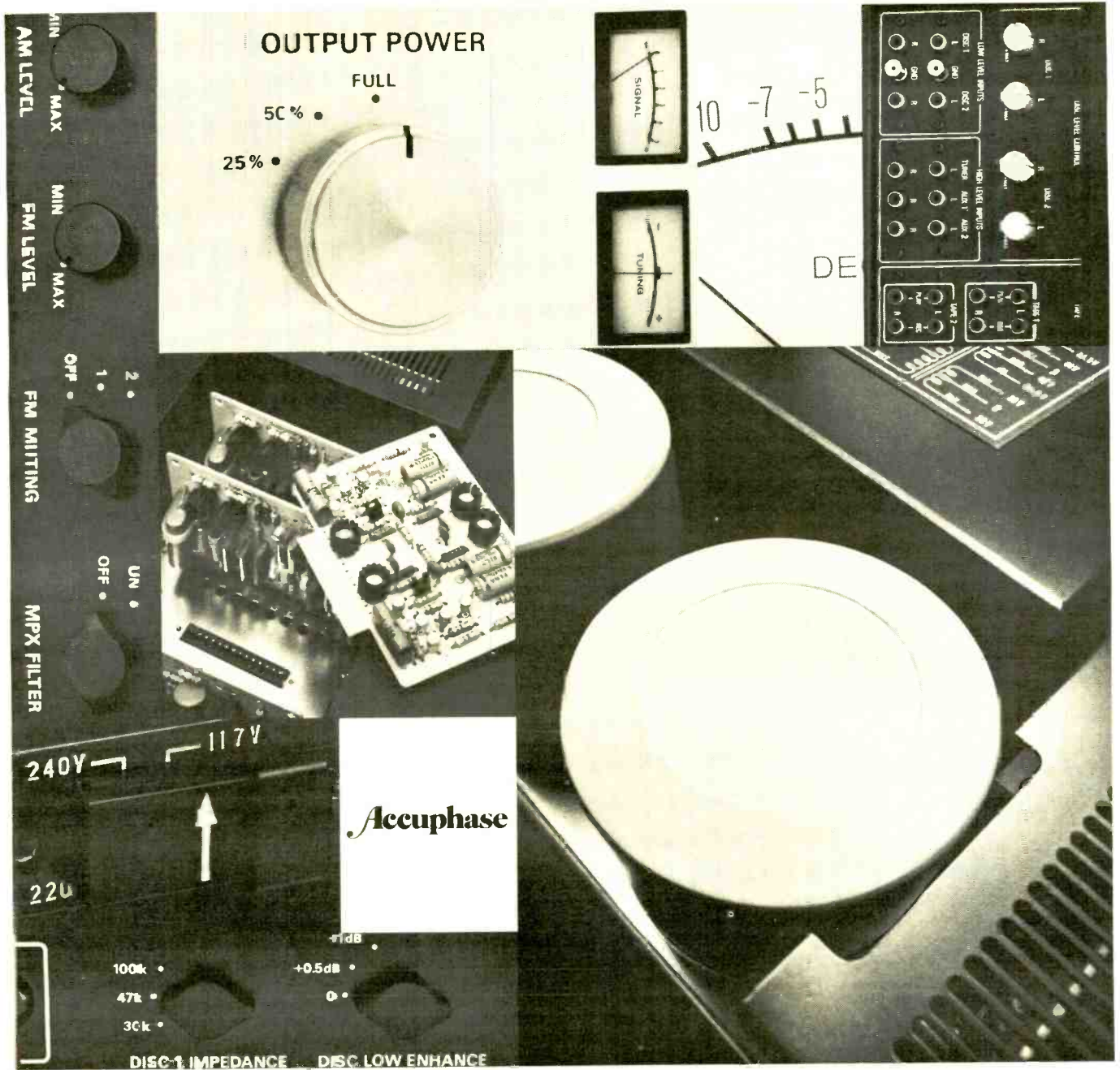
APL Model 801 Speaker System

Applied Physics Laboratory has announced a new speaker system—the fourth in this manufacturer's current line—employing a piezoelectric horn tweeter and an 8-inch woofer in a sealed enclosure slightly larger than one cubic foot in volume. The system uses no crossover network, but depends instead on the natural rolloff characteristics of the two drivers. The tweeter operates over the range 3,500 to 25,000 Hz, below which its rising impedance effectively introduces an 18-dB-per-octave rolloff. The woofer, with an in-box resonance of about 44 Hz, rolls off mechanically above 3,500 Hz at a 12-dB-per-octave rate. The 801 has a nominal impedance of 8 ohms and a power-handling capability of 100 watts continuous. Amplifier power of 10 watts per channel continuous is the minimum recommended by the manufacturer. The enclosure, which measures $21\frac{1}{2}$ x 12 x 10 inches, is



constructed of $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch particle board clad in oiled walnut veneer and a dark grille cloth. Price: \$99.

Circle 121 on reader service card



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 imagine what happens when each part
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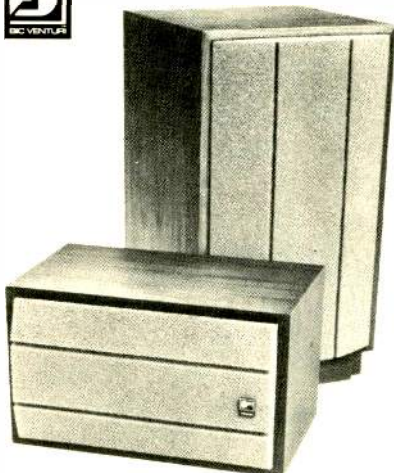
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CIRCLE NO. 10 ON READER SERVICE CARD

AUDIO QUESTIONS and ANSWERS

By LARRY KLEIN *Technical Editor*



Alcohol Inquiry Addendum

Q. *I was disturbed by your Q & A discussion and recommendation of alcohol as a cleaning agent for tape recorders (July 1974). I had tried using rubbing alcohol before you covered the question and was told by a tape-recorder company that rubbing alcohol has additives such as lanolin that can foul up a tape machine.*

GERALD PRICE
Tacoma, Wash

A. Mr. Price's story seemed plausible, so I checked it out with another expert, Bruce Maier (developer of the Discwasher), who volunteered to do a small research project for me. He first spoke to a number of manufacturers and found that some of them weren't really sure *what* they were adding to their alcohol. He then submitted a number of samples of rubbing alcohol to analytical breakdown in a gas-liquid chromatograph. Dr. Maier's report is as follows: "Upon analysis, and upon detailed conversation with different manufacturers of rubbing alcohol, I find that two out of six manufacturers put either lanolin or a small amount of glycol into the alcohol so as to keep the rubbed skin from becoming dehydrated. Other manufacturers simply augment the toxic nature of the rubbing alcohols with compounds the government clears as 'denaturing components for alcohol mixtures.' My tests indicate that these compounds are most often petroleum distillates and *jet fuel!* (Believe it or not, aviation and jet fuel have boiling points very similar to those of alcohols and are widely used for the purpose of making alcohols totally undrinkable.) All these additives provide a *slight*, but nevertheless undesirable, lubrication of the capstan, pinch-roller, and other tape-transport components.

My feeling is that the most prudent cleaning substance is carbon tetrachloride (available from most drug stores), which has better cleaning properties than the alcohols. However, carbon tet-

rachloride is rather toxic when inhaled for long periods in a closed environment. But unless somebody spends a great deal of time cleaning his tape recorder in a closet, there should be no danger. Pure ethyl alcohol is obviously another way to go, but it can be purchased only under controlled conditions (to prevent its finding its way into cocktails without being properly taxed)."

Rock Recording Quality

Q. *A subject that has bugged me for quite a while is the technical quality of today's "rock" recordings, which make up the majority of my record collection. Most of these recordings are "created" in the studio, and the sound quality is strictly up to the discretion of the recording engineer. The result, at least to my ears, is frequently less than what I would call ideal. Some of my records sound muddy or just plain distorted, and the treble boost in some cases could peel the paint off walls. (An example of this is the "Beatles, 1967-70" album on Apple Records.) In addition, some of these sonic disasters sound like the bassist didn't show up for the studio session. I'm sure I could make a better-sounding recording in my basement with my meager equipment. I'm not downing the whole industry, since such instances of bad recorded sound are infrequent—but I have noticed more and more of them recently. I hope disc sound quality won't be another casualty of the times.*

J. D. NORFOLK
Baltimore, Md.

A. Insofar as you're not damning the entire recording industry but are only citing occasional sloppy practices, you are absolutely right. Bad sound on rock recordings comes about in a number of different ways, and each bad disc would have to be analysed individually. Among the problem sources are those few tin-eared engineers who apparently can't hear highs unless they are boosted

(Continued on page 20)

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10 dB or so over the mid-range level (or are unaware that the tweeters in the monitor speakers are burnt out). Perhaps the producer or engineer believes that the disc is going to be played mostly on \$19.95 phonographs and AM car radios, and therefore he wants the highs as hot as possible in order to insure that they're heard at all. Sometimes, I'm sure, it's just plain sloppiness on the part of an engineer who normally knows what he's doing but was too zonked or deafened at the time to hear what was going wrong.

As far as the disappearing bassist is concerned, this could result from an attempt either to get more playing time or to raise the overall recorded level on the disc. Since both these procedures use up more groove space (which means less playing time), cutting back on the low bass (which uses up groove space very fast) helps restore some playing time.

I see little hope that an individual consumer can have any influence on record-production practices. However, the performers involved could have great impact if they objected strongly to an engineering mix or pressing that sounds bad. I would suggest therefore that the thing to do is not to write to the record company, but rather to protest to the group whose performance has been presented poorly. But it is hard, of course, to reach performers without going through their record companies. Stalemate?

Beam-of-Light Phono Pickup

Q. When I was young my family owned a Philco console radio/record player that featured a "beam of light" phono cartridge. Why hasn't that idea ever been popular during the stereo era? Wouldn't such a pickup considerably reduce stylus and record wear?

ARNOLD KIRKLAND
Chicago, Ill.

A. All the so-called "beam-of-light" pickups would more accurately be called photoelectric pickups. In every case, it involved using a conventional phono stylus to wiggle a vane or shutter that in some way modulated a light beam shining on a photo cell. The same problems that affect all other cartridge configurations (stylus mass, linearity, resonances, etc.) also have to be coped with in the photoelectric designs.

It is clear, however, that we are fast approaching the technological point where a true beam-of-light pickup (in this case laser light) is becoming practical. It's no trick today to make an audio recording that can be "read" by a laser beam—and at least one company has been working with that technique for a video disc. As of the moment, however, the cost and complexity of using laser beams to "play" the grooves of a conventional LP record do not make economic sense, even if such a system is technically feasible.



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AUDIO NEWS

VIEWS AND COMMENT

By LARRY KLEIN

Technical Editor

● AN important new technology whose ramifications may have escaped the notice of most audiophiles has appeared recently. I'm referring to Pioneer's development of a piezoelectric *film*. The piezoelectric phenomenon refers to the fact that certain crystalline structures, when stressed, produce a voltage. Or, conversely, when a voltage is applied to such a material it flexes. In audio, the first phenomenon (voltage-generation) has found practical employment in ceramic and crystal phono cartridges, the second phenomenon (voltage into motion) in crystal tweeters.

Consider the simplicity of a thin, limp piece of plastic with vapor-deposited contact terminals on each side. An audio voltage applied to the terminals causes the film to expand and contract. If the film is clamped at its edges, we then have a sound-generating device that works without either voice coils or magnets. As in the case of the electrostatic speaker, the diaphragm is directly driven by the signal. But, in contrast to the electrostatic principle, high polarizing and signal voltages are not required.

Crystal piezoelectric tweeters have been available for many years, but, in the opinion of many designers, mechanical problems such as resonance outweigh their advantages. The upcoming piezoelectric film devices, which are inherently simple and resonance-free, should change all that. Pioneer's piezoelectric film is used only in a pair of their moderately expensive stereo headphones, but it is bound ultimately to be applied in inexpensive form in all kinds of transducers from microphones to cartridges to tweeters—and perhaps even full-range loudspeakers.

● ONE of the reasons tapes in *any* format cost more than records is simply that records are stamped out like cookies, while tapes have to be recorded inch by magnetic inch. High-speed duplication cuts down the recording time, but it also almost invariably cuts down the fidelity as well. A possible way out of this dilemma has recently been developed by Matsushita Electric in Japan.

They are making available a video-tape duplicating system that will produce a copy of a 30-minute video-tape cartridge in less than 3 minutes. The Matsushita technique is to record the video picture signal "in reverse" on a master tape that has a special coating. The master and the blank tape are interleaved and wound tightly together on one reel at high speed. A carefully controlled magnetic field is then applied for one second. The previously blank but now recorded tape is then wound back on its own reel.

With the automatic Matsushita machinery, one master tape can be used to make up to 1,000 copies in about 50 hours. Technical details are lacking, but it appears to be a sort of magnetic contact printing in that the magnetic pattern from the master tape is transferred, under the influence of the external magnetic field, onto the blank tapes. Since color video tapes involve working with a signal whose frequency is at least 4 MHz (and remember that dropouts and "noise" are far more annoying in a picture than in sound), the system ought to provide superb results if the technology could be applied to audio duplication.

Would you believe that it is also possible to contact-print magnetic tape using a *thermal* technique? 3M refers to their duplication process as the STAM method (an acronym for—take a deep breath—sequential thermal anhysteretic magnetization). The heart of 3M's system is a special belt coated with proprietary magnetic materials. When heated and pressed against the master, the belt picks up the to-be-transferred signal and then re-records it magnetically on the copy tape. At any one moment different parts of the rapidly rotating belt are simultaneously picking up the signal from the master, transferring it to the copy, and being erased.

A possible disadvantage of 3M's STAM system is that chromium-dioxide tapes can't be used as the master since the heat would erase them. However, a large advantage of the belt technique over the interleaved winding approach is that it permits high-speed (37½ ips) duplication of video material directly into a cartridge—it is not necessary either to assemble the cartridge around a pre-recorded length of tape or to pull the tape out of the cartridge, record it, and then wind it all back in. Open-reel video tapes are duplicated at 75 ips.

● Well, the Federal Trade Commission has gone and done it. For reasons unclear to me (and to a lot of others) the FTC is holding fast to its position on power-test preconditioning. This was discussed at length in January's "Audio News," and I need not go over the same ground. Suffice it to say that I had expected better from the FTC—and good luck to the companies that are about to seek relief through legal channels.

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AUDIO BASICS

By RALPH HODGES



GLOSSARY OF TECHNICAL TERMS—16

● **Ground loop** describes a condition in which the hum level of a sound system has actually been increased through improper grounding. Often this results from there being too many ground connections between components: a sort of loop is formed that acts as an antenna for electromagnetic radiations from any source carrying 60-Hz current.

In high fidelity's infancy a ground loop was a common—even inevitable—consequence of interconnecting strange components. Today the foresight of manufacturers has eliminated ground loops almost entirely. However, when one does occur, a considerable amount of experimentation with different grounding schemes is often required to alleviate or eliminate it.

● **Half-track tapes** are standard quarter-inch-wide tapes that have been recorded with two parallel tracks of information, each occupying close to half the total width of the tape. At one time half-track was the principal format for stereo tape recordings, but now it has been entirely superseded by quarter-track in prerecorded tapes.

● **Harmonic** is a part of a complex tone (such as a note played on a musical instrument) that is an exact multiple in frequency of the fundamental or base frequency of the note. The first harmonic is the fundamental itself (the fundamental times one). The second harmonic is twice the fundamental, and the third three times the fundamental. All musical instruments emit tones that have a harmonic structure characteristic of them and which is in part responsible for their unique sounds. For example, a given instrument could have a second harmonic that is strong, a rather weak third harmonic, somewhat greater output at the fourth harmonic, and so on. Another will have a different harmonic pattern.

● **Harmonic distortion** is the addition of harmonics—by an audio component—to

a sound signal that lacked them originally or did not have them in such strength as they are heard with during reproduction. The result is a falsifying of the original tonal quality. A test for harmonic distortion is basic to the evaluation of all audio components. It is usually performed by feeding the component a fundamental signal (with no upper harmonics). At the component's output the harmonic-distortion analyzer electrically cancels the fundamental that was fed in, and measures anything left over in the output. The result, called *total harmonic distortion* (THD), is then expressed as a percentage of the entire output signal. (A total harmonic distortion measurement will also include any noise generated within the component, unless this is filtered out.) Special instruments also exist that can measure the strength of each spurious harmonic (second harmonic, third harmonic, etc.) introduced by the component.

● **Heads**, or "tape heads," are the active elements in tape machines that come into physical contact with the tape. They perform three functions, and in many tape decks a separate head is used for each. The *erase* head strips the tape of any magnetic signal that may be on it. The *record* head, driven by electric circuits within the machine, lays down the signal to be recorded. And the *playback* head picks up the signal from the tape for reproduction. High-quality, open-reel tape machines usually have separate erase, record, and playback heads, each designed especially for its particular function. Most cassette decks have a single record/playback head and a separate erase head.

Physically, most audio tape heads resemble small, solid blocks of metal—or metal encased in plastic—over which the tape passes. Internally they consist of a metal core wrapped with coils of wire: the core has a narrow (usually invisible) *gap* in its face where the magnetic activity takes place.

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CIRCLE NO. 44 ON READER SERVICE CARD

TAPE HORIZONS

By CRAIG STARK



GETTING ORGANIZED

As the size of your home-recorded tape collection grows (mine seems always to be overflowing the last shelf, leaving a dozen or so reels lined up between bookends on the carpet), you're bound to encounter three problems. First, how do you *find* a selection you may have taped several years ago? Next, how do you ensure, when you may have half a dozen reels out at once, that they all get back into their proper boxes? Third, with "normal" wear and care (in the Stark household this includes an occasional empty box's being stepped on, which ruins the fragile hinge that holds the top and bottom halves together), how do you keep your collection from looking just plain ratty? Over the years, I've explored several possible answers, and if my solutions don't meet your individual requirements, perhaps they'll inspire a brainstorm that will.

The first necessity is a cataloguing system separate from the information you write on the box. I use a Royal-Me-Bee Keysort setup (an inexpensive home data-processing scheme you might look into if your collection is rather large), but for ordinary purposes 3 x 5 index cards in a file box will certainly serve. Whether the system you adopt is basically alphabetical or straightforwardly sequential in order of recording or acquisition date, I think a *number* code of some kind is essential. When I first started recording, I kept two file indexes: one listing the reel number, composer, selection, performers, side, etc., and the other a kind of inverse index, showing how much time remained on each side of a tape for future recording.

Next, each of my reels gets an identifying, self-adhesive label 1/2 inch by 1 3/4. I've used the Dennison Pres-a-ply (S828 size) for years; they're available at any large stationery or art-supply store. Alternatively, you could simply use a short strip of Scotch "Magic" tape which you can write on with a ball-point or soft-tip pen. With any system of numbered reels, however, you must develop a consistent

approach to make sure that the tape gets back onto its designated reel.

I do this in two steps, first by using a distinctive metal take-up reel (which warns me that any tape left on it should be elsewhere), and second, by always storing my tapes in a *played*, not a *re-wound* condition. This means, of course, that if, like me, most of your collection is two-track stereo, you'll have to rewind the tape *before* playing, but it's really no harder than the usual, potentially harmful practice of rewinding after hearing. If you're playing both sides of a quarter-track stereo recording, it may not matter. If you care about the long-term quality of your tapes, the fact that they are stored wound on the reel under moderate and reasonably uniform tension is important. This guards against the excessive stresses on the tape that tend to arise from fast winding and from changes in temperature and humidity.

Cardboard tape boxes are often a headache, and the plastic counterparts supplied with some premium tapes are not uniform in shape, color, or the way they open up. To prevent torn hinges and to create an aesthetically pleasing appearance as well, I reinforce the spine of each box with a length of 1 1/2-inch-wide Mystic Tape. I use a uniform shade, but you may find it convenient to color-code different kinds of recorded material. Either way, I prefer the cloth to the plastic-backed type, both because it won't stretch and because it will take *white* marking ink—an excellent way of identifying your tape boxes. For a real "finishing touch," however, use a Dymo Labelmaker, which prints raised white letters onto a transparent tape you simply press atop the cloth-reinforced spine of your tape boxes. I'm sure that once you get into overhauling your tape "housings," you'll probably discover lots of hidden—or at least forgotten—treasures among your miscellaneous reels. There's a bonus in the enterprise, for you can do your labeling and listening simultaneously.

The single-play turntables only a great changer company could have made.



Garrard Zero 100SB, \$209.95

Garrard's new single-play turntables are so advanced in their solution of basic engineering problems that only a leading manufacturer of automatic changers (yes, *changers*) could have produced them.

This may sound paradoxical to the partisans of single play, but it's a perfectly realistic view of the situation. The truth is that it's easier to make a single-play turntable that works (never mind outstanding performance for the moment) than a record changer that works.

The very qualities that make the single-play turntable the preferred choice of certain users — straightforwardness of design, lots of room for relatively few parts, fewer critical functions, etc. — also permit an unsophisticated maker to come up more easily with an acceptable model. Take a heavy platter and a strong motor, connect them with a belt... you get the picture.

As a result, there are quite a few nice, big, shiny and expensive single-play turntables of respectable performance in the stores today.

A thoroughbred single-play automatic is another matter.

We're talking about a turntable that gives you not only state-of-the-art performance in terms of rumble, wow, flutter, tracking and so on, but also the utmost in convenience, childproof and guest-proof automation, pleasant handling, efficient use of space, balanced good looks and, above all, value per dollar.

Here we're back on the home grounds of the changer maker. He alone knows how to coordinate a lot of different

turntable functions and niggling little design problems without wasted motions, space and expenditures. The kind of thing Garrard is the acknowledged master of.

No other proof of this argument is needed than a close look at the new Garrard Zero 100SB and 86SB.

Yes, they have heavy, die-cast, dynamically balanced platters. Yes, they have belt drive. Yes, they have -64dB rumble (DIN B Standard). And the Zero 100SB has Garrard's unique Zero Tracking Error Tonearm, the first and only arm to eliminate even the slightest amount of tracking error in an automatic turntable.

But that's not the whole story.

What gives these turntables the final edge over other single-play designs is the way they're automated.

Both are fully automatic in the strictest sense of the term. Your hand need never touch the tonearm. The arm indexes at the beginning of the record, returns to the arm rest at the end of the record and shuts off the motor, all by itself. The stylus can't flop around in the lead-out groove.

There are also other subtle little features like the ingeniously hinged dust cover (it can be lifted and removed even on a narrow shelf), the integrated low-profile teak base, the exclusive automatic record counter (in the Zero 100SB only) and the finger-tab control panel. Plus one very unsubtle feature.

The price.

Garrard
Division of Plessey Consumer Products



Garrard 86SB
\$159.95



For your free copy of The Garrard Guide, a 16-page full-color reference booklet, write to Garrard, Dept. G-2, 100 Commercial Street, Plainview, N.Y. 11803.

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TECHNICAL TALK

By JULIAN D. HIRSCH

● **MORE ON DOLBY FM:** The name "Dolby" is firmly established in the audio lexicon, and anyone with the slightest interest in tape recording knows that it refers to the impressively effective noise-reduction technique developed by Dr. Ray Dolby and now incorporated in most high-end cassette recorders and some eight-track machines. (I am referring here only to the Dolby "B" system, which is used in consumer products for reduction of high-frequency hiss. The professional Dolby "A" system, though similar in concept, reduces noise over the full frequency spectrum and is used extensively in the recording industry.) Consumer open-reel tape recorders are able to do quite well without help from Dolby circuits, although a few high-price machines do have the Dolby system built in. The noise levels of the better open-reel recorders are so good that any improvement resulting from use of the Dolby system rarely, in my view, justifies its considerable added cost.

As of this writing, about thirty FM stations are broadcasting—or intend to broadcast—with Dolby encoding. The noise level of any FM tuner in its stereo mode is appreciably greater than in mono reception, and the noise reduction afforded by the Dolby system is equivalent to that achieved by a substantial increase in transmitter power, or to the improvement one might expect from using a high-gain receiving antenna instead of an indoor folded dipole.

Since the Dolby system involves signal processing at the point of reception (or playback) as well as in the transmission (or recording) process, it is necessary to use a decoder at the outputs of the FM tuner. A few tuners and receivers, generally rather expensive, have built-in Dolby circuits. Owners of other receiving equipment can add external Dolby units of the type originally intended as tape-recording adjuncts to their FM receiving components, or even use the FM-decoding function available on

some late-model Dolby tape machines.

Anyone who has listened to a Dolbyized tape without benefit of Dolby playback processing knows that it sounds brighter and sometimes has more hiss than an unprocessed tape. The same is true of FM reception of Dolbyized broadcasts. But, in spite of this, many people find the sound quality satisfactory even without Dolby decoding. Most FM is heard on car, table, or pocket radios, and their normally limited high-frequency response can be enhanced by the added brightness. With a good receiving system, on the other hand, one need only turn down the treble tone control a bit to restore an acceptable, if not ideal, tonal

will add enough brightness to compensate for the more drastic high-frequency roll-off caused by the 75- μ sec de-emphasis. Finally, those people using Dolby decoders together with a 25- μ sec receiving de-emphasis will hear the proper frequency response with the full noise reduction of the Dolby system—and with the bonus of less compression of high-frequency material and possibly less distortion in the overall transmission-reception process. Last June, the FCC authorized a 25- μ sec pre-emphasis during broadcast when a Dolby encoder is used. (Actually, the Dolby encoder has a built-in 50- μ sec de-emphasis that provides the 25- μ sec characteristic without actually changing the transmitter's 75- μ sec pre-emphasis. (For further discussion of all this, see my December 1974 column on "time constants.") However, the pre-emphasis change poses some problems for people who already have a Dolby unit and a tuner or receiver with the standard 75- μ sec de-emphasis. When a Dolby decoder is fed a 25- μ sec pre-emphasized signal by a tuner with 75- μ sec de-emphasis, the higher frequencies suffer badly.

A simple resistance-capacitance network (see accompanying circuit diagram) can be inserted in the signal path between the tuner and a Dolby unit or cassette recorder to restore the missing highs (by converting the tuner's de-emphasis time constant from 75 to 25 μ sec) without disturbing the tuner's internal circuits. Note that only one channel is shown, and that there is an insertion loss of about 10 dB. This conversion is incorporated in some of the newer cassette recorders and Dolbyized receivers, so that the proper FM audio-frequency response is obtained while listening to, or recording, Dolbyized transmissions. The normal operation of the system with 75- μ sec transmissions is not affected, since the network is bypassed when the Dolby system is not used, or when a recording is made from a source other

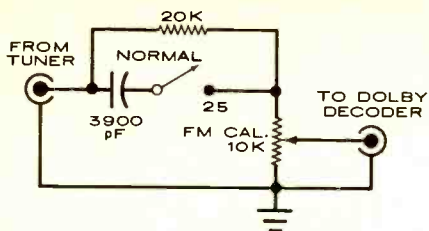
TESTED THIS MONTH



Sherwood S-7110 Receiver
Ortofon VMS 20E Phono Cartridge
Sony TC-756 Stereo Tape Deck
Technics SL-1300 Turntable

balance and actually realize some improvement in signal-to-noise ratio.

Dolby Laboratories has proposed that FM stations using the Dolby system also change to a more moderate 25-microsecond (μ sec) pre-emphasis characteristic instead of the FCC's standardized 75 μ sec. From the broadcaster's standpoint, this has the advantage that the average audio level of the transmitted program can be increased (or the limiting of high-frequency peaks decreased) without risk of overmodulation. And listeners without Dolby decoders who have standard 75- μ sec de-emphasis in their receivers will hear an approximately correct frequency balance, since the Dolby encoding at the broadcast station



Used with an existing tuner, the above circuit can switch Dolby de-emphasis in or out. The circuit for one channel only is shown.

than FM. The FM CAL adjustment in the diagram must be set while the station is transmitting a 400-Hz Dolby-level tone (corresponding to 50 per cent modulation) for a correct reading on the Dolby unit's meters. This calibration is required only once and will be correct for any Dolby broadcast, unless the tuner or its output-level settings are changed.

During the period when a local New York "good music" station (WQXR) was transmitting with the old 75- μ sec pre-emphasis plus Dolby encoding, we frequently found its sound to be undesirably bright when listened to without decoding. This was a function of the particular program material; if the high frequencies were *not* predominant in the low-level portions of the music, the tonal

balance was not seriously affected. When we listened to the WQXR transmissions in decoded form, the results were excellent, as might be expected. The only noise we heard was that inherent in the original record or tape.

We looked forward with interest, therefore, to the changeover to the 25- μ sec characteristic. However, to our surprise, there was virtually no difference between the sound we heard when using 25- μ sec de-emphasis and Dolby decoding and that obtained without Dolby decoding and with the standard 75- μ sec de-emphasis. If there was any difference, it was in favor of the latter, which seemed to give a *quieter* background! This is hardly what we expected, of course, and it would be interesting to hear of other listeners' experiences with Dolby reception under both the old and new standards, since it is possible that our local conditions are not truly representative of the overall picture.

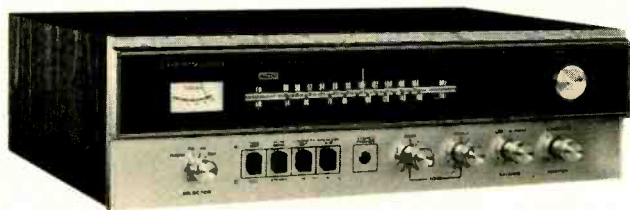
Before leaving the subject of Dolby noise reduction, I would like to comment on our plan to use standard-level Dolby tapes as one of the reference criteria for evaluating tape recorders in the future. For proper operation, the Dolby circuits in a tape recorder must be calibrated to the playback-head output from a

standard-level tape. For cassette and open-reel recorders, this tape is recorded with a 400-Hz tone at a magnetic flux level of 200 nanowebers per meter (nW/m). When we note the recorder's meter readings or output level from such a tape, the information can be used to compare the playback output levels (and therefore the signal-to-noise ratios) of different recorders on an absolute basis, rather than in respect to their meter readings or their record-playback levels corresponding to 3 per cent distortion. (With some machines, the 3 per cent distortion point corresponds to a meter reading far off scale, and therefore not readily identifiable by the user.) Our own view is that, for a consumer product, the recorder's own meters, generally the only indicator of recording levels available to the user, should be used to establish an overall signal-to-noise figure. But this is not in accord with general industry practice. The additional data supplied in our test reports, referring the signal-to-noise measurement to the 3 per cent distortion level, the recorder's own meter readings, and (indirectly) to the playback level from a 200-nW/m tape, will enable the technically minded recordist to evaluate this parameter as he wishes.

EQUIPMENT TEST REPORTS

By Hirsch-Houck Laboratories

Sherwood S-7110 AM/Stereo FM Receiver



● SHERWOOD's next-to-lowest-price stereo receiver, the Model S-7110, provides a level of performance, especially in its FM section, that would have been unattainable at *any* price only a few years ago. The unit has direct-coupled audio amplifier outputs that, rated in accordance with current FTC requirements,* can deliver 17 watts per channel into 8-ohm loads at less than 0.9 per cent harmonic distortion between 40 and 20,000 Hz.

Retaining the familiar Sherwood styling, the S-7110 has a "blackout" dial and tuning meter (a signal-strength indicator for both FM and AM) occupying the

upper portion of the panel, together with the large tuning knob. When the receiver is on, the dial and meter are lit in blue, and a red STEREO light appears when a stereo FM broadcast is received. The meter illumination is extinguished when the PHONO or AUX inputs are selected. At the lower left of the satin-gold panel is the input selector, with positions for PHONO, FM, AM, and AUX. Four pushbuttons control tape-monitor switching, stereo mode, loudness compensation, and speaker-switching functions. Two pairs of speakers can be connected to the receiver; one is always energized, and the switch connects the second pair in parallel with the main speakers. There is also a stereo headphone jack on the front

panel. The bass and treble tone controls affect both channels, and the remaining knobs operate the balance and volume controls (the latter includes the power switch).

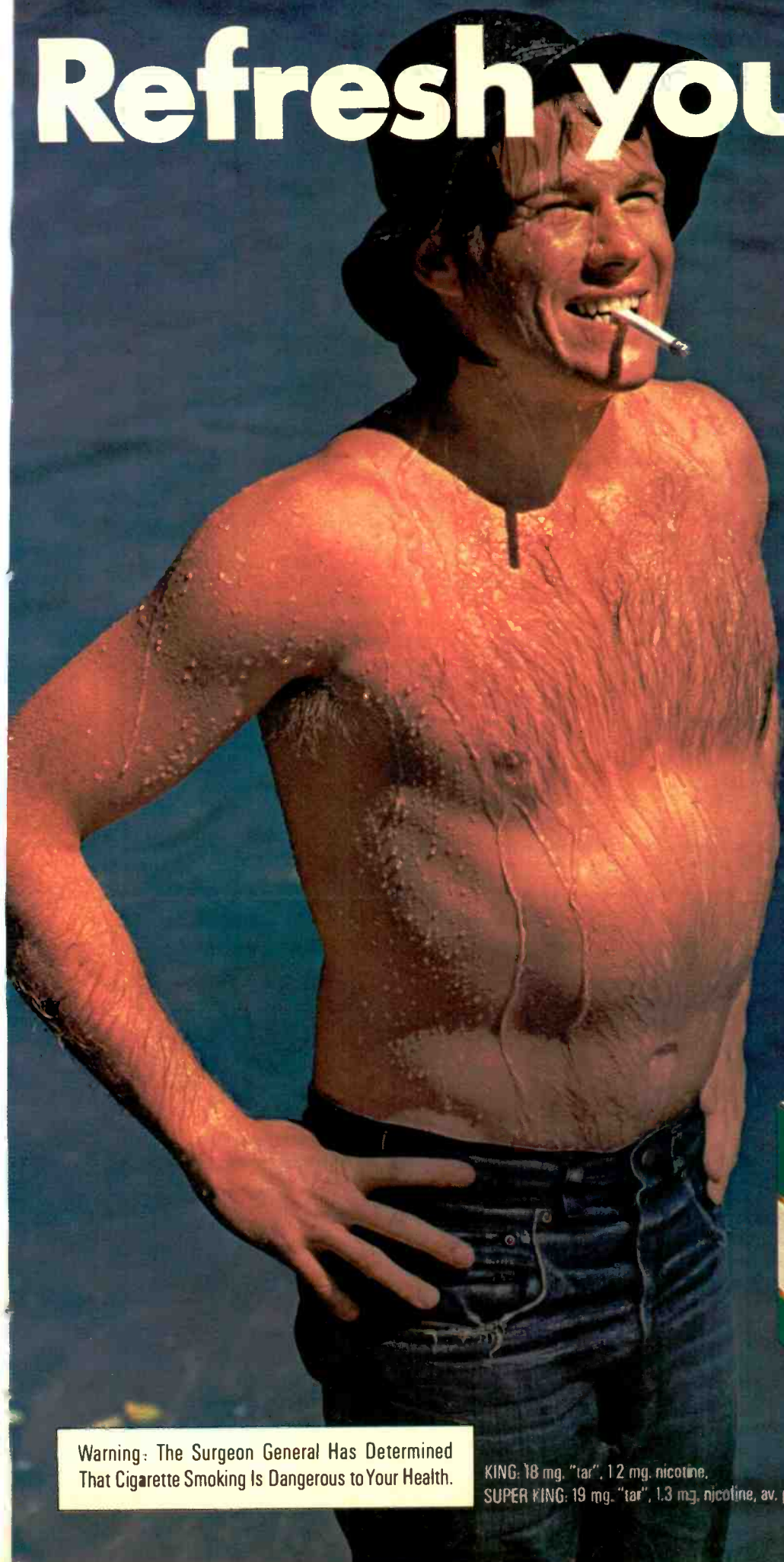
In the rear of the receiver are thumb-screw terminals for the speakers and antennas (300- and 75-ohm FM antennas and an external AM wire antenna). There is also a hinged AM ferrite-rod antenna. The two speaker fuses are accessible, protected by a clear plastic cover, and there is a power-line fuse. A single switched a.c. outlet is provided. The Sherwood S-7110 is supplied in a wooden walnut-finish cabinet, measures 17½ inches wide, 5⅝ inches high, and 13½ inches deep, and weighs 15½ pounds. Price: \$229.95.

● *Laboratory Measurements.* We were particularly impressed by the FM tuner performance of the S-7110, which in many ways rivaled that of some component tuners selling for more than this entire receiver. The IHF sensitivity was

(Continued on page 34)

*See November 1974 issue of STEREO REVIEW, page 81.

Refresh yourself.



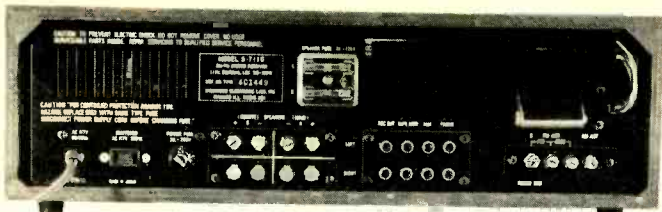
Have a Salem.
Smooth, rich tobaccos
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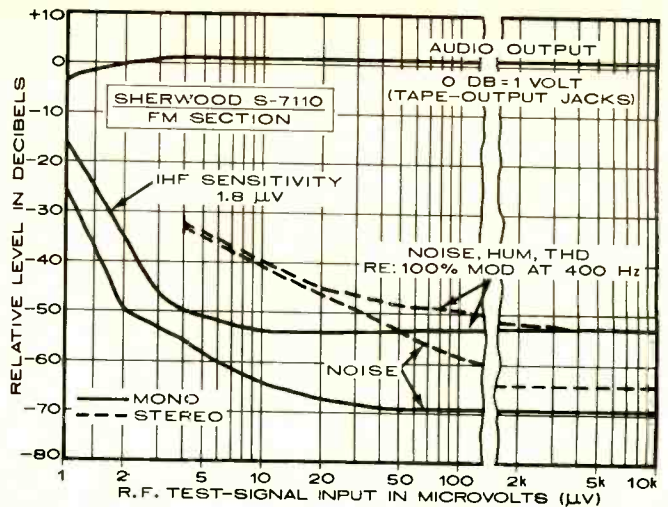
Warning: The Surgeon General Has Determined
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KING: 18 mg. "tar", 1.2 mg. nicotine,
SUPER KING: 19 mg. "tar", 1.3 mg. nicotine, av. per cigarette, FTC Report OCT. '74.



Along with the inputs and outputs, the rear panel of the Sherwood S-7110 provides one a.c. convenience outlet, screw terminals for main and remote speakers, and antenna inputs for AM and FM.

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.



1.8 microvolts (μ V) in mono and 4 μ V in stereo (the latter being the automatic stereo/mono switching threshold). The 50-dB quieting sensitivity was an exceptionally good 2.2 μ V in mono and 33 μ V in stereo. The ultimate signal-to-noise ratio (S/N) was 69 dB in mono and 64 dB in stereo. The FM distortion, both in mono and in stereo, was commendably low, measuring 0.22 and 0.28 per cent, respectively.

The stereo FM frequency response was ± 1 dB from 30 to 15,000 Hz, with the output rising gradually above 1,000 Hz and no sign of the usual sharp high-frequency cut-off which sometimes reduces the 15,000-Hz response of a tuner. Although the 19-kHz leakage from the pilot carrier was a good 60 dB below the 100 per cent modulation level, the 38-kHz switching frequency had to be filtered out before stereo distortion measurements could be made. The stereo separation, rated at 40 dB at 1,000 Hz, not only surpassed that figure by a comfortable margin, but exceeded 45 dB from 180 to 4,000 Hz, reaching 37 dB at 30 Hz and 31.5 dB at 15,000 Hz.

The capture ratio was 3.6 dB at 10 μ V and an excellent 0.7 dB at 1,000 μ V. AM rejection was a very good 66 dB at 1,000 μ V and 50 dB (the rated value) at

100 μ V. Alternate-channel selectivity, rated at 60 dB, averaged 61 dB. Image rejection was 51 dB. The frequency response for AM reception was quite limited, being down 6 dB at 2,500 Hz.

The audio amplifiers clipped at 21 watts per channel with both channels driven into 8 ohms at 1,000 Hz. The power at clipping with 4-ohm loads was 25 watts, and into 16 ohms it was 15.2 watts. At 1,000 Hz, total harmonic distortion (THD) dropped smoothly from 0.1 per cent at 0.1 watt to 0.017 per cent at 10 watts, rising again to 0.1 per cent at 21 watts, just before clipping occurred. The intermodulation (IM) distortion decreased from 0.07 per cent at 0.1 watt to 0.031 per cent at 10 watts, and reached 0.1 per cent at 20 watts. At very low outputs (considerably under 100 milliwatts) the IM rose to several tenths of one per cent.

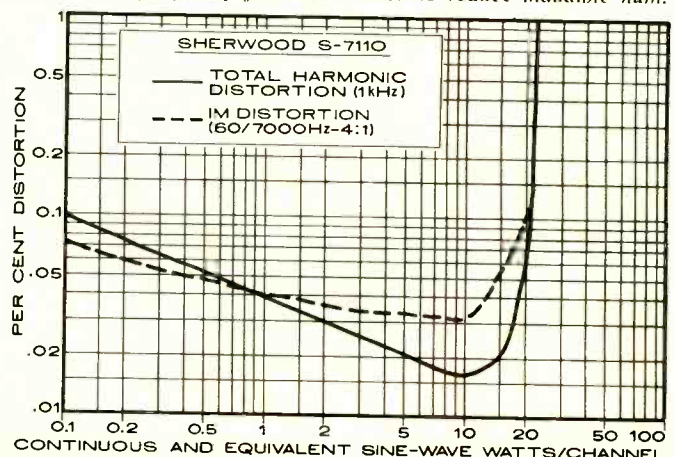
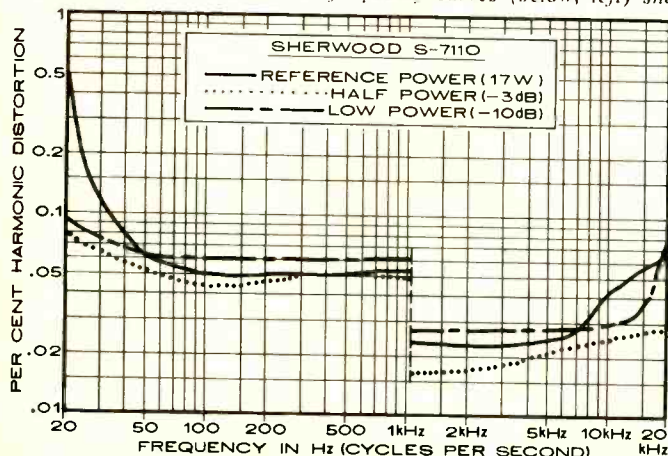
At the rated 17-watt output, the THD was less than 0.1 per cent from about 33 to 20,000 Hz, and was typically under 0.04 per cent. The residual (but inaudible) hum in the output was greater than the distortion, increasing the typical readings to 0.05 or 0.06 per cent below 1,000 Hz (at higher frequencies a filter in the distortion analyzer was able to remove the hum components and provide a

more accurate reading of the distortion). At most frequencies, the distortion at half and one-tenth power was roughly the same as at full power, and remained below 0.1 per cent even at 20 Hz.

The amplifiers required 0.12 volt through the AUX inputs, or 1.35 millivolts (mV) through the PHONO inputs, for an output of 10 watts. The hum and noise was about 68 dB below a 10-watt output through either input. Phono overload occurred at a safe 88 mV. The RIAA equalization, measured at the tape-out jacks, was within ± 0.5 dB from 50 to 20,000 Hz, dropping to -3 dB at 30 Hz. Equalization was affected somewhat by cartridge inductance, with a drop in the 15,000-Hz response of 2 to 4 dB, depending on the cartridge used. The bass tone control had a sliding turn-over frequency, and the treble response was hinged at about 2,000 Hz. The loudness compensation boosted only the low frequencies. The amplifier has no high- or low-frequency filters.

● **Comment.** We did not find the S-7110's lack of filters to be a drawback, especially since most audio filters are not particularly effective for their intended purposes. Surprisingly, the lack of FM
(Continued on page 36)

The break in the distortion-vs.-frequency curves (below, left) shows where a low-frequency filter was added to reduce inaudible hum.



Introducing the first 4-channel receiver with automatic CD-4 separation. The SA-8500X.

Until now you had to depend upon your hands, your eyes and your ears to bring you 4-channel separation of CD-4 records. When they missed, so did you.

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Technics

by Panasonic



CIRCLE NO. 47 ON READER SERVICE CARD

interstation-noise muting did not decrease our enjoyment of the receiver—again perhaps because most low-cost “garden-variety” muting circuits add as much transient noise as they remove hiss. In any event, the interstation noise was at a moderate level. Sherwood has arranged the pushbutton controls so that all are in their “out” positions in the “normal” mode of operation. This means that the loudness compensation is in use, a condition we do not consider

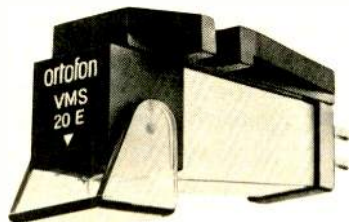
“normal.” More serious, we think, is the choice of speaker-switching options. One can use one or both of the speaker outputs, but they cannot be switched off for headphone listening.

Aside from these minor criticisms, we found the Sherwood S-7110 to be a most satisfying receiver to use. It not only meets its generally conservative specifications, but within the limitations of its maximum power output, this is as fine a receiver as one could wish for. By

spending two or three times as much for a stereo receiver, one can get more power and more control features, but when the S-7110 is used with moderately efficient speakers we doubt that any receiver on the market can deliver better listening quality. This is quite an achievement for a receiver that is not only low-priced by today's standards, but would have been considered low-priced even four or five years ago.

Circle 105 on reader service card

Ortofon VMS 20E Phono Cartridge



● A LISTING of the finest phono cartridges available today would certainly include the Ortofon M 15E Super, which we reported on in *STEREO REVIEW* for January 1973. In respect to flatness of frequency response, low distortion, and overall tracking ability, the M 15E Super ranks with the best. However, its very high compliance and delicate stylus structure limit its application to the finest tone arms (and its price, like that of so many other things, has increased appreciably since its introduction). The audiophile who has looked forward to owning an M 15E Super but is faced with equipment or financial incompatibility

need not despair. Ortofon has recently announced a new cartridge, the VMS 20E, which is for all practical purposes the equal of the M 15E Super but is considerably less expensive and sufficiently rugged to be used with almost any good automatic turntable.

Like its more expensive counterpart, the Ortofon VMS 20E uses the “variable magnetic shunt” principle, which is claimed to reduce distortion in the magnetic circuit of the cartridge below the levels attainable by other means of transduction. The user-replaceable stylus assembly has a 0.3 x 0.7-mil diamond mounted on a low-mass cantilever. In accordance with current practice, the vertical-tracking angle has been changed from the former 15 degrees to 20 degrees (not a significant change from the listener's standpoint).

Externally, the VMS 20E appears identical to the M 15E Super, with a relatively low cartridge weight of 5 grams and a swing-away stylus guard attached to the stylus assembly. A comparison of

the manufacturer's specifications shows that the two cartridges are indeed almost identical, with only two apparent differences: the horizontal compliance of the VMS 20E is rated at 40×10^{-6} centimeters per dyne (cm/dyne) as compared with 50×10^{-6} cm/dyne for the M 15E Super, and the tracking rating at 300 Hz is 70 micrometers instead of 80 (see below). The nominal tracking force is 1 gram, with a recommended range of 0.75 to 1.5 grams, and the recommended load is 47,000 ohms paralleled by a capacitance of 400 picofarads. Price: \$65.

● *Laboratory Measurements.* We tested the Ortofon VMS 20E in the tone arm of a Pioneer PL-71 record player using a 47,000-ohm load shunted by 340 picofarads (pF). The low-frequency tracking ability, with a Cook Series 60 record, was very good, and the highest recorded levels (at 32 Hz) were played cleanly at 0.75 gram. The very high velocity (30 cm/sec) 1,000-Hz tones of a Fairchild 101 test record were tracked with a small amount of symmetrical clipping at only 0.5 gram. Higher tracking forces did not improve the output waveform.

The 300-Hz tracking test referred to in Ortofon's ratings involves the use of a German test record that has a series of test tones recorded at increasing amplitudes, from 20 to 100 micrometers (μm). The VMS 20E played the 80- μm band easily at 1 gram, and, with a careful adjustment of the tone-arm anti-skating compensation, it was able to track the 100- μm band without significant distortion. The M 15E Super can do this a little more easily, and only a few cartridges we have tested have been able to track these high levels at all. Most portions of the Shure “Audio Obstacle Course—Era III” record could be played at their highest levels with a 1-gram force. We did hear a slight mistracking of the highest levels of the musical bells and sibilance test sections of this record at 1 gram. Increasing the force to 1.5 grams

(Continued on page 40)



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Total protection
for the price of
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From front to rear: Dual 1229Q, \$259.95; Dual 1228, \$189.95; Dual 1226, \$159.95; Dual 1225, \$129.95.

Why many choose the highest-priced Dual even though our lowest-priced model has all the precision your records need.

Even the lowest-priced Dual, model 1225, is a perfect example of Dual's basic design concept: to build every Dual turntable with more precision than you are ever likely to need.

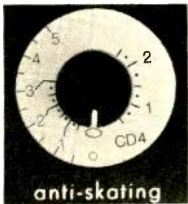
The 1225's vernier-adjust, counter-balanced tonearm can track flawlessly with the most sensitive cartridges available—at as low as one gram. Tracking pressure is applied exactly as



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

with the highest-priced Dual—around the vertical pivot, maintaining perfect balance in all planes. And the anti-skating system has separate calibrations for conical, elliptical and CD-4 styli.

Operating features include a single master switch for all start/stop operations, pitch-control, viscous-damped cueing and a hi-torque motor that maintains speed within 0.1% even when line voltage varies as much as 20%.



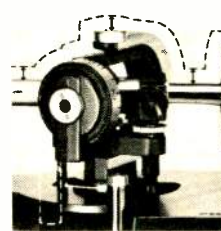
Separate anti-skating calibrations for conical, elliptical and CD-4 styli are provided on every Dual turntable.

Less obvious, but important nevertheless, the 1225 also provides the same high quality materials, carefully finished parts and meticulous quality control that have long earned Dual its reputation for reliability.

(Typically, many audio experts who bought the lowest-priced Duals early in their careers tell us they are still in service years later in a second system.)

Considering all this, why do so many serious music lovers spend \$259.95 for the 1229Q? Although the 1225 has all the

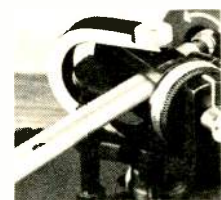
precision your records need, the 1229Q has refinements you may well want. For example, the 1229Q is a full-sized turntable with a 12" dynamically-balanced platter that weighs a full seven pounds. It is driven by the powerful Continuous-Pole/synchronous motor. The gimbal-mounted 8-3/4" tonearm can track at as low as 0.25 gram, and has provision for adjusting the vertical tracking angle of the stylus for single or multiple play.



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

The 1229Q also has an illuminated strobe, and cueing is damped in both directions to prevent bounce.

Dual's other multi-play turntables, the 1226 at \$159.95 and 1228 at \$189.95, offer one or more of these refinements.



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

Considering all this, it's no wonder that readers of the leading audio magazines own more Duals in every price range than any other quality turntable. Evidently, they choose Dual first to preserve their records, then select a specific model depending on the refinements they prefer.

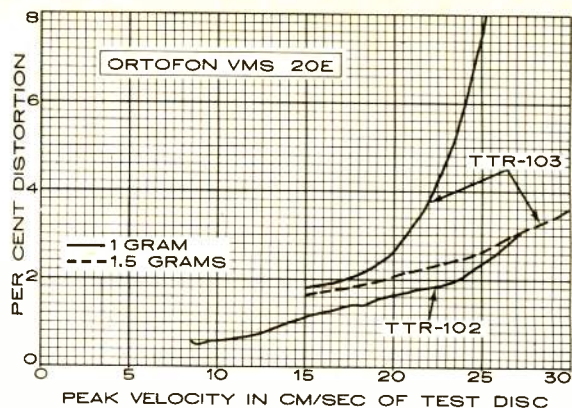
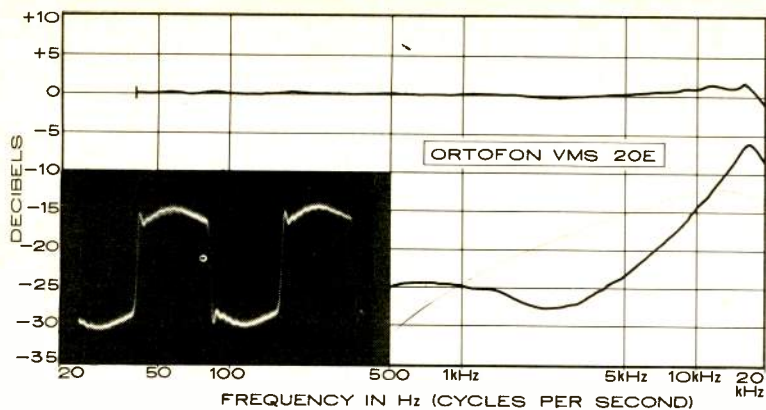
To sum up, Dual has made certain that your continuing investment in records will be protected even if you choose the lowest-priced model. How far you go beyond that is up to you. That decision can best be made when you visit a franchised United Audio dealer.



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At left, the upper curve represents the averaged frequency response of the cartridge's right and left channels. The distance (calibrated in decibels) between the two curves represents the separation between channels. The oscilloscope photograph of the cartridge's response to a 1,000-Hz square wave is an indication of the cartridge's high- and low-frequency response and resonances. At right, the distortion of the cartridge for various recorded velocities of the TTR-102 and TTR-103 test records is shown. Note that the high velocities on these discs constitute extreme tests of cartridge performance, and the numbers cannot be compared directly with distortion of other components.

cured the problem with the bells, but left a trace of "sandpaper" quality on the maximum-level sibilance test.

The intermodulation distortion, measured with the Shure TTR-102 record (a 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ -rpm counterpart of the 78-rpm RCA 12-5-39 disc) was very low—under 1 per cent up to a velocity of about 15 centimeters per second (cm/sec) and only 3 per cent at the maximum velocity of 27.1 cm/sec using a 1-gram force. Tracking at higher frequencies was checked with the Shure TTR-103 record, which has specially shaped tone bursts at 10.8 kHz for this purpose. With this record, the distortion remained low up to about 20 cm/sec (under 2.5 per cent, although the actual numbers cannot be compared readily to other types of measured distortion), and increased rapidly at higher

velocities. However, when we used the maximum rated force of 1.5 grams, the distortion increased smoothly and gradually to only 3.6 per cent at 30 cm/sec.

The frequency response with the CBS STR 100 record was almost identical to that of the M 15E Super we tested some time ago—essentially within ± 1.5 dB up to 20,000 Hz on one channel and ± 1 dB on the other channel. The channel separation was typically 25 to 30 dB at mid frequencies, decreasing above 4,000 Hz to 15 dB in the 10,000-Hz region and 5 to 10 dB at 20,000 Hz. The 1,000-Hz square waves of the CBS STR 111 record showed only a single small overshoot with the VMS 20E. The output was 3.2 millivolts at 3.54 cm/sec. In the Pioneer PL-71 arm, the low-frequency resonance was at about 6 Hz.

● **Comment.** As might be expected from their very similar measured performance, the Ortofon VMS 20E had the same neutral listening quality as the M 15E Super. Our experience with both cartridges proved that they sound exactly alike on virtually all recorded material when tracking at 1 gram. The chief difference to the user is that the M 15E Super will track just about anything on records at 1 gram, while the VMS 20E may require its maximum force of 1.5 grams in the most severe cases of high-velocity, high-frequency program material. However, it is unlikely that most people will ever play a music record (as opposed to a test record) which will overtax the VMS 20E (even at 1 gram), which makes this cartridge a fine value.

Circle 106 on reader service card

Sony TC-756 Stereo Tape Deck



● THE Sony TC-756 is a deluxe 10 $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch-reel stereo tape machine with many of the performance qualities and features

of professional recorders, yet it is suitable for the serious amateur recordist. It is a two-speed machine (7 $\frac{1}{2}$ and 15 ips)

with an a.c. servo-controlled capstan motor and an eight-pole induction motor for each of the two reels. The transport controls are mechanically latching push-buttons that operate the mechanism through solenoids. A logic control system permits the buttons to be operated at any time and in any sequence without risk of tape damage. The separate RECORD buttons for the two channels can be retained in their "in" positions by a REC TIMER LOCK so that the machine can be set up in advance for recording and turned on by an external timer. Small levers select the tape speed and set the reel torque for 10 $\frac{1}{2}$ - or 7-inch reels. The PAUSE lever also lights an indicator when engaged.

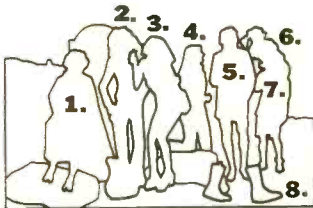
The tape-loading path is a fairly straight line, passing over tension arms near each reel. Although the head cover is not readily removable, its design

(Continued on page 42)

Can you spot the Camel Filters smoker?



© 1974 R. J. Reynolds Tobacco Co.



Local Rock Concert is about to begin . . . and almost everyone has a gimmick. Find the one who doesn't.

1. No. He's Phil O.

Dendron. Gimmick: Talks with plants. Plant he's holding just told him it's poison ivy.

Bought a pack of orange-flavored cigarettes—because store was out of his favorite brand, Chocolate Fudge.

2. He's Sy Cole Delic. Wears outfit so wild, he gets fan mail from neon signs. Gimmick: Plays along with band. He does to music what termites do to an old barn.

3. Nope. She's Bertha D. Blues, Groupie. Gimmick: Records everything. Has 12 cassettes of chickens tap dancing. Once lit a charcoal-filtered cigarette . . . and it made four carbons of her lips.

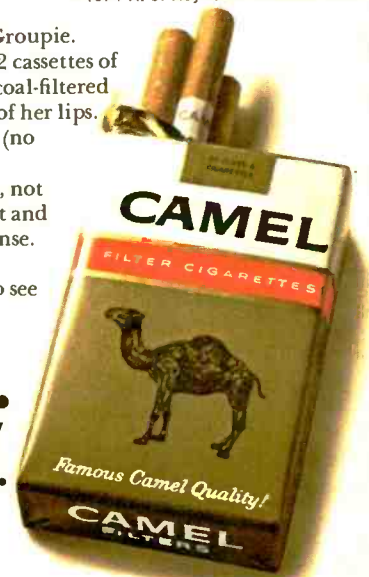
4. Wrong. She's Rhoda Dendron (no relation to #1 above).

5. Right! He's there for the show, not to show off. Wants his cigarette honest and natural, too. Camel Filters. No nonsense. All flavor.

6. & 7. They're two guys trying to see better—or an unfinished totem pole.

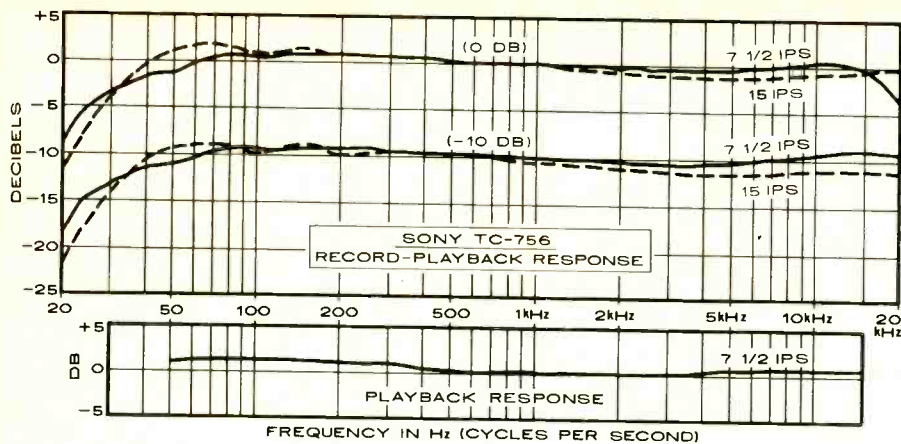
8. The Invisible Man, streaking.

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 OCT. '74.



makes tape threading a simple matter and permits sufficient access to the heads for cleaning or demagnetization as well. The heads are Sony's "Ferrite and Ferrite" design (available in either two- or four-track), and a dual-capstan, closed-loop drive reduces the flutter to very low levels. A four-digit index counter is located between the tape reels. The lower portion of the recorder's panel contains the electronic controls as well as the RECORD buttons and the TIMER-LOCK lever. Two separate switches adjust the recording bias to a low or high level and the recording equalization for NORMAL or SPECIAL tapes. The instruction manual suggests the settings for most popular tapes. Two MONITOR switches connect each of the output channels to either the source or the tape-playback signal, and a pushbutton controls the power to the recorder.

Two large, illuminated VU meters monitor either recording or playback levels according to the setting of the monitor switches. Playback levels are monitored at the line outputs, where they are affected by the settings of the playback level controls. Recording status is indicated by red lights in each of the two record-interlock buttons. Concentric knobs control the recording levels for the line inputs; another pair is used for the microphone inputs, and the two sources can be mixed. A front-panel microphone-input attenuator switch can be used to reduce microphone levels by 15 or 30 dB ahead of any preamplifier stages, if needed, to prevent overload from very-high-level mike signals. Another pair of concentric knobs sets the playback levels; one of the knobs is detented at its center to provide a reference setting for overall record-playback gain. There are two standard 1/4-inch microphone jacks on the lower left edge of the panel for unbalanced low-impedance dynamic microphones, and a jack at lower right for 8-ohm stereo headphones. In the rear of the recorder are the line inputs and outputs (through standard phono jacks) and a single unswitched a.c. outlet. The Sony TC-756 is housed in a walnut-finish wooden case; it

measures approximately 17 inches wide, 18 inches high, and 9 inches deep and weighs about 53 pounds. It can be operated either horizontally or vertically. Price: \$899.95.

● **Laboratory Measurements.** We tested a half-track version of the recorder, the Model TC-756-2, with a variety of tapes, using the recommended bias and equalization settings. In general, they proved to be optimum. A line input of 45 millivolts (mV) or a microphone input of 0.13 mV was needed for a 0-dB recording level. The microphone input at the "zero" attenuator setting overloaded with 74 mV input; the 15- and 30-dB attenuator settings increased this to 0.38 and 2.4 volts. The playback output from a 0-dB level, with the playback-level controls centered, was 0.43 volt (as rated), and it could be increased to about 0.8 volt at maximum control settings. Based on the meter readings when playing a standard Dolby-level tape, the 0-dB calibration corresponds to a flux level of about 240 nanowebers per meter on the tape.

At a 0-dB recording level, the playback distortion was exceptionally low, measuring 0.45 per cent at both tape speeds. To reach a reference 3 per cent distortion level it was necessary to record at +9 dB. The unweighted signal-to-noise ratio (S/N), referred to that level, was 64.5 dB at 7 1/2 ips and 60.5 dB at 15

ips. We suspect that much of the noise, especially at 15 ips, is ultrasonic and shows up in the measurement only because of the phenomenally extended high-frequency response of the recorder at that speed (see below). A measurement with IEC "A" weighting, which rolls off low and high frequencies, tended to confirm this theory. With weighting, the S/N at the two speeds improved to 71 and 70.5 dB, respectively. At maximum microphone-input gain, the unweighted noise increased by 16 dB; with IEC weighting the increase was 10 dB (at lower, more typical, gain settings the noise was much less, of course).

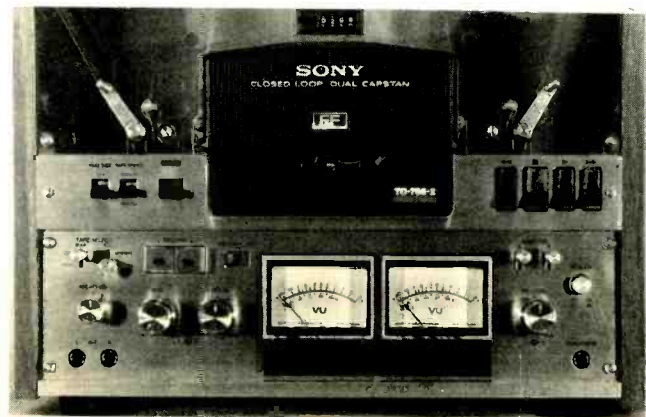
The 7 1/2-ips NAB playback frequency response over the 50- to 15,000-Hz range of the Ampex test tape was within ± 0.7 dB. The overall record-playback frequency response was better than Sony's specifications; in fact, it was by far the widest we have ever measured on a tape recorder. At 7 1/2 ips, the response at a -10-dB level was ± 1.5 dB from 36 to 27,000 Hz, and at 0 dB it was ± 1.5 dB from 36 to 18,500 Hz. At the 15-ips speed the response was identical at the -10-dB and 0-dB levels: within ± 1.5 dB from 36 to beyond 40,000 Hz, the upper limit of our test capability. Although the low-frequency response sloped off smoothly below 40 to 50 Hz at both tape speeds, the highs were remarkably flat and extended.

Combined wow and flutter measured 0.055 per cent at 7 1/2 ips (the wow alone was unmeasurable at less than 0.01 per cent). At the 15-ips tape speed, the only way we could measure flutter was through the combined record-playback process, and the resulting 0.025 per cent figure also set a new mark in our experience with tape recorders. When we measured the record-playback flutter at 7 1/2 ips in the same manner, the reading was 0.04 per cent, which was slightly better than the playback-only results using an Ampex flutter test tape.

The tape speeds were exact, and since the capstan drive is servo-controlled, a simple internal adjustment will correct any errors that may develop over time.

(Continued on page 46)

The control section of the TC-756 is relatively simple and uncluttered, but provides mixing for microphone and line inputs, as well as tape bias and equalization switching.



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Mozart's Six Greatest Symphonies

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FEBRUARY 1975



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Offer limited to the connecting 48 states. Offer expires 9/1/75. Limit: one membership per household. Only new members eligible. NOTE: All applications are subject to review, and we reserve the right to reject any application.

29821/Q90

In fast forward and rewind, a 1,800-foot reel of tape was handled in just under 2 minutes. The VU meter response was slower than professional VU standards, a 0.3-second tone burst producing 70 per cent of the continuous-signal reading instead of the standard 99 to 101 per cent. Headphone volume was adequate with 8-ohm phones, but unusably low with the high-impedance phones (200 to 600 ohms) made by several manufacturers.

● **Comment.** In many important respects, the Sony TC-756 set new records for performance of home tape decks we have tested. In fact, for any recording other than from a "live" source, using top-grade microphones and auxiliary equipment, the dynamic range, distortion, flutter, and frequency-response per-

formance of this machine are so far beyond the limitations of conventional program material that its virtues can hardly be appreciated.

The two-track format, 15-ips tape speed, and 10½-inch reel size imply intended professional applications, but the use of consumer-oriented phono-type connectors and unbalanced microphone inputs clearly shows that this machine is intended for the serious amateur. The quarter-track version would doubtless be more convenient for many users, and should offer essentially the same level of performance.

The performance of this machine at high frequencies is a convincing demonstration of the inherent advantage of high-speed, open-reel recording over either cassette or lower-speed open-reel

systems. The relative absence of high-frequency tape saturation, even at a 0-dB recording level, is obvious from the measurements. When recording and playing interstation FM tuner hiss at a 0-dB level, no differences could be heard between the input signal and the output of the recorder—a fairly severe test of the effect of tape saturation on actual listening quality.

Although no claims are made for the TC-756-2 in this regard, it is the first machine we have seen whose frequency response (*not* necessarily its phase characteristics, however) should allow it to copy CD-4 discs in their encoded form, for later decoding through a suitably modified demodulator. An intriguing prospect!

Circle 107 on reader service card

Technics Model SL-1300 Turntable



● **TECHNICS BY PANASONIC** was the first company to market electronic direct-drive turntables in which the platter is in effect a part of the drive motor. The SL-1300, a versatile single-play record player with automatic features, is the latest in a series of direct-drive units from that company.

The die-cast aluminum-alloy platter, covered by a ribbed rubber mat, weighs about 3¾ pounds. It is 13 inches in diameter, with a sloping outer rim that carries four bands of raised stroboscope marks (for its two speeds of 33⅓ and 45 rpm, and for 50- and 60-Hz line frequencies). The portion of the platter supporting the record is 11½ inches in diameter. A clear plastic prism carries the light from a neon stroboscope lamp below the motorboard up to the edge of the platter to the strobe markings for easy speed adjustment while a record is being played. It also serves as a pilot lamp to show that the unit is operating. The largest of the three knobs near the stroboscope lamp selects the operating speed and the other two adjust each speed separately over a nominal 10 per cent range. The speed controls are electronic and do not interact. The efficiency of the direct-drive system is illustrated by the very low power consumption of the SL-

1300—normally 4 watts, and only 6.5 watts during the cycling of the automatic mechanism.

The Technics SL-1300 tone arm, mounted on a gimbal-pivot suspension, is longer than average, measuring 9⅞ inches from pivot to stylus. The low-mass cartridge shell attaches to the tubular tone arm with a twist of a locking ring. The cartridge overhang is adjustable, using a full-size profile in the instruction manual as a template. The counterweight, which screws onto the rear of the arm, is rotated to achieve "zero" balance. A calibrated ring on the counterweight is then set to align its zero mark with a reference line on the arm, and the entire counterweight is turned until the desired tracking force is indicated. The scale is calibrated from 0 to 3 grams at intervals of 0.1 gram.

At the base of the pivot structure is an arm-lift (cueing) lever with a damped descent and a small anti-skating adjustment knob calibrated to match the 0- to 3-gram tracking-force range. A knob at the right side of the motorboard allows the SL-1300 to be set to repeat a record up to five times, or indefinitely if desired. Another knob sets the arm indexing for 7-, 10-, or 12-inch records. A STOP/START lever initiates the playing

cycle, starting the motor and moving the arm to the selected index position before lowering it to the record surface. After play, the arm returns to its rest and either shuts the motor off or repeats the record, depending on the setting of the MEMO-REPEAT control. If the control is set for a single play, the STOP position of the lever turns off the turntable; otherwise, it functions similarly to the REJECT lever on a record changer, returning the arm to the record for a repeat play. For fully manual operation, lifting the arm from its rest starts the turntable, which shuts off when the arm is returned to the rest, either manually or automatically, at the end of a record. An arm lock safeguards the stylus against damage when moving the turntable.

The Technics SL-1300 is supplied on an attractive silver and black base with soft supporting pads. It has a hinged plastic dust cover which remains open at any angle and can be removed easily if desired. The arm wiring and integral 4-foot signal cable have low capacitance for compatibility with CD-4 cartridges. The overall dimensions of the SL-1300 are 17¾ inches wide, 14⅞ inches deep, and 5½ inches high; it weighs about 21 pounds. Price: \$299.95.

● **Laboratory Measurements.** The Technics SL-1300 was tested with an Ortofon VMS 20E cartridge. The overhang adjustment was quite critical, and the first time we installed the cartridge the tracking error was higher than we would have expected. A recheck showed an error of about one millimeter in our overhang adjustment. After resetting the cartridge, the tracking error was almost too low to measure—less than 0.25 de-

gree per inch of radius everywhere on the record, and nearly zero at most points. Technics tells us that future units will be supplied with an improved overhang calibration device.

The calibration of the tracking-force adjustment was excellent, with an error of less than 0.1 gram over its full range. Like most anti-skating systems we have tested, this one had to be set slightly higher (by about 0.5 gram) than the tracking force for optimum compensation. The cycle time, from the moment the START lever was moved until the stylus touched down in the groove, was 10½ seconds at 33⅓ rpm and 8½ seconds at 45 rpm. The cueing lever had to be operated slowly to avoid jarring the arm and shifting its horizontal position. The descent was well damped, with a slight outward drift equivalent to a couple of grooves. The well-damped low-frequency arm-cartridge resonance (with the Ortofon cartridge) was at approximately 7 Hz, with an amplitude of 2 to 3 dB. The arm wiring capacitance, from cartridge shell to the end of the signal cable, was 70 picofarads per channel.



The tone-arm pivot assembly of the SL-1300, with anti-skating adjustment to the side and the MEMO-REPEAT selector further to the left.

The SL-1300 performed easily as well as the earlier Technics units we have tested. The unweighted wow and flutter were 0.03 and 0.04 per cent at 33⅓ rpm, and approximately the same at 45 rpm. The rumble was extremely low, with the unweighted (NAB) level measuring -46 dB including both lateral and vertical components, and -49 dB with the verti-

cal rumble canceled by paralleling the cartridge outputs. These are the lowest unweighted rumble levels we have ever measured, and consisted predominantly of frequencies around 25 Hz. With relative audibility weighting, the rumble was -63 dB—also one of the lowest figures we have recorded with this method of measurement. The speed vernier range, relative to the nominal center value, was +7 and -5 per cent at 33⅓ rpm, and +6 and -11 per cent at 45 rpm. The speed did not change detectably with extended operation or with a line-voltage shift from 90 to 140 volts. We were able to induce some moderate acoustic feedback with the SL-1300, but only by placing it directly in front of a speaker and applying some heavy bass boost with a high-power amplifier. It appears that the turntable is not likely to suffer from feedback under any normal listening conditions likely to be encountered.

● *Comment.* The figures speak for themselves with regard to the performance and quality of the Technics SL-1300. It is at least the equal, in every respect, of the finest record players we have tested. In other words, even when some other units have measured slightly better in a particular parameter, the differences were well within the normal limits of measurement error and would not indicate the superiority of one unit over the other.

Although its price is actually moderate compared with those of some turntables, the Technics SL-1300 offers performance equivalent to the finest available in today's record-playing equipment. For those people planning a CD-4 quadraphonic installation, the wiring capacitance of the SL-1300 is the lowest we have measured, and should permit any CD-4 cartridge to perform at its best. In its operation, the SL-1300 was completely smooth and quiet. In our judgment it is an outstanding combination of electromechanical design, styling, and human engineering, and a particularly fine value as well.

Circle 108 on reader service card

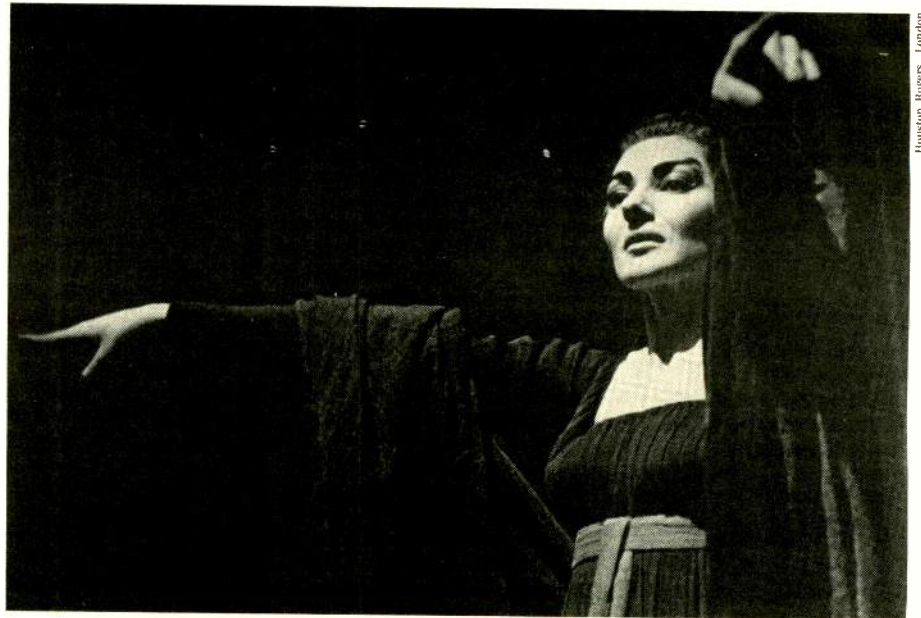


“... no living singer has enjoyed such a testimonial...”

Maria Callas
in the role of Medea

Opera's Grand Tradition: Two New Books

Reviewed by Max de Schauensee



Houston Rogers, London

Books about singers and their musical activities, often as not, can make for dull reading. Almost miraculously, writer J. B. Steane sustains an enthusiasm that bubbles and proves contagious through 610 pages of penetrating observation in his epic *The Grand Tradition*.

The author has covered almost all of the great opera singers who have recorded between 1900 and 1970. What a tremendous task this must have been! One can only guess at the endless hours of concentrated listening. But one also senses that the author had a grand time all the way. That is what makes the reading of *The Grand Tradition* an unalloyed delight.

A supreme value in this book stems from the obvious fact that Mr. Steane, besides being a meticulous critic, is also a fan. Too often tiresome aesthetes write about such matters, spewing their prejudices and seeing to it they do not enjoy anything that might damage their reputations as the bearers of exalted standards.

Again and again, after carefully pointing out the limitations of a singer and his repertoire, Mr. Steane will arouse an appreciative chuckle with such a sentence: “. . . It is largely pious self-deception to sigh for the Mozart and Handel he [Tito Schipa] did not record.” And continuing on Schipa’s singing of light songs by Richard Barthelmy and Cesare Andrea Bixio (“The Cole Porter of the Italian films”), Mr. Steane may confound the snobs by exclaiming: “. . . all these are a joy, and if for some reason they had to be lost from one’s collection they would leave a black gap where once was sunshine. One could better spare much better music.”

Lest the above quotation create an impression that *The Grand Tradition* is a preoccupation with so-called “trifles,” let me immediately say that this is a book of stature which gives the preservation of singing on records its due historical importance.

Beginning with Adelina Patti (debut 1859)

and progressing up to today’s designated superstars Joan Sutherland and Beverly Sills, the author covers a formidable panorama. It is remarkable how many singers are dealt with, how many discs described. Naturally, in so long a survey, there are some strange omissions: the great basso José Mardones, the colorful Australian Marjorie Lawrence, the French sopranos Yvonne Gall and Suzanne Balguerie, the baritone Martial Singher, and the German sopranos Barbara Kemp and Delia Reinhardt. And short shrift has been recorded the great Margarete Matzenauer, Kerstin Thorborg, John Brownlee, and Leo Slezak (who was anything but a favorite with the author).

On the other hand, his treatment of Lucrezia Bori and her records, his comparisons of Fernando de Lucia and Alessandro Bonci, of Beniamino Gigli and Schipa, are all absorbing. Singers who have recorded copiously during the present era—Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, Elisabeth Schwarzkopf, Maria Callas, and Janet Baker—are gone into in depth and with an absorbing thoroughness.

For minute, microscopic detail, Mr. Steane’s appraisal of Riccardo Stracciari (a baritone he admires) serves as a good example: “An oddity that became more noticeable as years went by was a kind of squeeze or even squirt given to notes usually at medium volume in the middle register. If the word were *usanza* (as in the Prologue to *Pagliacci*), it might come out as something like *usanza* . . .” This is applying a fine-tooth comb to criticism, but when it is accurate, as it is in this case, it becomes of incalculable fascination to any probing analyst of voice—and are we not all?

There are one or two inaccuracies. For instance, Marcella Sembrich did not sing on the very first night of the Metropolitan in 1883. That honor was reserved for Christine Nilsson in *Faust*. Mme. Sembrich sang two nights later in *Lucia*. Then, reference is made to the aria “*L’anima ho stanca*” as being from Mas-

cagni’s *L’Amico Fritz* when it actually occurs in Cilea’s *Adriana Lecouvreur*. These are trifles, slips that can be easily brushed aside.

For those who might be confused or even glutted by so much material, Mr. Steane has conveniently subdivided his book into three sections: Pre-Electrical Recordings 1900-1925 (The Golden Legend); The Electrical 1925-1950 (Decline and Survival); and The Long Playing Record 1950-1970 (Renaissance). Over this long vista he walks a fascinating tightrope, not feeling as George Bernard Shaw evidently did—“Let us hear no more of a golden age of bel-canto. We sing much better than our grandfathers”—for Steane is fully aware of the particular glories of the past.

For instance, in a comparison of an aria from Verdi’s *Luisa Miller* by de Lucia, Giuseppe Anselmi, Bonci, Schipa, and Aureliano Pertile with the more recent singers Carlo Bergonzi, Mario del Monaco, and Richard Tucker, he exclaims, “I found myself surprised at the sheer dullness of the moderns.” If I may venture to intrude my own opinion, I have always felt that it was not that the old singers were better or worse; they were simply different. Styles in singing change as do fashions in clothes, food, and decoration.

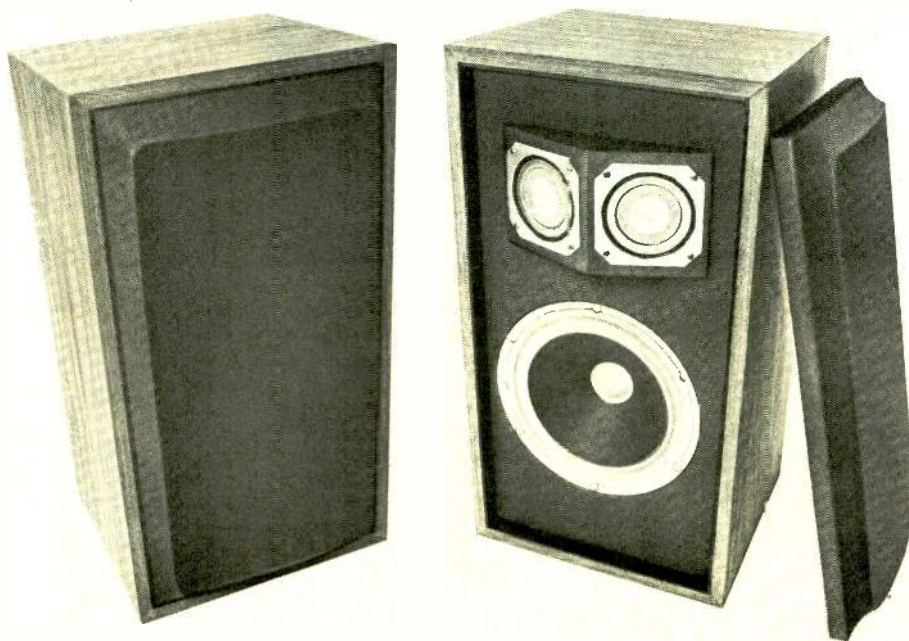
The Grand Tradition is a thrilling book, one that has been long and fervently desired by all who enjoy vocal art as preserved on records. Mr. Steane has backed up the singing with a further preservation of what we know to be precious.

* * *

AND now Callas, a new, sensationally handsome volume by John Ardoin, Dallas music critic, and Gerald Fitzgerald of *Opera News*, has appeared to delight all wealthy worshipers at the diva’s shrine. It accords her highly intelligent praise, a modicum of criticism, absolution for past misdemeanors, and a magnificent gallery of dramatic pictures. (Continued on page 50)

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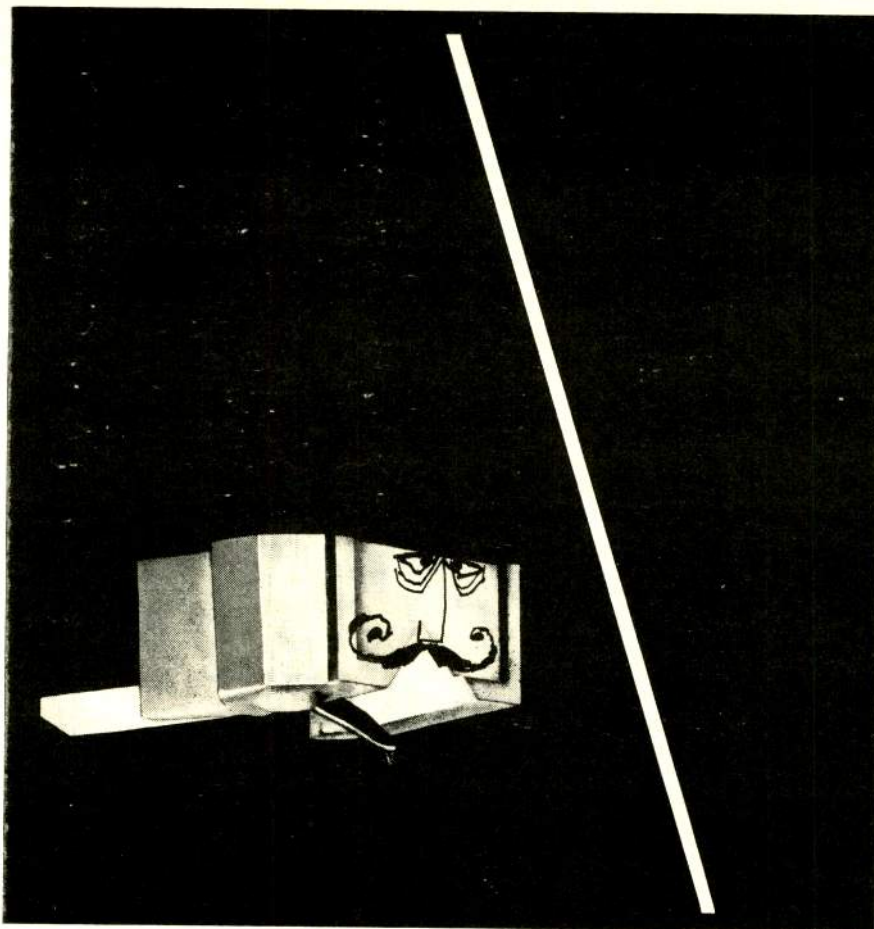
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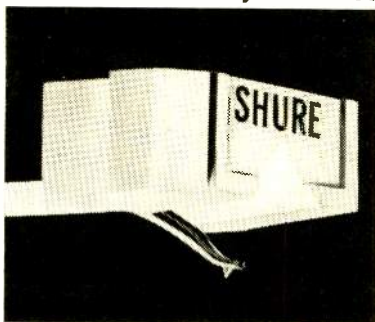
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CIRCLE NO. 41 ON READER SERVICE CARD

The text is by both these gentlemen (the essay by Ardoin, the richly informative picture captions by Fitzgerald), and the indefatigable Fitzgerald is responsible also for the astounding collection of pictures that catch the prima donna in every phase of emotion.

Probably no living singer has enjoyed such a gorgeous testimonial, nor has any singer enjoyed in print such an exhaustive survey of her life and art. The authors end by almost making you believe that the object of their labors was the greatest. Tonal inequalities are mentioned but not dwelt upon; the importance of Maria Callas' place in the history of opera remains, and rightly so, never in doubt.

Callas was indeed something very special. Most of her contemporaries seemed conventional if measured by her tempestuous temperament. I myself have never been an uncritical admirer of the lady's extraordinary gifts. When the authors state that Callas revolutionized opera, there is an implication that all the bad old things after the time of Giuditta Pasta, Maria Malibran, and Pauline Viardot-García have been joyously relegated to oblivion. Here, I cannot go along. Should we simply dump Adelina Patti, Marcella Sembrich, Nellie Melba, Luisa Tetrazzini, and Amelita Galli-Curci, with their ravishing bloom of voice, their fantastic techniques, into outer darkness? I do not think so.

While Callas did inaugurate a new trend in awareness of the obscure bel canto repertoire, the trend actually owed most to Tullio Serafin, who in Callas found the perfect soprano to give form to his ideas. For Callas was indeed an extraordinary artist, a personality whose force has left a powerful impact on the present opera scene. But she did so at considerable cost.

Possessor of a difficult, sometimes even ugly voice, she enjoyed some treasurable assets: an infinite capacity for disciplined work; an instinctive grasp of any role she was singing; an ability to rivet attention on her phrasing and word-weighting; and a gift for exact, meticulous, florid singing. Her best effects were in quiet moments in the middle range, which was often lovely, decidedly her best.

HER admirers claim that she was a throwback to the great *soprani sfogati* of the early nineteenth century. But here we are dealing with an unknown quantity, for nobody today knows what they were actually like. The small size of the orchestra, the small size of the theater, the limited repertoire—there was no Wagner, no *verismo*—makes such an assertion conjectural. During Callas' career, she had access to a variety of music undreamed of by those earlier singers, a variety that probably proved a factor in the damaging of her voice.

I found the book extraordinarily well written by both authors; they make an excellent case for the object of their devotion, with added testimony from Franco Zeffirelli, Luchino Visconti, Carlo Maria Giulini, and others. It is edifying reading, and the haunting pictures add a superb diadem to the entire project, surely worth the stiff price (\$27.50) for any red-blooded Callas fan—or for any mere opera buff worth his salt.

The Grand Tradition, by J. B. Steane. Scribner's, New York (1974), \$25.00; 610 pp.; illustrated with photographs.

Callas, by John Ardoin and Gerald Fitzgerald. Holt, Rinehart & Winston, New York (1974), \$27.50; 282 pp.; illustrated with photographs.

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| | ATOMIC WEIGHT | RIGIDITY (ELASTIC MODULUS) kg/mm ² | SOUND PROPAGATION VELOCITY m/sec |
|----------------|---------------|---|----------------------------------|
| BERYLLIUM (Be) | 9.013 | 28000 | 12600 |
| MAGNESIUM (Mg) | 24.32 | 4500 | 5770 |
| ALUMINUM (Al) | 26.98 | 7400 | 6420 |
| TITANIUM (Ti) | 47.90 | 11000 | 5990 |
| IRON (Fe) | 55.85 | 19700 | 5950 |

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| Dome Tweeter Comparison | | | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------|-----------|--------|
| | SIZE OF DOME | THICKNESS | WEIGHT |
| YAMAHA NS-1000 M (BERYLLIUM DOME) | 3 cm | 0.03 mm | 0.03 g |
| TYPICAL SOFT DOME | 3 cm | 0.3 mm | 0.1 g |
| CONVENTIONAL DRIVER | 2.5 cm | 0.45 mm | 1.03 g |

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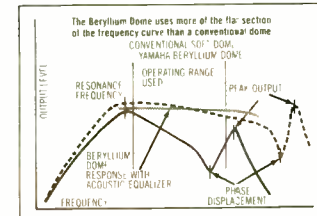


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Don't say we didn't warn you.



THE SIMELS REPORT

By STEVE SIMELS



BOWIE: THREE WAYS, NO WAY

ONE of the great moments in rock-and-roll history was aired on ABC's *In Concert* recently during D. A. Pennebaker's otherwise sleep-inducing film of David Bowie's 1973 "retirement" (ha ha) show. I had a pretty good idea of what was going to happen, having read reviews of the event at the time, and God, was I looking forward to it! But it was an absolute gas to see it finally, let me tell you. Briefly, what happened was that after what seemed like hours of sitting through David's ludicrously pretentious miming ("A pie in the face would be too good for him," remarked a friend of mine at just the point when Bowie began his dying swan number) and an interminable series of grimaces from guitarist Mick Ronson (who has just joined Mott the Hoople, by the way, which should effectively end the nice thing they've had going for the last two years), the Star broke character for a moment and introduced a special guest, the redoubtable Jeff Beck.

There was more than a little irony in this, of course; Ronson almost invariably dishes up the most thinly disguised imitations of Beck's work (minus the Master's inspiration, it goes without saying), and the song the augmented ensemble was about to perform—*Jean Genie*, one of Bowie's English hits—bears a startling resemblance to Beck's revolutionary work on the Yardbird's *I'm a Man*. At any rate, Jeff, who when he is on is still the most innovative electric guitar player who ever lived, sauntered out looking oh-so-cool (especially when compared with the "Ming the Merciless at Robert Hall" outfits Bowie and pals were decked out in) and within ten seconds had completely wiped out everyone else on the stage. He took a solo that was one of the most mind-boggling and un-clichéd I've heard in ages, and then—quite obviously smirking—deferred to Ronson, whose attempt at a topper sounded like the work of a backward six-year-old by comparison. Simply lovely.

(Incidentally, at various points in the broadcast, the nasty censor bleeped out what you were supposed to assume were "naughty" words. Unfortunately, if you were familiar with the lyrics, you knew that all of them can indeed be said on television, even in prime time. Our intelligence insulted once again, in another cynical ploy by Bowie and the Main-Man organization.)

A week later I had the dubious pleasure of sitting through the current Bowie experience in the flesh, and although Beck was not on hand to liven up the proceedings, I must confess it was an *interesting* evening. David has been threatening to go funky for some months now—for purely commercial reasons, you understand, since at heart he's about as funky as Margaret Rutherford (may she rest)—even going so far as to try to persuade interviewers that his favorite singers have always been people like Jackie Wilson. Baloney. It's just that in England he made it by pitching his records to the disco crowd, but in America they don't play rock-and-roll but r-&-b in discos; consequently, since Dave naturally still lusts to be as big in the States as he is at home, he's figured it's time to hit the *Soul Train* crew where they live.

So, after cajoling a pal into attending with me—which wasn't easy, believe me; in fact, it was almost as difficult as cajoling one of my friends into going to the last John Denver show—I trotted off to Radio City Music Hall to see Darling David's new look for myself. The affair (not quite sold out, by the way) began with a warm-up by Bowie's current band, mostly black, which featured a trio pretending to be the Supremes, and two male lead singers, one of whom danced on a piano (which I consider to be the single most offensive thing that a performer can do) while lisping out *Stormy Monday*, and another who looked and sounded exactly like George Kirby.

They did some currently popular soul

tunes, and the audience greeted them with bemused tolerance at the start and protracted boos by the finish. After a suitably lengthy intermission, they came back on, began to vamp out an intro riff, and then the George Kirby look-alike intoned (against the *de rigueur* drum roll), "And now, from Ziggy Stardust to Alladin Sane, the Diamond Dog himself, from London, England, the star of our show, Mr. . . . DAVID BOWIE!!!" All that was missing was Ed McMahon and Doc Severinsen. Bowie bounced on stage in a baggy suit, carrying a cane, looking for all the world like Fred Astaire with terminal jaundice, and launched into revamped soul versions of his better-known numbers (beginning with *Rebel, Rebel*, which I like), all of them funkied into unrecognizability.

The crowd, with the exception of the faithful in the front rows who kept trying to touch him, seemed more and more bored as the evening went on; it was clear that a mincing manikin doing a bad Joe Cocker act was not what they had paid (\$12.50 a shot, in some instances) to see.



Nothing daunted, RCA had the temerity to release a double live album at about the same time—material drawn from David's summer tour—which I also sat through, martyr that I am. It's summed up for me by his version of *All the Young Dudes*, which barely survives, but does at least make it quite

(Continued on page 54)

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clear that the rumors about his having taught Mott all they know are totally unfounded. Their performance had grandeur, power, and a stately rock-and-roll majesty; Bowie does it as if it were a cocktail song, complete with tinkling piano in the next room.

Overall, these three different looks at David had a very sobering effect on me. Here is a man who has written a few (very few—perhaps three or four) interesting songs, which makes him a respectable minor talent, a sort of Seventies Graham Gouldman, but a man who apparently takes himself so seriously that he believes his every utterance is worthy of immortality. It's depressing. His current shtick, pretending to be black—let's not forget that two years ago he was saying things like "I can't think of a whiter artist than me"—would be stomach turning if it weren't also such a colossal commercial miscalculation. Bowie's fans are, in the main, white middle-class teenagers, and no matter what Bowie or those around him think, they are *not* the people who hang out in trendy New York discos dancing to the Three Degrees or Love Unlimited. What we're about to witness, I think, as the taste-makers conned by their own careless enthusiasm begin to turn on him, is a decline that is going to be most unpleasant, a spectacle featuring a portrait of the artist as musical bankrupt. If he didn't so richly deserve it, I'd feel sorry for him. Of course, as you'll recall, the Who predicted all this in 1971, and if Bowie wants to make a graceful exit, he'll do a cover of their *Won't Get Fooled Again* and fade fast.

* * *

Okay, all that out of the way, and, having kept my promise *not* to review the new Stones album, I must add that you should immediately run out and buy the single of *It's Only Rock'n Roll*, because the flip side (a ballad left over from the Jamaican "Goats Head Soup" sessions entitled *Through the Lonely Nights*) is perhaps the band's most mature and moving performance since *Moonlight Mile*, and it is not scheduled for an LP appearance in the foreseeable future.

Further, if the touring stage version of *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band on the Road* makes it to your town, avoid it like the plague: Lennon and McCartney's music will probably survive director Tom O'Horgan's witless onslaught, but I see no reason to encourage him to try this sort of thing again.

Finally, the Rock-and-Roll Wisecrack of the Year, overheard at a club in New Jersey during a performance by a local band called the Weasels. Drunken jock on dance floor: "Play Barry White! I wanna hear some Barry White!" Weasels' piano player: "As soon as we finish our Jimmy Olsen medley."

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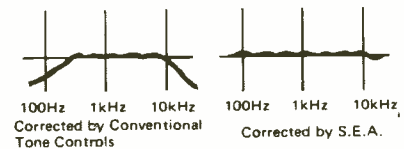
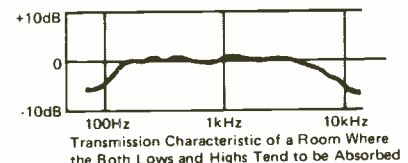
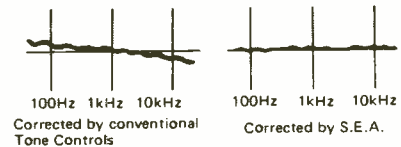
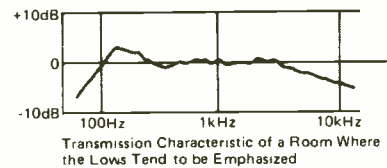
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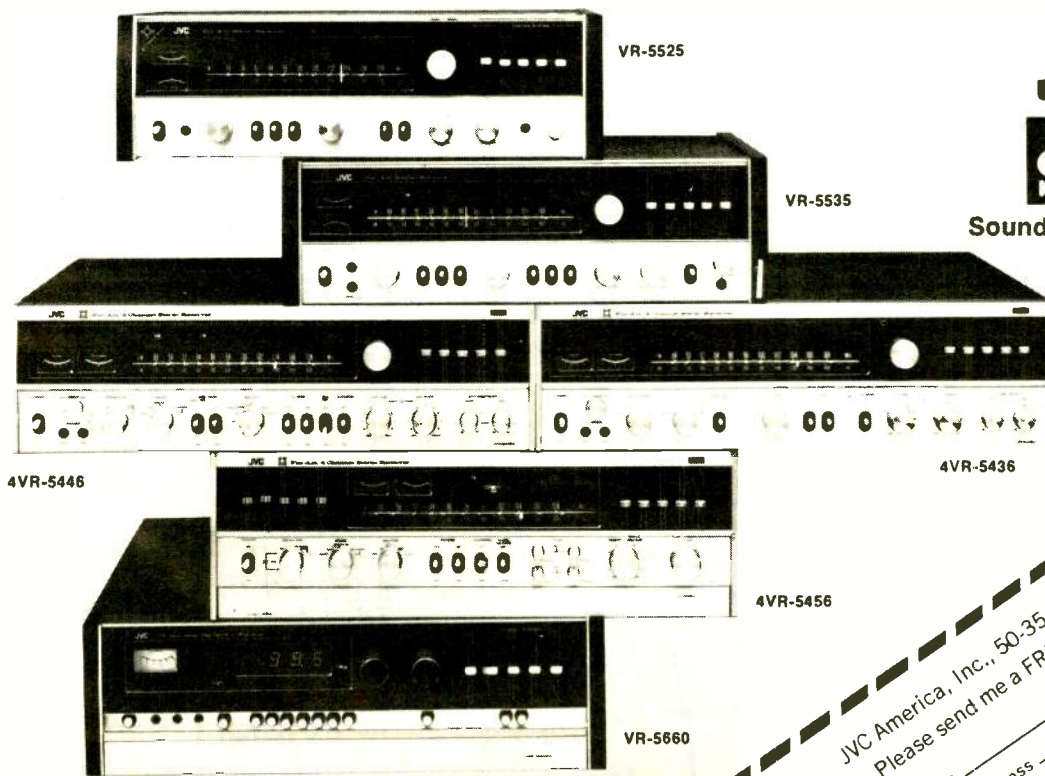
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GOING ON RECORD

By JAMES GOODFRIEND

Music Editor



LONG AFTER THE BALL

A FEW days after hearing Nonesuch's new recording of songs of the 1890's, appropriately titled "After the Ball," the logic and rationality of its appearance becomes evident. At first glance, though, perhaps even at first hearing, one feels a certain sense of surprise that such a project came into being at all. It is, peculiarly, the very same sense of surprise that was engendered by the appearance of the first Scott Joplin record, the Stephen Foster record, the record of comet favorites, and perhaps even the Gershwin record. All these Nonesuch releases have been solid, even outstanding musical achievements (as is the present one, and those additional albums of ragtime that followed logically from the first), but the particular furrow that Nonesuch has been plowing with these discs has not been all that obvious. It is the seeming *lack* of connection between them that has made each a matter of surprise as well as delight. But this new record, once again involving Bill Bolcom, this time with mezzo-soprano Joan Morris, may have taken us just far enough along in this mysterious sequence that we can divine the direction of the whole.

The albums are, of course, explorations of the American musical past, but they would hardly have produced the impact they have were they *only* that. Perhaps their rationale would become clearer if I ventured to guess that the next album in the series (I have no advance information on this) would far more likely be a collection of barber-shop quartets than, say, the Bay Psalm Book or the songs and hymns of that American contemporary of George Washington, Francis Hopkinson. For what Nonesuch has been dealing with is not the long ago and far away aspects of American music, but music we already know through the presence of on-going and still-living traditions. The point about the Nonesuch records, though, is that they have thrown out the traditions

and gone back to the original scores, and the surprise that is intrinsic to hearing them is that they have all given us familiar music presented in a totally unfamiliar way.

"Tradition," an eminent conductor of classical music has told us, "is the last bad performance." Few of us would care to make it as cut and dried as that, but there is no question that the score and the tradition of performance that germinated from the score have often, in serious music, come to oppose one another. The roots of this lie partially in the inability of our notational methods to represent fully and exactly what the composer had in mind, and partially in the desire, on the part of most composers, to *purposely* leave some room for variability in performance. In this "room," performance traditions grow, and since such traditions are handed down in the playing, the listening, and the talking *about* music, the performance tradition itself changes, sometimes to the point of parodying its original nature, in the same way that a simple English sentence whispered into the ear of the first of a group of people, and whispered in turn by each to the next, emerges from the last as

something quite different from what it was originally.

Performance tradition is an even more important element in popular music than it is in classical, and those areas between the two—such as classical music that has become, like Joplin's rags, an item of popular consumption—are also greatly affected by it. There were *two* traditions of performance that grew from Joplin's rags: one that treated them as if they were jazz, and one that lowered them to a derby-hat, garters-on-the-sleeves, ricky-tick musical nostalgia for the turn of the century. The shock of Joshua Rifkin's first record was that it followed *neither* tradition but went back to the score and to the little we know of Joplin's own performing style, presenting us with a different music out of the same notes. The Stephen Foster, cornet favorites, and Gershwin piano-music records did more or less the same thing, each of them coping with (and bypassing) a different tradition or group of traditions. "After the Ball" offers probably the most extreme case, for what Bolcom and Miss Morris are dealing with here is not the hard-to-categorize music of a misty mid-region (as the others were) but an out-and-out popular music.

THERE is (as this particular issue of STEREO REVIEW should demonstrate) a tradition of cabaret singing still very much alive in this country, and there is also a just barely living tradition of performance of Gay-Nineties and Turn-of-the-Century popular song. Neither is to be found on this record. What we get instead are sensitive, musicianly, totally unexaggerated renditions of the songs *as they are on the printed page*. Though such performances could paradoxically be called "classical," the performers have *not* superimposed classical-music traditions on popular songs. Miss Morris' voice has in it no echo of opera or of art song; it is vernacular American and, if anything, the sort of voice sometimes referred to as "churchy."

The effect is startling. Whether it is



Pianist William Bolcom and soprano Joan Morris: separating the master pieces from the period pieces

everything that might be desired is something else again. For (as should once again be demonstrated by this "cabaret" issue) *some* popular songs come to life only to the extent that they are vehicles for the projection of their performer's personality; do them straight and they die. The kind of exaggeration of emphasis that Beatrice Kay (does anyone else remember Beatrice Kay?) brought to such a song as *A Bird in a Gilded Cage* did not work against the song but breathed life into it. It was so exaggerated that it was satire, yes, but it was serious too, just as the song itself was serious—and satire. The tears were crocodile tears even in 1900, and Harry von Tilzer, who wrote the song, was not an innocent man.

THE effect of that song in Miss Morris' performance is a lesser one. So too with Monroe Rosenfeld's *Those Wedding Bells Shall Not Ring Out*. If one takes it completely seriously, it is a dreadful piece of hash: it needs the sting of irreverence to bring it to life. So much for the good side of tradition.

The bad side of it is that it covers everything with the same sauce, and not everything is palatable that way. Among the hamburgers on this disc are some very choice morsels indeed. I am being completely serious when I say that Paul Dresser's (Theodore Dreiser's brother) *On the Banks of the Wabash* is a great song, and that Ernest R. Ball's *Will You Love Me in December as You Do in May?* (which, of course, carries the same message as the Beatles' *When I'm Sixty-four*) is a classic as well. The performances we get here of these works, and others like them, strip the overpainting of tradition from the songs and present them as they really are: masterpieces. Miss Morris sings honestly and affectingly, Bolcom plays sensitively and musically, and the recording ambiance is completely sympathetic to the material. And so the upshot of it all is that this record (and the preceding ones) gives us the previously denied opportunity of separating the masterpieces from the period pieces. Such an experience opens up a whole new way of looking at and listening to the American musical past, and one could not imagine a more valuable contribution to the coming Bicentenary.

AFTER THE BALL: A Treasury of Turn-of-the-Century Popular Songs. Joan Morris (mezzo-soprano); William Bolcom (piano). *After the Ball; Good Bye, My Lady Love; A Bird in a Gilded Cage; Under the Bamboo Tree; On the Banks of the Wabash, Far Away; Those Wedding Bells Shall Not Ring Out; I've Got Rings on My Fingers; Come Down Ma Evenin' Star; I Don't Want to Play in Your Yard; Will You Love Me in December as You Do in May?; Meet Me in St. Louis, Louis; Love's Old Sweet Song; Waltz Me Around Again Willie; Wait Till the Sun Shines, Nellie.* NONESUCH H-71304 \$3.98.

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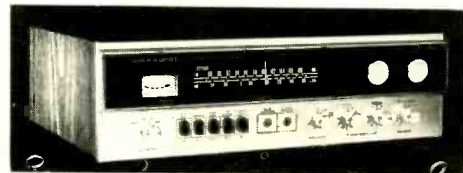
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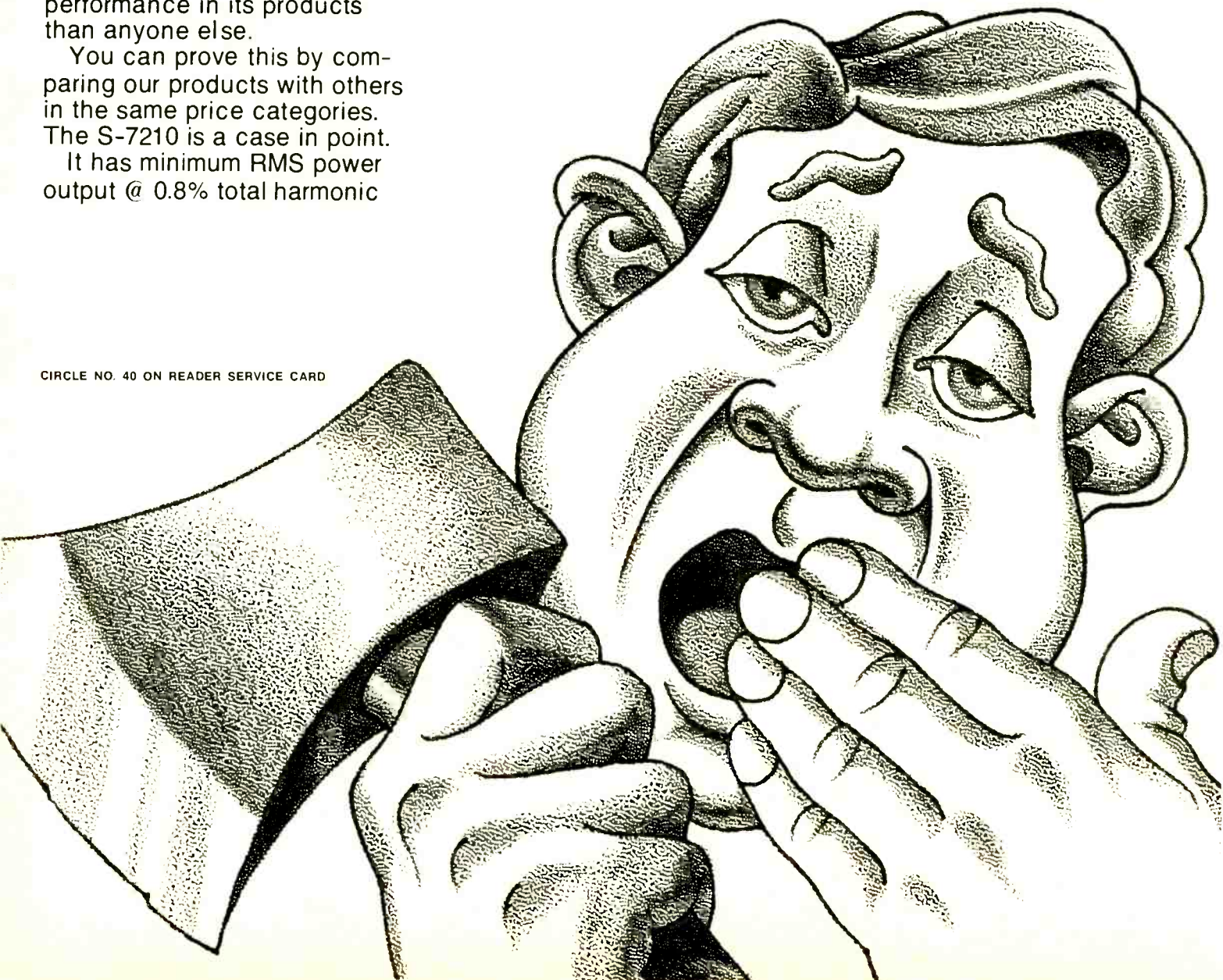


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THE BASIC REPERTOIRE • 178

By MARTIN BOOKSPAN

KODÁLY'S HÁRY JÁNOS SUITE

ZOLTÁN KODÁLY's ballad opera, *Háry János*, with a text by Béla Paulini and Zolt Harsányi, was produced for the first time on October 16, 1926, in Budapest. Its composer was then forty-three, fresh from the international triumphs of his *Psalmus Hungaricus*, and still deeply involved, along with Bartók, in searching out and recording authentic Hungarian folk music.

Writing an opera about the folk figure Háry János was almost inevitable for Kodály, for, as H. A. Phillips wrote in the *New York Times* on Christmas Day, 1927, "Háry is the braggadoccio spirit of the Magyar himself crystallized into mythical character. He is amused and terrified, regaled and enchanted by his own personality, about which he has woven a charming legend. Háry János is a colossal conceit. With this delightful character in mind, Kodály set out to depict him as a figure on the stage and as the embodiment of a certain phase or as an aspect of Hungarian history and character. It is hardly necessary to say that he uses folksongs for this purpose, helping himself to an age-old treasure which is rich beyond the dreams of melodic avarice."

A year later Kodály extracted from his score for the opera a suite of six numbers, of which only two (the third and the fifth) quote genuine Hungarian folk songs. The *Háry János Suite* was introduced to the United States on December 15, 1927, at a concert by the New York Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Willem Mengelberg, and it has been a popular favorite ever since.

It is an old Hungarian superstition that whenever a statement is preceded by a sneeze, that statement, unbelievable as it may seem, must be regarded as being unquestionably true. The musical representation of *Háry János*, whose story involves some of the tallest tales ever told, comparable to the exploits of the German Baron Munchausen or the American Paul Bunyan, opens with a colossal orchestral sneeze, and so "The

Tale Begins" (No. 1 of the Suite). The remaining movements concern themselves with the "Viennese Musical Clock" (No. 2), a song of homesick longing (No. 3), the "Battle and Defeat of Napoleon" (No. 4), a most aromatically



ZOLTÁN KODÁLY

Hungarian, if nonrepresentational, Intermezzo (No. 5), and the "Entrance of the Emperor and His Court" (No. 6), which depicts not the reality of the Austrian Imperial Court but how it might be in the imagination of a Hungarian peasant.

Kodály himself wrote program notes for the first New York performance of *Háry János*, and he described the action of the fourth movement this way: "Háry, as general in command of his hussars, confronts the French army. He brandishes his sword and lo! the French begin to fall before him like tin soldiers! First, two at a time, then four, eight, ten, and so on. Finally, there are no more soldiers left, and Napoleon is forced to engage in person the invincible Háry. Háry's fantasy pictures a Napoleon made in the image of his own burly peasant imagination—an immensely tall and formidable Napoleon who, shaking in

every limb, kneels before his conqueror and pleads for mercy."

The Suite from *Háry János* is surely Kodály's most popular work, and it is his most often recorded one as well. There are currently available five different performances of the music, each with its own special pleasures: Bernard Haitink's (Philips disc 6500015, reel 5015, cassette 7300017) is lucid and straightforward, with a special sensitivity to the poetic passages; István Kertész's (London disc CS 6417, reel L 80159) is flamboyantly extroverted and sumptuously recorded; Erich Leinsdorf's first recording of it, with London's Philharmonia Orchestra (Seraphim S 60209), is a tightly disciplined, superbly played performance; Leinsdorf's second recording, with the Boston Symphony Orchestra (RCA LSC 2859) is more self-indulgent, with phrases milked for all their worth (particularly in the Intermezzo), but with an infectious enthusiasm; and George Szell's (Columbia MS 7408) combines the directness of the Haitink approach with the color of Kertész and the discipline of Leinsdorf I.

If I were forced to select my own favorite among them, I would choose the Kertész recording. Kertész makes more of the music's humor, its puckish qualities, than do his rivals. Similarly, there is a real feeling of spontaneity to the performance and a sense of rightness to the many fluctuations in tempo. And the London Records engineers have captured it all in recorded sound that is vivid in the extreme. The third and fifth movements of the Suite incorporate prominent music for a Hungarian folk instrument, the cimbalom, and the microphone spotlighting transforms parts of the Intermezzo into a virtual concerto for cimbalom and orchestra. But even this extravagance does not offend me in the context of the sweep and surge of the Kertész reading.

My second choice would be Leinsdorf I, particularly since it is the only recording on a budget label. Though a product of relatively early stereo technology (it was recorded around 1960), its sonics are bright and full, with particularly rich reproduction of the lower brass and stringed instruments. And at that time the Philharmonia Orchestra was one of the very best in the world.

A final note: those intrigued by the *Háry János Suite* may wish to investigate the recording of the entire opera (London OSA 1278, two discs). The presentation is a tour de force for Peter Ustinov, who impersonates a whole host of characters, including Háry himself. And the music is again safely and stylishly in the hands of the late István Kertész.

* Mr. Bookspan's 1974-1975 UPDATING OF THE BASIC REPERTOIRE is now available in convenient pamphlet form. Send 25¢ and self-addressed #10 envelope to Diane Nakamura, Stereo Review, 1 Park Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10016 for a copy. *



Mabel Mercer

*William Livingstone
visits with the singers' singer*

AN awful lot of gaudy prose has been ground out by critics, columnists, and liner-note writers on the subject of Mabel Mercer. The St. Regis Room, where she performs, is in the St. Regis Hotel at Fifth Avenue and 55th Street in New York; it has been described as an "elegant salon" or a "posh watering hole." The chair from which she sings is a "Louis Quinze throne," and she herself is a "high priestess weaving her spell," "the *doyenne* of American popular singing," and the "queen of the supper clubs." Her repertoire, which encompasses about a thousand very carefully selected songs, is said to "rub a patina on our lives and loves, enriching, beautifying, and spiritualizing our experience." The writers carry on about her influence on our greatest pop singing stars and America's finest songwriters. They wax eloquent about Miss Mercer's impeccable taste, her

flawless diction, her musical phrasing, her penetrating insight, her incomparable projection of lyrics, and her regal dignity. And it's all true.

It's all true, and yet it's somehow unfair. In their efforts to do justice to this singer's art, some writers make her sound like a forbidding educational experience, something that's probably good for you but you'd just as soon put off for a while. Frankly, some of them make her sound like a royal pain, and nothing could be further from the truth. Okay, the room she sings in is nicely decorated, but as Penelope Ross pointed out recently in the *Village Voice*, a show at the Bottom Line (a rock joint in Greenwich Village) and a show at the St. Regis Room cost about the same. And Mabel Mercer, who regards herself as an entertainer, a girl who has been singing for her supper in show business since she was fourteen, is in there every night doing her best to see that the customers get their money's worth and have a good time. Without ever losing her natural dignity, she manages to exude warmth, hospitality, and humanity. Nobody loves a good-time atmosphere more than Mabel. She's the kind of woman who doesn't know how to talk to a man without making him feel good and glad he came to the party. As for the living-legend bit, she's quick to say that it makes her "veddy nervous."

I've been pestering Mabel for an interview for two or three years. At a party after her closing show at the St. Regis last spring, I asked her, "When can I come and talk to you so that you can tell me all your secrets?" She gave me an impish smile and said, "Secrets? I'm not going to tell you any secrets. It's all in the songs, dear. Listen to the songs." But when she came back to town for the 1974-1975 season, I pinned her down, and we set a date.

Since Mabel was born in 1900, she is celebrating her diamond jubilee this year. Faced with that momentous event and the fact that my interview was to coincide with her receipt of this magazine's first award of a Certificate of Merit for Significant Contributions to the Quality of American Musical Life, I panicked. Although she's friendly and easy to talk to, I'm still somewhat in awe of

Mabel Mercer has an uncanny ability to interpret lyrics with a realism that is seemingly absolute. You feel she is telling you, a close and much-loved friend, a

very personal story rather than just singing. And she does it all with a regal bearing uncommon in today's casual society.

— Johnny Mathis

her, and I needed someone to join us at lunch to keep the conversation going in case I was overwhelmed by the importance of it all and my tongue clove to the roof of my mouth. Therefore, I invited one of Mabel's long-time friends and devoted admirers, Donald Smith, a public relations consultant, who is convinced that "Mabel Mercer Madness will yet sweep this country."

The three of us met in the King Cole bar at the St. Regis one Saturday afternoon for what was lunch for Don and me and breakfast for Mabel. To avoid having to ask a lot of biographical questions, I had looked her up in *Current Biography* and elsewhere, so no formal interview took place. We just ate, laughed, and talked all afternoon.

A short, round little woman who looks taller than she is because of her erect posture, Mabel was wearing a bright red dress and seemed to be in good spirits. Her skin is the color of cream with a little coffee in it, and her head is

topped by a crown of shortish hair. She doesn't begin to look her age. "At practically seventy-five, I feel no different," she said. "I'm beginning to creak a little, but there are pills for that. Otherwise, I feel the same. The only thing I regret about my age is that I can no longer hold a note for a long time. In singing there are certain

Mabel is Cleopatra, Salome, and all great women. She slides down the bannister of your mind. If you're a songwriter, she captures the meaning of your songs better than you do. I am always under her spell.

— Howard Dietz

Besides being one of the great human personages, my friend Mabel Mercer turns a lyric into worlds of joy, longing, or sadness with unparalleled art. There is no one who cannot learn from her.

— Leontyne Price

effects you can make by sustaining a note, and I've had to learn to make them in other ways."

According to the reference sources, she was born on February 3, 1900, at Burton-on-Trent, Staffordshire, England. Her father was a black American who died before she was born, and her mother was a white vaudeville singer and actress whose whole family was in show business. Since her mother and stepfather toured constantly, Mabel was sent off to a convent school as a child.

"I was *the* most self-conscious child. I don't know how I ever became an entertainer. It was absolute agony at school when I was called on to recite a poem or something. I would turn scarlet, my knees would knock, and my lips would tremble so that I could hardly pronounce the words. And there I was, the child of performers, and I couldn't get over it. Horrible, horrible. Even now when I'm going to sing a new song or appear in a new place, I get stomach-aches up to here."

When Mabel sings, she has no discernible regional accent, just clear diction, but in conversation her British

Mabel Mercer has ever made me aware that a singer is someone through whom the words of the song must come alive. This great lady has been "telling it like it is"

all of her lifetime. What a thrill for the lyricists of her songs—and for those of us fortunate enough to hear her—to know her in our lifetimes.

— Sylvia Syms

accent, with a slight North-Country flavor, is quite apparent. There is not much change in her volume, but she places emphasis by rising and falling intonation, pausing after an important word, or really bearing down on it. I couldn't help noticing this as she continued to talk about her childhood. "At school all the kids thought I was rather odd. They'd never seen anything like me. I was the only one, you see. They christened me Golliwog, which was an affectionate term, because the "golliwogs" the children had were little black dolls, with black woolen hair. I was always envious of the girls with long hair. The one who sat next to me in the refectory at the convent—Queenie Vail—had long flaxen hair down to here. I never had any more than I've got now, and it was the bane of my existence. I used to get string and braid it and tie it to my hair with a big bow so that I could flick my plaits back. I remember one little girl said to me, 'Oh, you'll never get married.' And I said, 'Why?' 'Your hair's too frizzy,' she answered, 'No man will ever marry you.' And another kid said, 'We'll turn you upside down and sweep the floor with you.' And I got terribly upset because I had golliwog hair."

(Continued overleaf)

Mabel Mercer

Mabel Mercer? Marvelous! She is the keeper of the show songs that were never heard before. Singing intimately into your ear, she "reads a song beautifully."

—Harold Arlen

At fourteen Mabel left the school and joined members of her family in a touring music-hall act, beginning as a dancer. "I had two cousins in our family act, and I learned from them what was called step dancing, rather like tap dancing. We were on stage together until the war took my cousins. The act split up, and I had to go out on my own. I thought I knew how to sing well enough and dance well enough to get by, so I joined a troupe of girl dancers. When we played in Manchester, which was the home of the Tiller Girls—they were like the Rockettes—I asked for an audition, and they said I could go into one of their smaller troupes. So I joined the Tiller Girls—that is, until the head man saw me and said, 'Oh, out with *her*, she's not right in the line.' I was so different, you see, with my woolly head, rather like they're wearing now.

"But I joined another troupe and in time met up with a coloured show. Now, *that* was a first experience. I had never known any coloured people, never *met* any. Isn't that funny? My family never discussed anything, and I

I don't know any singer of repute, whether it be Tony Bennett, Frank Sinatra, Jack Jones, Andy Williams, or a score of others, who would not in some way have to acknowledge the influence Mabel Mercer has had on them. For myself, she, along with Sinatra,

taught me the importance of telling the lyrical story clearly and concisely. Above all, Mabel Mercer has total integrity when she performs, and that integrity always extends to respecting the author's and composer's wishes.

—Rod McKuen

was the only one at school, so I just took it for granted that I was one of a kind. And finding these others was like a dream. I was delighted. We were all different shades but all the same.

Don and I were fascinated and wanted to know what sort of show they put on. "It was run by an American," Mabel said. "He had collected a few Africans and a lot of artists of mixed blood in England and put together a fine show. It was called Coloured Society, I think—a very good singing and dancing show, with comedians, a regular revue. The boss was an excellent lyric tenor, we had a big fellow from Africa with a gorgeous bass, and there were a lot of fine voices in the group. The first scene was set in Dahomey, and we were all Zulus, running around and saying 'Woo, woo, woo.' Then we'd each do our different things, and we'd wind up, believe it or not, singing the sextet from *Lucia*. I sang the soprano part."

We all three laughed at that prospect, and Mabel said, "It was so unexpected—all those Zulus singing *Lucia*. I loved it. I never realized the incongruity of it until I was grown and looked back and wondered what *must* people have thought! I stayed with that show until the end of the war, through the Zeppelin raids and the flu epidemic. That was terrible. Our conductor had such a bad case of it that he couldn't work, and my boss sent me on in his place, as a pianist/conductor down in the pit. (I'd rush up on stage for my title part in *Lucia*.)

"The conductor never rejoined us, and I continued as

pianist/conductor as we traveled about, until we got to London and were to play in a large theater with an orchestra of fifteen or sixteen men. Here I wasn't to sit at the piano, but stand and conduct, and when we went to the first rehearsal, I was scared to death. One of the grey-beards in the orchestra looked at me and said, 'What can *she* do?' and my boss spoke up very strong, 'She can do exactly what I want her to do.' He took me to a boys' tailor, and they rigged me up in a silk-bosom shirt and white tie and tails, and I thought I was *IT!* Entertainers used to have what we called cigarette cards, their photographs with their names on them, and when we got to Bristol I had my picture taken in my white tie and tails—and with a monocle, if you please—and someone put a cigarette in my hand. That was me as a conductor. And I had 'Musical Director' on my card."

The middle phase of Mabel Mercer's career was in chic cabarets and bistros on the Continent, mostly in Paris, during the glamorous period between World Wars I and II, when Paris was a haven for expatriate American musicians, writers, and painters—Ernest Hemingway, Cole Porter, Gertrude Stein, and F. Scott Fitzgerald. Mabel became almost a permanent fixture at the smartest of these, a club in the Rue Pigalle run by Bricktop, a famous American hostess and singer, which was a favorite of the so-called smart set. Since she was in a reminiscent mood, Don pressed her to tell about Paris.

"I went first to Belgium," she said. "When the war was over, I teamed up with a girl dancer, and we went to Ostend. There was an American band playing at the casino—they were the first American entertainers I had seen—and I thought oh, *this* is the *ultimate*. If I could just perform like that! In those days I was just trying to do a few shuffles and sing ballads. But I danced for them, and they engaged me. They must have thought I was the *funniest* thing they ever saw, because they were Americans, and I was still doing it all in my English way. But they were nice fellows, and I was *young*, and we had good times.

"Florence Jones was the wife of the pianist, and when the group went to Paris, they eventually opened Chez Florence, where I worked for some time before I went to Bricktop's. But I worked in other clubs first and continued to travel to Antwerp and to Luxembourg with the girl I sang and danced with. She was a Cockney girl and sang French like you have never *heard*—all Mistinguett songs—and people would get hysterical. The French were on the floor. But people liked us and we joined traveling shows and went to Egypt, and Yugoslavia, and to Constantinople. I wasn't making any money, but I was *seeing the world*, and if I'd become a typist or something I'd have been stuck in an office. Between times I'd come

Left, Mabel Mercer as she appeared in a Vienna revue entitled The Chocolate Kiddies; at right, in conductor's tie and tails.





June 1937, at Bricktop's in Paris: left to right, an unknown reveler, Mabel Mercer, Tony Mast (didn't they use to call them "playboys"?), Spivy (onetime proprietress of a New York cabaret called Spivy's Roof), Julius Monk (his New York clubs were called Upstairs at the Downstairs and vice versa). In front, another stylish reveler and the redoubtable Bricktop.

back to Paris, which was very exciting in those days. Finally, I took an apartment in Paris, and it became my home until I came to America."

"But I thought you'd worked at Bricktop's all the time you were in Paris," I said.

"No, Brick came to Paris in 1924, and she worked in several clubs before she opened her own about 1931. She was a real American entertainer. In no time at all people like Cole Porter found her, and they all loved her. She was a great *hostess*, as well as a great entertainer, and she made everything like a big party. I learned a lot from Brick. Not how to sing, but everything about night clubs, how to meet and talk to people.

"Bricktop's closed about five or six in the morning, and a place called the Breakfast Club would still be open so everybody would troupe over there. I remember one morning Louis Armstrong with his trumpet and Django Reinhardt with his guitar were playing for each other. I went home and to bed. I got up around noon and came down for some milk or something, and they were *still* there playing duets. People were so carefree in those days. There was a lot of fun and practical jokes. Cole Porter had me arrested once because I sang a particular song so often. It was *Thank You for the Flowers*, written for me by a young society lad. It wasn't terribly good, but it seemed to take everybody's fancy, and it was requested a lot. Porter and his gang of friends got tired of it, and decided they'd have me arrested if I sang it one more time. Sure enough, someone asked for it, and while I was singing it, a gendarme tapped me on the shoulder and led me off the floor. It was just a joke they'd cooked up between them.

"Then there were the parties. Everybody came to Paris for the season—the Prince of Wales, Prince George, the Duke of Kent, and Princess Marina, they were our constant patrons. I remember the first time I saw Gertrude

Mabel Mercer is a phenomenon in that she raises popular song to the level of a legitimate art form. Her profound concern for the essence of the lyric, her faultless diction, her mastery of the musical phrase are unique. She emanates not only magnetism and warmth, but she creates a mood

when she performs which disperses all negativism, gloom, and depression. Mabel Mercer is, as a person, a healer, a believer, a steadfast companion, and a constant disseminator of love, valiance, wit, and understanding. I am proud to be her friend.

—Alec Wilder

Stein—I'd never seen a woman with a mannish haircut before. And the American families like the Singers and the Cranes (not the bathtub Cranes, the cash-register ones). Every year it would be like meeting old friends—the Indian princes, Maharanee Cooch Behar, and this one and that one. I knew them all and they were all *very*, *very* nice.

"When you went to a party you never knew who would be there, and we were constantly being invited to parties. Brick was very strict about that: you can go to a party, but you don't sing; if you go to a party and sing, you get paid for it. We had a lot of fun. I wouldn't exchange those years I worked with Brick for anything."

IN 1938 Mabel Mercer came to the United States for an engagement at Le Ruban Bleu in New York. She went on to a job in the Bahamas, where she was isolated by the outbreak of World War II, unable to return to England and unable to obtain re-entry papers for the United States. She married the black musician Kelsey Pharr, who brought her back to the United States in 1941 (they have long been separated), and in 1952 she became an American citizen. Her permanent home is a farm in Chatham, New York, where she still gardens a bit. In addition to her collection of dogs and cats, the fauna include deer, raccoons, and an enormous population of birds. "It's only thirty acres," she says, "I wish I had thirty more or three hundred. The land, that's what I care about."

Don Smith drew the conversation back to show business, asking, "Were there other singers at the Ruban Bleu when you first came to New York?"

And Mabel answered, "Oh, I can't remember all their names. There was Elsie Houston. She had a beautiful voice, not really a classical voice, but it had great tenderness, and when she sang those fados she was marvelous. It was 1938 and Greta Keller came that year. And there was a wonderful couple who were in Sillman's first *New Faces*; she was a very dark girl with a smile that lit up the room. I cannot remember her name. She used to sing *I'm the Prettiest Piece in Greece*, so you know they were good songs! Then a French lady came (she was very funny), and Richard Dyer Bennett, and a girl called Olga something, an Argentine girl, and Julius Monk, who was the sort of master of ceremonies."

I wanted to know how New York had struck her at first, and she said, "With all due respect, I thought it was

Mabel Mercer

Mabel Mercer. I love her. She is the eternal guardian of elegance in the world of popular song.
— Leonard Bernstein

frightfully strange. It didn't begin to grow on me until I'd been here about six months. The buildings were like monolithic gravestones, and it was all so different. And for *me* it was very different for other reasons. I could never get over the fact that I couldn't go here or couldn't go there. I couldn't understand why not. But I grew to like it, and it's stuck with me now. Cy Walter helped me get into Tony's. It was a hand-to-mouth existence, but I didn't have the kind of voice and I wasn't the kind of entertainer to go to enormous places. I remained there for

Mabel Mercer is all things to all people. She has kept us all young. In a world slowly going mad with apathy and ugliness, she has pruned away the troubles the way she prunes away the clutter in her country garden, gracing our lives with her unerring ear for beauty

and elegance in music. No popular composer of any merit, no singer with any class has failed to be influenced by her way with a lyric or her weaving of a melody. Her achievement is a legend. I think she is the eighth wonder of the world.
— Rex Reed

years. I prefer to stay in one place. It's the only way for people to know where to find you."

When the building that housed Tony's was torn down in 1949, Mabel went on a long sojourn at the Blyline Club, and after trying several others, she is now settled at the St. Regis. Wherever she has sung, the audience has included a large number of other singers. She is said to have influenced such diverse artists as Peggy Lee, Frank Sinatra, Leontyne Price, Eileen Farrell, Margaret Whiting, Blossom Dearie, Bobby Short, Johnny Mathis, Barbra Streisand, and countless others. When I asked Mabel to comment on this, she said, "It's wonderful that they say these things, and it makes me very happy, but you know I've never had a pupil or coached another singer. I can't think of anyone specifically who influenced me as a singer. The Americans all sang so differently. I admired them a lot, but I felt theirs was a style I could never acquire. And I never thought I was good enough to do anything anyway, and as long as I could sing and get by and get the rent I'd be happy. If you have any *listening* ability, you naturally learn from watching others perform. Mostly you see their mistakes and think of ways to avoid them yourself. First you have to learn how to stand and what to do with your hands. I remember one girl I heard sing in the Bahamas. She had a beautiful voice and just came out and sang. Dead still. Never moved. Never moved anything, not even her hands. And I said, 'Of course, that's it. Don't make any unnecessary movements!' I've never forgotten her composure. I guess that might have influenced me."

Don asked when she started sitting down to sing. "Well, off and on back in Paris, when one of us would sing to an individual party in a club. It's very tricky to sing for a small group or even a small room full of people. You have to learn to sing *for* them and somehow sing *at* them, but not sing *to* them in a way that makes them conspicuous because that embarrasses them and makes them uncomfortable. So I tried singing *at* them, but ignoring them, and they'd suddenly relax and become engaged in

each other if they were lovers and become interested not in me, but in what I was singing and how they could apply it to themselves. That's how it started, and I became very comfortable with it. I look at the audience, of course, but individuals don't know whether I'm seeing them.

"I'm pleased when someone comes up and says, 'I felt that you were singing particularly to me.' What that means is that they were able to apply the lines of the songs to their own experience."

The first time I heard Mabel Mercer sing I know that my world of music and singing changed. It was in the Forties at Tony's West-side, and after the first visit I think I went every night for a week. Lyric writers all must have

Mabel in mind when they write. Hers is always the supreme rendition of warmth, honesty, and knowledge of what to do with every kind of song. If Mabel can't sing it, it can't be sung.

— Margaret Whiting

Our chat drifted to other singers and who was in town at what clubs. Mabel was planning to go to hear Tony Bennett and Lena Horne, and Johnny Mathis, and was trying to find a time when she was free to catch Cleo Laine's show downstairs at the Maisonnette. She said there are dozens of current singers she likes. "Voices—I like singers with good robust voices, although I don't like the style in which many of them sing. Sarah Vaughan has a divine voice. And the girl who did *Seesaw*—Michelle Lee—she's wonderful. And the one who used to sing *Big D in Dallas*, Susan Johnson. *There's a real performer's voice. Grand! She never misses. And the girl on the record of *The Grass Harp*, Karen Morrow: she's a good show-person's singer. You know it's all *there*. I like Ethel Merman, I like her gusto. I thought she was fabulous in *Gypsy* and in the other shows. She's a downright robust performer. She doesn't care if it's a right note or a wrong*

It is impossible not to have heard of her before the first experience of hearing her, and yet you feel that you have discovered her. Her singing is the creative process of discovery shared with us. The intention of the artists who wrote

the song and the artist who is singing it flow from her to us, changing us while we listen and filling us with gratitude. She awakens us, makes us hear and feel more deeply.

— Marian Seldes

note. She's gutty. I like Lena's voice, and Ella Fitzgerald has a truly *gorgeous* quality."

Her choices surprised me, and I said, "But so many of them seem to be the antithesis of you. You are subtle and work so much with the words, and Merman is a belter, and Ella Fitzgerald ignores the words to concentrate on an instrumental quality."

"Yes, but I envy them all their lung power," Mabel said, "because mine is gone, even though I breathe properly, from the diaphragm. I just love watching entertainers, and they, in turn, make a marvelous audience."

The repertoire Mabel Mercer performs is, in large part, songs by the great composers for the musical theater, such as George Gershwin, Cole Porter, and Harold Arlen, as well as songs by composers who have written especially for her, such as Bart Howard, Cy Coleman, and Alec Wilder. I asked her how she selected her songs, and she shrugged her shoulders and said, "I like a good melody and a good lyric, lyrics I can *get* something out of.



Mabel Mercer and fellow cabaret entertainer Bobby Short are the most affectionate of buddies professionally and privately.

What you can do with it depends on how you *read* a thing and what it suggests to you. The choice is instinctive. The first time I heard *The Way We Were*, I thought 'That's a beautiful song, and nobody knows what they're singing about.' The melody's nice, but when they get to the second part, they screech it out, especially Barbra with that beautiful voice of hers. She has absolutely no perception of what this song is about. Most of them think you have to sing loud or soft. Loud and soft are the only nuances they seem to understand, and they don't get the meaning of certain phrases.

"There are lots of good contemporary songs, but rock singers are interested only in an exciting rhythm—I like the rhythm, I like the loudness of it—but they throw away the words."

Don, who knows Mabel's repertoire well, began to cite particular songs, such as *Raindrops Keep Falling on My Head*. Mabel commented, "To me *Raindrops* is a happy song, and if other singers don't get a laugh with it, it's because they don't *mean* the words when they sing them." He mentioned *I'm Way Ahead*, which she makes into a miniature drama, and she said, "That one means a great deal to a lot of people."

Mabel sings many sophisticated love songs, but they never become explicit. She will take you perhaps to within sight of the bedroom door, but never beyond. Irvin Graham, who wrote *You'd Better Go Now*, a favorite with cabaret singers, told me he'd offered Mabel a new song, *Loneliness*, in which a woman sings that loneliness is her lover and she sleeps in the arms of loneliness. Mabel liked the song but declined to sing it unless the lyrics could be changed. "I'm shy about things like that," she said. "Perhaps it's my convent upbringing. I don't mind implying things, suggesting things. I'm not a prude, but I don't think it's necessary to put a *name* to everything."

And Don commented, "When you sing these songs, Mabel, you make it seem as though you know the things that will always be true. You have a gift for insinuation.

You somehow manage to be wise without pontificating."

"Well, I've had my experiences, and I happen to know what I'm talking about. I've always been on the sentimental side, but not maudlin. When you're young you cry a lot. I thought I'd never survive certain things in my life, that if it didn't go the way I wanted it to, life was not worth living. Later you learn to shrug your shoulders, and say well, it was great fun. *Just One of Those Things* is not a sad song: it's very cynical, and I like to get a laugh on the line about a trip to the moon where nothing happens. We've all been in that situation, and some people in the audience respond to it with a laugh, others can't. It's often from the audience that I get ideas about how to handle certain lines, but I've never tried to analyze that. I feel that I'd start imitating myself and ruin it."

A phenomenon of some interest to Mabel's friends and admirers is that with the revival of interest in cabaret singing, she is attracting an increasing number of young people. This seemed not to surprise Mabel's friend, the actress Eugenia Rawls, who said, "The ambiance and style of Mabel Mercer is cherished by our generation, and now she is reaching out to a new one." Bricktop, now in her eighties, was currently performing at Soerabaja, and she said, "This is the year of the old. We're *all* out work-

It has been often said that the night club is the bottom level of show business. This is partly true, but a great artist can surmount with what seems like an uncanny ease the dirt and smoke of such places, transforming their confines into places of magic. Ma-

bel's refined manner, her elegance, and her sweetness have done so over the years both here and abroad. Her enthusiasm, dedication, and devotion to her art cannot help but be felt by anyone who has ever known her.

—Bobby Short

ing. Young people were terribly disillusioned by the Nixon Era and the phoniness it revealed. They're now searching for quality in music, in life, and they turn to people like us for values."

On that subject, Mabel said, "The young are very sensitive. They haven't experienced very much, and when they're hurt they feel it very deeply. Nothing hurts like young love that's been slapped in the face. Nothing is so painful as the sting of love. I've known a great deal of suffering, and young people sense that in my songs and are comforted by it. This all becomes easier as you grow older."

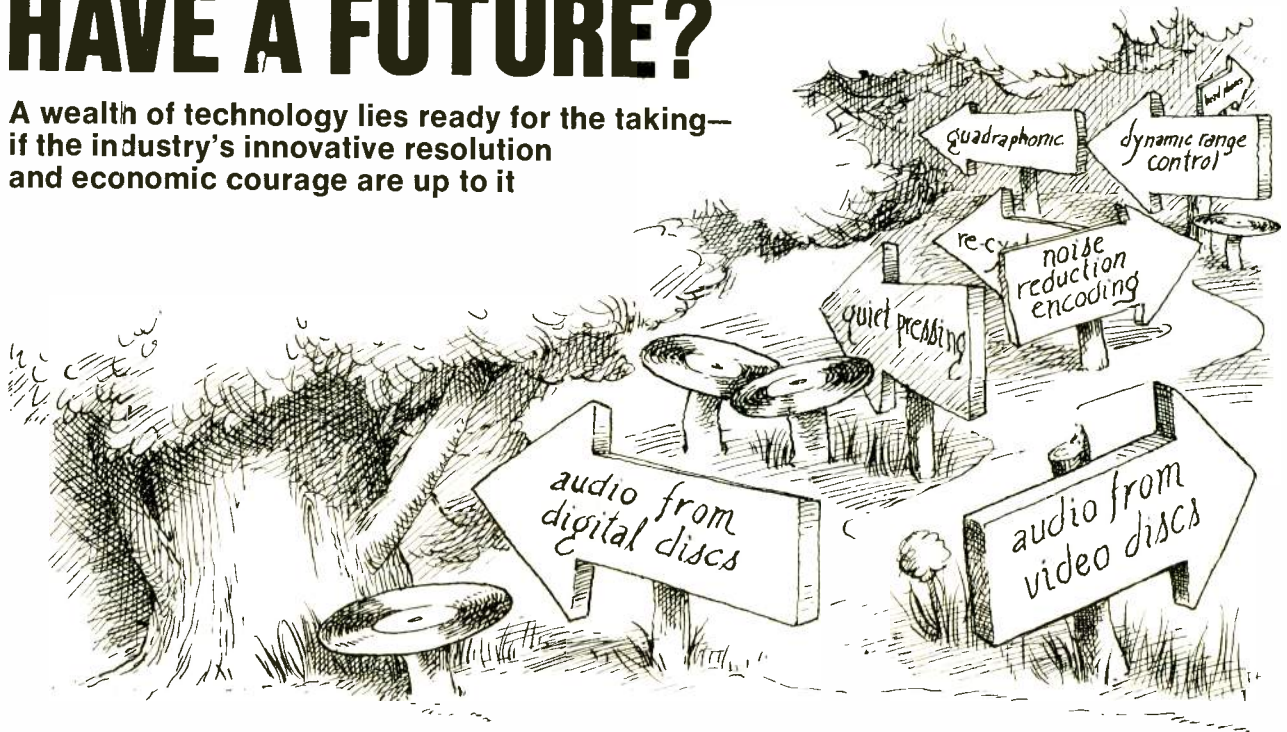
I told her I hadn't noticed that it became one *bit* easier. She smiled, patted my hand, poured me another cup of tea, and said, "Don't fret. Whatever it is, I assure you by the time you're my age it won't hurt any more."

A MABEL MERCER SAMPLER

Stanyan Records has produced, especially for STEREO REVIEW readers, a 7-inch, 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ -rpm sampler of the art of Mabel Mercer drawn from its just-released album "Mabel Mercer . . . for Always" (reviewed on page 90 by Rex Reed). The sampler includes, in addition to a short introductory tribute by Stanyan's Rod McKuen, Miss Mercer's performances of the songs *Once Upon a Time*, *Mira*, and *Ballad of the Sad Young Men*. To obtain your copy, send 25¢ to Diane Nakamura, STEREO REVIEW, 1 Park Avenue, New York, N. Y. 10016.

DOES THE PHONOGRAPH DISC HAVE A FUTURE?

A wealth of technology lies ready for the taking—if the industry's innovative resolution and economic courage are up to it



THE imminent dethronement of the phonograph disc from its position as the number-one medium for the reproduction of music has been predicted with numbing regularity ever since the introduction of the tape recorder to the consumer market. The attainment of genuine hi-fi status by the once lowly cassette has, further, given those predictions a new lease on life. "The Future of the LP" was therefore an appropriate topic for a panel discussion at the latest Midwest Acoustics Conference held last year in Evanston, Illinois, an

annual meeting that brings together leading engineers and consultants from all areas of the audio industry (the box on page 68 lists the panel members and their professional affiliations). As might be expected, the discussion covered a lot of ground, and in the question and answer session at the end many valuable comments were contributed by members of the audience. The following is my synopsis of the proceedings—which ought to be prefaced by an apology for any accidental omissions or faulty attributions.

—Craig Stark

THE first subject addressed by the panel, that of the limitations of present-day discs as a sound-reproducing medium, got quickly to the heart of the matter: the *dynamic-range requirements* of music and the *dynamic-range capabilities* of phonograph records. Simply defined, dynamic range is a ratio between the loudest and the softest sounds in a given recording situation: this ratio is expressed in decibels (dB). At the lower limit, dynamic range is determined by the point at which ambient room noise, hiss, or other noises on the tape or disc obscure or "mask"

our ability to hear such sounds as the dying reverberations at the end of a note. The upper end of the dynamic range is fixed by the loudest sounds we wish to hear or by limitations (such as distortion and phono-cartridge mistracking) of the record-playback system. Between these limits lies the system's usable range.

Panel moderator Daniel Queen opened the discussion by observing that peak sound-pressure levels in excess of 120 decibels are reasonably common in musical performances, and peaks of even 125 dB happen with significant frequency. At the

lower end of the range, good recording halls might have a (weighted) "background" noise level of about 30 dB (consisting of noise from air conditioning, traffic, and various other sources). Subtracting these unwanted sounds from the total leaves a potential range of 90 to 95 dB for the music. To capture this range, Queen suggested that the transmission medium (that is, the whole train of electronic gear between the original "raw" master tape and the finished disc) should have a signal-to-noise ratio at least about 10 dB better: "Any attempt to put full-range signals



of either serious rock or classical music through a system limited to less than 100 dB between peak levels and background noise means a compromise . . . there is information contained in this area [the full, uncompromised dynamic range] that the buying public may find important."

Queen's figures correlate well with measurements made of concert-hall performances, though it should be noted that with the addition of an audience the background-noise level rises considerably. On this same question of background noise, Elmar Stetter noted that very few living rooms are as quiet as a near-empty concert hall. "In a normal city residence. I don't know what background noise levels you *should* expect, but I suspect they're on the order of 40 to 50 dB." As concerns the other end of the loudness scale, he observed, with wry understatement, that "many people have adjacent neighbors who might complain when their walls started moving." In Stetter's view, therefore, a disc with a full 100-dB dynamic range would in many cases oblige its user to make constant trips between his easy chair and the volume control, alternately turning it up

to hear *pianissimos* above the background noise and turning it down on *fortissimo* passages to keep his neighbors' plaster from coming off walls or ceiling.

Given these considerations, the question then becomes: do we want or need a greater dynamic range on records intended for home playback than is presently being provided, and, if so, how do we get it? David Blackmer pointed out the advantages of using a noise-reduction process (on the master tape or even on the disc itself) to help preserve full dynamic range. Brief musical "transients"—the first few milliseconds of the "attack" on a given note—may run as much as 20 decibels higher than the *average* loudness. These momentary peaks don't register on the ear (yours or your neighbor's) at their true loudness level, but, he contends, they *do* constitute a significant part of the emotional impact of music and so should be preserved in the interest of musical realism. The way to do so, in his view, would be to *compress* the loudness range of the music during the making of the disc, thereby reducing a range of, say, 90 dB to 45 dB. This limited range can be cut well

above the residual surface noise of a disc and also well below the onset of distortion from excessive sound levels. A complementary expander circuit in our receivers or preamps can then restore the original dynamic range. This would constitute a kind of volume-level encoding, in some respects analogous to the RIAA frequency-response encoding or *equalization* conventionally used in modern recording practice.



Quiet Pressings

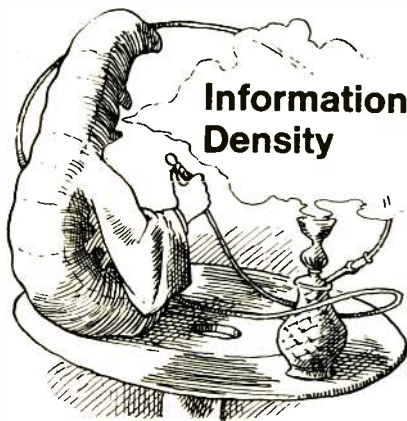
John Bittner responded to this approach rather pessimistically. He felt that if noise-reduction encoding were

added to discs, the record companies would say, "Now we don't have to worry about quality control any more as far as surface noise is concerned," and quality would eventually fall right back to where it started. Bittner went on to add that it is possible to produce a quiet recording right now: his company does it, and it is being done in Europe all the time. The problem, Bittner felt, was that present-day technology just isn't being used, first because a significant percentage of the public isn't demanding it, and second because the record companies aren't interested in it.

Asked for particulars, Bittner stressed that the issue was purely a matter of economics. For example, he noted, you can press a record quickly or you can press it slowly, and a longer cycle will generally give you a quieter record. But if you take forty seconds to press a record rather than thirty seconds, that's going to cut down your daily output. Therefore, there's a direct trade-off between how many records you can press and the quality of the pressings you turn out.

A recording engineer in the audience contributed a related point: "With Dolby or dbx I *know* I can put 80 to 90 dB of usable dynamic range on the master tape—which is more than most people can listen to in their homes. And I've also got to give the man on the disc-cutting lathe a break by not putting too much high-frequency energy on. At the same time, if I don't use the right overall level, kids with a \$25 portable aren't going to be able to play the disc because of the noise, power-output, and tracking limitations of their equipment. I've mixed lots of classical material and choral work that ended up on a major label, only to find that they later compressed the dynamic range because it was going to be for general consumer

use." The sympathetic applause from the audience served to underline the economic dilemma: it is evident that it is not the audiophile purist with state-of-the-art equipment and the desire to hear realistic dynamics who ultimately determines these matters, but rather the accountant who handles the recording-company ledgers.



Discussion then diverged to consider a variety of topics, ranging from the use of recycled vinyl (okay up to 30 per cent, according to Bittner; the noisier styrene substitute is being used only for lower-quality 45's) to the potential danger of hearing damage among those who listen to music at very high sound levels via headphones. Moderator Queen brought the discussion back to the main theme by asking RCA spokesman Joseph Wells what effect a wider dynamic range would have on the CD-4 quadrasonic system, which requires about twice the information density of an ordinary stereo disc. Wells replied that the four-channel information (which in this system modulates an ultrasonic carrier frequency which is then demodulated for playback) already *is* being subjected to noise-reduction techniques. The so-called

"base band," however, which is all the ordinary stereo listener to such a quadrasonic disc would hear, is not, for it would not then be compatible with existing stereo equipment. Wells did observe, moreover, that RCA has "found it necessary to upgrade the quality of record manufacture for CD-4 records because of the increased information density, and we have also developed new compounds and new techniques."

This brought Shure's Bernard Jakobs into the discussion, for every additional wiggle of the disc grooves ("increased information density") means that much more work for the phono cartridge. Though Blackmer's compression/expansion noise-reduction proposal would actually permit lower average stylus velocities, Jakobs was more concerned with tracking problems on momentary signal peaks at high frequencies: "For these short-duration time periods, the acceleration reaches numbers on the order of 2,000 to 3,000 times the force of gravity in the 6,000- to 10,000-Hz region." His hope, seconded by Blackmer, was that noise-reduction systems might provide some relief in this area, but he also feared that recording engineers, given a compression system that reduced average and even peak velocities, would use it to increase those velocities even further, easing the demands made on the phono cartridge not at all. Jakobs also echoed the concern voiced earlier by Stetter: if the background noise in the average home is 40 dB, and if you wish to play a record with a dynamic range of 60 dB, turning up the volume so you can hear the softest moments may result in high-level moments as intense as 100 dB. Do [most] consumers want it? Could they stand it?

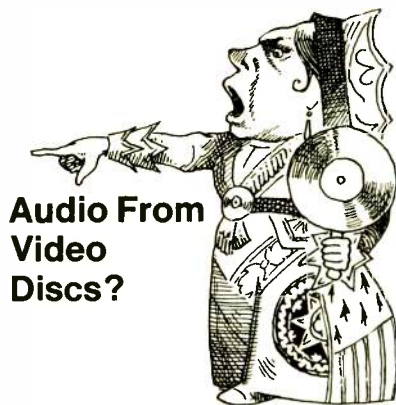
These questions quite naturally provoked some discussion of noise levels in typical listening situations. Most panelists concurred with the conventional estimates (weighted to discriminate against extremely low frequencies) that put the noise level in the average home between 30 and 40 dB. But, in the opinion of some, this noise figure, although weighted, is *still* dominated by low-frequency noise. If there is less noise at higher frequencies (generally more important for music), might there not be less masking of music, permitting a lower volume-control setting?

The consensus of the panel on this point was that there *could* be no consensus without more objective data.

PANEL: THE FUTURE OF THE LP

- Moderator: Daniel Queen, President, Daniel Queen Associates, Chicago, Illinois
- John Bittner, Jr., Mastering Engineer, Wakefield Manufacturing, Phoenix, Arizona
- David Blackmer, President, dbx, Inc., Harvard, Massachusetts
- Bernard Jakobs, Chief Development Engineer, Shure Brothers, Evanston, Illinois
- John (Jay) McKnight, Engineering Vice President, Magnetic Reference Laboratory, Palo Alto, California
- Elmar Stetter, Technical Sales Manager, Dolby Labs, London, England
- Joseph Wells, Manager, Electronic and Recording Development, RCA Records, Indianapolis, Indiana

But all agreed in principle that listeners in different environments—in an automobile, a noisy mid-city apartment, or a quiet country house—may well have different, incompatible dynamic-range requirements for deriving the greatest satisfaction from program material. Ideally, because the noise level of the listening environment is a factor beyond the record producer's control, the playback equipment ought to permit the listener to select not only the volume level preferred but the volume range (dynamic) as well, and this by the simple turn of a knob. That, at least, was a proposal the entire panel could endorse.



Audio From Video Discs?

What about the impact of future technical developments on dynamic range, frequency response, and multi-channel reproduction? This question inspired some comment on the several color TV, video-disc systems under development by Teldec, Philips, RCA, and others. (The video disc, with its 4,000,000-Hz bandwidth, of course requires a completely different recording, duplication, and playback technology. European and U.S. developers have been working with mechanical, electrostatic, and laser-beam pickups to play the discs, and have had some success with all three. However, playing time, turntable speed, and other considerations as well still remain problematic.) Bernard Jakobs pointed out that one of the most appealing things about video-disc technology as it might be used for purely audio applications is that the bandwidth requirements for audio are nowhere near as great as those for video, which means that the rotational speed of the disc (typically 1,500 rpm for video purposes) can be slowed down and playing time increased. Or, conversely, it would be easy to trade some playing time for as

many additional, completely independent sound channels as desired—up to a dozen or more.

Two questions that arose immediately in connection with these discs were: How should the information be recorded on them, and what form should the information take? Video discs have been developed that are mechanical (there is an actual groove with physical modulations just as in a phonograph disc) and photographic (a light scans an optical pattern on a translucent disc). Also, there is the possibility of a magnetic disc with a groove that is a very thin magnetic track designed to be "read" by a transducer similar to a tape head. As to the form of the recorded signal, virtually all audio is stored or broadcast in analog form, which means that for every audible phenomenon (intensity, frequency, and phase) there are direct physical (or magnetic) analogs built into the recording; among these are the extent of stylus excursion, rate of stylus vibration, and playing speed of the disc. But there is another form of information storage common in the world of computers: digital recording, which, briefly speaking, reduces everything to "bits" of information numerically encoded. These bits can be "played back" and converted to the original electrical analog of the musical waveform that the microphone produced. And, of course, the electrical analog can in turn be converted by the speaker back to analogous acoustical terms.

Or From Digital Discs?



The great advantage of digital techniques is that once the audio signal achieves digital form, it is "safe" from any intrusion of noise, distortion, frequency-response degradation, or even (since frequency and time are in code form and not dependent on the steady rotation of a turntable) wow and flutter. Some companies in Japan

have already begun using digital processing to produce records—the so-called PCM (pulse-code modulation) discs described in Larry Klein's "Audio News" column last July. The recorded signal must ultimately return to analog form, of course, either to drive speakers or, in the case of the Japanese recordings, to drive the record-cutting lathe (since the LP disc is not a suitable medium for digital recording, and since there is no consumer sound system set up to playback digital recordings).

Many members of the panel were of the opinion that digital techniques may in time come to play the dominant role in home-entertainment media, but there are enormous technical and financial obstacles to be overcome before this happens. One of these problems, touched upon by Elmar Stetter, is that digital recordings require far more recording "space" than analog recordings, so that the recording medium, whatever it is, must have even more capacity than most present systems do. When the amount of digital information to be encoded exceeds the capacity of the medium to accept it (or to give it back properly on replay), a digital system is subject to a kind of overload that produces gross distortion. This fact has problematic implications for dynamic range in particular. Digital techniques are virtually ideal as long as their limitations are respected, but any overload is literally catastrophic. A digital system can be designed with less tendency to overload than any analog system now in use, but an analog system overloads more "gently," with incremental increases in distortion rather than instant chaos. Perhaps the next Midwest Acoustics Conference, scheduled to concentrate on digital techniques, will put these matters in clearer perspective.

Can all this be summarized easily? Well, it appears that there are still strong differences of opinion among the experts in regard to what they think the consumer wants to hear—probably because of an almost complete lack of objective data supporting anyone's subjective views. But it also appears, gratifyingly, that there is technology presently available to do almost anything we want—assuming that the cost remains within reason and that we can agree on what it is we want to do. We have the road maps, we have the means of transportation. Where do we want to go?



Travis Hudson and Ronny Whyte

CABARET!

It begins to look as if popular music will flounder its way back to quality

By Robert Connolly

ALTHOUGH rock may not be dead or even dying, its most avid supporters will usually admit that it has entered a period of decadence. Music critics, record-company executives, and performers wonder, just as you and I do, where the next big surge in popular music will come from. Will it be country-and-western? Rhythm-and-blues? Middle-of-the-road? Latin? Reggae? Or something as yet unknown to us? Recording star Harry Nilsson is of the opinion that there will be a reaction against the self-indulgence and the amateurism that have characterized much of rock-and-roll in favor of greater musical craft and professionalism. Nilsson prophesies that there will soon be a

great rush to return to "quality pop."

Support for this view can be found in the recent emergence of the singer Cleo Laine as a superstar. A mature artist who has been singing and recording for years, she has suddenly been discovered by a large audience

which is thrilled by her awesome musical skills finely honed by years of performing in clubs. Miss Laine is so versatile she is hard to classify, but for me she is essentially a jazz-oriented cabaret singer, and although she can now fill a large concert hall anytime she chooses, she still sings in clubs and recently completed an engagement of several weeks at the Maisonnette in the St. Regis Hotel in New York.

Further evidence of a return to quality in popular music is the revival throughout the country of cabaret singing in night clubs. I don't mean the big brassy clubs at resort hotels in Miami, Las Vegas, Puerto Rico, and elsewhere, but the small supper clubs which, for want of a better term, we call "cabarets." There you can hear the very best of popular music sung by its most skillful interpreters.

The period of the 1930's through the 1950's was perhaps the heyday of night clubs and night-club singers. After the theater or a dinner party New Yorkers liked to top off the evening by dropping into a club to hear some favorite performer. There was an entertainer, an ambiance, and a price tag to fit every taste. In Greenwich Village at Cafe Society, Bon Soir, and the Village Vanguard, you could hear Mae Barnes, Josh White, Susan Reed, and a very young Harry Belafonte; at the jazz joints on Fifty-Second Street, Maxine Sullivan and Sarah Vaughan; at the big hotels, Hildegard and Sophie Tucker; and at the Versailles, Le Ruban Bleu, or La Vie en Rose there were the French artists Mistinguett, Jean Sablon, and Edith Piaf. New York, of course, had the largest number of clubs, but there were plenty in Detroit, Chicago, and San Francisco too. And Boston had what many people consider the nicest one of all, Storyville, in Kenmore Square.

During that golden era of American night life, going to a club could provide a unique and wonderful musical experience that cannot be duplicated

Mae Barnes



Maxine Sullivan



Harry Belafonte



Mercury



Sarah Vaughan

John Hobbs



Sophie Tucker

French Embassy



Jean Sablon

Chuck Stewart



Billie Holiday

elsewhere. Cabaret singing is an intimate art, one intended to be enjoyed by a small number of people in a small space. What a thrill it was to find yourself just a few feet away from Lee Wiley, Edith Piaf, Billie Holiday, or Mildred Bailey as she cast her spell over you and the rest of the audience, her every nuance and flick of an eyelash perceptible. On a good night when both artist and audience were relaxed and responsive, it could be unforgettable—a musical high such as no drug can produce.

THEN, toward the end of the Fifties, the clubs started closing or ceased to use high-quality entertainment. A great many reasons are given: the arrival of the rock era, the decline of downtown areas in American cities and the flight of the affluent to the suburbs, the competition from television and stereo, and rising costs—a club that holds a hundred people simply cannot pay an artist what he receives in Las Vegas or in a sports arena. Le Ruban Bleu, Bon Soir, the Blue Angel, Cafe Society, and the Fifty-Second Street clubs closed their doors or were transformed into rock joints, discotheques, or strip-tease palaces.

Now, all of a sudden, cabaret singers seem to be coming back into their own. A new generation of artists has arisen, and some of the older ones who are nearing the ends of their careers find themselves the objects of veneration and are more popular than ever. Others who were happy to line up a weekend gig somewhere a few years ago now see their old records reissued and selling better than they did originally. Following a Town Hall recital, Hildegard is on an East Coast tour. Teddi King, a very sweet singer prominent in the Fifties, has never been busier: after engagements at the Copley Plaza in Boston and the Riverboat in New York, she has gone on to others in Syracuse, Buffalo, and Windsor, Conn. And jazz singer

Sylvia Syms has returned to the night-club scene after an absence of some twenty years, and she is singing better than ever. Last fall she received nationwide raves for her appearances at Buddy's Place in New York, where she was backed by a superb trio and with a program of lesser-known ballads gave a demonstration of the heights to which American popular music can rise.

Within the last year in New York alone we have had such singers as Greta Keller at the Stanhope; Mabel Mercer at the St. Regis; Jackie and Roy, Anita O'Day, Morgana King, and Sarah Vaughan at the new Half Note; and Maxine Sullivan, Jane Harvey, Hugh Shannon, and even the legendary Bricktop at various smart East Side *boîtes*. At his Greenwich Village restaurant, the Cookery, Barney Josephson (former owner of the famous Cafe Society Uptown and Downtown) has featured Susan Reed, Nellie Lutcher, and Rose Murphy.

Among the many new clubs is Reno Sweeney in Greenwich Village, opened by two young graduates of

Columbia University, Lewis Friedman and Eliot Hubbard, who had always been fascinated by this glittering cabaret world they were too young to have known. In addition to established artists—Blossom Dearie, for example—they have presented a series of younger entertainers, such as Peter Allen, some of whom may turn out to be the Tony Bennetts and Lena Hornes of tomorrow.

As examples of the best in American and European cabaret singing I've selected a group of my personal favorites and will recommend a few of their currently available records. Any category that includes such di-



Teddi King

Helen Kenner



Sylvia Syms

J. J. Krieseman



Anita O'Day

Paramount



Morgana King



Associated Booking



Left, Nellie Lutcher; right, Rose Murphy

Dinah
Washington



Ruth Bowen

verse artists as a European charmer like Greta Keller and a rather tough jazz singer like Carmen McRae is bound to be a sprawling one, but these singers share certain common characteristics. Most of them are women. They concentrate on projecting the music and the lyrics with a minimum of gestures and theatrics rather than on pushing their own personalities, with the result that few of them have become sex symbols. All are superior musicians, true artists as well as entertainers, and their professional integrity makes them choose their songs with the greatest care from the best popular music of the past and present, which puts them above changing fashions. Cabaret singers have rescued many fine songs, such as *September Song* and *When They Begin the Beguine*, from oblivion and made them classics.

In clubs they create an aura of intimacy and somehow manage to make each patron feel like a guest in their private living room. Because of the subtlety of their art, they require greater attention than ordinary pop singers, and one noisy patron is enough to throw them off. I have seen Mel Tormé, faced with an inattentive audience, resort to withering sarcasm and saunter off the stage without finishing his song. Blossom Dearie will say politely, "Some of these people are my friends and have come to hear me." If that doesn't work, she simply cuts her set short. And Dinah Washington had a couple of unprintable squelches ready which were guaranteed to keep the offender in stunned silence for the rest of the show.

Most of the American cabaret singers show a strong jazz influence, a quality that has never been popular with the mass public, and since they play to small audiences of greater than usual sensitivity and musical sophistication, none of them have achieved the prominence of Elvis Presley or Tom Jones, but their influence on the art of popular singing has

been greater than the limited size of their audience might suggest. Marlene Dietrich has freely acknowledged her debt to Greta Keller, and such stars as Frank Sinatra, Tony Bennett, and Johnny Mathis have stated that the one singer who taught them most about phrasing and the interpretation of lyrics is Mabel Mercer.

I have omitted from my list the singers who play the Las Vegas and Miami circuit—Peggy Lee, Dionne Warwick, Tony Bennett, and so forth—where audience, repertoire, and style of delivery are another story altogether. Though at first the cabaret artists may require a little more attention than other pop singers, they are far from inaccessible to anyone willing to stretch his ears a bit, as listening to the records of the following performers will prove.

FIRST of all is Lee Wiley, who for me represents the *ne plus ultra* of American cabaret singers and is to many the finest white female singer that America has produced. Her voice has been aptly described as "pure Southern Comfort"—husky, reedy, and caressing—and her use of



Lee Wiley

it shows how much she learned from the great jazz instrumentalists she often worked with. She was so skillful a musician that she could sing a song virtually straight—without any perceptible altering of the melodic line—and it still became fascinatingly and totally her own. And no one could put across a Gershwin or a Cole Porter lyric with more wit and charm.

Between 1939 and 1945 the Liberty Music Shop recorded (on sandpaper, I think) three albums by Lee Wiley singing the loveliest and least hackneyed songs of Gershwin, Porter, and Harold Arlen. She also made a Rodgers and Hart album for Rab-

son's Music Shop in 1940. Accompanied by the likes of Eddie Condon, Fats Waller, Bunny Berigan, and Bobby Hackett, she gave perhaps the definitive performances of these songs. We shall be forever indebted to Monmouth Evergreen for re-releasing all four albums, with much improved sound, on two LP's: Rodgers and Hart and Arlen on MES 6087 and Gershwin and Porter on MES 7034.

Of the great American singers, one of the least represented on LP is the late Libby Holman. Perhaps no other American singer of her sex possessed such natural vocal equipment—a gorgeous, sensual contralto, the use of which was influenced by her idol, Ethel Waters. In a four-year period Miss Holman introduced on Broadway *Body and Soul*, *Can't We Be Friends*, *Moanin' Low*, *Something to Remember You By*, and *You and the Night and the Music* and made them forever her own. A few of these can be heard on various MCA and RCA nostalgia collections. I recommend



Libby Holman

"Originals, Musical Comedy, 1909-1935" (RCA LPV-560), which contains *You and the Night and the Music*. In 1965, accompanied by Gerald Cook, Miss Holman recorded an album which is now available as "The Legendary Libby Holman" on Monmouth Evergreen (MES-6501), and that label has recently reissued

Blossom Dearie



Grey & Davis



Jackie Cain and Roy Kral

"Something to Remember Her By," a collection of songs she recorded in 1954 and 1965. (It is reviewed elsewhere in this issue.)

ONE of the pleasantest compensations for living in overcrowded Manhattan is the presence of Blossom Dearie in our midst. With her long blonde hair, Gibson-girl dresses, and shining cheeks, she brings a breath of fresh air into a night club. For the past twenty-odd years people have been discovering or rediscovering her and falling under the spell of her small, pure voice, her gentle, humorous projection of lyrics, and her economical piano accompaniment. "But don't call me a jazz singer," she implores. "You don't know how many jobs that word has lost me. I'm a singer, period. And I'm tired of being called *tasteful*, too!" Well, she's right. She's not a jazz singer, and the word is *tasty*. Her music manages to be both inventive enough to satisfy other musicians and pretty enough to get across to everybody.

In the late Fifties, Blossom recorded a series of albums for Verve in which everything—repertoire, backing, and interpretation—is just about perfect. I've never stopped listening to my copies, and they sound as fresh as if they had been recorded yesterday; reissues are in order. In England, where she is a great favorite, she recorded four albums for Fontana (a Mercury label), only one of which was released here, "Blossom Time." Fontana SRF 67562. A low bow of gratitude in advance goes to Stanyan Records, who have announced that they will release at least one of the others here shortly.

Blossom also brightens up several of the Ben Bagley albums of rediscovered show tunes on the Painted Smiles label. And she recently released an album of her own compositions—*I'm Shadowing You, Hey, John* (for John Lennon), *Sunday Af-*

ternoon, and so forth—on her own label, Daffodil. It is called "Blossom Dearie Sings" (Daffodil BMD 101) and is available in stores or from Blossom Enterprises, Ltd., P.O. Box 522, Radio City Station, New York, N.Y. 10019.

Jackie Cain and Roy Kral are charter members of this small group of the musical elite. Two kids from the Chicago area, they got their start with Charlie Ventura's band and became famous for their incredibly intricate bop vocals. Going out on their own, they developed a sound and a repertoire that were unique, with Roy on piano, both on vocals, and the bass and drums often supplemented by a cello or French horn.

They now rarely sing their lovely Rodgers and Porter standards, preferring to be a part of today's musical scene performing the work of Paul Simon, Bob Dylan, and the Beatles, which they usually do more beautifully than the original interpreters. Over the years they have recorded for many labels. With a bit of looking you can still find "Grass" (Capitol ST 2936) and "Changes" (Verve V/V6-8668). Both are well worth searching for, particularly "Changes," in which they sing the cream of the songs of the Sixties. For the CTI label they recently made "Time and Love," (CTI 6019), which is a "production," utilizing a large orchestra and all the techniques of modern stereo to achieve effects impossible in a club. Their latest release, "A Wilder Alias" (CTI 6040), is lovely and the most advanced thing they've done to date.

Two singers who may not seem to belong in the category of cabaret singers, but must be mentioned in any discussion of superior club singing, are Mel Tormé and Lena Horne. It is true that both are very well known and sing in big clubs, but their styles

Mel Tormé



were formed in smaller, more intimate surroundings, and Tormé, at least, still plays such rooms as the St. Regis Maisonnette.

To me, Tormé is the wittiest, most interesting, and most musicianly of all current American pop singers—more than Sinatra, even though he lacks Sinatra's lovely voice and warmth. In clubs Tormé does little or nothing to woo the audience, but speaks to them with total frankness the way he would to his friends backstage. He sings more with his brain than with his heart; his stock in trade is not warmth or sex appeal, but breathtaking and sophisticated musicianship. In the mid-Fifties Tormé made a series of superb recordings on Bethlehem, notable for the backings by the Marty Paich Dek-tette. They were circulated for a while on London, and one of them, "Mel Tormé," has been reissued on a British bargain label (World Record Club TP 350), which is available in this country. American reissues of some of his earlier recordings are "Velvet Fog" (Vocalion 73905E) and "The Best of Mel Tormé" (Verve 68593).

Lena Horne is so beautiful that few people ever get around to hearing



Lena Horne

how gifted a singer she is. And so she seems to have concluded that in her club appearances audiences would rather hear her do flamboyant, sexy material than give undivided attention to a subtle Bart Howard song. On records, however, she performed some of the loveliest American show tunes for RCA (some with backing by Marty Paich). Within the last year all of them have been deleted by RCA, but they are still widely available in

record stores, and Woolworth's, which is a big buyer of cut-outs, is a good place to find them at bargain prices. Look for "It's Love" (LPM-1148), "Lena—Lovely and Alive" (LSP-2587), and "Lena on the Blue Side" (LSP-2465).

Although she must be classified as a jazz singer (and she is unsurpassed in that category), Carmen McRae spends a lot of time singing in small clubs or cabarets. She can play the Rainbow Room in Rockefeller Center one week and a jazz musicians' hangout the next—and with equal success. Unlike Mabel Mercer or Greta Keller, who purvey charm and hospitality in the clubs where they sing, Miss McRae is down-to-earth and astringent. She is not concerned with offering small talk or haute couture; she just gets up from the bar and sings. But how she sings!

Having begun her career as a teenage vocalist with the bands of Benny Carter, Count Basie, and Mercer Ellington, she acquired the ability to use her voice with the skill of a great jazz instrumentalist. She does not make a



Carmen McRae

little drama of each song—the vocal line is the thing with her, and she is incapable of emitting an uninteresting phrase. Of her dozen or so albums currently listed in the Schwann catalog, I especially recommend the two-disc set "The Great American Songbook" (Atlantic SD 2-904) and "Alive!" (Mainstream 800), also two discs, on which the atmosphere of a small club is palpable. A Stanyan album of Carmen McRae singing Noël Coward songs is reviewed in this issue.

The grande dame of cabaret singing in America is Mabel Mercer. English rather than American, she is an insti-



Edith Piaf

tution here because she has lived and worked in this country for more than thirty years, influencing our finest songwriters and our major popular singing stars. Consummate mistress of her art, and the most economical of singers, she is unparalleled at creating a mood and projecting a lyric. Since she is the subject of the cover story in this issue and a long review of a new Stanyan reissue and Atlantic's four-disc "A Tribute to Mabel Mercer on the Occasion of Her 75th Birthday," I will not go into greater detail on her fascinating and unique talents. But if you are new to this genre, I would not suggest that you *start* with Miss Mercer. She is the most rarefied of the cabaret singers, her material is sometimes recondite, and she is an acquired taste that takes careful cultivation. Her recordings include two double albums with Bobby Short: "Mabel Mercer & Bobby Short at Town Hall" (Atlantic SD 2-604) and "Mabel Mercer & Bobby Short, Second Town Hall Concert" (Atlantic SD 2-605). Besides the Stanyan album and the Atlantic tribute set, I would recommend the well-documented two-disc set "The Art of Mabel Mercer" (Atlantic LP 2-602, mono).

In addition to her English music-hall background and what she absorbed from American musicians after she arrived here in the 1940's, Mabel Mercer must have been influenced by the great European cabaret tradition, for she spent the period between the two World Wars on the Continent, mostly in Paris. A discussion of the European cabaret heritage in terms of recordings would probably begin with Aristide Bruant and Yvette Guilbert, legendary figures of the Belle Epoque, both immortalized in paintings by Toulouse-Lautrec, and with Mistinguett, who came

along later in the century. Fortunately all three made recordings, currently available on French Pathé and distributed in this country by Peters International (619 West 54th Street, New York, N.Y. 10019).

Unquestionably, the most famous modern exponent of the French cabaret style is Edith Piaf, who began as a street singer, moved into cabarets, and ultimately became so popular that she usually played in large theaters. The fact that she made hit records might almost disqualify her from this list, but her emotional commitment to each song and her repertoire of story songs so well exemplify what cabaret singing is all about that she must be included. A dozen years after her death any decently stocked American record store still has a special bin of Piaf albums. I don't think she ever made a bad record, so it would be hard for you to go wrong. Start with "The Best of Edith Piaf" (Capitol DT-2616E) or Capitol's three-disc "Edith Piaf Deluxe Set" (DTCL-2953E) or almost any of the many available imports.

The European cabaret tradition has never had a better ambassador to this country than Vienna's matchless Greta Keller, who has divided her career between America and Europe. A frankly older woman, she is still glamorous, and just watching her make her entrance into the Rembrandt Room of New York's old-worldish Stanhope Hotel in a gown of heavy white satin, take her place in the curve of the piano beside a vase of red roses, and run her hand through her soft blonde hair may make you feel you've already got your money's worth. She sings in German and English and occasionally in French, and her repertoire ranges from Franz

Greta Keller



Lehár through Kurt Weill, Cole Porter, and Noël Coward right up to Jacques Brel and Rod McKuen. Her performance of, say, Robert Stolz's bittersweet *Don't Ask Me Why* is as finely wrought as that of Elisabeth Schwarzkopf interpreting a Schubert lied.

When you listen to Greta Keller's early records—she has been recording since 1929—you realize with amazement that the style has remained virtually unchanged, and so has the voice itself. Stanyan has released "Greta Keller: Great Songs of the 30's" (SR 10042), a collection of her early recordings of German and American favorites. Also on Stanyan (SR 5040) is "An Evening in Vienna with Greta Keller and Rod McKuen," recorded at their joint concert at the Brahms-Saal in 1971. If there is a German record store in your city, you can choose from a variety of imported Keller records. I heartily recommend "Greta Keller: 38 bis auf Widerruf" (Amadeo AVRS 9257). Recorded in Vienna in 1970, it conveys very well the heady experience of Greta live in a small club.

Germany's finest exponent of the art of cabaret singing today is Gisela May, a leading actress of the Berliner Ensemble. Her interpretations of the German theater songs of Bertolt Brecht, Kurt Weill, Paul Dessau, and Hanns Eisler do not pale beside those of Lotte Lenya, who introduced many of them. Miss May does not imitate Lenya, but gives her own interpretations with a strong bite of social commentary and a suggestion of the decadence of German life in the Twenties shown in the film *Cabaret*. She toured the United States in 1971, 1972, and 1974, mesmerizing in her audiences even those who did not know a word of German. She can be heard on the Brecht-Weill "Seven Deadly Sins" (Deutsche Grammophon 139308) and a couple of splendid imported recitals. "Gisela May:

Gisela May



Brecht/Weill" (Philips 843 783 PY) includes songs from *Mahagonny*, *Happy End*, and *The Threepenny Opera*; "Bertolt Brecht Songs" (Deutsche Grammophon 144035) includes settings of Brecht lyrics by Weill, Eisler, and others.

Two stores in New York that are good sources for Keller and May records are Bremen House, 218 East 86th Street, New York, N.Y. 10028, and H. Mielke Co., 242 East 86th Street, New York, N.Y. 10028. Both do mail order business.

Spain, a country with slight contemporary cabaret traditions, can boast at least one artist of exceptional stature, deserving of international fame. Nati Mistral from Madrid is a strikingly beautiful singing actress who starred in the Spanish, Argentine, and Mexican productions of *Man of La Mancha*. She has appeared with great success at the Chateau Madrid in New York and more recently in concert in Miami. Her voice is rich and beautiful, her diction is exemplary, and her projection of the lyrics is to-



Nati Mistral

tal; she has an authoritative command of a wider variety of musical styles than any other popular singer I know. Her records can be found in stores with well-stocked international departments, such as King Karol and Sam Goody in New York, Rose's in Chicago, and Odyssey in San Francisco, or in Spanish shops in areas with large Spanish-speaking communities. On the Mexican Orfeon label look for "Nati de America" (LP/E-12-780) and "La Maravillosa Nati Mistral" (LP-12-686). The easiest to find these days is "La Trascendencia Universal y Madrileña de Nati Mistral" (Alhambra C 7004), which was reviewed in this magazine in November 1974 and is cited in this issue for Honorable Mention in the Record of

the Year Awards. If you cannot find it locally, write directly to Alhambra Records, 2214 West 8th Court, Hialeah, Florida 33012. That company also imports from Spain another excellent Mistral recital, "Nati Mistral" (Spanish Columbia CS 8055).

To close I'd like to call your attention to the very best of the new crop of American cabaret artists, the singing duo of Ronny Whyte and Travis Hudson, who have already built up a faithful following in New York and wherever else they have performed in the last few years. Both are blessed with attractive personalities, first-rate, wide-ranging voices, musicianship, humor, and impeccable taste in their repertoire.

Whyte and Hudson specialize in the lesser-known tunes of the best Broadway composers and manage to come up with songs that are both unhackneyed and totally delightful. Unusually versatile, they go with ease from old vaudeville corn to jazz-flavored tunes, big romantic numbers, and Broadway standards. They perform the songs of the Thirties and Forties with relish and no worries about not seeming to be "with it." Their first album, "We Like a Gershwin Tune" (Monmouth Evergreen MES 7061), received the rave it deserved in *STEREO REVIEW* when it was issued a little over a year ago. Their new album, "It's Smooth, It's Smart, It's Rodgers, It's Hart" (Monmouth Evergreen MES 7069), got a bigger rave here last November. It contains Whyte and Hudson's revival of the exquisite *I'll Tell the Man in the Street*, from *I Married an Angel*, and that alone would justify their existence and their inclusion among the elite of cabaret artists.

My apologies to Bobby Short, Milly, Hugh Shannon, Chris Connor, Portia Nelson, Juliette Greco, Pat-achou, Amalia Rodrigues, Germaine Montero, Morgana King, David Allen, and the many others for whom there was no space. You will discover these and others who may become your favorites when you look for the records I've recommended. Since this art is impervious to changing fads in popular music, an album of high-quality cabaret singing is a good investment because it never becomes dated. The intimacy of cabaret singing makes it ideal for home listening, and with recordings you can sit alone in your room and have the cabaret come to you.



LILI KRAUS, MOZARTEAN

By Richard Freed

WHEN Lili Kraus performed in Lincoln Center's "Mostly Mozart" Festival last August, about twenty New Yorkers (most of them in their early twenties) wanted to buy my tickets before I entered the building. Another thirty or forty (of comparable age) were waiting around the box office in hopes of cancellations, and among the capacity audience in Avery Fisher Hall were many who did not look at all like regular concertgoers but whose faces reflected the confident expectation of a grand experience. Such has been the scene in virtually every city in which I have heard Lili Kraus play Mozart concertos.

There is something about Mme. Kraus' smiling presence (and, when she speaks, the sound of her voice) that makes it clear to everyone in a concert hall that she is there not only to do homage to music, but out of the most genuine love for the listeners in all those seats. And it is nothing less than love that she gets back. On this particular Mozart evening Mme. Kraus played a brief solo recital (the K. 333 Sonata, a minuet, and a set of German dances) at seven, and in the orchestral concert a couple of hours later presented a dramatic, superbly integrated performance of the D Minor Concerto (No. 20, K. 466) with conductor Milton Katims. In the pianist's dressing room between the two events, it seemed not at all surprising to see one little woman approach her, declare simply "I love you, Lili," accept a huge hug, and disappear.

The next morning I talked with Lili Kraus after her rehearsal of the *Kegelstatt* Trio (K. 498) with clarinetist Charles Russo and Katims as violist. She is aware, she said, of "the power of the *aura* of a person, his radiation, his emanation. Therefore, when I appear on the stage—though I might be dying with anxiety—I have no other wish than to *involve* these people in the beauty of what I am about to transmit. I don't *make* it, but both my love for the music and my desire to project it are radiated; yes, it is a matter of love. So my playing, I hope, is much warmer than a performance would be that is, so to speak, handicapped by concern for effect. I never worry about effect. It is my wish to do justice to the work and make it possible for the listener to identify the piece in me."

This identification is remarkably effective, but as the otherwise happy crowd filed out of the hall after Mme. Kraus' solo recital, one young woman expressed irritation over the pianist's "aggressive" playing. "Mozart," she told her escort in a voice of authority, "should be delicate and subtle." I mentioned this to Mme. Kraus and then braced myself for something like Charles Ives' classic defense of Carl Ruggles' *Men and Mountains* ("Stop being such a God-damned sissy," Ives told a man who had hissed. "Stand up and use your ears like a man!") Her extremely polished but still Hungarian-inflected English is hardly Ivesian, but she had obviously heard such opinions before, and had a good deal to say about them.

"To say that Mozart should be played delicately," she said, "is to say that life should only have pink pastel and blue pastel colors—no ups and downs; that it should be white, serene, not too happy, please, but just nice, comfortable, pleasant, charming. As we all know, there are no depths of unhappiness, tragedy, frustration, anger that haven't touched Mozart to the core—likewise no bliss that he has not experienced. Any musician worth his salt speaks his life—the greater the master, the more economical the means; he doesn't have to put his heart on his sleeve. The past master of such understatement was Mozart, always with the understanding that what he had to say was glowing inside and shines through the seemingly restricted and almost childish simple—close to the line between *childish* and *childlike*. Anybody who is not conversant through personal experience with the dynamic range will not be able to discern the difference between the *pretense* of loud playing and the bodily *forte*. Now, when I play Mozart I don't ever really play loud—I would not play a single *forte* in Mozart as I play one in Beethoven—but by comparison the *piano*, which is never a Chopinesque *pianissimo*, already affects the listener as if it were loud. Through vitality, tension, imagination, I create the illusion that it is *very* loud, whereas it is never a *forte per se*.

"Only people who are *conventionally* and superficially acquainted with Mozart can ever come to the idea that he should be played delicately or lifelessly—*prettily*. Never, never, never! Always he has to have that wonderful incision that he is capable of creating whether he is *dolcissimo* or in despair. Certainly it has to be subtle and to contain, like life itself, all the surprises from tragedy to comedy, and it does; but if you always play that through a veil it can never possibly show its true vigor and impressiveness. Contrasts only seem extreme to someone who expects blandness."

To some, this may sound like an extremely romantic approach to Mozart, and yet an English critic welcomed Mme. Kraus' first recording of the Fantasy and Sonata,

K. 475/457, in the Thirties as a lesson in "how to give Mozart his due life without romanticizing him." By way of describing her personal response to Mozart, she cites Glenn Gould, whose Mozart is utterly different from hers but whose Bach she admires enormously. "The first time I listened to Glenn Gould's recordings I had the feeling 'Yes, this is how Bach should be played.' That's very extraordinary, because there are *many* very good recordings of Bach. But he plays it in a way as if he would have invented a new instrument to play Bach, and that kind of identification can come only from one thing—that he did indeed invent a new means of playing him, and that it is *the* way, the only convincing way. In the same way, I identify with Mozart: it is never a problem of 'How will I play that?' It simply doesn't occur, because I speak his language. My approach is totally spontaneous. Not more so than in Haydn, perhaps, but *much* more so than in Bach, *infinitely* more so than in Schumann, not at all in Brahms. There are these affinities. You see, between Mozart and Schubert there is a *terrific* link; one would almost think one could exchange them. Altogether this world is my very own—Haydn to Schubert."

LILI KRAUS was born in Budapest to a Czech father and a Hungarian mother. She began her piano studies when she was six, and two years later entered the Royal Academy of Music, where the late Zoltán Kodály and Béla Bartók were among her teachers. At seventeen she received her degree and went on to study with Eduard Steuermann and Artur Schnabel in Vienna: by the time she was twenty she was a full professor at the Vienna Academy. At that time her identification with Mozart did not occupy the dominant position in her career it does now.

"From about eighteen to twenty-three I was known as a Chopin player. I had then a forest of hair on my head, and no matter how many hairpins I would use to keep it up, by the end of a big, dramatic piece—say, the F Minor *Fantaisie*—the hairpins would all be scattered on the floor and my hair down. I'm sure the audience thought: 'If this isn't Romantic, what is!' But then I began to play Beethoven, both alone and with Szymon Goldberg (with whom I recorded all the Beethoven sonatas for violin and

A position as artist-in-residence at Texas Christian University allows Miss Kraus time for a little of a favored exercise.



piano), and for some years I was known primarily as a Beethoven pianist. After I made my first Mozart recording—the C Minor Fantasy and Sonata—I was approached to do more Mozart, including the piano-and-violin sonatas, which I did with Goldberg. For this a Mozart Society was formed in London, and it was very successful."

During the Thirties Mme. Kraus toured continental Europe, Britain, the Orient, South Africa, and Australasia. Shortly before World War II she settled in London with her husband—the late Otto Mandl—and their two children. In 1942, despite the war, she set out from Holland, together with her family and Goldberg, on a world tour that was to culminate in her American debut, scheduled for February 1943 with Pierre Monteux and the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra. While she was in what was then known as Java (Indonesia today), that Dutch colony fell to the Japanese, and she was imprisoned there for three years under the most wretched conditions. She does not find it painful to recall that experience now, her only reservation being that "the story has a beard on it."

"I have spent years more pleasantly, but not more fruitfully. The miracle of it is that I was aware even while it went on that there was no greater privilege God bestowed on me than these three years, because what I learned then I could never, never have understood and learned under any other circumstances. For a full year I had no idea what had become of my husband or my children. It was the one and only time we had the kids along, aged then nine and ten. We were separated and that was it. I was



Teachers and advanced students from all over the world have attended her famed master classes in Mozart interpretation.

not merely interned, but arrested on a trumped-up charge. A Dutch woman in trouble herself following her liaison with a Japanese officer signed a document stating that I had plotted with the American wife of the Dutch governor general (still today my best friend) to release a handful of British and Australian P.O.W.'s. It was fortunate they had only this charge against me, for if they had known what my husband and I *had* done they probably would have killed us: we had a hidden radio, we were harboring goods for the Dutch already in prison, transporting money from camp to camp, smuggling letters from wives to husbands."

In the first year of her imprisonment Mme. Kraus was one of fourteen women crowded into a tiny subterranean cell that was locked from 5 p.m. to 8 a.m. without excep-

tion. She subsisted on a daily ration of two cups of rice and herbs, and was forced to use her bare hands to scrub latrines with harsh chemicals. After about a year, a Japanese conductor with whom she had performed in Tokyo in 1936 and who had since become active in Batavia (Djakarta) learned of her presence and was able to arrange her transfer to a "privileged" camp, where she was reunited with her family.

"I learned in this period not to covet or envy the neighbors who had thought to bring along some reserve food which they did not share with us; not to hate, not to resent . . . to understand the big, robust Dutchwoman crying because she had three fewer grains of rice than was her share—perhaps her life depended on those three rice kernels. Walking with one's last strength to the end of the compound to share a tomato with two friends . . . the tiny Englishwoman resisting temptation and bribery with full and beautiful integrity . . . these are experiences that are irreplaceable, and everlastingly define what I have become. The gift of music—not to be unhappy, not to be lonely, because it *is* music—worked and lived in me all this time. There was the solace of living in this music—no matter that I didn't have an instrument—and on the other hand the terrific *yearning* for an instrument. The reunion with my family alone was worth the whole terrible experience. I am beholden and happy for having been allowed to have these experiences and survive."

WHEN she was finally liberated, in October 1945, Lili Kraus, who is not a small woman, weighed less than a hundred pounds; her body was covered with infections and open wounds. Nothing held her back, though, and by early 1947 she had given more than a hundred and twenty concerts in Australia and New Zealand. New Zealand



The question of what comes after the salad sends Miss Kraus and daughter Ruth Pope back to the recipe book for guidance.

conferred honorary citizenship on her in recognition of her "unrelenting efforts in aid of countries in need as well as for educational achievements." By 1948 she was again performing and recording in Europe, her insights deepened by the experience in Java, and the following year she made her American debut at last. Record collectors here became acquainted about then with the Parlophone 78's she had made of the Mozart sonatas with Goldberg and the three Haydn trios with Goldberg and cellist Anthony Pini (transferred to American Decca LP's in the early 1950's)—and also, in many cases, had her to thank for their first acquaintance with the piano music of Bartók.

"Bartók himself asked me to record his music," Mme. Kraus recalled, "and I made the first recordings of his piano works before he did himself. The Parlophone people said it was 'suicide,' and I told them: 'All right, let it be suicide'—but until the war every radio station in Europe played those recordings regularly. I adore to play Bartók, and still include his music in all my recitals, though I'm sorry to say I have never played the concertos. I don't believe one's nationality defines one's capacity for that country's music, really, but still, there is *some* truth in such a notion. When I play Bartók's folk-song pieces, I can't help singing the words to myself, and of course the very *metrum* of the text is also the rhythm of the music; it is much nearer to me, just as Larrocha is certainly at her best in Spanish music. On the other hand, I am certainly not Viennese, but I am a 'Mozart specialist' *soi disant*."

In the early Fifties Mme. Kraus recorded some Mozart concertos and Schubert sonatas for Vox, and then more Mozart—a sonata cycle and the piano trios (with Willi Boskovsky and Nikolaus Hübner) for Discophiles Français (released here by the Haydn Society). These are all gone now, but more recently she made several recordings of both concertos and solo pieces by Schumann, Schubert, Mozart, and Beethoven for Concert Hall of Geneva, some of which have appeared here on the Monitor and Vanguard labels, as well as some Schubert for Vanguard itself and complete series of the Mozart solo sonatas and concertos for Epic. The concertos, beautifully played but with rather undistinguished orchestral support (this is *not* Mme. Kraus' opinion, but mine), have been reissued in Columbia's special-order series, but of the sonatas only the Fantasy and Sonata, K. 475/457, have reappeared on Odyssey since the deletion of the entire classical segment of the Epic catalog.

Between concert dates Mme. Kraus is now artist-in-residence at Texas Christian University in Fort Worth, where she holds a master class. What she calls home, but does not get to see for more than a few days at a time, is a farm in North Carolina which she shares with her daughter and son-in-law and their three children. In the last few years she has published her cadenzas for the Mozart concertos (those for which neither Mozart nor Beethoven supplied cadenzas) and her own edition of the Mozart sonatas. Music she has not played before—or has not played in many years—still makes its way into her repertoire, for it is still a process of maturation: "Before I put a finger to a piece, Mozart or otherwise, I live with it, sometimes for years on end, so that it becomes part of me—my life, my dreams, my plans."

The procedure seems to be an effective one, but the description is incomplete, for to Lili Kraus living with music means loving it, just as living with people invariably means loving them, whether in a concert hall, in a prison camp, on a farm, or in a city.



Stereo Review's
Record of the Year Awards
for 1974

*in recognition of significant contributions
to the arts of music and recording
during the 1974 publishing year*

Is this really the eighth consecutive year in which I have sat down to write an introduction to STEREO REVIEW's selection of the year's outstanding records? The shelves full of issues before this one confirm the fact, and glancing through award lists past, I find myself delighted at the variety of records selected for commendation, and rather appalled at the lack of variety in my own prose introducing them year after year. Still, there are always new readers, and the rationale behind these awards, as well as the method of selecting the records that receive them, must be made clear.

In the first place, the records have been chosen from those reviewed in our pages during our publication year, January to December, 1974. They were chosen by polling the critical and editorial staffs of the magazine. The standards involved are those of musical and technical excellence alone, which themselves involve not only note-perfect performance or recording, but imaginativeness and taste in the production. The awards have no necessary relationship to sales; money (in our time) is its own reward and neither needs nor deserves any pat on the back from us to justify itself.

What to say about this year in particular? We do make a general practice of not giving awards to records that are essentially reissues of material available previously. We also have not, in the past, singled out tape formats for awards in themselves. We abide by that still, but so many of those qualified to vote suggested that some special thanks be rendered to RCA for its marvelous multivolume set of

the recordings of Sergei Rachmaninoff, and to the Advent Corporation for its technically and musically superb series of cassettes (drawn from the Elektra, Nonesuch, and Connoisseur Society catalogs, together with new material recorded especially for Advent), that I take the opportunity here of offering such thanks. The reader should look upon them as constituting some sort of award in themselves, for though neither project qualifies for our regular awards, their excellence is manifest and should not go unnoticed and unappreciated.

In addition to our regular record awards, we are this year inaugurating a new Certificate of Merit designed to recognize those who have made outstanding contributions to the quality of American musical life. The first winner of this award is the incomparable Mabel Mercer, a musician whose seminal influence on American popular songwriters and singers is simply incalculable.

I should also mention that apart from the top three or four records, which were on virtually everybody's list, the voting was unusually close this year. It is not merely that a single vote sometimes separated a Record of the Year winner from an honorable mention, but that the competition for honorable mention itself was a tight one. I earnestly request readers to go back over their 1974 copies and note particularly the "Recordings of Special Merit." Any number of them just missed honorable mention in this annual roundup. For records, at least, it was a very good year.

—James Goodfriend, Music Editor

Record of the Year

SELECTED BY THE EDITORIAL STAFF AND CRITICS



HAYDN: *String Quartets, Op. 50, Nos. 1 and 2* (Tokyo Quartet). DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2530 440.



RANDY NEWMAN: *Good Old Boys*. WARNER BROS. RECORDS MS 2193.



SCHUBERT: *Songs* (Janet Baker, mezzo-soprano; Gerald Moore, piano). SERAPHIM SIB-6083.



BILLY JOEL: *Piano Man*. COLUMBIA KC 32544.



VERDI: *Un Giorno di Regno* (Lamberto Gardelli, conductor). PHILIPS 6703 055.



KEITH JARRETT: *Solo-Concerts Bremen/Lausanne*. ECM 3-1035/37 ST.

Honorable mentions

ALBÉNIZ: *Iberia* (Alicia de Larrocha, piano). LONDON RECORDS CSA-2235.

BACH: *Christmas Oratorio* (Nikolaus Harnoncourt, conductor). TELEFUNKEN SKH 25-T/1-3.

BEETHOVEN: *Symphony No. 9* (Karl Böhm, conductor). DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON DG 2707073.

WILLIAM BOLCOM: *Pastimes and Piano Rags*. NONESUCH RECORDS 71299.

JORGE BOLET AT CARNEGIE HALL (Jorge Bolet, piano). RCA RECORDS ARL2-0512.

JIMMY BUFFET: *Living and Dying in ¾ Time*. DUNHILL 50150.
CANDIDE (Leonard Bernstein): *1974 Original Broadway Cast*.

COLUMBIA S2X-32923.

JIMMY CLIFF: *Unlimited*. WARNER BROS. RECORDS MS 2147.

DEBUSSY/RAVEL: *Piano Works* (Aloys and Alfons Kontarsky, piano). DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2707072.

BOB DYLAN/THE BAND: *Before the Flood*. ASYLUM AB 201.

FRANCK: *Sonata in A Major*. SZYMANOWSKI: *Mythes* (Wanda Wilkomirska, violin; Antonio Barbosa, piano). CONNOISSEUR SOCIETY CSQ 2050.

HEINRICH: *Dawning of Music in Kentucky* (Neely Bruce, piano and conductor). VANGUARD 71178.

HOLST: *The Planets* (Leonard Bernstein, conductor). COLUMBIA M-31125.

IVES: *100th Anniversary Album* (Leonard Bernstein, Gunther Schuller, Leopold Stokowski, conductors). COLUMBIA M4-32504.

LEO KOTTKE: *Ice Water*. CAPITOL RECORDS ST-11262.

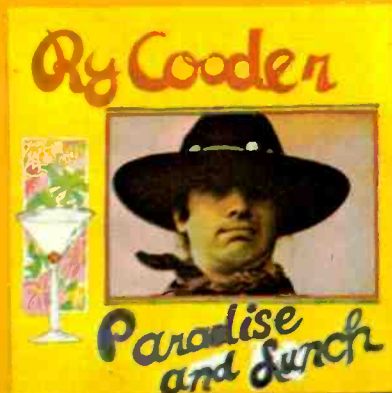
CHARLES MINGUS: *Mingus Moves*. ATLANTIC SD 1653.

Awards for 1974

FOR THE READERS OF STEREO REVIEW



CLEO LAINE: *Live!!! at Carnegie Hall*.
RCA RECORDS LPL1-5015.



RY COODER: *Paradise and Lunch*.
WARNER BROS. RECORDS MS 2179.



ALICIA DE LARROCHA: *Mostly Mozart*.
LONDON RECORDS CS 6866.



HUMPERDINCK: *Hansel and Gretel*
(Kurt Eichhorn, conductor). RCA
RECORDS ARL2-0637.



JIM CROCE: *I Got a Name*. ABC
RECORDS ABCD 797.



CORNET FAVORITES (Gerard
Schwarz, cornet; William Bolcom,
piano). NONESUCH RECORDS H-71298.

NATI MISTRAL: *Trascendencia Universal y Madrileña de Natí Mistral*. ALHAMBRA C 7004.

JONI MITCHELL: *Court and Spark*. ASYLUM 7E-1001.

MOZART: *The Magic Flute* (Wolfgang Sawallisch, conductor). ANGEL RECORDS SCL-3807.

MUSIC OF THE THIRTIES (Yehudi Menuhin, violin; Stéphane Grappelli, violin and piano). ANGEL RECORDS SFO-36968.

SCHUBERT/SCHUMANN: *Songs* (Hermann Prey, baritone; Leonard Hokanson, piano). PHILIPS 6520 002.

SCHUMANN: *Faust* (Benjamin Britten, conductor). LONDON RECORDS OSA-12100.

NINA SIMONE: *It Is Finished*. RCA RECORDS APL1-0241.

THAT'S ENTERTAINMENT (Original-soundtrack recording). MCA MCA2-11002.

TIPPETT: *The Knot Garden* (Colin Davis, conductor). PHILIPS 6700 063.

STEVIE WONDER: *Innervisions*. TAMLA T-326-L.

Certificate of Merit
awarded to
Mabel Mercer
for her outstanding contributions
to the quality of American musical life

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



CLASSICAL

Perhaps the Best Yet:
*A New Abduction from
The Seraglio* by
Deutsche Grammophon

CONSIDERING the many pitfalls that threaten performances of such a far from sure-fire work as Mozart's *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* (*The Abduction from the Seraglio*) in the opera house, one might well be surprised by its apparent suc-

cess in recordings: to the impressive total of three good stereo versions already in the catalog (Jochum/DG, Beecham/Angel, Krips/Seraphim) must now be added another from Deutsche Grammophon—and it may be the best yet. It is complete, for one thing, a distinction it shares only with the previous DG set by Eugen Jochum, and it offers, as perhaps its principal asset, the wise and firm-handed leadership of Karl Böhm. His pacing is brisk, yet it is always supportive of the singers and mindful of the many orchestral felicities with which the score abounds—the concertante elements in the orchestral introduction to Konstanze's famous aria *Martern aller Arten*, for example. This and similar delights are lovingly presented, with rich orchestral sound and clear instrumental balances. In terms of musical leadership, then, one could hardly ask for more.

The vocal standout in this performance is unquestionably Kurt Moll. His Osmin does not match the ripe comic qualities that go with the boomier tones of such previous interpreters as Gottlob Frick and Kurt Böhme, but what he may lack in massive sound he makes up for in agility and a sovereign command of Osmin's wide-ranging music, every note of which he delivers smoothly, accurately, with ease, gusto, and dead-center intonation. Peter Schreier's Belmonte is not far behind. This German tenor has noticeably refined his art during the past few years, and he displays here an exemplary legato and a finished technique that permits him to handle the extended runs in the oft-omitted aria *Ich baue ganz auf deine Stärke* with relaxed ease. Only the late Fritz Wunderlich sur-



VERMISCHT FOR DG

KURT MOLL: a sovereign command of the vocal qualities needed for the challenging Mozart role of Osmin

passes him in this role (in the earlier DG set), setting a standard we shall be living with for a long time.

Both soprano parts are sung by American artists with strong European reputations. A voice of more solid substance than Arleen Auger's would be desirable for an ideal Konstanze, but then such voices seldom command Miss Auger's agility: her work here is distinguished by precision, purity, and a remarkable accuracy in that treacherous *Martern aller Arten*. With her lighter, more fragile timbre, Reri Grist, in the role of Blonde, is a good foil for Miss Auger. And she also enlivens her performance with just the right amount of vivacity.

The role of Pedrillo is one of this seemingly simple opera's pitfalls. The part is essentially a buffo one—but its music sometimes calls for the accomplished elegance of a Tito Schipa. Harald Neukirch falls far short of that level of accomplishment, but he is a thoroughly capable tenor who fits well into the smooth ensemble. Little more can be said of Otto Mellies than that he delivers the implausibly noble utterances of Selim with as much conviction as can be expected. (The spoken passages in this *Singspiel* are all delivered by a separate cast of actors, following an established German recording tradition of questionable wisdom.)

The sixth side of this three-disc set is given over to the musical numbers of *Der Schauspieldirektor* (*The Impresario*). This 1786 "comedy with music" is minor Mozart, and though Miss Grist sounds a shade off her best form, some attractive arias and ensembles are delivered lightly and expertly. The Overture particularly, the best part of the music, gets a fine, spirited performance.

George Jellinek

MOZART: *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* (K. 384). Otto Mellies (speaking part), Selim; Arleen Auger (soprano), Konstanze; Reri Grist (soprano), Blonde; Peter Schreier (tenor), Belmonte; Harald Neukirch (tenor), Pedrillo; Kurt Moll (bass), Osmin. *Der Schauspieldirektor* (K. 486). Reri Grist (soprano), Madame Herz; Arleen Auger (soprano), Mademoiselle Silberklang; Peter Schreier (tenor), Monsieur Vogel-sang; Kurt Moll (bass), Buff. Dresden State Orchestra and Leipzig Radio Chorus, Karl Böhm cond. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2709 051 three discs \$23.94.



HENRYK SZERYNG: a concerto that will leave you smiling with pleasure

Henryk Szeryng's Poetry-filled Brahms Violin Concerto

HENRYK SZERYNG'S first recording of the Brahms Violin Concerto with Pierre Monteux and the London Symphony Orchestra (now available on RCA Victrola VICS-1028) has been at the top of my list of preferred versions for years. His remake with Antal Dorati and the same orchestra for Mercury did not come off too well: it seemed the violinist had rethought his interpretation and adopted generally slower tempos which had the effect, for me, of devitalizing the music. Since the Brahms Concerto is a rather monumental edifice to begin with, that aspect of it hardly needs further emphasis. Now, on his third time into the studio with the work—this time with Bernard

Haitink, who has emerged as one of today's outstanding Brahms interpreters—Szeryng has readopted his earlier view, and the collaboration has resulted in one of the happiest concerto recordings ever, the sort of performance that makes the listener want to jump up and throw his hat in the air or at least, depending on his nature, leaves him smiling with pleasure for the rest of the week.

Nothing in the new performance on the Philips label seems contrived. Brilliant, robustly affectionate, it is filled with poetry of the most unlabored variety, and both its vigor and its warmth are ideally apposite to the Brahmsian spirit at every turn. No one who has the earlier Szeryng/Monteux disc need be at all unhappy with it, for that performance is every bit as satisfying as this new one and, for all its seniority, almost as well recorded. The new Philips disc, however, does offer a richer sonic frame and absolutely silent surfaces (at more than twice the Victrola price). *(Continued overleaf)*

Szeryng plays the magnificent cadenza Joseph Joachim wrote for the first performance of this Concerto, but Yehudi Menuhin, in a Seraphim rerelease (mono) of his 1949 recording with Wilhelm Furtwängler, favors the one by Fritz Kreisler. That is not the sole difference between these two performances, of course. The Menuhin/Furtwängler version generates a glow more intense than what may be suggested by "warmth of heart"; it is a rhapsodic approach, more ecstatic than robust (though by no means deficient in vigor, actually pressing on more than the Szeryng/Haitink does in the outer movements). And there are also murmuring, secret disclosures from the inner voices of the orchestral strings and plenty of rubato in which soloist and conductor, as if guided by the same pulse, are always miraculously together.

Like Szeryng, Menuhin remade the Brahms Concerto in stereo, but in that version (Capitol SG-7173, deleted) Rudolf Kempe did not share his mystical insights as Furtwängler did, and for that reason (plus the unblemished sweetness of the violinist's tone — I can think of nothing quite like it in his vast discography except the prewar recording of Mozart's G Major Concerto with Georges Enesco) this older version has always been favored, even being sought after as an import when RCA withdrew its original LP transfer (LM-1142). The new Seraphim edition is a beautiful job, and the Beethoven *Romance* (recorded in 1953 together with the Op. 40 *Romance* now available on Seraphim 60135) is an attractive bonus. For a "basic" recording of the Brahms Concerto, most collectors will prefer one in more up-to-date sonics, but those who care for the work enough to want two versions should not overlook this reissue as a companion to the Szeryng.

Richard Freed

BRAHMS: *Violin Concerto, in D Major, Op. 77.* Henryk Szeryng (violin): Concertgebouw Orchestra, Amsterdam, Bernard Haitink cond. PHILIPS 6500 530 \$7.98.

BRAHMS: *Violin Concerto, in D Major, Op. 77.* **BEETHOVEN:** *Romance No. 2, in F Major, Op. 50.* Yehudi Menuhin (violin): Lucerne Festival Orchestra (Brahms), Philharmonia Orchestra (Beethoven), Wilhelm Furtwängler cond. SERAPHIM 60232 \$3.98.

"Streetlife Serenade": The Cold Eye and Warm Heart of Billy Joel

IT WAS obvious from last year's "Piano Man" that Billy Joel was very good, but his second album, "Streetlife Serenade," runs well beyond the high expectations set up by the first, achieving what I shall have to call a dark brilliance. In it he casts an eye as cold as that of novelist Na-

thanael West (try *Miss Lonelyhearts*) on the contemporary scene in a series of wry, occasionally savage, and often funny songs that nevertheless betray a certain compassion and even fondness for their targets.

It has been apparent for some time that what we need right now is a gifted eccentric to set us straight, someone who can cancel out with a fine, ripe raspberry the dull thud of yet another commercial sausage dropping off the end of the pop assembly line and the shrieks of robotic exhibitionists who are as uniform in their outrageousness as anything Karel Čapek ever dreamed up.

BILLY JOEL: songs of real, if slightly lopsided, truth



Columbia Records



JOHNNY SHINES: *beginning a new career at fifty-eight*

Joel has all the sound, basic credentials that an eccentric (perhaps more than anyone else) needs if he expects to get a hearing. He is a complete musician who works his keyboards expertly, with an almost absent-minded deftness that might remind you of, say, an Oriental rug weaver plying his loom and discoursing learnedly at the same time about nuclear physics. His voice is pliable, capable of comic parody one moment and of arresting sincerity the next, and the arrangements have a dry clack that delicately underscores key words and phrases. But first of all, most of all, there are the songs, each

of them ringing with real, if slightly lopsided, truth.

Further description would be as pointless as trying to describe W.C. Fields' walk, Barbra Streisand's giggle, or Paul Lynde's simper. You'll simply have to listen to Billy Joel's new album to hear what I mean. Once you do, your head ought to be changed around *quite* a bit.

Peter Reilly

BILLY JOEL: *Streetlife Serenade*. Billy Joel (vocals, piano, Moogs); orchestra. *Streetlife Serenader*; *Los Angelenos*; *The Great Suburban Showdown*; *Root Beer Rag*; *Roberta*;

The Entertainer; *Last of the Big Time Spenders*; *Weekend Song*; *Souvenir*; *The Mexican Connection*. COLUMBIA PC 33146 \$6.98.

If You Like The Delta Blues You'll Like Johnny Shines

JOHNNY SHINES' first recordings, made for Columbia almost thirty years ago, were not released until 1971, when the Testament label bootlegged them, but a handful of sides appeared in the early Fifties on the obscure J.O.B. label. One of them—*Walking Blues*, made in 1952—led to Shines' "rediscovery" ten years later, when resurrecting forgotten blues men was the order of the day.

But Johnny Shines didn't exactly become an overnight sensation. He made some recordings for Vanguard in 1965 and an album for Biograph in 1971, but, good as these recordings were, none of them can compare with a new set for Advent, just released but made in Los Angeles a little over a year ago when Shines was a ripe fifty-eight.

An exponent of the Mississippi Delta blues style and a one-time close friend of the legendary Robert Johnson, Shines is now ready to give B.B. King his walking papers. I don't know what he has been doing for the past few years, but his voice is stronger than ever, his guitar playing is simply phenomenal, and if this album does not mark the beginning of a new, successful career for him, somebody will have to do something awfully wrong on the promotional end. I won't single out any tracks; just take my word for it, this album is not to be missed by anyone with the remotest interest in the blues.

Chris Albertson

JOHNNY SHINES. Johnny Shines (vocals and guitar); instrumental accompaniment. *Give My Heart a Break*; *Skull and Crossbones Blues*; *Too Lazy*; *My Love Can't Hide*; *I Know the Winds Are Blowing*; *Moaning and Groaning*; *Just a Little Tenderness*; *Just Call Me*; *Vallie Lee*; *Can't Get Along with You*; *Have to Pay the Cost*. ADVENT 2803 \$5.98.



POPULAR DISCS AND TAPES

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

PAUL ANKA: *Anka*. Paul Anka (vocals); orchestra. *Bring the Wine; (You're) Having My Baby; Papa; Something About You; Love Is a Lonely Song*; and five others. UNITED ARTISTS UA-LA314-G \$6.98, Ⓢ EA314-G \$7.98.

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

After a long dry spell, Paul Anka has returned to the charts with a smash. *(You're) Having My Baby*, which defeats critical evaluation with the same brazenly sure grasp of the popular mood as his equally dismal *Diana* of years ago. Everybody knows Anka can do better (he proved it easily with *My Way*), but he still composes and sings as if he were working on his first million and his fondest wish was an appearance on Dick Clark's show. *(You're) Having My Baby* is (really) The Worst. He grunts out the unforgettable lyrics, "Yuh're havin' muh baybee/Whad a lovely way of sayin' how much yuh love me . . . Oh the seed inside you baybee/Do you feel it growin'?" in an Elvis-like roar while what sounds like Mantovani's orchestra swoons around him. Yet I'll admit, dammit, that after hearing it only once I caught myself vacantly humming it, exactly as I did years ago with *Diana*. All of which probably proves that Anka has some powerful natural gift of communication no matter how much one objects to the message. The rest is his usual slick, glossy job. P.R.

AVERAGE WHITE BAND. Average White Band (vocals and instrumentals). *You Got It*;

Work to Do; Got the Love; Pick Up the Pieces; Person to Person; Nothing You Can Do; and four others. ATLANTIC SD 7308 \$6.98, Ⓢ TP 7308 \$7.98, Ⓢ CS 7308 \$7.98.

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

I dreamed last night that I met the Angel of Death. He was about to tap me on the shoulder when I said, "Wait a minute. If my time has come, so be it. But before I go, would you mind setting something straight for me?"

The Angel of Death cleaned his nails with his scythe and nodded. "But make it brief," he hissed.

"Okay," I said. "Here's a record by a British group called the Average White Band. They try to play black music. I mean they imitate it note for note. With all the real black bands around, can you tell me why we need an outfit like that?"

The Angel of Death looked at his watch. "Not offhand. Come on, bub, let's move."

"Don't call me bub," I said. "This is my last request and you have to honor it."

The Angel of Death sighed, chilly air rushing from his thin lips. He propped his scythe in a corner. "Boy, the things I have to . . . All right, play me a cut. A short one."

I played two cuts. The Angel of Death pondered and asked, "What's their name again?"

"The Average White Band," I said.

The Angel grimaced. "They sure are."

"That's just my point," I said. "Can you explain them? What does it all mean?"

The Angel of Death went to the corner and picked up his scythe. He adjusted a fold of his robe that had dropped from his bony shoulder. He shook his head.

"I'm stumped," he said. "The world could do without them. No, don't put on your coat. I have to let you go. I couldn't grant your last request."

"You mean I'm absolutely free?" I cried.

"No, not absolutely. I'll come around for you every two years, just like jury duty. I suppose you'll have another Average White Band album for me to listen to by then?"

I grinned. "One never knows."

The Angel of Death smiled. "Don't get cute," he said. He tapped a fingernail on the scythe, and the blade rang like a tiny broken

bell. "Be thankful for your chance. And in the meantime, it wouldn't hurt to be a little nicer to Curtis Mayfield." J.V.

CHARLES AZNAVOUR: *A Tapestry of Dreams*. Charles Aznavour (vocals); orchestra. *She; Our Love, My Love; Baraka; We Can Never Know; After Loving You; From Today*; and four others. RCA CPL1-0710 \$6.98, Ⓢ CPS1-0710 \$7.95, Ⓢ CPK1-0710 \$7.95.

Performance: **Slick, clever, and very good**
Recording: **Excellent**

Aznavour's looks, particularly during his impassioned moments, still remind me of Snoopy come to improbable human life, while his songs and performances remain slick boulevard comedies acted out in fine nostalgic style. He's singing in English here, and as he gulps his tremulous way through *She (la femme fatale)*, or becomes a man of the world in *We Can Never Know (love-can-be-brief, ma chérie)*, or does his Tino Rossi imitation in *Baraka (ze-dahnce-you-cahn't-rezist, ma p'ti chou)*, he is so good-natured about it all that you can't help but go along with the gag. Obviously a man of some humor—his story of writing for the melodramatic Piaf, who always asked him before he played his new songs for her, "Ah, Charles . . . you have discovered a new way for me to die?," has always delighted me—he is also a slick, confident performer. Ten years ago this album would have been a ball for me, but now I am, how-you-say, more of the sophisticate. P.R.

SHIRLEY BASSEY: *Nobody Does It Like Me*. Shirley Bassey (vocals); orchestra. *Davy; When You Smile; All That Love Went to Waste; Morning in Your Eyes*; and six others. UNITED ARTISTS UA-LA214-G \$6.98, Ⓢ EA214-G \$7.98.

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

Shirley Bassey slams through the speakers like the original Personality Kid in search of someone to dazzle. She has all sorts of artful little vocal tricks, and her phrasing has a dilated, curved-nostril air to it that reminds me of the famous cartoon of two thoroughbred hor-

Explanation of symbols:

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

Monophonic recordings are indicated by the symbol Ⓢ

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

ses standing in a field watching a third who has passed by tossing her mane: "She's been acting like that ever since someone told her she reminded him of Katharine Hepburn." In short, Ms. Bassey is an unabashed, and sometimes glorious, ham. She picks her way through the title song of the album (from the musical *Seesaw*) with all the grandeur of a duchess—it has nothing to do with the song but is pure Bassey histrionics. She discovers "awakening" or perhaps only "that fresh, fresh feeling" from someplace, certainly not the lyrics, in Stevie Wonder's *You Are the Sunshine of My Life*, and her subsequent carryings on would leave Luise Rainer green with envy. "Busy" seems to be her byword; when she has a choice piece of scenery to chew, such as the Bergmans' *The Trouble with Hello Is Goodbye*, she becomes the Geraldine Page of pop—and what she can't do with acting she does vocally, swooping and sliding about "meaningfully."

Yes, she is a bit "intense," but she's also a very ingratiating and basically solid musician; her eagerness to please, or at least to give you your money's worth, is backed up by real talent, no matter how florid the approach. Overall, this is an enjoyable, though at times unintentionally amusing, album. P.R.

COLIN BLUNSTONE: *Journey*. Colin Blunstone (vocals); The King's Singers (backing vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *Wonderful*; *Beginning*; *Keep the Curtains Closed Today*; *Weak for You*; *Smooth Operation*; *It's Magical*; and five others. Epic KE 32962 \$5.98, © EA 32962 \$6.98.

Performance: **Move over, Engelbert**
Recording: **Very good**

Epic is hawking Colin Blunstone and some other baby-faced and—how do they put it?—"really cute and talented" English boys the way one might hawk balloons at a parade, or Donny Osmond to the seventh-grade girls. The approach does help put matters in focus. Blunstone's voice has had time to change, as a matter of puberty, since he was a teenage singer with the Zombies, but it still stays up there, feeding my suspicions about what the British are doing to a certain number of their male children—or maybe there is something in the water over there. Blunstone's songs are like the kind that years ago gave jazz a bad name; the melodies are about half-finished

and consequently come off vague and dull, and the lyrics are superficial to the degree of being pointless. He does have a smooth delivery, though, and a nice alto sound, and when there is a demand for albums that have nothing whatsoever to do with human feelings, there'll be a mad scramble (in quarters other than the seventh grade, where there'll probably be one anyway) for this one. N.C.

DAVID BOWIE: *David Live*. David Bowie (vocals); Earl Slick (guitar); Herbie Flowers (bass); Tony Newman (drums); other musicians. 1984; *Rebel Rebel*; *Moonage Daydream*; *Sweet Thing*; *Changes*; *Suffragette City*; *Aladdin Sane*; *All the Young Dudes*; *Cracked Actor*; *Diamond Dogs*; and seven others. RCA CPL2-0771 two discs \$11.98. © CPS2-0771 \$12.95, © CPKS-0771 \$12.95.

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

What I've been wanting to do about David Bowie is ignore him, or it, as the case may be. I hate it when they let actors sing, for one thing; I have felt it should be prohibited in civilized countries ever since I first saw how the judgment of fundamentally decent persons was coming unhinged over the atonal groans coming out of Marlene Dietrich. And she *could* act, after a fashion. We don't even know if David can handle anything beyond a few costume changes. But no one is permitted to ignore something that grosses enough money, not in *this* world, brothers and sisters (and please note in passing what an apt word "grosses" is sometimes), and so I'd like to take this opportunity, if you can call something rammed down your throat an opportunity, to publicly thank David Bowie.

He has performed the service of returning our attention to what it's all about. He has put matters in perspective, guided the eye back to the sparrow, returned the emphasis to its natural center of gravity. The troubadours, the Dylanites, the flower people and their folk-rock gropings, the well-meaning hacks making careers out of rewriting Gordon Lightfoot—these forces had us believing *they* believed there was something to it besides the big fish eating little fish, dog eating dog, and getting while the getting's good. Their believing it, if they *do* believe it, hasn't changed the world much. And Bowie and the hounds at his heels—you know them: Alice Cooper, Evel

Knievel, Bobby Riggs, the parachuting sky-jacker, the vice president on the take, many others—have simply demonstrated the durability of hustlers.

This album is a sampling of early, middle, and late Bowie, hustling all the way, and repeats what other albums made perfectly clear—that *how* a hustler gets it is not the important thing; that is, Bowie has no singing voice of his own and doesn't seem to care, and Bowie's backing seems to be based on the idea that if you've heard one rock band you've heard them all. The just-another-show attitude comes through eloquently. The album is stodgy, automatic, and lifeless. The thing about Bowie's appearance in the Tower Theatre in Philadelphia, of course, was just that. Bowie's *appearance*. Bowie's sound never was the important thing, and he was being sensible, in his way, in paying only this much attention to how it all sounded. N.C.

GENE CLARK: *No Other*. Gene Clark (vocal, guitar); Lee Sklar (bass); Russ Kunkel (drums); Mike Utley (keyboards); Richard Greene (violin); other musicians. *Life's Greatest Fool*; *Silver Raven*; *No Other*; *Strength of Strings*; *From a Silver Phial*; and three others. ASYLUM 7E-1016 \$6.98.

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

People just might have trouble figuring out what the music recorded here has to do with the cover illustration, a montage of drawings and photographs suggesting nothing in particular except a period—the late Thirties or the early Forties, and who really cares which?—and people might be bothered by this, some of them already having been suckered into paying good money to see the movie version of *Gatsby* or having otherwise been ripped off by nostalgists. But if you are truly diligent about torturing logic, you *can* make a connection. Gene Clark, ex-Byrd and so forth, has done several things pretty well here, but for complicated reasons it has all jelled into something unflaggingly pleasant, undemanding, and unremarkable. It is mainstream folk-rock to the point of being woven into the wallpaper of this day and age, if I may be permitted to make a montage of metaphors for the occasion. He can't even surprise anyone when he sings the title tune through one of those corny filters that John Lennon should have shot through the garbage tubes of the Yellow Submarine when he had the chance. It's all easy to take, no matter how he may have fretted over it, and it will not bother anyone with the tiniest shock that might indicate either incompetence or genius. A little open-string jangle of acoustic guitars and some Ken Malone-style drumming from Russ Kunkel and *Some Misunderstanding* is all set to be immediately understood and mildly liked by all sorts of folks. *The True One*, being more country (the way you tell has to do with your falling asleep if you try to concentrate on the bass line), is even more relaxing. Where all this gets us, if you've been properly torturing logic as we've gone along, is a feeling for the flavor of it, which I find like that conjured up by the cigarette ads of the era suggested by the album's jacket montage—particularly the ad that used the slogan "never a rough puff." There's your connection, such as it is. N.C.

VASSAR CLEMENTS, DAVID BROMBERG: *Hillbilly Jazz*. Vassar Clements (fiddle, vo-

CHARLES AZNAVOUR: "Love can be brief, ma chérie. . . ."



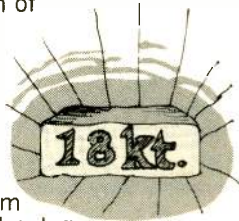
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The illustration contains optional extras.

als); David Bromberg (guitar); other musicians. *San Antonio Rose*; *Texas Blues*; *Take Me Back to Tulsa*; *Delta Blues*; *Fais Do Do*; *Breakfast Feud*; *Brown's Ferry Blues*; *Panhandle Rag*; *Cherokee*; and fourteen others. FLYING FISH 101 two discs \$7.98.

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

Maybe it's me, or maybe it's cultural, but I can't find much of what music is supposed to do in this country swing or Texas jazz stuff being so doggedly revived now. I can see what musicologists see in it (this is another country swing album with a booklet by a college professor in the packaging, although this prof does seem to listen as well as look up trivia), but I can't hear anything in it that could possibly fascinate such soulful musicians as Vassar Clements and David Bromberg. On the other hand, I do like bluegrass, which in its way is just as stylized. It may be simply that I was born just about where bluegrass was and can more easily respond to its bumps and humidity than to this style that seems as flat and dry as its Texas-Oklahoma birthplace. Clements is, as Rick Ulman asserts in the notes I mentioned, quite a jazz-influenced country fiddler—but this recording itself is ample evidence that Vassar somehow assimilated real jazz rather than the stuff as watered down by Bob Wills, Spade Cooley, Pee Wee King, and such. Bromberg, whom I also admire, is probably into this for his own private reasons—he seems to be wandering about, learning from sources as authentic as possible as much as he can about all kinds of music. If he thinks he should play *Sentimental Journey* bottleneck-style before a band slogging just this side of slumberland, he must have some reason for thinking it.

For me, few of these things work. *Brown's Ferry Blues*, the old Delmore Brothers tune, does work . . . and is in no way country swing. *Vassar's Boogie*, even though it sounds as if it's being made up on the spot, works for about the same reasons, which include taking swing's handcuffing restrictions off the key men, especially the fiddler. Bromberg introduces *Brown's*, incidentally, with a flat-picking run you wouldn't believe.

One might argue that this isn't, strictly speaking, a country swing band—but the weight of my eyelids quashes such nit-picking arguments. The more boring elements—spacing out the beat, or jamming eight beats into what common sense says is a four-beat bar, absolutely requiring the fiddle to do a certain back-up stroke every time through, demanding horn-like bleats from the guitar, etc.—these things petrify a song whose lyrics and melody are basically all right. At least that's the view of this kind of back country from my kind of backwoods. N.C.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

JIMMY CLIFF: *Music Maker*. Jimmy Cliff (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *Brother*; *I Want to Know*; *You Can't Be Wrong and Get Right*; *House of Exile*; *Foolish Pride*; *No. 1 Rip-off Man*; *I've Been Dead Four Hundred Years*; and five others. REPRISE MS 2188 \$6.98, ® M8 2188 \$7.98, © M5 2188 \$7.98.

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

Jimmy Cliff, the Jamaican singer and tune-smith who so delighted and surprised me in

the soundtrack album for *The Harder They Come*, has many talents to recommend him. The first is his mastery of the reggae rhythm, both as writer and as performer. This is not as simple as it sounds: there are, for example, a lot of lousy polka bands, although a good polka well played and well sung is a fine thing. Similarly, there are dozens of mediocre reggae bands who play the rhythm but do not swing with it. Cliff swings. The second talent is his fine high tenor; sometimes he strains a bit and has to push for the right note, but he always makes it. His third talent is his writing. Cliff is wonderful when he sings about the mysteries of life, persuasive when he mixes the mysteries with political sentiments that attempt to resolve or reconcile them, and as boring as one would expect when the songs are purely political. They were all political in



JIMMY CLIFF
Master of many musical talents

his last album, "Struggling Man," which was a disservice to his art.

But in "Music Maker" Cliff is just what the title says. True, he gets his political licks in every once in a while, but most often he goes back to the thing he does best: attaching singable, simple lyrics to entrancing tunes set to the coquettish hop-skip of reggae. Cliff was also in charge of the production here, which is crisp and accurate. He has brought the best of all his talents to this album, and it's certifiably fine. Bravo. J.V.

THE KIKI DEE BAND: *I've Got the Music in Me*. Kiki Dee (vocals); Jo Partridge (guitar); Bias Boshell (keyboards); Phil Curtis (bass); Roger Pope (drums). *I've Got the Music in Me*; *Someone to Me*; *Step by Step*; *Water*; *Out of My Head*; *Do It Right*; *Little Frozen One*; *Heart and Soul*; *You Need Help*. ROCK-ET MCA-458 \$6.98, ® MCAT-458 \$7.98, © MCAC-458 \$7.98.

Performance: **Good, with reservations**
Recording: **Good**

Rock has never been an interpreter's medium, and rock performers are usually only as good as their material. There are exceptions, of course, but I'm afraid Kiki Dee isn't one of them. On her last album, which I perhaps overrated in the first flush of excitement at finding a girl singer who could really rock, you could overlook her own mediocre quasi-folk

compositions because she was also singing the dickens out of some ace tunes by Elton John and Jackson Browne, among others. This time we're not so lucky. Further, and equally unfortunate, Gus Dudgeon's production has nowhere near the grace and clarity of Elton's on the last one, and Kiki's band can't quite match the level of playing Elton extracted from the various celebrated British sidemen he employed. Drummer Roger Pope in particular almost sinks the album singlehandedly with some of the most obnoxious pounding I've heard since the legendary drum battle between Dave Clark and Gary Lewis on the old Lloyd Thaxton Show.

Be that as it may, *I've Got the Music in Me*, her very welcome surprise hit single, and the concluding track *You Need Help* (an absolutely spectacular song I've been anxiously awaiting since I heard her do it live a while back) are stunning tracks, and I still think Kiki has it in her to be the first really authoritative female rocker: all she has to do is be a little more selective about choosing her repertoire. Its glaring faults notwithstanding, you could make a much worse investment than this record. *Steve Simels*

NEIL DIAMOND: *Serenade*. Neil Diamond (vocals): orchestra. *Yes I Will*; *Lady Magdalen*; *Rosemary's Wine*; *Reggae Strut*; *The Last Picasso*; and three others. COLUMBIA PC 32919 \$6.98, Ⓢ PCA 32919 \$7.98, Ⓒ PCT 32919 \$7.98.

Performance: "Oh dear/What can the matter be?"

Recording: **Good**

Neil Diamond usually provides the sort of soft-focus banality that has made him the moping darling of his huge public all these years (*The Gift of Song*), but along the way, as in *Rosemary's Wine* and *Longfellow Serenade*, he can provide enough twitches and shudders to convince even the doubter that his Soul has been permanently sunburned by The Glare Of Life. He wanly smiles through even the supposed frivolity of *Reggae Strut* with the weary manner of an Atlas searching for a massage parlor that specializes in sore shoulders. Contemplating *The Last Picasso* is only another wrench to his sensibilities. If you want to make a real night of it, this is the perfect album to accompany your jug of apple wine, your funny cigarettes, and your musings on the collected works of Kahlil Gibran. *P.R.*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

LIBBY HOLMAN: *Something to Remember Her By*. Libby Holman (vocals): Gerald Cook (piano). *Am I Blue?*; *Supertime*; *Buked and Scorned*; *Oh Waillie Waillie*; *Go Away from My Window*; *I Gave My Love a Cherry*; *More Than You Know*; *There Ain't No Sweet Man That's Worth the Salt of My Tears*; and six others. MONMOUTH EVERGREEN MES/7067 \$6.98.

Performance: **A worthy souvenir**
Recording: **Good**

I first succumbed to the spell of Libby Holman's throbbing, throaty voice when I was fourteen and she sang *You and the Night and the Music* in the Broadway musical *Revenge with Music* back in 1934. The aunt who treated me to that experience wasn't sure I ought to be there at all: it was only two years since charges had been dropped against Miss
(Continued on page 92)

THIS

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"Mabel Mercer is seventy-five... she will bury us all."



The Essential Mabel Mercer

It's a difficult task writing about the legendary Mabel Mercer and the effect she's had on popular music. The words have all been spoken, the poems have all been written. Still, new generations discovering her magic all over again keep trying to describe it. Record collectors guard her valuable albums the way Elizabeth Taylor guards her diamonds. Like those of Edith Piaf, Lotte Lenya, Billie Holiday, and Judy Garland, her treasured recordings have taken on something of the aura of artifacts. What better way to celebrate her seventy-fifth birthday, then, than to inherit a legacy of riches in five of her previously released

albums, three of which are already out-of-print collector's items?

Rod McKuen's Stanyan label has reissued Miss Mercer's only album for Decca and wisely titled it "Mabel Mercer for Always." The intelligence and imagination inherent in her approach to uniquely structured songs, coupled with her patrician phrasing and personal taste, are perfectly flavored by Ralph Burns' small ensemble arrangements, which provide subtle and fascinating settings for a handful of choice songs like *The Ballad of the Sad Young Men* and an overworked *Try to Remember* that sounds fresher than it has a right to. There are some unusual surprises, too, such as Johnny Green's obscure *Hello, My Lover, Goodbye* and Hoagy Carmichael's *My Resistance Is Low*, which originally appeared in a Jane Russell movie called *The Las Vegas Story*. (The ability to find precious gems lost in a quarry of abandoned rocks is just one of Mabel's laudable attributes.) In short, this is a rare and happy opportunity to rediscover some pleasant listening moments in an album that was no longer available through normal consumer outlets, and Stanyan

should be congratulated for rescuing these twelve songs for posterity.

Most of Mabel's other years as a recording artist have been spent toiling unselfishly in the vineyards for Atlantic Records, and as an additional birthday tribute to her unflagging energy, Atlantic has packaged four of her best albums, fifty-five songs, and tied them up with a bright bow in a package called "A Tribute to Mabel Mercer on the Occasion of Her 75th Birthday." These albums are classics in the recording field and absolute requirements for any serious music library. If you are just entering the privileged ranks of Mabel Mercer's admirers (and they are legion), you cannot afford to be without them. If, like me, you've worn your old copies thin with repeated playing, this is a once-in-a-lifetime chance to secure newly minted copies previously unavailable in retail stores. Either way, you won't regret it. Mabel knows everything worth knowing about the interpretation of lyrics, her selection of material is faultless, and her associations of long standing with the very best songwriters and musicians have never been better demonstrated. Some of the highlights:

- "Mabel Mercer Sings Cole Porter": The hammock of chords provided by pianists Cy Walter and Stan Freeman (you just don't hear playing like this any more). The glib and wistful *Experiment*, a song I can never hear often enough, and don't. The way Mabel pronounces "the quintessence of joy" in *Looking at You*. The magnificent modulation in *After You*. The acting job in *I'm Ashamed That Women Are So Simple*; it would make Kim Stanley blush with envy. The devastating sophistication in the lyrics and phrasing. The kitten-like pounce in her voice that makes even an old evergreen like *It's Delovely* sound de-licious.

- "Midnight at Mabel Mercer's": The moonstruck voodoo she performs on Alec Wilder's *Is It Always Like This?*, making her voice an integral part of the instrumentation, a lonely violin with a time-worn patina. The definitive rendition of *Lazy Afternoon*, in which Milt Hinton's bass gives the effect of a crying cello behind a vocal line drawn with an emotional artistry unmatched by any other singer. The furtive sighs in Leonard Bernstein's *Some Other Time* that perfectly convey her particular *disease* approach to music—it has enchanted the best singers who learn from her, but they never manage to do it quite as well. The heart-breaking story she relates, once again as an actress, on Bart Howard's *Walk-Up*. A perfect album.

- "Merely Marvelous": The guitar and drums add a night-club quality to the proceedings, giving the listener an "in-person" feeling of immediacy and impact. Beverly Peer, Bobby Short's bassist, doing remarkable things with his instrument. Jerome Kern's *All in Fun* gets a nostalgic going-over that makes it hard for me ever to hear this song sung by anyone else. Rodgers and Hart's *You're Nearer*, performed with a charm reminiscent of an old-fashioned lace valentine unearthed in Grandma's attic

Charles Hallam for Stanyan Records

trunk. Sly-fox perception in Cy Coleman's *I Walk a Little Faster* shows a different side of Mabel's mischievous character—and note the way her voice breaks into a laugh in *You Fascinate Me So*. And, as always, Mabel demonstrates her dazzling ability to display the work of exciting new song-writers—here it's William Roy, whose *The Fifth of July* is simply electrifying.

● "Once in a Blue Moon": My favorite Mercer album, and the only one besides the Stanyan release that uses strings to cradle her voice—like a pair of sensitive hands holding an unfolding rose. The arrangements by George Cory (who wrote *I Left My Heart in San Francisco*) are classics in themselves: every time I hear them, I am filled with admiration. Everything about this beautiful album seems to have been produced, performed, and embroidered with love. The two Noël Coward songs, *Sail Away* and *If Love Were All* (notice the proper pronunciation of the famous "Heigh-ho line as "hay-ho," not "hi-ho"—just another reminder of what a perfectionist Mabel is), and the Gershwin *Isn't It a Pity* are beautiful enough to bring tears to the eyes. The septuagenarian wink in her deft handling of Lerner and Loewe's *I'm Glad I'm Not Young Anymore* proves that humor has no season, and the childlike enthusiasm of *Sunday in New York* makes me feel sorry for anyone who has never lived through one. My favorite song in the album, however, is *Guess I'll Go Back Home This Summer*, the kind of memorable "story song" that Mabel is most at home with. It tells the tale of the world-weary sophisticate planning a trip back home to recapture more innocent times and feelings, and by the time Mabel finishes you can almost see with her, from the train's window, her father's old Jersey cow jumping fences.

In these baffling, bitter times of androgynous monsters in glitter bras, bizarre rock vulgarities, and screeching, dissonant nightmares passing off their reckless, cacophonous fantasies as music, Mabel Mercer is still reminding us of the beauty and wisdom there can be in popular music. She has regally ignored the fads and trends and here-to-day-gone-tomorrow fakes on the Top-40 charts, dedicating her life to her art. Mabel Mercer is seventy-five years old. She will bury us all. —*Rex Reed*

MABEL MERCER: *Mabel for Always*. Mabel Mercer (vocals); orchestra, Ralph Burns cond. and arr. *Once Upon a Time: Year After Year: Mira: I've Got Your Number: The Ballad of the Sad Young Men: More I Cannot Wish You: This Is All I Ask: My Resistance Is Low: Run to Love: Try to Remember: Trouble Comes: Hello, My Lover, Goodbye*. STANYAN SR 10108 \$5.00 (available from Stanyan Records, P.O. Box 2783, Hollywood, Calif. 90028).

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Holman in the murder of Zachary Smith Reynolds, and moreover, when she had finished singing that haunting Dietz-Schwartz number, she was seduced and abandoned right there in a Spanish kitchen onstage. Later in my life, I was thrilled once again by Miss Holman, who had been studying folk singing with Josh White, when a stunning set of records was issued on which White played the guitar and she offered emotional renditions of ballads like *The House of the Rising Sun*. By then, Miss Holman was well beyond the show tunes that had made her early reputation, singing not only folk songs and blues but art songs by Aaron Copland and David Diamond. In 1965 she made a two-disc set with Bill Borden and Gerald Cook, with Cook at the piano, called "The Legendary Libby Holman" (now fortunately available again on the Monmouth Evergreen label) and was planning another album when she died in 1971 at the age of 65.

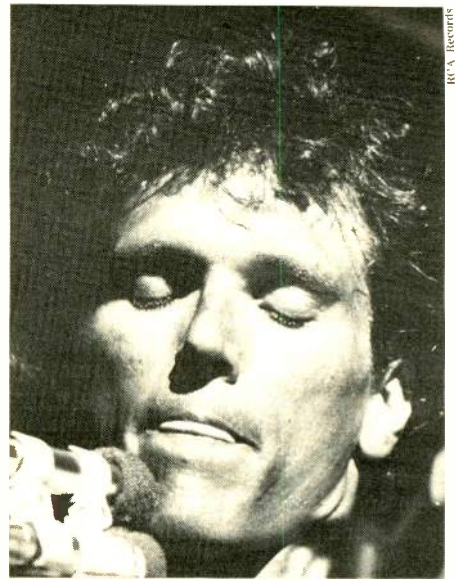
Happily, Mr. Borden and Mr. Cook have assembled unreleased titles from her 1965 recording sessions as well as earlier material recorded by Marcus Blechman in 1954, and another impressive album is the result. Whether she is heard singing *Go Away from My Window* in the manner John Jacob Niles made famous, or making the most of those deep chest tones she could produce in such vintage items as *Am I Blue?*, *More Than You Know*, and *Supper Time*, every song reflects the deep emotion, and sometimes the sly wit, that she brought to her conscientious interpretations. She is in excellent voice on side one, and although a conspicuous quaver and the exhaustion of age dims her power in the pieces she recorded twelve years later, there isn't a single un compelling moment. Among the high points is the vigorous rendition of *There Ain't No Sweet Man That's Worth the Salt of My Tears*, which also, as it happened, was the first song she ever recorded. There are several good Ellington numbers—*The Blues* and *In Between*—and a *Mosquito Blues* that brings out the caustic sense of comedy so unexpected in a woman who had made her early reputation as a "torch singer." The record ends, most touchingly, with a band devoted to a song called *Bad Girl*, all about, as it happens, a woman accused of murder who promises to be good for the rest of her life if the judge will let her off. She didn't know this song was being recorded, and at the end she is heard talking about how she plans to improve the way she does it. But even unrehearsed and unpolished, *Bad Girl*, like the rest of this exciting program, comes over strong. The record is indeed "Something to Remember Her By." P.K.

JEFFERSON STARSHIP: *Dragon Fly*. Paul Kantner (vocals, guitar); Grace Slick (vocals, piano); David Freiberg (vocals, keyboards, bass); Craig Chaquico (guitar); John Barbata (drums); Papa John Creach (violin); Pete Sears (bass, keyboards); other musicians. *Ride the Tiger; That's For Sure; Be Young You; Caroline*; and four others. GRUNT BF1.1-0717 \$6.98, ⓑ BFS1-0717 \$7.95, Ⓒ BFK1-0717 \$7.95.

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

Taking the Starship, Jefferson-wise, is a more clinical, plastic way to go than taking the Airplane was. One lesson in that, I suppose, is that the less primitive travel becomes, the less romantic it becomes. This is an example of a

good band without much style, and it must surely set some kind of record in the how-far-from-synergy-can-you-get category. The whole equals so much less than the sum of the parts that you wonder if it had outside help. It seems rigged, somehow, and perhaps it is rigged to a degree by a rebellion in us listeners against putting up with two-minute stretches without a chord change. Being objective about it, you'd have to say Paul Kantner's songwriting hasn't gotten any worse—it was always this lousy and sometimes lousier—and this album, partly for that reason, isn't any worse off melodically than several in the past. To get away with it, you must have style, and I guess Jorma Kaukonen's Airplane lead guitar and Jack Casady's Airplane bass has it all over Craig Chaquico's Starship lead and Pete Sears' Starship bass, style-wise. Chaquico plays a *good* lead, but he's so smooth he can't



JORMA KAUKONEN

Turning from psychedelia to gentler sounds

be readily identified with any particular group or style. Grace Slick's vocals and Papa John Creach's fiddle are the main attractions, but both seem increasingly restricted by the pounding format and the awkward writing. *Hyperdrive* suggests how good a Starship album *could* be if everything went right, starting with the script (this one by Sears and Slick), but much in this album suggests it's going to take more than simply trying hard. Little tidbits of inspiration have to coagulate for a band like this, as happened in a couple of terrific cuts in Kantner and Slick's "Sun-fighter" album. Marty Balin's appearance here adds several points in the distance-from-synergy column; he's really a stylish singer, and the lyrics he wrote for his one song, *Caroline*, are wordy but perceptive, though the song is completely wrecked by the inane melody Kantner put on it. The Starship's fuel problem is at least as bad as yours and mine. N.C.

BILLY JOEL: *Streetlife Serenade* (see Best of the Month, page 84)

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

JORMA KAUKONEN WITH TOM HOBSON: *Quah*. Jorma Kaukonen (vocals, guitar); Tom Hobson (vocals, guitar). *Genesis; I'll Be All Right; Song for the North Star; I'll Let*

You Know Before I Leave; Flying Clouds; Another Man Done Gone; and five others. GRUNT BFL1-0209 \$6.98, © BFS1-0209 \$7.95.

Performance: **Charming, with warts**
Recording: **Excellent**

Jorma Kaukonen's electric-guitar sound effects in the early Jefferson Airplane days were the most psychedelic effects going, but his heart lies elsewhere now, and he has been gaining credibility as a gentler and more complete musician, playing a lot of open-string acoustic stuff and singing in a slightly shaky but warm and increasingly welcome baritone. Possibly this was supposed to be a solo album, since all the Airplane people at Grunt take turns at nominal solo albums, and he hit upon the idea of getting help from another acoustic guitar. Generally, it was a fine move; song selection is good, Jorma's singing is good, and he and Tom Hobson do some pieces in different tunings that put a nice edge on what is essentially a sparse sound. A time or two, they get in each other's way, sounding something like Leo Kottke with a couple of strings out of tune, but the only big mistake was letting Hobson sing. Since nobody could mess up a monstrosity like *Sweet Hawaiian Sunshine*, the only really big mistake was in letting him sing a second tune, *Blue Prelude*, after having been stroked by the genius it took to dig that one up in the first place. I haven't heard it *sung* (considering how far off-key Hobson is, I still haven't) since I was a little nipper crawling around my grandfather's big radio, but I used to hear the Three Suns' instrumental version of it occasionally when I was waiting for the ballgame to start, so this awful vocal is a special frustration for me, thanks to nostalgia. Jorma's handling of *Genesis*, *I'll Be All Right*, and *Another Man Done Gone* is right close to where I live now, though, and I love how they play guitar the way they feel, as opposed to a way calculated to impress those listening for fancy licks. I'll accept all the albums of this caliber that anyone wants to send me. N.C.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

LABELLE: *Nightbirds*. Patti LaBelle, Sarah Dash, Nona Hendryx (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *Lady Marmalade; Space Children; Are You Lonely?; You Turn Me On*; and six others. EPIC KE 33075 \$5.98, © EA 33075 \$6.98, © ET 33075 \$6.98.

Performance: **Successful flight**
Recording: **Excellent**

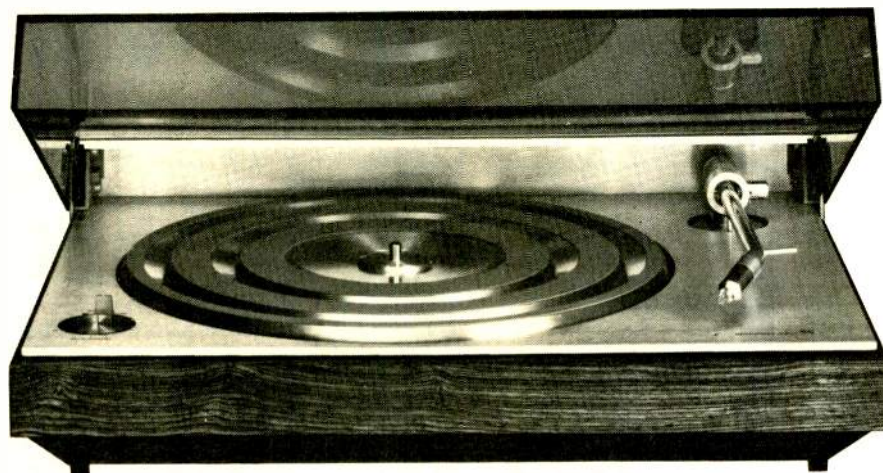
It was Patti LaBelle and Her Blue Bells back in the early Sixties, with hits like *I Sold My Heart to the Junkman* and *Tear After Tear*. But when the last ditty-bopper twisted off the scene to await a comeback as a bargain-priced rock relic interrupting Gable and Lombard on the Late Late Show, Patti and her girls followed suit. However—thanks to the efforts of Vicki Wickham, an enterprising rock journalist from England—we were spared the sight of Patti, Nona, and Sarah traipsing on the tube to offer us their past for some pittance. Convinced that the trio had more than memories left to give us, Ms. Wickham shortened the group's name to Labelle, took it to England for a year of rehearsals and general transformation, and returned to hound the record companies with an act that bore little resemblance to the old Patti LaBelle and Her Blue Bells. Now, after three years of label hopping

and several decent but not very successful albums, Labelle has landed on Epic and come up with their best album to date. The move from Warner Brothers to Epic is of less significance than the fact that Ms. Wickham relinquished her producer's role to Allen Toussaint, who himself records for Warner Brothers' Reprise label. Toussaint, a New Orleans hit maker of long standing, has added the finishing touches to Vicki Wickham's work and turned Labelle into a viable chart product.

Last October, Labelle appeared at the Metropolitan Opera, attracting a capacity crowd that, judging by its appearance, obviously knew it wasn't going to witness a newly discovered work by Verdi. The colorful crowd of imaginatively costumed people and bearded

drag queens lent a Halloween atmosphere to the Met, and most had come there to be seen rather than to witness the performance on stage. However, relying heavily on material contained in this album—then just released—and aided by lavish feathery costumes and such theatrics as Patti slowly descending on wires from high above the stage, the group commanded attention and won over skeptics.

Though it has neither the feathers nor the visual trickery of their Met performance, this album is destined to win Labelle the following they have sought over the past three or four years. Among its salient features are Toussaint's arrangements, an appropriately funky accompaniment augmented by the Meters—a group with a success of its own—and material that is several notches above Labelle's other



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Unlikely Disc-mates No. 88: Peggy Lee and Paul McCartney

recent efforts and way beyond any comparison to the Blue Bells period. Particularly effective are *Lady Marmalade*, a Bob Crewe/Kenny Nolan collaboration about a Creole lady of the evening, *Nightbird*, *You Turn Me On*, and *Space Children*, by Nona Hendryx, whose prolific pen is one of the group's most vital assets.

Vocally, Patti LaBelle relies more on timing and a flair for the dramatic than on actual voice quality, but Sarah Dash makes up for any weakness in that department. LaBelle left the Met audience clamoring for more; you'll find "Nightbirds" has the same effect. C.A.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

PEGGY LEE: *Let's Love*. Peggy Lee (vocals); orchestra. *Let's Love*; *Sweet Talk*; *Sometimes*; *Easy Evil*; *Always*; *He Is the One*; and five others. ATLANTIC SD 18108 \$6.98, Ⓟ TP 18108 \$7.98, ☐ CS 18108 \$7.98.

Performance: **Pure gold**
Recording: **Excellent**

Although Peggy Lee has changed labels (from Capitol to Atlantic), reduced her weight by what must be half (she looks terrific), and invited Paul McCartney in to produce her version of his *Let's Love* (very fine indeed), there is really very little different here from Lee's work of the past decade. She is still the ultimate but unstrained perfectionist, still the most mesmerizing popular recording performer of our time, and still brings to bear on every piece of material she records her musical elegance, her dramatic sensibility, and her uniquely stylized voice. Let Streisand stomp around chewing the scenery. Aretha construct what by now have become Byzantine three-act plays out of a simple blues. Helen Reddy tell us all off in song after song: Peggy Lee continues on her self-sufficient way, apparently content in the knowledge that when you get lonesome for the *real* thing you'll come home to Mama. In this case, Mama does know best, and she proves it effortlessly in a lovely *He Is the One* and a sly *Easy Evil*. Her performance of Irving Berlin's *Always* is one of classic beauty in every sense, making me wish (again) that she'd do an album of his ballads.

One thing about the change to Atlantic: "Let's Love" is by far the best-looking album she's had in years. Not that anyone buys her records for their covers (at least I hope they

don't), but the last few before this might actually have hurt sales. P.R.

LIESBETH LIST: *Solitude's My Home*. Liesbeth List (vocals); orchestra. *I Think of You*; *We*; *The Lovers*; *Three*; *I'll Catch the Sun*; and nine others. STANYAN 10078 \$6.98.

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

Liesbeth List's big, dark-toned voice and crushed-velvet style are mostly wasted in yet another recital of the overcooked *oeuvre* of Rod McKuen. Although from Holland, Miss List sings impressively in unaccented English. Most persuasive is her *Round, Round, Round*, in which she invokes a unique dreamlike quality; hers is completely different from The Master's own interpretation, which rather induces vertigo. Given her repertoire, she does remarkably well, but the pickings are still pretty lean.

All things considered, this is one of McKuen's Stanyan label's better efforts, at least as far as the vocalist is concerned. But that may be faint praise when you realize that the roster also includes Hildegard, Alice Faye, and Rock Hudson. P.R.

CARMEN McRAE: *Mad About the Man: The Songs of Noël Coward*. Carmen McRae (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *I'll See You Again*; *Zigeuner*; *Someday I'll Find You*; *A Room with a View*; *World Weary*; *I Can't Do Anything at All*; *Mad About the Boy*; *Poor Little Rich Girl*; *I'll Follow My Secret Heart*; *If Love Were All*; *Why Does Love Get in the Way?*; *Never Again*. STANYAN SR 10115 \$6.98.

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

Carmen McRae's approach to this collection of what amounts to the best of the Noël Coward songs is that of a jazz-tinted cabaret singer. Her skill and artistry are beyond dispute, but I wonder if Coward's songs — adaptable as they are to this style — are best served by it.

It is possible to do a cabaret/jazz version of almost anything, as too many cabaret/jazz artists have proved, often with ridiculous results, over the years. But Coward's songs require a precision of diction (which Ms. McRae has) and a legitimate stage style of singing which is rather formal and, at this late date, rather period, but sublime nonetheless. I

cannot get used to the very slow waltz tempo given *Some Day I'll Find You* when—and this may be my trouble—I have heard Coward singing it and have also heard other vocal and instrumental versions containing the sentimentality which is so necessary to the tune but which Ms. McRae's version lacks.

Do not, however, get the impression that I didn't enjoy this album. Some Coward songs are more adaptable than others to the cabaret/jazz style, notably *A Room with a View*, *Why Does Love Get in the Way?*, and *I Can't Do Anything at All*. Here the arrangements are very jazzy and Ms. McRae gets to sail away (kindly note hidden reference). J.V.

LES PAUL & MARY FORD: *The World Is Still Waiting for the Sunrise*. Les Paul (guitar); Mary Ford (vocals). *How High the Moon*; *Whispering*; *The Best Things in Life Are Free*; *Lover*; *Deep in the Blues*; *The World Is Waiting for the Sunrise*; and six others. CAPITOL ST-11308 \$6.98, ⑧ 8XT-11308 \$7.98.

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

Les Paul was born Lester Polfus. Mary Ford was born Coleen Summers. He was an excellent guitarist with outstanding technique: when he let himself fly he played a personal brand of jazz that was hard to beat. Because of his technical innovations in guitars and recording equipment he is largely responsible for recording as we know it today—he was designing twelve-track recording consoles before anyone else was—and there is hardly a twang of rock guitar over the last twenty-five years that does not owe him a debt. (The Les Paul model electric guitar is still prized by rock musicians for its tone, action, and comfort.) Mary Ford sang in a straightforward manner and was in fact an excellent jazz singer, though she was not considered so at the time of the great Paul-Ford success (early and middle Fifties) because the style for lady jazz singers then dictated breathiness and turtle-tempo'd ballads.

The Les Paul and Mary Ford song that many people remember is *The World Is Waiting for the Sunrise*, partly because Stan Freberg satirized it so devastatingly. But the other Paul-Ford masterpiece is the first of their recorded efforts, *How High the Moon*. Mary Ford, double-tracked so that she's singing harmony with herself (this is 1951, remember) and with just the right touch of echo so that her from-the-belly vocal is eerily romantic, sings the words straight through with a delicious little punch and tickle here and there to spark the lyrics. Then Paul comes in for a long, hearty solo that conjures up visions of Django Reinhardt in his great days with the quintet of the Hot Club of France. Paul's solo is one of the best ever taken by a jazz guitarist. (Another fine player, Chuck Berry, has said that he always wanted to do the tune in concert, but he could never find a band strong enough to tackle Paul's arrangement.)

The other selections range from show-off pieces like *Whispering* to a very sturdy rendering of *I Really Don't Want to Know* and a Paul guitar solo, *Deep in the Blues*, where he doesn't exactly swing but certainly demonstrates that he was knowledgeable; whether consciously or not, parts of this solo have been repeated for the last twenty-three years by rock guitarists. Paul knew it all, way back then. He was a mixture of electronic gimcrackery, hokum, and sheer brilliance. Let us now praise famous men. J.V.

ELVIS PRESLEY: *Elvis Recorded Live on Stage in Memphis*. Elvis Presley (vocals): instrumental accompaniment. *See See Rider*; *I Got a Woman*; *Love Me*; *Trying to Get to You*; *How Great Thou Art*; *Help Me*; and fifteen others. RCA CPL1-0606 \$6.98, ⑧ CPS1-0606 \$7.95, ⑥ CPK1-0606 \$7.95, ⑧ APT1-0606 \$8.95.

ELVIS PRESLEY: *Having Fun with Elvis on Stage*. Documentary. Elvis Presley (narrative). RCA ⑥ CPM1-0818 \$6.98, ⑥ CPS1-0818 \$7.95, ⑥ CPK1-0818 \$7.95.

Performances: **King deigns to reign**
Recordings: **Very good/variable**

With few exceptions—a song here, a song there—"Live on Stage in Memphis" is the

same live Elvis Presley album as the last one was, and the one before that, and the one before that. Whether Presley's stage show is being recorded in Las Vegas or via satellite from Hawaii, the program of songs does not significantly change, nor do the audiences—they still come by the thousands.

Most of the songs here are given thirty-second treatments: a quick chorus, half a verse, and on to the next ditty in the medley. Presley is, of course, still in great voice—and he has one of the greatest. But why on earth anyone should spend six dollars and ninety-eight cents plus tax to hear the same program that they could hear on half a dozen other "live" albums is beyond me.

"Having Fun with Elvis on Stage" is subtitled—"Live on Stage in Memphis" is the
(Continued on page 97)

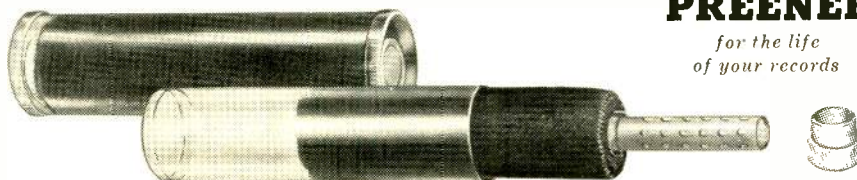


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The Inimitable Hildegarde

DURING the time I was just passing into my teens, "The Incomparable HildegardE" virtually lived in the Persian Room of New York's Plaza Hotel. I never did get to see her there myself, but my folks did, and when I asked them how she was, my mother said, "She was just charming, charming!" Hildegarde's "act" involved an upswept hairdo (I once saw a picture of her with her hair down and I didn't recognize her as the same woman); a long, clinging gown and long gloves; an almost copyrighted pose of standing with both arms upraised alongside the head, the fingers gracefully curved; and a lot of roses, which she distributed to the audience. Her voice was

small and sweet and she phrased well. She took liberties with songs, and sometimes she got just a little too fey, but she never did violence to anything she sang. Some songs she sang better than anyone else I ever heard.

She was, in her aura, America's own "European" singer. She had what might be called a cosmopolitan accent, which is to say she pronounced some words very exotically, but the accent was not consistent; it flitted all over the European continent and several times touched never-never lands. To say she pronounced "Paris" as something like "pair-is" gives only the foggiest notion of the real sound and no idea of the small magic somehow embodied in that impossible-to-place pronunciation. In my time she was known as "The dear that made Milwaukee famous," a loving epithet if not a particularly graceful one, and, though the books seem to differ on just where she was born, they all agree that it was in Wisconsin. And yet she made her first success in Paris (did she call it "pair-is" there too?), her second success in London, and only with the onset of World War II in the United States.

All her most famous records here were made for Decca, and they included an album of Noël Coward songs, one of Rodgers and Hart, and one of Weill, a couple of sweet songs of Viennese inspiration, and her most famous successes: *The Last Time I Saw Paris* (the best version I've ever heard), and *Darling, Je Vous Aime Beaucoup*, written by her then-manager Anna Sosenko. Her records were reputed not to have sold particularly well until the late Jack Kapp came up with the idea of selling them at a higher price than other Decca pop discs and thus created the first "celebrity series."

A new Stanyan record purports to contain Hildegarde's recordings from the Forties, which, says the liner, "delightfully capture the feel of that era musically." Unfortunately, Stanyan's research is a little awry, for none of these recordings date from the Forties. They were, rather, recorded between 1935 and 1938 in England, for the British Columbia label (EMI), most of them accompanied by a group called Carroll Gibbons and His Boy Friends, and, to the best of my knowledge, they have never been issued in the United States before. They present Hildegarde, paradoxically, as more an American singer than a Continental one. She swings lightly, phrases with occasional jazz touches, and produces only a little of that particular illusion that was later her stock in trade. The odd pronunciation drops in about every twelfth word, and it sounds all the odder for not yet being a part of an integrated style. The recording of *Darling, Je Vous Aime Beaucoup*, as you might expect, is not the famous one, but one taken at a considerably faster tempo and with as many wrong chord changes as your average bad rock band. What was about to happen to her as a singer and as a personality is just beginning to fit together on these sides.

On the other hand, she does sing well, and I haven't been able to keep *There's a Small Hotel* off the turntable since the record arrived. So, for those who already know the special phenomenon that was Hildegarde, this record will show it in the process of becoming. For those who don't and want to, this record will not quite do the job; maybe Stanyan will later lease some of the Decca masters. For those who don't and don't care about that in particular, here are some good tunes, generally tastefully performed in late Thirties style by a singer with a nice voice, talent, brains, and a few idiosyncrasies. You could do worse.

—James Goodfriend

HILDEGARDE: *I'm in the Mood for Love*. Hildegarde (vocals); unidentified accompaniments. *Darling, Je Vous Aime Beaucoup*; *Let's Call the Whole Thing Off*; *I'm Feeling Like a Million*; *Now It Can Be Told*; *This Year's Kisses*; *I've Got My Love to Keep Me Warm*; *Cheek to Cheek*; *I'm in the Mood for Love*; *Love Walked In*; *There's a Small Hotel*; *Can I Forget You?*; *Sweetheart (Will You Remember?)*; *So Rare*; *They Can't Take That Away from Me*. STANYAN SR 10056 \$5.00 (available from Stanyan Records, P.O. Box 2783, Hollywood, Calif. 90028).

itled "A Talking Album Only." (This seems appropriate: did not mighty RCA start off as the "Victor Talking Machine Company"?). It should have been called "Elvis Raps." Here we pay our six dollars and ninety-eight cents for a collection of Presley reminiscences. The longest one is about his early days in Memphis, how despite film and recording fame he always missed the thrills 'n' spills of working in front of a live audience, how he returned to touring, and why he is so happy to be here tonight because this audience is one of the best he's ever played to. As a documentary it is the most relaxed we are liable to get of the enigmatic Presley, who has guarded his privacy (or had it guarded for him) as closely as Howard Hughes.

Both the "talking" and the redundant "live" album, though designed to be intimate, only let the fan touch the hem of Presley's garment. And for a combined total of better than fourteen dollars (with the taxes) we deserve a better hem, especially if Presley insists on hemming and hawing. J.V.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

JOHN SEBASTIAN: *Tarzana Kid*. John Sebastian (vocals, guitar, harmonica, banjo, marimbas, autoharp); Amos Garrett (guitar); Milt Holland (drums); Kenny Altman (bass); other musicians. *Sitting in Limbo; Friends Again; Dixie Chicken; Sportin' Life; Face of Appalachia; Wildwood Flower; Wild About My Lovin'; Singin' the Blues; Stories We Could Tell; Harpoon*. REPRISÉ MS 2187 \$6.98. Ⓟ M 82187 \$7.95. Ⓢ M 52187 \$7.95.

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

Yes, I know it's kind of late to be rehashing the "less is more" theme, and that it probably should be restricted to architecture anyway, but John Sebastian has done a nice job of leaving things out of his "Tarzana Kid" album for Reprise. First, there was the way I noticed I was always jumping in with the harmonica to help fill out the sound—and Sebastian is one of the best harmonica players in pop music, but he was laying out, as it were, with a vengeance—and it took me a long time to find out what just the album sounded like. Then there was the thing I've noticed before: Sebastian's *singing* seems to leave something out, and that can make for a busy little mind in the listener. Busy makes happy, I suppose, for I'm fond of the little old album.

The tunes are not terribly ambitious, as songwriting labors go, but they are spirited little things and they do their bit to elaborate on Sebastian's varied influences. These include flower-child folk-rock, country (*Stories We Could Tell* is a dandy), blues (this version of *Wild About My Lovin'* is also a dandy), and his association with such Real People as Fred Neil, which shows up in more subtle ways. There aren't many pop stars who'd be up to picking out *Wildwood Flower* on the autoharp and then turning to the electric guitar and a blues voice for *Wild About My Lovin'* (and of course the presence of Ry Cooder on mandolin and slide in that cut doesn't hurt); Sebastian may not be imposing, but he's a good musician.

I don't care much for *Dixie Chicken*, where he falls down a bit on the job of leaving things out, but a truly fine finale for harp called *Harpoon* more than makes up for that. I'd rather not even think about all the stuff that *isn't* in the album, but be assured it includes electric

smears over the vocals, fancy licks for the sake of fancy licks, and most other positively identified kinds of pretentiousness. N.C.

JOHNNY SHINES (see Best of the Month, page 85)

COLLECTIONS

SUPPER CLUB SINGERS. Carmen McRae: *If Love Were All*. Felicia Sanders: *It Never Was You*. Hildegard: *Darling, Je Vous Aime Beaucoup*. Greta Keller: *10¢ a Dance*. Portia Nelson: *Autumn Leaves*. Eartha Kitt: *My Man*. Lori McCormack: *It's Raining*. Jeri Southern: *You Better Go Now*. Mabel Mercer: *The Ballad of the Sad Young Men*. Sylvia Syms: *I Guess I'll Hang My Tears Out to Dry*. Shelby Flint: *Isn't It Something*. Chris Connor: *Hit 'Em in the Head with Love*. Liesbeth List: *Three*. Georgi Griffith: *Harbour*. STANYAN SR 10112 \$6.98 (available by mail from Stanyan Records, P.O. Box 2783, Hollywood, Calif. 90028).

Performance: **Pleasant to glorious**
Recording: **Fine**

As soon as you have a sampler presenting many musicians' work (in this case fourteen cabaret singers), it's easy to lose overall perspective in the passion, or lack of it, for individuals. And what can singers as diverse as Mabel Mercer, Hildegard, and Eartha Kitt possibly have in common besides their chosen occupation?

For one thing, most of them have that indefinable quality called style. There's no confusing McRae with Mercer or Kitt (or Portia Nelson or Sylvia Syms). As nonwriters, cabaret singers must find their way to distinctiveness through voice, phrasing, and choice of material without—one hopes—becoming merely mannered. These women all present themselves to the world as true sophisticates who have been through it all and survived to tell the story, no matter how sad, without rancor or girlish illusions.

Where singer and song match perfectly, the effect can be breathtaking. Felicia Sanders sings Weill's *It Never Was You* with a quiet passion that will break your heart every time. Mabel Mercer is represented by *Ballad of the Sad Young Men*, the song she has turned into the national anthem of saloons.

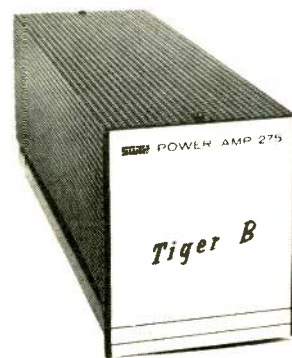
Where singer and song mismatch, it's hilarious. Eartha Kitt may be singing that old tearjerker, *My Man*, but when she sings, "He isn't true/He beats me too/What can I do?" you know she can knock his teeth down his throat and break a few bones. And will.

Some of the songs on this sampler are recently recorded. Others are reissues. One of my favorites is a 1930's recording of Greta Keller singing *10¢ a Dance*. Backed by an unspeakably awful band churning through a nightmare orchestration, her weary, cynical voice conveys the true sleaziness of dance halls and makes the song grotesque, funny, and decadent. I loved it.

On the whole, the older singers make the best showing, proving that, even if the voice starts to go, twenty to fifty years' experience guarantees doing it right. On the younger side, Lori McCormack and Shelby Flint are merely pleasant. But Georgi Griffith is really fine with her version of a new torch song, *Harbour*. The record makes a good introduction to a resurgent art form. Penelope Ross

(Continued overleaf)

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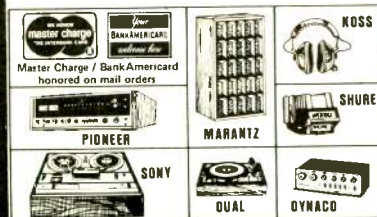
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JAZZ



GARY BURTON: *Seven Songs for Quartet and Chamber Orchestra* by Michael Gibbs. Gary Burton (vibraharp); Michael Goodrick (guitar); Steve Swallow (bass); Ted Seibs (drums); Nordwest Deutscher Rundfunk Symphony Orchestra, Hamburg, Michael Gibbs cond. *Nocturne Vulgaire; Phases; Throb; By Way of a Preface*; and three others. ECM 1040 ST \$6.98.

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

In a previous album ("The New Quartet," ECM 1030), Gary Burton, whose playing has undergone astounding development since his days with George Shearing in the early Sixties, introduced us to his remarkable new quartet and included two intriguing compositions by Mike Gibbs. Now, with a chamber orchestra joining Burton's quartet, a bit of formality seems to be in order, and so—with the exception of a Steve Swallow opus—we have an album devoted to the music of Michael Gibbs. (I recall that the same thing happened to Charlie Byrd, who became Charles whenever he recorded classical guitar works, but that is beside any point I wish to make here.) Call him what you will, Mr. Gibbs writes music worth lending an ear to.

Burton's quartet—with Steve Swallow and Ted Seibs replacing Abraham Laborial and Harry Blazer—plays with rather than against the background of the chamber orchestra, creating a lush, but never mushy, brooding blend of Afro-American and neo-classical Western European music that is totally in keeping with the high standard set by ECM so far. Burton and guitarist Michael Goodrick stand out from time to time, but all of it is very impressive, from the first to the thirty-seventh minute. *C.A.*

LARRY CORYELL: *Spaces*. Larry Coryell, John McLaughlin (guitars); Chick Corea (electric piano); Miroslav Vitous (bass); Billy Cobham (drums). *Gloria's Step; New Year's Day in Los Angeles; Chris; Wrong Is Right*; and two others. VANGUARD VSD 79345 \$6.98.

Performance: **Stars in ascendancy**
Recording: **Excellent**

This album is a repackaged 1970 release which is of additional interest now because of the development each player has undergone since then. John (Mahavishnu) McLaughlin and Chick Corea, then part of the Miles Davis Bitches Brew Rejuvenation Program, have since established themselves as leaders on the rock-cum-jazz scene: Czechoslovakian bassist Miroslav Vitous had left Herbie Mann and was about to found Weather Report with Miles Davis alumni Joe Zawinul and Wayne Shorter; Billy Cobham, another Miles Davis alumnus, then with a short-lived, jazz-oriented rock group called Dreams, has recently

emerged as a leader in two superb Atlantic albums. Larry Coryell, the then twenty-seven-year-old Texas guitarist who brought this impressive group together five years ago, first attracted attention in jazz circles two years earlier when he left a rock group called Free Spirits and became a member of the Gary Burton Quartet. Like his estimable colleagues in this session, Coryell has undergone a musical maturation in the last two or three years. But "Spaces" is an album of more than historical importance.

Most prominent here are the two guitarists, Coryell and McLaughlin, dazzling in their marvelous solos and intricate interplay in *Spaces* and *Wrong Is Right*, and paying tribute to the remarkable Belgian gypsy guitarist Django Reinhardt in *Rene's Theme*. Both are excellent technicians with flowing improvisational skill and impressive rhythmic prowess.



LARRY CORYELL
Dazzling guitar on a fine reissue

Vitous' bowed bass adds a new dimension to the old Bill Evans standby, Scott LaFaro's *Gloria's Step*, and Chick Corea's electric piano weaves nice tonal patterns with the two guitarists in *Chris*, the only selection in which he appears. Drummer Billy Cobham displays characteristic sensitivity as he propels each selection to its natural conclusion, and even *New Year's Day in Los Angeles*, a twenty-second guitar improvisation, has a certain charm—it very nicely puts the period at the end of an album that spells virtuosity. *C.A.*

RECORDINGS OF SPECIAL MERIT

DUKE ELLINGTON: *Ellington for Always*. Duke Ellington and His Orchestra, with musicians of the Symphony and Opera Orchestras of Paris, Hamburg, Stockholm, and La Scala, Milan. *Harlem; Non-Violent Integration; Night Creature; La Scala, She Too Pretty to Be Blue*. STANYAN 10105 \$6.98 (available by mail from Stanyan Record Co., 8440 Santa Monica Blvd., Los Angeles, Calif. 90069).

Performance: **Successful marriage**
Recording: **Good**

DUKE ELLINGTON: *Second Sacred Concert*. Alice Babs. Tony Watkins, others (vocals); A.M.E. Mother Zion Church Choir; Choirs of St. Hilda's and St. Hugh's School; Central Connecticut State College Singers; Frank

Parker Singers; Duke Ellington and His Orchestra, Duke Ellington cond. *Praise God; Supreme Being; Heaven; The Biggest and Busiest Intersection; It's Freedom*; and eight others. PRESTIGE P-24045 two discs \$7.98.

Performance: **Message-laden**
Recording: **Very good**

I have always preferred to hear the Ellington Orchestra unescorted, so to speak, but whether flirting with the new music (as in his recordings with John Coltrane), with another band (as he did with Basie on a Columbia album), or with choral groups and symphony orchestras (as he does on these two releases), Duke Ellington never stepped out of character or appeared out of place.

The Stanyan album, previously released on Reprise (RS-6097), contains recordings made in Paris, Stockholm, Hamburg, and Milan during the first two months of 1963; all the music mates Duke and his men with classical players—some five hundred in all—but only one piece was written for this recording: *La Scala, She Too Pretty to Be Blue* was written by Duke on seven hours' notice and, of course, recorded in Milan, though not entirely—Paul Gonsalves, Lawrence Brown, Russell Procope, and Cootie Williams added their solos after the orchestra had returned to the U.S. *Night Creature* was commissioned in 1955 for the Symphony of the Air and has since been widely performed. The first and second movements of this recording were done with members of the Stockholm Symphony, and the third had been recorded five days earlier with strings from the Paris Symphony. That movement, with segments featuring Latin rhythm, occasionally sounds like one of those Carmen Miranda production numbers of the Forties—you remember those things. Spanish couples dancing on oversized conga drums beneath the paper palms. However, such banalities are brief and inevitably rescued as Duke shifts gears. *Non-Violent Integration* is a prepossessing little piece originally performed (under another title) in 1949 by the Robin Hood Dell Orchestra. Here it's rendered with members of the Hamburg Symphony, and includes solos by Duke, Johnny Hodges, Buster Cooper, Jimmy Hamilton, Paul Gonsalves, Cat Anderson, and the first oboist of the Hamburg Symphony. *Harlem*, which ends this collection, is one of Duke's most ambitious and interesting works employing a symphony orchestra. Recorded with members of the Paris Symphony, it features the Ellington Orchestra more prominently than does a later Decca version with Erich Kunzel and the Cincinnati Symphony, but both recordings can be recommended as successful fusions of rather disparate musical cultures.

Duke recorded his First Sacred Concert for Victor in 1965, and lived to perform it in more than fifty churches, cathedrals, and temples throughout the world. The Second Sacred Concert, captured in full on this two-record Prestige set, saw its première in New York in January 1968 before a capacity audience in the huge Cathedral Church of St. John the Divine. With Ellington's death, last May, and as more and more vital members of the orchestra either retire or pass away, these recordings become increasingly important because Ellington composed specifically for his orchestra and its individual members; others play his music, but only he and those for whom he wrote could accurately render the sounds he intended us to hear.

For all too long, the music of the church was shackled by traditionalism, and though Duke Ellington was by no means the first to secularize church music or pioneer jazz before the altar, his nonsectarian Sacred Concerts have done much to open minds that otherwise might have remained closed. Musically, both these works are spotty, and neither is a very memorable part of the vast Ellington legacy, but they are important paragraphs in a long, significant chapter that Duke contributed to American art, and it is fortunate indeed that they were preserved on records under the composer's direction. C.A.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT
BENNIE MAUPIN: *The Jewel in the Lotus.*

Bennie Maupin (reeds, glockenspiel, vocals); Charles Sullivan (trumpet); Herbie Hancock (piano); Charles Buster Williams (bass); Freddy Waits and Billy Hart (drums); Bill Summers (percussion). *Winds of Change; Past Is Past; Mappo; Ensenada; Past + Present = Future*; and three others. ECM 1043 ST \$6.98.

Performance: **Silk purse**
Recording: **Excellent**

On a recent Saturday morning, my TV screen revealed Herbie Hancock's group going through the motions of playing one of their heavy flirts with a Motown derivative on the popular *Soul Train* program. It was sad to see the once adventurous associate of Miles Davis and Donald Byrd give in to mass-market



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demands, plunking predictables over a rhythm section that sounded like some Hammond organ attachment. Sadler still was to hear Hancock—on the same program—dismiss the music that first brought him prominence and cite Sly Stone as his idea of "where it's at." But Hancock is still capable of something else, as he clearly demonstrates in his performances in this album—recorded last March under the leadership of Bennie Maupin.

If I seem to dwell on Hancock, it's because this group consists mostly of men who have been associated with him over the past couple of years. What Bennie Maupin, Hancock's regular saxophonist, gets out of these players bears little resemblance to their recent output under Hancock's leadership: the compositions here—all by Maupin—emphasize the melodic and harmonic rather than the rhythmic; the sound is acoustical rather than electronic; clichés and predictable patterns have been avoided. Most horn men in Maupin's position would have seen a date of their own as an opportunity to step out of the background and release stored-up energy, but Maupin has wisely chosen a different route. He has taken the tools at Hancock's disposal and demonstrated what can be done with them, and he has reintroduced us to Hancock stripped of his pop-chart aspirations.

"The Jewel in the Lotus" will not send you finger-popping and hip-wiggling down a *Soul Train* "walk," but it will survive anything Herbie Hancock has involved Bennie Maupin in for his recent Columbia albums. C.A.

DICK WELLSTOOD: *Dick Wellstood and His All Star Orchestra Featuring Kenny Davern.* Dick Wellstood (piano); Kenny Davern (soprano saxophone). *Sweet Substitute; Once in Awhile; Winin' Boy Blues; Smiles; Georgia on My Mind;* and five others. CHIAROSCURO CR 129 \$6.98.

Performance: **Crisp**
Recording: **Crackling**

If Dick Wellstood has a style of his own, it is hard to pinpoint. The influences of Fats Waller, James P. Johnson, Jess Stacy, and other piano individualists are much in evidence in his playing. But, compensating for his lack of stylistic originality, Wellstood's imagination produces an absorbing earful of jazz piano history executed with dazzling technique.

These days, Wellstood frequently teams up with soprano saxophonist Kenny Davern for New York club appearances, and this album captures eight of their duets plus a solo track by each (despite the album title, there's no orchestra). Whether striding, ragging, or playing a simple blues, Wellstood is in fine form throughout. Davern plays well, too, especially in *Wild Man Blues*—a Sidney Bechet favorite—and *Fast as a Bastard* (which is credited to him and Wellstood, but is actually Duke Ellington's old *Jubilee Stomp!*) yet he is not quite in Wellstood's league. This is particularly evident in *Cashmir and Togas*, a solo performance which also reveals his shortcomings as a composer.

All in all, however, this is a spirited album that captures well a flavor of the past. But I beg to differ with annotator William F. Buckley, Jr. (yes, you read correctly), who contends that Davern "is the man who can make Wellstood sound better than Wellstood alone." Wellstood is alone on Cole Porter's *So In Love*, and that is the album's finest track. C.A.



THEATER • FILMS

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

PETER COOK & DUDLEY MOORE: *Good Evening.* Original Broadway-cast recording. Peter Cook and Dudley Moore (comedians). *Hello; Madrigal; Six of the Best; One Leg Too Few; The Frog and Peach; Die Flabbergast; Gospel Truth; Mini-Drama.* ISLAND ILPS 9298 \$6.98.

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

Mr. Moore and Mr. Cook, after breaking up Broadway audiences for a full year with their two-man entertainment *Good Evening*, have finally put the highlights of their show on a disc for the record-buying public, and I don't think any of their admirers (count me as one) are going to be disappointed. Mr. Moore, a devil of a musical satirist who can reduce the entire repertoire of the French art song or the complete works of Benjamin Britten to hash just by raising his harrowing voice in mimicry, is not as well represented here in that department as he was in *Beyond the Fringe*, but he does sing a "bawdy" Elizabethan madrigal that should put the entire madrigal business, not to mention the Deller Consort, out of commission for some time to come. Most of the time, however, like some British Bob and Ray injected with a mania-producing serum by a mad scientist, Moore and Cook are busy with less recondite targets—a Member of Parliament's traumatic experience with a nerve-racking cabbie who gets instructions over his intercom like "Pick up torso," carries a gun in his glove compartment, and seems hell-bent for bloodshed; an encounter, which in less tactful hands could be hopelessly tasteless, between a theatrical agent and a crippled actor out after the role of Tarzan; and an excursion to an understandably empty suburban restaurant called the Frog and Peach, with its hair-raising specialties. The next best thing to seeing Moore and Cook understate their way into the realms of satirical madness is to hear them in their own sketches; one only wishes Island Records had gone for broke and recorded everything. There are too many giggles on the track, some of them baffling in the light of what a mere listener can't make sense of—or nonsense of, for that matter—but at least the laughs don't sound post-dubbed. A good evening indeed. P.K.

THE GOLDEN VOYAGE OF SINBAD (Miklós Rózsa). Original-soundtrack recording. Rome Symphony Orchestra, Miklós Rózsa cond. UNITED ARTISTS UA-LA308-G \$6.98.

Performance: **Occidental-Oriental**
Recording: **Good**

Miklós Rózsa is an illustrious member of the musical "Hollywood Hall of Fame," a group
(Continued on page 103)

of composers who left their native Europe after early triumphs of their works in the concert hall and settled in Southern California to write mammoth scores for the movies. Like Erich Wolfgang Korngold, Dmitri Tiomkin, and Max Steiner, Rózsa always has taken his role as composer quite seriously, whether he was writing for the screen or aspiring to the orchestral repertoire. Born in Budapest, he studied in Leipzig at the Conservatory of Music, and his compositions include ballet scores and chamber pieces as well as symphonic works. Most of us, however, remember him mainly for the striking ghostly passages he contributed to the soundtrack of Hitchcock's *Spellbound* and his appropriately harrowing music for *The Lost Weekend*. I doubt if any but the most devoted fans could whistle you an air out of the music for *The Four Feathers*, *The Thief of Baghdad*, *Quo Vadis*, *Ben Hur*, or *A Double Life*—although the last two, as well as the score for *Spellbound*, brought him Academy Awards.

Dr. Rózsa's scores are typical of the big symphonic approach that may not yield much reward for the attentive ear alone but can stir up quite an emotional storm as subliminal accompaniment to the doings on screen, especially when there is plenty of physical action or a demand for the kind of Big Biblical Sound he scored for such epics as *Sodom and Gomorrah*. *The Golden Voyage of Sinbad* deals with sailor Sinbad's perilous adventures, including combat with gigantic centaurs, encounters with oracles, pursuits by enemies, and other lively doings on the high seas around Arabian Nights country. Rózsa's score for what sounds like a real old-fashioned Hollywood "action drama" is itself heavy on the action, as it ought to be, with just enough of Kodály, Glière, and Rimsky-Korsakov to make it comfortable for the movie-goer who wouldn't want irrelevant experimental effects distracting him from the visual action (nevertheless, there are a few). The score, which the composer himself describes as being in his "finest Oriental mood," is given an energetic going-over by the Rome Symphony Orchestra under his direction and will no doubt make a respectable addition to the libraries of collectors who prize this sort of album. Personally, I prefer my *Háry János* neat. P.K.

THE MAGIC SHOW (Stephen Schwartz-Doug Henning). Original Broadway-cast recording. Cheryl Barnes, Annie McGreevey, David Ogden Stiers, Anita Morris, Robert Lupone, Lloyd Sannes, Ronald Stafford, and Doug Henning (vocals); chorus and orchestra, Stephen Reinhardt dir. BELL 9003 \$5.98.

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

The Magic Show kept this member of the audience at the Cort Theatre in New York openmouthed in a state of wonder, but it certainly wasn't Stephen Schwartz's songs that provided the magic. The excitement of *The Magic Show*, on the contrary, came from the absolutely inexplicable tricks performed on the stage by magician Doug Henning, each of them more baffling than the last, until the final miracle of mummery that I won't give away. The story was only a skimpy scaffolding to hold the magic acts together, and the score, although endearingly performed, is even shakier.

I suppose, even in the present state of our technology, it would not be feasible to issue some of Mr. Henning's tricks on a phono-

graph record—although the album does come with a "hexaflexagon" that can keep the enterprising purchaser busy for hours folding a length of colored cardboard into amazing shapes: goodness knows one has to do something while enduring the songs from *The Magic Show*! Mr. Schwartz, who produced the album with Phil Ramone, has provided a full set of lyrics in clear print on the inner sleeve. Unfortunately, reading the words of numbers like *Solid Silver Platform Shoes*, *Two's Company*, *Charmin's Lament*, and *The Goldfarb Variations* (!) only serves to emphasize their utter weightlessness, despite a scattering of deft lines. He has certainly provided Broadway with more glittering material in the past. In fact, the only item of any distinction or real bite—a bitter, clever monologue called *West End Avenue* well sung by Dale Soules—has to be dragged by the heels into the plot of *The Magic Show*. And even that one could have done with a bit of sharpening. P.K.

VINTAGE RADIO BROADCASTS: *Fred Allen*. Broadcasts of October 28, 1945, and April 11, 1948. Fred Allen (comedian); Basil Rathbone, Charlie McCarthy, Edgar Bergen, and the DeMarco Sisters (guests). MAR-BREN MBR 741 \$5.98 (plus 50¢ for shipping and handling from Mar-Bren Sound Company, 420 Pelham Road, Rochester, N.Y. 14610).

Performance: **Endearing and enduring**
Recording: **Pretty good**

Once upon a time, as we've probably all heard *ad nauseam* by now, when radios were shaped like little cathedrals and trios of sisters made fortunes by singing "doodle-ee-doo" in close harmony over the nation's microphones, life was just one *Fred Allen Show* after another for many of us. Allen, a wry, suave, nasal character with a celebrated pair of bags under his eyes and an adder under his tongue, used to regale his listeners with journeys down an imaginary street called Allen's Alley, where the blowhard Senator Claghorn, the bucolic Titus Moody, and Mrs. Nussbaum ("You were expecting maybe Dinah Shnorrer?") would be waiting to discuss some topic of the week with their sardonic interviewer. There would also be the comic-strip voice of Portland Hoffa to fence with Allen in brisk exchanges, skits in the form of take-offs on topical themes, and musical interludes provided by the De Marco Sisters and Al Goodman's orchestra.

Was it all really funny—or has memory greened the reality? Well, Mar-Bren Sound has now released a disc to settle the matter: yes, Fred Allen's broadcasts were really funny, and have stood the test of time better than a lot of us. Side one offers a show in which the topic is jobs for women, about which Senator Claghorn is less than enthusiastic, for, as he points out, "a woman could never be the father of our country." Later in the show, there's a courtroom trial featuring Charlie McCarthy, and there's an execrably recorded stretch by Al Goodman's orchestra of the pretty vintage tune *Lullaby of the Leaves*. The sound is better on side two, which is more of the same. And the period Ford commercials are heard intact. The Mar-Bren people, by the way, who put this one out, plan to follow it up with a whole series of vintage (out of copyright) radio on LP's. They also offer "thousands of additional shows" on open-reel tapes and cassettes. A complete catalog can be obtained by sending 25¢ to the address listed above. P.K.

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CHOOSING SIDES

By IRVING KOLODIN



MOZART: THE EARLY SYMPHONIES

OF the many distinctions that differentiate W. A. Mozart from his great colleagues, one, without question, is unique: he is the only composer in history who became a master while he was still a Master ("too young," as the dictionary has it, "to be called mister"). Why this phrase is particularly applicable to the teenage master of the symphony is spelled out in explicit detail and with exquisite justice by Neville Marriner and the Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields in a new Philips release (6747 099, eight discs) titled "Mozart: The Early Symphonies."

Just how Marriner's venture surpasses prior probes toward the same objective (an early LP set on L'Oiseau-Lyre with Pierre Colombo sharing the direction with Louis de Froment, a Concert Hall set directed by Otto Ackermann, a Westminster treatment by Erich Leinsdorf, and the recent Deutsche Grammophon release conducted by Karl Böhm) goes well beyond the energy of his effort and the depth of his understanding. It derives from the thoroughness of a procedure that takes in not only the authentic eighteen of the first sequence (Nos. 1 to 20; 2 and 3 are spurious), but six in the posthumous sequence (Nos. 42 to 47). The last six are works of the early period which were unknown to Köchel when he completed his monumental Mozart catalog in the 1870's. The total of thirty-one items is completed by two "Lambacher" symphonies not included in either numerical listing, four "mini-symphonies" derived from operatic overtures and converted by Mozart into symphonies through the addition of "spare parts" (finales, etc.) he kept on hand for such purposes, and an oddly nominated "Symphony No. 55" in B-flat.

One can listen to these richly enjoyable works in the random sequence proffered by Philips and marvel at the rapid maturation of a mind capable of producing the most remarkable first symphony ever written (Mozart wrote his No. 1 in E-flat, K. 16, at the age of eight). Or one can seek out the interior relationships and keep chronological pace with the agile brain and pulsating heart as they progress from the astounding to the miraculous in leaps and bounds that compact both time and distance.

Before he was fourteen, Mozart had traveled, under his father's not wholly benign guidance, more than J. S. Bach did in his lifetime. He was in Paris and London before he was eight, in Vienna at eleven, twice across

the Alps to Italy by the time he was fifteen. Leopold, of course, was looking for ways to reap the financial rewards due him for his phenomenal luck in fathering a child wonder. The son, however, was reacting to everything he heard and saw in a way that made him something more than a prodigy: a wonderful child who had the capacity to mature into a wonderful man, the first truly international musician (much more so than Handel) the world had known. This perception is embodied in Rossini's finely chosen words: "From the moment that the North produced a Mozart, we of the South were beaten on our own ground, because this man rises above all nations, uniting in himself the charm of Italian melody and the profundity of German harmony."

Through these Philips recordings we have, thanks to Marriner's imaginative implementation of a skillfully wrought plan, the opportunity to experience at first hand the molecular attraction and the final coming together of the elements of melody and harmony, the fusion that Rossini described so well. We can, in consequence, travel the instrumental route step by step (let us hope that someone, some day, will document the parallel vocal course equally well), hear Master Mozart minding his *p*'s and *f*'s under the scrutiny of J. C. ("the London") Bach in 1764 and Mozart the master articulating in a work of his twelfth year (the Symphony in B-flat Major, K. App. 214, E. 45b, a work previously unknown to me) a first version of the pregnant four-note theme that was to begin the last movement of his last symphony a score of years later.

This thematic outcropping occurred during a visit to Vienna in which the footloose Leo-

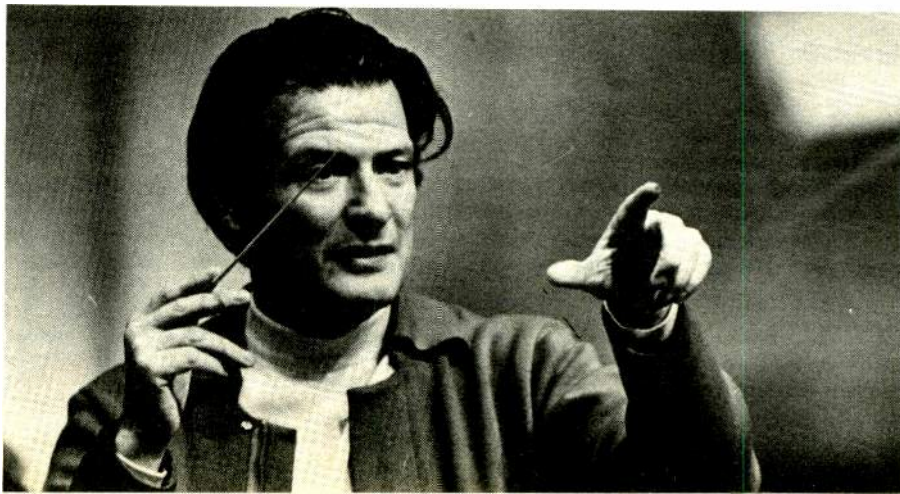
pold hoped to find some princely post worthy of his offspring. That reward eluded him, but the time spent in Vienna was sufficient to acquaint his son with the Viennese concept of the four-movement symphony (J. C. Bach had indoctrinated him in the three-movement type) which has, in the decades since, endlessly enriched the musical world.

Back, then, to Salzburg for a while, and to learning of a different sort: counterpoint and its complications. There were no symphonies to speak of in this year of 1769. By 1770, father and son were on the move again—this time to Italy. This was the happiest of Leopold's travel ideas, for it was the most productive for Wolfgang—eyes open, ears pricked, senses aquiver to the new world of sound into which he had been plunged. Italy was a place of both challenge and stimulation to which the young Salzburger brought his rich endowment and the cultivation to which it had already been exposed elsewhere. His response to the brilliance, the play of passions, and the vivacity in the music of a culture new to him was so keen that the visit was repeated a year later.

For now (1771), at fifteen, he returns home to Salzburg a young man of the world culturally speaking and, creatively speaking, an ageless man in a world of his own. And it was just *here*, in some foreordained coming together of instinct and evolution, action and reaction, that occurred the flash of combustion which fused everything to which his talent and taste had been exposed over the seven-year period that began with his visit to London in 1764. It is all there in the symphony that bears the number 14 (actually, he had by then written more than twenty): hotly impetuous but coolly controlled, alive with the tensions of the south and rigorously disciplined by the science of the north. It is a witty, winning delight that shows Mozart's shining (A Major) morning face, the same that was to beam later through the Piano Concerto No. 23, the Violin Concerto No. 5, the Clarinet Quintet and Clarinet Concerto, the Piano Sonata No. 11 (with its famous variations-finale), and, of course, the supple, well-coordinated Symphony No. 29.

With the Symphony No. 14 as a plateau or a kind of base camp, Mozart would take off urgently, unrelentingly, to reach the peak of the musical Everest it was within his power to achieve. Though there is sometimes a slide back as circumstances of the moment do not permit him to put his better foot forward, the going is steadily upward, lost ground is quickly regained, and exhilarating new heights soon achieved.

How to differentiate between early Mozart and early Haydn? In a comment written some years ago for a set of Mozart symphonies conducted by Erich Leinsdorf (it took in the



Conductor Neville Marriner/Philips Records

MOZART'S EARLY SYMPHONIES IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER

| Philips No. | Köchel No. | Köchel-Einstein No. | Year | Place of Composition | Adjusted Listing |
|-------------|---------------------|---------------------|--------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1 | 16 | 16 | 1764-5 | London | 1 |
| 4 | 19 | 19 | 1765 | London | 4 |
| 5 | 22 | 22 | 1765 | The Hague | 5 |
| 43 | 76 | 42a | 1767 | Vienna | 5a |
| 6 | 43 | 43 | 1767 | Vienna-Olmütz | 6 |
| none | 45 | 45 | 1768 | Vienna | 7 |
| 7a | App. 221 | 45a | 1768 | Vienna | 7a ("Alte Lambacher") |
| none | none | none | 1768 | Vienna (first published 1965) | 7b ("Neue Lambacher") |
| 55 | App. 214 | 45b | 1768 | Vienna | 7c |
| 8 | 48 | 48 | 1768 | Vienna | 8 |
| 44 | 81 | 73l | 1770 | Rome | 9 |
| 47 | 79 | 73m | 1770 | Rome | 10 |
| 45 | 95 | 73n | 1770 | Rome | 10a |
| 11 | 84 | 73q | 1770 | Milan-Bologna | 11 |
| 10 | 74 | 74 | 1770 | Milan | 11a |
| 42 | 75 | 75 | 1771 | Salzburg | 11b |
| 9 | 73 | 75a | 1771 | Salzburg | 11c |
| 12 | 110 | 75b | 1771 | Salzburg | 12 |
| none | 111 & 120 | 111 & 111a | 1771 | Milan | 12a ("Ascanio in Alba") |
| 46 | 96 | 111b | 1771 | Milan | 12b |
| 13 | 112 | 112 | 1771 | Milan | 13 |
| 14 | 114 | 114 | 1771 | Salzburg | 14 |
| 15 | 124 | 124 | 1772 | Salzburg | 15 |
| none | 126 or 161 & 163 | 126 & 141a | 1772 | Salzburg | 15a ("Il Sogno di Scipione") |
| 16 | 128 | 128 | 1772 | Salzburg | 16 |
| 17 | 129 | 129 | 1772 | Salzburg | 17 |
| 18 | 130 | 130 | 1772 | Salzburg | 18 |
| 19 | 132 | 132 | 1772 | Salzburg | 19 |
| 20 | 133 | 133 | 1772 | Salzburg | 20 |
| none | 196 & 121 | 196 & 207a | 1774 | Salzburg | 30a ("La Finta Giardiniera") |
| none | 208 & 102 | 208 & 213c | 1775 | Salzburg | 30b ("Il Re Pastore") |

NOTE: Symphonies Nos. 2 and 3 are omitted from the chronology because they are known *not* to be by W. A. Mozart. Symphony No. 7, minus the minuet, was reorchestrated as the Overture to *La Finta Semplice*; this recording, though it does not specify Symphony No. 7, is of the symphony, not the overture. Symphonies Nos. 21 through 30 would, presumably, be called "middle period" rather than early, and must wait for another album.

entire 1 to 41 sequence), I likened Haydn to a builder with musical blocks, Mozart to a weaver of musical tapestries. With the benefit of all the additional musical information made available by scholars in the last decade and a half, I would now say that Mozart's was the more interesting creative mind at any period of its development. Haydn piled his blocks, patiently, knowingly, into the structure that became the symphony orchestra. Mozart ingeniously wove his symphonic tapestries from the same threads that were going into his divertimentos and serenades, and only at the very last did he come close to the orchestral ensemble that Haydn was to perfect (in London, of all places, where Mozart's journey had begun!) after his younger colleague's death.

These recordings lead me to hope that conductor Marriner will be given the opportunity to trace the remainder of Mozart's symphonic odyssey as he has the first part of it. I would not, however, like to see that remainder accompanied by an album brochure of the same quality as the present one. Most of its content has been culled industriously from prior sources, and not always with an awareness of the possible pitfalls. This is, unfortunately, too often par for the phonographic course. (London Records has set an example—with its Haydn symphony notes by H. C. Robbins Landon—that Philips might well emulate in any future, parallel projects.) Without going into too great detail, I would point out that the present brochure observes that "The three-movement, *opera buffa*-style pattern of the Symphony [K. 16] was continued in Mozart's next four extant symphonies: in D, K. 19; in

B-flat, K. 22; in D, K. 81 (K.-E. 73l); and in G, K. 74." As the accompanying tabulation shows, K. 22 was separated from K. 74 by no less than eleven symphonies. But the most confusing confusion comes in the statement: "To the same year, 1769, belongs the brilliant C Major Symphony, K. 73. This is among the first of Mozart's symphonies which offer an amalgamation of various Italian and Austro-German influences. . . ." Alas, Mozart did not go to Italy for the first time until 1770, and No. 9 is well known as a misnumbered product of 1771—it should more properly be identified as Symphony No. 11c. The brochure also does not explain why K. App. 214 (K.-E. 45b) should be listed as Symphony No. 55.

I would be remiss, however, were I to end without thanking Philips for giving us the mini-symphonies evolved from the multi-part overtures to *La Finta Giardiniera*, *Ascanio in Alba*, *Il Sogno de Scipione*, and, most particularly, *Il Re Pastore*, which is full-developed (sixteen-year-old) Mozart. I would describe them not as dinner music—of which genre Mozart's catalog is famously full—but as *pre-dinner* music, something to be enjoyed while downing an aperitif or cocktail. Ranging in length from 6'35" to 11'32", they could serve as perfect timers for a steak, chops, or other short-term cooking project. Which one would serve what purpose would of course depend on your preference for underdone, medium, or well done. But whatever way the dish comes out, the aural pleasure experienced during the time of its preparation would be rare indeed.

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CLASSICAL DISCS AND TAPES

Reviewed by RICHARD FREED • DAVID HALL • GEORGE JELLINEK • IGOR KIPNIS
PAUL KRESH • ERIC SALZMAN

RECORDINGS OF SPECIAL MERIT

BEETHOVEN: Piano Concerto No. 5, in E-flat Major, Op. 73 ("Emperor"). Alexis Weissenberg (piano); Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, Herbert von Karajan cond. ANGEL S-37062 \$6.98.

Performance: **One of the best**
Recording: **Very good**

BEETHOVEN: Piano Concerto No. 5, in E-flat Major, Op. 73 ("Emperor"). Walter Gieseking (piano); Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, Bruno Walter cond. TURNABOUT M THS-65011 \$3.98.

Performance: **Memorable**
Recording: **Good transfer**

Whenever it seems about time to call a moratorium on further recordings of this or that "overexposed" warhorse, something in the nature of Ristenpart's *Brandenburgs* or Haitink's *Scheherazade* comes along to make us glad we did not. There are plenty of fine *Emperor* Concertos in our catalogs, but both of these would be welcome if there were a hundred, and together they constitute a digest of exemplary musicianship of today and of the fabulous era that ended with the outbreak of World War II. It took some time for Weissenberg to hit his stride as a recording artist—that is, to come across on records as effectively as he does in the concert hall—but his recent Brahms D Minor Concerto with Giulini (Angel S-36967) was a knockout, and his new

Emperor with Karajan is perhaps even more impressive. It is big, bold, and genuinely symphonic in concept, not stormy but truly majestic in the outer movements and achieving a dramatically contrasting level of intimacy in the middle one. The mutuality between soloist and conductor is extraordinary. A few phrases here and there are a little fussy, but never enough to get in the way of the sweeping effect, both viscerally exciting and deeply satisfying after repeated hearings. The sound is rich and full-bodied, and in every respect this is one of the best *Emperors* around.

Sonically, of course, the same cannot be said of the Gieseking/Walter version, but it is a sublime performance, surely the best of Gieseking's three recordings of this work. (His second one, with Karajan, is gone now: his last, with Alceo Galliera and in stereo, is on Seraphim S-60069.) This is big and bold too, with fewer contrasts than the Weissenberg/Karajan and other recent versions, but with a straightforward grandeur that is really irresistible. Discophiles who know Gieseking only from his very delicate Debussy and usually small-scaled Mozart (except in the concertos!), and who never heard him play the

Rachmaninoff Second Concerto, may be astonished by the lusty, assertive virtuosity displayed here. Walter, as in all of his finest recordings, simply makes one feel he is allowing the music to speak for itself, with no gratuitous overlay of "interpretation," and the orchestra itself is heartbreakingly beautiful. It doesn't take more than the first entry of the horns in the second subject to remind one that the prewar Vienna Philharmonic was gloriously unique, whether playing the *Emperor* Concerto or the *Emperor Waltz*. This was, I believe, the last concerto recording made by Bruno Walter or the Philharmoniker before the War, as well as Gieseking's only recorded collaboration with this conductor, and as such it is an interesting document. But it is, as I hope I have been able to suggest, a great deal more than that, and the transfer from the 1938 78's has been accomplished most successfully—and without artificial stereo. R.F.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

BEETHOVEN: Piano Sonata No. 11, in B-flat Major, Op. 22; Fantasy in G Minor, Op. 77; Sonata No. 24, in F-sharp Major, Op. 78.

ALEXIS WEISSENBURG: *his Emperor is big, bold, and genuinely symphonic in concept*



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Monophonic recordings are indicated by the symbol Ⓜ

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

Rudolf Serkin (piano). COLUMBIA M 32294 \$6.98.

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

This joy-filled disc is a dual reminder: first, these three attractive works are not heard often enough, and second, Serkin has made far too few recordings in the last few years. This one is a gem. The sunlit Sonata in B-flat has never been more appealing, nor its relative neglect harder to understand, than in this affectionate but unsentimental realization, and the two shorter works (both of which represent remakes for Serkin) are "little" only in terms of playing time. No one knows this music better than Serkin, no one loves it more: he plays it very beautifully, vigorously, communicatively—and what more need be said? The surfaces of my review copy are rather gritty, but I would rather have these performances pressed on recycled emery boards than do without them. R.F.

BEETHOVEN: Romance No. 2, in F Major, Op. 50 (see Best of the Month, page 83)

BEETHOVEN: Symphony No. 5, in C Minor, Op. 67; Overture to "The Creatures of Prometheus," Op. 43. London Symphony Orchestra. André Previn cond. ANGEL S-36927 \$6.98, © 4XS-36927 \$6.98.

Performance: **Interesting**
Recording: **All right**

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

BEETHOVEN: Symphony No. 5, in C Minor, Op. 67; Symphony No. 8, in F Major, Op. 93. BBC Symphony Orchestra. Colin Davis cond. PHILIPS 6500 462 \$7.98, © 7300 252 \$6.95.

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

André Previn takes the exposition repeats in the first and last movements of the Fifth: Colin Davis does not. Hence the latter performance fits snugly on a single side, while the former leaves only enough room for a short overture instead of another symphony. But the matter of repeats is not the only difference between these two performances. Although both conductors take the second movement rather broadly, Previn adopts a very deliber-

ate tempo for the first movement which largely robs it of momentum—or so it seems, despite some outstandingly effective playing by the various winds in their exposed passages. Ferenc Fricsay, in his now deleted recording of the Fifth, took a similar tempo, but he invested the music with the *weight* that made it work more successfully than it does for Previn. The rest of Previn's performance is much more convincing, and I cannot imagine a more winning presentation of the *Prometheus Overture*, but the first movement rules this record out for me, and the sound quality itself is hardly alluring.

Davis gives a strong, brilliantly balanced, absolutely uneccentric account of the Fifth: no startling revelations, but everything where one wants it (questions of repeats aside) for a fully satisfying listening experience. The reading has splendid flow and continuity, and the big proclamative moments are not allowed to degenerate into bombast. Crisp, well-defined sound (which enables us to hear Davis—or someone—crooning along toward the end of the slow movement) helps to make this the only serious challenger to the Szell/Concertgebouw version on the same label (Philips 802.769 LY) for pre-eminence among all single-sided Fiftths. The stimulating Eighth on the new disc, too, is at least as bright, vigorous, and thoroughly persuasive as any other now current. R.F.

BRAHMS: Violin Concerto in D Major, Op. 77 (see Best of the Month, page 83)

BUSONI: Elegies; Ballet-Scene No. 4. Martin Jones (piano). ARGO ZRG 741 \$6.98.

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

Periodically someone rediscovers the wonderful Busoni *Elegies*, but somehow they never seem to take. Busoni is an intriguing and enigmatic figure whose reputation for prophecy never seems quite to square with the old-fashioned ultra-romanticism of most of his music. But his *Elegies* of 1907, each one dedicated to a young pianist in his circle, strike a distinctly original note. The opening—significantly titled "After the Turning Point: Self-Reflection"—sets a twentieth-century harmonic style, and the third piece, a choral prelude, is a profoundly moving work of an unusual sort. But the appearance of all

sorts of material taken from other, quite traditional-sounding works is disconcerting—especially when the main theme from the re-worked *Turandot* music turns out to be *Greensleeves*! No *Pierrot Lunaire* Expressionism here, no turning inward, no beating of the breast or gnashing of the teeth. Abstraction and neo-Classicism seem equally far away. Busoni's "modernism," like Ives', is a kind of idealistic pantheism that includes Bach, Neapolitan songs, *Greensleeves*, waltzes, a bit of pianistic display, and an elegy for his mother. All of this in one rather unprepossessing set of piano pieces, some of them exquisitely simple.

The *Elegies* storm no barriers, then, and no history books will be rewritten upon their continually imminent rediscovery. But this music will continue to be a matter for personal discovery and enjoyment, especially in attractive, sympathetic performances and recordings like the one in hand.

The Fourth Ballet-Scene is also a reworking of early material, originally composed in 1894 and reissued in 1913. Busoni's flirtation with modernism seems to have passed this piece by; it is vivacious pianism in three-quarter time. There is no trace of the darker moods that run through the *Elegies*: Busoni seems to have been one early twentieth-century artist-intellectual who could dance and sing for joy! Martin Jones is very much at his ease with the kind of difficult music that must ripple off the fingers, and this is a brilliant performance. E.S.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

COUPERIN: Les Nations. Quadro Amsterdam. TELEFUNKEN TK 11550/1-2 two discs \$13.96.

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

Originally recorded on Telefunken SAWT 9476 and 9546 by the expanded Quadro Amsterdam in 1968, the two discs containing François Couperin's four sets of trio sonatas known as *Les Nations* have now logically been combined in one album. The music for these works was in part written in the early 1690's, when Couperin was writing sonatas in the Italian style. Two of the sonatas eventually wound up as the first sections in the second and fourth of the present pieces, *L'Espagnole* and *La Piémontoise*, respectively; the rest of the movements, which are dances, are usually connected with the suite. A similar order prevails in No. 1, *La Française*, and No. 3, *L'Impérial*, the last work dating from about 1725 and the latest music contained in this important and diversified collection. Stylistically, these pieces represent Couperin at his very greatest, but they are very refined, sophisticated works in the typical Rococo manner. Although many listeners find this style of writing the hardest of the Baroque era to get to appreciate, it is well worth additional effort, even if the music doesn't roll into the ear as prettily as the average Vivaldi or Handel.

Couperin never accurately specified the instruments he wrote for in these four large-scale sonata suites, and the two melody parts could be played equally well by winds, such as the flute or recorder, or by upper strings, such as the violin, with the continuo line played by harpsichord supported by either a viola da gamba or a cello. The Quadro Am-

(Continued on page 110)

WALTER GIESEKING: his Emperor has a straightforward grandeur that is irresistible



“... a veritable feast of Russian baritones and basses...”



Galina Vishnevskaya (Natasha) and Yevgeny Kibkalo (Andrei) in the ballroom scene

Prokofiev's War and Peace

THE first release under Columbia's new agreement with Russian Melodiya is nothing less than a whopper: Serge Prokofiev's *War and Peace* in the Bolshoi Theatre production. Even in a pruned-down version, Prokofiev's major opus takes up four discs with a listed cast of thirty-five (over seventy characters are named in the printed score) as well as the sizable choral and orchestral forces of the Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow. Nor is the set impressive only in its dimensions; *War and Peace* is a work of considerable interest, and it is ably realized here.

Prokofiev's setting of scenes from Leo Tolstoy's *War and Peace* occupied him from 1941 until his death in 1953. It was patently impossible to include in an opera all of this extraordinary epic novel, not only the central work in Russian literature after Pushkin but considered by many the greatest novel of the nineteenth century in any language. Prokofiev's solution was simply to set certain key scenes—eleven originally, later expanded to thirteen—concerning the fate of a few of the main characters: Prince Andrei Bolkonsky, Countess Natasha Rostov, and Count Pierre Bezuhov. Ironically, this rather intimate concept of the work was conceived and worked out during the darkest days of World War II. Prokofiev was evacuated to the Caucasus and, later, to

Kazakhstan, where he worked with Eisenstein on the film *Ivan the Terrible*. Throughout this period he lived with a young poet, Mira Mendelson, who became his second wife. The libretto was written by the two of them, with the touching scene between the wounded Prince Andrei and his alienated fiancée Natasha as the starting point. Part I shows their first encounter at a country house, Natasha's cold reception at the house of the ultra-aristocratic Bolkonsky family, and the scenes of her barely averted seduction by the ne'er-do-well Prince Anatol Kuragin. But this highly romantic and personal setting did not meet with official approval, and Prokofiev revised the work, largely by adding to the scenes of the Battle of Borodino, the Burning of Moscow, and the Retreat of the French. Since the revisions enlarged the work considerably, plans were made to present the opera in two evenings, and Prokofiev accordingly enlarged it still further by adding two major scenes: a ball in Part I and a war-council scene in Part II. As in the similar case of Berlioz's *The Trojans*, this solution was not a success; indeed, only the first part ever reached the stage in the composer's lifetime—in 1946—and Prokofiev spent the last years of his life making the changes that he hoped would make the full work acceptable and practicable for a Soviet stage production. Another version, drastically shortened, appeared in 1955, but the “complete” score (in what version it is not very clear) was published only in 1958. The Bolshoi production—the one recorded by Melodiya—was based on the score published in 1958 but is said to be modified by various suggestions made by the composer himself (even though he died five years before the date of publication).

Ironically, the original core of the work, the scenes involving the private lives of the

principal characters plus the glittering ballroom scene, remain substantially intact, while major cuts have been made in the panoramic war scenes of Part II, notably the Burning of Moscow and the final scene on the Smolensk Road—the very sections that Prokofiev was encouraged to expand. The epic scenes of the work are a very mixed bag: the opening chorus is loud and blatant, and the Burning of Moscow, badly chopped up in this version, is a disappointment. But the scenes of the Battle of Borodino (grand choruses for the heroic Russian people, sinister brass for Napoleon and his generals) and the blizzard music for the final scene are reminiscent of the best of *Alexander Nevsky* and *Ivan the Terrible*. Still, it is the other opera, the original, intimate side of *War and Peace*, that evoked Prokofiev's best work. All of these scenes are brilliantly composed in a kind of Russian *verismo* style, highly melodic, romantic, and dramatic in an almost Puccinian manner. The ballroom scene—one can hardly believe it was an afterthought—is brilliant with that Mahlerian touch of irony Prokofiev loved (and used) so well. *Aficionados* of Prokofiev's dance scores, notably *Romeo and Juliet*, will recognize this music right away. The whirl of mazurkas and waltzes pervades this part of the work and adds more than a twist or two to the ironic success that Soviet composers have had with ultra-bourgeois nineteenth-century forms. Indeed, except for these twists and the *verismo* touches, this work belongs very much to the nineteenth-century Russian operatic traditions—Borodin as well as Moussorgsky. And—more irony—the intimate and romantic characteristics of the work as well as its more baldly nationalistic aspects take the work away from Tolstoy and his great novel. This opera can, in no sense, be interpreted as a *setting* of Tol-

stoy's *War and Peace* but only as a musico-dramatic treatment of a number of themes taken from the much larger (and greater) work and adapted—almost as bits of folklore or traditional historical tales might be—for musical purposes.

Deeply flawed and unprogressive as it may be, *War and Peace* is a work of tremendous stature. It is operatically engaging—extremely effectively written for the voice and full of impressive theatrical gestures. Its arrival here in the Bolshoi Theatre version is therefore something of an event, particularly since it marks the first Russian-made Melodiya release by Columbia, which replaces Angel as the American musical agent of détente.

Like most of the great Russian operas, *War and Peace* is admirably written for the special qualities of the Russian singing voice. Only the rich lower male voices really suit our Western ideas of beautiful operatic singing, and this is, indeed, a veritable feast of Russian baritones and basses—more than half the cast consists of parts in these categories. (The most impressive of these is probably Pavel Lisitsian—as Napoleon, no less.) But, on home ground, so to speak, the tenors and the women are almost equally strong. The genius of Russian opera lies in its way of mining a natural melodic flow out of the language itself, and in this respect Prokofiev often succeeds very nearly as well as some of his illustrious predecessors. Russian singers with a command of their extraordinary language are more important than singers with conventionally beautiful (that is, Italianate) voices. There is certainly a whole slew of such singers here, including a good percentage of the relatively few whose names have become known in the West. In short, it's an all-star Bolshoi cast. The chorus is, as one might expect, excellent. The orchestra is a bit rough-and-ready, and the musical direction operates on the basic principle of broad strokes. This is not a subtle reading, but it makes its points in a most telling manner, and it is all extremely well recorded. The accompanying booklet includes a transliteration as well as a convincing libretto translation. —Eric Salzman

PROKOFIEV: *War and Peace*. Yevgeny Kibkalo (baritone). Prince Andrei: Galina Vishnevskaya (soprano), Natasha; Valentina Klepatskaya (mezzo-soprano), Sonya; Yevhenia Verbitskaya (mezzo-soprano). Maria Dmitriyevna Ahrosimova; Irina Arkhipova (mezzo-soprano). Countess Bezuhova; Vladimir Petrov (tenor). Count Bezuhov; Alexei Maslennikov (tenor), Prince Kuragin; Georgy Pankov (bass), Dolohov; Kira Leonova (mezzo-soprano), Princess Maria Bolkonskaya; Alexander Vedernikov (bass), Old Prince Bolkonsky; Boris Shapenko (baritone), Denisov; Alexei Krivchenya (bass), Fieldmarshal Kutuzov; Pavel Lisitsian (baritone), Napoleon; Mark Reshetin (bass-baritone), Marshal Berthier; Vitali Vlassov (tenor), Monsieur de Beausset; Artur Eizei (bass), Ramballe; Georgy Shulpin (tenor), General Barclay de Tolly and Platon Karatayev; others. Chorus and Orchestra of the Bolshoi Theatre, Moscow. Alexander Melik-Pashayev cond. COLUMBIA/MELODIYA SLS 837 four discs \$27.98.

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sterdam, consisting of some of the most knowledgeable players to be heard today, opts for a varied treatment in which the upper lines of the trio sonatas are played variously by flute (or recorder) and violin, either mixed or two of each. This certainly provides variety and tonal contrast, although I don't find the older performance by the Jacobean Ensemble with two violins, gamba, and Thurston Dart directing from the harpsichord (L'Oiseau-Lyre S-137/8) in the least lacking in variety either. The latter players provide a slightly more rhythmically incisive, virile rendition than the Dutch musicians, whose manner is a bit more ethereal. In any case, in points of style neither group can be faulted. Telefunken's reproduction has that wide-open, transparent, and rich fullness that is characteristic of so many of that company's early-music recordings. I.K.



Philips Records

QUARTETTO ITALIANO
A happy confluence with Mozart

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

GERSHWIN: *Concerto in F*; *Lullaby*; *Catfish Row*, *Suite from Porgy and Bess*; *An American in Paris*; *Promenade*; *Rhapsody in Blue*; *Second Rhapsody*; "I Got Rhythm" Variations. Jeffrey Siegel (piano); Barbara Liberman (piano, in *Catfish Row*); other soloists; Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra, Leonard Slatkin cond. Vox □ QSVBX 5132 three discs \$10.98.

Performance: **Clarion clear**
Recording: **First-rate**

There have been headier and more vigorous performances of some of Gershwin's big works, but here a certain style and total comprehension saturate everything, and the sound in the quadraphonic version is a revelation. The Saint Louis Symphony seems in wonderful shape under Leonard Slatkin. Despite a lifetime of familiarity with this music, I had never realized how much Gershwin favored circus instruments like the xylophone, how essential the resources of percussion are to the sparkle he sought, how big and sturdy and theatrical his arrangements really are. His *Cuban Overture*, here complete and as written after his visit to Havana in 1932, is a package tour but a highly satisfying one, and it is given the alert, affectionate treatment it requires—though not, to be sure, as steamy a

going over as Fiedler gave it. *Rhapsody in Blue*—the only big work Gershwin didn't orchestrate himself—needs all the strident energy conductor Slatkin brings to it: if it doesn't glitter, it doesn't work. The "Second Rhapsody, written for the movie *Delicious* as *Rhapsody in Rivets* and undeservedly ignored over the years, at last gets the full-scale, stirring performance it merits. The *Concerto in F*, with its startling shifts in mood and tempo, its high-tension allegro, city nocturne of an andante, and shrill, idiomatic, insolent finale in musical New Yorkese, sounds wonderful here. So do the *I Got Rhythm* Variations, as wily and witty a piece as Gershwin ever penned. If I felt any disappointment, it was only an occasional vexation at the sometimes too refined approach of otherwise expert pianist Jeffrey Siegel.

How refreshing also it is to hear Gershwin's own *Porgy and Bess* Suite, *Catfish Row*, replete with characteristic counterpoint, dressed in the spiffy orchestration that was so much his own, and containing the *Jazzbo Brown* piano solo that was eventually dropped from the opera: here it is played earthily by pianist Barbara Liberman, along with a section called "Porgy Sings," the exciting "Hurricane Music" from the third act, and an "Occupational Humoresque" that brings everything to a high-spirited energetic close. Mr. Slatkin also leads his forces through an unabashedly period treatment of *An American in Paris*: the delightful *Promenade*—the dog-walking music composed for the film *Shall We Dance*—a more interesting work here than it seemed under André Kostelanetz in a Columbia collection; and the first "serious" work by the composer, an adaptation for string orchestra of his *Lullaby* for string quartet written in 1919, harboring hints of songs to come like *The Man I Love* and *Has Anyone Seen Joe?* What with the handsome box all this comes in, the informative notes by Gershwin expert Edward Jablonski, and the noninflationary price tag, this is an album every Gershwin lover should want to get his hands on, no matter how many Gershwin records he already owns. P.K.

KODÁLY: *Háry János Suite* (see *The Basic Repertoire*, page 59)

MIASKOVSKY: *Cello Concerto, Op. 66* (see **PROKOFIEV**)

MOZART: *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*; *Der Schauspieldirektor* (see *Best of the Month*, page 82)

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

MOZART: *String Quartet No. 13, in D Minor* (K. 173); *Divertimento in D Major* (K. 136); *Divertimento in B-flat Major* (K. 137); *Divertimento in F Major* (K. 138); *Adagio and Fugue in C Minor* (K. 546). Quartetto Italiano. PHILIPS 6500 645 \$7.98.

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

The early D Minor work with which Mozart concluded his cycle of six "contrapuntal" quartets in the summer of 1773 (in response to the stimulus of Haydn's *Sun* Quartets, Op. 20, as the later half-dozen dedicated to Haydn was touched off by that master's Op. 33 set) is a magnificent summation of the seventeen-year-old composer's achievement in terms of expressiveness as well as mastery of form. It

is not unreasonable to find in it—particularly in the brilliant fugal finale—pre-echoes of such masterworks as the Piano Concerto No. 20 (K. 466) and *Don Giovanni*, both also in D Minor, but such discoveries are hardly essential to the enjoyment of the work, which happens to contain sunny episodes as well as dramatic ones, and which, in any context, is itself a masterwork. That there has been no recording of K. 173 in our catalogs for the last several years is a rather astonishing lapse, corrected now in the grandest style imaginable with the appearance of this disc, on which the playing—both impassioned and impeccable—is hardly less magnificent than the music itself. The recording is also a summation, one might say, of the nearly thirty productive seasons of the Quartetto Italiano and a milestone in the Philips engineers' refinement of their own art: all in all, a happy confluence.

All of the other works on this disc are usually played by a larger group of strings, but there is no suggestion of thinning-out here, and surely no other current recording of these engaging divertimentos captures quite the marvelous balance of elegance and infectious joy of these zestful performances. In the case of the Adagio and Fugue a strong argument can be made for the string-orchestra version, best exemplified by the majestic Klemperer performance (Angel S-36289), but to this work, too, the Italians bring such understanding and conviction that their four instruments are more than adequate to convey and sustain its awesome weight—and with a greater sense of urgency than in any other recording of it with any number of strings.

With this release Philips completes the presentation of the Quartetto Italiano's Mozart cycle except for the heart of it, the six quartets dedicated to Haydn, which will no doubt be along shortly. In general, I have found more pleasure in the early quartets than the late ones in this project, and I think this disc is the most striking of all. I am only sorry the series apparently will not include the four so-called "Milanese" quartets (K. Anh. 210-213); even if there are questions about their authenticity, they are far too attractive to remain unavailable, and I hope Philips and the Quartetto will reconsider. (In the meantime, Vox would be doing a genuine service by reissuing its old Barchet disc, originally released in 1952 as PL 7480.) R.F.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

NIELSEN: *Symphony No. 4, Op. 29* ("The Inextinguishable"). Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra, Zubin Mehta cond. LONDON CS-6848 \$6.98.

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

Mehta shows profound feeling for this symphony: he has evidently approached it with due regard for the Nielsen tradition but is in no sense restricted by it, and his orchestra is at the top of its form. The performance, like those of Igor Markevitch (Turnabout TV-S 34050) and Jean Martinon (RCA LSC-2958) in their different ways, is not merely exciting but deeply communicative and luminous with insight. A fine sensitivity is shown in the numerous sections calling for really soft playing (still more of a rarity than it ought to be in orchestral recordings), the appropriate fervor is displayed in the more proclamative episodes, and the London/Decca engineers have provided a generally excellent sonic frame.

(They did not succumb to what must be an enormous temptation to blow up the timpani battle in the finale to several times life-size, but in their restraint they provided a little less separation between the two sets of drums than one might wish.) In all, this is a distinguished addition to the Nielsen discography and perhaps the most all-round successful stereo recording of the Fourth; it deserves the highest recommendation, though many admirers of the work (including the undersigned) will want it only in addition to, rather than instead of, the Markevitch and/or Martinon.

R.F.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

PROKOFIEV: *Violin Concerto No. 2, in G Minor, Op. 63.* David Oistrakh (violin); Philharmonia Orchestra, Alceo Galliera cond. **MIASKOVSKY:** *Cello Concerto, Op. 66.* Mstislav Rostropovich (cello); Philharmonia Orchestra, Sir Malcolm Sargent cond. SERAPHIM S-60223 \$3.98.

Performance: **A-1**
Recording: **Excellent**

Put this Seraphim disc down as a best buy by any standards, for the late David Oistrakh never sounded more ravishing tonally than in this recording of the Prokofiev Second Violin Concerto. The orchestral teamwork by Galliera and the Philharmonia is of a piece with the soloist's own conception: elegantly lyrical and transparent, but free of egregious sentimentality. This has always been one of my favorite Oistrakh recordings, and it's good to have it available once more.

The Rostropovich recording of the Miaskovsky Cello Concerto has been something of a rarity since its initial release by RCA Victor in 1957. Its content is somewhat more bland in musical substance than the Prokofiev, but the piece as a whole is elegantly crafted and is eminently listenable in this recording. D.H.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

PUCCHINI: *Madama Butterfly.* Mirella Freni (soprano), *Madama Butterfly;* Luciano Pavarotti (tenor), B. F. Pinkerton; Christa Ludwig (mezzo-soprano), Suzuki; Robert Kerns (baritone), Sharpless; Michel Senechal (tenor), Goro; Giorgio Stendro (baritone), Yamadori; Marius Rintzler (bass), Bonzo; Hans Helm (baritone), Imperial Commissioner; others. Chorus of the Vienna State Opera; Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, Herbert von Karajan cond. LONDON OSA 13110 three discs \$20.94.

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

This is not a radically innovative performance, but it is sufficiently individual that it will not please all tastes. Karajan's imprint is its most distinctive feature; Mirella Freni and Luciano Pavarotti would be outstanding interpreters with any good conductor, but, for better or worse, not quite the same as they are here.

Karajan eschews the full-blooded Italian approach to this opera. He creates a delicate aural framework for it, and within that framework he weaves his customary magic spell with subtle shadings, perfumed sonorities, cannily built climaxes, and other manifestations of his superb control over the vocal and orchestral forces under his command. His tempos are decidedly broad—this is the slow-

est *Butterfly* I know of—and, although the sustained lyric flow is often admirable, at times matters are carried too far. The melancholy pace he sets for Pinkerton's "*Dovunque al mondo*" not only goes against the composer's notation of *Allegro sostenuto con spirito*, it also notably contradicts Pinkerton's light-hearted pronouncement. Similarly, the Butterfly-Suzuki duet "*Scuoti quella fronda*" (Act II), while beautifully sung, moves without animation at a pace nowhere near the quick tempo Puccini set for it. But these almost perverted idiosyncrasies must be measured against a magisterial skill that, among other things, makes a tone poem of the *Intermezzo*.

Mirella Freni is the ideal Butterfly to fill this Karajan frame—delicate in tone, subdued in passion, yet immensely touching in her heart-break. She does not pull out all the stops for "*Un bel di vedremo*"; that aria is but one of the many high points in a portrayal that relies on a minimum of conscious effect, allowing the voice's natural expressiveness to carry the music. I found her entire performance haunting, and I was particularly impressed by her way with the inspired phrase "*rinnegata e felice*," the exquisite pianissimo in "*un bene di bambino*" in the Love Duet, and the tender lullaby in the third act. Luciano Pavarotti reaches his peak in the Love Duet also, especially in the *dolcissimo* "*Bimba dagli occhi pieni di malia*." With his tasteful and tonally flawless singing he makes Pinkerton a rather likable figure, but the lack of character projection may be traced to Karajan's neutralizing influence.

Christa Ludwig is a dream Suzuki and Robert Kerns a subdued but generally pleasing Sharpless. Only Hans Helm as the solid Imperial Commissioner projects an individual profile; the other supporting singers blend, more or less facelessly, into the homogenized Karajan background. Marius Rintzler is probably a very effective Bonzo, but his angry utterances are swallowed up by the orchestra in one of the set's few technical miscalculations. The orchestral sound itself is beautiful, most other vocal-orchestral balances are well judged (though the orchestra virtually drops out during a brief portion of the Love Duet), and the overall aural impression conforms to the conductor's obsession with euphony, at times at the expense of spontaneity.

In sum, this is not a *Madama Butterfly* to overwhelm you emotionally. A measure of artificiality intrudes on your contemplation of its beauties. But the beauties are there. G.J.

SIBELIUS: *The Tempest, Op. 109, Suites Nos. 1 and 2; Scaramouche, Op. 71.* Hungarian State Symphony Orchestra, Jussi Jalas cond. LONDON CS 6824 \$6.98.

Performance: **All right**
Recording: **Good**

The incidental music for *The Tempest* was, I believe, Sibelius' last composition for orchestra (following *Tapiola* by a year or so), and is quite possibly the most fascinating collection of short orchestral pieces by any composer of this century. For years it has been represented on records by only an occasional snippet or two at best—that is as much of Beecham's 1955 recording of the two suites as Columbia ever chose to release in this country. The absence of this material from our catalogs was deplored when the Sibelius centenary was observed nine years ago, but only now, with this new London disc, do we have the complete *Tempest* music (minus the Prelude.

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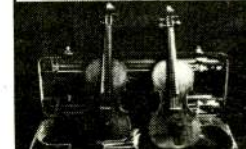
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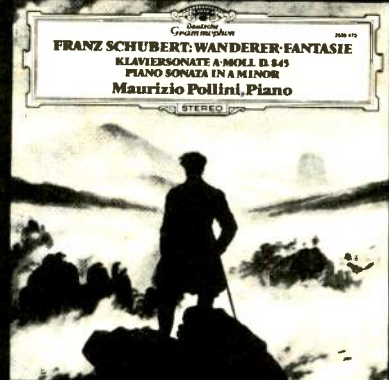


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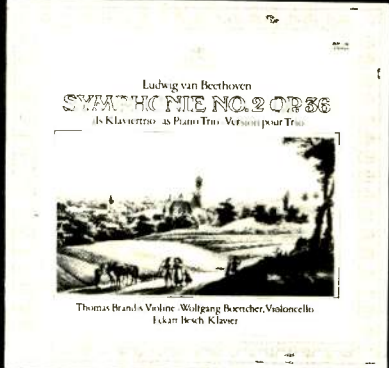
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which is more or less reprised in the final movement of the first suite).

Because of my own long and deep enthusiasm for the *Tempest* score and my respect for Jalas in matters Sibelian (based not on the circumstance of his being the composer's son-in-law, but on the insights demonstrated in numerous performances I have been able to hear), I was prepared, by way of reflex action, to affix a "Special Merit" heading to this review and perhaps send up a votive prayer or two. The votive prayer may be in order, simply for having this gap filled at last, but the presentation of the music, while certainly more than adequate, lacks much of the magic projected in earlier versions.

The disappointment one might feel in this matter is to some degree offset by the appearance of *Scaramouche*—evidently a premiere recording. This is not incidental music, but the entire score for a pantomime whose scenario recalls that of Bartók's *Miraculous Mandarin*, which was composed and produced in the same period. Instead of grisly and garish *verismo*, though, the music exudes the charm of the *commedia dell'arte*. (In his theater music Sibelius was not reluctant to be charming, as witness the early *King Christian II* music as well as the contents of this disc.) This work presents an almost unknown facet of Sibelius' musical personality, and its presence confirms the disc as a major addition to the composer's discography. Beecham, Watanabe, *et al.* have shown we can expect more from *The Tempest*, and I am still hopeful that some canny record producer will get Watanabe to do a set of all of Sibelius' theater music. *R.F.*

SMETANA: Polkas: Louisina; Jiřinková; From Student Life; Venkovanka; Bettina; To Our Girls. Czech Dances Nos. 1, 2, 7, 8, and 10. Brno State Philharmonic Orchestra, František Jilek cond. SUPRAPHON 1 10 1225 \$6.98.

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

It is regrettable that Smetana's charming piano dances are so little known beyond the borders of his own country; if it were not for Rudolf Firkusny we would probably never hear any of them here in their original form. From time to time various Czech musicians have tried their hands at orchestrating some of the polkas and Czech Dances, but so far none of their efforts have found a place in the general repertoire, so what is offered on this disc is new to most of us. Represented here, in addition to two polkas Smetana actually composed for orchestra—*Venkovanka* (*The Country Woman*) and *Našim děvám* (*To Our Girls*)—are ten of his piano dances orchestrated by six of his compatriots, the earliest of whom, Otakar Zich (1879-1934), was born the year the Czech Dances were composed. I can recall being more impressed when Walter Susskind conducted his own transcriptions of the Czech Dances No. 1 (*a furiant*), No. 2 (*The Little Hen*), and No. 10 (*a skočná*) in Saint Louis three years ago than I am now by the Ludmila Ulehlová, František Hertl, and Václav Trojan arrangements of the respective pieces or by these recorded performances, but in general these are all effective settings, performed with spirit and recorded in a warm (if not particularly brilliant) ambiance. *R.F.*

WAGNER: Operatic Excerpts. Parsifal: Scene from Act II. Die Walküre: Act I, Scene 3. Birgit Nilsson (soprano), Kundry, Sieglinde;

Helge Brilioth (tenor), Parsifal, Siegmund; Norman Bailey (baritone), Klingsor; Orchestra of the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden. Leif Segerstam cond. PHILIPS 6500 661 \$7.98.

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

These "duets" (as they are called on the jacket) take in quite a bit of music: some thirty-eight minutes in the second act of *Parsifal*, from the disappearance of the Flower Maidens to the end of the act, coupled with twenty-three minutes containing practically the entire Siegmund-Sieglinde scene of *Die Walküre*'s first act. It is good to have such substantial chunks of Wagner available separately for those who do not wish to acquire these two operas in their entirety (five discs each). Besides, the present release offers Birgit Nilsson in two Wagnerian roles rarely associated with her and not heretofore interpreted by her on discs.

She is still one of nature's wonders, defying tessitura and riding over the orchestra with power to spare. As Kundry, she does not have to resort to vocal overacting, as some singers do when the music gets too demanding. Nilsson makes her points *vocally*, with tones that are firm and gleaming—though devoid of any seductive quality. What her Sieglinde lacks is the illusion of youthful rapture, but here again the soaring vocal expression cannot be faulted.

Helge Brilioth is as good a Wagner tenor as any before the public today. His tone is strong yet tender; in fact, moments of tenderness—Parsifal's contrite reminiscence of his mother, or Siegmund contemplating Sieglinde in the moonlight—find him at his best. The peak of passion that would make "*Amfortas, die Wunde!*" the overwhelming experience it can be is not achieved here, but that may be the result of Leif Segerstam's neat but rather subdued and unexciting orchestral contribution. Klingsor's scathing words are delivered by Norman Bailey with moderate effectiveness. *G.J.*

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

This very delightful selection of (mostly) sonatas includes as its earliest work a suite by the seventeenth-century Marseilles composer Pierre Gaultier. The French style is also evident in the F Major Sonata by one of the later composers here, Michel Blavet (1700-1768), although by his time the Italian style had pretty much penetrated France with a resulting mixture of national styles. Italian allegros intermingling freely with French gavottes. Handel is well represented by one of his Op. 1 sonatas, and there are as well excellent pieces by Telemann (a particularly invigorating Sonata in F). Leonardo Vinci
(Continued on page 115)



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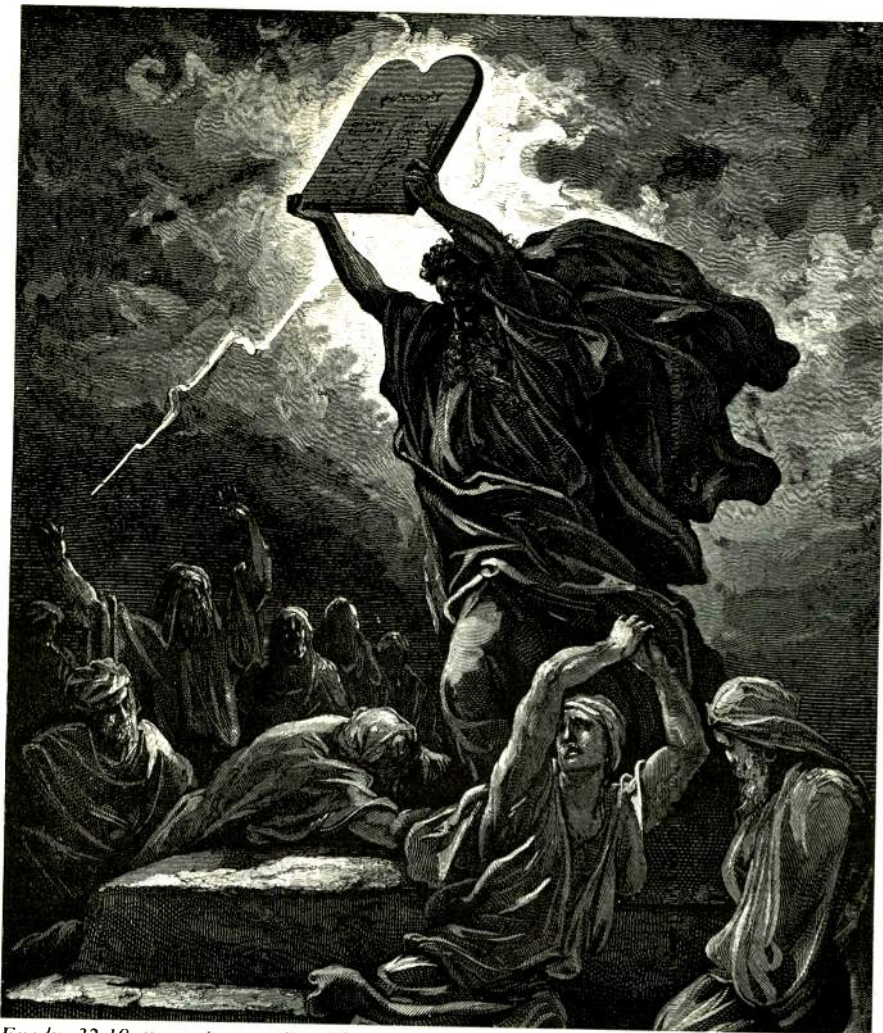


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Exodus 32:19: "... he cast the tables out of his hands, and brake them beneath the mount."

Arnold Schoenberg's *Moses und Aron*

ONE does not ordinarily think of Arnold Schoenberg as a man of the theater, but in fact his work is directly in the main line of Wagnerian tradition and some of his most important compositions are theatrical in one sense or another. *Moses und Aron* was, however, his one attempt at a full-length opera, and it is an astonishing, mind- and ear-boggling work. It is not merely the last gasp of Wagnerism but the ultimate of that artistic paradox, Opera as Idea.

In 1933, exiled from Hitler's Germany, Schoenberg returned to Judaism. Shortly before, he had completed the text and two

acts of a major operatic work on the Biblical subject of the conflict between Moses and the high priest Aaron. Although he always intended to finish the work after his arrival in America—I believe that at one point he applied for a Guggenheim fellowship for the purpose and was rejected—*Moses und Aron* remained unfinished at his death in 1951. A concert version of "The Dance Around the Golden Calf" had a remarkable popular success in a performance by Hermann Scherchen only a few days before the composer's death. *Moses und Aron* was first performed in its entirety in 1954 and reached the stage as part of a contemporary music festival in 1957—a performance at which I was present. The work was recorded and, surprisingly, has been staged a number of times since. It has been produced in this country by Sarah Caldwell's Boston Opera Company and had a rather notorious Covent Garden production in London a few years ago. But, until Philips released its new *Moses und Aron*, there was no recent recording of it available.

What has earned this abstruse and philosophical work admission to the old-fash-

ioned operatic stage? The orgy scene, of course; "The Dance Around the Golden Calf" is not only stage sex with a touch of class (Biblical source, twelve-tone rows so that you can't enjoy it *too* much, and lots of operatic window dressing for sex as high culture) but also includes some of Schoenberg's best and most accessible music. And therein lies the key to why he never finished the work.

Moses und Aron is an opera with only three characters in it. Moses, scarcely human at all, has his head entirely wrapped up in difficult, abstract theological concepts. Aron, his brother, has the job of translating abstract thought into something the ordinary fellow in the street can get a handle on—in short, into religion. When Moses disappears into the wilderness for forty days, Aron, severely pressed by his restless flock, gives them a solid image: the Golden Calf. Moses returns, sees what has happened, and, in despair, smashes the tablets. The third character in the opera? The chorus, the Israelites, the masses.

It is immediately apparent that Schoenberg has played out his own inner creative conflicts in the form of a great static drama. Schoenberg, like Moses, conceived of himself as a law-giver. He was always the philosopher, and his whole life and work were guided not merely by ideas, but by his quest for a central, unified vision—very much consonant with the unified Mosaic vision of creation and the Creator. But, of course, the vision is not enough. Schoenberg, living and working in the real world, has to get up in the morning, put on his clothes, think about tones and rhythms, write notes on paper, deliver them to rehearsal, suffer the inadequacies of the flesh-and-blood musicians, and, Lord save us, expose his ideas to the public, the great unwashed. Schoenberg, the aristocratic and intellectual Moses, has to be Aron too, whether he likes it or not, or the music simply remains in his head. What a contradiction! The most subtle and difficult of philosophical abstractions must be expressed in that most worldly of art forms, the opera. And, irony of ironies, Schoenberg achieves his greatest success in "The Dance Around the Golden Calf"—the expression of the triumph of the graven image over the Idea.

"O Wort, du Wort, das mir fehlt," says the defeated Moses at the end of Act II. It is not words that fail Schoenberg, however, but the music for the third act. In the third act, Moses—the Idea—was to triumph over Aron, the image-maker. But, in the end, Schoenberg could never be anything but a poor image-maker himself. What music could he write to express the triumph of the inexpressible? None, of course. The opera *was* finished, after all; not another note could he have ever written.

What kind of experience is the recorded, purely sonic version of a twelve-tone orgy? No heavy breathing here; yet, in its difficult way, this is Schoenberg's most sensuous music. Aron is a lyric tenor, and some of his melodic material—twelve-tone or not—is

really seductive. In the new recording great credit is certainly due the Belgian tenor Louis Devos, who sings in an almost bel canto style. The part of Moses, performed by Günter Reich in an imposing, somewhat heavy-handed manner, is almost entirely intoned in the speech-song technique that Schoenberg had invented many years earlier. The choral writing, a combination of speech-song, whispering, and twelve-tone singing, is rather remarkable and, in places, extraordinarily moving. The Interlude between the acts, "Where is Moses?" is breathtaking. In other places, though, we seem just barely able to get through the exposition of choral exclamations and rows in densely packed counterpoint that stretches the singers' voices, our patience, and everybody's ears: the voice of the masses it ain't. The orchestral writing is typically Schoenbergian, occasionally colorful and delicate, but most often heaving and screaming, with great gobs of notes flying everywhere. Economy of means was never one of Schoenberg's strong points.

The singers in general and the chorus in particular are extremely well prepared, although they have been brought to a kind of peak of precision where everything, words and notes alike, is spat out in crisp, Germanic style. The rat-tat-tat of the fast choral German is set against the highly Expressionist orchestral writing in a way that becomes tiresome after a while. Michael Gielen is an excellent conductor and musician, but he makes it quite clear that he considers the work a kind of latter-day Handelian oratorio. The recording is almost like chamber music—indeed, in line with Schoenberg's frequent chamber scoring, it is often exactly that. Such an attempt to clarify matters on the part of the conductor and the producers is exceptional and welcome.

HA VE I made it clear that this is important, unlovable, but often moving music? It is really a dramatic work and one that grew out of an irreconcilable conflict in the composer's own life. *Moses und Aron*, as it stands, is a kind of musical tragedy, and its tragedy—its heroic defiance of the most tragic contradictions in the composer's own life and work—is set forth with remarkable lucidity and self-insight. In his own thought, Schoenberg would never let the Aron side of his nature get the upper hand, but in the opera Aron triumphs. There is perhaps a lesson in that for us all.

Text and translation along with other material are given in the booklet that accompanies the Philips set. One oddity: there is a large photograph and biographical notice of one Otto Sertl displayed prominently in the booklet, but there is otherwise no mention of Herr Sertl or what he might have had to do with this recording. —Eric Salzman

SCHOENBERG: *Moses und Aron*. Günter Reich (speaker), Moses: Louis Devos (tenor), Aron: Eva Csapó (soprano), Young Girl: Roger Lucas (tenor), Young Man: Werner Mann (bass), Priest: Members of the Vienna Boys' Choir; Chorus and Symphony Orchestra of the Austrian Radio. Michael Gielen cond. PHILIPS 6700 084 two discs \$15.96.

(1690-1730), who wrote many operas and oratorios, and Jean-Baptiste Loeillet, Flemish-born but destined to make his career in London.

André Pepin, who I believe played first flute in the Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, has a beautifully sweet tone and a manner of playing that brings out the entertaining characteristics of this repertoire. There are some flutists who are keener stylists than Pépin, for he is apt to play in longer phrases, he does not always tackle his trills with an upper note beginning, and he is a bit conservative about embellishments (although he does make some very effective additions on repeats in slow movements). Nevertheless, together with his able partners, he succeeds in making this music sparkle. Raymond Leppard provides some highly imaginative touches in his realization of the continuo harpsichord part, and the whole has been recorded clearly and with good balance though with less than ideal brightness in the treble. This recording, which was originally issued in England four years ago, is just one more example of why collectors should keep their eyes on the London Stereo Treasury offerings. I.K.

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GREAT HITS YOU PLAYED WHEN YOU WERE YOUNG—VOL. 3. Massenet: *Thaïs: Meditation*. Schubert: *Impromptu in G-flat Major*. Poldini: *Dancing Doll*. Chopin: *Waltz in A-flat Major, Op. 69, No. 1*. Beethoven: *Sonata in G Major, Op. 49, No. 2*. Liszt: *Liebestraum*. Grieg: *To Spring*. Satie: *Gymnopédie No. 1*. Debussy: *Golliwogg's Cakewalk*. Chaminade: *Scarf Dance*. Bach: *Prelude in C Minor*. Mozart: *Allegro (K. 3)*. Schumann: *Album for the Young: Knight Rupert*. Morton Estrin (piano). CONNOISSEUR SOCIETY □ CSQ 2065 \$6.98.

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Performance: **Flawless models**
Recording: **Superb**

I have always wondered whether the availability of student repertoire in good recorded performance would discourage a learner to the point that he would chuck the idea of developing performance know-how and fall back permanently on the recording as a lifetime surrogate. It seems to me that the answer depends equally on the learner and on his teacher and parents. For myself, I think it's wonderful to have a flawless model performance on hand both as an inspiration and as a jumping-off point. Once he has reached a certain level of proficiency and ease of execution, the amateur, if he is intelligent and caring, will begin to cut his own interpretive paths.

If you come to these recordings with an open mind, then, you can enjoy to the full not only the superlative musicianship of Morton Estrin in even the most hackneyed of these lit-

tle pieces—Poldini's *Dancing Doll*, for instance—but also a quality of piano recording that, when heard in four channels on top-drawer equipment, is almost indistinguishable in timbre and body from the sound of the instrument itself in a living room.

Estrin's real flair, it seems to me—and this is borne out in his Brahms and Rachmaninoff discs that I've reviewed here in past months—lies in the deep-dyed Romantic idiom: Schubert, Schumann, Mendelssohn, Liszt, and Grieg. The other pieces are very beautifully done, but with just a touch of heaviness in such as the Chopin A-flat Waltz and the Debussy *Golliwogg*. The Bach pieces, unfortunately, must have been recorded at the height of the Manhattan rush hour, to judge from the traffic noise and the auto horn at the end of the C Minor Prelude. And some of the music, I might add, is for pretty advanced students, at least in terms of digital dexterity.

I haven't heard the first two volumes of this series, but if they are on the same level as these two, the series as a whole is a special minor gem of the recorded piano-music literature. Quite frankly, the only thing I can recall that comes near it is a remarkable performance of the Mendelssohn *Spring Song* recorded by Horowitz in the 1940's. D.H.

RAGS AND TANGOS. Stravinsky: *Tango: Ragtime; Piano Rag Music*. Castro: *Tangos*. Milhaud: *Tango des Fratellini; Caramel-Mou; Three Rag-Caprices*. Barber: *Hesitation Tango*. Thomson: *Parallel Chords (Tango); Ragtime Bass*. Grant Johannesen (piano). GOLDEN CREST CRS-4132 \$6.98.

Performance: **Lively**
Recording: **Dry**

The current revival of interest in popular forms by the "serious" musicians is of course only another turn of the wheel in a by-now familiar cycle. New World popular music—already on its way to dominating world popular music—first hit Europe in a big way just after World War I. The first big wave was in France: Stravinsky, Satie, and the composers of *Les Six* all produced important work under the spell. None of these composers knew it, but they had long been anticipated in America. Ives, as usual, was there before anyone else, but other composers—among them such black composers as Scott Joplin and the now-forgotten James Reese Europe, whose Army band brought ragtime to Europe in the first place—took up the idea of amalgamating serious and popular elements. Still later, in the Thirties, the trends toward a folk-like simplicity and nationalism produced another crop of pop in the high-culture camps.

It is the first European and the second American phases that are represented here in this charming collection. How ironic that the Stravinsky and Milhaud pieces are the most familiar music here, while Juan José Castro's Suite of Tangos—a real "Bachianas Argentinas"—and Virgil Thomson's rollicking pair of etudes, a tango, and a "ragtime bass" that rings more like a barn dance are so little known!

Grant Johannesen has collected and performed these witty pieces with a sound feeling for the dance underpinnings as well as the blend of wit and camp that characterizes most of them, and he makes this something more than still another ragtime revival record. In spite of the dry piano sound, this is a notable addition to Johannesen's long list of Golden Crest recordings. E.S.

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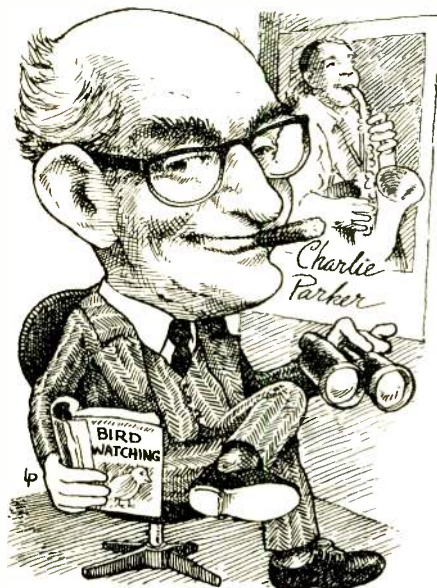
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SR-275

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.



London Editor

Henry Pleasants

INTERMISSION at a Simon & Garfunkel concert in the Royal Albert Hall a few years ago. A young student approaches a tall, gray-haired man standing in the foyer, attired squarely in a dark, pin-striped suit. "Where," asks the young man, "is the gents'?"

"I haven't the faintest idea."

"Sorry, sir, but I thought you were an official."

Well, a Simon & Garfunkel audience was not quite the congregation among which a young S&G enthusiast would expect to find the man who was, for twelve years, music editor of the Philadelphia *Evening Bulletin*, for twenty years a high-ranking Foreign Service officer, for ten years Central European music correspondent of the *New York Times*, and who, for the past eight years, has been London music critic of the *International Herald Tribune* and London Editor of STEREO REVIEW.

But he might have encountered Henry Pleasants in stranger places: at Wimbledon for the tennis, at the Oval for cricket, at Shea Stadium for baseball, at a billiard parlor (either as spectator or participant), at a

winetasting, or in the countryside, with field glasses, as a bird watcher.

Of Pleasants' widely ranging enthusiasms, however, the most intense and the most persistent has been music. Even during his career as a Foreign Service officer he found time not only to cover the European musical scene for the *New York Times*, but also to translate Hanslick, Spohr, and Schumann and to shake up the musical world with his book *The Agony of Modern Music*.

His musical career began as a boy soprano in the churches of the Philadelphia Main Line and was encouraged by his acceptance, at seventeen, as a vocal student at the Curtis Institute of Music. But along with his inclinations as a singer went a passion and facility for writing, and at nineteen he had combined the two as reporter, rewrite man, feature writer, and critic for the *Evening Bulletin*. As a former schoolboy all-around athlete, he fell into sports writing, too, specializing in billiards and cricket. Pleasants finds nothing incongruous in these parallel enthusiasms for music and sports. They are not, indeed, quite parallel in his case, for they meet in his profound admiration for the true professional in whatever field.

"There is something in the way great athletes move and in the way they respond to challenge," he says, "that always reminds me of the greatest musicians of my experience. To me, supreme mastery and supreme artistry are pretty much the same thing."

An observation such as this goes far to explain Pleasants' bias, in music, for the performer as distinct from the composer, and his feeling that our present tendency toward composer idolatry—derived from the undeniable accomplishments of the great European composers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries—has a lot to do with the infirmities of contemporary "serious" music. And certainly it explains his enthusiasm for jazz, denigrated by the "serious" music community as a "performer's art."

This personal philosophy underlay his book, *Serious Music—And All That Jazz!*, a sequel to *The Agony of Modern Music*. He rejects any synonymous relationship between *serious* and *good*. For good music, in his view, is where you find it, and the critic's job is to discover it, wherever it may be.

In his writing for STEREO REVIEW, as also for the *International Herald Tribune*, he practices what he preaches. In recent months, for the *Herald Tribune*, he has covered the Montreux Jazz Festival and, in London, Ethel Merman at the Palladium and a replica of the Paul Whiteman Orchestra at the Roundhouse. He also interviewed Vic Damone and reviewed the Los Angeles Philharmonic, the Chicago Symphony, and new productions by the Royal Opera and the English National Opera. For *Books and Bookmen* he has reviewed books on Charlie Parker, George Gershwin, Bix Beiderbecke, and ragtime.

This list reflects a predilection for singing and singers hardly surprising in one who began as a singer and whose books include *The Great Singers—From the Dawn of Opera to Our Own Time* and, most recently, *The Great American Popular Singers*. In Pleasants' opinion, singing is what music is all about, whether the song comes from throat or instrument. —Drummond McInnis

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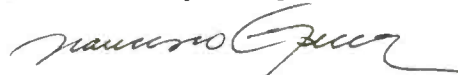
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Francisco Espina*
Newport, Rhode Island

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