

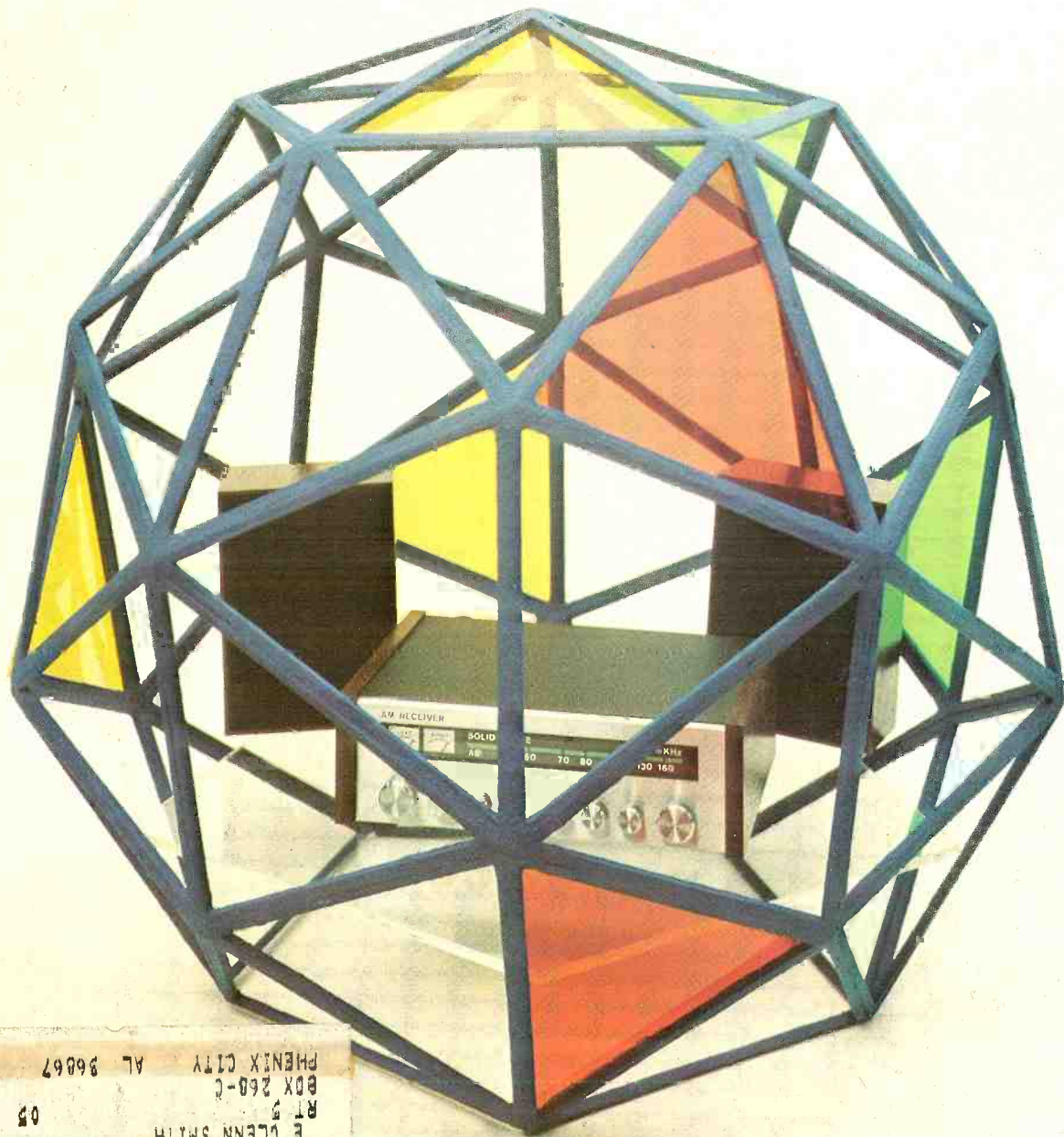
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Stereo Review®

MAY 1977 • ONE DOLLAR

**How to Keep Radio-frequency Interference Out of Your Audio
Chamber Music for Beginners • The Beach Boys Eleven Years On**

HIRSCH-HOUCK LABS' EQUIPMENT TEST REPORTS ON: Aiwa AD-6500 Cassette Deck • Dynaco 300 Power Amplifier • Scott R336 AM/FM Stereo Receiver • Suporex TRL-77 Stereo Headphone



**WHAT DOES IT TAKE
TO GET THE MOST
BEAUTIFUL MUSIC OUT
OF A LITTLE THING
LIKE THIS?**

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Stereo Review

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The recording tape in a cassette is only an eighth of an inch wide. Crammed into that eighth of an inch may be as many as 64 original tracks mixed down to two. A hundred musicians. Countless overdubbings. Not to mention the entire audible frequency range.

Any cassette deck can reproduce part of what's been put down on that eighth of an inch.

The Pioneer 9191 was designed to reproduce all of it. Superlatively. Without dropouts,

unacceptable tape hiss, or noticeable wow and flutter.

Take our tape transport system.

Since the tape in a cassette moves at only 1-7/8 inches per second, even the most minute variation in tape speed will make a major variation in sound. To guard against this, where most cassette decks give you one motor, the 9191 comes with two. The first is used only for fast forward and rewind, so the second can be designed exclusively for maintaining a constant speed for play and record.

All of our tape drive components—the capstan, belt, and flywheel—are finished to

incredible tolerances. Which give the 9191 the kind of wow and flutter figures that no deck in our price range can match.

Of course, having a great tape transport system means nothing if you don't have great electronics to back it up. We do.

The 9191 comes with an advanced three stage direct coupled amplifier that extends high frequency response and minimizes distortion. The built-in Dolby system can reduce tape hiss by as much as 10 decibels in high frequencies.

Our multiplex filter lets you record FM broadcasts without picking up a lot of unwanted noise, or the multiplex signal every FM stereo station sends out.

Even our ferrite solid tape head offers the

best combination of accuracy and long life you can get in a cassette head.

There's also a peak limiter that lets you cram as much onto a cassette as possible without distortion. Large VU meters and a peak indicator light that let you know if you do begin to oversaturate the tape and distort. Plus separate bias and equalization switches that let you get the most out of different brands of tape. And an automatic CrO₂ selector.

If all this isn't enough, you'll find that the 9191 comes with a memory that lets you go back to a favorite spot on the tape automatically. And electronic solenoid controls for going from play to rewind, or from rewind to fast forward, without hitting the stop button. And without jamming the tape.

There's also the convenience of front loading. A door over the cassette compartment to help keep the tape heads clean. And a light behind the cassette that lets you see where you are on the tape.

Go slip a cassette into a Pioneer 9191 at your local Pioneer dealer.

You'll find it hard to believe such a little thing could come out sounding so big.

CT-F9191 Specifications:

Frequency Response: Standard, LH tape: 25-16,000 Hz (35-17,000 Hz ±3dB), CrO₂ tape: 20-17,000 Hz (30-14,000 Hz ±3dB)

Signal-to-Noise Ratio: Dolby OFF: More than 52dB, Dolby ON: More than 62dB (over 5,000 Hz, Standard and LH tapes/When Chromium Dioxide tape is used, signal-to-noise ratio is further improved by 4.5dB over 5kHz)

Harmonic Distortion: No more than 1.7% (0dB)

Wow and Flutter: No more than 0.07% (WRMS)

Motor: Electronically controlled DC motor (built-in generator) x1; (1.8cm/s speed drive), DC torque motor x1; (Fast forward and rewind drive)

PIONEER

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

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CIRCLE NO. 45 ON READER SERVICE CARD



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B

Cassette

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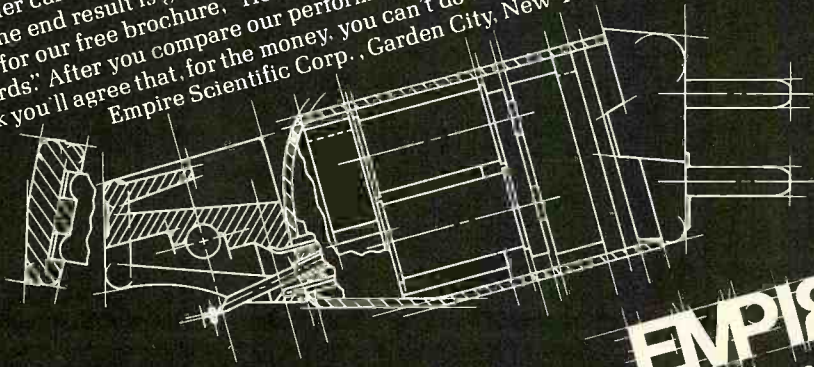
D-C90 TDK.

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No matter what system you own, a new Empire phono cartridge is certain to improve its performance. The advantages of Empire are threefold. One, your records will last longer. Unlike other magnetic cartridges, Empire's moving iron design allows our diamond stylus to float free of its magnets and coils. This imposes much less weight on the record surface and insures longer record life.

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Already your system sounds better.

MODEL	4000 D/III	4000 D/II	4000 D/I	2007	2000 E/III	2000 E/II	2000 E/I	2000 E	2000
FREQUENCY RESPONSE	10Hz-50KHz ± 3 db	15Hz-50KHz ± 3 db	15Hz-45KHz ± 3 db	20Hz-20KHz ± 1 db	20Hz-20KHz ± 2 db	20Hz-20KHz ± 2 db	20Hz-20KHz ± 3 db	20Hz-20KHz ± 3 db	20Hz-20KHz ± 3 db
TRACKING FORCE RANGE	¾-1¼ gm	¾-1½ gm	1-1¾ gm	¾-1¼ gm	¾-1½ gm	¾-1½ gm	1-2 gm	1¼-2½ gm	1½-3 gm
SEPARATION: 15Hz to 1KHz 1KHz to 20KHz 20KHz to 50KHz 20 Hz to 500Hz 500Hz to 15KHz 15KHz to 20KHz	28 db 23 db 15 db	26 db 21 db 15 db	24 db 20 db 15 db		20 db 30 db 25 db	20 db 28 db 20 db	20 db 25 db 18 db	18 db 23 db 15 db	16 db 21 db 13 db
I. M. DISTORTION @ 3.54 cm/sec	.2% 2KHz-20KHz	.2% 2KHz-20KHz	.2% 2KHz-20KHz	.08% 2KHz-20KHz	.1% 2KHz-20KHz	.15% 2KHz-20KHz	.2% 2KHz-20KHz	.2% 2KHz-20KHz	.2% 2KHz-20KHz
STYLUS	.2 mil bi-radial	.2 mil bi-radial	.2 mil bi-radial	.2 x .7 mil elliptical	.2 x .7 mil elliptical	.2 x .7 mil elliptical	.2 x .7 mil elliptical	.3 x .7 mil elliptical	7 mil radius spherical
EFFECTIVE TIP MASS	.4 milligram	.4 milligram	.4 milligram	.2 milligram	.6 milligram	.6 milligram	.6 milligram	.9 milligram	1 milligram
COMPLIANCE	30x10 ⁻⁴ cm/dyne	30x10 ⁻⁴ cm/dyne	30x10 ⁻⁴ cm/dyne	30x10 ⁻⁴ cm/dyne	20x10 ⁻⁴ cm/dyne	18x10 ⁻⁴ cm/dyne	17x10 ⁻⁴ cm/dyne	16x10 ⁻⁴ cm/dyne	14x10 ⁻⁴ cm/dyne
TRACKING ABILITY	32 cm/sec @ 1KHz @ 1 gm	32 cm/sec @ 1KHz @ 1¼ gm	30 cm/sec @ 1KHz @ 1½ gm	38 cm/sec @ 1KHz @ .9 gm	32 cm/sec @ 1KHz @ 1 gm	28 cm/sec @ 1KHz @ 1¼ gm	28 cm/sec @ 1KHz @ 1½ gm	28 cm/sec @ 1KHz @ 1¾ gm	32 cm/sec @ 1KHz @ 2 gm
CHANNEL BALANCE	within 1 db @ 1KHz	within 1 db @ 1KHz	within 1½ db @ 1KHz	within ¾ db @ 1KHz	within 1 db @ 1KHz	within 1¼ db @ 1KHz	within 1½ db @ 1KHz	within 1½ db @ 1KHz	within 1½ db @ 1KHz
INPUT LOAD	100K ohms/ channel	100K ohms/ channel	100K ohms/ channel	47K ohms/ channel	47K ohms/ channel	47K ohms/ channel	47K ohms/ channel	47K ohms/ channel	47K ohms/ channel
TOTAL CAPACITANCE	under 100 pf/channel	under 100 pf/channel	under 100 pf/channel	300 pf/channel	400-500 pf/channel	400-500 pf/channel	400-500 pf/channel	400-500 pf/channel	400-500 pf/channel
OUTPUT @ 3.54 cm/sec	3 mv/channel	3 mv/channel	3 mv/channel	3 mv/channel	4.5 mv/channel	4.5 mv/channel	7 mv/channel	7 mv/channel	7 mv/channel

FORMERLY HI FI/STEREO REVIEW

Stereo Review®

MAY 1977 • VOLUME 38 • NUMBER 5

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Editorially Speaking

By William Anderson



EXECUTIVE MUSIC

LONG, long ago and far, far away, in the days of kings, emperors, and other awful majesties, political theorists who thought they knew more about ruling than their rulers did invented a whole "how to" literature on the subject. Some of these books had an expressly moral intent (the sixteenth-century collection of cautionary tales called *A Mirror for Magistrates*, for example), while others were concerned with such practical matters as the getting of power, holding onto it, and wielding it in the interim (Niccolò Machiavelli's strange mixture of cynicism and idealism in *The Prince*). Things haven't really changed much since then. Our thoroughly modern, morally enlightened political thinkers may temporarily see themselves more as guardians of civic virtue than as mere chroniclers of the deployment of political power, but both *Tales from the Watergate* and *The Making of a President* have an oddly familiar ring to them.

Magistrates, princes, and presidents are certainly under closer scrutiny today than in times past, with scarcely a place to hide from

the intrusive thrust of the microphone. But as long as a smile can be worth a paragraph, a frown a column of commentary in the game of, say, President Watching, there is not likely to be any letup. Just as in more conventional espionage, a few small, apparently unrelated details can add up to a revelation—such as the discovery that we have in Jimmy Carter a musical President, a fact somehow kept from us during the recent campaign. The Washington press corps has since put together a picture of a man who loves chamber music and opera, dotes on Mozart and Wagner, and has made good, steady use of the library of 2,000 recordings presented to the White House by the Recording Industry Association of America in 1973. Is such a man, conjecture runs, likely to ignore the needs of the arts—particularly music—in his political decisions?

That remains to be seen, but we know for now that the President understands the uses of music—appropriate music—in his new residence (White House Watching is a subdivision of President Watching). The musical pro-

gram for the occasion of the March visit of British Prime Minister James Callaghan and his wife was a model of its kind: short, sweet, and domestic. The President himself, in a brief introduction, pointed out that though the music was designed for the simple pleasures of family performance, the highest sort of artistry would not be wasted on it. (Experienced Washington reporters would no doubt have put a little tick right there beside the word "family," for it is a note the President has already struck fairly often in his short tenure, and one of these days it will surely turn out to Mean Something.)

Tenor Robert White opened the program with a group of turn-of-the-century sentimental songs drawn from his recent RCA album (ARL1-1698): *When You and I Were Young Maggie*, *Sylvia*, *Little Boy Blue*, *May-Day Carol*, and *A Perfect Day*. Mezzo-soprano Jan De Gaetani followed, singing Stephen Foster songs from her two Nonesuch albums (H-71268 and H-71333): *Linger in Blissful Repose*, an excellent example of Foster's contemplative style; the comic *If You've Only Got a Moustache*; *Jeannie with the Light Brown Hair*; *Little Jenny Dow*, very likely addressed affectionately by the composer to his daughter (though his family life was an unhappy economic melodrama, the stuff of soap opera); *Ah! May the Red Rose Live Always*, for me perhaps the deepest note Foster ever struck; and the upbeat *Some Folks*.

Miss De Gaetani's encore was appropriate—*Hard Times Come Again No More*; Mr. White's was the traditional Welsh song *All Through the Night*, with the first verse ably sung in Welsh to flatter the distinguished visitors. Accompanists Samuel Sanders and Gilbert Kalish coaxed miracles of sound out of the piano, the same 1850 Chickering used in Miss De Gaetani's Foster discs. If its dulcet plunk was more appropriate to the Foster than to the somewhat younger sentimental songs, it also served to unify the program, helping to make it, in the President's own capsule review, "just about perfect." He went on to liken the experience to walking into a peanut field right after a rain. And that is a line I won't even try stepping on.

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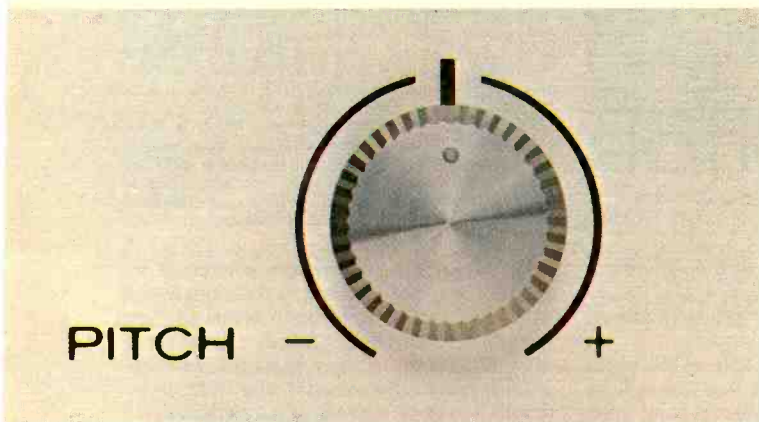
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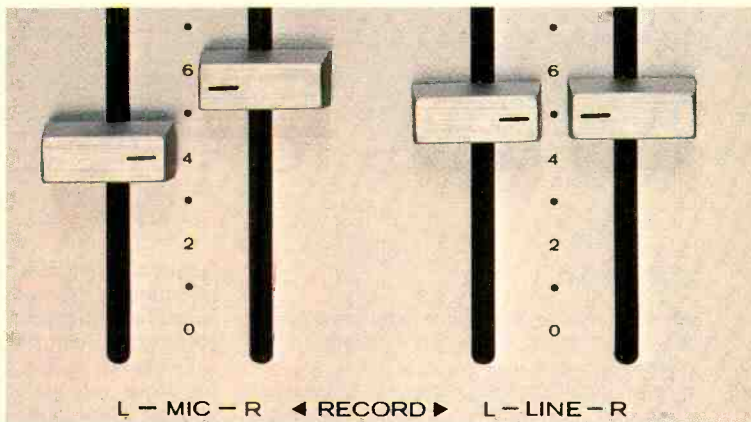
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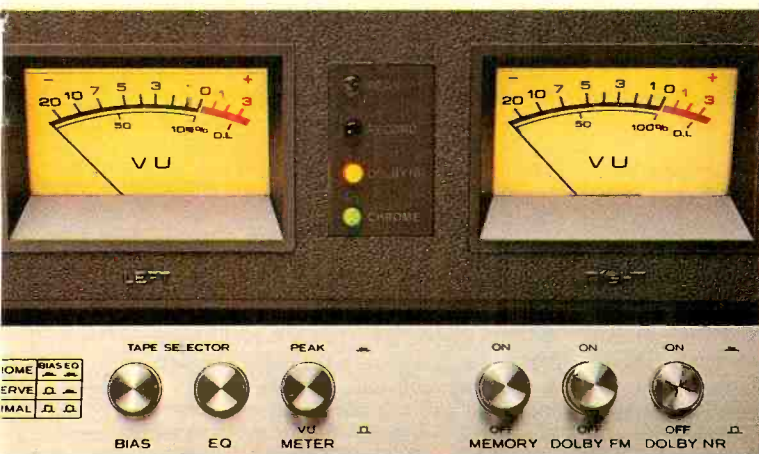
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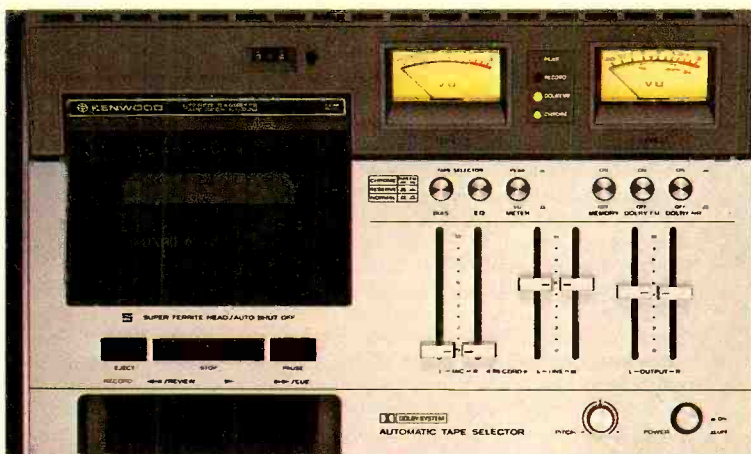
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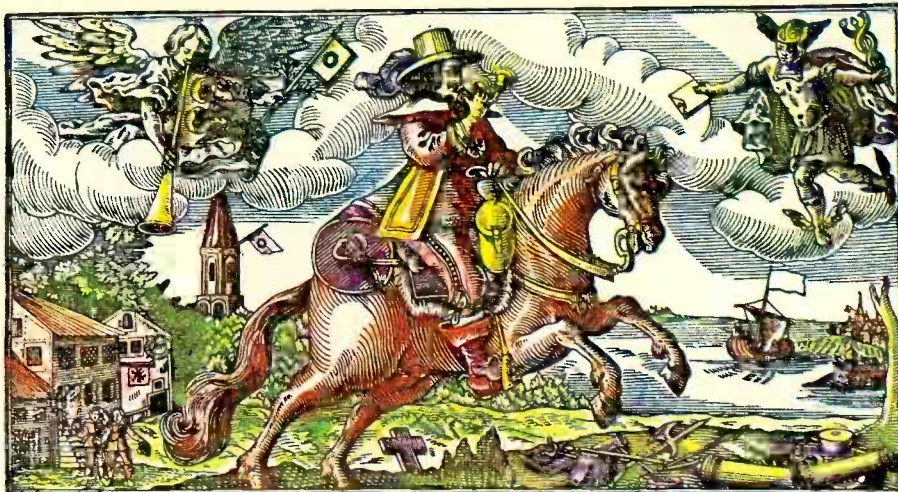
The only option you should even think about is tape.

*Suggested resale price. Actual prices are established by Kenwood dealers.

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CIRCLE NO. 19 ON READER SERVICE CARD



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

More RFI

● Let me add yet another letter in response to Ralph Hodges' January column, "The Greater Good."

Yes, the RFI problem is severe and will become worse with more and more radio transmitters on the air and more and more receiving devices being put into service. Having been a ham operator for the past thirteen years, I am no stranger to this type of interference. Indeed, we hams—by virtue of our having had the only large antennas in the neighborhood (until the CB boom)—were often blamed for *any* type of interference, whether we were causing it or not. Since we are authorized to use up to 1,000 watts (2,000 SSB), we are, in fact, frequently the cause of some interference. (Notice I did not say "to blame," just the cause.) It is entirely possible for a properly operating transmitter to cause interference to a properly operating receiver. However, until and unless we want more governmental regulation, a spirit of cooperation must be developed among the operators of transmitting equipment, the users of receiving equipment, and the manufacturers of both types of gear.

First of all, the owner of the transmitter should make sure his equipment is operating properly. He should have a good ground installed and should purchase a good low-pass filter (for operation on 30 MHz and below). And the owner of the receiving equipment should not be so ready to blame "the other guy." It is quite possible that the problem *is* in his set.

Also, let us not ignore other sources of noise pollution—electric motors, fish-tank heaters, power lines, heating pads, electric blankets, etc., which also need simple noise-reducing devices installed by responsible manufacturers. While this type of interference rarely causes problems for FM, tape, and phono systems, it can be extremely irritating and troublesome to AM listeners, hams, and CB'ers.

Readers with noise/interference problems might be interested in the names and addresses of thirty-nine manufacturers on an "RFI-Assistance List" published in the February 1977 *QST* by the American Radio Relay League. This list includes names, addresses, and telephone numbers of thirty-nine manu-

facturers, along with a brief description of the help one can expect from each. It may be obtained by writing to ARRL, 225 Main Street, Newington, Conn. 06111.

Finally, let me say that I believe this problem to be very serious and one that will be growing worse in the near future. If we wish to avoid tight governmental regulations, which might place restrictions on those using transmitting equipment and add to the cost of audio gear, the time for voluntary action and cooperation is now.

MARK KLOCKSIN
Phoenix, Ariz.

(For more on the RFI problem, see page 56)

Basic Repertoire

● Your comment in the January issue about Martin Bookspan's feature ("How 'basic' can a list 180-odd items long be?") is certainly true. It must have been very difficult in the later stages for Mr. Bookspan to come up with more additions to the list. However, I want to confess that I enjoyed Mr. Bookspan's column from its inception in the November 1958 issue. As one truly ignorant of musical information, I profited much from his monthly effort to elucidate the wealth of music and recordings of it.

It is good news that you intend to continue Mr. Freed's annual updatings of the Basic Repertoire, and your indication of new directions you intend to take in this field, such as Mr. Kolodin's proposed look at chamber music, sounds interesting.

JAMES T. WEBER
Tucson, Ariz.

Richard Freed's 1977 updating of the Basic Repertoire is just off the presses. See the ad on page 90 for information on how to secure your copy.

Bicentennial Puzzle

● In the December 1976 issue *STEREO REVIEW* paid one last tribute to the Bicentennial year by featuring artist Sharon Warner's découpage of popular musicians. We offered the *STEREO REVIEW* Test Record Model SR

12 to the top ten contestants who came closest to naming the seventy-six faces in the découpage. Ms. Warner was herself able to identify seventy-three of them; in alphabetical order, they are:

(1) Jim Atlas, (2) Chet Baker, (3) Bee Gees, (4) Max Bennett (L.A. Express), (5) Tony Bennett, (6) David Bowie, (7) Brazil 77, (8) James Brown, (9) Les Brown, (10) B. T. Express member, (11) Cab Calloway, (12) Conte Candoli, (13) Larry Carlton, (14) Cher, (15) Buddy Clark, (16) Joe Cocker, (17) Nat "King" Cole, (18) John Coltrane, (19) Glenn Cornick (Jethro Tull), (20) Dramatics member, (21) Earth, Wind & Fire member, (22) Roy Eldridge, (23) Wilton Felder (Crusaders), (24) Ella Fitzgerald, (25) Med Flory, (26) Aretha Franklin, (27) Terry Gibbs, (28) Wardell Grey, (29) Jake Hanna, (30) George Harrison, (31) Lena Horne & Lou Levy, (32) two Isley Brothers, (33) Harry James, (34) Elton John, (35) Stan Kenton, (36) Carole King, (37) Kris Kristofferson, (38) Harold Land, (39) Steve Lawrence/Eydie Gorme, (40) Led Zeppelin member, (41) Michel Legrand, (42) John Lennon, (43) Liberace, (44) Gordon Lightfoot, (45) Loggins & Messina, (46) Melissa Manchester, (47) Shelly Mann, (48) Warne Marsh, (49) Paul McCartney, (50) Carmen McRae, (51) Harold Melvin & the Blue Notes, (52) Jay Migliori, (53) Ronnie Milsap, (54) Joni Mitchell, (55) Jack Montrose, (56) Tony Orlando & Dawn, (57) Billy Paul, (58) Elvis Presley, (59) Charlie Pride, (60) Helen Reddy, (61) Minnie Riperton, (62) Max Roach, (63) Frank Rosolino, (64) Seals & Crofts, (65) Frank Sinatra, (66) the Spinners, (67) Dakota Staton, (68) Leslie Uggams, (69) Sarah Vaughan, (70) Kitty White, (71) Paul Williams, (72) Stu Williamson, and (73) Nancy Wilson.

We were pleased with the number of responses we received and especially pleased with the results: everybody followed "the rules," whether he/she identified forty-six or zero. So, thanks to those who tried, and congratulations to the winners, who were, in order of the highest number of correct answers:

David W. LeVan, Stamford, Conn. (46); Janet Y. Jackson, St. Louis, Mo. (38); Sandra Wilson, Roseville, Minn. (38); Harry Drucker, Mt. Clemens, Mich. (37); Frank Gajdosik, Galveston, Tex. (37); Jim Portanova, Flushing, N.Y. (36); Kay Elliott, Hanover, N.H. (34); Chick Sponder, Tujunga, Calif. (34); David J. Sterner, Tonawanda, N.Y. (34); and SP/4 Addie M. Bryant, Fort Hood, Tex. (33).

And David Furst of Sebastopol, California, wrote as follows: "Fore Sure Fore Sure Theres Got To Be A Boobie Prize And I Should Get It. I Honestly Don't Recognize Not a Soul." David, you got it.

Disc Quality

● It's soapbox time! In his February column the Editor gave some rather pallid suggestions for dealing with the atrocious state of disc quality. There was one glaring omission from his list (undoubtedly due to the politics involved): a consumer boycott. I propose a month-long moratorium on record purchases. The drive might be spearheaded by the creation of an organization under a name such as D.U.S.T.—Discophiles United against Surface Trash. Perhaps economic pressure applied to retail and mail-order outlets as well as to the record companies will bring some results that have not been achieved by mere individual complaints.

In my experience all major companies are at fault. Record buyers no longer have a refuge even in foreign pressings, and the impending rises in list prices just add insult to injury. Government regulation may be the answer. But first let's see if we can get voluntary, if grudging, compliance with our request for improvement. We have to get the record companies literally to clean up their act. Discophiles, unite!

MICHAEL S. FLYNN
Leland, Miss.

The Editor replies: I haven't quite made up my mind which of today's common cries—"ripoff!" or "boycott!"—is more inimical to (Continued on page 10)

We made the first Ortofon cartridge for us.

As far back as 1945, Ortofon was making the cutterheads used throughout the world to cut the grooves in master phonograph records. But the phono playback cartridges then available could not put our cutterheads to the test for sensitivity and capacity.

So we made our first phono cartridge. For us.



Since then our cutterheads have moved ahead—with a quality we couldn't even imagine in 1945. So have our phono cartridges.

The new MC20 moving coil phono cartridge is the best we've ever made. We believe it is the finest available for professional or home use.

The MC20 has the lowest stylus tip mass ever attained on a phono cartridge. A flawless, fine line diamond stylus is fixed directly (without the usual sleeve) to a stepped, low mass cantilever. Beryllium filling enables the cantilever to attain rigidity despite its minute dimensions. The moving coils are wound with wire one-fifth the thickness of a human hair.

The moving coil principle, with its low inertial mass, wider frequency response, low distortion as well as low tracking force, has clearly established its sonic superiority over any other phono cartridge system. Our new pre-preamplifier, the MCA-76, is also available to process the signal of the MC20 or any other moving coil cartridge. The MCA-76 features low-noise circuitry, a subsonic filter and a by-pass switch which accommodates all magnetic cartridges.

We'll be pleased to forward data on the entire Ortofon line. We suggest that you write to us directly. Ortofon, Dept. A, 122 Dupont Street, Plainview, New York 11803.

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The luxury a difference:

Sansui's new 9090DB top-of-the-line receiver adds Dolby to its other luxury credentials — big power, an extremely fine tuner section and great versatility. The Dolby circuitry will not only decode Dolby FM broadcasts: it can also encode and decode tape

recordings for reduced noise and hiss.

And, of course, with the Sansui 9090DB you can creatively determine just how you like your music. In addition to bass and treble controls, with turnover selectors for 150 Hz/300 Hz and 1.5 kHz/3 kHz respectively,

The Sansui 9090DB.

AUDIO SECTION

POWER OUTPUT

125 watts per channel, min. RMS, both channels driven into 8 ohms from 20 Hz to 20,000 Hz, with no more than 0.1% total harmonic distortion.

FM SECTION

FM SENSITIVITY

9.8 dBf (1.7 μ V).

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better than 85 dB.

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SPURIOUS

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there is also a midrange control. High and low filters. A tone defeat for bass and treble. A loudness switch and 20 dB audio muting switch. For added creative freedom, two tape monitors and a mic mixing circuit with separate level control. Two tuning meters, as well as twin power meters that also serve for Dolby tone calibration.

as well as twin power meters that also serve for Dolby tone calibration.

Listen to the 9090DB. Handle its superbly smooth controls. See how they respond to your slightest command. We know you will fall in love with Sansui.



rational discussion since both assume that all the evidence is in. The trouble with boycotts is that (1) they're illegal, and you'll get it in the neck (or somewhere else even more tender) if it can be proved you started one; and (2) they assume that the right is all on one side. I think that is hardly true in the present case. To claim that the whole of the American record industry is engaged in a vast plot to mulct the public is not the kind of idea to engage the minds of reasonable men, though it may be attractive to the other kind. Once more, with feeling:

The combination of inter-company competition and public resistance to higher prices (records are not a necessity) has been responsible for keeping the price of records from rising at anything like the rate of everything else over the past two decades. Domestically produced classical records—mono, of course—cost \$4.98 twenty years ago and, up until a couple of months ago, stereo discs were still only \$6.98—that's an increase of 40 per cent. Contrast that with what has happened to the 25¢ hamburger (at least \$1.25 these days, or up 400 per cent); the New York subway fare, up from 10¢ to 50¢ (400 per cent), or, more realistically, a top orchestra seat at the Metropolitan Opera: \$8.50 in 1957 and \$30 next season (up better than 250 per cent). Readers might try supplying some other figures for salaries, rents, bread, and the like from their own experience. In terms of actual dollar buying power, records are therefore cheaper than they were twenty years ago.

Record companies were hardly immune to increasing prices over the years; they had to pay salaries, buy raw materials, and ante up to Uncle Sam just like the rest of us. How did they manage on only 40 per cent? By cutting corners on costs (read quality), by making less on each record sold but selling one helluva lot more records in the aggregate (the rising curve of record sales since the introduction of stereo in 1958 has to be seen to be believed). They found in the process that quality was, for the mass market they had discovered, something less than crucial. This meant that records could be made thinner, more of them could be pressed from a given stamper, costly inspection procedures could be . . . er . . . "streamlined," the number of rejects cut down, pressing cycles (time is money) could be shortened, production lines stepped up, and Lord knows what else.

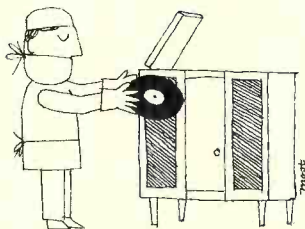
But nothing is forever, and it is extremely likely that things will get back to "normal" in the industry again as the "baby-boom" buyers responsible for the electrifying sales totals of recent years get married and start to buy diapers instead of discs. When this happens, the record industry will have to trim its sails (as will every other "youth" industry) and discover new ways of dealing with a different kind of market. I have suggested that that way might be to permit prices to rise to a level somewhat approaching those long since attained by everything else, and to plow some of the increased income back into improving quality. The record buyers of the future will not only be fewer but more particular, more likely to practice informal, individual "boycotts" if quality is not to their liking. Smart record companies ought to be taking the first steps to deal with this right now.

● One solution to the disc quality problem (Editorially Speaking, March 1977) would be immediately possible. The U.S. record companies could license Philips to do the disc

manufacturing. U.S. companies already license each others' and independent record clubs to manufacture their products, so why not let Philips manufacture our classical discs?

THOMAS E. DIMOCK
Ventura, Calif.

● In his March column the Editor has set himself up as an apologist for the record industry and its poor-quality pressings when he implies that nothing can be done about such poor pressings because "higher quality will mean higher prices for records." If it is true that higher-quality pressings cost more, then how can he explain the change in quality of records on the ECM label manufactured in the United States by Polydor? Until early in 1976, Polydor/ECM's were notorious for being some of the most off-center, crackle- and glitch-prone records anywhere. Due to the concern about the problem on the part of ECM's audience, and probably most of all on the part of Manfred Eicher, founder of ECM, Polydor brought its pressing standards up to



the point where they are now among the best pressings produced in this country, and the price remains completely competitive with other American-made records.

KEITH BAREFOOT
Santa Monica, Calif.

The Editor replies: Mr. Barefoot nicely proves my point. Polydor (ECM) does not own the American plant (Columbia's) that does its pressing, but is its customer just like the rest of us. Its pressings improved because it was able to bring pressure upon its supplier, presumably by threatening to go elsewhere (there are lots of independent pressing plants in the U.S.). In other words, it complained and was able to make its complaint stick.

The major American record companies (Columbia, RCA, and others) own their own pressing plants, but they also do custom pressing for smaller labels. It is a sad fact that these same plants can be bludgeoned into producing better product for outside customers than is produced in their own names. One of the reasons, of course, is quantity: the average custom pressing run is simply smaller than most of these companies' own. Another is that such business is "found money": the pressing plant is already there, its employees are on a salaried work day, and it is lucrative to have a nice little roster of small jobs to fit into the intervals between your own bigger ones. In short, the profit margin on these custom jobs is probably larger—large enough to accommodate more careful procedures all down the line. Even so, I would guess that eternal vigilance is necessary on somebody's part to keep the quality up. I have already recommended that the general public make itself a part of this eternal, complaining vigilance, and I don't apologize for that!

Star Is Born

● In reviewing the original-soundtrack album of the Barbra Streisand/Kris Kristofferson *A Star Is Born* (March), Peter Reilly confuses the death of silent-screen star John Gilbert (who died in 1936 of alcoholism—or from a "heart attack," as MGM primly diagnosed it) with that of film actor John Bowers, another despondent victim of the "talkies" era.

Bowers, at one time married to popular screen actress Marguerite de la Motte, enjoyed some fame in the Twenties until the arrival of sound films. In November of 1936, at the age of forty-five, he set out alone in a rented sailboat, and his body washed ashore a couple of days later near Santa Monica.

The suicide-by-drowning of Norman Maine, the has-been actor of the first two versions of *A Star Is Born*, is thus perhaps more closely connected to Bowers' death than to Gilbert's, which had little, if anything, to do with water.

CURTIS F. BROWN
Brooklyn, N.Y.

Laverne and Shirley

● I was amused at Peter Reilly's review of Penny Marshall and Cindy Williams' album, "Laverne & Shirley Sing," in March, but I was also rather disappointed at the overly serious manner in which Mr. Reilly criticized the album. Misses Marshall and Williams, admittedly, may not be the best singers in the world, but I do not think that either the performers or the record's producers ever intended the album to be anything other than a novelty act. The next time an album like this comes along, I would recommend that STEREO REVIEW's critics avoid seeing it as an attempt to pass off the artists involved as serious singers.

ALLEN JONES
Port Arthur, Tex.

Well, maybe, but our reviewers do tend to feel that making a record is a Very Serious Matter.

Mickey Duck

● Craig Stark, on page 83 of March STEREO REVIEW, has made a serious error that will set acoustical terminology standardization back a generation. He describes the quantitative shift in frequency when playing back a speech tape at a speed higher than recorded as "Mickey Mouse effect." He is actually describing the well-documented "Donald Duck effect," the parameters of which have often been delineated in the psychophysics literature. "Mickey Mouse," in contrast, is a qualitative, dimensionless phenomenon of more concern to the serious music critic than to the serious acoustician.

DANIEL QUEEN
Chicago, Ill.

Sorry—somehow it just squeaked by us.

Simels

● I see that Steve Simels has gone on to the "fresh pastures" of TV writing. Sing praises! The boy has found himself!

JACK STACY BOOVE
Kinston, N.C.

Credentials Like These Are Worth Reading



When you're buying speakers, you want to talk specs. And we don't blame you. In fact, we encourage it. Because when you invest your good money in a pair of speakers, you want more than just a pretty cabinet.

Consider the new Jensen Spectrums. These good sounds didn't just happen. They're the result of extensive engineering efforts and exhaustive testing. Testing that ranged from exacting measurements in laboratory "live" rooms and anechoic chambers to in-depth consumer surveys.

Examine our Spectrum Model 540. It's an excellent example of the superb specs you'll find throughout the Jensen Spectrum Series.

The Spectrum 540 is a 3-way, 4 element system that is so efficient it can be driven with as little as 10 watts continuous power. Its maximum power rating is 75 watts continuous.

The woofer is a 12" long-throw, high compliance design. Special acoustic suspension and infinite baffle enclosure give you extremely low distortion. And a high temperature voice coil affords high power handling. Magnet structure weight is a hefty 4½ lbs. with a Gap Flux Density of 10,000 Gauss.

Two 3½" cone midranges give excellent power handling and eliminate break-up in the critical midrange region. Tuned isolation chambers control response at the low end of the midrange spectrum. They also provide acoustical isolation in the cabinet between the midranges and the woofer. An edge damped rim suspension with specially treated molded cone offers sharp, clear, midrange reproduction.

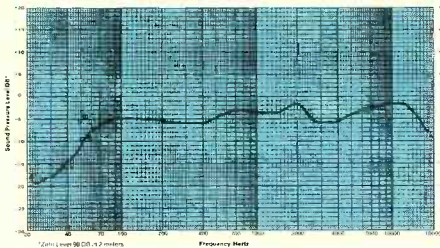
A 1½" Mylar® rear damped hemispherical dome tweeter offers a disper-

sion of 170°. Its large, lightweight voice coil gives high power handling, yet maintains a low mass for good high frequency reproduction.



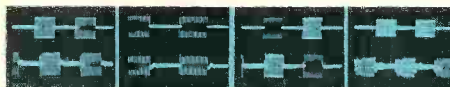
Tweeter and midrange controls allow you to adjust your Spectrum controls System to room conditions and listening preferences; controls are front mounted for convenience, continuously variable, calibrated in db attenuation from a maximum, or flat, response.

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About as flat as you can get... and that's good. The Frequency Response Range is an admirable 25 to 25,000 Hz.

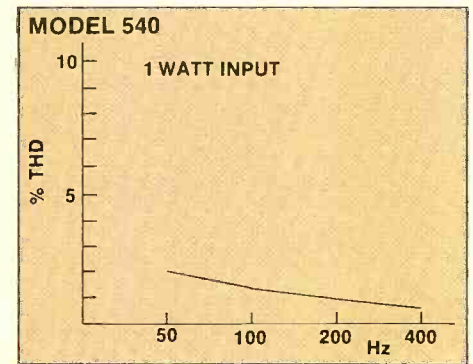
TONE BURSTS



"Blurring" and "Overshoot" are reduced to a minimum in this acid test of transient response. The Spectrum 540 re-

produces each waveform accurately with low distortion.

TOTAL HARMONIC DISTORTION



Distortion is kept to a minimum in Jensen Spectrum Speaker systems.

The cabinet is built with solid walnut front moldings and walnut veneer on wood composition panels. All walnut surfaces are hand rubbed for a rich luster and beauty. The baffle is finished in an attractive, durable black pebble grain.

In short, Jensen Spectrum speakers aren't designed to put out the most amount of bass or the most amount of treble. They're designed to put out the right amount. We consider them to be the best speakers we've produced in 50 years. Simply because when it comes to sound reproduction, they're extraordinarily accurate. And that's what specs are all about.

For further information and name of your nearest authorized Spectrum Dealer, write to: Jensen Sound Laboratories, Dept. SR-574136 United Parkway, Schiller Park, Illinois 60176.

JENSEN

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New Products latest audio equipment and accessories



Clean Sound's Handsome New Record Cleaner

□ The Clean Sound record-cleaning system from Recoton consists of a proprietary fluid and a handsomely styled applicator pad. The applicator is constructed of two half cylinders of clear styrene held together by chromed aluminum clips. One of the halves is wrapped in a padded plush-pile fabric, and it is this (treated, if desired, with a small amount of the Clean Sound fluid) that contacts the record surface. An untreated portion of the pad is then used to dry and buff the record.

The Clean Sound system is priced at \$15. Refill bottles of fluid are available, as well as replacement pads for the applicator.

Circle 115 on reader service card



Time-synchronized Speaker System From Ultralinear

□ The Ultralinear ST550 has two driver mounting surfaces, one of which holds the mid-range and tweeter and is set back relative to the woofer panel to equalize the sound-propagation times for different frequencies. In addition, the crossover network has been designed to correct phase anomalies in the drivers' outputs. The ST550's driver comple-

ment consists of a 12-inch woofer, 2-inch dome mid-range, and 1-inch dome tweeter. Output-level controls for all three drivers are provided beneath the system's removable grille. The woofer enclosure, nominally sealed, is fitted with aluminum plates that block a pair of circular ducted ports. When either or both of these are removed, the system becomes a ported design with somewhat boosted output at the lower frequencies.

Frequency response of the ST550 is rated as 27 to 22,000 Hz. For its 8-ohm impedance, minimum recommended amplifier power is 20 watts per channel continuous, and maximum is 100 watts continuous. Crossover frequencies are 700 and 4,300 Hz. The system measures 34¼ x 17¾ x 17 inches. Three finishes are offered: walnut-grain plastic and oak or walnut veneers. The grille, fashioned of acoustically transparent cloth, is available in black or brown. Approximate price: \$390.

Circle 116 on reader service card



Thorens "Isotrack" Turntables Feature New Tone Arm

□ The TD-126C, the new leader of the Thorens turntable line, has a low-mass tone arm that is also available on the Models TD-145C, TD-160C, and (in a slightly modified form) the TD-166C. The arm achieves low effective mass with a straight tubular shaft, a lightweight headshell, and what Thorens calls a "plug-in arm" design. Instead of a detachable headshell, Thorens provides a detachable arm shaft, thus locating the mass of the bayonet connector and locking collar much closer to the pivot assembly than would otherwise be possible. The TD-126C's arm has stylus force applied by a calibrated spring, a magnetic anti-skating system calibrated for elliptical and spherical styli and for wet or dry record playing, plus electronic cueing and motion sensing that automatically raises the arm when any physical shock disturbs its playing.

The turntable itself is a three-speed (33⅓, 45, and 78 rpm) belt-drive mechanism with electronic speed control. Speeds can be fine-tuned over a 12 per cent range; an illuminated stroboscope indicates on-speed operation. Wow and flutter are less than 0.04 per cent,

and unweighted rumble is -50 dB. Effective tone-arm mass is 7.5 grams. The turntable can be operated manually, with automatic arm lift at the end of a record or with automatic arm lift and motor shut-off. With the base and dust cover supplied, the TD-126C measures about 20 x 15½ x 6¾ inches. Price: \$625. The same turntable without tone arm is offered as the Model TD-126BC.

Circle 117 on reader service card



Sherwood's FM-only "Computer" Tuner

□ The heart of the Sherwood Micro/CPU FM-only tuner is a microprocessor—a "mini-computer" with memory—that performs all tuning functions and also operates three tuning displays. The first display is a digital readout of station frequency; the second is a digital readout of station call letters (programmed by the user from the alpha-numeric alphabet stored within the tuner's memory); the third is a dial scale with—instead of a pointer—a string of LED's spaced at one-megahertz intervals to provide an idea of a station's location within the FM band.

The Micro/CPU 100 is a frequency-synthesizing device with tuning that is totally non-mechanical. Its principal tuning modes are manual (via a conventional tuning knob that operates a photoelectric system) and AUTO SCAN, which advances station by station up or down the FM band, locking onto each station until the touch of a contact switch commands it to move on. There is also a four-station memory that will tune to any pre-programmed broadcast channel on demand.

The tuner has a usable sensitivity of 1.7 microvolts and a 50-dB quieting sensitivity of 2.1 microvolts. The user is offered a switch-selectable choice of i.f. bandwidths: NORMAL (for maximum selectivity) and WIDE (for minimum distortion and best stereo separation). For these two conditions, alternate-channel selectivities are 80 and 18 dB, respectively, and harmonic distortion is 0.1 and 0.07 per cent. Separation is 45 dB in the NORMAL mode at mid frequencies, improving to 50 dB in WIDE. Capture ratios are 1 dB (NORMAL) and 0.5 dB (WIDE). Image and spurious-response rejection are both 130 dB, and i.f. rejection exceeds 120 dB. Frequency response is 20 to 15,000 Hz ±0.5 dB. The Micro/CPU's tuning accuracy is within 0.0024 per cent.

(Continued on page 17)

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LTD II Brougham



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LTD II with Sports Touring Package



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Thunderbird Town Landau



Pinto with Rallye Appearance Package



Pinto Cruising Wagon



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Mustang II T-RooF Convertible



Pinto Runabout with Accent Stripe Group



Thunderbird in Lipstick Red

Turn the page for more. ▶



Pinto 3-Door Runabout



LTD Landau



LTD II S with Sports Appearance Package



Limited Edition Maverick



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Limited Edition Mustang II

Spring Price News.

See the lowest base sticker prices of the year on Pinto, Mustang II, Maverick and Granada. Inexpensive options like Pinto's all-glass 3rd door, sticker priced at \$12.00 and a Flip-Up Open Air Roof for Mustang or Pinto at \$145.00. And right now, during your Ford Dealers Limited Edition Sale, get special features, special prices* on '77 Ford Cars and Trucks.

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Limited Edition Pinto



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Econoline with Free Wheeling Option



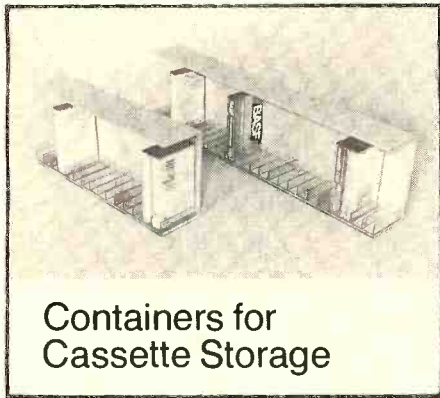
Cruising Van



New Products latest audio equipment and accessories

Subsidiary controls of the Micro/CPU 100 are concealed behind a swing-away panel below the dial area. They include variable interstation-noise muting, high-frequency blend for stereo noise reduction, switchable de-emphasis (75, 50, and 25 microseconds), and an output-level control. The tuner has signal-strength and multipath meters. The Micro/CPU 100 measures about 20 x 6½ x 15 inches. Price: approximately \$2,000.

Circle 118 on reader service card



Containers for
Cassette Storage

□ Bundy Crafts is the manufacturer of two cassette storage racks, the Model 15 and Model 25, whose names designate their capacity. Cassettes are held upright, spines exposed, in clear plastic spacing slots. The racks can be stacked like shelves or wall mounted by means of pre-drilled screw holes. Prices: Model 15, \$9.98; Model 25, \$14.98.

Circle 119 on reader service card



Visible Audio

□ Atari's "Video Music" is a component-styled module that produces a variety of abstract colors, shapes, and patterns on the screen of a television set, altering the display according to the rhythmic content of music played through an audio system. It connects

to the VHF antenna terminals of a TV receiver via a switch box supplied, and to the left and right tape- or preamplifier-output jacks of an amplifier or receiver through a shielded cable with phono-plug connectors.

The unit generates variations on three basic shapes, called SOLID, HOLE, and RING. The user can select by pushbuttons a single shape or employ an automatic mode that causes the device to alternate all three randomly. Other controls change the size of the pattern, the number of shapes it contains, the outline "envelope," and the value and distribution of colors (when a color TV receiver is used). Pushbuttons select the rate at which the pattern changes. The Video Music module has an input impedance of 47,000 ohms and will accept inputs up to 10 volts peak. Dimensions are 14½ x 4 x 8½ inches. Price: about \$180.

Circle 120 on reader service card



Nakamichi's New
Tuner-preamplifier

□ The latest product introductions from Nakamichi include a combined stereo preamplifier/FM tuner, the Model 630. The unit's circular tuning dial is calibrated linearly with ten divisions per megahertz, and it is rotated (by means of reduction gearing) by a central knob. The tuning aids consist of five front-panel lights, three of which serve as channel-center indicators; the other two are labeled SIGNAL and STEREO. User-selectable i.f. bandwidth (WIDE and NARROW) is provided, as well as switchable interstation-noise muting and built-in Dolby noise-reduction circuits (with the appropriate 25-microsecond de-emphasis for Dolbyized broadcasts).

The Nakamichi 630 also has inputs for phono, auxiliary, and full tape monitoring and dubbing facilities for two tape decks. Major preamplifier controls are volume, balance, bass, treble, and variable loudness compensation. Signal-to-noise ratios (A weighted) are better than 80 dB for phono (referred to a 1-millivolt input) and 102 dB for high-level inputs. Distortion is generally under 0.003 per cent. The preamplifier has a maximum output of 5 volts into 50,000 ohms or 300 milliwatts into 8 ohms (via the front-panel headphone jack). The tuner section has a usable sensitivity of 1.5 microvolts, a capture ratio of 1 dB, AM suppression exceeding 60 dB, and image, i.f., and spurious-response rejection all great-

er than 100 dB. Alternate-channel selectivity exceeds 90 dB in the narrow-bandwidth mode and 45 dB in the wide mode. Corresponding figures for mid-range stereo separation are 30 and 55 dB. Ultimate signal-to-noise ratio is more than 65 dB without the Dolby circuits. The Model 630 is constructed on Nakamichi's wedge-shaped chassis, suitable for shelf or rack mounting. It measures approximately 16 x 6¼ x 9¾ inches. Suggested price: \$600.

Circle 121 on reader service card



European Styling and
Automatic Features
On B&O Receiver

□ The Beomaster 1900 FM-only receiver from Bang & Olufsen in Denmark has a European look. Its gently slanted top serves as a control panel, with many of the controls normally concealed beneath a hinged aluminum plate. Lighted indicators show the positions of the concealed bass, treble, and balance controls. The volume control (not concealed) is fully electronic, with two switches that increase or decrease the listening level gradually when they are merely touched. In addition, the 1900 has three volume presets that determine what the volume level will be when the receiver is first turned on. There are also five presets for FM stations, the fifth consisting of the receiver's main tuning mechanism (normally concealed). These presets, along with the phono and tape inputs, are all selected by electronic touch switches.

Power output for the Model 1900 is 20 watts per channel continuous (8 ohms, 20 to 20,000 Hz), with less than 0.2 per cent harmonic distortion and 0.15 per cent intermodulation distortion. Usable FM sensitivity is 19.2 dBf in mono and 24 dBf in stereo; corresponding figures for 50-dB quieting sensitivity are 18.5 and 38.9 dBf. The capture ratio is 4.5 dB, AM suppression is 50 dB, and spurious-response rejection is 87 dB. The FM frequency response is 20 to 15,000 Hz ±1.5 dB. Signal-to-noise ratios exceed 60 dB (phono inputs) and 65 dB (tape inputs). The Model 1900 measures 24¼ x 2½ x 9¾ inches. Price: \$495.

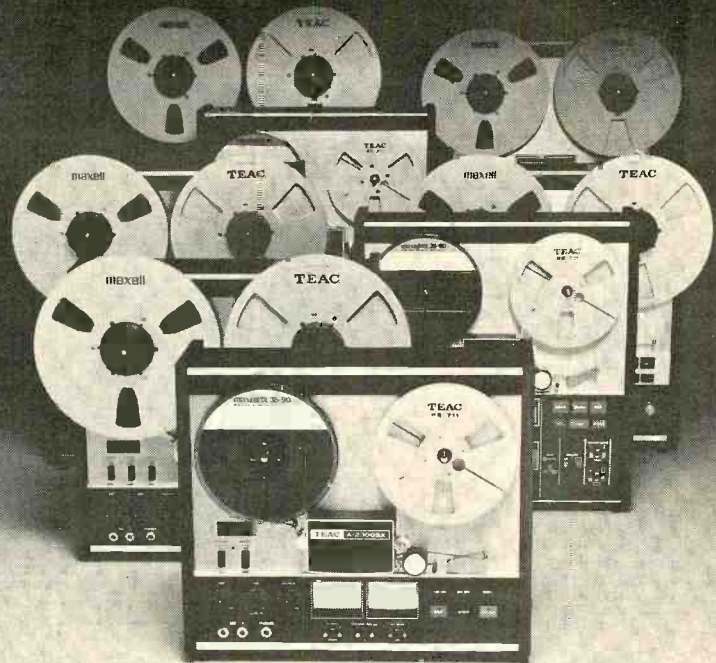
Circle 122 on reader service card

(Continued on page 18)



**“If I just wanted to
listen to music,
I’d go to a concert.”**

**“I want to lead
the band. I want to
build my own
albums.”**



TEAC®

Nineteen tape systems—six cassette and thirteen open reel—from \$200 to \$1450.*

“I want to get my hands on the music.”

You're talking TEAC open reel. From the time you decide to edit, resequence and build your own albums until you finish your home studio, you're talking TEAC open reel.

Why TEAC?

Better specs. Not more bells and whistles and gingerbread. Performance you can hear. Specs we can prove:

We can print a signal at plus six and still meet spec. (A cheapy will lose definition and distort.)

We hold and define a piano and violin with a sustained Middle C. (On Brand X, Y and Z, the tone will wander away.)

When the tape transport moves or shifts or reverses, TEAC has a nice, clean, solid “thunk” that tells you the tape transport is there to stay. (Some TEAC look-alikes give off a hollow, plastic complaint when they're asked to do anything.)

And we'll perform to specs a year or two from now. Not just pull tape. Perform to specs.

Do you know who buys one out of every three new TEAC systems? People who own old TEAC systems. We've been making tape systems for twenty five years, and we really know how.

It's just a matter of time. The more you know about tape, the more you'll know about TEAC.

The Extra Mile.

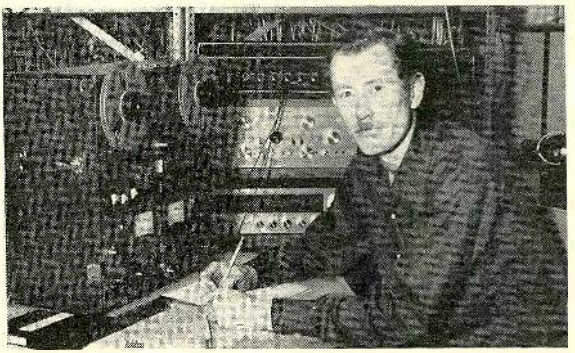
Buy any TEAC open reel recorder between now and June 1, 1977, and you'll be able to get 30% off on twelve 7" reels of Maxell U.D. 35-90 tape or twelve 10" reels of Maxell U.D. 35-180 tape. The way we figure it, you get at least five miles of tape for the price of four. Any way you figure it, it's a nice way to start a tape library.



*Actual resale prices are determined individually and at the sole discretion of authorized TEAC dealers.

Tape Talk

By Craig Stark



Dolby Adjustments

Q. Some cassette decks provide Dolby calibration controls that allow the user to adjust his Dolby system when he changes tape brands, while others don't. Is this a real advantage or just a case of knobs for the sake of knobs?

R. WHITE
Ames, Iowa

A. The appearance, disappearance, and reappearance of Dolby controls on consumer cassette decks obviously reflects mixed feelings on the part of manufacturers. On the one hand, optimizing the adjustments for any electronic device will make it operate better, but sad experience has convinced many manufacturers that consumer controls on home Dolby recorders will cause more of them to become misadjusted than optimized.

To put the matter in a practical perspective, when I recently tested some thirty-one brands of cassettes, I found a variation in their basic low- to mid-frequency output (400 Hz) of 4 dB, though the vast majority were within ± 1 dB of each other. At the high-frequency end there were differences of up to 10 dB at 10,000 Hz (growing larger at still higher frequencies). Among conventional ferric-oxide and CrO₂ cassettes, however, I could not find a consistent relationship between the high-frequency and the low-frequency differences. This is important because, when a Dolby system is adjusted, the reference is a low- to mid-frequency (333 Hz) tone on a level-calibrating tape, whereas any frequency-response errors that arise in decoding are most serious in the high frequencies, where the Dolby action is concentrated. For conventional oxides, then, optimizing the Dolby settings makes sense only after you're sure that the frequency response of your machine with the new tape is reasonably comparable to what it was with the original tape used by the manufacturer in setting up the deck.

For a few tapes, however—specifically those ferric oxides that are designed to be used with the CrO₂ bias and equalization—I found an output consistently higher (by up to about 3 dB) than with the chrome tapes that would have been used in the original recorder set-up, and here the frequency response was consistently very similar. When using these "super-premium" cassettes, therefore, it would make sense to readjust the Dolby cir-

cuitry if your machine permits it, even if you're not in a position to make a full frequency-response check.

X-Ray Damage?

Q. Does radiation from a color television set affect prerecorded tapes, and if so, how far away should they be stored?

MORRIS Y. MINTZ
Paramus, N.J.

A. Some years ago, the question of X-ray damage to recorded tapes was rather thoroughly investigated—by Memorex, if memory serves—in connection with problems that might arise in very high-flying aircraft. Radiation levels far in excess of any encountered either in the upper atmosphere or in the vicinity of misbehaving color TV sets were tested, and no damage either to the recorded material or to the tape itself was found.

On the other hand, many color sets contain degaussing coils that are activated each time the set is turned on. While I haven't measured the field strength of these demagnetizers, I'd recommend keeping recorded tapes about as far away from a TV as you would from a loudspeaker (three feet or so), just to be on the safe side.

Cobalt and Treble Losses

Q. Recently I came across a statement that the high-frequency response of cobalt-doped iron-oxide cassettes fell off progressively with each play. Is this true of today's premium cobalt-doped cassettes? And how do I know which cassettes are cobalt-doped?

RICHARD ZULTNER
Williamsburg, Va.

A. I raised this question with technical representatives of Maxell (UD-XLII) and 3M (Master II), whose cobalt-treated ferric oxides follow the same direction as TDK's Super Avilyn. Today's tapes have advanced considerably since the appearance of the first "cobalt-doped" formulations, and to make this distinction clear, modern tapes are generally said to be cobalt "treated" rather than "doped." The nature of the treatment varies from product to product, but in general any ferric-oxide cassette intended for chromium-

dioxide bias and equalization has undergone some kind of cobalt treatment.

Early experiments with cobalt treatment, quite a number of years ago, did reveal a problem with treble stability in connection with both typical capstan/pinch-roller pressure and elevated temperature. However, today's cobalt-treated tapes have been specifically designed to avoid this problem, and I am assured that they exhibit no more treble fall-off in use than regular iron-oxide cassettes do. Proper cobalt treatment has been and is being used in the manufacture of many high-quality video tapes whose short-wavelength (high-frequency) response requirements far exceed those of cassettes, so there seems to be no reason to doubt my sources' reports that good engineering has eliminated this potential danger.

Tape Chatter

Q. When I put my open-reel machine into fast forward or reverse, the recorded music is still audible as the reels rotate. This condition has developed only recently. Could it be my heads are out of alignment? How can I correct this problem?

GARY AILINGER
Amherst, N.Y.

A. Your problem is not one of head alignment, so don't touch that! Rather, it would seem that your machine's tape lifters, whose job it is to hold the tape away from the heads when it is in its fast-winding modes, aren't doing their job properly. These are usually spring-loaded, so if a spring has broken or lost tension, that's the explanation. I'd suggest a service shop visit, since you'll probably need an exact replacement.

Dolby and 0 VU

Q. I thought that Dolby levels were standardized. But when I look at the meters of various cassette decks, some have the Dolby mark at 0 VU, some at +2 or +3 VU, and others as low as -5 VU. How can the Dolby system work on all these very different record/playback levels?

MARK FINCH
Miami, Fla.

A. The Dolby-B system does have a single reference: a recorded test tone with a flux level of 200 nanowebers/meter. The relation between this specified flux level and the tape deck manufacturer's decision as to where, on his meters, he wants to put the "0 VU" indication depends on a number of variables. One is the question of how much "headroom" to allow between the nominal 0 VU and the onset of serious distortion. Another is the question of whether the tape deck uses a peak-reading or an average-reading indicator.

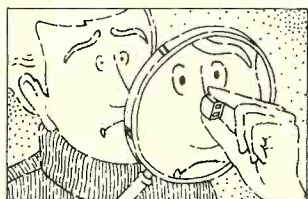
Setting your recorder so that its built-in Dolby tone generator (if your machine has adjustment facilities) records at a level that plays back at the Dolby reference mark calibrates the recorder for proper Dolby encode/decode action no matter where "0 VU" falls on the meter scale. In other words, the Dolby mark on the meter always corresponds to a specific level; it is the 0 VU point and other calibrations that can and do vary from one machine to another.

ARE YOU BLAMING YOUR TAPE RECORDER FOR PROBLEMS CAUSED BY YOUR TAPES?

Every day people all over the country go into hi fi dealers with complaints about their tape recorders.

When in reality what they should be complaining about is their tapes.

Because the fact is, a lot of the problems that plague tape recorders can be attributed to bad tape.



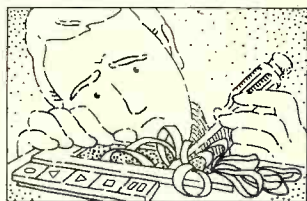
HEAD WEAR IS CAUSED BY YOUR RECORDER. OR IS IT?

If you have to clean your tape heads more than usual, for example, it could be your tape doesn't have a special nonabrasive head cleaner.

Maxell is the only tape that has one.

If your recorder jams, it can be any number of things. Maxell does something to prevent all of them.

We make our cassette shells of high impact polystyrene. And then so they won't crack



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POOR TRACKING IS CAUSED BY YOUR RECORDER. OR IS IT?

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Technical Talk

By Julian D. Hirsch



● PHONO-CARTRIDGE CROSSTALK:

One of the most gratifying aspects of my work is the continuing education it provides—for me, that is. I am now well into my twenty-third year of testing audio components, yet I am constantly getting involved with new testing techniques made necessary by the technical sophistication of today's consumer products.

In addition, I find that one must constantly question the validity of time-honored procedures. Just because something has been done in a certain way for many years, or because everyone "knows" that certain factors can be ignored when making a measurement, does not mean that these assumptions are correct. I can illustrate this point with an actual recent example.

For years, I have been measuring the frequency response and crosstalk of stereo phono cartridges by installing them in a suitable tone arm in the usual manner and connecting them, one channel at a time, to a wide-band amplifier and a graphic-level recorder whose chart speed is synchronized to the frequency sweep on a test record. And, of course, the appropriate resistance and capacitance are placed across the measured channel output to suit the needs of the cartridge. With the left channel connected, the left and right swept-frequency bands of the test record are played and the cartridge output is recorded on the same section of chart paper. The process is repeated for the right channel. The result—or so we have always believed—is a plot of the frequency response and crosstalk response of the cartridge as measured with that test record.

So far as I know, just about everyone else makes this measurement in essentially the same way. It seems to be a logical and obvious way to do the job, and until recently there was no reason to question its validity. Last year, I tested a new cartridge from Empire Scientific. Its performance was first-rate, and I as-

sumed that the considerable reduction (as against the specification) in measured channel separation near 20,000 Hz was a combination of product variability and test-record characteristics. In any event, I saw no reason to be concerned about a totally inaudible loss of separation at a frequency of primary interest only to dogs, cats, and bats.

Understandably, from his viewpoint, the manufacturer took issue with my measurements. He pointed out that the record-player tone arm (a very good one, by the way) in which I had mounted the cartridge had a fairly high capacitance *between* the signal leads of the two channels (as distinguished from the capacitance from either lead to ground, which is well recognized as affecting the frequency response of most magnetic cartridges). He pointed out the simple and obvious fact (which I admit I had not thought of until that time) that at high frequencies the capacitive coupling from the driven channel to the opposite one could produce a large crosstalk signal which was in fact external to the cartridge itself. I made enough additional measurements and calculations to convince myself of the truth of this argument, and resolved to be more careful in the future.

At that time, I was also concerned that only a few tone arms had low enough interchannel capacitance to render this effect negligible. The vast majority of

cartridges were, are, and will continue to be used in arms with an interchannel capacitance of at least 50 to 60 picofarads instead of the 20 or so needed to remove this factor from the picture. Unless the cartridge has low-impedance windings, the measured—if not the audible—high-frequency channel separation is almost certain to be seriously affected in some way by this cross-coupling.

The problem is even more complex than it seems at first glance. On a number of occasions I have measured high-frequency separation far *greater* than would be expected in the presence of interchannel capacitive coupling. Based on the limited tests I have made since becoming aware of the problem, it seems that internal cartridge crosstalk can have widely different and unpredictable (by me, at least) phase characteristics. The external capacitive crosstalk has a phase shift which can approach 90 degrees. Internal cartridge crosstalk with a 90-degree phase angle, depending on whether it is in the same or opposite phase to the external crosstalk, can either add to or subtract from it, giving a measurement that can be either worse or better than the "true" cartridge performance. I have found that the external-crosstalk effect can reduce high-frequency channel separation to zero, make it 10 dB or more greater than it should be, or result in any intermediate condition.

More recently, I encountered a similar problem when testing the Shure M24H stereo/CD-4 cartridge. Initially, the channel separation I was getting in the carrier band (above 30 kHz) was far from meeting Shure's specifications although the tone arm I was using was compatible with CD-4 cartridges and was fitted with low-capacitance signal cables. It finally occurred to me that the bugaboo of interchannel capacitance might be involved, so I disconnected the unused channel *at the cartridge* instead of at the other end of the signal cable. At last, my measurements essentially duplicated

Tested This Month

Aiwa AD-6500 Cassette Deck
Scott R336 AM/FM Receiver
Superex TRL-77 Headphones
Dynaco 300 Power Amplifier

Shure's, which had been made in an SME tone arm.

I do not present this merely to illustrate the pitfalls of testing hi-fi components, although it is a classic example of Murphy's Law, which states that "If anything can go wrong, it will." The dilemma it poses for me is that most medium- or high-impedance magnetic cartridges can deliver their rated channel separation at high frequencies only when installed in tone arms having very low interchannel capacitance (I assume that Shure's SME arm meets this requirement). Since a negligible percentage of

cartridges are used in arms with that quality, this suggests that almost all of them cannot deliver, in home service, the full separation of which they are capable. My problem is this: should I test and rate cartridge separation under realistic *average use* conditions or under special or atypical test conditions?

I can understand a manufacturer's concern with having the inherent performance of his product presented fairly in a test report, but I am also concerned with the consumer out there in the "real world" who thinks he is getting, say, 20 dB of separation in his de luxe cartridge

at 20,000 Hz when he may in fact be getting only 5 dB. This is another case of the manufacturers of different components being somewhat insensitive to the compatibility question.

Does all this really matter to the user? Fortunately, no—at least not in the case of stereo cartridges, whose separation at any audible frequency is generally much better than is required for the full stereo effect. But I am not so sure in the case of CD-4 cartridges, since a radical reduction in separation in the carrier band might well have serious effects on the sound quality.

Equipment Test Reports

By Hirsch-Houck Laboratories

Aiwa AD-6500 Cassette Deck



THE Aiwa AD-6500 is a front-loading cassette deck with a single d.c. servo-controlled motor driving the capstan and both tape hubs. It features a novel automatic tape-loading mechanism. The hinged door, with its large window, swings upward into the cassette opening when the OPEN key on the panel is pressed (or when it is lifted manually). This exposes a flat carrier tray on which the cassette is placed. A slight push on the cassette (or closing the door) causes the cassette to disappear with a soft whirring sound into the depths of the machine, where it is automatically placed into playing position about two inches behind the panel. The cassette is angled upward at about 30 degrees, and it is well illuminated so that the status of its tape pack can be seen easily from outside the machine.

Seven flat keys extending from the front panel below the cassette opening control all transport functions. Following the OPEN key are RECORD, REW/REVIEW, FWD, F.FWD/CUE, STOP/EJECT, and PAUSE keys. They can be distinguished by standardized markings above them as well as by color stripes on the RECORD, STOP/EJECT, and PAUSE keys (the FWD key is considerably wider than the others).

Pressing the STOP/EJECT key stops the tape and disengages the mechanism; releasing it and pressing again moves the cassette forward and opens the door so that it can be withdrawn easily.

To the right of the transport controls are two levers that select the input source (LINE or MIC/DIN) and activate the Dolby system (simultaneously inserting the low-pass multiplex filter into the recording signal path for recording stereo FM broadcasts). There is a DIN socket in the rear near the phono jacks that carry the line inputs and outputs. A second DIN socket on the front panel replaces the rear DIN circuit when a plug is inserted into it. Plugging a microphone into one of the front-panel MIC jacks disconnects both DIN inputs.

Separate three-position lever switches adjust the bias and equalization for ferric (LH), ferrichrome (FeCr), and chromium-dioxide (CrO₂) tapes. Separate control over bias and equalization gives the machine added flexibility in accommodating almost any type of tape formulation.

To the right of the switches, a small knob adjusts the playback level on both channels

and a larger pair of concentric knobs controls the recording levels. Above them are two large illuminated VU meters, between which are two peak lights set to flash at levels of +3 and +7 dB. To the left of the meters is a three-digit index counter, a MEMORY button that causes the tape to stop in the REWIND mode when the counter returns to a 000 reading, and a moving-light strip that shows when the tape is in motion.

At the far left of the panel is a square POWER switch button, the headphone jack, and the two microphone jacks. The red RECORD indicator light is behind the tinted plastic cover of the cassette compartment. The Aiwa AD-6500 has a rated frequency response (no tolerance given) of 30 to 14,000 Hz with LH tape and 30 to 17,000 Hz with CrO₂ and FeCr tapes. The S/N, using Dolby with FeCr tape, is rated at 62 dB, and the weighted rms flutter is 0.07 per cent. The record/playback head is of ferrite construction. The recorder is about 18 inches wide, 12 inches deep, and 6½ inches high; it weighs 18.7 pounds. Price: \$370.

● **Laboratory Measurements.** The playback equalization of the Aiwa AD-6500 was checked with Nortronic AT200 and Teac 116SP test tapes for the 120- and 70-microsecond equalization characteristics, respectively. After correcting for the differences in low-frequency equalization between the recorder and the Nortronic tape, we came up with a response curve (over the limits of the two tapes) that was flat within ±0.5 dB from 80 to 10,000 Hz and up about 2 dB at 31.5 Hz. The 70-microsecond (CrO₂) response, using the Teac tape, was within ±1 dB from 40 to 10,000 Hz.

The recorder had been adjusted at the factory for three types of Aiwa tape: a high-grade ferric tape (LH), a chromium-dioxide tape (CrO₂), and a ferrichrome tape (FeCr). Samples of these tapes were supplied to us by Aiwa and were used for our performance checks. With LH tape, at a -20-dB recording

(Continued overleaf)

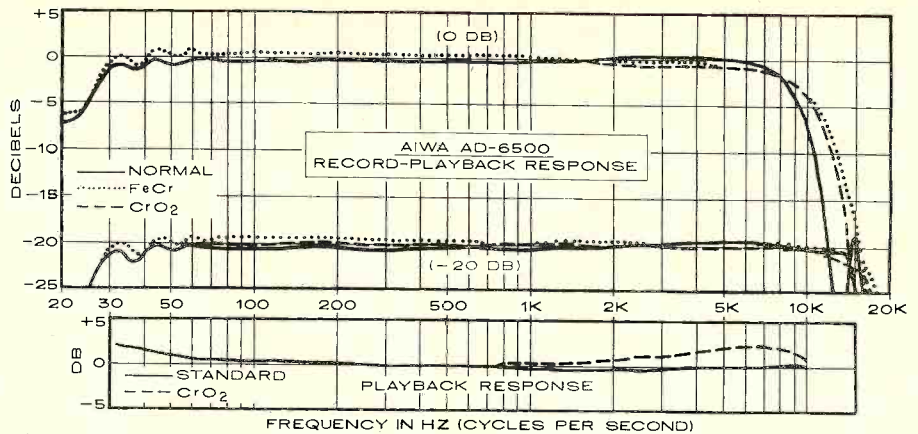
level, the playback response was flat within ± 0.5 dB from 55 to 14,000 Hz and down 3 dB at 28 and 15,000 Hz. The CrO₂ tape produced the expected extension of high-frequency response, though it was not quite as flat above 10,000 Hz as the LH tape. Overall, it was down 3 dB at 27 and 16,500 Hz. Ferrichrome tape was slightly better, flat within ± 1 dB from 28 to 15,500 Hz and down 3 dB at 27 and 17,000 Hz.

To judge the compatibility of the AD-6500 with more widely available tapes, we checked its frequency response with Maxell UD-XL I and II (LH and CrO₂ equivalents) and with Sony Ferrichrome. The results were close to those obtained with the Aiwa tapes. The Dolby circuits tracked well, with no more than 2 dB of difference between the response curves made with Dolby in and out at levels of -10 AND -30 dB. The Dolby-level mark on the recorder's meters is at +3 dB, so these test levels were actually 23 and 33 dB below 200 nW/m. The crosstalk between channels, playing the TDK AC-352 test tape, was -35 dB at 1,000 Hz.

A line input of 45 millivolts (mV) was needed for a 0-dB recording level. The microphone inputs required 0.24 mV and overloaded at 27.5 mV. The maximum playback output from a 0-dB recording was 0.67 volt with LH tape (it varies somewhat with the tape used). The meters had VU ballistics, reading 100 per cent of steady state on 0.3-second tone bursts. The +3-dB light flashed at +4 dB and the +7-dB light came on at the indicated level.

The distortion in the playback of a 1,000-Hz signal recorded at a 0-dB level was a very low 0.45 per cent with LH tape. With FeCr tape it was 0.89 per cent, and with CrO₂ it was 1.4 per cent. The recording levels corresponding to 3 per cent distortion were respectively +8.5, +6, and +3 dB with the three tapes, in that order.

The S/N, referred to the 3 per cent distortion playback level, was 51, 53, and 50 dB with LH, FeCr, and CrO₂ tapes, respectively. With IEC "A" weighting, these improved to 54.2, 55, and 51 dB. With CCIR/ARM weighting (the characteristic preferred by Dolby Laboratories), the S/N readings were within 1 dB of the "A" weighted measurements, and with the Dolby system in use they improved to 63, 66, and 61.5 dB. Through the microphone inputs the noise increased by 12 dB at



maximum gain, but at normal gain settings the increase was negligible.

The wow of the AD-6500 was lower than the residual of our test tapes and instruments (about 0.015 per cent); the unweighted rms flutter was about 0.12 per cent playing the Aiwa TTA-111A test tape and also in a combined record-playback measurement. The tape transport moved a C-60 cassette from end to end in 87 (rewind) to 95 (fast forward) seconds.

● **Comment.** The Aiwa AD-6500 impressed us with its smooth mechanical operation and with the quality of its sound. The automatic loading, though hardly necessary as a labor-saving device, worked perfectly (it reminded us of the picture ejection from a Polaroid SX-70 camera in reverse). The transport controls operated lightly and positively (they are mechanical, but they need only a light touch). The mechanism shut off automatically at the end of a tape in any mode of operation. The peak-reading LED's were an ideal adjunct to the meters. The instructions suggest appropriate peak indications for different tape types (although the LH tape had far more headroom than these suggestions implied). In any case, it is hard to imagine making a recording at an incorrect level if the +3-dB light flashes occasionally and the +7-dB light hardly at all.

The REVIEW and CUE features of the rewind and fast-forward modes are a great conven-

ience for locating a specific portion of a tape. When the FWD (play) key is engaged, the tape can be shuttled in either direction at high speed with the rewind and fast-forward keys, with sufficient coupling to the playback head so that recorded segments can easily be identified. In this mode, the fast keys are non-latching, so that releasing them returns the machine to normal playing speed instantly. The headphone volume from the AD-6500 was more than sufficient for comfortable listening with medium-impedance phones.

As for the sound quality, it could hardly have been better. Recording interstation FM tuner hiss and comparing the playback to the tuner output, we were pleasantly surprised to discover that at a -20-dB level (on the recorder's meters) there was no difference whatever between the two signals, and at -10 dB there was only a trace of dulling of the extreme high frequencies. This is a very severe test for a cassette machine (not too long ago, few open-reel machines designed for home use could pass it), and it served to underline the audible benefits of the ruler-flat frequency response we measured on this machine.

When the features and performance of the Aiwa AD-6500 are considered, its price is surprisingly low (we would have guessed it to be considerably higher). It is a first-rate product, unique in some respects and better than good in every respect.

Circle 105 on reader service card

Scott R336 AM/FM Stereo Receiver



THE Model R336 stereo receiver is one of the newest components in the H. H. Scott line of audio equipment. It is rated to deliver 42 watts per channel into 8-ohm loads from 20 to 20,000 Hz with no more than 0.3 per cent total harmonic distortion. Its front panel, of satin-finish aluminum, has a large rectangular cut-out behind which is another aluminum sub-panel that carries the tuning-dial scales and two meters. The FM-band calibrations are linearly distributed and marked at 1-MHz intervals. There is a "logging" scale.

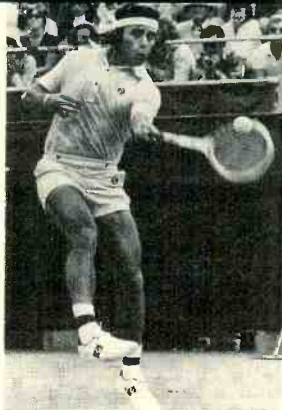
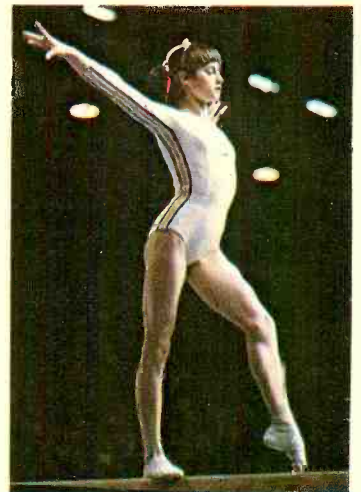
(Continued on page 36)



An
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readers to



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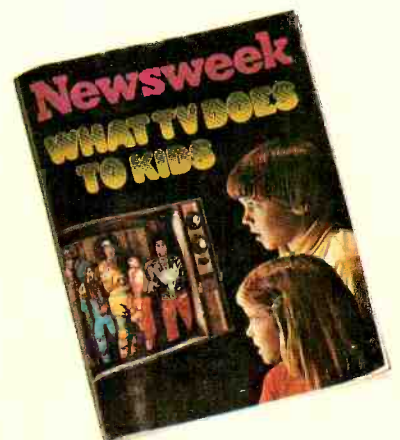
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marked from 0 to 10, between the AM and FM calibrations, but the spacing of its calibrations makes it useless for logging stations. One of the meters reads FM channel-center tuning, while the other is a relative-signal-strength indicator that functions for both AM and FM.

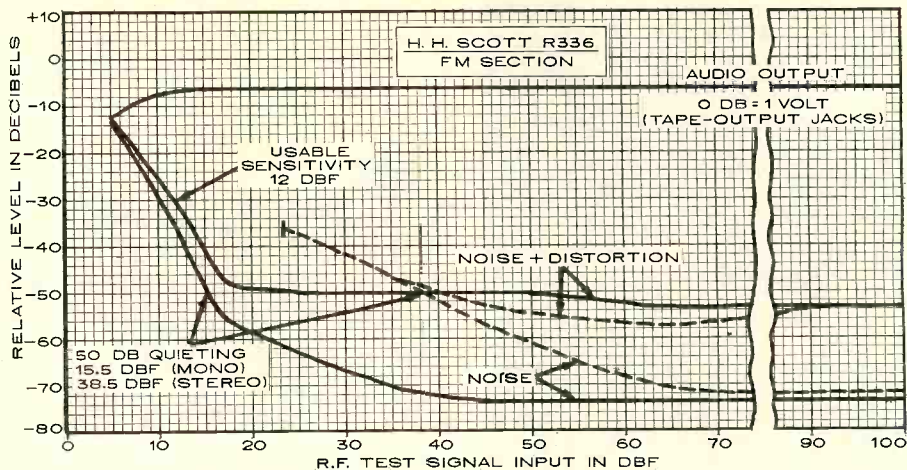
Above the dial and meter scales, softly illuminated labels identify the selected program source and indicate whether a stereo FM broadcast is being received. Small green lights to the left of the dial scales identify the FM and AM modes of operation.

The other controls form a single row across the bottom of the panel. The input selector has positions for microphone, phono, FM, AM, and auxiliary input. The microphone jack is next to the selector knob. Three push-buttons control the tape recording and playback functions. The COPY button interconnects two tape decks for dubbing from either one to the other. Another button selects either of two tape machines as the playback machine for copying or for normal tape operation. A third button connects the amplifiers to either the playback (monitor) output of the selected tape deck or to the selected signal source.

The balance control is detented at its center, and there is a large volume-control knob with some forty very positive detents throughout its range. The level change per "click" varies somewhat over the full range of the control, but it is about 1 dB in the most used portion. The bass and treble tone controls each have eleven detented settings. They are concentric controls with slip clutches that permit independent adjustment of the two channels.

Four black-handled lever switches operate the loudness compensation, FM muting, high-cut audio filter, and stereo/mono mode switching. Next to them is a combined POWER/SPEAKERS switch that enables either, both, or neither of two pairs of speakers to be driven from the amplifier. A headphone jack completes the front-panel array.

In the rear of the R336 there are insulated spring clips for the speaker outputs, screw terminals for the antenna terminals, and a hinged, ferrite-rod AM antenna. One set of tape-recorder jacks is duplicated by a DIN socket. A three-position slide switch changes the FM de-emphasis from the normal 75-microsecond time constant to either 50 microseconds (the European standard) or 25 microseconds (for use with an external Dolby accessory). A removable power cord plugs



The R336's rear panel has spring-loaded connectors for speakers, screw terminals for external AM and FM (300 or 75 ohms) antennas, and a detachable power cord (socket at lower left).

into a socket in the rear of the receiver, and there is a single unswitched a.c. outlet.

The Scott R336 is furnished in a walnut-vinyl-clad wooden cabinet. It is about 18½ inches wide, 15¼ inches deep, and 5 5/8 inches high; it weighs 26½ pounds. The receiver carries a three-year limited warranty covering parts and labor. Price: \$399.95.

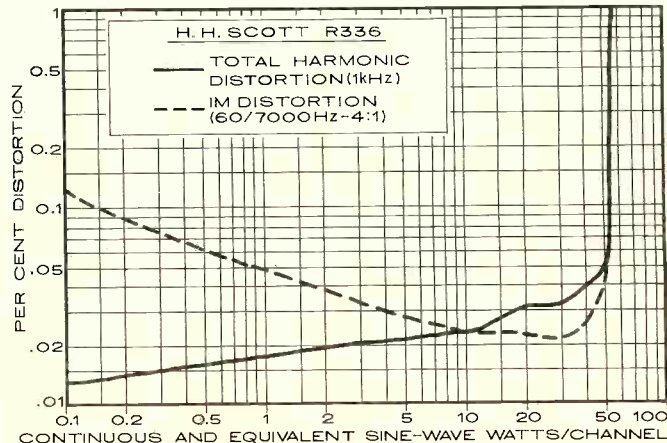
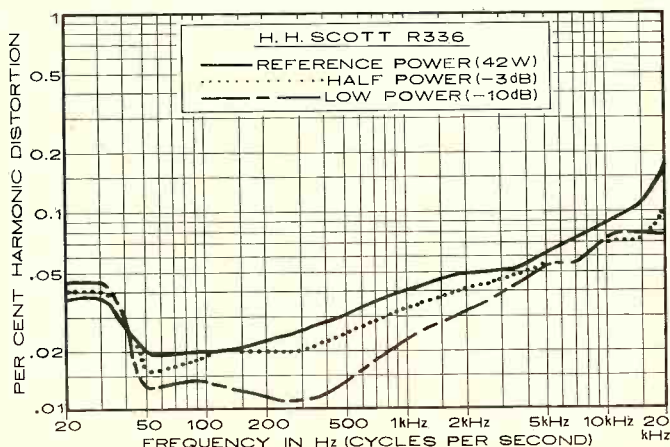
● **Laboratory Measurements.** During the standard FTC preconditioning period, the top ventilation grille (above the output-transistor heat sinks) became very warm. However, there was no evidence of damage or improper operation during the subsequent power and distortion measurements. The audio amplifier outputs clipped at 53 watts per channel with both channels operating at 1,000 Hz into 8-ohm loads. Power at clipping into 16 ohms was 33.6 watts; into 4 ohms it was 75.7 watts.

At 1,000 Hz, the total harmonic distortion (THD) was very low at low power levels. It was 0.013 per cent at 0.1 watt, 0.025 per cent at 10 watts, 0.04 per cent at 40 watts, and 0.05 per cent at 50 watts. The intermodulation distortion (IM) was 0.12 per cent at 0.1 watt, decreasing to about 0.025 per cent from 10 to 40 watts and reaching 0.1 per cent at 55 watts.

At the rated 42 watts output, the THD was just under 0.04 per cent in the 20- to 30-Hz range; it dropped to 0.02 per cent between 50 and 150 Hz and increased steadily to 0.09 per cent at 10,000 Hz and 0.16 per cent at 20,000 Hz. At half power and under, the distortion was less than these figures at all frequencies.

For a reference output of 10 watts, the input required was 84 millivolts (mV) at the auxiliary jacks and 1.3 mV at the phono inputs. The respective signal-to-noise ratios (S/N)

(Continued on page 40)



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Now we've raised our standards even higher, beyond the laboratory and into the home. The result is the CR-2020: the pinnacle of a new line of advanced performance Yamaha receivers, rated to meet the more critical demands of real life.

Real Life Rated™ While traditional laboratory measurements provide a good relative indication of receiver performance, they simply don't tell you how a receiver will sound in your living room in actual operation.

For example, in the lab, each receiver component is tested separately. At home, you hear them together as a single unit.

In the lab, distortion is measured at full-rated amplifier output. At home, you rarely, if ever, use the amplifier's full-rated power.

In the lab, power and distortion measurements are made with the volume control at maximum. At home, maximum volume would be painfully loud to listen to.

In the lab, noise and distortion are measured separately. At home, you hear them together.

Clearly a new standard is needed for evaluating overall receiver performance under real life conditions. Yamaha's new standard is called **Noise-Distortion Clearance Range (NDCR)**. No other manufacturer specifies anything like it, because no other manufacturer can measure up to it.

We connect our test equipment to the phono input and speaker output terminals, so we can measure the performance of the entire receiver. We set the volume control at -20dB, a level you're more likely to listen to than full volume. We measure noise and distortion together, the way you hear them.

On each of our new receivers, Yamaha's Noise-Distortion Clearance Range assures no more than a mere 0.1% combined noise and distortion from 20Hz to 20kHz at any power output from 1/10th watt to full-rated power.

Component-by-Component Excellence. By all conventional laboratory standards, as well as Yamaha's more stringent standards, the CR-2020 offers a new level of receiver performance.

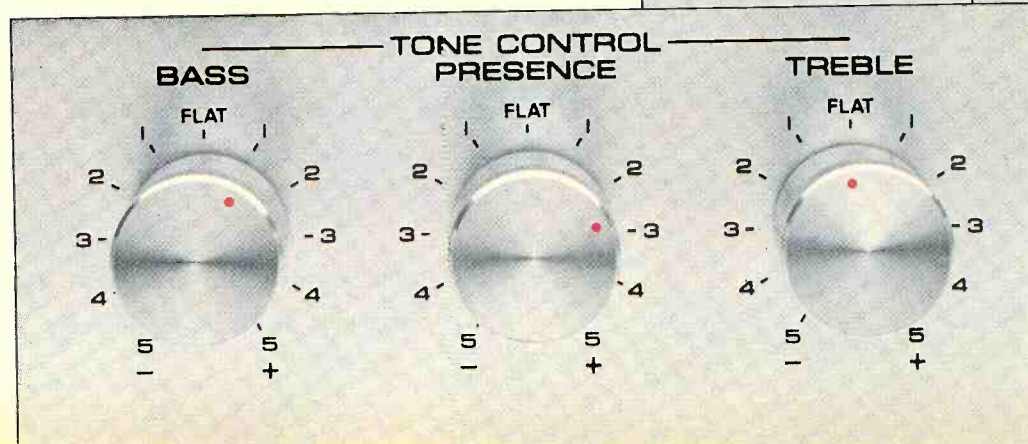
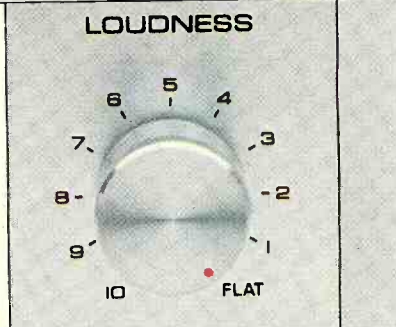
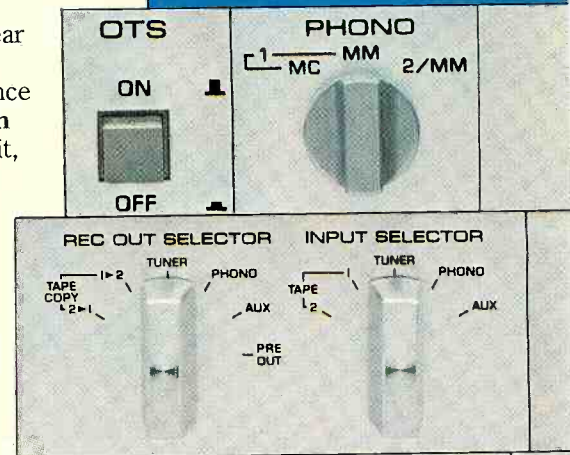
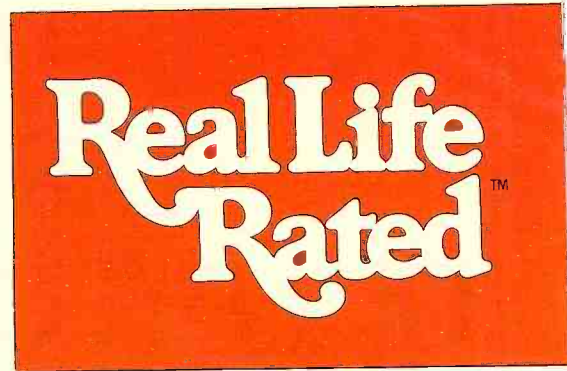
At full-rated output, the 100 watt-per-channel power amplifier reduces total harmonic and intermodulation distortion to a new absolute low—a mere .05% from 20Hz to 20kHz into 8 ohms.

The CR-2020's exceptionally fine preamplifier is largely responsible for an incredible -95dB signal-to-noise ratio, from moving magnet phono input to speaker output.

The CR-2020's tuner makes FM reception up to 18kHz possible for the first time with unique negative feedback and pilot signal cancellation circuits (patents pending).

What's more, Yamaha's patented use of special ceramic and LC filters (developed for our revolutionary CT-7000 tuner) provide the highest selectivity and lowest distortion available.

Built-In Moving Coil Head Amp. Today, more and more people are discovering the superior performance of the moving coil phono cartridge. While



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other receivers require an expensive preamplifier or step-up transformer, which can compromise sound quality, the CR-2020 already provides for it—the same solid-state device first developed for our superlative C-2 preamplifier.

Input/Rec Output/Pre Out Selectors. Here's extra convenience for tape recording enthusiasts. Record any source while listening to another. For example, copy a tape or disc at the same time you're enjoying an FM program. When you're in the mood to play recording engineer, you can use all the tone controls and filters to compensate for poor quality sound sources.

Fast Rise, Slow Decay Power Meters. The CR-2020's large, accurately calibrated power meters, with fast rise, slow decay characteristics, make accurate readings possible from 1/10th watt to 200 watt peaks without switching ranges.

Multi-Function Signal Quality Meter. When tuning, the right channel power meter automatically converts to a signal quality/strength meter. Needle oscillation indicates the degree of multipath present, while the meter calibrations indicate the strength of the signal. After tuning, the needle automatically reverts to power reading.

Optimum Tuning System. Yamaha takes the problem of inaccurate tuning out of human hands. After you manually locate the desired station, OTS automatically fine tunes it to the single point that gives maximum stereo separation and minimum distortion. A defeat switch is provided for special applications.

Built-In Equalizer. Think of the CR-2020's tone control circuitry as a small multi-band equalizer. Feedback bass and treble controls have selectable turnover frequencies. A midrange presence control adds more flexibility. Two-position low and high filters have 12dB/octave slopes. For the purist, a defeat switch removes the effect of the tone control circuitry entirely.

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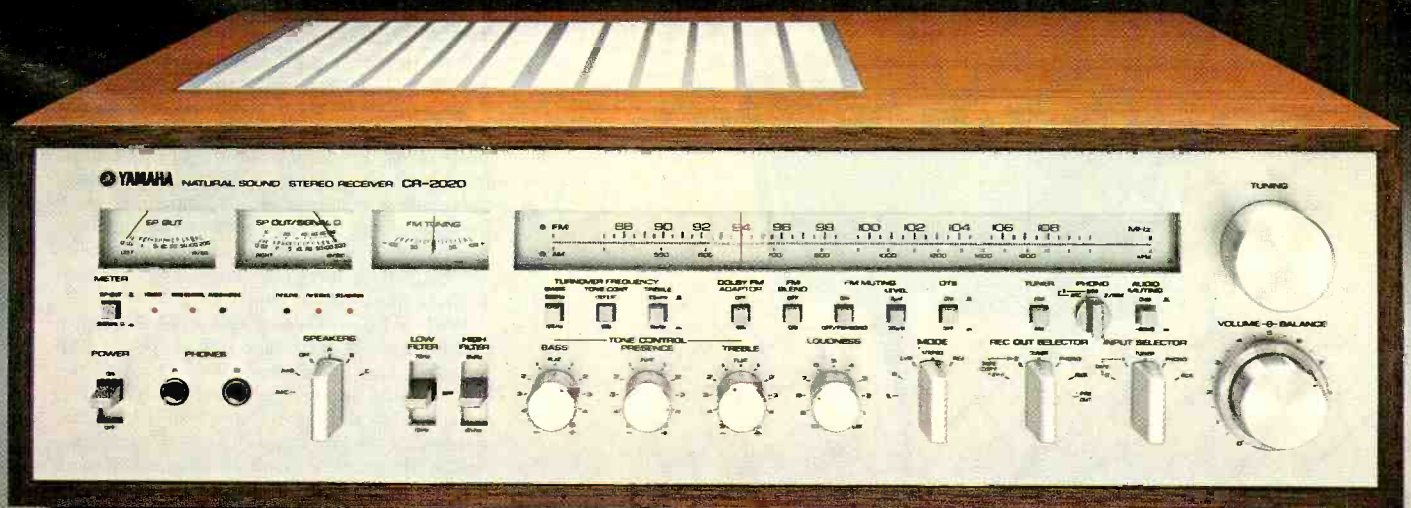
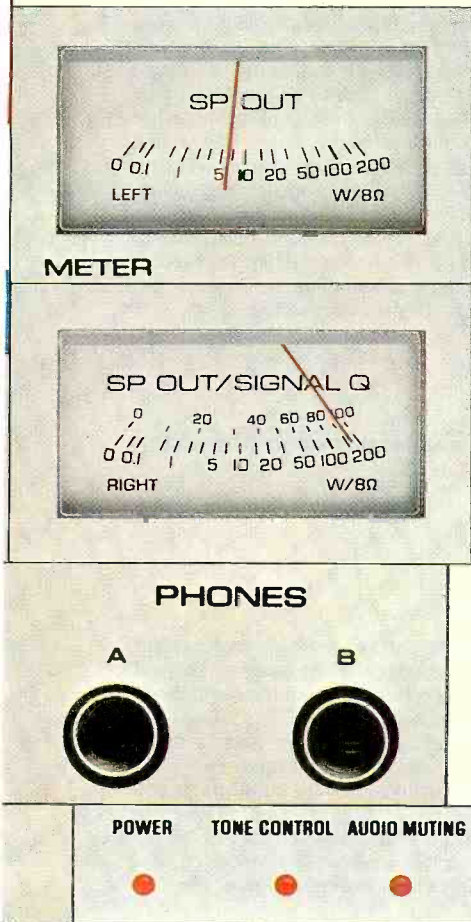
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were 77.6 and 71.4 dB. The phono preamplifier overloaded at an acceptable 100-mV input. The bass tone-control turnover frequency shifted from under 100 Hz to about 500 Hz as the control was moved from its center, while the treble-response curves were hinged at about 2,000 Hz. The maximum range of the bass control, in particular, was quite large; it could boost the output by some 23 dB in the 20- to 30-Hz region. Even at the moderate power output of the R336, this could be hazardous to some small speaker systems, and it is an invitation to distortion if the tone controls are not used with discretion.

The loudness-compensation circuit boosted both low and high frequencies at reduced volume-control settings (although this effect did not begin until the control was set at least 10 to 15 dB below its maximum). The filter had a 6-dB-per-octave slope; its -3-dB point is at 5,000 Hz. The RIAA phono equalization (extended) was accurate within ± 1 dB from 30 to 20,000 Hz. The circuit was totally immune to phono-cartridge-inductance interaction, which affected the response by less than 0.5 dB at any frequency.

The FM tuner section had an IHF sensitivity of 12 dBf or 2.2 microvolts (μV) in mono and 23 dBf ($8 \mu\text{V}$) in stereo. The latter was the automatic stereo-switching threshold as well as the muting threshold. The 50-dB quieting

sensitivity was 15.5 dBf ($3.3 \mu\text{V}$) with 0.8 per cent THD in mono; in stereo it was 38.5 dBf ($46 \mu\text{V}$) with 0.37 per cent THD. The distortion at a 65-dBf ($1,000 \mu\text{V}$) input was 0.23 per cent in mono and 0.14 per cent in stereo. The respective S/N readings were 73 and 70.5 dB. Stereo distortion at 65 dBf with out-of-phase (L - R) modulation was 0.32 per cent at 100 Hz, 0.16 per cent at 1,000 Hz, and 0.1 per cent at 6,000 Hz.

The frequency response of the FM tuner was perfectly flat from 30 Hz to beyond 10,000 Hz, dropping to -3.4 dB at 15,000 Hz. Stereo channel separation was about 45 dB in the 100- to 250-Hz range and decreased gradually to 30 dB at 7,000 Hz and 24 dB at 15,000 Hz. It was 36.5 dB at 30 Hz.

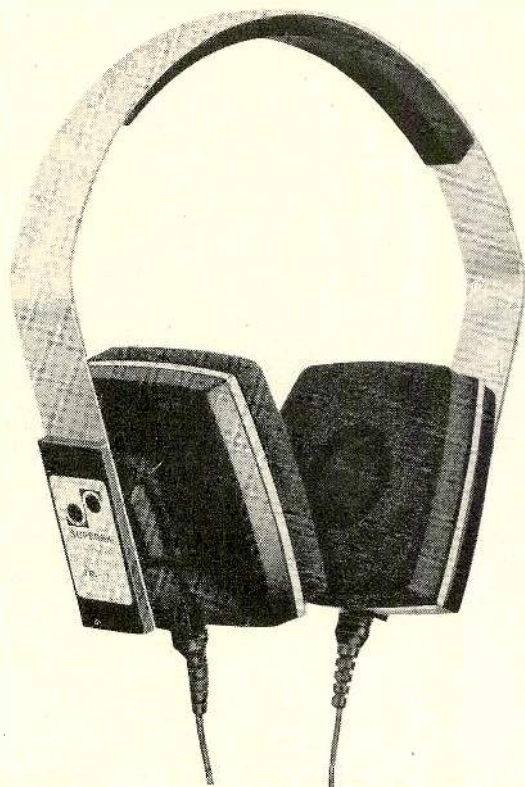
The FM capture ratio was 1.2 dB at a 45-dBf ($100 \mu\text{V}$) input, and an outstanding 1 dB at 65 dBf. The AM rejection at these respective signal levels was 67 and 59 dB. Image rejection was an excellent 97 dB. Alternate-channel selectivity was very good at 71 dB (it was symmetrical about the center frequency of the channel), while the adjacent-channel selectivity was 4.7 dB. The 19-kHz pilot-carrier leakage in the audio outputs was 76 dB below full modulation, and the tuner's hum level was -73 dB. The AM frequency response was very restricted, being down 6 dB at 60 and 1,700 Hz.

● **Comment.** In its basic performance as an FM tuner and stereo amplifier, the Scott R336 gave a very good account of itself. All the key tuner parameters were in the "good" to "excellent" category, with special mention going to the FM S/N and capture ratios, which were among the best we have measured. The audio amplifiers also have a very low noise level, and the distortion measurements speak for themselves. Although the AM tuner produced a rather constricted, nasal sound, we would not hold that against the R336. If AM quality were a significant factor, few stereo receivers could be considered even marginally acceptable for quality reproduction.

Like almost any product, the Scott R366 had a few minor idiosyncrasies. The bass tone control, as we have noted, had far too much range, especially in the boost condition. And the FM interstation muting—at least in our sample—operated with a definite "whump" sound, not loud enough to be annoying, perhaps, but still audible enough to distinguish it from some more refined systems. The styling of the Scott R336, although it somewhat resembles that of many Japanese-made receivers, has a European flavor as well. It is undeniably attractive and a good performer to boot; we think this bodes well for the success of the new Scott product line.

Circle 106 on reader service card

Superex TRL-77 Stereo Headphone



THE TRL-77 stereophone is the latest and least expensive model in the Superex headphone line. It is a lightweight "open-air"

headphone with adjustable earpieces mounted on a padded, one-piece stainless-steel headband. The foam-plastic ear cushions un-

snap from the earcups for easy replacement. Red and blue inserts in the cushions, as well as markings on the outside of the cups, identify the left and right channels.

The high-efficiency drivers employ Mylar diaphragms, and maximum input is 5 volts. The 7-foot lightweight cord connects to both earcups with a "Y" junction. There are molded strain reliefs at each earpiece and a molded plug. The net weight of the TRL-77, less cable, is about 10 ounces. Price: \$30.

● **Laboratory Measurements.** On a modified ANSI headphone test coupler, the Superex TRL-77 response was strong from about 45 to 300 Hz (it rose to a maximum around 100 Hz) and from 1,200 Hz to the upper limit of our measurements at about 16,000 Hz. The output dropped off smoothly above 100 Hz to a minimum at 900 Hz before returning to its normal level at about 1,200 Hz. This sort of irregularity is not uncommon in headphone-response measurements due to interaction between the headphone driver and the enclosed volume of the coupler. It does not necessarily correlate with the subjective sound.

With a 1.5-volt signal delivered through a 100-ohm series resistance (the proposed IHF standard test conditions), the output of the TRL-77 had an average sound-pressure level between 110 and 115 dB from 50 to 16,000 Hz, except for the mid-range dip mentioned previously. Harmonic distortion was measured at 100 and 1,000 Hz as a function of drive level. It was about 1 per cent at normal listening lev-

(Continued on page 42)

I can't taste numbers. I can taste Winston Lights.

I was looking for a cigarette with low tar. But the low tar cigarettes I tried had no taste. Now I smoke Winston Lights. I get the low tar I want. But more important, Winston Lights are all taste. Winston Lights are for real.

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els up to about 90 dB and rose to 5 per cent at the maximum allowable input of 5 volts (which corresponds to a very loud listening level of about 125 dB). The impedance of the TRL-77 phones was about 80 ohms over most of the audio range, approaching 150 ohms at 100 Hz and 20,000 Hz. The phones are suitable for use with any amplifier's or receiver's headphone jack.

● **Comment.** The Superex TRL-77 phones were very comfortable to wear. The stainless-steel band provided just the right pressure against the ears, with a minimum sensation of weight. The foam ear cushions, which of course did not materially attenuate sounds

from elsewhere in the room, were equally comfortable. Like other open-air phones, the TRL-77 radiated considerable external sound and could be heard clearly by others when played at any reasonable volume level.

Like many other phones, the TRL-77 had a better subjective sound quality than one might expect from its measured frequency response. The upper middle and high frequencies were smooth and strong. Listening to FM-tuner interstation hiss, one could hear the low-frequency coloration associated with the broad 100-Hz response peak in the form of a slight "roaring" quality. On program material the effect was of a slight heaviness particularly noticeable in male voices (it was analogous

to a loudspeaker's bass-resonance effect).

Overall, however, we would describe the sound of the TRL-77 phones as well-balanced and musical, and certainly as good as one could hope to get from a phone of this price. Although it obviously cannot match the quality of the better phones costing several times as much, it should not be confused with the low-price "bargain" phones sometimes offered for \$10 or \$15. The latter are certain to offend the sensibilities of any audiophile, while the Superex phones are both good to listen to and comfortable to wear. In short, the new Superex TRL-77s represent an extremely good dollar value.

Circle 107 on reader service card

Dynaco 300 Power Amplifier



THE Dynaco Stereo 300 basic power amplifier, also known as the QSA-300, can be easily converted into a four-channel amplifier. In its stereo mode the amplifier is rated to deliver 150 watts per channel to 8-ohm loads between 20 and 20,000 Hz with less

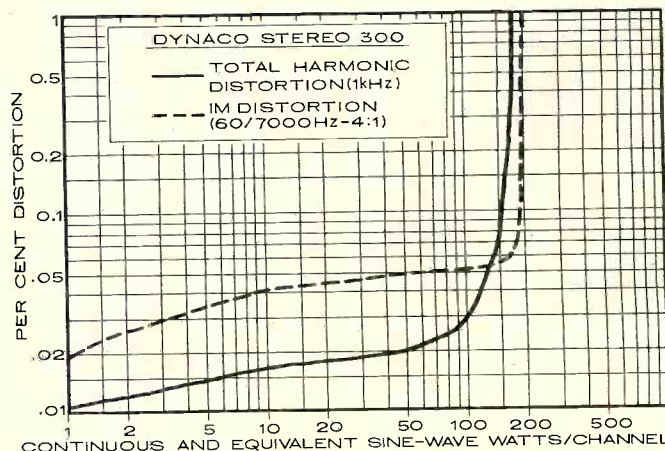
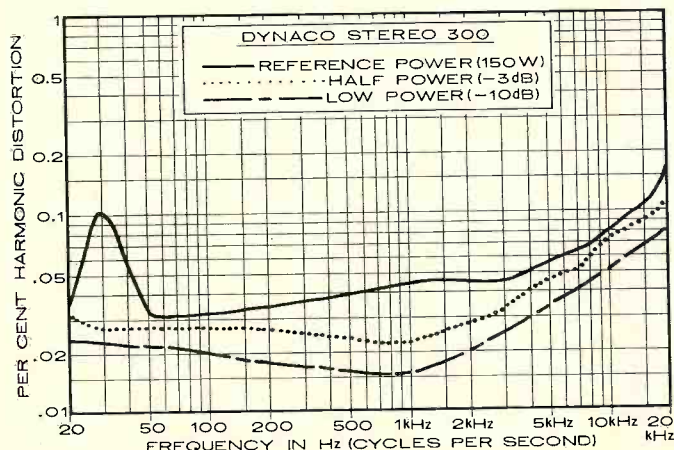
than 0.25 per cent total harmonic distortion. Also, by means of another internal wiring change, the Stereo 300 can be converted from the normal "high-impedance" output to a "low-impedance" mode suitable for driving loads of less than 8 ohms. With the low-

impedance wiring, the power rating is 150 watts into 4 ohms and 200 watts into 2 ohms (the latter condition can be sustained for up to five minutes without the need for external fan cooling).

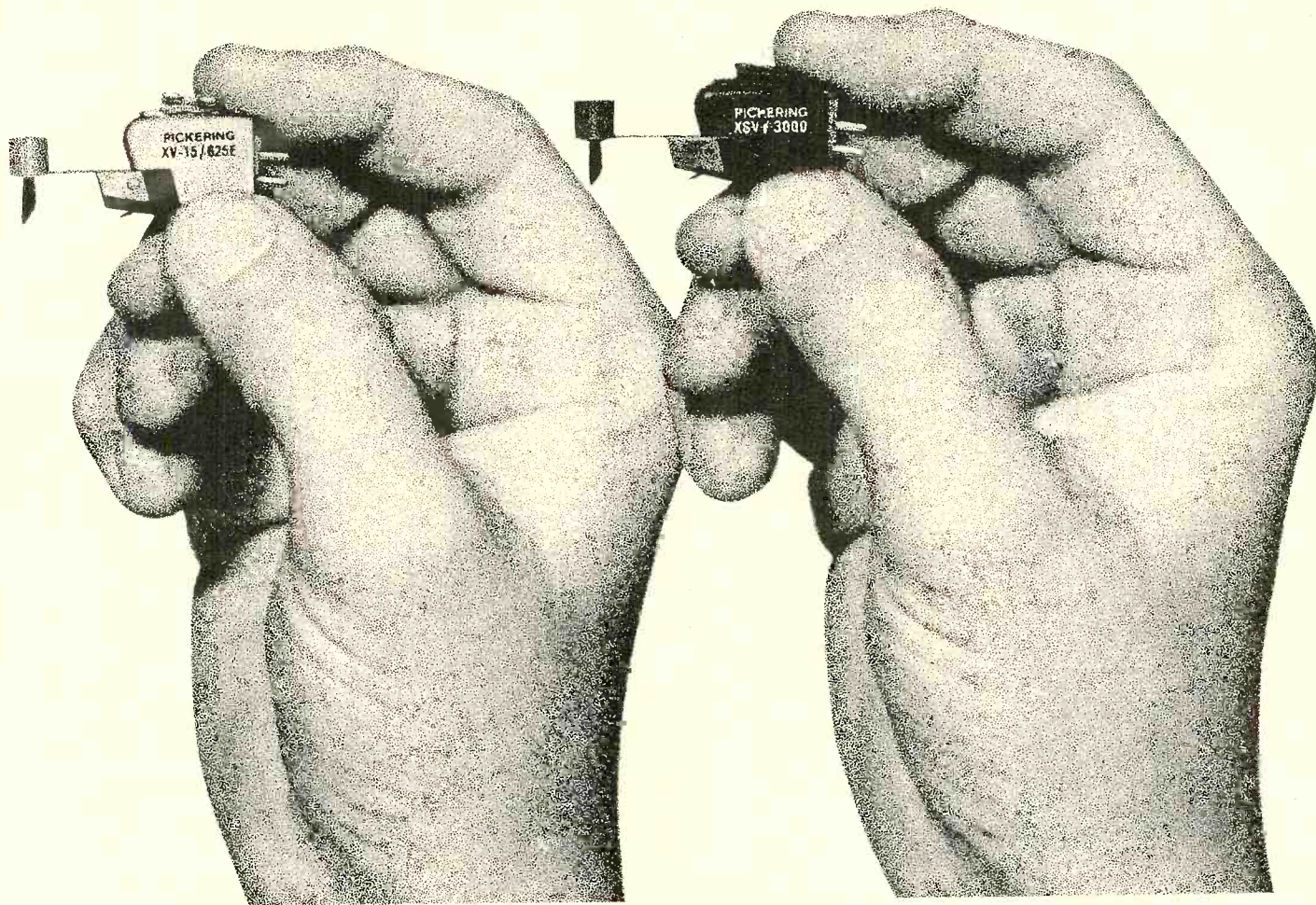
The Stereo 300 has completely separate power supplies for the two stereo channels. The electronic circuits are on two identical printed-circuit boards, and the power transistors are cooled by large heat-sink fins extending from the rear of the amplifier. The internal wiring change that converts the unit to four-channel operation provides 75 watts per channel to four 8-ohm loads or 100 watts per channel to four 4-ohm loads. This facility can be of advantage to some stereo listeners as well, since each channel can be used as part of a multi-amplifier system with an electronic crossover device ahead of the amplifiers.

Most of the front panel of the Stereo 300 is covered by black plastic. On a metal strip across the bottom of the panel are a rocker power switch and a blue pilot light. In the rear, below the heat sinks, are the phono-jack inputs and binding-post speaker outputs for each channel (there are four sets, but only two are used for stereo operation). Each speaker line is fused, and so is the power line.

(Continued on page 44)



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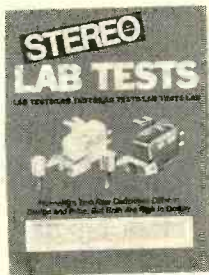
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The summary advice of **Stereo's Lab Test**, in an unusual dual product review, we think brilliantly states our position: "The XV-15/625E offers performance per dollar; the XSV/3000, the higher absolute performance level." That makes both of these cartridges **best buys!**



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Pickering's new XSV/3000 is a remarkable development. It possesses our trademarked Stereohedron Stylus Tip, designed to assure the least record wear and the longest stylus life achievable in these times with a stereo cartridge. Its frequency response is extraordinarily smooth and flat; its channel separation is exceptional; its transient response affords superb definition. It represents a whole new concept of excellence in stereo cartridges.

Read the whole evaluation report. Send for your free copy of the **Stereo "Lab Test"** reprint; write to Pickering & Co., Inc., 101 Sunnyside Blvd., Plainview, N.Y. 11803. Department SR

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Dynaco 300

(Continued from page 42)

In addition, each stereo output stage is protected by a thermal circuit breaker that removes power from the transistors if their temperature rises excessively.

The sides of the Stereo 300 are covered with walnut panels, giving the amplifier an attractive and finished appearance. Its 35,000-ohm input impedance is slightly lower than that of some amplifiers, but it can be driven by almost any good preamplifier (including the Dynaco PAT-4 and PAT-5). Because the Stereo 300 draws some 10 amperes from the 120-volt line at full power, it should not be plugged into the typical preamplifier switched a.c. outlet (the Dynaco PAT-5 is an exception to this rule).

The Dynaco Stereo 300 is 18 $\frac{3}{8}$ inches wide, 14 $\frac{3}{8}$ inches deep, and 7 $\frac{3}{8}$ inches high. Its net weight is 52 pounds. It is priced at \$489 in kit form and \$699 as the factory-wired Stereo 300/A. The QSA-300 is essentially identical except that assembly instructions are provided covering its wiring as a two- or four-channel amplifier. An optional accessory meter kit (MC-3, \$125) provides four panel-installed power meters for the QSA-300. The factory-wired version of the QSA-300, including the meters, is \$799.

● **Laboratory Measurements.** After the one-hour preconditioning period, the output transistors and heat sinks of the Stereo 300 were too hot to touch comfortably, but the thermal circuit breakers did not trip. The outputs clipped at 195 watts per channel into 8 ohms and 121 watts into 16 ohms, with both channels driven at 1,000 Hz. The amplifier was not tested into 4 ohms because it was wired in the high-impedance configuration.

The total harmonic distortion (THD) with a 1,000-Hz test signal was less than 0.02 per cent from 0.1 to 50 watts output, reaching 0.069 per cent at the rated 150 watts and 0.5 per cent at 180 watts. The intermodulation distortion (IM) was less than 0.05 per cent from a few milliwatts output to 50 watts, reaching 0.056 per cent at 150 watts and 0.135 per cent at 190 watts.

At the rated 150 watts output, the THD was between 0.03 and 0.05 per cent from 20 to several thousand hertz, rising smoothly to 0.16 per cent at 20,000 Hz (there was an apparent increase to 0.1 per cent at 30 Hz because power-supply ripple combined with the distortion products). At lower power levels the distortion followed a similar pattern, but it was somewhat lower (typically 0.02 to 0.03 per cent at most frequencies and power outputs).

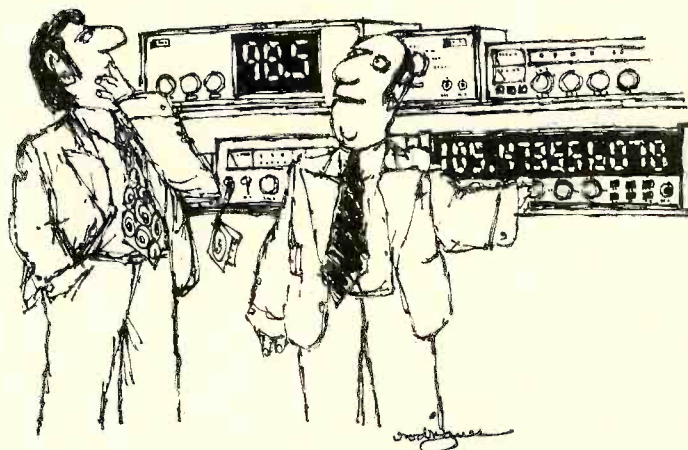
An input of 0.37 volt drove the Stereo 300 to a reference output of 10 watts, and its unweighted noise level was 80 dB below 10 watts. The amplifier rise time was 3.5 microseconds and the slew rate was 11 volts per microsecond, surpassing the manufacturer's specification of 7 volts per microsecond. The frequency response was down 1 dB at 5 Hz and 50 kHz, and it was down 3 dB at 100 kHz.

● **Comment.** The Dynaco Stereo 300 must inevitably be compared to their Stereo 400. It would appear that the new model is \$10 cheaper in kit form and is rated at 75 per cent of the power of the earlier model (which is still very much in the Dynaco product line). The Stereo 300 lacks the input level controls and filters of the Stereo 400 and its "Dyna-guard" power-limiter circuit. However, the two are about the same size and generally comparable in performance—except for their power ratings, which differ by an insignificant 1.25 dB.

Balanced against this is the greater versatility offered by the Stereo 300. It can be wired to drive very low-impedance loads safely or to drive quadraphonic speaker arrays. And for those who stack (and parallel) two identical speakers to reproduce each stereo channel (which can present an undesirably low impedance to the amplifier), the Stereo 300 in its four-channel configuration permits each speaker to be driven with its own 75-watt amplifier, thus retaining the full 300-watt total capability of the amplifier.

This is clearly a case where the buyer can make his choice on the basis of his actual requirements, since the two amplifiers are effectively identical in performance quality as well as price. Although the change of output configuration and impedance rating can be made to either a Stereo 300 or a QSA-300, it is probably easier to work with the QSA-300 if one plans to experiment with the various output options.

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Today a good amp and tuner can easily cost you \$350, \$500, \$700 or even more. But no matter how much a component costs, if it doesn't have waveform fidelity, the music that's put into it won't be the music that comes out. And that's an expensive mistake to make.

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With both tuners, the waveform being broadcast will be the waveform you'll receive, with virtually no distortion or cross modulation. Because both have flat group delay filters in the IF sections. So the time delay is constant for all frequencies.

There's also a Phase Locked Loop IC in the MPX sections. That's why, for example, with the top of our line, the ST-8600, you'll get stereo separation of 45dB

at 1kHz and 35dB at 10kHz. And a frequency response that's as flat as it is wide, 20Hz to 18kHz (-0.2dB - 0.8dB).

And with an 8-ganged tuning capacitor (5 for FM and 3 for AM) and a Technics developed 4-pole MOS FET, broadcasts with the ST-8600 will sound more like master tapes than FM.

You'll also find waveform fidelity in both amps. Including our most powerful one, the SU-8600. With 73 watts per channel, minimum RMS, both channels driven into 8 ohms from 20Hz to 20kHz, with no more than 0.08% total harmonic distortion.

And the SU-8600 will stay 73 watts regardless of the power-hungry transient bursts found in many musical waveforms. The reasons: Sixfold independent power supplies for the control voltage and power amplifiers. The results: Virtually no transient cross-talk distortion. And optimum waveform fidelity.

So before you make a \$350 mistake, or an even more expensive one, listen to our new amps and tuners. Your Technics dealer has them. Along with Technics waveform fidelity.

Cabinetry is simulated wood.

Technics by Panasonic



This Dual tonearm does more to optimize stylus-to-groove interaction than any other tonearm ever made.

Dual engineers have never forgotten their basic geometry, especially the principle that a straight line is the shortest distance between two points. Nor have they overlooked their advanced physics as applied to materials, balance, mass, bearing friction and resonance. The desired end result: fidelity of reproduction and extended record life.

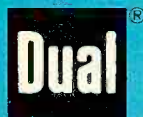
All Dual tonearms are straight-line tubular from pivot to tonearm head—for lowest effective mass and greatest rigidity. The horizontal and vertical pivots are centered within a true, four-point gyroscopic gimbal in which the masses are balanced at the intersection of both axes.

Every initial set-up adjustment has a special touch of precision. Stylus overhang is accurately adjustable for optimum horizontal tracking angle. Zero balance is vernier-adjustable. Stylus tracking force is applied at the vertical pivot and remains perpendicular to the record even if the turntable is tilted. Anti-skating is calibrated separately for all three stylus types and is self-compensating for disc diameter.

The 721 and 704 tonearms have additional refinements, not provided on any other tonearm. A vernier 8mm height adjustment parallels the tonearm to the record without spacers. Thus, accurate vertical tracking angle is assured, and the mass at the head minimized. Also, mechanical filters, in the counterbalances of the 721 and 704 tonearms, absorb energy in the resonance-frequency ranges of the tonearm/cartridge system and the chassis. This preserves tracking stability in the presence of external shock and vibration whether produced by acoustic feedback, record warps or dancing feet.

Dual's direct-drive system is also the most advanced today. It features an all-electronic, low speed, brushless DC motor with Hall-effect feedback control and a regulated power supply. Two overlapping coil layers, each with eight coreless bifilar-wound coils, achieve a gapless rotating magnetic field. This eliminates the vibration-inducing successive pulses of magnetic flux common to all other motor designs.

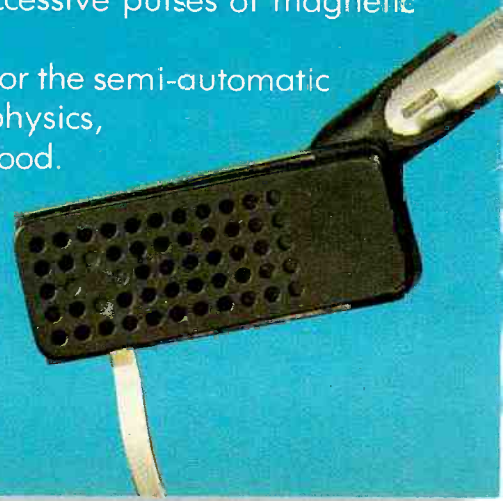
With either model—the fully automatic 721 or the semi-automatic 704—we think you'll agree that geometry and physics, as interpreted by Dual, have never sounded so good.



United Audio Products

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True, four-point gyroscopic gimbals centers and pivots the tonearm mass at intersection of horizontal and vertical axes. Tonearm is dynamically balanced in all planes. Each pivot is first hardened and then honed, a process which produces microscopically smooth surfaces. They are matched to ball-bearing races only 0.157 inch in diameter.

The unique counterbalance contains two mechanical anti-resonance filters. These are separately tuned to absorb energy in the resonance-frequency ranges of the tonearm/cartridge system and chassis to minimize acoustical feedback.

Stylus pressure is applied via a long coiled spring centered around the vertical pivot. Pressure is always maintained perpendicular to the record even if the turntable is not level.

Vertical Tonearm Control parallels tonearm to record at any point over an 8mm range. Result: accurate vertical tracking without the added mass of cartridge spacers.

Straight-line tubular tonearm provides maximum torsional rigidity and lowest effective mass. With the same effective tonearm length and tangential tracking error any other shape must either sacrifice rigidity or increase mass.

The Dual 721:

fully automatic, single-play. All-electronic, direct-drive motor. Features include: Vertical Tonearm Control; variable cue-control lift height and descent speed; 10% electronic pitch-control; illuminated strobe; dynamically-balanced 12" platter; cue-control viscous-damped in both directions; continuous-repeat. Price: less than \$400, with base and cover. **Dual 704:** similar, except semi-automatic. Ingenious mechanical sensor locates lead-in groove of 12" and 7" records; tonearm lifts and motor shuts off automatically at end of play. Less than \$310, with base and cover.

Rumble: (DIN B):
Dual 721, > 72dB;
Dual 704, > 70dB.

Wow and flutter:
< ±0.03%

Fully-automatic, single-play/multi-play Duals: 1225, less than \$140; 1226, less than \$170; 1228, less than \$200; 1249, less than \$280. Semi-automatic, single-play Duals: 502, less than \$160; 510, less than \$200.

CIRCLE NO. 50 ON READER SERVICE CARD

The Opera File

By William Livingstone



MACBETH

THE first official La Scala recording of a complete opera in a number of years is Deutsche Grammophon's recently issued album of Verdi's *Macbeth*. It was based on Giorgio Strehler's production, which was seen in this country last year when La Scala paid a Bicentennial visit to the Kennedy Center. Piero Cappuccilli and Shirley Verrett are the principal soloists, and the set is conducted by Claudio Abbado. Before the DG set was released in this country, Angel Records announced plans for their new *Macbeth*, conducted by the other young hot-shot Italian maestro, Riccardo Muti, with Sherrill Milnes in the title role and Fiorenza Cossotto as Lady Macbeth. Both sets have now been released (DG 2709 062 and Angel SCLX 3833, three discs each), and both are excellent.

Macbeth is a wonderful opera, the first of Verdi's great works. Premiered in 1847, when the composer was only thirty-four, it came between *Attila* and *I Masnadieri*, preceding *Rigoletto* (the first of the middle-period masterpieces) by four years. Verdi revised *Macbeth* for its first performance in Paris in 1865, but aside from adding the ballet music required in Paris, he made very few changes in this work of his youth. Interesting as his other early works are, *Macbeth* stands apart from them. Perhaps because of his fondness for Shakespeare, perhaps because he had more time than usual when he composed it, Verdi produced in *Macbeth* a very original opera of unusual psychological power and dramatic effectiveness.

In the new recordings both Abbado and Muti conduct *Macbeth* as though it were one of Verdi's mature Shakespearean masterpieces, and when it is performed with such conviction it comes closer to the level of *Otello* and *Falstaff* than you might think possible. For me, Abbado is the hero of the DG recording. The Scala chorus and orchestra are excellent, and he conducts them and the soloists with authority and drive, paying great attention to detail within an overall concept and producing a well integrated performance that is both beautiful and exciting. The recording has an unusual sense of spaciousness and movement and a wide dynamic range.

Cappuccilli, an elegant, tasteful baritone, is DG's *Macbeth*, and I have never heard him sing with greater dramatic involvement. In the smaller male roles, Nicolai Ghiurov is a son-

orous Banquo and Placido Domingo is an effective Macduff. My one reservation concerns Shirley Verrett's Lady Macbeth. She gives a somewhat affected, "actressy" performance, laying on generalized emotion rather than shaping phrases and coloring her voice to fit the requirements of the music and words. She is now a soprano, and there is a real soprano quality in her high notes, but I



Sherrill Milnes as Macbeth
Is this a dagger which I see before me?

think they have been bought at the expense of resonance in the middle and lower registers. She is not a *bad* Lady Macbeth, but I had expected something more from this very interesting singer.

Abbado conducts the customary 1865 version of the opera, including the very atmospheric ballet music, but (like Erich Leinsdorf in the old RCA set) he reinstates Macbeth's brief death-scene aria from 1847. I prefer this ending.

I enjoyed the DG recording so much that I didn't think Angel could match it. I was wrong. Muti has an excellent cast, chorus, and orchestra at his disposal, and he makes the most of it, delivering a total performance

that is musical, dramatic, and exciting. Like Abbado, Muti has had a great deal of symphonic experience, and this shows in the way he highlights orchestral detail, emphasizes dynamic contrasts, and yet controls the overall shape of the opera.

Verdi might have thought Fiorenza Cossotto's voice too pretty for Lady Macbeth, and she creates a character that is more human and attractive than is customary in this role. But she adds some interesting dramatic touches, too, such as whispering her reading of the letter. Ruggero Raimondi is a subtler Banquo than most, and José Carreras is a youthful, impassioned Macduff.

Never having seen Milnes as Macbeth in the theater, I was unprepared for his beautifully developed characterization of this role. Milnes is in that line of great American baritones that includes Lawrence Tibbett and Leonard Warren, and in the last couple of years he has taken giant steps in interpretation. Without distorting the music, he expresses great feeling in *Macbeth*, letting his big robust voice out for the climaxes, yet reining it in expertly for more inward moments, when he colors it precisely to convey the meaning of the text. Few Americans sing Italian as well as Milnes, and fewer still are so responsive to the words. His *Macbeth* is among his finest recorded performances.

Muti also directs the 1865 version of the opera including the ballet music, but an added attraction on the Angel set is the inclusion on side six of three "supplementary numbers," passages Verdi deleted or replaced in the 1865 version. One is Macbeth's death scene, but I'd never heard the other two, and they are valuable documents.

If you are in the market for a *Macbeth*, you can buy either of these with confidence; I like both so much that I cannot choose between them. Of the three available older sets, I do not recommend London OSA 1380 because I find Birgit Nilsson miscast as Lady Macbeth. I have a lingering fondness for London OSA 13102, which has flawed but interesting performances by Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau and Elena Suliotis and the best Macduff on records in Luciano Pavarotti. Leinsdorf's official Metropolitan recording (RCA VICS 6121) is treasurable for the larger-than-life portraits created by Leonard Warren and Leonie Rysanek, who sang the leading roles at the Met premiere of *Macbeth* in 1959.

That premiere had been promised to Maria Callas and was to be her first new production at the Met. I was an impassioned Callas fan in my youth and could hardly wait to see her as Lady Macbeth, a role that seemed ideal for her. But there was some disagreement between La Divina and Rudolf Bing, then the company's general manager, and Bing, like some kind of dunce, fired her. Leonie Rysanek substituted for Callas and was an unforgettable, hair-raising Lady Macbeth, but I and other Callas fans have not found it in our hearts to forgive Bing for depriving us of her interpretation. She never made a complete recording of *Macbeth*, but her album "Callas Sings Verdi Heroines" (Angel S-35763) contains the three principal soprano arias, including the best Sleepwalking Scene I've ever heard. No matter which recordings of *Macbeth* you own, this recital should also be in your collection. Joan Sutherland, Renata Scotto, and Montserrat Caballé have expressed some interest in *Macbeth*. I hope they've got that Callas record too.

The Sherwood Model HP 2000: It adds a new high to performance.

If power and versatility are the essential elements of high performance, the HP 2000 is unquestionably the high performance amplifier you've been waiting for.

This new top-of-the-line Sherwood amplifier puts you in full command of your sound system.

Consider the credentials:

Power: 120 watts per channel [minimum RMS at 8 ohms from 20-20,000 Hz] with no more than 0.08% Total Harmonic Distortion.

This rating is ensured by massive 16,000 μ f filter capacitors, backed by a zener regulated dual secondary power supply. The full complementary direct-coupled OCL output circuitry employs output transistors with the largest S.O.A. [safe operating area] of any consumer device currently available. Dual power meters [which feature selectable sensitivity; no final, or

-10dB] and LED power limiting indicators precisely monitor power output at all times. And rear-panel switching permits the independent operation of the pre-amp and power amplifier sections.

Precision: The film resistor step Loudness [Volume] control features 22 accurately calibrated positions [both channels matched within 0.5dB in all steps]. Eleven position Variable Loudness Contour, Bass, Treble and Midrange controls have 11 detented positions each. Resetting to your exact acoustic preferences is never a matter of guesswork.

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Operational Flexibility: The HP 2000 can accommodate two turntables [Phono inputs are selected with IC analog

switching, and feature a front panel level control], two tape decks [tape-to-tape duplication is accomplished with the Tape-1, Tape-2 Monitor circuits]; and a pair of professional caliber microphones [mixing level determined by a separate front panel control]. Additional source capabilities include a Tuner; two Auxiliary components; and a 4-Channel Adaptor [which also serves as a third Tape Monitor if needed].

All Sources and Functions are activated by front panel push switches. [“On” position is indicated by color change.]

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has been selected to meet or exceed posted specifications. The P.C. boards and inter-board ribbon cable connectors plug into a “mother-board,” for reliable operation.

The HP 2000 is the first in a new, highly sophisticated line of tuners and amplifiers from Sherwood Electronics.

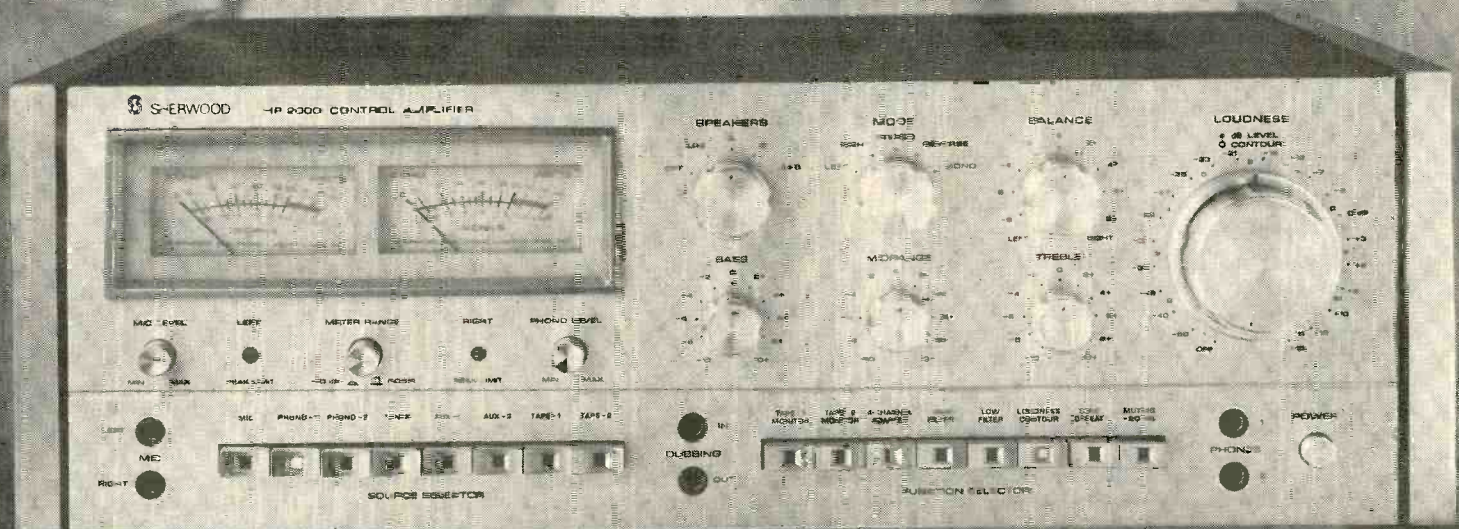
Other units in this new High Performance Series will be available soon.

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CIRCLE NO. 48 ON READER SERVICE CARD

The Pop Beat

By Paulette Weiss



PICKIN' AND SINGIN'

EACH month I get more prophecies on the future of pop music in my reader mail than Jeanne Dixon could churn out in a fruitful year. One in particular caught my attention the other day with its tone of quiet authority. It stated simply that "Country is the pop music of the future" and was signed Corn Dog, the Prophet. The city slicker in me would once have shrugged this off as easily as a rumor that Minnie Pearl has taken up fan dancing, except that the Country Music Association and Jerry Bradley of RCA Records had recently provided me with some impressive statistics that suggest Corn Dog may just have something.

Mr. Bradley, vice president and director of Nashville operations for RCA, had trekked up east to attend the CMA's quarterly board meeting held in New York City, and simultaneously to promote the c-&-w branch of RCA by meeting with the local press. Culled from our talk, a CMA press kit, and some extracurricular research of my own are the following revelations:

- Of the approximately two billion dollars grossed on records of all kinds in the U.S. last year, half came from the sale of country-music records.

- Average successful c-&-w album sales have leaped from 25,000 copies to a significant 200,000, and 1976 witnessed the first c-&-w album ever to earn the RIAA platinum certification of sales of one million copies or more ("The Outlaws," RCA APL1-1321, Waylon Jennings and friends).

- There is at least one country night club in every major U.S. city.

- Every major market area boasts at least one full-time country radio station.

Even with the grain of salt required to down this information (such artists as Tom Jones and Ringo Starr, not your average good ol' boys, are included to puff up some of the above figures), it's still bound to be startling news, I think, to a generation that has made rock its commercial king.

C-&-w has been a resounding commercial success for the last fifty years, of course. Briefly, the invention of radio spread the country gospel in the early Twenties, popularizing rural performers like Fiddlin' John Carson and giving birth to that Mother Church of the art, the Grand Ole Opry. Radio's appetite

for new performers competed with that of the infant recording industry, and the determined search for artists who could sell wax as well as airwaves turned up the Carter Family (no kin), Jimmie Rodgers, and others you've probably never heard of.

Since then, country music has absorbed various influences and produced numerous offshoots. The perhaps less accessible traditional forms—"hillbilly," bluegrass, Western swing, and Cajun—now exist side by side



Waylon goes platinum

with newer styles that have gained a wide audience—the polished, orchestrated "Nashville Sound," "progressive" or "outlaw" country, and crossover country-rock. Country stars like Johnny Cash, Glen Campbell, Kris Kristofferson, and Roy Clark are also true pop stars, making movies and/or TV appearances regularly. Maybelle Carter and Crystal Gayle sing commercial jingles on radio. Movie soundtracks abound with down-home music, from Eric Weissberg's dueling banjos in *Deliverance* to the *Foggy Mountain Breakdown* theme that ran through *Bonnie and Clyde*, not to mention the imitative if not downright parodistic whole score of Robert Altman's *Nashville*.

On the flip side, pop/rock stars have been producing country-flavor hits that pin them firmly to the Nashville charts. The designation of Olivia Newton-John as the Country Music Association's best female vocalist of 1974 shook the c-&-w old guard to its bluegrass roots; after all, the lady isn't even a native American, for Pete's sake. (Even Jerry Bradley thought her sound too MOR at the time. He was prepared with his own country artist and arrangements for a cover version of *Let Me Be There* just in case Olivia flopped with it in Nashville. She didn't.) And don't forget that John Denver (CMA's Entertainer of the Year in 1975) exploded onto the c-&-w charts with *Take Me Home, Country Roads* before it ever hit the pop market, or that Linda Ronstadt (1976 Grammy award winner as best female pop singer) can have the keys to Nashville back any time she wants them.

POP music's creative exhaustion in the late Sixties sent it tottering to Dr. Feelgood for pep injections. The result was the temporary energy of fusion—jazz-rock, Latin-rock, country-rock. In the early Seventies, when young people started to act out fantasies of the simple life, leaving the polluted cities for little farms where they raised rutabagas and bounced babies, they picked up on the music appropriate to the surroundings. Bob Dylan's 1969 "Nashville Skyline" (Columbia KCS-9825) and the Byrds' 1968 "Sweetheart of the Rodeo" (Columbia CS 9670) were classic precursors of the trend that produced such country-rock groups as Poco, Pure Prairie League, the Flying Burrito Brothers, the Nititty Gritty Dirt Band, New Riders of the Purple Sage, and the Eagles. Hard-core rock fans who sneer at c-&-w can't see the irony of their stand. Rock-and-roll is country's kissin' kin, the electrically christened offspring of the union between c-&-w and rhythm-and-blues. Rock and country parted company in the early Sixties, but folks like Elvis Presley, Chuck Berry, and the Everly Brothers got a lot of mileage out of the relationship before the split.

THE reality of c-&-w's upsurge in the U.S. was impressed upon me by tremors in my home town—cosmopolitan Manhattan, the bastion of punk rock. O'Lunney's, formerly an Irish bar and for four years now a c-&-w club, has been packed and rollicking nightly since the pickers and singers moved in. Worldly New Yorkers dance with abandon—in the aisles, on table-tops if they must—to good-time music played by little-known groups. The Lone Star Cafe, a newer club that rollicks on a more sedate level, features such name performers as James Talley and Billy Swan, plus plans for live broadcasts of shows on WHN AM. The popularity of this all-country radio station is another sign of the music's ascendancy: the audience is spread throughout New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut, it is large (1.5 million per week), and it is growing, though country-music purists tend to pooh-pooh its playlist.

The third and last signal I have caught is the emergence on city newsstands of *Country Style*, a tabloid magazine with the physical appearance of *Rolling Stone* (four-color on newsprint) and articles dealing solely with country music and its performers. It has been rumored that you can sell anything in New York if you know how (not true), but if this one goes, then Corn Dog, you rascal, you are a prophet!

JVC builds in what other receivers leave out. A graphic equalizer.



The only way you can equal the realistic sound capability of JVC's modestly priced S300 stereo receiver, is by adding an expensive, but highly versatile graphic equalizer, to another receiver.

For the price of a conventional receiver in its price range, the S300 has built-in JVC's exclusive graphic equalizer system. With five zone controls to cover the entire musical range. While most high priced receivers offer bass and treble controls, and some include a third for midrange, none approach the precision and flexibility of the SEA graphic equalizer system developed and patented by JVC.

371,293 ways to hear better sound.

By adjusting the five detent tone controls covering the frequency range at 40Hz, 250Hz, 1,000Hz, 5,000Hz and 15,000Hz, you can create 371,293 different sounds. A feat never before achieved (with a stereo receiver) outside a professional recording studio. But, then, the S300 is a JVC professional.

Get better performance from your components and listening room.

Why do you need such tremendous variations in tone? Quite simply, they help you to overcome the shortcomings of the acoustics in your listening room; they also can help you to compensate for the deficiencies in old or poor recordings.

Finally, they can do wonders for the frequency response of your speakers, and where you place them.

SEA is really quite easy to use. For example, the 40Hz switch reduces record hum or rumble, and it can add greater clarity to the ultra low bass of an organ.

The problem of booming speakers is simply handled with the 250Hz switch. And in the important midranges, the 1,000Hz control adds new dimension to the vocals of your favorite rock performers, while the 5,000Hz switch brings out the best in Jascha Heifetz. You can even reduce tape hiss and diminish the harsh sound of a phono cartridge at high frequencies, with the 15,000Hz control.

SEA adjusts the sound of your system to the size of your room.

You see, small rooms tend to emphasize high frequencies, while large ones accentuate the lows. But the ingenious SEA allows you to compensate for room size and furnishings—so your system can perform the way it was meant to, wherever you are.

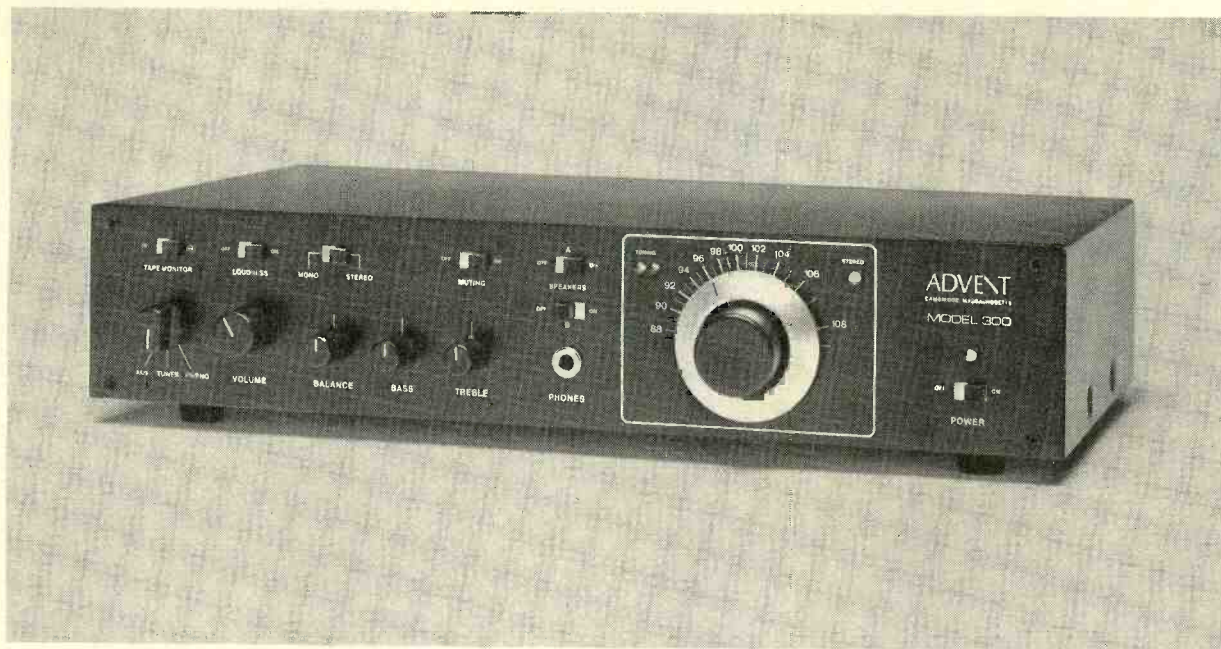
While most manufacturers reserve

unique features for their top of the line model, JVC has included SEA in three of its receivers. The S300, the S400, and, of course, the top professional—the S600.

When you hear these receivers at your JVC dealer (call toll-free 800-221-7502 for his name), think of them as two components in one. In fact, it's like having all the benefits of a graphic equalizer... without buying one.

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JVC



Some Very Clear Statements From Reviews of the Advent Model 300 Stereo Receiver.

*From Julian Hirsch's report in
Stereo Review:*

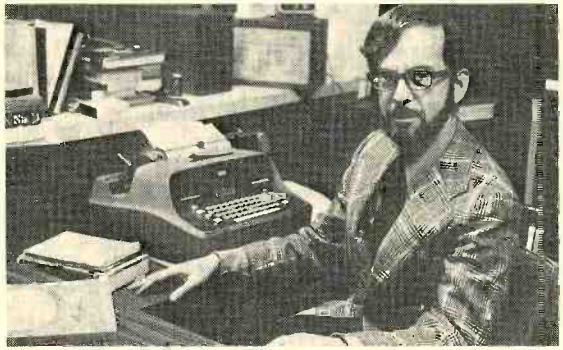
"We have always admired value engineering of the sort associated with products from Advent and a few other companies, in which a maximum of consumer-benefiting performance and features are provided for a minimum cost. It is relatively easy to make a 'super' product if price is no obstacle, but it requires some ingenuity to achieve a high level of performance at relatively

low cost. This is exactly what Advent has done in the Model 300."

"The Advent's *actual* sensitivity (ability to receive weak stations without excessive noise and distortion) is as high as will ever be needed by the majority of users. The phono preamplifier is designed to be immune to interaction with phono-cartridge inductance, which affects the high-frequency response of many preamplifiers, and to have an effectively negligible noise level (inaudible under conditions of practical use)."

Going on Record

By James
Goodfriend



ABC CLASSICS

THE most visible result in the United States of the current internationalizing of classical record marketing is the appearance here of many new, or seemingly new, record labels. ABC's new ABC Classics series is a case in point, a particularly interesting one visually, for though the jackets are designed and printed here, they have the typical appearance of European issues, with titles, notes, and texts, where applicable, in three languages. And they are quite as handsome as almost any of the European records they are meant to emulate. The price of a record in the ABC Classics line, though, is still \$6.98, which is a dollar or two cheaper than most imports.

Although a variety of sources will be utilized for the recorded material to appear on ABC, the first release consists entirely of recordings produced by the Seon label of Germany. Seon, whose records have not been issued or widely imported here before, is the company run by Wolf Erichson, one of Europe's finest record producers, who was earlier responsible for most of the records in Telefunken's Das Alte Werk series as well as certain records released by BASF. Seon is his own company.

Those familiar with Erichson's previous work will know what to expect here: highly capable, musicianly performers; a repertoire that focuses on the span from 1500 to 1800; early instruments or reproductions thereof; scrupulous adherence to musicological correctness; excellent, well-balanced recording without gimmicks of any sort. All these characteristics are evident in the ABC series, and ABC has added to them not only the packaging previously discussed, but first-rate pressings that are similarly comparable to their European models.

The first releases include a disc of Christmas music of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries (ABCL-67002); a two-disc set of choral music of Thomas Stoltzer (67003/2), an early sixteenth-century composer previously unrepresented in Schwann; John Blow's *Ode on the Death of Mr. Henry Purcell* plus songs by Blow (67004); a three-disc set of the complete sonatas for a wind instrument and continuo of Handel (67005/3); a volume of Baroque lute music (67006); J. S. Bach's *Musical Offering* (67007); a recital by Gustav Leonhardt on early organs of Switzerland and other Alpine lo-

cations (67008); harpsichord pieces by the eighteenth-century composer Antoine Forqueray (67009), another new name in the catalog; Mozart's first two violin concertos plus the concerto-style movements from his serenades (67010/2); Haydn's String Quartets, Op. 20, Nos. 2 and 4 (67011); and a sampler record of individual tracks selected from the above (67001).

On its own terms, the musical level of the series is incredibly high, which is not to say that all the records will appeal equally to everyone. For me, the outstanding discs are



JOHN BLOW (1649-1708)
A great and striking musical work

those devoted to music by Blow, Forqueray, and Haydn, with the lute recital and the organ recital close behind, for it is there that I find the best blend of interesting repertoire and outstanding performance, and it is there that I get the peculiar feeling of "rightness" that results when the musicological approach and the sound of old instruments mesh with my own conception of what the music is all about.

In the case of the Haydn quartets, the matter is perfectly straightforward. The music is magnificent, the playing of the Esterházy Quartet warm and understanding, and the gut-string instruments produce sounds so complementary to the style that one wonders only

why all performances of Haydn quartets do not sound that way. With the Forqueray disc it is less the rightness of sound than the unfamiliarity and interest of the music itself. Those who know the composer at all know him as a composer for the viola da gamba. These keyboard works, in fact, are arrangements (presumably by Forqueray himself and his keyboard-playing wife) of gamba pieces, but they are no less effective for that. Listeners musically sophisticated enough to while away hours with the *clavecin* music of Couperin and Rameau will find a further extension of that style here in Leonhardt's performance—with perhaps a somewhat earthier compositional personality behind it.

John Blow's elegy for his student and friend Henry Purcell is one of the great and striking musical works of the English Restoration. Its scoring for two counter-tenors, two recorders, and continuo has elicited outstanding recorded performances in the past, but this one is at least as good as the best of those. René Jacobs and James Bowman sing with awesome skill and great intensity of feeling, and the varied vocal works on side two call up equally fine renditions from all the performers. No one interested in Baroque music should be without this work and this record.

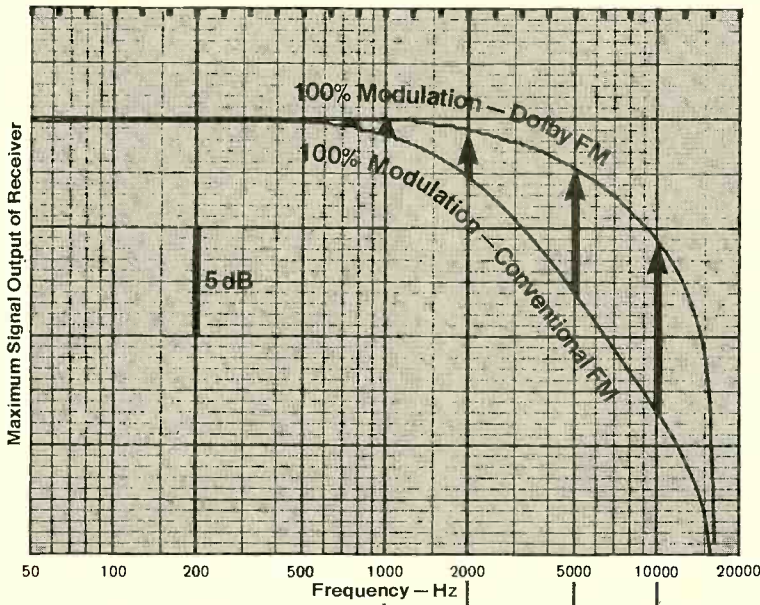
The "Alpine" organ recital is no longer a new idea—an assortment of Renaissance and Baroque music played on an assortment of Renaissance and Baroque organs—but the playing is very fine and the instruments do make some lovely sounds. The lute recital offers works by Sylvius Leopold Weiss, David Kellner, and J. S. Bach (Prelude, Fugue, and Allegro, BWV 998) played by Eugen M. Dombois, and while I cannot say that I have heard of the gentleman before, he is obviously one of the ranking lutenists in the world today. Truly, marvelous playing.

ABOUT most of the other records, I confess I have a few personal reservations. I simply cannot get used to the sound of Jaap Schröder's Baroque violin playing in the Mozart concertos. There may be ample musicological justification for the instrument and the vibratoless style, but it does not seem to bring out the best in the music and that to me is a sign that *something* is wrong. Similarly, the Leonhardt-led performance of Bach's *Musical Offering* seems to offer me less musically than some other performances (Rosen's of the two *ricercari*, for example). I am not aurally convinced that his resolutions of the problems are the final ones. Of the Thomas Stoltzer records, I am afraid I simply find the music rather thick and provincial and not up to that of his great Netherlandish contemporaries; others may feel differently, however.

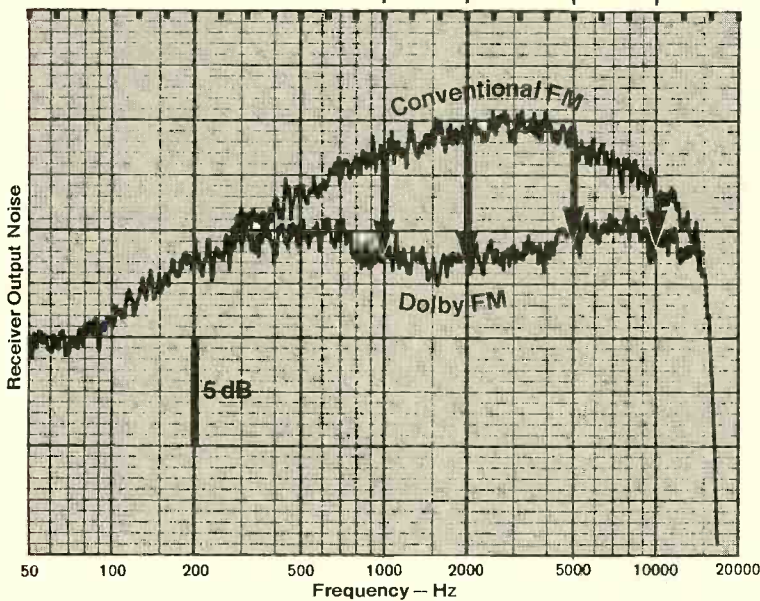
The Handel sonatas, of course, are anything but dull. My sole objection to the set (apart from overly specialized and really rather inadequate notes) concerns some occasional difficulties of intonation that flute and recorder virtuoso Frans Brüggen incredibly seems to have with his period instruments. They do not, however, constitute enough of a flaw to spoil an otherwise beautifully played and produced set, and certainly the oboist is consistently fine.

In all, then, ABC Classics has brought us a considerable musical treasure here, and I must emphasize again the real quality—in research, performance, recording, pressing, and production—that is characteristic of the series. Despite individual tastes or specific objections, this is work on the highest level.

Here's How Dolby FM Gives You: **More Signal** ↑ **Less Noise** ↓



Increased Dynamic Range Capability +5 dB +8 dB +10 dB +10 dB



These curves show the improvement in maximum high-frequency output level with Dolby FM. Contemporary wide-range program material will not "fit" under the 100% modulation limit of the 75 microsecond conventional FM curve; the signal must be high-frequency limited (or reduced in overall level) enough to do so. Such program material *will*, however, fit under the 25 microsecond Dolby FM curve. (Note that these curves are maximum output curves; they are not frequency response curves in the normal sense. At low modulation levels both curves would be flat to 15 kHz.)

All curves were made on a typical new stereo receiver with full Dolby FM decoding capability. The receiver was driven from the rf output of a Sound Technology 1000A FM signal generator, operating at a frequency of 97 MHz. The rf level was set at 100 μ V at the 300 ohm antenna input terminals of the receiver.

For the maximum high-frequency output curves, the output of a B & K 1024 audio sweep oscillator was fed into the FM generator at a level giving 100% FM modulation at all frequencies (± 75 kHz deviation, including 19 kHz multiplex pilot). One stereo channel of the receiver (tape output) was fed directly into a B & K 2305 chart recorder. The Dolby FM/conventional FM switch on the receiver was then operated to give the two recordings shown.

For the noise level curves, the audio input to the FM generator was switched off. The receiver output was fed to a Radiometer FRA 3 wave analyzer which was coupled to the chart recorder and calibrated to give a flat chart recording with pink noise input. The Dolby FM/conventional FM switch on the receiver was then operated to produce the two noise spectrum recordings shown.

In all of the chart recordings note that there is a sharp drop in response above 15 kHz. This is normal for all FM receivers and is caused by the filters necessary for rejection of the 19 kHz and 38 kHz multiplex components.

These chart recordings show the noise reduction effect of Dolby FM. The top curve is the noise spectrum of conventional 75 microsecond FM. The bottom curve shows the reduced noise level of Dolby FM.

These chart recordings show how the Dolby FM technique increases the available high frequency dynamic range of FM broadcasting.

The Dolby FM process works on both extremes of the dynamic range. The maximum permissible level of high frequency signals is increased, while low

level noise is reduced. The 10 dB action of the Dolby B system is split in an optimum way between these two equally important areas of operation. The net result is an FM system which can pass signals from transmitter input to receiver output with high integrity.

To find out more about this new development, please write to us for further

details. The following information is available:

1. Explanations and technical details on Dolby FM.
2. A list of stations with Dolby FM encoder units (160 stations).
3. A list of receivers with built-in Dolby FM circuits (45 models).

Dolby

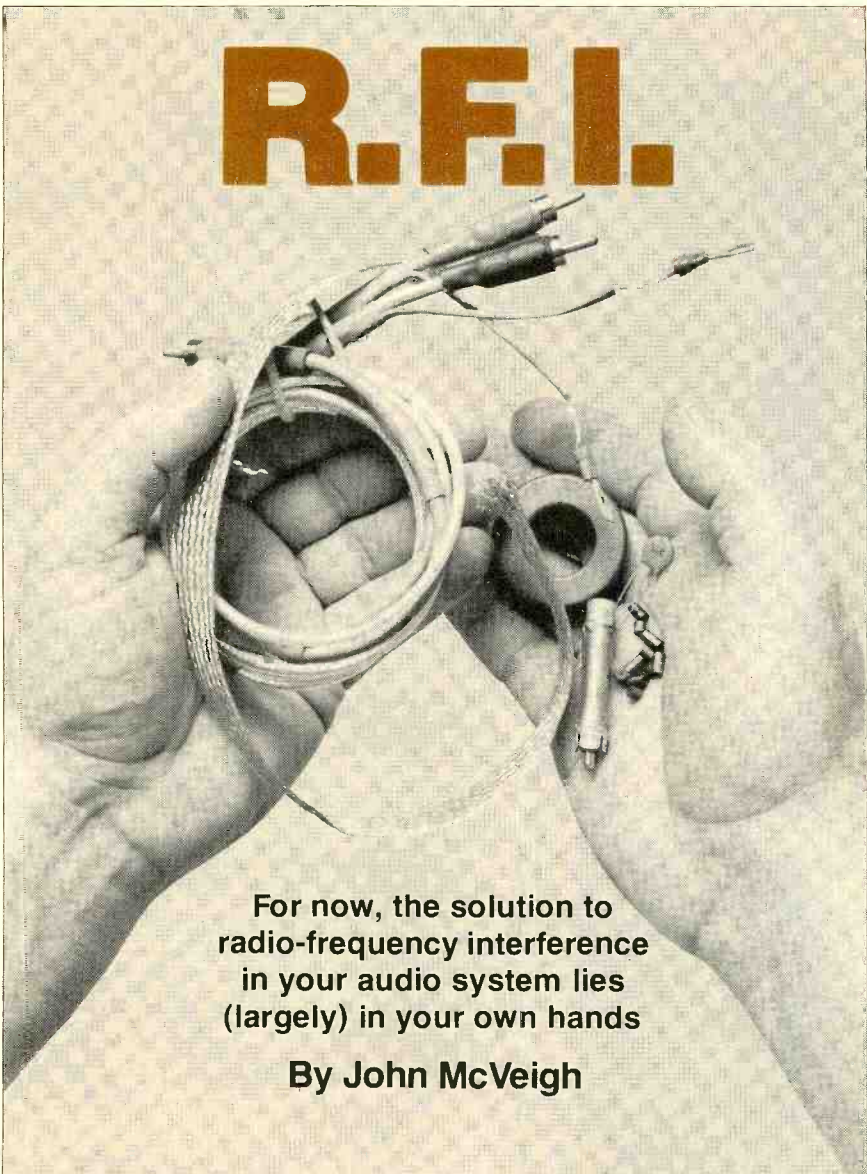
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R.F.I.



For now, the solution to radio-frequency interference in your audio system lies (largely) in your own hands

By John McVeigh

Over one hundred thousand people complained to the Federal Communications Commission last year about radio-frequency interference coming through their stereo systems, church public-address systems, intercoms, TV's, electric organs, juke boxes, tape recorders, hearing aids, and only the FCC knows what else. This is a dramatic increase over the figures for such interference recorded the last time STEREO REVIEW surveyed the problem for its readers (November 1972), and the reason for it is clear: the tremendous growth in the use of citizens band (CB) radio equipment over the past few years.

For those afflicted with this far-from-laughable electronic disorder, the big questions are two: What (who) causes it, and how can I stop it? Radio-frequency interference occurs when, for one reason or another, two electronic devices cannot function compatibly in the same environment. One or both will be adversely affected by electromagnetic radiation from the other. Power tools, fluorescent lights, thermostats, light dimmers, automotive ignition systems, radar, television, and radio transmitters (among many other things) all radiate electromagnetic energy. Television receivers, FM tuners, musical-instrument amplifiers, P.A. systems, tape decks, and audio preamps and amplifiers can all be influenced by this radiated energy, but our concern will be the RFI problems associated with audio systems.

A TYPICAL RFI incident starts in one of two ways. First, someone in your neighborhood is bitten by the "radio bug," gets a CB or ham license and some equipment, puts up an impressive-looking antenna, and starts transmitting. As luck has it, you immediately experience interference in your audio system, with the radio operator's voice being heard on top of whatever program source (tape, disc, or tuner) you are listening to—or perhaps only through your phono or tape inputs. Another RFI incident might start like this: you've lived down the block from a ham or CB'er for several years, and never had any interference problems. But now, after updating your component system with a new preamp, you're experiencing severe RFI. In either case, your natural reaction is annoyance or anger toward the ham or CB'er who is responsible for the interference. But is he responsible? Granted that it is his broadcast—it is also your equipment that is receiving it. Who should take steps to eliminate the interference?

The source of the interference might just as well be not a radio ham or a CB'er but a commercial AM, FM, or TV broadcaster. It might even be some doctor's diathermy machine. But the majority of cases reported to the FCC involve local radio amateurs or citizens-band operators and, because of the sheer numbers involved, odds are that you are more likely to experience RFI from one of them. The remedies that will be described here, however, are applicable to *any* RFI problem—TV "sync buzz" interference from commercial broadcasters and all the irritatingly noisy rest.

Amateurs and CB'ers usually broadcast signals that are *amplitude* modulated. As with conventional AM radios, this means that the operator's voice varies the strength of the radio-frequency *carrier* signal. To recover the original information (the voice) a *detection process* is necessary. This means converting the modulated radio-frequency signal back into an audio signal. But the signal transmitted by the radio station—any radio station—is composed *solely* of radio-frequency energy well beyond the highest frequencies to which any audio component is designed to respond. Even a "wide-band" power amplifier's frequency response extends only to 100 or 200 kHz at most. In contrast, the *lowest* frequencies allocated for amateur radio use (1,800 to 2,000 kHz) are far above the upper limits of the amplifier's fre-

quency response. And CB frequencies at 27,000 kHz (27 MHz) are even further beyond the audio band.

Given ideal circumstances, therefore, radio-frequency and audio-frequency (roughly 20 to 20,000 Hz) equipment should be able to operate side by side without interference. But obviously these circumstances don't exist and there is a serious RFI problem in this country. What goes wrong is that the audio system for some reason detects the r.f. signal (which is far outside its bandwidth) and converts its amplitude modulations into an audio signal just as an ordinary AM radio would. There are several points in an audio system at which such detection of an r.f. signal can take place, and once the r.f. signal has been detected (turned into audio), it is then amplified by all stages and components following its detection point and is finally heard at the speakers.

BUT audio components are not supposed to respond to r.f. signals. Why, then, do they do it? One reason lies in economics. In the fiercely competitive market of consumer electronics, most manufacturers try to offer their products at the lowest possible prices. This means that they will include (at least at the lower-cost end of a product line) as little "extraneous" material as possible. But what is extraneous, and what is essential? Many manufacturers define extraneous to mean anything that is not necessary to the meeting of published specifications or to operation in a "normal" environment. Those special circuits, shieldings, and extra parts that might allow an audio component to function in the presence of strong r.f. fields are deemed extraneous in most designs, and in most installations they probably are. If only, say, 5 per cent of all the audio components sold end up in locations where RFI is a problem, then why should 95 per cent of the buyers pay extra for shielding and filtering they do not need? Further, many engineers involved with the problem consider each RFI situation to be more or less unique in terms of the severity of the interference, the frequency and strength of the r.f. source, the characteristics of the audio equipment picking it up, and which specific "cures" may be required.

The majority of RFI cases now involve CB'ers rather than hams. Although hams generally use more powerful transmitters and thus generate stronger r.f. fields, they are fewer and further between. Simply because of

their larger numbers, CB'ers are more likely to be causing RFI in audio components than radio amateurs are. Also, not every CB'er observes the 4-watt power limitation, and the use of illegal, high-power equipment can certainly enhance the probability of RFI.

Both radio amateurs and CB'ers are supposed to obey FCC regulations dealing with the purity of the signals they radiate, their power output, and other matters. Although different rules are applicable to each type of transmission, they essentially hold the operator responsible for insuring that spurious signals that could cause interference to radio receivers of other services are suppressed. An example of these spurious signals are harmonics that appear at multiples of the operating frequency. These harmonics can cause TV and FM interference, but they are usually too weak to pose a problem to audio components. Rather, it is the strong r.f. signal at the operating frequency, whether or not harmonics are radiated, that gets into audio systems. When a ham or CB operator is radiating a legal signal under the authority of a license issued to him by the FCC, his activities are not only protected by federal law; they are encouraged as well. Such operations are deemed to be "in the public interest" for a variety of reasons. However, it can also be said that the audiophile has a right (he has no specified "legal"

Shown in the facing-page photo are Verion cables, copper braid for cable shielding or grounding, an in-line low-pass input filter, capacitors, and ferrite forms.

right) to use his equipment unhindered in the privacy of his own home.

The Federal government has (so far) adopted the position that the only available solution to this conflict of interests is to apply the remedies—such as are available—at the audio-equipment end. It therefore becomes the procedural and financial responsibility of the audiophile—not the ham or CB'er—to take the necessary steps to eliminate the interference. Fair or unfair, that is the current legal situation.

However, if the radio transmitter is being operated *illegally*, you can and should report the matter to the nearest field office of the FCC. Although the Commission does not have a large field staff, it will usually investigate a situation if several complaints are received.

And if a CB'er is not licensed, does not identify himself with call letters (nicknames or "handles" do *not* count), talks continuously with another station for more than five minutes, uses obscene language or (worse) an illegal amount of power, the Commission can force him off the air, impose fines, and/or even imprison him. And you should note that this station is being forced off the air not because you experience RFI from its transmissions, but because it violates FCC operating rules!

With that station off the air, your RFI problems may cease—at least until the next one in your vicinity goes on the air. But if that operator obeys FCC regulations, RFI will plague you until you take steps to eliminate it in your audio installation.

Anti-RFI Procedures

The first step toward solving an RFI problem is to contact the manufacturer of your equipment for whatever advice he has to offer. Sometimes he will provide a few small parts that can easily be added to the components involved. If you have several different brands of components in your installation, write to *each* of the manufacturers. Note that under present law a manufacturer is not *compelled* to help you. The fact that his equipment is RFI-sensitive does not mean that there is any obligation or liability on his part. Of course, most manufacturers will do whatever they can to alleviate the problem short of redesigning the unit completely (that may ultimately be what is required). The radio operator is under no compulsion to help you either, but in the interest of good relations he may cooperate. Radio amateurs, who must pass electronics theory tests to receive their licenses, are often very helpful. CB'ers, however, need not be technically proficient to be licensed, and most probably wouldn't know where to start helping if they wanted to.

It goes without saying that you should approach a radio operator—assuming you can physically locate him—in a courteous and reasonable way (remember that he probably has the law on his side). Having been involved personally (on both sides) in a few RFI incidents, I can assure you that a bit of courtesy and tact can go a long way toward resolving any of these problems. Explain to the ham or CB'er the nature of the interference, the times you have noted it, and what kind of equipment you have. Unless the

TRACKING DOWN RADIO-FREQUENCY INTERFERENCE

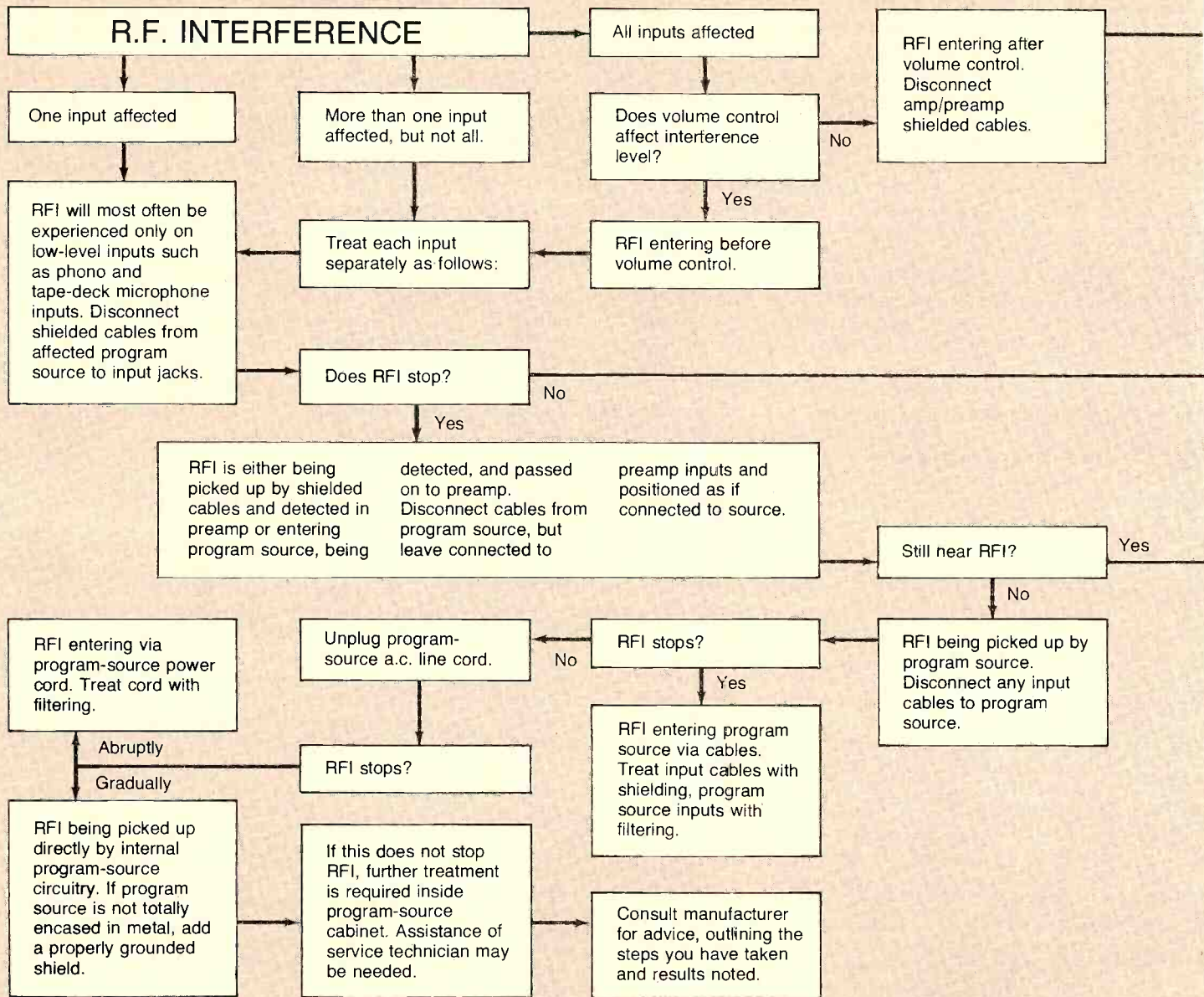


Figure 2.

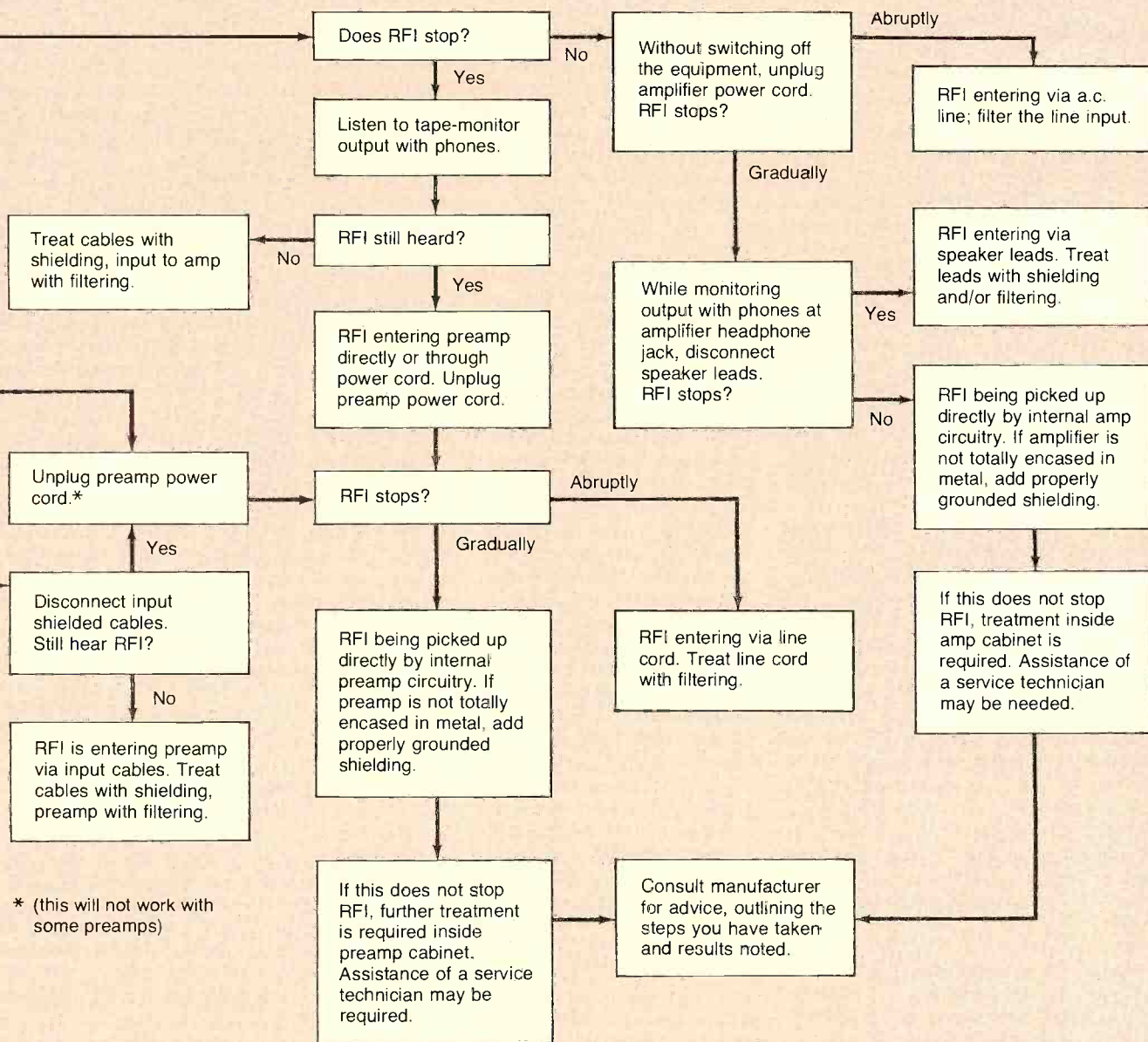
transmissions are blatantly illegal, *don't* call up or write to the FCC demanding immediate action—you simply won't get it. What you will get is a copy of "FO Bulletin No. 25," which states, in part, "... the Commission cannot give any protection to audio devices which respond to signals from a nearby radio transmitter. The problem is not caused by the improper operation or by technical deficiencies of the radio transmitter. . . . The only 'cure' is by treatment of the audio device. You should therefore contact a qualified technician, the dealer, or the manufacturer of your audio device . . . for assistance."

But don't despair! In many cases, RFI can be suppressed without expending large amounts of money or time. A qualified technician's services will sometimes be required, but often one or more simple external remedies can be applied without even getting inside your equipment, and no special tools or electronic technical experience are required.

The basic goal of RFI suppression in audio equipment is to prevent the radio-frequency signal from reaching that point in your equipment's circuits where it is converted (detected or demodulated) into an audio signal. There are three general ways of achieving this

result: grounding, shielding, and filtering. In mild cases of RFI, only one of the three might be needed. More severe interference can require the combination of two or three methods. *Grounding* involves bringing the chassis of all components to an *earth* ground. This makes the metal chassis electrically "dead," preventing radio fields from passing through them. However, grounding must be done in exactly the right way or intolerable hum-producing "ground loops" will be generated (more on this later).

Shielding means protecting vulnerable circuitry by surrounding it with a grounded layer of metal, be it in sheet,



screen, or braided form. The shield (if properly installed) prevents any signal from passing through it. When the shield prevents r.f. from reaching the sensitive circuits, signal detection—and RFI—can't take place.

The third method of suppressing RFI is *filtering*. It is accomplished by installing one or more devices at critical points in the audio system's signal path either to block the passage of r.f. or to shunt it to ground. The filter components most commonly used are capacitors, resistors, and inductors in the form of r.f. chokes (turns of wire wrapped on a cylindrical form), ferrite beads (small cylinders which are strung

over wires like jewelry beads), and ferrite toroids or "rings." Each has specific advantages and disadvantages for use at a particular point in the audio system. Basically, the goal of filtering is to prevent r.f. from reaching critical stages in an amplifier without otherwise affecting the amplifier's performance.

Before any (or, if necessary, all) of these remedies are applied, you must first determine at what point(s) the r.f. signal is entering the system. The task can be made easier if the radio operator will cooperate by providing you with a series of test transmissions.

Let's assume that you have an audio system set up as in Figure 1 on the

following page—a turntable, a tape deck, an FM tuner, a pre-amplifier, a power amplifier, and two speakers. (RFI-hunting procedures will generally be the same for systems using receivers or integrated amplifiers, but simpler because there are fewer component interconnections.) When the radio operator is transmitting, turn the preamp's selector switch to each position (phono, tape, tuner, etc.) and note when the RFI is experienced. You might get RFI in all modes or in just one or two. Typically, the phono input will yield the most intense r.f. interference because its active circuitry has the most gain (amplification). (Continued overleaf)

R.F.I.

It would be wise to pause right here and point out that the entire RFI-hunting procedure is illustrated in the large chart, Figure 2, on the previous two pages. This is not exactly the easiest procedure in the world to follow (no trouble-shooting system is), so in the interests of clarity and at the risk of redundancy I will be taking you through the chart by hand, so to speak, using slightly different language (if not procedures) at times that may dispel an occasional ambiguity. If you understand the purpose of the procedures, the step-by-step instructions will make far more sense. To return

After determining which program sources are affected, unplug the corresponding shielded cables from the preamp. If all modes are affected, remove all input cables. If the RFI has not stopped, turn the volume control up and down. Does the loudness of the RFI change with the position of the control, or is it unaffected by it? In the former case, the signal is entering the system before the volume control. In the latter, the r.f. is being picked up after it. Often, the volume-control setting will have no influence on the RFI. If this is the case, unplug the cables from the preamp to the power amplifier. If the interference stops, the stage detecting the audio signal is in the preamp. If the interference persists, detection is taking place in the power amplifier.

Now you must find out how the signal is entering the component(s) detecting the r.f. signal. It can do so in one of three ways. First, the signal can be picked up by the a.c. power line and enter the audio component via its power cord. Second, the input and/or out-

put leads or cables can act as antennas and introduce the r.f. at their corresponding jacks. These two are the most common. The third—direct signal pickup within the component's enclosure—occurs only when the r.f. field is *really* strong. It is also the most difficult and inconvenient to counteract. In most cases, the first two can be dealt with through means external to the device.

If the preamp volume control does affect the RFI, plug in all the shielded cables in the system and switch the input selector to the affected input. (When there is more than one affected program source, repeat the following procedure for each. However, if the problem is in the power amplifier, don't bother—just read on.) Unplug the program source's a.c. power cord from its socket and wrap its full length around your hand. If the RFI stops, the r.f. signal is entering the component through the line cord. If this doesn't affect the interference, turn the preamp's volume control to near minimum and remove the shielded cables of that program-source component from its output jacks. Leave the cables plugged into the preamp and positioned as if they were connected to the source.

If this silences the RFI, the signal is being detected inside the source component. If it does not, try unplugging the cables from the input jacks of the preamp. In cases where the RFI stops after this has been done, the signal is being picked up by the cables and detected inside the preamp. If the RFI persists, there are only a few possibilities left. First, unplug the preamp's power cord and wrap it around your hand to inhibit its action as an antenna. If the RFI stops, the signal is getting into the preamp via the power cord. If it continues, reconnect the power cord and remove the cables from the preamp output jacks but leave them plugged into the power amplifier and positioned normally. Cessation of interference indicates that the signal is being picked

up somewhere within the preamp, where it is being rectified and passed on to the power amplifier. If RFI continues, unplug the cables from the input jacks on the power amplifier. If the RFI stops, it means that the cables are acting as antennas, passing the signal into the power amplifier where it is detected and amplified.

If you still (!) experience RFI, unplug the power amplifier's line cord. If the interference stops *instantly*, you have discovered the signal's route into the system. If the RFI dies away slowly as the amplifier's power-supply capacitors discharge, reinsert the power cord into its socket. Disconnect the speaker leads from the output terminals and check for the presence or absence of RFI either by watching the amplifier's power meters or by listening to a pair of headphones (make the effective length of the headphone cable as short as possible by wrapping it around your hand). In all but the rare cases where the r.f. signal is being picked up by internal amplifier wiring, this will kill any remaining RFI. You have isolated the signal's entry path to the speaker leads, which are often quite long and can work as very effective antennas.

Keeping RFI Out

The procedure just outlined, if followed methodically, will uncover one or more r.f. signal-entry paths. Now that you know where the signal is getting *in*, you can determine the steps necessary to keep it *out*. Signals riding in on the a.c. power line are easy to deal with, no matter which component is affected. All that's required is the installation of a "brute-force" line filter or a ferrite toroid or bar. [Line filters such as the Model C-509-L SA by the J. W. Miller Division of Bell Industries (they also manufacture filters for speaker outputs and phono-jack inputs), the Model CBBS-1 by Cornell

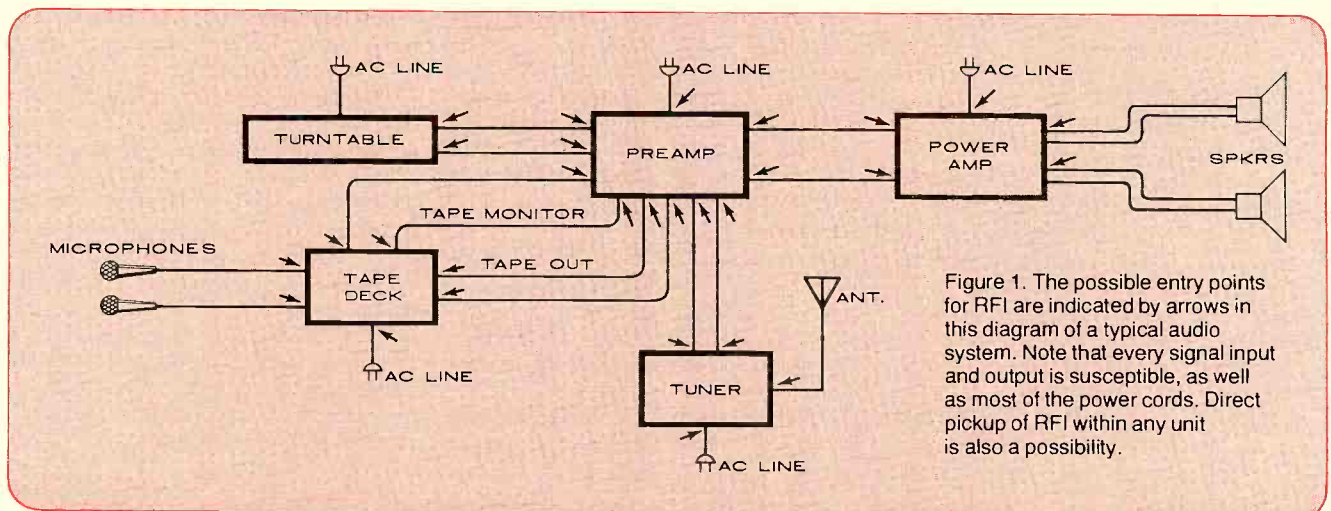


Figure 1. The possible entry points for RFI are indicated by arrows in this diagram of a typical audio system. Note that every signal input and output is susceptible, as well as most of the power cords. Direct pickup of RFI within any unit is also a possibility.

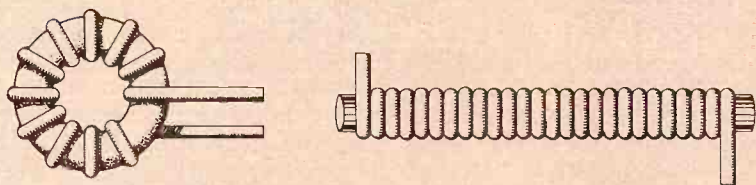


Figure 3. The proper way of wrapping cables and cords around ferrite rings and rods. The ferrite form should be kept near the component's rear panel.

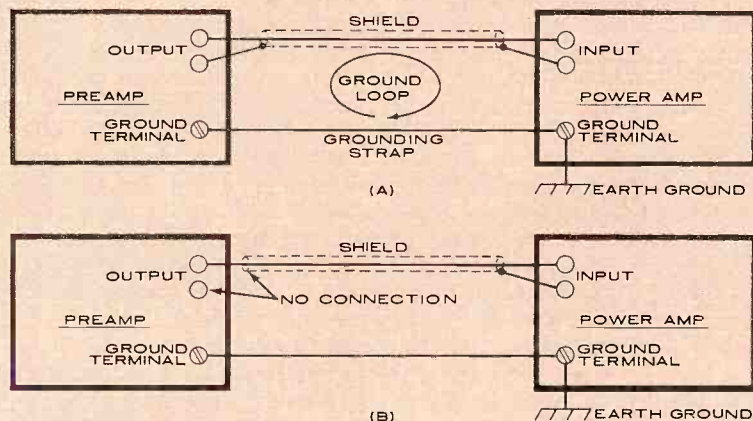


Figure 4. In (A), the existence of two separate ground paths between components creates the possibility of a ground loop. In (B), the shield of the signal cable is detached at one end, leaving only a single ground path.

Dubilier, and the Sprague Electric Company's Model F-500 (all rated to pass 5 amperes a.c., or about 550 watts) can be ordered from many radio-supply stores.] From the consumer's point of view, they are the easiest to use. All you do is plug the filter's line cord into the wall, ground the metal case (the screw holding the socket plate to the wall is often an effective grounding point), and plug the component's line cord into the socket on the filter case. The filter allows the 60-Hz a.c. power to reach the component but blocks any r.f. riding in on the line. Since such filters can pose a serious shock hazard if they malfunction, be sure to get one that bears the "UL" (Underwriters Laboratories) approval.

Ferrite bars and toroids (rings) perform the same function as brute-force filters—they let the a.c. power in but keep the r.f. out. They are also inherently safer than in-line filters. [Large electronics supply houses (especially those catering to radio amateurs) often stock them, but such distributors are not as common as they were in the past. Mail-order suppliers of ferrite materials are listed in the accompanying box.] Using ferrite forms is relatively simple. Wrap at least ten to twenty turns of power cord on the rod

or around the ring (see Figure 3). Secure the ends with PVC electrical tape, and make sure you form the coil as close to the point where the cord enters the component as possible. That's all there is to it.

When the RFI is arriving at a component via another path, other steps must be taken. The first thing to do is to examine all wire connections, plugs, and clips. For example, if the pins of your phono cartridge are corroded and the clips are not making good contact, signal rectification could be taking place right at that point. The same holds true for the phono plugs of shielded cables. Make sure that *all* metal-to-metal joints are clean and secure. Crimp phono-plug shells or cartridge clips slightly to ensure firm contact with jacks or pins. Polish any corroded plugs or jacks with a fine grade of sandpaper. In some cases, simply cleaning up all the connections may be enough to stop r.f. interference.

Grounding

The next procedures to consider are grounding and shielding. These are allied remedies: a chassis acts as a shield, for example, but it won't be very effec-

tive as such unless it is grounded. It is important that *all* components in the system be properly grounded, but you must do this carefully. Otherwise, ground loops will result, possibly producing high hum levels. Figure 4 illustrates the point. At A, you can see that there are two conductors running between the chassis of the preamp and the power amplifier. This produces a ground loop. At B, both chassis are tied together by a common grounding strap, but the shield of the cable is not connected to the power amplifier's input jack. (Only one channel is shown for simplicity.) Here no ground loop is present. The general rule is to connect the chassis together with one conductor only.

A grounding strap of heavy copper braid or wire is the best candidate, but it may not prevent ground loops from occurring—especially if you are using commercially prepared patch cords with molded connectors (these invariably tie the shield to the connectors at both ends). The way to get around this is to disconnect the shield at one plug. Cut carefully around the cable near the point where it meets the plug. Severing the insulation will expose the shield wires, which can then be snipped and trimmed back so they won't accidentally come in contact with anything. Note, however, that some components (particularly preamps with "floating" input grounds) will not function when the shields are interrupted in this way. When reinstalling a component that has had its signal grounds altered, turn the volume down fully and advance it *very* cautiously just in case you have *set up* a hum situation.

Shielding

Although you might find that a good grounding system stops the RFI, more treatment may be required. Some very inexpensive audio components are packaged in wood or plastic enclosures and lack a metal "wrap-around" beneath the cosmetic shell. Plastic or wood cabinets offer no resistance to the passage of r.f., while metal cabinets *can* be effective r.f. shields. If your equipment does not have metallic cabinets or sub-enclosures and you have determined that the signal is being picked up and rectified *inside*, you will have to shield the affected components with metal.

Copper flashing or brass screening is ideal for this purpose. Staple the screening to the inside of the cabinet and solder all portions of the screening together, leaving as few gaps as possible—none, if you can manage it. It may be that when you reinstall the now-

Filtering

shielded cover the copper screening will be automatically grounded to the metal chassis. If not, solder a lead to the screening and connect it to the chassis at the main grounding tie point. Be very careful when installing the screening to prevent accidental short circuits between it and electrically "live" portions of the component circuitry. Don't allow it to droop. If necessary, staple thin cardboard *over* the screening to serve as an insulator between it and the chassis-mounted components. If installed properly, the screening will have no effect on the component's performance, but it will prevent r.f. from getting into the circuits. In most cases where the signal is not entering via the power line, patch cords, or speaker leads, a good grounding and shielding installation will eliminate the problem.

Now let's look at the remaining r.f. "ports of entry"—the speaker leads and interconnecting cables. These can act as antennas, picking up the r.f. and delivering it to the component, where it is rectified. The problem here is how to allow these leads (and the circuits connecting to them) to function normally with audio while blocking r.f.

There are several ways of doing this. The first is to use specially shielded leads. Most audio cables have the configuration shown in Figure 5A. It consists of an inner conductor, center insulation, and shielding wires that spiral around the inner conductor and insulation, plus an outer plastic jacket. Although the spiral shield is fairly effective at audio frequencies, it doesn't work too well at radio frequencies. To improve the shielding, you can either replace the patch cord with one made of coaxial cable (Figure 5B), such as RG-59-U, the type used in some TV or FM antenna installations, or you can slip tubular copper braid *over* the existing patch cord. Be sure to connect the braid to the system ground.

Where two conductors (speaker leads, for example) must be shielded, you can use the cable shown in Figure 5C. This type of cable is available in 18- and 16-gauge sizes and can be used for most speaker-wire runs. Again, be sure the braided shield is tied to the system ground. (This and all the cable shown in Figure 5 are available from large electronics supply houses under brand names such as Alpha and Belden. Copper braid can also be obtained from these sources.)

The final method of RFI treatment is to install filters in the leads picking up RFI. Most useful in accomplishing this are discrete filters that employ ferrite bars, toroids, ferrite beads, and small capacitors. Let's consider the speaker leads first. They can pick up and deliver a strong r.f. signal to the output terminals of the amplifier. The r.f. is passed back to an earlier stage by the feedback loop where it is converted into audio. The audio is then treated by the later stages as a normal signal: it is amplified and ultimately heard through the speakers. The best cure is to block the r.f. before it gets into the circuits by using an appropriate filter, by forming r.f. chokes from the speaker leads and ferrite toroids or bars (Figure 3), by shielding the speaker leads with braid (or the use of braid-shielded, two-conductor cable as in Figure 5C), and/or by installing shunt capacitors and/or ferrite beads as necessary.

The proper way to install shunt capacitors is shown in Figure 6. Inexpen-

sive disc ceramic capacitors rated at 250 volts (or higher) and 0.001 to 0.01 microfarad (μF) are suitable. The capacitors will appear as a short circuit to r.f. signals, preventing them from entering the power amplifier. However, they will essentially be open circuits (as if they weren't there) to the audio output signals. Thus they will have no adverse effect on frequency response. Some amplifiers might act up if a capacitor is installed directly across the speaker terminals; therefore, consult with the manufacturer of your amplifier before installing capacitors.

Ferrite forms can be used alone or together with shunt capacitors and/or cable shielding. Serious cases of RFI may require the use of all three suppression methods. Ferrite beads can also be used. One or more are slipped over the speaker lead as close to the amplifier terminals as possible. These devices act as resistances to r.f. but let audio signals flow unimpeded. Again, beads might reduce but not eliminate the interference in severe cases, and shielding, grounding, and the use of capacitors might also be required.

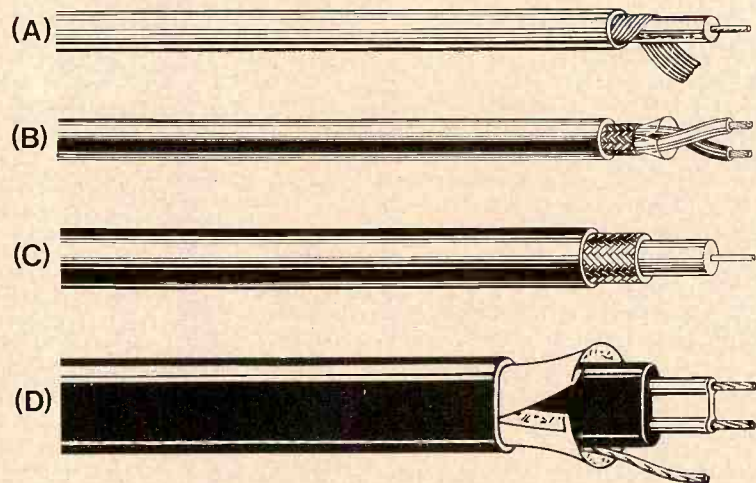


Figure 5. Various shielded cables. (A) is a standard type for patch cords. (B) has a braided copper sleeve for better shielding. (C) and (D) have two inner conductors plus shield and are useful for speaker cables (C) and antenna lead-ins (D).

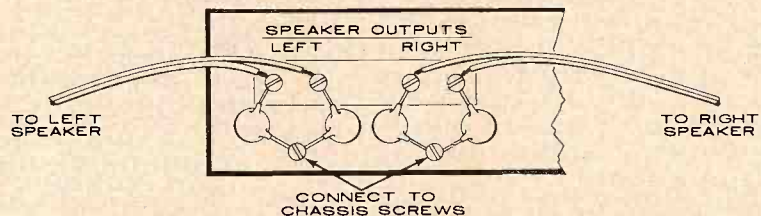


Figure 6. Disc capacitors of recommended value (see text) will shunt RFI picked up by the speaker wires to ground when connected as illustrated. The chassis screws shown can actually be any handy nearby grounding point.

Ferrite beads can also be used at the preamplifier and program sources. In some cases, beads will have to be mounted inside the component's cabinet on the "hot" leads at the input and output jacks. A small amount of unsoldering and resoldering will be required. Beads can also be mounted on the leads to a tape deck's record, playback, and erase heads (but this sort of delicate work is perhaps best left to an experienced technician). Shielded cables can also be treated with ferrite bars or rings, as in Figure 3.

FM tuners might be overloaded by strong short-wave radio signals. The use of shielded twin lead or coaxial antenna feedline can help, as can the installation of copper screening. (Chassis grounding is a *must* for this approach.) Sometimes a high-pass filter is needed to stop tuner overload. This type of filter blocks all signals below about 40 MHz, preventing CB and short-wave-amateur signals from reaching the antenna input but passing FM signals (above 88 MHz) without attenuation. The Drake TV-300-HP and TV-75-HP filters, designed for use with 300-ohm twin lead and 75-ohm coaxial feedlines, respectively, are well suited for this application. They are installed at the antenna terminals of the tuner. (Incidentally, these filters are also useful for stopping interference in television reception.) The Drake filters are available from many electronics supply houses.

Phono preamps are best treated with ferrite beads and bars or toroids. The use of *braid* shield or coaxial input leads is also important. Shunt capacitors are *not* usually desirable at the phono input because they can have a detrimental effect on frequency response. However, coaxial cable such as RG-59 can be used to replace spiral-shield input leads. The capacitance of this type of coax is even less than that of "low-capacitance" spiral shielded cable, making it totally compatible with stereo and CD-4 systems.

THE great majority of RFI cases can be dealt with successfully using one or more of the techniques that have been outlined here. However, it is always easier to eliminate interference when you have the cooperation of the radio operator. Remember, though, that any costs involved must be borne by you. Although that might seem unfair, it is the law as promulgated by the administrative agency of the government in charge of such matters (the FCC). Some irate people have attempted civil lawsuits against radio-operator neighbors, but these suits have invariably failed—and on occasion even prompted harassment counter suits brought by the radio operators. The courts have

consistently refused to penalize a radio operator when he abides by FCC regulations. Hams and CB'ers, however, are two different breeds of cat. The ham usually has a reasonable degree of electronic knowhow; the CB'er does not. It will be helpful to solicit a ham's cooperation in discovering how r.f. is getting into your system and in applying appropriate remedies; you won't get that cooperation by harassing him.

In response to the growing RFI problem, bills have been introduced in the last two sessions of Congress that would empower the FCC to set resistance-to-RFI standards for all home-entertainment devices. However, both times Congress has adjourned before acting on them and the bills have expired. But it seems only a matter of time before an RFI bill becomes law. Any standards adopted under such a law will be reasonable, we hope, and

SOURCES OF FERRITE MATERIALS

- **Amidon Associates**, 12033 Otsego Street, No. Hollywood, California 91607, is a mail-order source for ferrite beads, toroids, and bars. Its FB-73B-101 ferrite bead offers greatest impedance to r.f. at about 10 MHz, and it will fit over No. 18 wire. Its FB-73B-801 will fit over heavier No. 12 wire. Prices per dozen: \$2 (FB-73B-101) and \$3 (FB-73B-801). Two ferrite rods are available: the 30-61-4 (½-inch diameter, 4-inch length, \$1.50) and the 30-61-7 (½-inch diameter, 7½-inch length, \$2.50). The T-200-2 toroid is large enough for use as an r.f. choke on speaker leads and covers the frequency range from 1 to 30 MHz; price, \$3.25.
- **Elna Ferrite Laboratories**, Box 395, Woodstock, New York 12498, is a

mail-order source for Ferroxcube ferrite materials. Two toroids are available. The 400T 750-3C8 (\$4.75) is useful for speaker leads; it is larger than the 528T 500-3C8 (\$2.75), which is more convenient for use with input cables. The 56.590.65/4A6 and 56.590.65/3B (both \$2 per dozen) ferrite beads are appropriate for use with smaller wires.

(Additional information is available from both these sources about other toroid sizes, magnetic properties, etc.; include a stamped, self-addressed envelope for reply.)

ANOTHER source of shielding materials is Verion, a company that manufactures patch cords, cables, and other grounding accessories. The Verion cables are triaxial in construction, with an outer shield that carries no signal. Write Verion, 75 Haven Avenue, Mount Vernon, New York 10553, for a free catalog.

SOURCES OF RFI FILTERS

IN many localities you may not be able to locate a supplier and will have to contact the manufacturer directly. Some major manufacturers are listed below and catalogs are available from them in most cases. In addition to line filters, a number of these companies offer devices intended for insertion in the signal path between components, and these may provide some degree of relief.

- **Bell Industries**, J. W. Miller Div., 19070 Reyes Avenue, Compton, California 90224.
- **Cornell Dubilier**, 150G Avenue L, Newark, New Jersey 07101.
- **Sprague Electric Co.**, 645G Marshall Street, North Adams, Massachusetts 01247.

If you are seeking shielded cable of any type, two major sources are:

- **Alpha Wire Corp.**, 711G Lidgerwood Avenue, Elizabeth, New Jersey 07207.
- **Belden Corp.**, Dept. G, Box 1100, Richmond, Indiana 47374.

they should *not* be developed without the technical advice of the audio manufacturers who would be affected.

For the present, however unfair it might seem, you as a consumer must tackle the RFI problem on your own. As mentioned earlier, manufacturers anxious to keep their customers' good will often provide parts and advice. By all means, write to the manufacturer describing the nature of the interference and the model and serial numbers of the affected components. Armed with your persistence, his advice, and sometimes with the radio operator's cooperation, you can lick Radio Frequency Interference. □

John McVeigh is an electrical engineer, an audiophile, and a radio amateur holding call letters WB2BLS. He is an associate editor with *Popular Electronics* magazine.

**Take a spin on our new
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And leave the
direct driving to us.**



With Sony's new PS-4300, you just sit back and enjoy the ride. Wherever the record takes you.

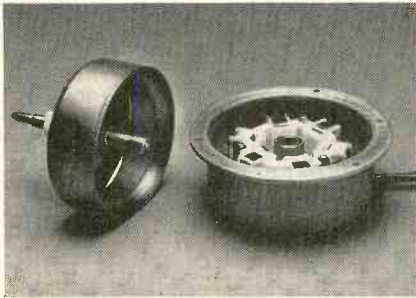
That's the blissful simplicity of a fully automatic turntable.

But the PS-4300 is more than purely practical. We like to think of it as a model union: combining the convenient and the complex.

It is a profoundly engineered machine, with intelligent design slashing through down to the smallest detail.

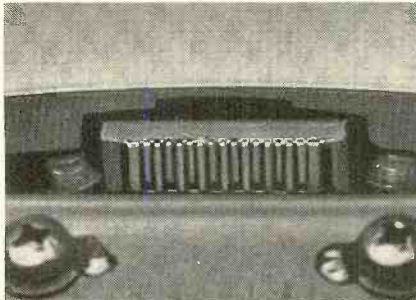
We gave brushes the brush.

The motor that powers the PS-4300 is brushless and slotless. Direct drive, if you will.



This deceptively simple construction makes for a smooth-running motor with less friction and noise than traditional DC motors. And it eliminates cogging.

What's more, this smooth-running motor is monitored by a

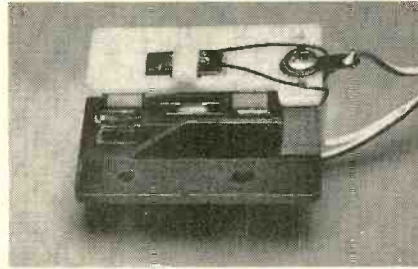


smoothly-engineered 8-pole magnetic pick-up head. And our magnetic speed sensor works through an intricate electronic feedback system; driving the platter directly—without a jumble of belts and pulleys getting in the way.

So our torque is not a turkey, and we've got low wow and flutter and high speed stability to boot.

An electric eye. For your ear.

Hands off the PS-4300!

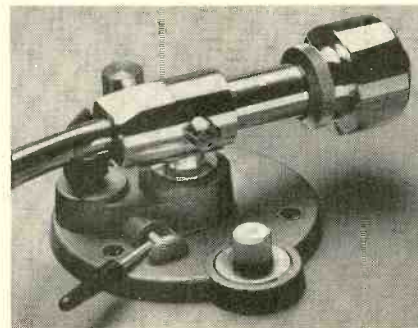


Our optical sensing system automatically returns the arm when your record is over.

Optical sensing is light years ahead of the conventional mechanical linkage. Eliminating the pressure and distortion you'd ordinarily get at the end of a record.

A tone-arm that's a strong arm.

Now we're not calling anyone clumsy. But there is the chance you might make a mistake and grab hold of the tone-arm while it's in motion.



That's why the PS-4300 has a tone-arm that's more than just statically balanced. It comes with a protective clutch device. (The only clutch you'll find on our fully automatic turntable.)

This latching set-up protects your arm against too much strain.

Moving from arms to feet, ours are designed to cut feedback. They're rubber-soled: suspended by cup-shaped rubber shock absorbers.

And they're adjustable, letting you level the turntable. So you might say our feet come with elevator shoes.

Our vibration-reducers are great shakes.

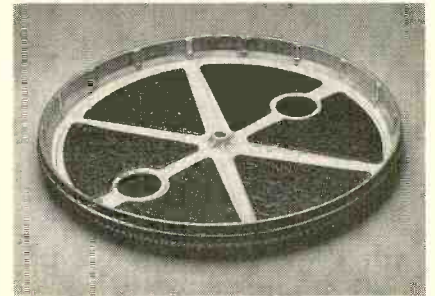
Sometimes the cabinet itself

can vibrate—distorting what comes out of it.

Not so with the PS-4300.

Our cabinet is built out of a material with a low Q. Low Q materials hardly vibrate, and nobody watches their P's and Q's like Sony.

Even our platter has been undercoated with a damping material.



And what looks like a bad case of acne on our record mat is a series of bumps that provide an air cushion and absorb vibration.

An exercise in self-control.

You can see that we've covered just about everything when we created the PS-4300.

Even the cover.

Our dust cover is ingeniously simple. When closed, it leaves the controls accessible.



And what controls they are! One-touch, LED-indicated switches for start/stop and repeat.

One light tap starts everything going, while your record, under the dust cover, is in splendid isolation.

So if what you're looking for is an unmatched fully automatic direct drive turntable, drive on over to Sony.

SONY®

THE BEACH BOYS: Eleven Years On

By Steve Simels

*Top to bottom,
Brian and Dennis Wilson,
Al Jardine, Mike Love,
and Carl Wilson (Capitol
Records photo).*



“...these evocations of youthful joys and sorrows were on a level approaching the very finest folk art, and few could resist them.”

POP culture makes for strange bedfellows. For example, English writer Kingsley Amis, in his *New Maps of Hell*, the first (during the Fifties) serious scholarly appraisal of science fiction, noted a previously uncharted affinity sci-fi fans had for jazz. We all know that kids today have been raised largely on movies and TV and consequently don't (or can't) read much sci-fi or anything else—but they can *listen*, so critics have noted another affinity, that between movies, TV, and rock-and-roll. Some have gone so far as to suggest that most rock critics, once generally assumed to be frustrated rock stars, are in reality frustrated film critics, as if John Mendelssohn wanted to be Andrew Sarris rather than Mick Jagger.

All this is, I think, at least slightly off-base. If rock-and-roll was at its inception (and, to a certain extent, is now) a bastard child, an outlaw music, then the real visual equivalent of rock is not TV but that equally scorned and congressionally investigated American phenomenon, the lowly comic book. In the Fifties, remember, both were thought to be direct causes of juvenile delinquency, and ten years later, as political unrest was sweeping our campuses, it was probably true that young radicals were just as likely to own the latest issue of *Spiderman* as the latest *Airplane* album.

I was reminded of all this as I reread something Jules Feiffer wrote in his *The Great Comic Book Heroes*. He had been one of those youngsters involved in creating the so-called “Golden Age” of comics, and he observes that kids then thought of themselves as “a generation, the way the men who began the movies must have felt . . . out to be splendid somehow.” Just as Pete Townshend, John, Paul, Mick, Keith, Brian, Eric, and all the others must have felt in the London club where they gathered, dreaming dreams of creating something revolutionary in the Sixties. But at the close of Feiffer's book, there is an anticipation of John Lennon's bitter “The Dream Is Over”: by the dawn of the Fifties, Feiffer says, the men in charge of our childhood fantasies had “become archetypes of the grownups who made us need to have fantasies in the first place.”

Something similar has certainly happened to rock-and-roll. With the exception of the Bay City Rollers, who (sorry, kids) hardly count, there is nary a rock star who isn't pushing thirty or already well past it, be they new sensations like Peter Frampton and Patti Smith or established artists. In other words, they are archetypes of those very grownups who made a whole generation need to have rock fantasies in the first place. Detroit's Bob Seger, an over-thirty type who just last year became a national star after almost a decade of journeyman labor in his home town, has dealt with this question specifically in terms of the audience that has grown up along with him rather than with the young kids who now pack his concerts. “So you used to shake 'em down,” he sings, “but now you stop and think about your dignity.” His solution? Simple: “Come back, baby, rock-and-roll never forgets.” The Who have been a lot more blunt: “We'll still be rockin' in our wheelchairs,” says Peter Townshend.

But there is one group—and one group only—for whom this preoccupation with the aging process seems to have no relevance whatsoever. Three incidents, rather widely spaced in time, come to mind. It is 1965, it is night, and I am outside the Asbury Park Convention Hall, where I am going to attend the very first rock show of my young life. I look up, and there on the roof, clowning around (turning their names on the marquee upside down) and waving to a horde of fifteen-year-old girls who like myself have just recognized them, are . . . *The Beach Boys*. Carl, the lead guitarist, my hero and my junior by mere months (we are both seventeen), is acting particularly silly, and I get weeks of conversational mileage out of recounting his behavior (and mine) to my high-school buddies.

The year 1973 finds me at yet another Beach Boys concert, and I am in the third row. Behind me another gaggle of fifteen-year-old girls are working themselves into hysteria over the good looks of drummer Dennis, trying to persuade me to pass a note up to him on stage. During the band's final encore, a parodistically good-natured version of the Stones' *Jumpin' Jack Flash*, Carl falls to the floor and begins to flail at his

phallic instrument. Accidentally, our eyes meet and we crack up simultaneously at the foolishness of it all.

It's late 1976. I am emerging from Penn Station, surrounded by *new* hordes (where do they come from?) of fifteen-year-old girls just leaving a Beach Boys concert upstairs at Madison Square Garden. I ask one how the show was, and she is practically speechless. Her friends carry a huge banner reading “Welcome Back, Brian,” and one informs me breathlessly that Carl actually *waved* to her. I curse myself for not having been able to obtain tickets.

THE point of all this reminiscence? It is now eleven years on, and, despite the attrition of years, the virtual disappearance of the surf and car culture from which they sprang, and the inevitable distancing from their audience their growth from boys to men must bring, the Beach Boys are *still* fueling the fantasies of adolescents *and* of those of us long beyond them. This is a most remarkable achievement; other musicians who, like them, began their careers at the same age as their first fans have for the most part hung on to these *same* fans as the greater part of their audience. Paul McCartney, Dylan, the Stones, and the Who (to say nothing of Elvis, who is in many ways outside time entirely) have, to be sure, attracted new devotees. But only the Beach Boys' audience, among those of the classic rockers', seems to remain forever young, forever fifteen.

The answer, I think, has something to do with Innocence, which, like most things in life, is a much more complicated proposition than it at first appears. Certainly, the Beach Boys *were* innocents when they began; how could they, a bunch of teenagers growing up in an unremarkable suburb like Hawthorne, California, as a tight little family unit and interested in nothing more sophisticated than cars and girls, have been otherwise? You can see it on their earliest album covers—those incredibly young faces smiling on the back of “Surfing U.S.A.” seem like extras from the cast of *Leave It to Beaver* or some weird, surreal foreshadowing of *Happy Days*. But there is pain in the passing of innocence, and Brian Wil-

BEACH BOYS...

son, who captained the group from its inception and who blossomed as an enormous talent almost overnight, felt it most strongly. In Guy Peelaert's satirical picture book called *Rock Dreams* there is a portrait of the Brian of those halcyon days. He is seated at the piano, "alone," in Nik Cohn's words, "in his room, with his weight problems, his ear disease, his allergies, his pathological shyness." Out of this he created a fantasy world, and "wrote dreams about outdoors where the sun was always shining, where the cosmic surfer's wave unfurled towards infinity, and where everyone was golden young and beautiful forever."

BUT Brian was not merely an overly sensitive teenager; he was a remarkably gifted musician, and the fantasies that obsessed him turned into a series of records that sounded like nothing anyone had ever heard before. Grafting the falsetto harmonies of the Four Freshmen onto the rock rhythms of Chuck Berry, and then experimenting with the "wall-of-sound" techniques of Phil Spector, he unleashed a seemingly unending stream of classic singles. He was the first member of a rock band ever to assert artistic control over his own product—a commonplace now, but downright avant-garde in 1964. Some rocked like mad (*Little Deuce Coupe*, *Dance Dance Dance, I Get Around*); some were ballads of aching melodic beauty (*Surfer Girl*, *The Warmth of the Sun*, *In My Room*). Either way, these evocations of youthful joys and sorrows were on a level approaching the very finest folk art, and few could resist them.

For the first few years of their career, the Beach Boys clung to their innocence as they traveled the world in triumph, enormous international stars. Oh, to be sure, they quickly grew to understand that it was all *Image*. None of them was an intellectual, but they were smart enough to realize they were role playing, even though the events were real enough. As the world rapidly changed, their innocence began to weigh heavily against them. They had represented good times, hedonism, materialism, even an Andy Hardy-ish school spirit, and by the middle of the decade the teenagers who had once adored the Boys were rejecting those values with a vengeance.

To their credit, the Beach Boys refused to lie about who they were; they

did not pretend, as the rest of the youth culture did, that they had never been *unhip*, and there is a remarkable recorded document to prove it. In 1966, as kids all over the country began to flirt with drugs, to discover their disapproval of the Vietnam War, and as other musicians fiddled with feedback and smashed their instruments, the Beach Boys put out an album ("Beach Boys Party," now deleted) which consisted of nothing heavier than the five of them, plus assorted girl friends, noodling around on acoustic instruments with a bunch of moldy old rock songs.

After that, the full fury of the "Love Generation" was marshaled against them. Brian was on the board of directors of the 1967 Monterey Pop Festival, but his band's appearance was canceled because of quite legitimate fears that the hippie audience would laugh them off the stage. A later billing at the Fillmore East, which attracted a mere eight hundred diehard fans, was de-

"With the exception of the Bay City Rollers, there is nary a rock star who isn't pushing thirty or already well past it."

nounced in the underground press with headlines screaming "The Fillmore Sells Out!" Next, the wolves appeared at their door, and the innocents welcomed them with open arms. Some were well-meaning academics like Leonard Bernstein. Some were journalists who still admired the band and wanted to legitimize that admiration by spreading stories of the eccentric nature of Brian's "genius," winding up muddling him totally with drugs he was unprepared to deal with. Some were simply leeches, a horde of "business advisors" who knew the Boys were millionaires regardless of what the hippies thought of them, and others were downright evil, like Charles Manson, who actually wound up living in Dennis' house and co-writing songs with him for a brief period before his megalomania turned to blood lust.

THE amazing thing is that, throughout this whole chaotic period, the beset Beach Boys turned out a series of albums that are perhaps their best and certainly among the least dated relics of their era. There was "Pet Sounds," Brian's pre-"Sgt. Pepper" concept record, both a triumph of studio technology and a heart-rending chronicle of lost

love. There was "Smiley Smile," a curious but entertaining piecing together of fragments of a project Brian had been working on with Van Dyke Parks. And, finally, there was "Wild Honey." Cut totally in Brian's basement studio, it anticipated the return to pre-psychedelic simplicity of Dylan's "John Wesley Harding" by several months, but, for all its primitive sound and back-to-the-roots naïveté, it was as perfect a piece of *music* as they had ever come up with—ten gorgeous originals and perhaps the first cover version of a Stevie Wonder tune ever attempted by any white rock band. Despite the success of the title track as a single, "Wild Honey" sold hardly at all, and it is only now beginning to get its critical due. It has been reissued, though, and if you don't own a Beach Boys record, it is certainly the one you should buy first.

THE saga of the Beach Boys since those days is well enough known that it needs only a brief recounting. The Seventies brought them the embrace of the counter-culture that had once scorned them, and they came out of it as a monster concert attraction. Capitol enjoyed staggering success with repackagings of their early hits, while Brian's very real schizophrenia was morbidly dwelt on by the rock press. Last year they even got, at long last, a hit single—a run-through of *Rock and Roll Music*, done in the same style as their rewrite of *Sweet Little Sixteen* back in 1964. Their new album, "The Beach Boys Love You," contains all new Brian originals ("15 Big Ones," their 1976 comeback, was largely an oldies collection, a sort of studio updating of "Beach Boys' Party"). And, of course, there are all those fresh *fifteen-year-old girls* to contend with, the ones who know little and care less about the band's history but simply love the way they sound and think Dennis is sexy.

And through it all, incredibly, that original innocence has somehow endured, a slightly battered assurance of survival. If their obsession with the California dream of the early Sixties—cars, surfing, the good life—has a contemporary parallel, what is it if not their involvement with conservation and ecological matters, their continued dalliance with transcendental meditation? These are fitting backgrounds for dreams of more Endless Summers and other Promised Lands, and they now include the knowledge, derived from experience, of the price of those dreams, the understanding that good times have to be earned if they are to be worth having. How wonderful that you can get all of that along with some of the most beautiful songs and performances in American music. □

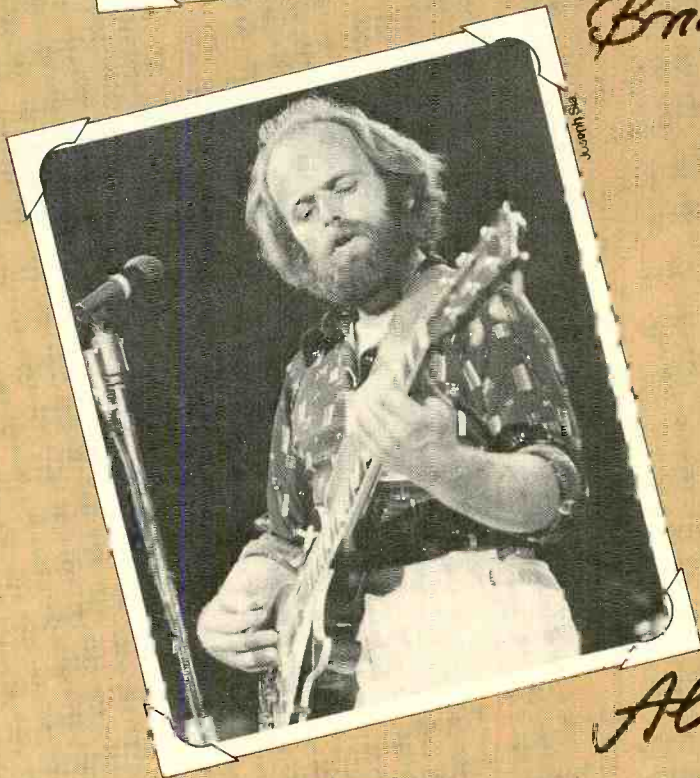


Brian



Stuart G. Liben

Dennis



Joseph Sia

Al



Joseph Sia

Mike



Stuart G. Liben

Carl

A Beginner's Guide to CHAMBER MUSIC

By Irving Kolodin

Tashi in performance at the Bottom Line in New York City; from the left, Ida Kavafian, Peter Serkin, Fred Sherry, Richard Stoltzman.



As terminology, the epithet “chamber music” is a prime example of giving a good dog a bad name. Further, it is an example of giving *all* good dogs—Dobermans and Danes, corgis and poodles—the *same* bad name. Just as the generalization “dogs bite” does not work when we get down to particular cases (some do, some don’t), so “chamber music is boring” is demonstrably false as soon as we can get someone to accept a little guidance in his listening. There are as many kinds of attractive, rewarding, and stimulating listening experiences in the world of chamber music as there are breeds of dogs in all their uncountable variety. And just as some of the most lovable dogs we have known were unmistakably mongrels, so many of the greatest, most enjoyable chamber works are the products of mixed musical parentage.

What, after all, is a trio, a quartet, or a quintet but a sonata or a symphony under another name? Whoever has learned to live with and enjoy the interplay of ideas that makes up the first movement of Beethoven’s *Pathétique* Sonata or his *Eroica* Symphony will discover that exactly the same rules of procedure govern his monumental output of chamber works. And if Beethoven is not your passion but Tchaikovsky is, a similar relationship can be traced between his *Pathétique* Symphony and his trios and quartets. State-

ment, development, restatement; variations; scherzo and trio; rondo finale—I could be referring either to Schubert’s C Major Piano Sonata, his C Major Symphony, or his C Major Quintet. Saying that one of these is less attractive than the others because it is “chamber music” is to get foolishly bogged down in terminology when you should be fighting your way through to meaning.

And if terminology is not to the point, neither is chronology. One can quite reasonably start, in chamber music, at either end of a two-century span of musical composition, either working forward from Haydn or backward from Carter—a situation analogous perhaps to starting a study of English literature with Shakespeare on the one hand, T. S. Eliot on the other (though in the latter case you may occasionally be mystified by a reference or two). Even the enthusiast for Romantic music of the nineteenth century can be led to the spring and persuaded to drink if he discovers that what refreshes his taste in a Dvořák symphony or Slavonic dance is just as free-flowing and satisfying in a work labeled Quartet No. 6, in F Major, Op. 96, bottled as it is with the reassuring nickname “*American*.”

THE best advice I can possibly give to anyone who feels intimidated or walled off by chamber music is this: work along the part of the wall that re-

lates to music you already know and like until you find the opening—the particular work—that will give you entry to the lovely stretch of greensward that lies on the other side. Do not, in other words, charge into the wall head on, for if you listen to classical music at all you already have keys to at least one of the many gates that lead into a veritable garden of works for small ensemble.

One would hardly think that the voluptuous sound of Borodin’s *Polovetsian Dances* could have an echo in the seemingly “austere” realm of chamber music—four strings don’t make anything like an equal amount of sound. But Borodin’s D Major Quartet has quite as much of his sensuously melodic, specially *personal* quality in it, and I defy anyone who likes the dances *not* to like the quartet. Robert Wright and George Forrest discovered as much when they took the *Notturmo* from that quartet and made it into *And This Is My Beloved* (and the Scherzo into *Baubles, Bangles, and Beads*) for the hit musical *Kismet*.

As a musical form, the trio/quartet/quintet for strings not only has the longest history and the broadest repertoire in chamber music, but a singular distinction as well: the instruments used have remained relatively *unchanged* since they were first combined in an ensemble. Haydn’s klavier was a mere toy in comparison to the concert grand of today, but the first of his sev-



enty-six quartets (a product of the time before 1760) was written for violins, viola, and cello that are identical in range and tuning (and similar in tone and dynamics) to those required by similar works of Shostakovich (written in 1974). The difference in sound has little to do with the inherent properties of the instruments, but everything to do with the skills, purposes, and objectives of the composers. If your musical cosmos revolves around Debussy's *Prélude à L'Après-midi d'un Faune* or Ravel's *Ma Mère l'Oye*, you will find much of the same idiom in the single string quartet each of these masters wrote. Frequently coupled on the same disc, they provide a unique example of an introduction to a whole chamber literature (French "modern" division) back to back.

All of which is to say (in a paraphrase of Will Rogers, who once remarked he never met a man he didn't like) that I never met a music lover who didn't like chamber music—once he found out it wasn't really different from all the other kinds of music he liked. Here, then, are twenty-odd ways to find that out, in an order that goes from the simplest instrumentation to the more complex. Sonatas for piano and one solo instrument are not included, for though nominally classified as chamber music they relate more to the recital repertoire than to the matter being considered here.

String Duo

(Violin and Viola; Violin and Cello)

● **MOZART: Duos in G Major (K. 423) and in B-flat Major (K. 424).** Arthur Grumiaux (violin); Arrigo Pelliccia (viola). PHILIPS 839747.

These are unique, unsurpassable examples of doing the impossible—making two instruments sound like three or four—so well that difficulties disappear, leaving only a radiant revelation of complete musical compatibility. Lovers either of violin and viola or of Mozart will find in Grumiaux and Pelliccia the makings of a lifelong musical friendship.

● **KODÁLY: Duo (Op. 7).** Jascha Heifetz (violin); Gregor Piatigorsky (cello). RCA LSC 2550.

A brilliant example of assimilation (of Mozart) and amplification (Kodály's own) to produce a work of fervor, warmth, and insinuating individuality.



"I never met a music lover who didn't like chamber music—once he found out it wasn't really different from all the other kinds of music he liked."



String Trio

(Violin, Viola, and Cello)

● **MOZART: Divertimento in E-flat Major (K. 563).** Isaac Stern (violin); Pinchas Zukerman (viola); Leonard Rose (cello). COLUMBIA M 33266.

In the Salzburg duos listed above, Mozart drew a blueprint for ensemble compatibility and decorated it with a typically fulfilling design. For this Vienna work of roughly five years later he added the cello, enabling him to evolve a veritable symphonic discourse. The title "divertimento" refers to the six-movement sequence; "heavenly" would be a rather guarded word for the outcome as organized and presented by these sterling players.

● **BEETHOVEN: Serenade in D, Op. 8.** Jascha Heifetz (violin); Gregor Piatigorsky (cello); William Primrose (viola). RCA LSC 2550.

Three of the greatest soloists of our time match pianos and fortes and all the gradations in between in a sure-handed presentation of the young Beethoven's different, rather than better, solution to the three-part problem. Lively and reflective by turns, the work takes wing in this performance. The great Kodály duo is on the other side of the disc.

Piano Trio

(Violin, Cello, and Piano)

● **HAYDN: Trios No. 25, in G Major; No. 26, in F-sharp Minor; and No. 27, in C Major.** Beaux Arts Trio (Isidore Cohen, violin; Bernard Greenhouse, cello; Menahem Pressler, piano). PHILIPS 6500 023.

Though once referred to as Trios 1 and 2, those misleadingly low numbers do not identify the *earliest* of the many trios by Haydn but rather the "best" as arranged in a nineteenth-century collection. The qualitative context still applies to the content, however, which combines Haydn's humanity with his humors. The G Major has the famous *Rondo all'Ongarese* as its finale, while the F-sharp Minor contains a reworking of the slow movement of the Symphony No. 102 as its adagio. Beautiful playing by the Beaux Arts personnel, who are engaged in a project to record all the Haydn trios, makes these two works (as well as the lesser C Major Trio) sparkle.

● **BEETHOVEN: Trio No. 6, in B-flat Major, Op. 97 ("Archduke").** Isaac Stern (violin); Leonard Rose (cello); Eugene Istomin (piano). COLUMBIA MS 6819.

Few works in music so well deserve an imperial sobriquet as this stupendously serene, enormously elevated score. Virtuosity and intimacy are combined in a manner that is wholly understood and communicated by these players.

● **SCHUBERT: Trios in B-flat Major, Op. 99, and E-flat Major, Op. 100.** Artur Rubinstein (piano); Henryk Szeryng (violin); Pierre Fournier (cello). RCA ARL2-0731 two discs.

A true musical "gusher," the B-flat Trio is equaled in melodic abundance and guileless charm only by the E-flat, its twin in thought and tonal breeding. Nothing honors Rubinstein's art more than his participation, with new associates, in Op. 99, a work whose prior classic recorded version he made three decades before with Heifetz and cellist Emanuel Feuermann. (overleaf)

CHAMBER MUSIC...

Miscellaneous Trios

● **BRAHMS: Horn Trio in E-flat Major, Op. 40.** Michael Tree (violin); Myron Bloom (horn); Rudolf Serkin (piano). COLUMBIA MS 7266.

Of the composer's several trios, no other combines the appeal of this singular work for those who relish the piano Brahms, the orchestral Brahms, or the ensemble Brahms. The composer is alleged to have said that the idea for the work came to him during a walk in the *Schwarzwald* (Black Forest). My belief is that he had a vision of such a horn player as Bloom and honored him *in absentia*. (For comment on Serkin and side two, see "Quintet: Schumann.")

● **BARTÓK: Contrasts.** Béla Bartók (piano); Joseph Szigeti (violin); Benny Goodman (clarinet). ODYSSEY 32160220E.

A commission extended to Bartók in the late Thirties jointly by Szigeti and Goodman enabled the composer to achieve a fusion of elements in which the unique attributes of each participant are honored. Especially interesting is the treatment of the clarinet in the spirit of the Hungarian village dances well known to Bartók and not too foreign to Goodman's jazz background. The work is best heard in this version by the original performers.

Quartet

(Two Violins, Viola, and Cello)

● **HAYDN: Quartets in D Major, Op. 64, No. 5, and D Minor, Op. 76, No. 2.** Cleveland Quartet. RCA ARL1-1409.

One could hardly err in presenting almost any pair of Haydn quartets to a neophyte in the genre while saying: "Listen to them until you know them by heart; then you'll know what a *quartet* is." The particular choice here relates, in the first instance, to the works' outstanding quality; in the second, to descriptive titles that clarify something about the content. In the case of the D Major, it is "The Lark," descriptive of its soaring, bird-like melodies; in the case of the D Minor, it is "Quinten," a title derived from the recurrent interval of the fifth. The performances, lilting in manner, luscious in sound, explain the rapid rise to prominence of this new American group.

● **MOZART: Quartets No. 19, in C Major (K. 465, "Dissonant"), and No. 22, in B-flat Major (K. 589).** Tokyo Quartet. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2530468.

In a logical progression from the preceding entry, the C Major is the last in a series of six quartets by Mozart that are dedicated to Haydn in appreciation of what the younger composer learned from the elder. That included the creation of a subtly intertwined introduction whose harmonic character prompted some (at an earlier time than ours) to refer to it as the "Dissonant" Quartet. Today, in a world filled with dissonance, it merely adds interest and anticipation to what follows. The winged B-flat was written a few years later. Both are performed here with sterling sound and golden inflections by the brilliant young Japanese-born, Juilliard-trained Tokyo Quartet, a group also responsible for some excellent Haydn quartets.



● **BEETHOVEN: Quartets in D Major, Op. 18, No. 3, and C Minor, Op. 18, No. 4.** Fine Arts Quartet. CONCERT DISC 210.

As most string players pronounce their first paeans of praise to Beethoven through one of the six works in Opus 18, so the listener may safely be ushered into Beethoven's vast temple of sound through the same easily accessible door. These two quartets proceed from musical matters first raised in certain of the piano sonatas (the C Minor, in particular, being akin in mood to the *Pathétique* Sonata in the same key) to

new objectives related to providing provocative discourse for four strings. The Fine Arts Quartet is not one of the best-known American ensembles, just one of the best.

● **BEETHOVEN: Quartets in F Major, Op. 59, No. 1; E Minor, Op. 59, No. 2; and C Major, Op. 59, No. 3 ("Rasumovsky").** Quartet-to Italiano. PHILIPS 6747 139 two discs.

To those for whom the Beethoven of choice is the composer of the Fourth Piano Concerto, the *Eroica* Symphony, and the *Appassionata* Sonata, these quartets will present a mirror image of the Ludwig they love best. Tense, intense, compact, concentrated, they challenge the players, as does no earlier chamber music, in both mental and muscular terms. The fervor and skill of the performances by these four Italians are packed into an economical arrangement that puts three works onto two discs.



● **SCHUBERT: Quartets No. 13, in A Minor, Op. 29 (D. 804); and No. 12, in C Minor (D. 703, "Quartettsatz").** Guarneri Quartet. RCA LSC 3285.

What Schubert did with four strings in the A Minor Quartet can very well stand as an introduction to the subject as a whole, especially as the slow movement arouses recollections of two other uses by Schubert of the same material: in the *Rosamunde* ballet music (Entr'acte No. 3) and as a piano Impromptu (Op. 142, No. 3). Both the quartet and the brief added *Quartett-*

satz (which simply means "quartet movement") are performed by the Guarneri according to the standard that made them famous. The headlong drive of the *Quartetsatz* will appeal especially to lovers of this composer's *Great C Major Symphony*.

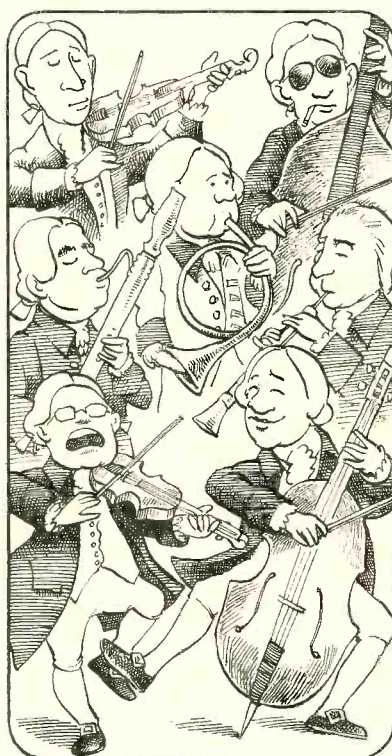
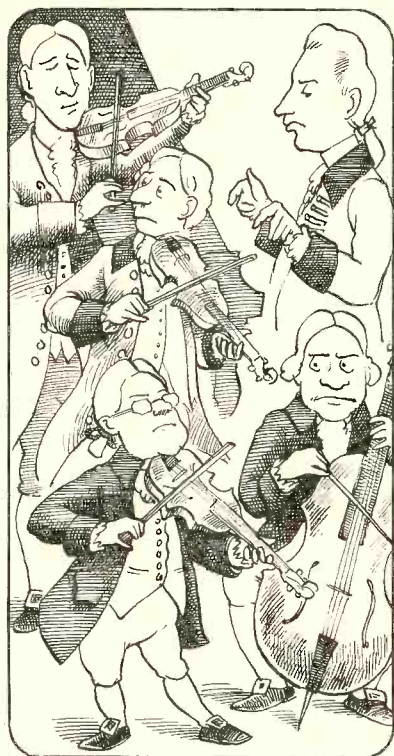
● **SMETANA: Quartet No. 1, in E Minor.**
DVOŘÁK: Quartet No. 6, in F Major, Op. 96. Juilliard Quartet. COLUMBIA MS 7144.

Accessibility is as close as the next groove on both sides of this well-conceived pairing. In the Smetana, familiarity is generated through the overtones of *The Moldau* and the other tone poems of *Má Vlast (From My Homeland)* as well as from *The Bartered Bride* in this great quartet titled *Aus meinem Leben (From My Life)*. In the Dvořák, it is the warm spillovers from the *New World Symphony* and the *Indian Lament* that permeate the work written in Spillville, Iowa, and known

cordings there is a choice: a coupling with one of the better Shostakovich quartets if you already have the Dvořák *American*, or the version by the *Quartetto Italiano* if you don't. If the choice is a toss-up, my foreign-exchange chart quotes rubles over lire just now, and I'd do the same in this musical case.

● **DEBUSSY: Quartet in G Minor, Op. 10.**
RAVEL: Quartet in F Major. Budapest Quartet. COLUMBIA MS 6015.

The case (only pros, no cons) for these two flavorful works has already been made in the introduction. All that remains is to select one disc from the eight pairings currently available. My choice is the Budapest version, not only because it is one of the earliest and still among the best, but also because a basic library of chamber music recordings without at least one by this enormously influential group would be a contradiction in terms.



in this country as the *American Quartet*. The Juilliard gives highly polished, freely flowing performances.

● **BORODIN: Quartet No. 2, in D Major.**
SHOSTAKOVICH: Quartet No. 8, Op. 110. Borodin Quartet. LONDON STS 15046.

● **BORODIN: Quartet No. 2, in D Major.**
DVOŘÁK: Quartet No. 6, in F Major, Op. 96. Quartetto Italiano. PHILIPS 802814.

The introduction to this article has covered the matter of the Borodin Second Quartet well enough that it needs no expansion here. However, among re-

● **CARTER: Quartets Nos. 1 and 2.** Composers Quartet. NONESUCH 71249.

For those versed in current compositional practices, the two Carter quartets will be seen as concentrated summations of his art as it developed in the Fifties. For others, they will provide vistas into the past (No. 1) as well as projections into the future (No. 2), in which performers will evidently function as individuals as well as members of an ensemble. The Composers Quartet is well qualified to serve as the instruments of Carter's purposes.

Piano Quartet

(Violin, Viola, Cello, and Piano)

● **SCHUMANN: Quartet in E-flat Major, Op. 47.** **BRAHMS: Quartet No. 3, in C Minor, Op. 60.** Pro Arte Piano Quartet (Lamar Crowson, piano; Kenneth Silito, violin; Cecil Aronowitz, viola; Terence Weil, cello). L'OISEAU-LYRE S-320.

Schumann's piano works could be described as chamber music in themselves; adding strings to his piano writing only makes it overtly what it already is covertly. In other words, inherent character is intensified rather than altered into something else. This well-balanced English ensemble shows a strong affinity for Brahms as well as for Schumann, an affinity appropriate to the lifetime relationship of the two composers.

● **FAURÉ: Quartet in C Minor.** Artur Rubinstein (piano); members of the Guarneri Quartet. RCA ARL1-0761.

One of the great glories of French musical art, this work will sing its way into the heart of almost anyone who exposes himself to it. The surging strength of a fine Rubinstein performance is an "open sesame" to its treasures. With the C Minor Quartet on this disc is the late string quartet (Op. 121) of Fauré, well played here by the Guarneri ensemble.

Miscellaneous Quartet

● **MESSIAEN: Quatuor pour la Fin du Temps.** Tashi (Peter Serkin, piano; Ida Kavañan, violin; Fred Sherry, cello; Richard Stoltzman, clarinet). RCA ARL1-1567.

The *Quartet for the End of Time* contains, as may be expected by those who know Messiaen, bird calls, chime-like piano constructions, what the composer describes as "soft cascades of blue orange chords," and evocations of trumpets, all in fulfillment of the Revelation of St. John. Tashi owes its very existence and burgeoning career to a concert performance of this work, and they meet its awesome demands with power and security; need any more be said about these four extraordinary players?

Quintet

(String Quartet plus Piano)

● **SCHUMANN: Quintet in E-flat Major, Op. 44.** Rudolf Serkin (piano); Budapest Quartet. COLUMBIA MS 7266.

From its first appearance on discs in the mid Twenties, each new version of

CHAMBER MUSIC...

Schumann's quintet has been an invitation to total immersion in a sound bath that is regenerating to both ear and mind. This is perhaps an elaborate, indirect way of saying that if there is a *basic* basic chamber music work with piano, this is it. One good reason for owning this Serkin-powered disc is the Brahms Horn Trio (already discussed) on the second side; this quintet makes two good reasons.

Miscellaneous Quintet

● **SCHUBERT: *Quintet in A Major, Op. 114*** ("Trout"). Jörg Demus (piano); members of the Collegium Aureum (Franz Josef Maier, violin; Heinz-Otto Graf, viola; Rudolf Mandalka, cello; Paul Breuer, double bass). BASF KHB 20314.

Of all the recordings of this work known to me—including versions in which the pianist is Clifford Curzon, Mieczyslaw Horszowski, Louis Kentner, Hephzibah Menuhin, and *both* Serkins—this is the one which would have sounded, I think, most sympathetic to Schubert himself. This is not alone because of the excellence of Demus, but also because he plays a period Conrad Graf piano with the kind of mellow, unforced tone known to the composer. And too, Demus' highly qualified associates use gut (rather than wire or wound) strings on their splendid Italian instruments. The blend is thus both luminous and illuminating, exposing details rarely heard on other recordings. As for the work itself, praise of it is as superfluous as speaking up in favor of tomorrow morning's sunrise.

● **BRAHMS: *Clarinet Quintet in B Minor, Op. 115***. Gervase de Peyer (clarinet); Melos Ensemble. ANGEL S-36280.

To call this work Brahms' supreme chamber-music accomplishment might be to invoke only a warm personal preference rather than a cool cerebral judgment. But it should at least suggest that this quintet occupies a unique place *above* other Brahms works for which I have great affection—the F Minor Piano Quintet, the A Minor String Quartet, and the B-flat Major Sextet, to name a few. But in none of them did Brahms invent material of the distinc-

tion and memorability the Clarinet Quintet conveys both reflectively and rhapsodically. De Peyer swings from one mood to the other with a tone quality amenable to either, and his associates are no less resourceful.

● **MOZART: *Quintets No. 3, in G Minor (K. 516); and No. 4, in C Minor (K. 406)***. Arthur Grumiaux (violin); Arpad Gérecz (violin); Georges Janzer (viola); Max Lesueur (viola); Eva Czako (cello). PHILIPS 6500 620.

The G Minor Quintet is a conceptual counterpart to the G Minor Symphony, but, lacking some of the *galant* externals as it does, it reveals more of the in-



ner turmoil and emotional distress induced by the recent death of the composer's father. No one who relishes Mozart at his most joyous should deny himself the privilege of sharing also his sufferings and sorrows. The Grumiaux-led performance strikes me as faster than appropriate, hence less expressive of the work's inner essence. But it is both better-sounding and more accurately reproduced than any other currently available version. Curiously, the C Minor Quintet has everything in intensity of playing here that the G Minor lacks.

Septet

(Strings, Clarinet, Horn, Bassoon)

● **BEETHOVEN: *Septet in E-flat Major, Op. 20***. Melos Ensemble. L'OISEAU-LYRE 60015.

In its multiple movements (six) and scoring for strings plus clarinet, horn,

and bassoon, Beethoven's Septet is, in everything but name, a divertimento. The reason for this is wholly terminological, for the work was written on the cusp between the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth, when the older designation was becoming old-fashioned. Under either name it is a thoroughly enjoyable experience, both for what it summarizes of the eighteenth century and for what it promises for the nineteenth. The performance shows British ensemble artistry at its best.

Octet

(More of the Same)

● **SCHUBERT: *Octet in F Major, Op. 166***. Vienna Octet. LONDON 6051.

What Beethoven could not have realized when he was writing his Septet in 1799-1800 was that there was then in Vienna a two-year-old child who would grow up to add a second violin to his septet combination and produce one of the unique masterpieces in the whole chamber literature. Franz Schubert played the Beethoven Septet as a student, reacted to it as a man, and glorified many of its concepts in an octet of 1824 which, for sheer euphony, has never been surpassed. Written for Viennese musicians, it is best heard from those conditioned (there) to understand not merely its sense but also its sound. To me that means Willi Boskovsky, violin, and seven other peerless principals of the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra.

● **MENDELSSOHN: *Octet in E-flat Major, Op. 20***. Smetana Quartet; Janáček Quartet. VANGUARD SU 4.

Violinists who dote on the Mendelssohn Violin Concerto, pianists who adore the *Rondo Capriccioso*, and just plain music lovers who appreciate the *Midsummer Night's Dream* should lose not a day in acquainting themselves with the *source* of all of them. In this work written in 1825, the sixteen-year-old Mendelssohn both found and flourished his gift for fairy music, for fantasy, and for string writing. As his sister Fanny wrote to a friend in description of its content, one is "half inclined to snatch up a broomstick and follow the aerial procession." This is one work of which, when played well (as it is here by two good quartets), one can easily say, "There was never anything like it before, and there has never been anything like it since." That is as appropriate a way as any I can think of to end the octet category—and, indeed, the much larger one of Chamber Music as well. □

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



Elgar's Second by Boult: a Realization as Close to Perfect as It Is Ever Likely to Be

IN his latest (the fifth!) recording of Elgar's complex and enormously rich-textured Second Symphony for Angel Records, Sir Adrian Boult, together with the players of the London Philharmonic Orchestra and producer Christopher Bishop, has finally achieved a realization that takes the full measure of all the dimensions of this mighty score.

In reviewing previous recordings of Elgar's Second in these pages, I have noted that the work is a tough nut for listeners to crack on first hearing, and that it is perhaps best approached by way of the middle movements, so that familiarity with them may provide the key to unraveling and putting in their proper perspective the many-layered and close-packed events of the end movements. Sir Georg Solti, in his remarkable 1975 reading of the music (also with the London Philharmonic), accomplished prodigies of textural and rhythmic clarification of these same end movements, but I noted somewhat cramped recorded sound in climactic moments of the score. I also recalled that Sir Adrian Boult's first recording of the symphony, done in 1945 on 78-rpm discs, embodied a breadth and power I had never before experienced.

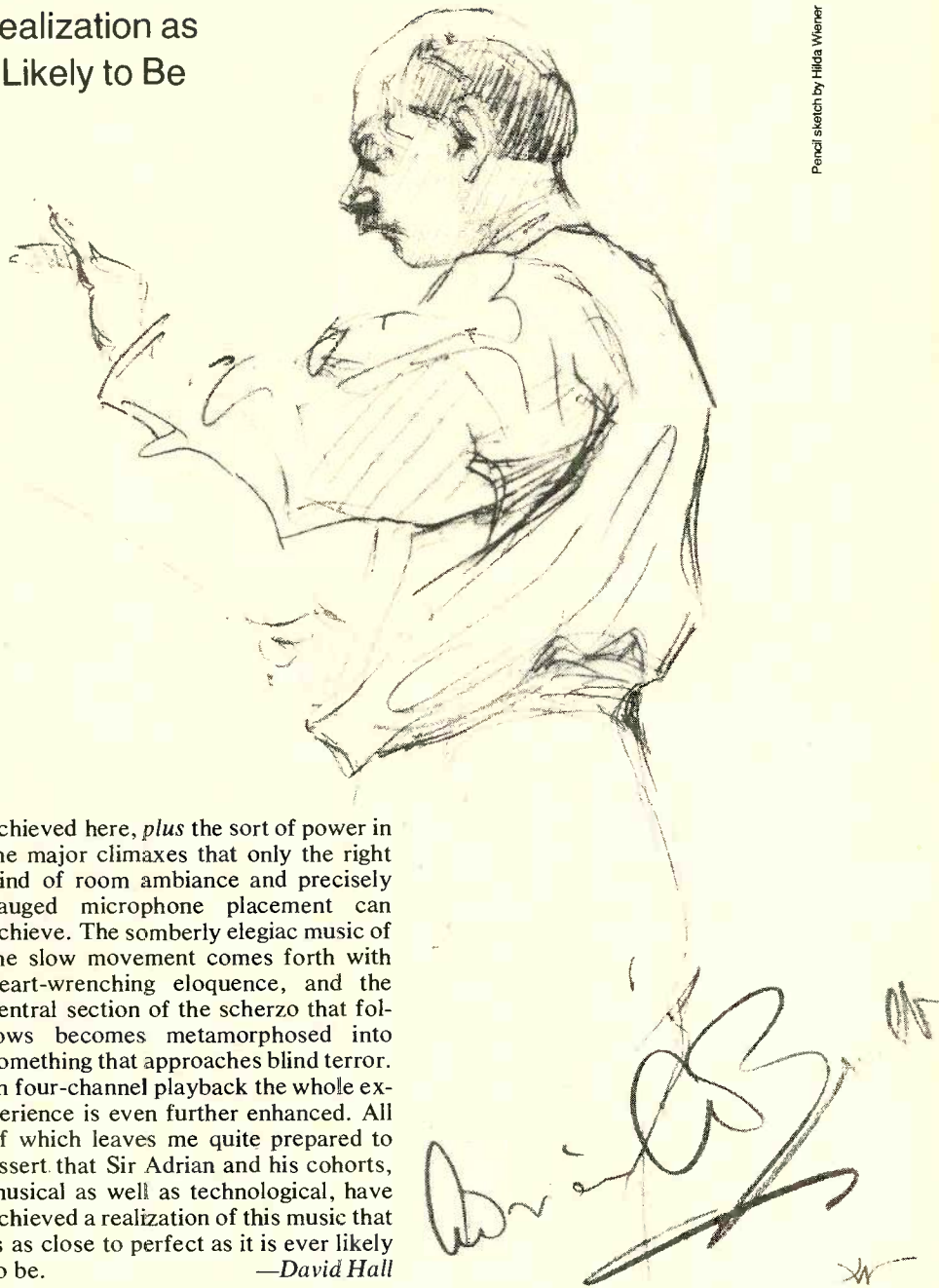
In any event, Sir Adrian, at the age of eighty-eight, has achieved the seemingly impossible: a magnificent re-creation of his 1945 reading that is enhanced by some of the best recorded orchestral sound it has been my privilege to encounter. This job of production is in the same class with Bishop's achievement in his recording of the Benjamin Britten Sea Interludes and Passacaglia from *Peter Grimes*. Boult's tempos here, marginally more deliberate than Solti's, enable the special fervor of his conception to take hold fully from the beginning to the end of the fifty-three-minute score. All of the textural clarity of Solti's recording is

achieved here, *plus* the sort of power in the major climaxes that only the right kind of room ambiance and precisely gauged microphone placement can achieve. The somberly elegiac music of the slow movement comes forth with heart-wrenching eloquence, and the central section of the scherzo that follows becomes metamorphosed into something that approaches blind terror. In four-channel playback the whole experience is even further enhanced. All of which leaves me quite prepared to assert that Sir Adrian and his cohorts, musical as well as technological, have achieved a realization of this music that is as close to perfect as it is ever likely to be.

—David Hall

ELGAR: *Symphony No. 2, in E-flat Major, Op. 63.* London Philharmonic Orchestra, Sir Adrian Boult cond. ANGEL □ S-37218 \$6.98.

(Continued overleaf)



Pencil sketch by Hilda Wiener

Munrow's Last Album: The Aristocratic Courts Rather Than The Barnyards

WHILE the final editorial work on Deutsche Grammophon's Archiv album "Music of the Gothic Era" was being done, conductor David Munrow died at the age of thirty-three. This, then, is his last recorded collection of early music; it is also one that outstrips any others in the field in concept, scholarship, and execution.

These three discs contain no mere collection of Gothic music, but an anthology tracing the whole history of polyphonic music based on plain-song in France for a period of just over two hundred years. Beginning with the *organa* of Leonin and Perotin, it leads us through the motets of the Ars Antiqua (Montpellier and Bamberg Codices), the Ars Nova, the mannered motets of the late fourteenth century (Ivrea Codex), the motets of Machaut, and finally the large-scale motets from the Chantilly Codex.

To the casual listener the repertoire may seem a limited one, but the musician and scholar interested in Gothic

music can sense the excitement of tremendous stylistic growth as harmonic and rhythmic languages undergo a subtle but sure evolution. It is, in fact, a development similar in scope to that which took place between Sammartini and Mozart, and, with a little getting used to the style, even the casual listener will begin to hear it in those terms.

Besides three records of performances of the actual music, the album offers a superb booklet of over fifty pages which includes comprehensive essays concerning the music and literature of the period, the original texts with translations into English and German (there is even a glossary of obsolete words), complete documentation of the musical sources, a catalog of the instruments used, and a variety of illustrations and reproductions of pages from some of the manuscripts. In short, this album is a complete package containing everything one needs to survey this era in detail.

But these are only the *trimmings*; the outstanding feature of the album is the superb performances offered by the Early Music Consort of London. This group is, without doubt, the finest in the field. Their intonation is impeccable, their rhythm is vital and precise, and their ensemble perfect. While many groups today strive for a "natural" sound, falling all too frequently into the raucous in attempting the ro-

bust, these singers bring a refinement of tone which places them firmly in the aristocratic courts rather than in the barnyards of the period.

The same refinement is extended to the interpretations. Lacking any documentation on the matter, Munrow derived the expressive content from the texts themselves. Thus, each work is individually conceived as to the mood it is intended to create and the instrumentation that mood requires. The use of plucked instruments, for example, in *S'on me regarde* produces sound of the rarest delicacy, as do the bells in the following piece.

Perhaps the most impressive performances are those of the *organa*. So often rendered as cold, long, and monotonous, they are imbued by Munrow with an intimate *spiritual* quality which comes as a surprise in these monolithic creations of the Gothic mind. The long, sustained tones of the tenor are taken by a small chorus accompanied by bells or organ. Above this, soloists are employed for the sinuous melismas of the upper parts. Not only are the intertwined lines clearly heard, but one immediately realizes the virtuoso nature of the vocal writing. Messrs. Bowman, Hill, Elliott, and Brett prove their individual agility and musicianship in the Leonin works and their ensemble mastery in the *organum duplum* of Perotin.

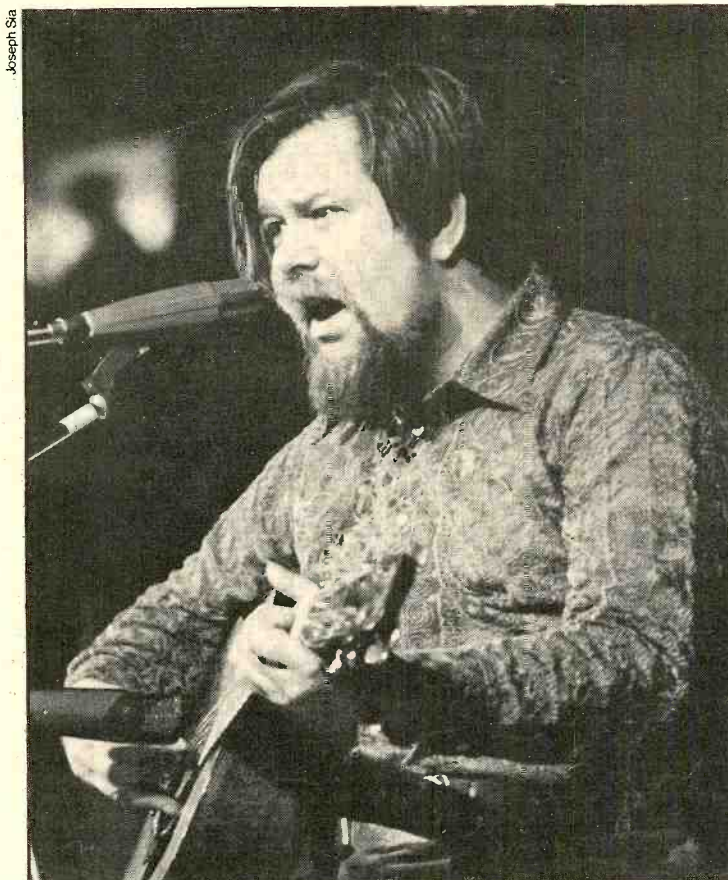
This, I want to make clear, is a very

The Early Music Consort (clockwise) in the motet *Clap, clap, par un matin*: James Tyler (mandora), Christopher Hogwood (harp), Gillian Reid (psaltery), Oliver Brookes (vièle), the late David Munrow, vocalists Paul Elliott and Martyn Hill.



special album. It should be treasured, listened to for pleasure, and, for those who want to enrich their knowledge of the Gothic era, dipped into little by little in order to absorb the mass of exquisite detail. —Stoddard Lincoln

MUSIC OF THE GOTHIC ERA. Leonin: *Viderunt omnes; Alleluia Pascha nostrum; Gaude Maria Virgo; Locus iste.* Perotin: *Viderunt omnes; Sederunt principes.* Petrus de Cruce: *Aucun ont trouvé.* Adam de la Halle: *De ma dame vient; J'os bien a m'amie parler.* Vitry: *Impudenter circumivi; Cum statua.* Cluny: *Pantheon abluitur.* Pusiex: *Ida capillorum; Rachel plorat filios.* Machaut: *Lasse! comment oublieray; Qui es promesses; Hoquetus David; Christe, qui lux es.* Royllart: *Rex Karole, Johannis.* Anon. (Codex Montpellier and Codex Bamberg): *Alle, psallite cum luya; Amor potest; S'on me regarde; In mari miserie; On parole de batre; En mai, quant rosier sont flouri; Dominator Domine; El mois de mai; O mitissima; Hoquetus I-VII.* Anon. (Roman de Fauvel): *La mesnie fauveline; Quant je le voi; Zelus familie; Quasi non ministerium.* Anon. (Codex Ivrea): *Clap, clap, par un matin; Lés l'ormel a la turelle; O Philippe, Franci qui generis; Febus mundo oriens.* Anon. (Codex Chantilly): *Degentis vita; Inter densas deserti.* Early Music Consort of London, David Munrow cond. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON ARCHIV 2723054 three discs \$23.94.



Dave Van Ronk: no queens dying in childbirth

Minstrel Dave Van Ronk Sings What Sounds Good, Feels Good, And Makes Sense

LET us now praise famous men who are not as famous as they ought to be. Dave Van Ronk has, for more than twenty years, been familiar to "folk-music" cognoscenti in an area largely confined to New York City and the New England states. He has recorded countless albums for labels big and small without ever catching fire—nor apparently caring very much whether he did or not—and he is practically the only minstrel besides Pete Seeger and Judy Collins who has not metamorphosed into the tempting—and permanent—compromises of pop and rock. He still has the same grainy, gritty voice, still tends to become carried away on ride-out vocal choruses, still plays guitar with beautiful control and taste, and continues to add to a catholic song repertoire that is as interesting

and as surprising as Seeger's, Collins', or Leadbelly's.

I don't mean to suggest that Van Ronk should now become the object of a cult, but he has been such a good musician for such a long, long time that cheers—loud and prolonged cheers—are not only much in order but seriously in arrears. Van Ronk is not a "folk" artist in the purist sense—the kind that sings only Ozark Mountain ballads or ditties from the Francis James Child catalog about queens dying in childbirth. He sings whatever sounds good, feels good, and makes sense.

He was one of the first minstrels—there is no other term that describes him better—to recognize the charm and complexity of early "hot jazz" tunes: fifteen years ago he made an album containing a persuasive, soft version of Jelly Roll Morton's *Sweet Substitute*, and his understandable fascination with Morton has continued. On this new Philo disc he plays a wonderful guitar transcription of Morton's superb piano piece *The Pearls*, as well as doing a vocal on Morton's *Mamie's Blues*, said to be based on a song by the New Orleans madam Mamie Desdumes of the early 1900's.

Van Ronk's own *Sunday Street* is as good a tune about a down-and-outer as

has ever been written, and his reading of Joni Mitchell's *That Song About the Midway* has a fine ferocity about it. *Down South Blues* and *That'll Never Happen No More* are stomp-heel versions based on originals by the Twenties country-blues singer Leroy Carr/Scrapper Blackwell and Blind Blake, respectively (and, in Van Ronk's hands, respectfully). To top the album off, there is a grinding version of what Van Ronk, in his liner notes, describes as "this . . . perfect . . . song": *Would You Like to Swing on a Star?* It may seem a long way between Walt Disney and Jelly Roll Morton, but both detail the doings of that ultimate bunch of in-laws, the human race. Van Ronk's artistry comes from his acceptance of the whole bunch, with all its warts and winsomeness, tenderness and violence. Van Ronk is one of us, maybe a little better than most.

—Joel Vance

DAVE VAN RONK: *Sunday Street.* Dave Van Ronk (vocals, guitar). *Sunday Street; Jesus Met the Woman at the Well; Nobody Knows the Way I Feel This Morning; Maple Leaf Rag; Down South Blues; Jivin' Man Blues; That Song About the Midway; That'll Never Happen No More; Mamie's Blues; Would You Like to Swing on a Star?:* PHILLO 1036 \$6.98. (Continued overleaf)

Getting Hooked on Emmylou Harris: The More You Hear The More You Want

I AM a fan of Emmylou Harris, and that puts her in very select company in my little world. Much as I've praised her in private, I've probably wound up underrating her in print. The more accustomed to her voice I become, the better I like it; the more I listen, the more I hear. There are subtlety and credibility in the way she emotionally underscores both music and lyrics, plus a distinctive and attractive tonality and considerable phrasing savvy.

An example of this last can be found in the way she refuses to be rushed by Jimmy Work's awkward wording of the second verse of an otherwise good old country song, *Making Believe*, in her new Warner Brothers album "Luxury Liner." The choice of that old, lately overlooked warhorse relates to another thing about Harris, her taste. It isn't infallible (it turns up at least one godawful clinker with every album, in this case Chuck Berry's *You Never Can Tell*), and it is in danger of sliding into formula, a couple of Gram Parsons songs, a Louvin Brothers song, and something on the order of a Carter Family classic becoming predictable by now in each album. But it turns up offbeat nuggets too, such as Townes Van Zandt's *Poncho and Lefty* (Van

Zandt is every bit as crazy, praise the Lord, as Roger Miller), and it continues to be not a case of what *kinds* of songs she picks out but which *particular* ones.

And, of course, her band and producer continue to do their jobs almost as spectacularly as she does hers. I'd rate this one right up there with "Elite Hotel," where the air is pretty rarified.

—Noel Coppage

EMMYLOU HARRIS: *Luxury Liner*. Emmylou Harris (vocals, guitar); Emory Gordy (bass); Albert Lee (guitar); John Ware (drums); other musicians. *Luxury Liner; Poncho & Lefty; Making Believe; You're Supposed to Be Feeling Good; I'll Be Your San Antonio Rose; You Never Can Tell; When I Stop Dreaming; Hello Stranger; She; Tulsa Queen.* WARNER BROS. BS 2998 \$6.98, © M8 2998 \$7.97, © M5 2998 \$7.97.

Teddi King: Intelligent Songs Intelligently Sung By One Who Can Sing

COMING upon Teddi King's new Audiophile album titled "Lovers & Losers" is like opening the door to an unfamiliar room where there lingers the

scent of a remembered perfume—the same perfume that a girl who long ago disappeared from your life used to wear and which you didn't think they made any more. In Teddi King's case the perfume is the subtlest blending of musical style, drama, forcefulness, sexy wit, and just plain old-fashioned class that I've inhaled since the heydays of Mabel Mercer, Portia Nelson, and Felicia Sanders. These great ladies of song—and Teddi King, too—were (are) more than mere Saloon Singers for the Knights of the Furrowed Brow. They were dramatic artists who told you—sang you—fables and stories and vignettes of Life and Love with all the hypnotic grace and skill of a Scheherazade. Ms. King has, apparently, been ripening to a luscious maturity for some few seasons now, but this is the first time I've heard her, and, not to beat around the bush about it, you have before you an instant Cult of One.

I have no idea how many lucky others surrendered to her enchantment at her recent live appearances at the Cafe Carlyle in New York, but if you didn't make it to Manhattan's upper East Side this recording will give you some idea of the quality of musical sorcery she practiced there. As she weaves her way through these fifteen songs, she uncovers a hitherto hidden note of little-girl anger in Lorenz Hart's blasé, sardonic lyric for *Bewitched*, waltzes through *Wait Till You See Her* with a Garlandish wistfulness, and sings simply and superbly Alec Wilder's lovely *Blackberry Winter*.

Teddi King is someone really special—not in the we-precious-few sense,

Emmylou Harris (near right) sings tales of the country, Teddi King (center right) songs of the town, while Antal Dorati (far right) presents Haydn's delicious mixture of the courtly minuet and the country dance in splendid performances and first-rate sound.



but "special" meaning exceptional, uncommon, and distinct. And the joy—the unmixed, uncomplicated joy—of hearing intelligent lyrics intelligently sung after all these years by *someone who can actually sing* is not to be taken lightly. Nor is this album. More, Teddi King! Much, much more!

—Peter Reilly

TEDDI KING: *Lovers & Losers*. Teddi King (vocals); Loonis McGlohon (piano); Mel Alexander (bass); Jim Lackey (drums). *Lovers and Losers; A Ghost of a Chance; Can't You Do a Friend a Favor?; The Wine of May; There's a Man in My Life; A Sunday Kind of Love; Ask Yourself Why; Nobody's Heart; Honeysuckle Rose; Bewitched; Slightly Less Than Wonderful; Blackberry Winter; Wait Till You See Her; Fools Rush In; Be a Child.* AUDIOPHILE AP 117 \$6.98.

The Inexhaustible, Wonderful, Sublime— And Previously Unrecorded—Haydn

ANTAL DORATI is evidently determined to record every note Haydn wrote for orchestra, and his determination is adding abundantly to our pleasure as well as our knowledge of the works involved. Having completed the

symphonies with the Philharmonica Hungarica for London/Decca; having begun the concertos with his wife, pianist Ilse von Alpenheim, and the Bamberg Symphony for Vox; and having made a superb start on a complete opera cycle in Lausanne for Philips, he has now returned to the scene of the first of these projects to give us the heretofore unrecorded set of twenty-four minuets Haydn composed (according to the reasoned speculation of H.C. Robbins Landon, whose performing edition was used in the recording) in 1796 or 1797, probably for a grand ball at Eisenstadt. The depth and joyous nature of Dorati's commitment are shown in his charming postscript to Landon's annotation for the new two-disc London set, in which he suggests a descriptive character for most of the respective dances and the sense they make as a continuous sequence.

Ordinarily one would approach such a collection with some caution and perhaps suggest exposure to only one of the four sides at a sitting, but this is *Haydn*—this is, as a typical London review of 1794 expressed it, "the inexhaustible, the wonderful, the sublime HAYDN!" Landon describes Haydn's "farewell to dance music in the strict sense" as "these great twenty-four *Menuetti*"; the adjective is not used casually. Dorati, noting that "These minuets are quite of another type from those in the master's symphonies . . . real dance music," expands on "how Haydn is able to open doors, penetrate the walls of the palace, intermingling the talk of nobles with the voices of the people, mixes the courtly minuet with

dances of peasants, soldiers . . . fore-shadows such future dance music as the *Ländler* or *Schuhplattler* and—far on the horizon—the *Wiener Walzer*."

The scoring is for a largish orchestra (without violas, of course, according to the pattern followed by Mozart, Haydn, and their contemporaries in such productions), with some brilliant passages for various winds. One might cite for particular attention the stunning horns *in alt* in No. 10, the Schubertian-before-the-fact clarinets in No. 13, the by-no-means-gossamer fairy world evoked in the trio of the festive No. 11. One might, indeed, make a study of all the fascinating trios in their own right: it does not seem at all out of proportion to suggest that these dances are as valuable in their particular genre as Haydn's symphonies and quartets are in theirs.

For the performances, no amount of praise could be excessive, and the sound is first-rate, too, if a trifle bassy. It might be noted that, with the four sides averaging sixteen minutes' playing time, Haydn's other set of minuets—the twelve *Katherinentänze* of 1792—and perhaps the twelve German Dances as well might have been included in the set, but they are available elsewhere, and there is no question at all about full value—and then some—in this marvelous release. It is, in its own way, quite "inexhaustible . . . wonderful . . . sublime."

—Richard Freed

HAYDN: *Twenty-four Minuets (Hob. IX:16)*. Philharmonia Hungarica, Antal Dorati cond. LONDON STS-15359/60 two discs \$7.96.



Ramon Scarvelli



POPULAR DISCS AND TAPES

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

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

ABBA: *Arrival*. Abba (vocals, instrumentals). *When I Kissed the Teacher; Dancing Queen; Knowing Me, Knowing You; Why Did It Have to Be Me; Arrival; Tiger*; and four others. ATLANTIC SD 18207 \$6.98, Ⓢ TP-18207 \$7.97, © CS-18207 \$7.97.

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

Abba is the Swedish group that hit in 1975 with *Waterloo*, a rollicking pastiche of every good American and British pop record of the last twenty years. Since then they have had several other hit singles and have issued sundry albums, and I have to tell you right now that I haven't been able to take *this* particular album off the turntable for a week. It is a splendid display of sheer know-how, canny songwriting, and cavalry-charge performances. The sass and pizzazz of the group are delightful, and it is obvious that some brainwork has gone into the production, which is also by the group.

Not that Abba's music is ambitious or "significant"; it continues to be a pastiche of British/American commercial pop, sometimes sophisticated, sometimes pure bubblegum (*Knowing Me, Knowing You* is an example of the former, and *When I Kissed the Teacher* of the latter). But it is unabashedly entertaining, and presented with thrill and skill. I haven't

heard as vigorous and well-made an album in years. J.V.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

BILLO'S CARACAS BOYS: *Billo '77*. Cheo Garcia, Ely Mendez, Gustavo Farrera, Oswaldo Delgado (vocals); orchestra, Billo Frometa arr. and cond. *El Rey; Roberto Ruiz; El Callao Tunai; El Coquero; Cosas del Alma; Golpe Para Alla*; and five others. TH THS-2010 \$4.98, Ⓢ THS-2010 \$6.00 (from TH Records, 10124 NW 80th Avenue, Hialeah Gardens, Fla. 33016).

Performance: **Spirited**
Recording: **Fair**

According to Billo's liner notes, he has been playing in Venezuela for forty—count 'em—forty years, and this album marks the first time he has used singers with his orchestra. He goes on to say that he is proud of the quality of his vocalists (in particular Sr. Oswaldo Delgado, whom he introduces on this album) and that he believes this present group of musicians and singers is the finest one he has ever led.

I will cheerfully testify that Billo's group is sprightly and full of fun, and that they seem to be having a whale of a time. His is an "old-fashioned" pre-salsa dance band, with dash and precision, and I'm sure it would be great fun to go to a Latin ballroom to hear Billo's orchestra and to watch the patrons dancing to his music.

Technically, the recording (it was made in a small studio in Florida) tends to pinch the sounds of the brass, and the stereo separation is rather crude, but these deficiencies somehow add to the pleasure of listening, as though Billo's group were being recorded on the spur of the moment—*overheard* rather than memorialized. A delightful album. J.V.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

EUBIE BLAKE: *Wild About Eubie*. Joan Morris (mezzo-soprano); William Bolcom and Eubie Blake (pianos). *I'm Just Wild About Harry; Goodnight, Angeline; I'm Cravin' for That*

Kind of Love; Boogie Woogie Beguine; and eight others. COLUMBIA M 34504 \$6.98, Ⓢ MA 34504 \$7.98, © MT 34504 \$7.98.

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

William Bolcom, whose pianism is as foot-tapingly infectious as syncopation itself, and his talented wife Joan Morris, who can trill the sappiest song into a first-rate piece of entertainment, have done wonders again. Following triumphant appearances together in "After the Ball" and "Vaudeville" on the Nonesuch label, they have gone over to Columbia to join Eubie Blake in an affectionate retrospective of songs and instrumental selections by the ninety-three-year-old master. The idiom ranges from the one-step to swing and back to ragtime, much of it reflecting the fruitful partnership Blake began in 1915 with lyricist Noble Sissle.

Joan Morris gamely takes on the period stuff with the sly, subtle note of satire that is her hallmark in such numbers as *I'd Give a Dollar for a Dime* and *My Handy Man Ain't Handy Any More*, a double-entendre routine rife with excruciating word play ("He never hauls the ashes like he used to do"), but she can also dish it out straight, which she does effectively with the old showstopper from *Shuffle Along* called *I'm Cravin' for That Kind of Love*. There's also a sort of half-serious version of *Weary*, a blues lament that must have inspired Noël Coward to write *Weary of It All* for Beatrice Lillie. When the lady isn't singing, Bolcom is out there making the keyboard jump in *Capricious Harlem*, or Blake himself, with his even sharper, swifter touch, is delivering the *Boogie Woogie Beguine* and, later, *Eubie's Classical Rag*, which he composed only recently in the very idiom he helped make famous in the first place. For a sizzling finale, Bolcom and Blake team up for a duet of *Dixie Moon*, while La Morris offers vocal winks at the wacky words. As an interlude of sheer delight or even studied soberly (depressing thought) as a survey of the American popular song since the turn of the century, "Wild About Eubie" can be unreservedly recommended. P.K.

Explanation of symbols:

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

Monophonic recordings are indicated by the symbol Ⓜ

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

DAVID BOWIE: *Low*. David Bowie (vocals, saxophones); Eno (keyboards, tape treatments); Dennis Davis (percussion); Roy Young (piano); other musicians. *Speed of Life; Breaking Glass; What in the World; Sound and Vision; Always Crashing in the Same Car*; and six others. RCA CPL1-2030 \$7.98, © CPS1-2030 \$7.98, © CPK1-2030 \$7.98.

Performance: **Peculiar**
Recording: **Deliberately murky**

"Low" is, to say the very least, a departure for Bowie, an experiment, and I confess I'm surprised that so much of it comes off as well as it does. It is in reality a collaboration, although it's not billed as such—a Bowie/Eno album rather than the usual Darling David star vehicle. Consequently, your reactions to it will depend primarily on your tolerance for Eno's hit-and-miss avant-gardisms rather than on your fondness for Bowie's electronic egomania. Most of the songs find Bowie's voice mixed almost inaudibly, and the arrangements are highly reminiscent of Eno's post-Roxy Music work, weird psychedelic/surfing stuff like "Here Come the Warm Jets" and "Taking Tiger Mountain by Strategy."

Personally, though I've never been totally convinced by Eno's deliberately anti-music approach, most of what he has contributed here has an oddly austere beauty, and, since

Bowie's singing has always annoyed the hell out of me, the combination of the buried vocals, interesting compositional ideas, and marvelous production makes "Low" the first Bowie album I can listen to. This is certainly more demanding stuff than the phony r-&-b of "Young Americans," and God only knows what his hard-core fans will think of it. But you have to give him credit if only for the commercial gamble involved. Artistically, at any rate, the gamble seems to have been worth it. It's terribly cold, of course—this is still Bowie, after all—but it's . . . well, interesting. Coming from me, that qualifies as a rave. S.S.

BREAD: *Lost Without Your Love*. Bread (vocals and instrumentals). *Hooked on You; Belonging; Fly Away; Hold Tight; The Chosen One*; and six others. ELEKTRA 7E-1094 \$6.98, © ET8-1094 \$7.97, © TC5-1094 \$7.97.

Performance: **Mostly Velveeta**
Recording: **Good**

There's a really charming (you heard me, *charming*) track here: *She's the Only One*. Bread, back together again with David Gates at the helm, performs it beautifully and simply against a shimmery acoustic-guitar background, and it is one of those easy, folk-inflected songs that automatically spread sunshine all over the place. Most of everything

else, unfortunately, is Velveeta-bland, even the stately dramatics of *Our Lady of Sorrow* ("Just today I watched them as they carried her away") and the "sensitive" blubber of *Lost Without Your Love* ("I'm as helpless as a ship without a wheel"). As a group, Bread is hardly a quartet likely to give you much pause one way or another. At least *She's the Only One* proves that they have the occasional ability to charm. But then again, don't we all? P.R.

KIM CARNES: *Sailin'*. Kim Carnes (vocals); orchestra. *Sailin'; He'll Come Home; Warm Love; Tubin'*; and six others. A&M SP-4606 \$6.98.

Performance: **Doom on your doorstep**
Recording: **Fair**

Kim Carnes is a Hitchcock blonde. That is, she looks like one of those cool, elegant ladies you wouldn't hesitate to bring home to mom or to introduce to your boss as proof of your upward mobility, the kind Alfred Hitchcock prefers in his films. On this recording, however, that lady vanishes and Ms. Carnes turns out to be just another Desperate Chick with a throat-catching rasp in her voice and doom-on-your-doorstep delivery. And her songs (she wrote most of the material here), such as *All He Did Was Tell Me Lies* and *He'll Come Home*, have all the bounce of Emily Brontë



Left to right, Steve Cropper, Booker T. Jones, Willie Hall, and Donald "Duck" Dunn

That Memphis Group Is Back

STARTING in 1962 with "Green Onions," Booker T. and the M.G.'s (M.G. stood for "Memphis Group") adapted blues, country, rock, jazz, and common-sense funk into a style of performance that became uniquely their own. By the very early 1970's, they had evolved into rock's only real chamber-music group. Not only were the individual musicians talented and skilled, but they were an ensemble group, as opposed to one with a dominant leader and supporting musicians or—on the other hand—a group of soloists who occa-

sionally play together for a few choruses of a tune.

The artistry of the quartet could also be found in their approach to material, no matter what the quality, no matter whether it was their own or someone else's. Where other groups would say, "What can we do with this tune?" or "What can we do to it?" the M.G.'s took a rare and honorable attitude: "What can we do for this tune?"

By 1971, the M.G.'s were experimenting with a sound that was quasi-jazz, but it was

right about this time that they split up. Booker T. Jones went off to record several wayward and vapid solo albums; guitarist Steve Cropper became an independent producer; and bassist Donald "Duck" Dunn and drummer Al Jackson, Jr., remained as studio sidemen with Stax Records in Memphis, where the group had its start. Jackson was also a very successful co-producer of many of the early Al Green hits and played drums on Green's recordings. He was murdered in 1975 by a person or persons unknown. A fine man and a fine musician, he is sorely missed.

THE remaining M.G.'s have now reunited, with Willie Hall on drums, and I am happy to report not only the return of the group—which is good enough news in itself—but that their artistry is undiminished. Here again we can hear Jones' wonderful equation of romp and melancholy and Cropper's exquisite fills. (Of all the better guitarists I've ever heard, Cropper is the only one who does not need the solo to express either himself or his responsibility to a tune; for a modern guitarist this is amazing.) Dunn's moaning, guttural bass and Hall's spicy drumming are exquisite.

The M.G.'s are one of the rare groups that know and believe in the mystery of music, and their performances are made of dreams, brains, spit, and dignity. This album is an event. —Joel Vance

BOOKER T. & THE M.G.'S: *Universal Language*. Booker T. Jones (keyboards); Steve Cropper (guitar); Donald "Duck" Dunn (bass); Willie Hall (drums). *Sticky Stuff; Grab Bag; Space Nuts; Love Wheels; Moto Cross; Last Tango in Memphis; M.G.'s Salsa; The Stick; Reincarnation*. ASYLUM 7E-1093 \$6.98, © ET8-1093 \$7.97, © TC5-1093 \$7.97.

JOSÉ FELICIANO:
a violent—and
tender—urge to
speak through music



Private Stock Records

filling out a form at the Bureau of Missing Persons. The overall production style is vaguely c-&-w, the album having been arranged and recorded by a number of hands in a variety of places (Muscle Shoals, Miami, and New York). The overall effect is boredom. P.R.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

COUNTRY GAZETTE: *Out to Lunch*. Roger Bush (bass, vocals); Roland White (mandolin, guitar, vocals); Kenny Wertz (guitar, vocals); Alan Munde (banjo, guitar, dobro banjo); other musicians. *Still Feeling Blue; Sure Didn't Take Him Long; Out to Lunch; Melody for Baby; Sing a Sad Song; Down Down Down*; and seven others. FLYING FISH 027 \$6.98.

Performance: **Sparkling**
Recording: **Clear and clean**

Country Gazette is a West Coast bluegrass band somewhat less famous than fiddler Byron Berline, who left it to join another band between the last album and this one. More notoriety may come the Gazette's way now, as it sounds better here without Berline than it last did with him. Some of the holdovers seem to be trying harder, for one thing; Roland White, who mostly played guitar on the last album (maybe because Berline also plays mandolin), plays a lot of mandolin here and plays it well. That makes sense, as he was a proven mandolin picker with Lester Flatt before there was a Country Gazette. Also the songs are more interesting in this set—quite interesting, in fact. It's a group out to tease bluegrass and acoustic country into slightly more modern shapes: a little vocal oohing against a conventional instrumental complement, and that sort of thing. The group's taste is dependable, vocals are decent, picking is clean, production is good. Best of all, this is one California group playing Southeastern music as if it had actually been to the Southeast. N.C.

BING CROSBY: *Feels Good, Feels Right*. Bing Crosby (vocals); instrumental accompani-

ment. *Feels Good, Feels Right; Once in a While; As Time Goes By; Old Fashioned Love; Time on My Hands; The Way We Were*; and six others. LONDON PS 679 \$6.98, © PS8-679 \$7.95, © PS5-679 \$7.95.

Performance: **Still honey in that comb**
Recording: **Very good**

The track record and endurance quotient of Bing Crosby require no new testimonials; were he an Englishman, he'd certainly be Sir Bing by now. As it is, he is content to endorse orange juice and make periodic comebacks in places like Carnegie Hall, confounding a willing world which might have thought that at seventy-three it was pretty well time for a crooner to rest his vocal cords. This latest recording, made in London and the first new one from Crosby in some time (Schwann-1 lists only *What Life Is* and *A Couple of Song and Dance Men* with Fred Astaire as current releases, though there are seven older discs in Schwann-2) shows the old master to have lost little of his vocal equipment and none of his charm. The voice sounds a little strange at first, deeper, bassier, and with less of that agile ability to reach at will into the tenor range, but the listener quickly comes to realize that he's still in the authentic presence of Der Bingle, and to relax and enjoy it.

As ever, when he is most relaxed, Crosby is at his most convincing. When he is plucking hardy perennials out of old gardens—*Time on My Hands, The Night Is Young and You're So Beautiful, Once in a While*—it's a particular pleasure to take things slow with him and traverse the romantic musical landscapes of the past. He is less ingratiating when he's trying to be wide-awake and upbeat (as in the title song, which somehow doesn't feel quite good or right at all). Alan Cohen's lush, over-sweet arrangements are an intrusion. And there's one kind of made-to-order autobiographical item, *There's Nothing That I Haven't Sung About*, which has the manufactured sound of such self-serving concoctions and is far too cute for comfort. But most of

the time the real Crosby is in there doing what he does best, and he's still good to hear. P.K.

JOE ELY. Joe Ely (vocals, guitar); instrumental accompaniment. *I Had My Hopes Up High; Mardi Gras Waltz; She Never Spoke Spanish to Me; Gambler's Bride; Johnny Blues*; and five others. MCA MCA-2242 \$6.98, © T-2242 \$7.98.

Performance: **Not quite**
Recording: **Good**

The instrumental backing here is by far the best thing about it, and unfortunately you can't keep track of who's doing that, as producer Chip Young failed to see to it that the musicians got credited on the jacket. That should be considered strike one against any producer, in my book. Otherwise, though, he did a good enough job, the only other problem being that the thing is recorded at a high volume level and therefore, like a rock record, has a squeezed dynamic range. Ely's singing and his and two other writers' songs don't excite me much. Ely's voice isn't bad, but he postures a bit (which doesn't make him unique among aspiring country singers), and it seems to me he tends to slide a hair's breadth off pitch. Nice solos are plucked out of these songs by the back-up men, but I can't get a hell of a lot out of them. N.C.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

JOSÉ FELICIANO: *Sweet Soul Music*. José Feliciano (vocals, guitar); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *I Love Making Love to You; The Hungry Years; Loving Her Was Easier; Sweet Soul Music; Funny/Night Life*; and five others. PRIVATE STOCK PS 2022 \$6.98, © PVS 8300-2022 \$7.95, © PVS 5300-2022 \$7.95.

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

I was a Feliciano fan (of the raving category) as far back as 1961, when (I do not mean to compare my talents to his) we and dozens of others were allotted the stage at Gerde's Folk City for fifteen minutes apiece on Monday amateur nights. I used to watch José devastate the room, and I held him in awe. Without signing a membership card, I became a José cultist, and on those occasions when he played a one-night stand at a club or a concert hall, I dashed to where he was and yelled myself silly. Then, in 1968, *Light My Fire* hit the air waves, and José had made the big time.

Since then, of course, Feliciano has had a score of hits and become a famous name. He has recorded prolifically and has always given the utmost of his energy to his performances, sometimes not to his own benefit. What animates him, then as now, is a violent and tender urge to speak through music, and his intensity sometimes leads him astray, especially when he is singing weak or miscalculated material (some of which he has written himself). Feliciano's glory—and his problem—was and is that he is a hyper-talent who needs strong control; otherwise, he scatters his brilliance and energy in a buckshot spray. He has made some very good albums and some very bad ones.

Fortunately, his new LP is thrilling, disciplined Feliciano, and the credit for this is due in no small part to the production by Jerry Wexler, one of the great aces, and Barry Beckett. Feliciano has always felt very much

(Continued on page 86)

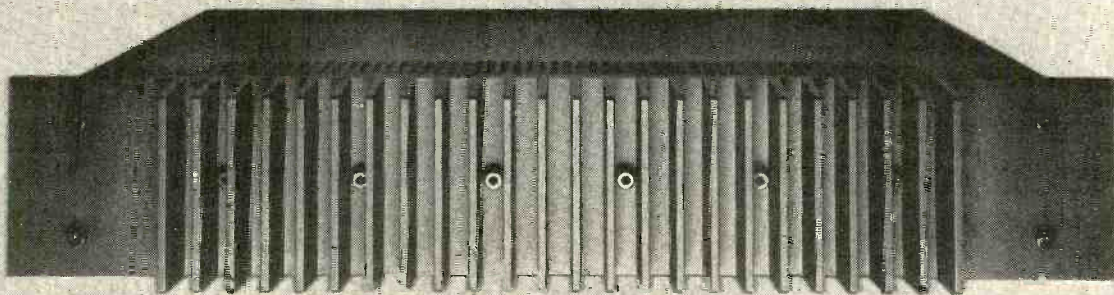
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CIRCLE NO. 26 ON READER SERVICE CARD

at home with jazz and funk, and the selection of material here is tailor-made for him. The sequence of *Funny* and *Night Life*, both written by Willie Nelson, is a mellow killer, and Feliciano's performance of Neil Sedaka's *The Hungry Years* cracks the heart. In case anyone has forgotten how remarkable José Feliciano always was, this album will serve as a welcome reminder. J.V.

ANDREW GOLD: *What's Wrong with This Picture?* Andrew Gold (vocals, guitars, keyboards, bass, drums); Kenny Edwards (bass); Dan Dugmore (guitar); other musicians. *Hope You Feel Good; Passing Thing; Do Wah Diddy; Learning the Game; Angel Woman*; and six others. ASYLUM 7E-1086 \$6.98.

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

It might be going a bit far to say that without Andrew Gold there wouldn't be much happening on Linda Ronstadt's records, but the superb band Gold leads and the arrangements he's cooked up for her have certainly been major factors in her success. As a solo artist, unfortunately, he leaves a lot to be desired. His voice is serviceable enough (it's improving, too—he sounds much more convincing here than he did on his first solo set), and his guitar playing, when it's on, remains absolutely breathtaking. The problem is that, for all the mid-Sixties English influences on his songwriting, he hasn't much of a knack for melody, and his albums are pretty bland as a result.

The only noteworthy things here, in fact, are oldies rearranged in the manner of his work with Linda on *You're No Good* and *Heatwave*. The old Manfred Mann chestnut *Do Wah Diddy* comes off best, with a tremendous increase in energy compared to the original, but the reggae approach he gives to *Stay* manages to catch fire only in a too-brief guitar/handclap break. The rest of his own stuff is the usual L.A. country-rock, at least as dispensable as anything churned out in the Asylum stable of Hollywood cowboys. Someday, this fella is going to make one hell of a rock-and-roll album, but "What's Wrong with This Picture?" simply isn't it. S.S.

STEVE MARCH:
*an impressive debut
with a sophisticated,
imaginative album*



United Artists Records

EMMYLOU HARRIS: *Luxury Liner* (see Best of the Month, page 80)

TEDDI KING: *Lovers and Losers* (see Best of the Month, page 80)

THE KINKS: *Sleepwalker*. The Kinks (vocals and instrumentals). *Life on the Road; Mr. Big Man; Sleepwalker; Brother*; and five others. ARISTA AL 4106 \$6.98.

Performance: **The thrill is gone**
Recording: **Excellent**

There's something extraordinarily potent about cheap music, as a character in a Noël Coward play once observed. One could have said much the same thing about Kinks albums at times, just as once one might have made a case for Ray Davies as a sort of latter-day Sir Noël. Unfortunately, "Sleepwalker," the latest effort from Davies and the Kinks, continues the decline in quality that Kinks albums have been demonstrating for at least five years now (with the possible exception of "Preservation Act One"). And again the decline must be counted as Ray's responsibility, brother Dave having long since abandoned his own songwriting efforts. For better or worse, the Kinks are a one-man show now.

The album is just . . . well, uninvolved. Where in the past Ray gave us concise, compassionate little stories about little lives and everyday tragedies, today he seems content merely to rail at obvious targets in the most banal language (*Mr. Big Man*) or to deal obsessively with his own psychological concerns, which, frankly, are no more interesting than yours or mine or the average rock star's. Why this is I can't say, except that perhaps the Kinks' commercial success has in some way closed him off from the sorts of people he used to bring to life so vividly. At any rate, here are nine tracks, all of which go on far too long (the best Davies songs were always under three minutes), a few clever lines that remind one that there is talent lurking about here somewhere, and the usual high level of performance from the boys in the band.

I had the misfortune to listen to this album just after seeing another equally British production, Richard Lester's *Robin and Marian*,

with Sean Connery and Audrey Hepburn. I cried like a baby almost throughout it, and I was reminded that once upon a time, far too long a time ago, certain Kinks' songs had the same effect on me. As cheap music goes, "Sleepwalker" is not very potent. S.S.

LOCUST: *Playgue*. Locust (vocals and instrumentals). *Hesitation; Let's Just Say Goodbye; You'll Never Know; Madonna*; and five others. ANNUIT COEPTIS AC 1004 \$6.98.

Performance: **Busy**
Recording: **Busy**

Locust's execution is good, vocally and instrumentally, but after hearing them sing about "pain" and "emptiness," I get the impression that they heard about those things and thought they'd better write songs about them if they wanted to be taken seriously.

Locust may, with time, become a good band. Some of what they do is precocious, but much of it is simply pretentious. They are talented amateurs who should loosen up and stop trying to pass themselves off as intellectuals. You're working too hard, kids. J.V.

TAJ MAHAL: *Music Fuh Ya' (Musica Para Tu)*. Taj Mahal (guitar, vocals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *You Got It; Freight Train; Baby, You're My Destiny; Sailin' into Walker's Cay*; and four others. WARNER BROS. BS 2994 \$6.98, ® M8 2994 \$7.97, © M5 2994 \$7.97.

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

The eight tunes on this album run an average of five minutes each, which is about three and one-half minutes too long per tune. Each cut has the seed of an interesting song and performance, but the basic ideas are exhausted in about thirty seconds, and the rest of the time is spent in repetition of riffs and figures.

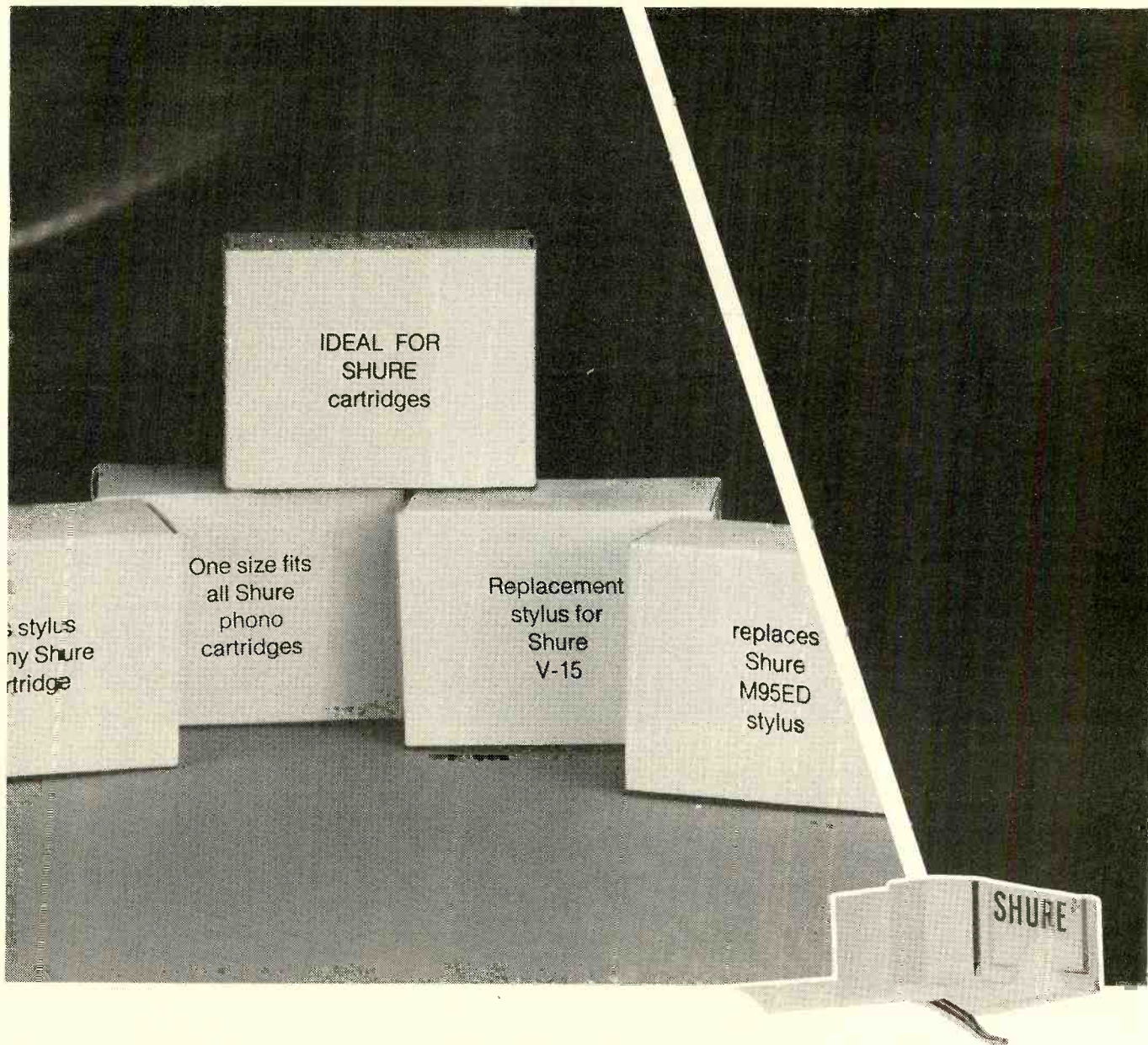
Although the musicians supporting Taj Mahal have ability and friskiness, they can't disguise his garrulous, floundering, vapid leadership. Mahal is a talented man and in his better moments there is no one else quite like him, but his self-advertised "smokey vocals" are, on this occasion, resolutely banal, as if it were the listener's duty to appreciate him rather than his responsibility to entertain the listener. Only one cut, the calypso *The Four Mills Brothers*, comes close to being a performance, but that is because of the quality of the song and not the delivery. *Freight Train*, the grand "folk song" written by Elizabeth Cotton, which Mahal introduces in a spoken tribute to the lady, becomes a feeble compliment when he fakes the well-known lyrics. I like "loose" music, but the doings on this album are so loose they're unhinged. J.V.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

STEVE MARCH: *Lucky*. Steve March (vocals, piano, percussion); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Lucky; Sweet for the Dutchman; It's Been Real; Stop It!; Croon*; and eight others. UNITED ARTISTS UA-LA674-G \$6.98, ® UA-EA674-H \$7.98, © UA-CA674-H \$7.98.

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

This impressive debut by Steve March, the son of the late Hal March, is an unusually sophisticated and imaginative album. A good (Continued on page 88)



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Columbia Records

Tina Charles, Disco Queen

I'd rather make my money now while I'm young and get out and live the rest of my life enjoying what I've worked for," said Tina Charles, "Britain's Very Own Disco Queen," in a recent London interview. On the basis of her new Columbia album, "I Love to Love," her life after the current disco craze has passed (it *will* pass, won't it?) ought to be a pretty cushiony affair. The American royalty checks that seem certain to rain down on her should provide for a villa or two in the south of France, and that, added to her already sizable revenues from several other countries, should make enjoying what she's worked for not too difficult. And why not? She is a commercial natural. I advise all carpers, including myself, not to fight it; most of the rest of the world certainly hasn't.

Tina Charles is very, very good at what she does, and what she does here, as she belts and undulates and hip-shakes her way through productions so clever as to be almost diabolical, is to create within the listener an urge to dance so strong that it's just about irresistible. Her album is Entertainment, perhaps not pure, but most certainly simple and basic. Vocally she sounds like any number of female singers: Diana Ross, Teresa Brewer, Cilla Black, Streisand, you name it. Tina's blues may not be progressive, but her performing contagion is. As she herself says, "I'm not a heavy soul singer and I'm certainly not into 'progressive soul,' whatever that means, but I like the commercial stuff like Ohio Players. . . . A lot of people think that the new record is orchestrated disco soul, but it's not. The real secret behind it is the rhythm."

Ah, "the rhythm," m'dear. How right you are. It is consistently infectious, giddy, sexy, carefree, and a siren call to get on your feet and MOVE. And what a relief to hear it

against the background of so much of today's pop, "pop" music that actually demands and forces the listener into a full emotional and often draining participation in whatever the weighty problem of the song is. There's none of that belabored going-down-the-chute-to-God-knows-where in "I Love to Love." This album is all certified, deliberate, totally professional fizz. Sounds a bit quaint, doesn't it? But the important point is that it works—it entertains joyously and unselfconsciously, and it invites your participation without risking your mental health for the week. And Tina Charles, with her trim, tidy approach, her non-toxic, brash charm, and her wash-and-wear negligée sexiness, is the perfect Director of Activities.

LEST it seem that all of this is merely so much Simple Stuff for the Kids, be assured that some of the work of Ms. Charles and the hypnotic Biddu and Pip Williams, who have done the arrangements and scoring, respectively, is first-rank by *any* standards. The title song and a wondrously conceived and executed little bauble called *Hey Boy* glitter with all the promising excitement of a stack of just-won roulette chips being pushed across the table to you. And, if Tina Charles' lucky streak continues in the States, as it has everywhere else, she may very well be the girl who breaks the disco bank. Now, if only I could work up my chops enough to dance to it. . . .

—Peter Reilly

TINA CHARLES: *I Love to Love*. Tina Charles (vocals); orchestra. *I Love to Love; You Have Set My Heart on Fire; Hey Boy; Take All of Me; Love Me Like a Lover; Why; Hold Me; Disco Fever; Disco Love*. CBS CBS-81290 \$6.98.

deal of the album's impact lies in the superb arrangements of Jim Grady, who also does some dynamite instrumental work on piano and guitars. Grady's arrangements often transcend the material itself, as in the stunning five-minute *Damage*, into which he incorporates the old Mercer-Whiting classic *Hooray for Hollywood*, and his own *A Little Hollywood Nightmare Music* to create an effect straight out of the chillier work of Nathanael West. Then there's his version of *Torque Ma-da*—chamber music from a crypt.

Steve March and his songs, however, are the stars of the album. While there is a good deal that is tentative or too ambitious (*These Are the Times* and *Ease Down Line*), there are also the delivered potential of *Lucky*, a flip, unsentimental sad-song, and the genuine feeling of *This Is a Love Song*, on the surface only another teenage lament but one that has a whiplash kicker of reality about it. March's voice is . . . serviceable. But he can communicate with it, and he has a natural warmth that permeates all his performances. I hope he keeps on working as hard as he obviously has here, and I certainly hope he has the good sense to continue to work closely with Jim Grady.

P.R.

JOHN MAYALL: *Lots of People*. John Mayall (vocals, harmonica, guitar); other musicians. *Changes in the Wind; Burning Down; Play the Harp; A Helping Hand; Room to Move*; and four others. ABC AB-992 \$6.98.

Performance: **Offhand**

Recording: **Offhand**

This is a live-recorded, sort of harsh-sounding album, and you can take the title literally (although probably not the way Mayall meant it), for the thing has a bloated, big-band sound. I am, of course, less than enthralled with that, and not very excited about Mayall's inattention to his singing, by far his strongest suit (he'll never be a hotshot harp player if he practices *another* twenty years). He seems to be on a noncommittal sashay through one song after another, with obese backing hot on his heels and filling up every conceivable hole, and a few spots that might not be holes, with trumpet baires and such stuff. But it isn't an awful album. Mayall takes a nice harp solo or two—his work on style pays better dividends than his work on technique—and there's some duet singing that isn't bad. Call it a mediocre album—unless you always wanted to hear the Casa Loma Orchestra play the blues.

N.C.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

CHARLIE MCCOY: *Play It Again, Charlie*. Charlie McCoy (harmonica, vocals); Ken Buttrey (drums); Terry Dearmore (bass); Buddy Skipper (piano); other musicians. *Wabash Cannonball; Tuff; Mule Skinner Blues; Theme from a Summer Place; Pots and Pans; Missing You*; and five others. MONUMENT MC6630 \$5.98.

Performance: **Fine**

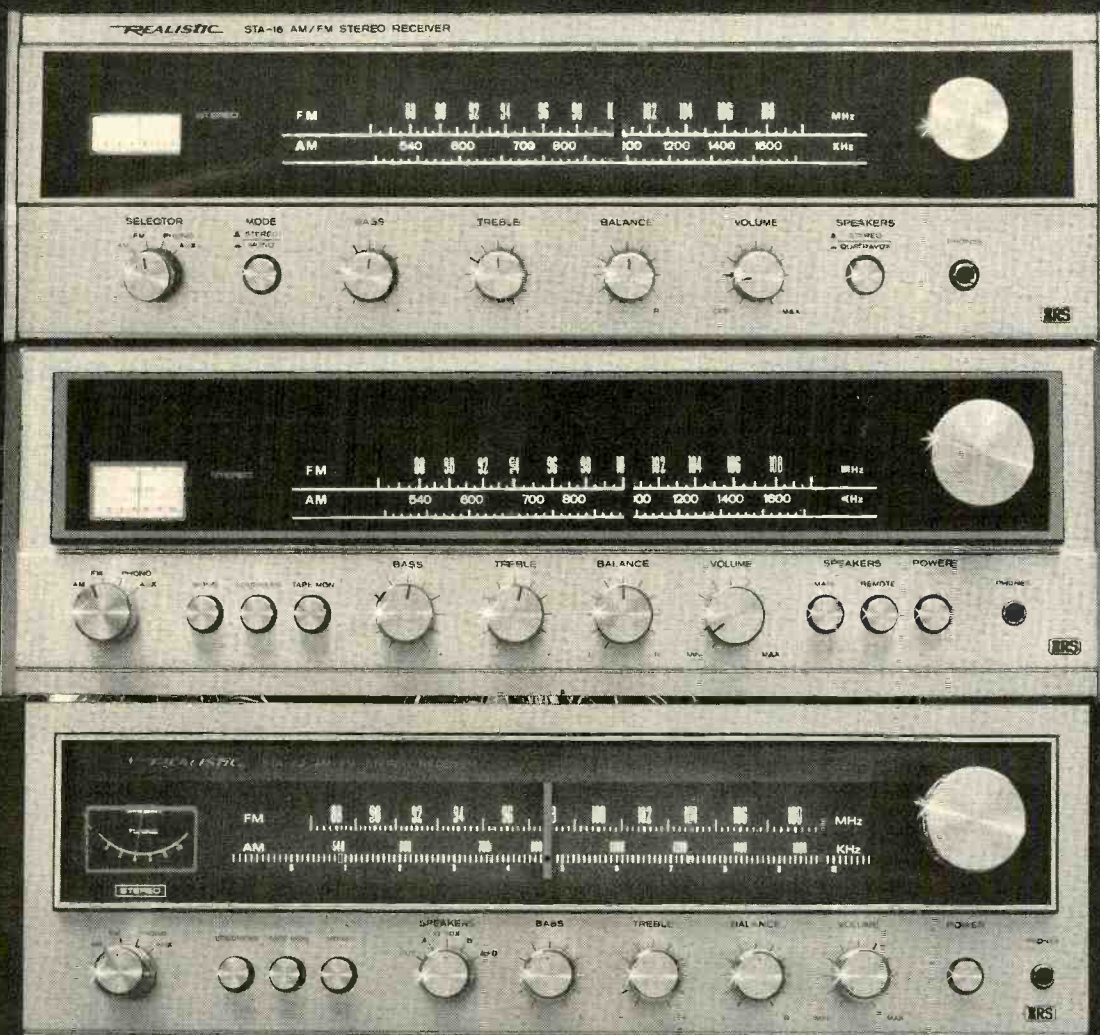
Recording: **Very good**

The harmonica is more expressive than any number of more respected instruments. The harp is under-respected, probably because a huge number of people play it badly and relatively few play it well. If you want to hear how well it *can* be played, if you want an idea of how expressive it can be, you can turn to a

(Continued on page 90)

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CIRCLE NO. 31 ON READER SERVICE CARD

Charlie McCoy record. This one isn't altogether typical, having a Stephen Foster medley plunked into it seemingly out of nowhere (but of course—what better instrument to try that with?), which is very nice but keeps McCoy playing sweeter longer than he usually does at one stretch. But it's typical enough. McCoy hired a slew of Nashville's finest musicians and then managed to keep arrangements from seeming crowded, with Josh Graves, the most surprising, most nearly perfect dobro player, cofeatured again on a couple of cuts. And the instrumentation, as usual, is super-tight and agile. McCoy even makes it worth your time to hear *Ode to Billy Joe*, a difficult song to make interesting with the harp because of its droning melody (a harp needs note changes), so you can imagine what he does with *good* tunes. He is, through his recordings, my own personal teacher, my guru—there's no other harp player I can learn as much from—and I'm grateful for this latest lesson. N.C.

ANN J. MORTON: *My Friends Call Me Annie*. Ann J. Morton (vocals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Poor Wilted Rose; Molly Jones; Willie I Will; Good Looking Cowboy; Never Should Have Come*; and five others. PRAIRIE DUST PDLP-1661 \$6.98.

Performance: **Service with a smile**
Recording: **Old style**

A friendly girl indeed—Ann J. Morton says *Don't Call Me No Lady* and tells the hero of *Good Looking Cowboy* that "You can ride my horse any old time . . ." and that if he's looking for a saddle, hers will be just fine. The



ABC Records

MARTIN MULL
Almost depressingly facile wit

voice itself is a battle-scarred, backwoods contralto that dishes up the homilies and the cutesies with equal aplomb and with all the weary, cheerful innuendo of a hash-house waitress somewhere in the Southwest. She's backed by the kind of throbbing electric guitars that haven't been heard since Minnie Pearl's teenage days. Ann writes all her own material, and her steam-table philosophy of life is surely best summed up by one of her biggies: *Onions and Love Affairs*. P.R.

MARTIN MULL: *I'm Everyone I've Ever Loved*. Martin Mull (vocals); Richard Tee (keyboards); Chuck Rainey (bass); Colin Bailey (drums); other musicians. *Honor Roll; They Never Met; I'm Everyone I've Ever Loved; Get Up, Get Down*; and seven others. ABC AB-997 \$6.98, © 8185-997-H \$7.95, © 5185-997-H \$7.95.

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

Martin Mull, known of late to millions through his role as the charming wife-beater on *Mary Hartman, Mary Hartman*, is a songwriter of almost depressingly facile wit and also the purveyor of one of the funniest club acts in the history of Western civilization. Unfortunately, his studio albums are disappointing, lacking both audience feedback and the visual antics of Mull himself.

This one is no exception. Despite some marvelous material (the title tune, a disco parody to end all disco parodies, the thoroughly scandalous *Humming Song*) and valiant support by an all-star cast including Rob Reiner and Tom Waits, it is only fitfully amusing, which is not what I want from a man who in performance has reduced me to rolling uncontrollably in some very crowded aisles. Get his live set on Capricorn ("Martin Mull and His Fabulous Furniture"), see him in person, and otherwise save your bucks for a *really* funny album—like, say, the next Bryan Ferry. S.S.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

MILTON NASCIMENTO: *Milton*. Milton Nascimento (guitar, vocals); orchestra. Fran-

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cisco; *Clove and Cinnamon*; *The Call*; *One Coin*; and five others. A&M SP 4611 \$6.98, © 8T-4611 \$7.98, © CS-4611 \$7.98.

Performance: **Expert**
Recording: **Gorgeous**

Milton Nascimento's new album is filled with super sound, gorgeous arrangements (his own), the soft slur of sung Portuguese, and an atmosphere as lushly heady and sensual as a gardenia in Sophia Loren's décolletage. There's very little real substance here—the songs (again by Milton) all seem to run into one another in form and treatment, and Milton's voice is used as just another instrument in the orchestral effect—but substance would be as out of place here as Rima being a paid consultant to the Audubon Society. I'm not giving out guarantees on how all of this holds up on repeated playings, but it makes a hell of a one-night stand. Superb engineering, incidentally, and probably a must for all of you with superior equipment. P.R.

NEW RIDERS OF THE PURPLE SAGE: *Who Are Those Guys?* Buddy Cage (steel guitar); John Dawson (vocals, guitar); Spencer Dryden (drums); Stephen Love (vocals, bass); David Nelson (guitar, vocals). *I Can Heal You*; *High Rollers*; *Peggy Sue*; *Another Night in Reno*; *Love Has Strange Ways*; and five others. MCA MCA-2248 \$6.98, © T-2248 \$7.98, © C-2248 \$7.98.

Performance: **Much better, thanks**
Recording: **Very good**

Signs of growth in unexpected places are always nice, and I find some here. The New

A&M Records



MILTON NASCIMENTO
A lushly heady atmosphere

Riders are still as synthetic and middle-class as I always said they were, but here they seem much more professional, much sharper with the details. This one has a sort of Eagles' apprentices sound to it—this will never be a wildly original group—but it has pretty good tunes, improved, more authoritative vocals, and better instrumental balance than I expected. Bob Johnston produced it, and that may be a factor. In any case, good news is good news. N.C.

MICKEY NEWBURY: *Rusty Tracks*. Mickey Newbury (vocals); orchestra. *Leavin' Kentucky*; *Tell Him Boys*; *Shenandoah*; *That Lucky Old Sun*; *Bless Us All*; *Danny Boy*; and three others. ABC/HICKORY AH-44002 \$6.98.

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

Mickey Newbury goes Legit in a big way here in a monumental Ronnie Gant production that includes heavenly-hosts arrangements and an orchestral sound not heard since the palmiest days of MGM. He's frequently awash in the middle of all the booming grandeur of such things as *Shenandoah* and *That Lucky Old Sun*, but he just keeps belting away like a country Jan Peerce, and it's hard not to admire his guts. The admiration unfortunately ends just about there, and a real impatience takes over: why must the usually unsuspecting public be pulled into these quirky ego trips? Newbury has always been a good enough artist at doing what he usually does, as he proves here in *Leavin' Kentucky*. Why the urge to be Important? P.R.

PINK FLOYD: *Animals*. Pink Floyd (vocals and instrumentals). *Pigs on the Wing (Part One)*; *Dogs*; *Pigs (Three Different Ones)*; *Sheep*; *Pigs on the Wing (Part Two)*. COLUMBIA JC 34474 \$7.98, © JCA-34474 \$7.98, © JCT-34474 \$7.98.

Performance: **Sound and fury**
Recording: **Superb**

I never cared much for the post-Syd Barrett Pink Floyd until their last album. Without (Continued on page 93)

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WESTERN swing begins—and ends, many would argue—with Bob Wills. It was Wills who first evolved the style of playing frontier fiddle tunes with a Dixieland beat and combined country string ensembles with horn sections to produce a form of music that was related to the Kansas City swing bands of the Thirties as much as it was to country-and-western. Other Texans (Milton Brown, Bill Boyd) soon put together their own swing groups, but none were as big, brash, or brassy as those of Wills, and none had his instinctive feel for the blues.

Thanks to such new western swing groups as Asleep at the Wheel and tribute songs by artists such as Waylon Jennings, Wills is, ironically enough, more popular now than he was in his heyday. In the Thirties and Forties, he was considered too much of a hick to be

songs are available elsewhere. For the uninitiated, "The Bob Wills Anthology" (Columbia KG-32416) might be a better starting point in terms of seeing what the excitement is all about.

But, for fans of Wills and/or western swing, "In Concert" is a prize collection. However artful his recordings, Wills was first and foremost a *live* performer—he and the Playboys lived for the bandstand, stayed on the road most of the year, and felt they served their purpose best only when the dance floor was packed. Wills himself was the consummate showman, jive-talking to the audience, cajoling musicians, letting out his trademark "ah-ha!" squeal when somebody hit a note he liked. And *that's* the Wills this album preserves; this is the only album that shows us what it was like when Wills was out there in

Lone Star chauvinism runs rampant on "Johnny Gimble's Texas Dance Party" (Columbia), but this is one occasion when Texans put their music where their mouths are. This album should appeal to country fan and jazz fan alike.

Fiddler Gimble, who once worked with Wills, is here backed by the Bosque Bandits, a regional group. Before a live audience, they casually spin out a set of Texas fiddle favorites (such as Tillman's *I'll Keep On Loving You*) and originals (*Under the "X" in Texas*), swinging them all relentlessly. An additional highlight is *Bosque Bandit*, which delightfully defines the professional musician as one "too lazy to work, too nervous to steal." Gimble's brother Dick proves himself a stalwart bassist, and pianist Curly Hollingsworth threatens to steal the show from his boss. From the

Hard Core Western Swing



BOB WILLS

Capitol Records



FLOYD TILLMAN

Danny Keeland/CBS



JOHNNY GIMBLE

Columbia Records

rated with the great Kansas City orchestras; he was also shunned by the country music establishment in Nashville, which frowned on his use of drums, among other things. Though Bing Crosby had a million seller with his *San Antonio Rose*, Wills himself was virtually unknown outside the Southwest. Yet he is now becoming recognized as one of the most revolutionary figures in American music, and one result is that albums such as Capitol's recent "Bob Wills and His Texas Playboys in Concert" are making his music available once again.

That said, it should quickly be conceded that "In Concert" does not comprise the best, or even the most representative, Wills material on the market. World War II ravaged the big dance bands in general and Wills and the Playboys in particular. After the war, he could never again put together an orchestra featuring the horns that were so important to him.

This album of radio transcriptions from the early Sixties (Capitol's otherwise exemplary liner notes don't give dates or personnel) therefore features a smaller group relying on string instruments. It is weighted heavily with either traditional fiddle reels and breakdowns (such as *Beaumont Rag*) or schmaltzier big-band tunes (such as Artie Shaw's *Summit Ridge Drive*), with little emphasis on the funkier stuff that made Wills unique. The noteworthy exception is a seven-minute version of *St. Louis Blues*, sparked by Wills' own scat fiddling and vocal, that gallops away from the rest of the album. It's not that any of the performances here are poor, though; it is rather that more exciting versions of most of these

front of an audience, strutting his stuff, and in this case that alone counts for plenty.

In Texas, Floyd Tillman is almost as legendary as Wills. He was a standard bearer of the honky-tonk movement in country music (the Hank Williams era), but since the Texas honky-tonkers were all under the spell of Wills, they tended to swing a bit themselves; their Nashville counterparts seldom did. Tillman has the kind of classic "bad" voice that only country music seems to tolerate—he sings flat, nasal, and with little regard for such niceties as meter. In short, once you've heard him, he's unforgettable, and unless you're a country-music fan you're probably not going to like him. He is as hard-core as Ernest Tubb, a contemporary with a similar style, or Willie Nelson, who clearly copped his fair share of vocal licks from Tillman.

He was also one of the leading songwriters of the late Forties and early Fifties (*Slipping Around* is perhaps his best), and a recent Columbia album collects ten long-out-of-print sides. They feature a lilting Hawaiian guitar and a lazy piano. Most of the songs are at slow or medium dance tempos, though *I Finally Saw the Light* is taken at a bluegrass pace and spotlights a berserk steel guitar player who repeats his trick on *I'll Never Be the Same (Without You)*.

Western swing never really died in its home state; there, it has remained the music of choice wherever working people gather on Friday nights to blow off steam. So while it's merely being rejuvenated around the rest of the nation, in Texas it is being elevated to a status somewhat akin to religious music.

spirited into of *Lone Star Rag* to the closing *End of the Line* (written and first recorded by Gimble in 1950, with Wills), "Texas Dance Party" unleashes the hottest western swing made today.

—John Morthland

BOB WILLS AND HIS TEXAS PLAYBOYS IN CONCERT. Bob Wills (fiddle, vocals); other singers and musicians. *South; Ida Red; Don't Let the Deal Go Down; San Antonio Rose; Beaumont Rag; Sooner or Later; From a Jack to a King; La Golondrina; Summit Ridge Drive; Right or Wrong; Little Star in Heaven; Smith's Reel; Just Friends; St. Louis Blues; Gone Indian.* CAPITOL SKBB-11550 two discs \$7.98.

THE BEST OF FLOYD TILLMAN. Floyd Tillman (guitar, vocals); other musicians. *Slipping Around; I Love You So Much, It Hurts; It Had to Be That Way; I Gotta Have My Baby Back; This Cold War with You; I'm Falling for You; I Finally Saw the Light; A Small Little Town; I Love You Just as You Are; I'll Never Be the Same (Without You).* COLUMBIA KC-34334 \$5.98.

JOHNNY GIMBLE'S TEXAS DANCE PARTY. Johnny Gimble (fiddle, electric mandolin, banjo, vocals); Curly Hollingsworth (piano); Bill Mounce (drums); Kenny Frazier (guitar); Maurice Anderson (MSA steel guitar); Dick Gimble (bass, vocals). *Lone Star Rag; I'll Keep On Loving You; La Zinda Waltz; Texas Fiddle Man; Texas Skip; Under the "X" in Texas; Blues for Joe Tee; Bosque Bandit; Slow 'n' Easy; End of the Line.* COLUMBIA/LONE STAR KC-34284 \$5.98.

Barrett's psychedelic anguish and vision, the band's watery surrealism, aimless chromatic meanderings, and preoccupation with sound effects never communicated much to me. But "Wish You Were Here" was something else again. With its marvelously imaginative "Abbey Road"-ish musical trappings, it was a truly moving tribute to the founding member who had fallen prey to the dangers of a lifestyle Pink Floyd had all once communally endorsed—witty, bitter, mordant, and above all, honestly felt. I loved it.

I don't much love "Animals," their new one, however. Musically and thematically it's constructed along the same lines as the last, but the subject—their intense contempt for the business of selling art—is just not important enough, or at least they don't make it seem important enough, to justify all the vented spleen. Pity is a rare emotion in a rock musician, but unfortunately self-pity isn't, and "Animals" comes off as just another boring entry in the same boring sweepstakes everyone from James Taylor to Elton John to Lou Reed to you name it has been dabbling in since the dawn of the Seventies. Splendidly played and produced. S.S.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

RACING CARS: *Downtown Tonight*. Racing Cars (vocals and instrumentals). *Calling the Tune; Hard Working Woman; Ladee-Lo; Downtown Tonight; Pass the Bottle*; and four others. CHRYSALIS CHR 1099 \$6.98.

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

Racing Cars is a blues-based English group who know what they like and like what they do, which is to make tight, no-nonsense, well-crafted music. They remind me of that fine Welsh group, Ace, who play for the mutual pleasure of themselves and their audience and in the process get a lot of good work done.

If you're tired of intimidating bands that demand much, promise nothing, and deliver less, get hold of this album and recall what it's like to hear a band that works for the listener and doesn't fool around. Racing Cars doesn't do anything spectacular; they're just damned

good. The performances are refreshingly professional and flow easily into one another, and this is one of the very, very few albums where most of the cuts are in medium tempo but do not put you to sleep or make you think the band is playing with half a heart and one eye open. In present commercial terms, where bombast or snide jive is the norm, Racing Cars may seem to have little ambition and/or cynical smarts, but I have the impression they would rather deliver the goods than play tricks, and for that we may all be thankful. Nice going, lads, and well done. J.V.

LEON REDBONE: *Double Time*. Leon Redbone (vocals, guitar); Milt Hinton (bass); Jonathan Dorn (tuba); Dominic Cortese (accordion); other musicians. *Diddy Wa Diddie; Nobody's Sweetheart; Shine On Harvest Moon; Melancholy Baby; Sheik of Araby; Winin' Boy Blues*; and five others. WARNER BROS. BS 2971 \$6.98, ® M8 2971 \$7.97, © M5 2971 \$7.97.

Performance: **(mumble, mumble)**
Recording: **Good**

Who is Leon Redbone? What is he? But first, how much does it really matter? He does a lot of opening for Bonnie Raitt, and I have great respect for her judgment, but that's getting to be the strongest argument I can make on his behalf. In this album he just mostly messes around, as if it is universally accepted that every grunt or groan he makes is going to be the cat's meow, to use an expression that goes with his repertoire. It played all right for a while and still isn't too bad as a stage act, assuming it's brief, as it usually is. This album isn't really offensive, either—much of it is like his stage act nowadays, with the tuba added and all—but it's starting to seem repetitious to me. Redbone has some tricky moves on the guitar, but he plays with such a muted, soft-finger tone that they don't really grab me. There must be an easier way (on my ears) of seeing that Blind Blake and such characters aren't forgotten. Being hip in a mysterious sort of way is not enough, and neither is being mysterious in a hip sort of way. N.C.

(Continued overleaf)

RACING CARS: *delivers the musical goods*



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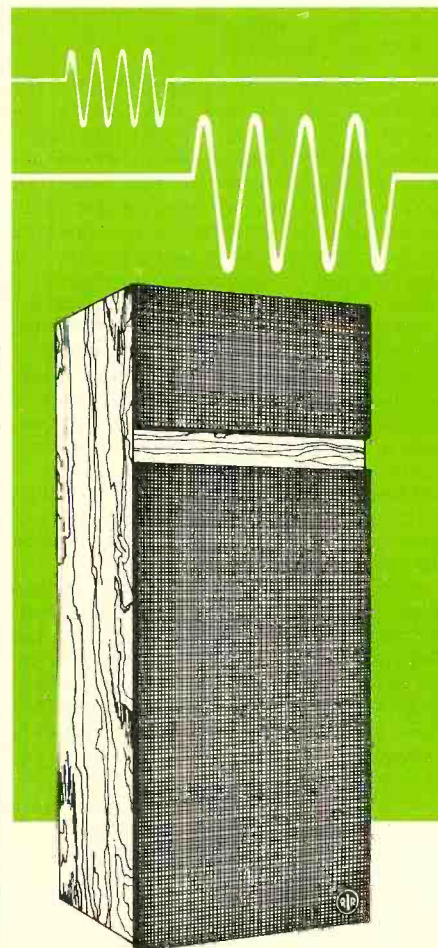
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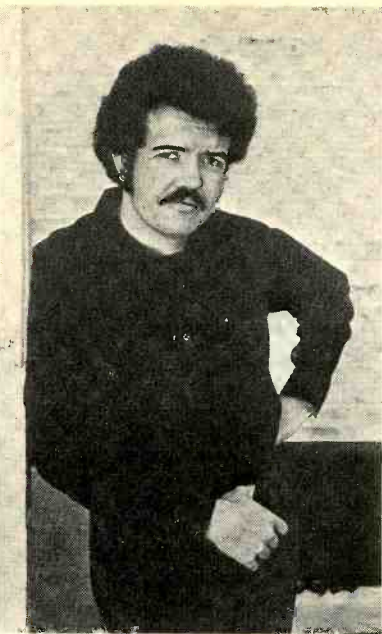
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THE RUNAWAYS: *Queens of Noise*. The Runaways (vocals and instrumentals). *Queens of Noise; Take It or Leave It; Midnight Music; Born to Be Bad*; and six others. MERCURY SRM 1-1126 \$6.98, © MC8-1-1126 \$7.95, © MCR4-1-1126 \$7.95.

Performance: **Improved**
Recording: **Likewise**

It's becoming more and more obvious that the Runaways are not what they initially appeared to be—that is, the first truly mainstream female rock band—but rather are simply Los Angeles' response to the New York Dolls. The parallels are unmistakable. Both bands were the creations of high-powered huckster/managers; both were supported by small but noisy subcultures in their respective cities; both wanted to be the Rolling Stones when they grew up, even down to having Keith Richard look-alikes (Johnny Thunders in the Dolls, Joan Jett in the Runaways); both play basic hard rock pitched to some imagined idea of an emerging teenage consciousness; both are only marginally competent at their instruments. They even shared the same record label. The only real difference I can detect is that the Dolls were guys who came on like girls, whereas the Runaways have reversed the process.

"Queens of Noise," the nymphets' second album (and their last, if it fails to sell any better than their first, another parallel with the Dolls) is a slight improvement over their debut disc, largely because of its production. Engineer Earle Mankey has given them a little more thud to their sound, and the result is compelling in a gross kind of way, something like castrati Kiss. But in the long run, it's the same punk posturing and unimaginative tunes we've heard from a zillion other bands. Although they're looking cuter than ever, aurally the Runaways still bore me to tears. S.S.

JAMES TALLEY: *Blackjack Choir*. James Talley (vocals, guitar); instrumental accompaniment. *Bluesman; Alabama Summertime; Everybody Loves a Love Song; Magnolia Boy; Up from Georgia; When the Fiddler Packs his Case*; and four others. CAPITOL

ST-11605 \$6.98, © 8XT-11605 \$7.98, © 4XT-11605 \$7.98.

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

I've been meaning to do my bit to help spread the word about James Talley, a quality troubadour. This album doesn't seem a typical one with which to encounter him for the first time; the songs may be a little less ambitious than some of his earlier ones, much of it has a bluesy flavor, and the populist streak in his writing comes to a head only once, really, in *Migrant Jesse Sawyer*. But then it's a pretty good album of whatever sort it is. The songs don't tingle with urgency but are well built, Talley's vocals are clear and sure, the backing and arrangements are excellent (Talley also produced it), and it is all extremely well engineered. What more could one ask? Well, maybe for something more personal—but this one will help you bide your time. N.C.

TELEVISION: *Marquee Moon*. Television (vocals and instrumentals). *See No Evil; Venus; Friction; Marquee Moon*; and four others. ELEKTRA 7E-1098 \$6.98.

Performance: **No flesh tones**
Recording: **Hard-nosed**

I'm sure someone is going to call this avant-garde, in spite of how much it sounds to me like warmed-over Bruce Springsteen. Then again, the group may not be sufficiently inept on the instruments to qualify for a "visionary" label—although it sure is with the vocals. The punk posing sounds a lot like the Fifties recycled, and it is starting to seem as dull to me as pictures of Ike playing golf did back then. These chaps seem capable of playing well, but singing and writing? Well, I have my doubts. N.C.

DAVE VAN RONK: *Sunday Street* (see Best of the Month, page 79)

MUDDY WATERS: *Hard Again*. Muddy Waters (vocals, guitar); Johnny Winter (guitar); James Cotton (harmonica); Pine Top Perkins (piano); Charles Calmese (bass); other musicians. *Mannish Boy; Bus Driver; I Want to Be Loved; Jealous Hearted Man; I Can't Be Satisfied*; and four others. BLUE SKY PZ 34449 \$6.98, © PZA 34449 \$6.98.

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

The Boss Man's bands usually are somewhat rougher than the big-name backing he has here, and maybe roughness is what it takes. I can't find much excitement here, and I don't think Waters' performances themselves are what's wrong. Johnny Winter, who produced it, brought in himself on guitar and James Cotton on harp, among others, but then nobody did much of anything. Cotton, a much smoother, more accomplished harp player than the last two or three who've worked for Muddy, takes it easy for some length of time here and then doesn't put much feeling into it when he becomes louder and/or faster. Winter as producer if not Winter as guitarist is responsible for a slide guitar solo in *I Can't Be Satisfied* that is downright shaky near the end, and he's also got some guitar bits in several other places that could surely be less hackneyed. Then too, he has to answer for the selection and sequencing of the tunes, which bring on twelve-bar tedium a time or two. If you think I think this one is just about sunk by

slapdash production, you're getting pretty close. N.C.

Z Z TOP: *Tejas*. Billy Gibbons (vocals, guitar, harmonica, fiddle); Dusty Hill (vocals, bass); Frank Beard (drums). *It's Only Love; Arrested for Driving While Blind; El Diablo; Snappy Kakkie; Ten Dollar Man*; and five others. LONDON PS 680 \$6.98, © PS8-680 \$7.95, © PS5-680 \$7.95.

Performance: **Not bad, I reckon**
Recording: **Good**

I couldn't find much contrast in the last couple of Z Z Top recordings, which were mostly bash and crash and other things ending (or likely to) in ash, but this one's different. A little sleepy at times, but different. Not bad, though, taken as a whole, even if it does have titles like *Enjoy and Get It On* in it. It doesn't have much in the way of lyrics that you can't afford to miss, but it has considerable instrumental depth and variety for a three-piece blues-based rock band. Rock wouldn't be on the rocks if more of its post-1970 bands played this well. N.C.



THE CHIEFTAINS: *Bonaparte's Retreat*. The Chieftains (vocals and instrumentals). *Chatting Magpie; The First Tuesday of Autumn; Green Grow the Rushes O; Bonaparte's Retreat*; and five others. ISLAND ILPS 9432 \$6.98.

Performance: **Great day for the Irish**
Recording: **Very good**

The Chieftains are a cheerful group of Irishmen with a formidable grasp of the Gaelic musical idiom, which they employ to fashion artful medleys of reels and folk songs and tone poems based on Irish history. The most ambitious of these, *Bonaparte's Retreat* (which runs almost fifteen minutes), depicts in music the plight of the chieftains Napoleon forced to leave Ireland to serve in his armies abroad, the defeat of Napoleon in Russia, and the restoration of the Bourbon monarchy. This is a rather heady program for music that relies on the potentialities of such limited instruments as tin whistles, clacking bones, bodhrans, pipes, and concertinas. Yet the Chieftains carry it off, along with the ballads and hornpipes and Kerry slides that round out an unusual and beautifully recorded album. P.K.

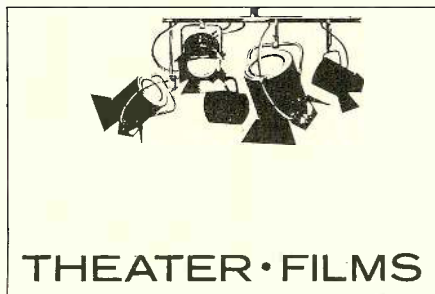
STEAMBOAT'S A-COMIN'. Bill Jackson, Tom Williams, Lawrence C. Shoberg, Scott O'Malley, Raymond Bazemore, Charles Harper, Harry Johansen, Michael Cooney, Jay Ungar (vocals); Elliot Stringer (calliope); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Oh, Them Golden Slippers; Wish I Was in Mobile Bay; Georgia Camp Meeting; Old Dan Tucker; Sounding Calls; Dance, Boatman, Dance*;

Workin' on the Levee; *Angelina Baker*; *Tombigbee*; *Camptown Races*; and ten others. NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC SOCIETY 07787 \$6.95, © 07787 \$6.95 (from National Geographic Society, Dept. 100, Washington, D.C. 20036).

Performance: **Right river, wrong accent**
Recording: **Excellent**

A steamboat whistle toots, muddy Mississippi water churns in the paddlewheel, a calliope plays, and we're off on a stretch up river with the music of Tom Sawyer's time on this latest release from National Geographic. Here comes the showboat to the tune of *Oh, Them Golden Slippers*. Now the *Natchez* and the *Robert E. Lee*, boilers belching smoke and close to bursting, race to St. Louis in a contest whose outcome, disputed in some river towns to this very day, is commemorated here in a lively ballad. There are field hollers and sounding calls—"Mark Twain, quarter less three, half twain, quarter twain . . ." There are work songs and fiddle tunes, a spiritual, upbeat items like *The Glendy Burk*, and lively old litanies like *Old Dan Tucker*. And, to sober the listener lest he wax too exuberant with the spirit of the excursion, the gaudily illustrated text is full of grim reminders of the dangers and hardships aboard the old boats, of the greed which, ironically, prompted the owners to forbid their black slaves to stoke the furnaces—since that work was too dangerous and best left to free and therefore less valuable white Irishmen.

If there's any problem with this latest release in the generally splendid "American Adventure" series, it's one of idiom. There's a brisk, northern, headlong style to the performances, from the vocal choruses to the strumming on the banjo, which seems out of keeping with the place and the period this music is intended to evoke: There isn't that minstrel spirit, or the mischief implicit in the music, or the drawl that would seem a necessary part and parcel of the style. The group here sounds as if it would feel more at home on the dock at the South Street Seaport Museum in New York than down on the levee. Even so, the program is an exceptionally lively one, and the production is superb. P.K.



THEATER • FILMS

IPI-TOMBI (Bertha Egnos-Gail Lakier). Original-cast recording. Martha Molefe (vocals); other performers; instrumental accompaniment. ASHTREE 26000 two discs \$13.96.

Performance: **Bantu bore**
Recording: **Good**

A lot of fuss was made when this South African musical arrived at the Harkness Theatre in New York this past January after long runs in Johannesburg and London. There were pickets and protests and pannings in the press—only the *Wall Street Journal* seemed to

be able to take *Ipi-Tombi* to its heart. Perhaps it was all the negative publicity that helped keep *Ipi-Tombi* alive; it is difficult to think of any other reasons why it made out as well as it did (a second company in Tel Aviv is reported to have drawn the largest audiences in Israel's history). *Ipi-Tombi* recounts, with much instrumental noise and many a monotonous song and chant, the experiences of the Xhosa (it's pronounced with one of those tongue clicks) tribe in trying to trade their rural, segregated lives for urban, segregated lives in Johannesburg.

Since no text is provided with this album, and since the narration is sparse and erratic and only an occasional ballad is sung in the English language, one has to take the word of the liner notes for all this. What *Ipi-Tombi* sounds like when you simply hear it—relentlessly complete—on these records is an inordinate amount of sound and fury in a pseudo-African idiom that Bertha Egnos, who "conceived, devised and produced" the show and also wrote the music, seems to have manufactured out of dubious sources for the occasion. The mood doesn't change much whether the members of the tribe—depicted on the cover decked-out in beads and plumes—are grinding corn back home or collecting garbage for a living in the white man's metropolis. I expected to be moved when the tribesmen lament the hardships they witness among the underpaid and overworked laborers in a gold mine, but neither the score nor Gail Lakier's lyrics were able to induce anything much in this listener beyond a continuous headache. For whatever reason, the only member of the cast mentioned by name in the album is Martha Molefe. Her lament for a hungry child was one of the few outstanding moments in a generally dismal enterprise. I thought the members of the tribe would never go home to their village in the mountains; I was immeasurably relieved when at long last they did. P.K.

MAKE A WISH (Hugh Martin). Original-cast recording. Nanette Fabray, Dean Campbell, Harold Lang, Helen Gallagher, Stephen Douglass (vocals); chorus and orchestra, Milton Rosenstock cond. RCA CBM1-2033 \$7.98.

Performance: **Fabray saves the day**
Recording: **Very good**

SEVENTEEN (Kim Gannon-Walter Kent). Original-cast recording. Ann Crowley, Kenneth Nelson, Frank Albertson, Doris Dalton, Ellen McCowen, Helen Wood, Joan Bowman, Bonnie Brae, Carol Cole, Sherry McCutcheon, Elizabeth Pacetti, Harrison Muller, Maurice Ellis, Alonzo Boasas, Dick Kallman (vocals); chorus and orchestra, Vincent Travers cond. RCA CBM1-2034 \$7.98.

Performance: **Willie is winning**
Recording: **Very good**

CALL ME MADAM (Irving Berlin). Dinah Shore, Paul Lukas, Russell Nye, Galina Talva, Pat Harrington, Ralph Chambers, Jay Velie (vocals); chorus and orchestra, Jay Blackton cond. RCA CBM1-2032 \$7.98.

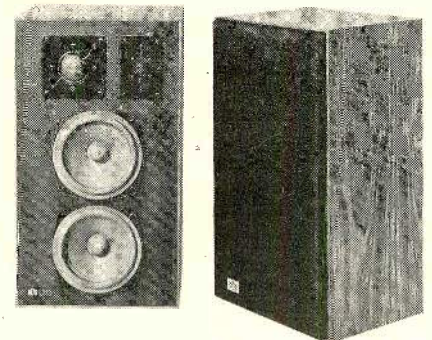
Performance: **Dinah's no horn blower**
Recording: **Very good**

Digging into its musical comedy archives to produce this series of "Legendary Broadway Shows" on discs, RCA has lit up old footlights and come up with a mixed assortment of mementos from the sometimes overlament-
(Continued overleaf)

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This Land Is Your Land: David Carradine as Woody Guthrie

“Bound for Glory”

BOUND FOR GLORY is a movie that takes us back to 1936, to the days when Woody Guthrie was trying to feed his family by working as a sign painter and a musician in the Texas Dust Bowl during the depths of the Depression. Woody was the most compelling folk singer and inventor of folk-like ballads of his time. He liked to talk like a left-wing prophet, and he died in agony of Huntington's disease, but I don't think he ever thought of himself as a saint, certainly not when I knew him in the Forties. A saint, however, is what the movie seems to be trying to make of him, a people-lover swathed in incorruptible nobility. This myth-building quality is the main flaw in an otherwise spacious and splendid film, but, as it happens, it doesn't spoil the record devoted to the musical score one bit. There have been numerous tributes to Woody on discs over the years, some recorded “live” at memorial concerts, others mixing ballads with political pieces drawn from the Wisdom of Woody, but none so ingratiatingly blended into concert form as this exceptionally fine recording from the soundtrack of *Bound for Glory*.

Although nobody could sing for Woody the way Woody sang for himself, with that curious mixture of laconic detachment and emotional conviction, and no record ever made could replace the ones he made, David Carradine just naturally has a better voice and is able to convey much of both the coolness and the emotional fervor of the real Woody without resorting to mimicry. When he sings *Hobo's Lullaby* and *Oklahoma Hills* and *So Long, It's Been Good to Know Yuh*—he sings scarcely more than half a dozen of Woody's ballads in all, by the way—you feel you're in the presence of a voice as stubbornly and penetratingly honest as Woody's own, and bringing that off is of itself no mean feat. His treatment of *Deportee* is especially telling.

But there is more to this record than the singing of David Carradine. The credits read “Music by Woody Guthrie adapted and conducted by Leonard Rosenman,” and Rosenman's contribution is manifestly a large one. He has taken Woody's tunes and woven them into a strong, sinewy score in a style reminiscent not so much of the folk music of the Forties as of the American classical style of the period—the lean rhetoric of Roy Harris and Paul Creston and the Aaron Copland of the Third Symphony, with an appropriately generous helping of flourishes on accordions, harmonicas, and guitars. So skillfully is the orchestral track woven in with the vocal interludes that the result is a single, integrated musical program instead of the usual assortment of snippets and repetitious excerpts. As a concert evoking both the memory of Woody and the tribulations of his time, therefore, the recording drawn from *Bound for Glory* is no duplication of earlier “tributes” to Woody's memory but deserves a place on the record shelf on its own merits, right up there with Woody's own albums. —Paul Kresh

BOUND FOR GLORY (Woody Guthrie—Leonard Rosenman). Original-soundtrack recording. David Carradine (vocals); orchestra, Leonard Rosenman cond. *Hard Travelin'; This Train Is Bound for Glory; The Drifters; I Ain't Got No Home; So Long, It's Been Good to Know Yuh; Hobo's Lullaby; Dust Storm; Pastures of Plenty; Do Re Mi; Running for the Train; Arrival in Los Angeles; Oklahoma Hills; Howdidi; Hitchhiking; Ramshackle; Curly Headed Baby; Talking Dust Bowl Blues; This Land Is Your Land; Deportee; On the Road Again; Going Down the Road; This Land Is Your Land (Reprise).* UNITED ARTISTS UA-LA 695 H \$7.98, © UA-EA695 \$7.98, © UA-CA695 \$7.98.

ed past, in this case the Forties and Fifties. Since some of these shows were in themselves nostalgic tributes to a still earlier past, there is a kind of hall-of-mirrors effect to the whole enterprise. *Make a Wish*, for example, was a 1951 musical version of *The Good Fairy*, a Ferenc Molnár play of the 1931 season which had already provided the plot for several Hollywood movies. Set in that dreamland Paris of the musical stage where the Follies Bergère represents the pinnacle of all possible recreations, *Make a Wish* tells the story of a pretty girl who escapes from a Paris orphanage to become a participant in the “bustling, glittering” life of the French capital. Jannette, the orphan girl, had the good fortune to be played by Nanette Fabray, who makes such songs as *I Wanna Be Good 'n' Bad* and *Over and Over* sound rather entrancing, though Hugh Martin's score strains so hard to fizz that it sometimes fizzles. But with Harold Lang and Helen Gallagher teamed up as Jannette's high-spirited friends and Stephen Douglass supplying the male romantic interest in such ballads as the touching *When Does This Feeling Go Away?*, the show is worth a listen. Who knows, it may even be revived. They have dragged unlikelier relics back to Broadway.

Seventeen is even easier to like. Here the double nostalgia is evoked first in the 1951 period songs by lyricist Kim Gannon and composer Walter Kent and further by the Booth Tarkington tale of what it was like for William Sylvanus Baxter to grow up in Indianapolis in 1907, smitten as he was by the charms of a prattler named Lola Pratt. Sally Benson, who had already given the country the delights of *Meet Me in St. Louis*, wrote the book for this one, and the songs, more apt than inspired, keep the story moving and the characters consistently engaging. As Lola Pratt, Anne Crowley makes even her baby-talking ballads bearable, Kenneth Nelson is entirely winning as Willie, a Penrod coming of age, and the group numbers, especially *The Hoosier Way*, fix the piece comfortably both in its turn-of-the-century frame and simultaneously in that immediately identifiable sound of the 1950's Broadway musical.

In its reissue of *Call Me Madam*, the company has dredged up something that might more advisably have been confined to library archives or curio shops than loosed upon a saturated public. *Call Me Madam* was a smash hit both on Broadway and Hollywood, but anyone who wants to know what *The Hostess with the Mostes' on the Ball, Can You Use Any Money Today, or You're Just in Love* ought to sound like is commended to MCA's recording of Ethel Merman singing “Twelve Songs from *Call Me Madam*.” RCA found itself in the curious predicament of having the entire original cast available for the recording except for Merman herself, who was under contract to another company (Decca). Since most of the numbers worth remembering are delivered by the brazen Madame Ambassador, the role calls for a louder lady than the gentle Dinah Shore, wonderful as she is in the role of herself. Paul Lukas as the suave prime minister and the rest of the players do their best, but every time the civil voice of Shore attempts to sail placidly through some number that cries out to be belted past the balcony, the zing goes out of the Berlin score and we're left with something that has turned up at the wrong party. *Call Me Madam* may well be another likely candidate for revival; this record isn't. P.K.

JAZZ



RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

GARY BARTZ: *Ju Ju Man*. Gary Bartz (alto and soprano saxophones, clarinet, synthesizer, vocals); Charles Mims (piano); Curtis Robertson (bass); Howard King (drums); Syreeta (vocals). *My Funny Valentine*; *Straight Street*; *Chelsea Bridge*; and two others. CATALYST CAT-7610 \$6.98, © CLT-7610 \$7.98.

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

Saxophonist Gary Bartz stepped into the jazz limelight as a member of Miles Davis' group and subsequently proved himself worthy of attention through a series of fine albums on the Milestone and Prestige labels. His last Prestige album, "The Shadow Do," was a disastrous misstep into that twilight zone of tasteless pap sometimes called jazz-rock, but what might have killed the reputation of Gary Bartz only sprained it, and this album offers happy testimony to his full recovery.

Syreeta (the former Mrs. Stevie Wonder) handles *My Funny Valentine* admirably, soulfully weaving a vocal pattern into threads of melody sensitively executed by Bartz on alto; her voice is clear, and she pays attention to the lyrics. Bartz's alto is again heard on Coltrane's *Straight Street*, a bouncy exercise in control, and he gives Billy Strayhorn's *Chelsea Bridge* an interesting reading on clarinet and soprano sax. Except for the first two minutes of *Ju Ju Man*, which have Bartz singing some nonsense about "love supreme" that would have embarrassed the late John C., this is a very fine album to which I recommend you treat your ears. C.A.

COUNT BASIE: *Basie Jam #2*. Count Basie (piano); Clark Terry (trumpet); Al Grey (trombone); Benny Carter (alto saxophone); Eddie "Lockjaw" Davis (tenor saxophone); Joe Pass (guitar); John Heard (bass); Louis Bellson (drums). *Doggin' Around*; *JJJJump*; *Mama Don't Wear No Drawers*; *Kansas City Line*. PABLO 2310-786 \$7.98, © S10-786 \$8.98, © K10-786 \$8.98.

Performance: **A rose is a rose is . . .**
Recording: **Very good**

Throughout his long career as a bandleader, Count Basie—now approaching seventy-three—has periodically taken time out from his big band to swing with a smaller group. There were the famous 1939 Decca quartet sessions with the downy All-American Rhythm Section, the classic *Dickie's Dream/Lester Leaps In* Kansas City Seven date for vocal that same year, the 1942 All-American Rhythm Section sides with Buck Clayton and Don Byas, and—throughout the Fifties and Sixties—many more for Columbia, Clef, Roulette, Impulse, and Verve. Columbia recently issued an excellent two-record Basie

anthology ("Super Chief"—Columbia G 31224) that includes some of the classic Basie combo sides from 1939 and 1942, and a few of the Impulse and Roulette recordings remain in the catalogs. But, comforting as it is that these sides are still available, it is even more heartening to see that the tradition continues.

This album of Basie in a small-band setting, recorded last year, is a late follow-up to "Basie Jam" (Pablo 2310-718), which was made in 1973 and released in 1975. Again it's an eight-piece band, but since the two sets have only tenor man Eddie "Lockjaw" Davis and drummer Louis Bellson in common (plus, of course, Basie himself), each has a character of its own. As one might expect, Basie's economic, ultra-relaxed style sets the tone and mood of this session, which, as the album title

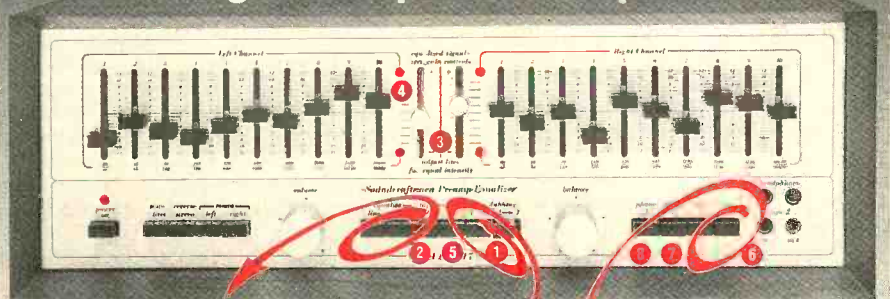
implies and like its predecessor, has the nature of a jam session but involves a modicum of head arrangement. The rhythm section is not quite as feathery light as that famous one of old, but guitarist Joe Pass fills Freddie Green's shoes acceptably with admirable support from bassist John Heard and drummer Louis Bellson, a man of impeccable taste. There is excellent work by all the horn players, but special mention is due Benny Carter, who—only months away from his seventieth birthday—is still an extraordinary performer.

According to a producer's note on the back of this album, Norman Granz intends to record Basie with other combinations in the future; let's hope Mr. Basie makes a full recovery from his recent illness, and that there will

(Continued on page 99)

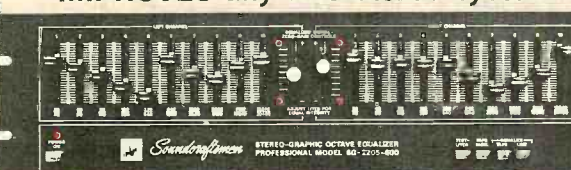
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A New Jazz Reissue Series from Verve



Bob Parent

SINCE much of the music in Verve's new Reissue series was originally recorded by Norman Granz, it valuably complements his current activity on Pablo and is a reminder of the importance of his past contributions in the documentation of jazz history. His values and policies have, fortunately, remained the same regardless of fashion, and he continues to treat musicians with more consideration and generosity than is common in this field. Moreover, he grants them considerable freedom in the studio, and this has usually been amply repaid. Johnny Hodges, for example, made some excellent albums without supervision of any kind (several remain unissued) but was always careful to remember that "Norman likes the blues." When Creed Taylor took over responsibility for the label, he was not, like Granz, his own boss, but answerable ultimately to the company's accountants. Shrewd and intelligent, he adopted different methods that were also successful, but he ended up by falling into the trap—however lucrative—of over-elaborate production.

The 1957 *Porgy and Bess* will inevitably be compared with Granz's recent RCA set by Cleo Laine and Ray Charles. As well as Charles does in several instances, there is nothing in the RCA recording to compare with Armstrong's *There's a Boat Dat's Leavin' Soon for New York*. Ella Fitzgerald is more natural and less dramatic than Cleo Laine, although the latter's treatment may be more appropriate to an "opera" that seems to have critics falling down in worshipful heaps just as they did for *Treemonisha*. I suppose we are stuck forever with "de," "dat," and "wid" in the song titles, but I wonder whether Gershwin's ear for dialect was any more accurate than that of those Americans who imagine the English say "veddy." Duke Ellington, for one, did not think it was.

The jam session set (2508) is an essential jazz item, although calling it "The Charlie Parker Sides" is misleading and irritating. Parker plays here on equal terms with Johnny Hodges and Benny Carter and by no means outdoes them—or Ben Webster, for that matter—but presumably Parker's name now guarantees sales to the brainwashed masses. The long performances show Granz's early awareness (in 1952) of the LP's proper potential for jazz, but the continuous, one-chorus-each ballad medley tends to get boring. Anyone who regards Hodges as primarily a ballad player should revise his opinion after hearing

him on the two blues. The performance level varies, as in all jam sessions, but the ensemble riffs are consistently satisfying.

Bill Evans appears to be a favorite of those responsible for this series; he pops up no less than three times in the present batch. "Jazz is a mental attitude rather than a style," he is quoted as observing. However that may be, it requires *heart* to make it. Although the cerebral content of his playing is sometimes demanding, rhythmically he often sounds as though he were sleepwalking. The interplay with Gary Peacock's bass and Jim Hall's guitar is subtle and sensitive, but the overall impression is of cocktail music for intellectuals.

The first record in the Stan Getz album was made in 1964, after Getz's successful affair with bossa nova, and the surprising choice for drummer was Elvin Jones. "It's fun swinging and getting hot for a change," the saxophonist told Leonard Feather later, and most listeners must have found the relatively abandoned blowing a welcome change. Even Evans seems stirred by Jones' boiling drums, and the bassists really move on their respective sessions. Chick Corea and Grady Tate replace Evans and Jones on the second (1967) record, which culminates in a vigorous performance of Corea's *Windows* in 6/8 time. The pianist, then little known to the public, shows the influence of Evans, while Tate, usually heard in more conservative contexts, rises confidently to the occasion.

found here, but there is plenty of that feeling which results in believability. Those who take pleasure in minimizing Fitzgerald's achievements should study the faces of musicians, like those in Count Basie's band, when they accompany her at a concert.

The Parker set (2512) promises more than it fulfills. Most of the first record is devoted to laborious performances with strings, but there is an element of humor in the contrasts between the saxophonist's chiseled tone, the movie sound of the strings, and Buddy Rich's drumming. There is something incongruous, too, in the meeting with Coleman Hawkins on *Ballade*—Mr. Warm meets Mr. Cool! Despite bongos and conga on the second session, the other record is more listenable. The trumpet playing by Miles Davis is delicate and introverted on the first session, that of Red Rodney more confident and outgoing on the third. The blues tracks have moments of direct simplicity, but soon sink beneath the weight of exercise-book virtuosity and trite unison riffs. Parker's style seems more suited to *Lover Man*, here oddly credited to "Weill, Anderson" instead of Davis, Ramirez, Sherman.

THE Wes Montgomery album, recorded thirteen years later than the Parker one, is easy to appreciate. The opener, *No Blues*, swings from the first bar and contains superb choruses by Wynton Kelly, who also provides good support throughout. Three tracks on the second side have been wisely divested of the wretched, dubbed-in backgrounds that probably helped hurry the guitarist to his grave. The fact that organ records are now less abundant adds some interest to Montgomery's 1966 encounter with Jimmy Smith on the fourth side. Nothing very stimulating happens, but they converse comfortably like a couple of old friends.

The piano collection by the modern masters (and mistress) is, like the curate's egg, very good in parts. It is useful to have as an illustration of both "the state of the art" and the uneven course of jazz evolution. Three movements from Mary Lou Williams' *Zodiac Suite* were recorded at the Newport Jazz Festival of 1957 and are introduced verbally in typically humorous fashion by Dizzy Gillespie. Backed by a powerful big band, she plays with an authority that seems to have digested

... a singer who swings more consistently
than any other since Armstrong died ...

Ella Fitzgerald's songbooks are esteemed by those who are prepared to grant a singer certain liberties in the course of his or her "interpretation" but believe they are entitled to hear the words too. You can hear them in the Cole Porter collection, verse and chorus in most cases, all delivered with consummate artistry by a singer who swings more consistently than any other since Louis Armstrong died. As Chris Albertson writes in the notes, the songs "have rarely been sung with such sympathetic elegance and grace." No self-pity carried over from private life, nothing coy, no affectations, no phony dramatics are to be

all other styles. Her improvisational ability is also demonstrated on the unlikely vehicle *Carrioca*. Bud Powell's influence on pianists of the bop aftermath was comparable to that of Parker and Gillespie on their followers, but by 1955, when these records were made, he was past his prime. There are, nevertheless, rewarding glimpses of his invention, virtuosity, and *drive*, as well as great bass playing by George Duvivier. Cecil Taylor in 1957 and Paul Bley in 1961 were evidently trying hard to be different or searching for a nebulous freedom, while Bill Evans in 1966 continued to explore his (harmonic) interiors. Wynton

Kelly in 1965, on the other hand, knew exactly what his goal was and went straight at it on *Blues on Purpose*.

Now that this series has saluted all the fashionable figures in the Verve catalog, it is to be hoped that it will begin to mine the rich resources left by such artists as Coleman Hawkins, Roy Eldridge, Ben Webster, and Johnny Hodges—particularly the early Hodges records—as has already been done, if clumsily, in European releases. —Stanley Dance

ELLA FITZGERALD & LOUIS ARMSTRONG: *Porgy and Bess*. Ella Fitzgerald (vocals); Louis Armstrong (trumpet, vocals); orchestra, Russell Garcia cond. *Summertime*; *It Ain't Necessarily So*; and fourteen others. VERVE VE2-2507 two discs \$7.98.

NORMAN GRANZ JAM SESSIONS: *The Charlie Parker Sides*. Johnny Hodges, Benny Carter, Charlie Parker (alto saxophone); Flip Phillips, Ben Webster (tenor saxophone); Charlie Shavers (trumpet); Oscar Peterson (piano); Barney Kessel (guitar); Ray Brown (bass); J. C. Heard (drums). *Jam Blues*; *Ballad Medley*; *What Is This Thing Called Love?*; *Funky Blues*. VERVE VE2-2508 two discs \$7.98.

BILL EVANS: *Trio (Motian, Peacock)*; *Duo (Hall)*. Bill Evans (piano); Gary Peacock (bass); Paul Motian (drums); Jim Hall (guitar). *Little Lulu*; *I'll See You Again*; *Angel Face*; and eleven others. VERVE VE2-2509 two discs \$7.98.

STAN GETZ: *The Chick Corea/Bill Evans Sessions*. Stan Getz (tenor saxophone); Bill Evans, Chick Corea (piano); Ron Carter, Richard Davis (bass); Elvin Jones, Grady Tate (drums). *Night and Day*; *Melinda*; *Litha*; and eight others. VERVE VE2-2510 two discs \$7.98.

ELLA FITZGERALD: *The Cole Porter Songbook*. Ella Fitzgerald (vocals); orchestra, Buddy Bregman cond. *Miss Otis Regrets*; *Let's Do It*; *Just One of Those Things*; *Begin the Beguine*; *You're the Top*; and twenty-seven others. VERVE VE2-2511 two discs \$7.98.

CHARLIE PARKER: *The Verve Years (1950-1951)*. Charlie Parker (alto saxophone); Miles Davis, Red Rodney (trumpet); Coleman Hawkins (tenor saxophone); Hank Jones, John Lewis (piano); Ray Brown (bass); Buddy Rich, Max Roach, Kenny Clarke, Roy Haynes (drums); strings, Joe Lippman cond. *Laura*; *Ballade*; *She Rote*; *Lover Man*; and twenty-four others. VERVE VE2-2512 two discs \$7.98.

WES MONTGOMERY: *The Small Group Recordings*. Wes Montgomery (guitar); Wynton Kelly (piano); Jimmy Smith (organ); Paul Chambers (bass); Jimmy Cobb (drums); Ray Barretto (percussion). *No Blues*; *Misty*; *Four on Six*; *James and Wes*; and seven others. VERVE VE2-2513 two discs \$7.98.

MASTERS OF THE MODERN PIANO. Bud Powell, Cecil Taylor, Mary Lou Williams, Paul Bley, Wynton Kelly, Bill Evans (piano); in trio, quartet, and with orchestra. *Conception*; *Mona's Blues*; *Zodiac Suite*; *Carla*; *Blues on Purpose*; *My Foolish Heart*; and eleven others. VERVE VE2-2514 two discs \$7.98.

be many more albums as good as this one. While we're at it, let's also hope that Mr. Granz sees fit to lower his prices. It is hard to understand why Pablo records should sell for a dollar more than most other albums, especially when one considers the stingy black and white covers. C.A.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

LOUIE BELLSON: *Louie Bellson's 7*. Louie Bellson (drums); Blue Mitchell (trumpet); Dick Nash (trombone); Pete Christlieb (tenor saxophone); Ross Tompkins (piano); Grant Geissman (guitar); John Williams (bass). *Now and Then*; *Body and Soul*; *Dig*; *My Old Flame*; and six others. CONCORD JAZZ CJ-25 \$6.98 (from Concord Jazz, Inc., P.O. Box 845, Concord, Calif. 94522).

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

Louis (or Louie, as he bills himself these days) Bellson is a drummer of remarkable technical facility and good taste who won a Gene Krupa drum contest while still a teenager and has since propelled some of the greatest big bands in the land, including those of Goodman, Tommy Dorsey, Basie, and Ellington. He often works with his wife, Pearl Bailey, and is a regular at the Concord Summer Jazz Festival where this album was recorded last year. The album is a splendid one from all standpoints, the artful performances of Bellson's impressive septet having been expertly recorded by engineer Phil Edwards, who has captured every nuance of sound with a clarity and balance usually reserved for studio recordings.

The program is equally well balanced, a good blend of the old and the new, the bouncy and the ballady. Particularly pleasing in the latter category is a five-song medley highlighted by Blue Mitchell's squeezed-out reading of *It Might As Well Be Spring* and a mellow trombone version of *Body and Soul* that might well have you looking (in vain, I believe) for Dick Nash albums. Mr. Bellson is his impeccable self throughout; drummers tend to be exhibitionists, but Bellson knows when to hold back, and the only time he really steps front and center—for a number entitled *Roto Blues*—he gives us a superb demonstration of his skill and the flexibility of "Roto Toms," which are drums that can be finely tuned with a full octave range that gives the drummer melodic possibilities hitherto all but denied him. The album has many more salient features, but you really ought to hear them for yourself. C.A.

PAT BRITT: *Starrsong*. Pat Britt (flute, soprano, alto, and tenor saxophones); Gary Barone (trumpet, flugelhorn); Dwight Dickerson (piano); Allen Jackson (bass); Will Bradley (drums). *Little Doubletotee*; *Tristan*; *To Whom It May Concern*; *Roy's Place*; and three others. CATALYST 7612 \$6.98.

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

Neither Pat Britt nor the other four members of his group have gained much attention away from the West Coast, probably because they are good without being exceptional. Judging by Herb Wong's notes for this album, the quintet seems to consist of local celebrities. But there is something lacking in their music, and I believe that something is a lack of direction. There are so many different individual

and collective styles to be heard on this record that one is tempted to ask the real Pat Britt Quintet to stand up. Perhaps next time around? C.A.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

BENNY CARTER/DIZZY GILLESPIE: *Carter, Gillespie, Inc.* Dizzy Gillespie (trumpet); Benny Carter (alto saxophone); Tommy Flanagan (piano); Joe Pass (guitar); Al McKibbon (bass); Mickey Roker (drums, vocals). *Sweet and Lovely*; *Night in Tunisia*; *Broadway*; and three others. PABLO 2310-781 \$7.98, © S10-781 \$8.98, © K10-781 \$8.98.

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

Imagine a topnotch, driving rhythm section flowing like water, and two outstanding, imaginative horn players effortlessly skipping perfectly coordinated notes across it. If you can grasp that metaphor—bearing in mind that the two horn players are Dizzy Gillespie and Benny Carter, and that the rhythm section is headed by Tommy Flanagan—you don't need any further word from me. Get it? By all means, do. C.A.

CHICK COREA: *My Spanish Heart*. Chick Corea (keyboards); Arriaga String Quartet; Jean Luc Ponty (violin); Stanley Clarke (bass); Steve Gadd (drums); other musicians. *My Spanish Heart*; *Love Castle*; *The Gardens*; *Day Danse*; *Night Streets*; *The Hilltop*; *The Sky*; *Wind Danse*; *Armando's Rhumba*; *Prelude to El Bozo*; *El Bozo (Parts I-III)*; *Spanish Fantasy (Parts I-IV)*. POLYDOR PD-2-9003 two discs \$9.98, © POL-8T2-9003 \$11.98, © POL-CT2-9003 \$11.98.

Performance: **Half marvelous**
Recording: **Very good**

I have no doubt, after hearing this double-disc album, that Chick Corea is a superior pianist with superb technique, a sprightly imagination, and a delicate touch. But I also have no doubt that he clutters and smothers his talents by trying to do too much all at once, and the result is that he over-reaches. He has recorded enough material in bulk for two LP's, but he—or someone—should have edited it down to a single disc. His attempt to make grand, sweeping statements causes him to drag in pop, jazz, and current Latin clichés. Some of what he plays—the better moments—is absolutely gorgeous, but too much of the rest is make-work flapdoodle. Still, when he's good, he's awfully good. J.V.

LARRY CORYELL: *The Lion and the Ram*. Larry Coryell (vocals and guitars); Michael Urbaniak (violin); Mike Mandel (keyboards); others. *Larry's Boogie*; *Stravinsky*; *The Fifties*; *Toy Soldiers*; and six others. ARISTA AL 4108 \$6.98.

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

I can do without Julie Coryell's lyrics about licking the wounds of love, and Larry Coryell's rendition of them doesn't exactly turn me on, either, but most of this album is instrumental and worthy of anybody's attention. This is basically the Eleventh House group Coryell led on a couple of previous albums (one on Vanguard, one on Arista). What makes "The Lion and the Ram" so worthwhile is Coryell's fine guitar playing, a nimble exercise that is more akin to the work of Big

Bill Broonzy and Blind Willie Johnson than it is to the overrated calisthenics of the late Jimi Hendrix. C.A.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

EARL HINES: *Earl Hines at Saralee's*. Earl Hines (piano). *Alice Blue Gown*; *I Want a Little Girl*; *Don't Take Your Love from Me*; and three others. FAIRMONT FA-1011 \$6.98 (from Fairmont Records, P.O. Box 3392, Santa Monica, Calif. 90403).

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

Pianist Earl Hines will be seventy-four this year. He has been playing professionally for more than fifty years, and, had he stopped

working forty-nine years ago, his first recordings alone would have assured him certain prominence in the annals of jazz. Fortunately Hines did not stop performing, and, amazingly, he has never stopped progressing. His improvisational skill is as great today as it ever was, and his technique is simply dazzling.

This album was recorded in 1974 at the Santa Monica home of concert pianist Saralee Halprin. The selections average eight minutes each, and Hines fills every second with the most exquisite piano playing you are ever likely to hear. Obviously relaxed in the informal setting of a home, he is playing better than I have ever heard him—and that is really saying something, for I have heard him on many occasions when his brilliance overwhelmed me. And if you think Hines' music is

that of another era, get an earful of *Don't Take Your Love from Me*—it is an extraordinary highlight of an album that is simply remarkable. C.A.

BOBBY HUTCHERSON: *The View from the Inside*. Bobby Hutcherson (vibraphone); Manny Boyd (soprano and tenor saxophones); Larry Nash (piano); James Leary (bass); Eddie Marshall (drums). *Later, Even*; *Laugh, Laugh Again*; *For Heaven's Sake*; and four others. BLUE NOTE LA710-G \$6.98, © EA710-H \$6.98.

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

Vibist Bobby Hutcherson became interested in music twenty years ago after hearing Milt Jackson. At thirty-five, he is still playing à la Jackson, though ten years have passed since some critics hailed him as the first modern vibes player to have liberated himself from that doyen of the post-Hampton school of vibes men. This is a quintet recording without the embellishments (voices, synthesizers, etc.) the Blue Note producers seem so fond of, and that in itself is a relief, but it is also a very unexciting album. All five men play correctly, but the tunes are dull, the arrangements tedious, and the overall effect somniferous. It's like good cocktail music: you don't mind talking over it. C.A.

MARIAN McPARTLAND: *A Fine Romance*. Marian McPartland (piano); Frank Tate (bass); Ted Moore (drums). *Send In the Clowns*; *Silent Pool*; *This Masquerade*; *Feelings*; and six others. IMPROV 7115 \$5.98.

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

Marian McPartland, whose musical embroideries normally appear on her own Halcyon label, recorded this set for Improv last year during an engagement at Downtown, a jazz spot in Buffalo, New York. The repertoire is mostly familiar, ranging from Kern and Sondheim to Stevie Wonder and Leon Russell and including a medley of Ellington tunes. There is also a very sensitive, beautiful rendering of *Feelings*, which—although I am beginning to tire of the tune—I find myself going back to repeatedly.

Most impressive, however, is Ms. McPartland's own *Silent Pool*, a stunningly haunting composition that ends side one. It ought to lead to a whole album of McPartland music—perhaps Marian McPartland the record-company owner will consider releasing such an album. C.A.

KIRK NUROCK. Kirk Nurock (piano). *Straight No Chaser*; *Giant Steps*; *A Night in Tunisia*; and five others. ADAMO ADS 9504 \$6.98 (from Adamo Records, 29 Washington Avenue, South Nyack, N.Y. 10960).

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

Pianist Kirk Nurock is as new to me as the label on which he records, but he plays a mostly familiar, well-chosen program, and he does it in a manner that is strictly his own. His technique is a bit rigid, his style somewhat impetuous and at times over-embellished, but judging from the cover photo he is still quite young and there is enough talent in evidence to give rise to great expectations. Unlike Keith Jarrett, Paul Bley, and Steve Kuhn (all of whom have gone the solo route), Nurock's



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music is extroverted, which is not a fault except that he sometimes seems to lose control. Despite such criticism, I rather like this album because Nurock is original and he obviously has something to say that has not been said before—time will surely remedy any difficulties he has in expressing himself. C.A.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

FLIP PHILLIPS: *Phillips' Head*. Flip Phillips (tenor saxophone, bass clarinet); Mickey Crane (piano); Milt Hinton (bass); Mousey Alexander (drums). *Spanish Eyes; Love Story; Nancy; Fat Tessie's Ass*; and five others. CHOICE CRS 1013 \$6.98 (from Choice Records Inc., 245 Tilley Place, Sea Cliff, N.Y. 11579).

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

Flip Phillips was part of the 52nd Street scene in the early part of the Forties (most notably with trumpeter Frankie Newton). He was playing clarinet then, but he switched to tenor just prior to joining Woody Herman and what was to become the celebrated First Herd. In 1947 he became a member of the nomadic Jazz at the Philharmonic portable jam-session troupe, firmly establishing himself as a crowd-pleaser through a frenetic, live recording of *Perdido*, which remains as good an example of musical prudence as we are ever likely to hear.

That Phillips has a more artistic side to him is already a matter of record, and, thanks to this album, so is the fact that—though he has virtually kept himself off the scene since 1960, living in Florida—Flip Phillips remains a superb reed player. The album is a joy from beginning to end, and should you wonder where Phillips' head is at these days, I suggest you give *Fat Tessie's Ass* a spin; the set's only Phillips original, it is presumably dedicated to an obese friend's beast of burden, but the dexterous Mr. Phillips runs through it and the surrounding tunes with the grace of an Aqueduct favorite. C.A.

SEAWIND. Seawind (vocals and instruments). *We Got a Way; You Gotta Be Willin' to Lose (Part II); He Loves You; The Devil Is a Liar; A Love Song/Seawind; Make Up Your Mind*; and three others. CTI CTI-5002 \$6.98, © CT8-5002 \$7.98, © CTC-5002 \$7.98.

Performance: **Good, but . . .**
Recording: **Very good**

Sir Herbert Beerbohm-Tree was a noted English actor of the late nineteenth century, and his production of *Hamlet* was acclaimed in London. Tree made the mistake of asking Oscar Wilde what he thought of his performance, and Wilde, pretending to give the question much thought, replied: "Tree, your performance was . . . was . . . was . . . funny without being vulgar."

It is something like that with Seawind, a pop-jazz group that tries to make up in energy what they lack in content. They derive much of their sound from groups like Lambert, Hendricks, and Ross and Sergio Mendes' Brazil 66, who were full of zippy vocals and polite jazz instrumental backings. And, like LH&R and Brazil, Seawind is actually nothing more (or less) than a well-drilled lounge act who work very hard and take themselves too seriously. I admire their precision and skill—as I do Guy Lombardo's—but they want us to believe that, since they are ped-

dling something close to jazz (America's Only Native Art Form, Inc.), what they are doing has Artistic Significance. Not so. Slick stuff, yes. Music, maybe. Art, uh-uh. J.V.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

SONNY STITT: *I Remember Bird*. Sonny Stitt (alto and tenor saxophones); Frank Rosolino (trombone); Dolo Coker (piano); Allen Jackson (bass); Clarence Johnston (drums); *Yes Jesus Loves Me; Waltz for Diane; Jeepers Creepers*; and four others. CATALYST 7616 \$6.98.

Performance: **Youthful and bopish**
Recording: **Very good**

When I reviewed Sonny Stitt's last album on

the Catalyst label, I suggested that an encore might be in order. Here it is: forty-five minutes of unadulterated, beautiful music by five well-matched players, including trombonist Frank Rosolino, whose work with Stitt will, I hope, not end with this album. There isn't a bad cut on either side, but side one alone is enough to make this a worthy acquisition; it opens with *Waltz for Diane*, a Rosolino composition exquisitely swung by all involved, goes on to a most prepossessing and sensitive reading of *Body and Soul*, and romps to an end with *Jeepers Creepers*, a 1938 item introduced by Louis Armstrong. There is good support throughout by pianist Dolo Coker, a Stitt mainstay twenty years ago, drummer Clarence Johnston, and the wonderfully bouncy bass of Allen Jackson. C.A.

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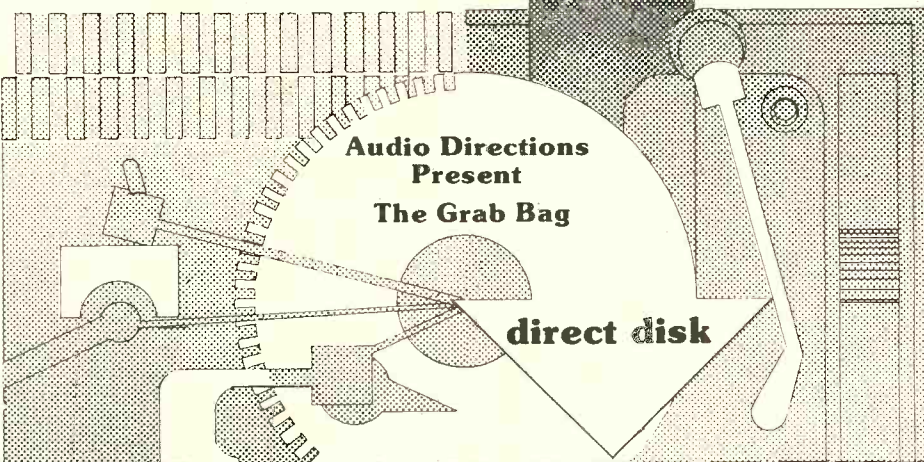
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J. S. BACH: *Brandenburg Concertos (BWV 1046-1051)*. Stuttgart Chamber Orchestra, Karl Münchinger cond. LONDON STS 15366/7 two discs \$7.96.

Performance: **Gluey**
Recording: **Thick**

Karl Münchinger's reading of the six *Brandenburgs* is characterized by an uncomfortable discrepancy between two stylistic approaches to the music. Although the Stuttgart Chamber Orchestra specializes in works conceived for a relatively small complement of players, their forces are still far too numerous to achieve the clarity demanded by such works as the *Brandenburg Concertos*. Certainly clarity could be achieved through careful use of separate bowings and highly articulated execution, but, unfortunately, Mr. Münchinger prefers a lush string sound and a pervasive legato more appropriate to works of the Romantic era than to the Classical and Baroque repertoire. The result is a gluey, thick sound which obscures the severely linear part-writing that is such a vital component of these pieces. The soloists, on the other hand, are thoroughly versed in Baroque style and play clean, highly articulated lines that are in complete contrast to the mushy tutti playing. This creates an unpleasant dichotomy of style.

Another disturbing factor in this album is the insensitive balance between the harpsichord and the other instruments. The former

is so soft that one barely hears it in the Fifth Concerto (in which the harpsichord is, after all, one of the soloists), and one rushes for the volume control in order to hear the cadenza at least at a reasonable volume level. This is all the more a pity because of the fine, solid playing of Igor Kipnis. Especially interesting is his realization of the final chords in the slow movement of the First Concerto and his tasteful interpolation between the two movements of the Third. Surely he deserves a few more decibels than the stingy ration he gets here.

S.L.

J. S. BACH: *Piano Transcriptions* (see *Collections—Wilhelm Kempff*)

J. S. BACH: *Sonatas for Flute and Harpsichord*. Paula Robison (flute); Kenneth Cooper (harpsichord); Timothy Eddy (cello). VANGUARD VSD 71215/6 two discs \$13.96.

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

Everything about this album is good. Paula Robison is a very clean flutist; her intonation is perfect and her rhythm precise. Kenneth Cooper is also an extremely neat and accurate performer, with a nice sense of rhythm and a fine feel for the harpsichord, and Timothy Eddy, an excellent cellist, offers discreet support in the works for continuo and flute. In short, everything is here that is on the written page; nothing has been overlooked. But nothing has been added either. There is no sense of a fresh look at the music (which may need a fresh look, for it has not been that long since it was decided that several of the sonatas were *not* written by Johann Sebastian), nor is anything brought to it through the use of Baroque performance practices. Therefore, the records spin on with the same goodness throughout and never once is the listener arrested by anything particularly outstanding, different, or original. One fine feature, however, is the balance. The engineers have put the harpsichord sound on an equal footing with the flute sound so that one can, at last, hear the two treble lines in an ideal balance and comprehend their intricate contrapuntal relationship.

S.L.

BALAKIREV: *Symphony No. 1, in C Major*. USSR Symphony Orchestra, Yevgeny Svetlanov cond. MELODIYA/ANGEL SR-40272 \$6.98.

Performance: **Hearty**
Recording: **Generally good**

It is always good to see this marvelous symphony get some attention; it is one of the most spectacularly attractive things of its kind, but, inexplicably, it never turns up on our concert programs. The performance recorded here is one of Svetlanov's best jobs, and the sound, if a little fiery in spots, is generally very good too. But the 1955 Beecham recording happens to be one of his best jobs, and that, as Aunt Effie used to say, is goin' some. It is still available (Seraphim S-60062), and I still find Sir Thomas' way with this score incomparable. Svetlanov's general approach is actually similar in outline, but he does not match the Beecham magic. He simply has a heavier hand and lacks Sir Thomas' refinement when it comes to shaping a phrase, and the wind soloists in the Russian orchestra do not show up too well against those of the Royal Philharmonic at its peak. The Seraphim sound is hardly showcase quality, but it doesn't get in the way, and the price is barely more than half that of the new disc—whose appearance is to be welcomed for calling attention to the music and reminding us (in a liner blurb, in fact) of the really indispensable Beecham version.

R.F.

BARTÓK: *Five Songs, Op. 15; Five Village Scenes; Five Songs, Op. 16; Eight Hungarian Folk Songs*. Elizabeth Suderburg (soprano); Béla Siki (piano). TURNABOUT TV-S 34592 \$3.98.

Performance: **Lyric and intense**
Recording: **Very good**

Béla Bartók was a composer who was very extroverted and dynamic in his chamber music and very inward and personal in his songs. There are essentially two types of Bartók songs: the art songs, represented here by Opp. 15 and 16, and the folk-song settings, represented here by Slovak and Hungarian sets. None of them are very often performed

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

(these performers recently gave this very program at Lincoln Center, and it was something genuinely unusual), but there are good reasons for this neglect. First of all, the language problem: few singers are willing to learn to sing—as Ms. Suderberg has—both Hungarian and Slovak (the alternative, translation, has its problems too). An even more difficult obstacle is encountered in the very intimacy of the music, and even the folk-song settings refuse to yield their secrets easily. Bartók's lyric style is slow, poetic, and introspective; sadness, longing, and pain are its constant themes.

I have no way of evaluating Ms. Suderberg's Hungarian (much less her Slovak), but, for a non-native, her lyricism and intense musicality add up to a persuasive advocacy for this music. The basic approach is simplicity and directness, so that the starkness and intensity of expression inherent in the writing emerge with clarity and impact. In effect, Ms. Suderberg universalizes a very particular, personal, and Hungarian form of expression. I should add that the very capable pianist, Béla Siki, is Hungarian, and that translations but no texts are provided. **E.S.**

BARTON: *The Disappointment, or The Force of Credulity*. Arden Hopkin (tenor), Parchment; Milford Fargo (tenor), Quadrant; William Sharp (baritone), Rattletrap; Joseph Bias (baritone), Raccoon; Elaine Bonazzi (mezzo-soprano), Moll Placket; Richard Hudson (baritone), McSnip; Tonio di Paolo (tenor), Meanwell; Ruth Denison (soprano), Lucy; Richard Reif (baritone), Topinlift; John Maloy (tenor), Washball. Eastman Philharmonia Chamber Ensemble, Samuel Adler cond. TURNABOUT TV-S 34650 \$3.98.

Performance: **Good but over-orchestrated**

Recording: **Okay**

The Disappointment, described here as America's first ballad opera, is a somewhat racy and Hogarthian play in the *Beggar's Opera* tradition. Written by one Andrew Barton, it was scheduled for performance at the Southwark Theatre in Philadelphia in 1767 but apparently never performed. The play's "personal reflections" are said to have rendered it "unfit for the stage"—perhaps more because of its political satire than for reasons of bawdiness or vulgarity. Barton resorted to the freer medium of the press, publishing his masterpiece (the libretto only; the tunes are merely named) in New York in 1767 and later in Philadelphia in 1796.

In true ballad-opera tradition, the music consists entirely of pop songs of the day, and the work contains the earliest known reference to *Yankee Doodle*, a version of *Over the Hills and Far Away*, and other goodies. Not all the tunes are so well remembered, but it has apparently proved possible to recover most or all of the originals. This version, a Bicentennial production sponsored by the Library of Congress Music Division and the Eastman School of Music, goes well beyond merely fitting words and melodies together. Samuel Adler of the Eastman School has worked up a rather elaborate chamber orchestration complete with overture, interludes, dances, and more or less elaborate accompaniments—most of it, we can safely say, well outside anything that could have been expected in 1767 from a provincial, colonial outpost of what was already a rather old-fashioned musical culture.

This recording—of the songs only—gives some feeling for the bite and wit of the original tale of con artists, dupes, shills, whores, buried treasure, stool-pigeons, lovers, and the law. But it would have been better done more simply and with more vivacity and edge. I won't belabor the title, but this recording is a bit of a **E.S.**

BEETHOVEN: *Piano Sonata No. 12, in A-flat Major, Op. 26 ("Funeral March"); Piano Sonata No. 16, in G Major, Op. 31, No. 1*. Emil Gilels (piano). DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2530 654 \$7.98, © 3300 654 \$7.98.

Performance: **Cool, sinewy**
Recording: **Pellucid**

The best of Emil Gilels' recorded performances of Beethoven convey a powerful delineation of the music's architecture together with dead-accurate passagework and rhythm. So it is here with the well-known *Funeral March* Sonata and the much less familiar but delightfully quirky No. 16. Gilels does not underline the rhetorical aspects of the Op. 26 slow movement; his treatment is carefully measured and highly effective in its cumulative impact. What pleases me most about this record, however, is hearing him unbend sufficiently to capture so beautifully the skittish humor of the opening movement of No. 16. There is good, clean piano sound throughout both sides, though the instrument is a mite

hard in tone—a characteristic common to most of Gilels' solo discs I have encountered on the DG label. **D.H.**

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

BEETHOVEN: *Piano Sonata No. 21, in C Major ("Waldstein"); Variations and Fugue in E-flat, Op. 34 ("Eroica")*. Emanuel Ax (piano). RCA ARL1-2083 \$7.98.

Performance: **Richly satisfying**
Recording: **Excellent**

To the formidable pages of the *Waldstein* Sonata Emanuel Ax brings urgency, virility, and grandeur of conception, yet in no way does he "push" the music's inherent momentum, as is too often the case in virtuoso performances. He is masterly in his subtle variations of tempo and dynamics, particularly in his treatment of dialogue sequences in the end movements.

To the lengthy variations on the theme that Beethoven had used in a contradance and in his *Prometheus* ballet, and was to bring to fullest fruition in the finale of the *Eroica* Symphony, Mr. Ax brings just the right combination of splendor and elegance. All told, this is a most satisfying disc, not only in its musical qualities but in the full-bodied and amply spacious sonics. **D.H.**

BEETHOVEN: *Symphony No. 3, in E-flat Major, Op. 55 ("Eroica")*. Scottish National Or-

Parkening: Gentle Mastery



Angel Records

and fancies in somewhat the same way the cembalo did in the eighteenth century. (The harpsichord has today regained something of its old charm but now has an antiquarian sound that it obviously didn't have in its heyday.) Harpsichord music sounds very nice indeed on the guitar, especially *à la* Parkening. I was disappointed only in *Les Barricades Mystérieuses*, which always sounds as if it ought to be good on the guitar but in fact turns out to lose a bit of its mystery.

Side two of the record is—with one exception—French early-modern, again taken from a keyboard style that translates well into guitar terms; Satie and Ravel transcribe beautifully, and Parkening plays them with a gentle mastery that is rare on this difficult and attractive instrument. —Eric Salzman

CHRISTOPHER PARKENING: *Music of Two Centuries*. Scarlatti: *Prélude and Allegro Vivo*. Handel-Parkening: *Sarabande and Variations; Minuet in D Major*. Visée-Parkening: *Giga*. Weiss-Parkening: *Passacaglia*. Couperin-Parkening: *Les Barricades Mystérieuses*. Satie-Parkening: *Gymnopédie No. 1*. Satie-Marshall: *Gymnopédies Nos. 2 and 3*. Debussy-Marshall: *The Girl with the Flaxen Hair*. Poulenc-Marshall: *Pastourelle*. Ravel-Hyman: *Pavane of the Sleeping Beauty; Empress of the Pagodas*. Trad.-Marshall: *Afro-Cuban Lullaby*. Christopher Parkening (guitar). ANGEL S-36053 \$6.98, © 8XS-36053 \$7.98, © 4XS-36053 \$7.98.

CHRISTOPHER PARKENING's new guitar collection is a charming album of encore pieces in skillful, suave arrangements and performances. Side one is all Baroque and, with one exception, derives from keyboard works. The guitar is the modern equivalent of the harpsichord and seems to caress our ears

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chestra, Carlos Paita cond. LONDON SP 21152 \$6.98, © 5-21152 \$7.95.

Performance: **Spirited**
Recording: **Mushy**

This is a spirited, poetic performance: the Scottish musicians play well and the music is impressively shaped. Paita is not afraid of ritards and even tempo changes, but they are always within an expressive concept and justified by a superb feeling for phrase movement. The strong spirit of the performance, however, is compromised—particularly in the fast movements—by the mushy recorded sound.

E.S.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

BERLIOZ: Roméo et Juliette, Op. 17. Julia Hamari (mezzo-soprano); Jean Dupouy (tenor); José van Dam (bass-baritone); New England Conservatory Chorus; Boston Symphony Orchestra, Seiji Ozawa cond. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2707 089 two discs \$15.96, © 3370 011 \$15.96.

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

It is a measure of Seiji Ozawa's growth in musical maturity over the past decade that his new DG recording of Berlioz's enormously complex and varied *Roméo et Juliette* can hold its own very well indeed against the best of earlier recorded versions—in my opinion, those of Colin Davis, Charles Munch, and Arturo Toscanini.

Ozawa, like Davis and unlike Munch, favors a volitive approach to which he adds something of the fire and vigor of Toscanini. Munch perhaps brings a bit more magic to the music of the *Scène d'amour*, and Toscanini's delineation of the Queen Mab Scherzo in the 1947 NBC broadcast (issued in 1969 on RCA LM 7031) remains incomparable, but Ozawa sets a blistering pace for his own reading of this bit of musical sorcery and the Boston players carry it off superbly. Aside from the spirit and magnificent nervousity of his reading as a whole, Ozawa really scores over the competition in the quality of his soloists, who are one and all superb. Shirley-Quirk in his singing for Colin Davis may emerge as a more compassionate Friar Laurence, but José van Dam is marvelously authoritative, and one can well understand that he might indeed put the fear of God into the feuding families in the music's final pages. For this reason, Berlioz's finale comes off under Ozawa's baton more convincingly than usual. Special praise is due the New England Conservatory Chorus, which is a model of delicacy and flawless enunciation in the early pages and of high-powered splendor at the end.

Topping off the whole is a splendid recording job that not only captures the detail and stately grandeur of the music—most notably in the Ball music—but also manages most effectively the varied distance effects called for, both explicitly and implicitly, by Berlioz's altogether remarkable score. I'm not about to throw out my Davis, Munch, and Toscanini recordings of *Roméo*, but I'm certainly going to add this one to my library.

D.H.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

BIZET: Carmen Suites Nos. 1 and 2; L'Arlésienne Suites Nos. 1 and 2. National Philharmonic Orchestra, Leopold Stokowski cond.

COLUMBIA M 34503 \$6.98, © MA 34503 \$7.98, © MT 34503 \$7.98.

Performance: **Distinctive**
Recording: **Some rough spots**

This is the first release under Stokowski's new contract with Columbia, which runs to his hundredth birthday with an option for a ten-year renewal. The flair that distinguished his first recordings of this material, made in Philadelphia nearly a half-century ago, is very much in evidence here, but the sound is much less smooth than what RCA had been doing for him recently, with distressing congestion and occasional lack of bottom in some of the heavier passages in *L'Arlésienne*. This side, by the way, is attributed to "Bizet/Stokowski," which, unless there is some retouching I failed to notice, would seem to relate only to the cuts in the sequence. Unlike Stokowski's



Frank Salomon

RICHARD STOLTZMAN
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1952 version for RCA, this one is not complete: in the Suite No. 2 he has gone back to his old Philadelphia practice of performing only the second part of the Pastorale (the little Provençale dance), and the Intermezzo is omitted altogether. Well, these are surely the kindest cuts of all, and the freshness and elegance of the rest in Stokowski's hands may override the sonic shortcomings (though they will to many, of course, make them all the more regrettable).

The *Carmen* side, which fares better sonically, includes all the music of the two suites, even the instrumental settings of the *Seguedille* and *Habanera*. The magic of the early Philadelphia performances may not be fully recaptured here, but, except for the extraordinary Toscanini account of the Suite No. 1 (Victrola VIC-1263), there is no more recommendable version of the *Carmen* Suites than this: no big surprises, no fussiness, just more loving care than any other stereo version communicates.

R.F.

BRAHMS: Clarinet Quintet in B Minor, Op. 115. Richard Stoltzman (clarinet); Cleveland Quartet. RCA ARL1-1993 \$7.98.

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

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Brahms clarinet quintet have been relatively few and far between. I still enjoy the elegant, lyrical performance recorded for Angel in 1965 by Gervase de Peyer with the Melos Ensemble, but in its own way this new made-in-America reading by young Richard Stoltzman and the youthful Cleveland Quartet is equally fine. Their approach is more overtly expressive and less autumnally restrained than some of us may be used to, but, as Bernard Jacobson indicates in his penetrating liner notes, there is no reason to be bound by fancied psycho-biographical considerations in dealing with this music.

The reading here is strong, but by no means lacking in tenderness where called for, and Mr. Stoltzman's clarinet work is top-drawer. The recording is more closely miked than Angel's is, but the internal balances are excellent. I would rate this album the equal of Angel's, with one's personal taste as the only deciding factor in making a final choice. D.H.

DUSSEK: Piano Sonata in F Minor, Op. 77; Piano Sonata in B-Flat Major, Op. 35, No. 1. Frederick Marvin (piano). GENESIS GS 1068 \$6.98.

DUSSEK: Piano Sonata in F-sharp Minor, Op. 61; Piano Sonata in C Minor, Op. 35, No. 3. Frederick Marvin (piano). GENESIS GS 1069 \$6.98.

Performances: **Careful**
 Recordings: **Quite good**

Jan Ladislav Dussek, that fascinating composer whose wanderings took him over the face of Europe, wrote an assortment of keyboard sonatas whose content, scope, and technique have puzzled musicians from the day they were conceived. Some of these works were written for his technically limited students and reflect only too well, through their banal melodies, these young ladies' profoundly vulgar taste. Others, however, were written to display the composer's own brilliant technique and embody some of the most exalted piano music composed during the confused transition from the Classical to the Romantic style. But in all cases the sonatas are interesting and worth study, and Frederick Marvin is to be congratulated for this ambitious project which will ultimately bring all the sonatas to the public on records.

The four sonatas on these discs, among the grandest of the lot, range from the sublimity of the *Élégie Harmonique*, Op. 61, to the almost embarrassing material used in the final movements of the two sonatas from Op. 35. One of the problems of performing these works is holding them together: they are very loosely structured, they wander, they are excessively padded. Mr. Marvin, sensitive to minute detail, very often uses so much rubato and so many agogic accents that the overall line is lost. In order to bring off the large contours of these sprawling movements, it is necessary to drive through to the most important cadential points without stopping for the niceties, a thing Mr. Marvin, in his obvious love for each note, is unable to bring himself to do, and this is especially apparent in the final movements of the Op. 35 sonatas. His approach frequently leads to a loss of virility and direction. For example, the first movement of the F-sharp Minor Sonata, after the introduction, is marked *agitato*. Mr. Marvin's slow tempo and detailed reading of the ubiquitous sighing figure kills the agitated grief Dus-

(Continued on page 109)

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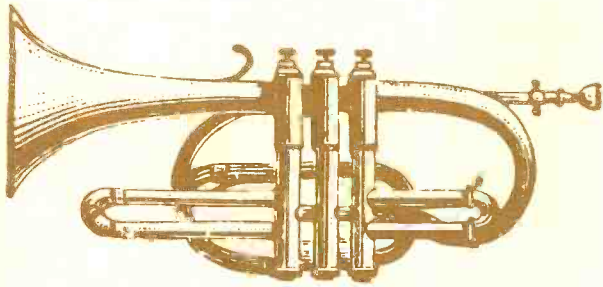
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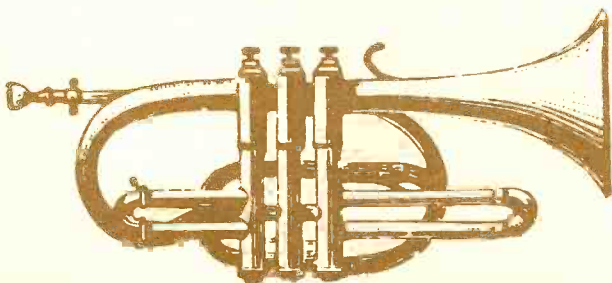
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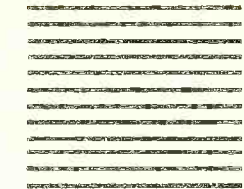
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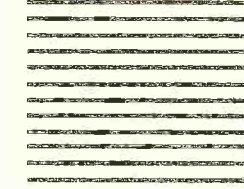


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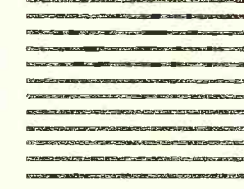


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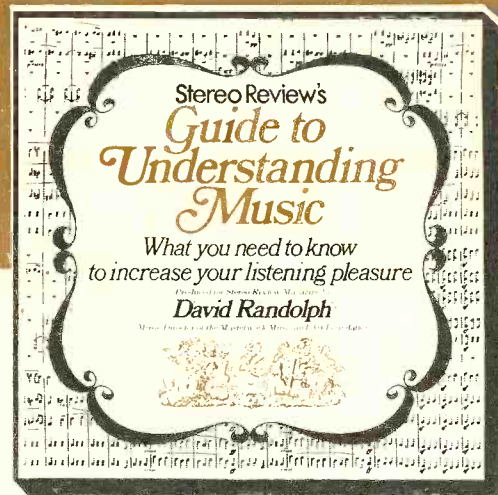
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sek so beautifully expressed here. In the final movement of the same work, however, Mr. Marvin shows that he can make a headlong thrust as he drives his way through the difficult, all-pervading syncopations. Let us hope that in future Dussek performances Mr. Marvin will see more of the overall picture and be willing to throw away the padding for what it is. Let us also hope that he will continue the series so that we may hear more of these fascinating works. S.L.

DVOŘÁK: Symphony No. 9, in E Minor, Op. 95 ("From the New World"). New Philharmonia Orchestra, Riccardo Muti cond. ANGEL □ S-37230 \$6.98.

DVOŘÁK: Symphony No. 9, in E Minor, Op. 95 ("From the New World"); Carnival Overture, Op. 92. Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra, Zubin Mehta cond. LONDON CS 6980 \$6.98.

Performances: **Muti fine-grained, Mehta facile**

Recordings: **Both good**

Since these latest tapings of the *New World* Symphony bring the available recorded versions to over two dozen, they certainly cannot be said to fill any gap in repertoire documentation. However, Riccardo Muti's carefully thought-out and finely honed reading (which includes the first-movement exposition repeat) is a fine contribution to the catalog, even if one misses in it the passion of a Kubelik or the rhythmic fire of a Toscanini. I can imagine Guido Cantelli, whose premature death in 1956 robbed the world of a major interpretive talent, doing a very similar type of reading. The New Philharmonia solo winds are in superb fettle here, and the recorded sound, especially in four-channel playback, is bright and airy, yet with ample body.

Zubin Mehta's Los Angeles Philharmonic produces gorgeously rich sounds as recorded in UCLA's Royal Hall, but I find Mehta's readings of both the *New World* and the *Carnival Overture* sadly lacking in poetic substance. Of brilliant playing there is plenty, but Dvořák needs more than that. The finale, in particular, becomes something of a mad dash here; the playing times are close to those of Toscanini, but there is little of the Toscanini magic. In short, these are highly proficient but essentially prosaic performances. D.H.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

ELGAR: Sonata in E Minor for Violin and Piano, Op. 82. WALTON: *Sonata for Violin and Piano.* Sidney Weiss (violin); Jeanne Weiss (piano). UNICORN RHS-341 \$7.98 (from HNH Distributors Ltd., P.O. Box 222, Evanston, Ill. 60204).

Performance: **Extremely persuasive**
Recording: **Excellent**

If you listen to the Elgar side of this record first, your reaction is likely to be that it sounds incredibly up-to-date and unstuffy, charged with an astonishingly contemporary vitality and wit. It is not so surprising, then, to discover that the labels are reversed—but that is absolutely all that is wrong with this splendid release. To the Elgar and Walton alike, the Weiss Duo (as Mr. and Mrs. Weiss bill themselves) brings an exceptionally sympathetic approach and all the skill needed to make the most persuasive case for the materi-

(Continued on page 112)

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ALTHOUGH there are so many Bach-cantata recordings hanging around these days that one may well believe they grow on trees, good performances of them definitely do not. A fine performance of one, in fact, is a carefully tended hothouse flower. The problems are many: What instruments were used? How do you obtain obsolete instruments and locate players sufficiently skilled to execute the difficult and idiomatic writing? How many players should be involved? Do you use boy sopranos or women? Finding soloists who can negotiate the instrumentally conceived writing and sing stylistically is also a problem, along with all the even more specific musical problems I shall not even attempt to list. In the fifteen cantatas recorded on seven relatively recent discs from three labels, we are presented with well worked-out solutions, quite different from one another, by three different conductors: Gustav Leonhardt, Helmut Rilling, and Karl Richter.

Gustav Leonhardt's Telefunken album is one of an ambitious series which will eventually include all the Bach cantatas. Telefunken's policy is to be as authentic as possible by using old instruments and performing in a style as close to Bach's as can be reasonably worked out by modern scholarship. Certainly this goal is an admirable one, but anyone who has listened to such recordings must admit that the results are a mixed blessing. The album under scrutiny is a case in point. Cantata 51, "*Jauchzet Gott in allen Landen*," not only contains one of the most frightening soprano parts ever written, but it also demands the utmost skill of a Baroque trumpeter. Marianne Kweksilber begins bravely, but she sounds intimidated by what she has probably been told is authentic Baroque vocalism. The voice is light and clear, but the coloratura simply does not come off. Don Smithers also puts on a brave show, but he too has trouble negotiating a fiendish trumpet part. In the more lyric middle section, we realize that Miss Kweksilber is a fine musician, and by the time we reach

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a joy



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the final "Alleluia," all seem to have forgotten about the old style and relax enough to turn out a rousing performance. If only at this point they could have returned to the opening, we might have had a fine reading of the entire work.

As for Cantata 52, "*Falsche Welt, dir traue ich nicht*," it is a miracle that a boy soprano can get through the work at all. Master Seppi Kronwitter has been well programmed, but his piping voice lacks even a hint of expression or phrasing; he sounds like a mechanical doll. Perhaps this is authentic. If so, it is clearly a case where authenticity should be forgotten so that we could listen to the wonderful music without having to worry about where the next note is coming from—and even what it will be.

The finest performance in this album is turned out by Paul Esswood in Cantata 54, "*Widerstehe doch der Sünde*." Esswood's counter-tenor voice is rich and well suited to this contemplative work, on which Bach lav-

More Bach Cantatas



“. . . a revelation to
hear 'Sheep may
safely graze' in
its pastoral context"

ished a wealth of felicitous detail. The performance is further enriched by the use of old instruments in the minutely scored accompaniment. This is an example of complete authenticity that comes off stunningly. The remaining two cantatas are performed by natural male voices and will be received, at least by the modern listener, with a sense of relief.

The two Musical Heritage Society albums by Helmut Rilling make use of modern instruments except for the recorders, viola da gamba, and harpsichord. The modern performance style is clean and light. Of the three cantatas, No. 208, "*Was mir behagt*" (the *Hunt Cantata*), is by far the best performance, mostly because of the excellent work of Helen Donath and Wilfrid Jochims. Their voices are beautifully focused, and they not only reveal superb musicianship in their solo work but prove to be an excellent working team in their duets. Elisabeth Speiser must also be congratulated on her straightforward presentation of the ever-popular "Sheep may safely graze." It is a revelation to hear it in its pastoral context. Particularly charming is the final chorus. The *Figuralchor* of the *Gedäch-*



Kolmar-Luth

KURT EQUILUZ:
passionate

niskirche has a limpid sound, and it is rare to hear a chorus sing with such lilt and grace.

Rilling's other disc, although good, is not as successful. The Frankfurter and Gächinger choruses produce somewhat muddy sounds that obscure the choral textures, and the bass line of the continuo is heavy and lumpy in the arias. Kathrin Graf, however, is a fine Bach singer, and the album is worth having for the miraculous tenor aria "*Wo wird in diesem Jammertale*," which is beautifully sung by Kurt Equiluz.

Karl Richter is well known as a Bach specialist through his many recordings and concerts with the Munich Bach Choir and Orchestra. Making no attempt to use old instruments or any authentic performance practice, he elicits for Deutsche Grammophon a sound that is thoroughly modern. He uses the best soloists he can find, and they often turn out to be top singers of opera and lieder rather than Baroque specialists. Purists may cavil at this, but the general listener can only rejoice in the results. The choral and orchestral sound is sumptuous, and the individual lines, while not articulated in the Baroque manner, are clean and beautifully projected. The solo singing, for the most part, is superb. Edith Mathis is a joy, and I especially like her duet with Anna Reynolds in Cantata 23, "*Du wahre Gott und Davids Sohn*." The same disc includes Cantata 87, the high point of which is the ubiquitous Kurt Equiluz's passionate reading of the siciliano, "*Ich will leiden*." Perhaps the finest cantata of all is No. 92, "*Ich hab in Gottes Herz und Sinn*." It is certainly a show piece for Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, and remarkable from both a musical and vocal standpoint is the curious choral and recitative "*Es kann mir fehlen minnermehr*." Like Schubert's *Death and the Maiden*, it requires two voices, one for the impersonal chorale melody and another for the passionate tropes that comment on the text of the chorale. In the aria "*Das Brausen von den rauhen Winden*," Fischer-Dieskau demonstrates his agility in

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DIETRICH FISCHER-DIESKAU:
coloratura
agility

coloratura singing. Here too, mention should be made of how well an extremely difficult continuo part is handled.

The Richter discs prove an all-important point in the performance of old music: effective and moving performance does not depend entirely on the use of authentic instruments and performance practice. What really counts, what speaks to us today and ultimately proves the worth of a piece of music, regardless of when it was written, is good, solid musicianship, common sense, and soloists who know how to communicate.

—Stoddard Lincoln

J. S. BACH: Cantatas: Jauchzet Gott in allen Landen (BWV 51); Falsche Welt, dir traue ich nicht (BWV 52); Widerstehe doch der Sünde (BWV 54); Ich armer Mensch, ich Sündenknecht (BWV 55); Ich will den Kreuzstab gerne tragen (BWV 56). Marianne Kweksilber (soprano); Seppi Kronwitter (boy soprano); Paul Esswood (alto); Kurt Equiluz (tenor); Michael Schopper (bass); Hannover Boys' Choir and Leonhardt Consort with additional players, Gustav Leonhardt cond. TELEFUNKEN SKW 14/1-2 two discs \$15.96.

J. S. BACH: Cantata, Was mir behagt, ist nur die muntre Jagd (BWV 208). Helen Donath, Elisabeth Speiser (sopranos); Wilfrid Jochims (tenor); Jakob Stämpfli (bass); Figuralchor of the Gedächtniskirche, Stuttgart, and Bach Collegium, Stuttgart, Helmut Rilling cond. MUSICAL HERITAGE SOCIETY MHS 3297 \$3.50 (plus 95¢ shipping charge from Musical Heritage Society, Inc., Oakhurst, N.J. 07755).

J. S. BACH: Cantatas: Ach lieben Christen, seid getrost (BWV 114); Siehe zu, dass deine Gottesfurcht nicht Heuchelei sei (BWV 179). Kathrin Graf, Gabriele Schnaut (sopranos); Else Paaske (alto); Kurt Equiluz (tenor); Wolfgang Schöne (bass); Frankfurter Kantorei, Gächinger Kantorei, Stuttgart, and Bach Collegium, Stuttgart, Helmuth Rilling cond. MUSICAL HERITAGE SOCIETY HMS 3207 \$3.50 (plus 95¢ shipping charge from Musical Heritage Society, Inc., Oakhurst, N.J. 07755).

J. S. BACH: Cantatas for Whitsun: O ewiges Feuer (BWV 34); Also hat Gott die Welt geliebt (BWV 68); Er ruft seinen Schafen mit Namen (BWV 175). Edith Mathis (soprano); Anna Reynolds (alto); Peter Schreier (tenor); Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau (bass); Munich Bach Choir and Orchestra, Karl Richter cond. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON ARCHIV 2533 306 \$7.98.

J. S. BACH: Cantatas: Ich hab in Gottes Herz und Sinn (BWV 92); Erhalt uns, Herr, bei deinem Wort (BWV 126). Edith Mathis (soprano); Anna Reynolds (alto); Peter Schreier (tenor); Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, Theo Adam (basses); Munich Bach Choir and Orchestra, Karl Richter cond. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON ARCHIV 2533 312 \$7.98.

J. S. BACH: Cantatas: Du wahre Gott und Davids Sohn (BWV 23); Bisher habt ihr nichts gebeten in meinem Namen (BWV 87). Edith Mathis (soprano); Anna Reynolds (alto); Peter Schreier (tenor); Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau (bass); Munich Bach Choir and Orchestra, Karl Richter cond. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON ARCHIV 2533 313 \$7.98.

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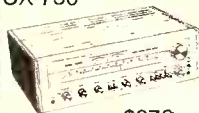
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FRANS HELMERSON,
HANS PÅLSSON:
beautiful Franck,
sympathetic Prokofiev

al. When I got into the real Elgar sonata, I found myself enjoying the work more than I would have thought possible. The Weisses make no concession at all to the traditional Edwardian bloat so often associated with this composer (even in such sturdy post-Edwardian works as this 1918 sonata); rather, they are alert, precise, and intense, honoring Elgar's musical thought and melodic impulse and allowing the emotional substance to rise up respectfully without a gratuitous boost. In the Walton, too, both the violinist (a former Chicago Symphony concertmaster), with his big, sweet tone, and his keyboard partner are right on the button all the way, reveling in the brilliant alternation of crispness and lyricism darting through the work. These are, after all, extremely handsome sonatas, and it is to the credit of both the performers and the first-rate engineer (Tony Faulkner) that it is only after savoring the richness of the music that one thinks of acknowledging their achievements on its behalf.

R.F.

ELGAR: *Symphony No. 2, in E-flat Major, Op. 63* (see Best of the Month, page 77)

FAURÉ: *Trio in D Minor, Op. 120* (see SHOSTAKOVICH)

FRANCK: *Sonata in A Major for Cello and Piano*. PROKOFIEV: *Sonata in C Major for Cello and Piano, Op. 119*. Frans Helmerson (cello); Hans Pålsson (piano). HNH 4028 \$7.98 (from HNH Distributors Ltd., P.O. Box 222, Evanston, Ill. 60204).

Performance: **Very good**

Recording: **Very good, but the piano is favored**

Franck's violin sonata is such a lovely piece transposed down for the cello that I can imagine many listeners wanting recordings of the work as played on both instruments (there is even one played on the viola now). Those who are so disposed, or who favor the cello, will not find any current recording more attractive than this one. The beautiful playing and complete integration of the two partners makes their performance as satisfying as the elegant Nelsova/Johannesen collaboration (Golden Crest GS-40899), and the Bis recording has more presence—though the piano does seem a little too forward on both sides. The Prokofiev sonata also receives a sympathetic performance, especially effective in the lyrical sections that predominate in the work. Rostropovich, for whom the sonata was written, is more persuasive still in his pre-stereo recording with Sviatoslav Richter (Monitor

MCS 3021), and RCA has given Lynn Harrell and James Levine an edge over both the older and newer versions by providing the most realistic sound and the most equable balance between the two instruments. In its own right, though, the new entry is most enjoyable, and anyone who finds this particular coupling attractive may invest in it with confidence.

R.F.

GRIEG: *Piano Concerto in A Minor, Op. 16*. SCHUMANN: *Piano Concerto in A Minor, Op. 54*. John Ogdon (piano); New Philharmonia Orchestra, Paavo Berglund cond. VANGUARD VCS 10112 \$3.98.

Performance: **Indifferent Grieg, good Schumann**

Recording: **Good**

One might expect the combination of an eminent British soloist and a fine Finnish conductor to result in a superior and idiomatic version of the Grieg concerto, but such is not the case here. I find both pianist and conductor prosaic in their handling of the Grieg; there is little of the fire and romantic ardor that should go into the playing of such young man's music as this. The Schumann, on the other hand, fares well in the opening music and really beautifully in the slow movement and finale. The sensitivity and care for phrasing and dynamic shadings missing in the Grieg are present in abundance here, and the 1972 EMI recording is altogether excellent.

D.H.

HAYDN: *Twenty-four Minuets* (see Best of the Month, page 81)

LISZT: *Duo (Sonata) in C-sharp Minor (G. 127); Grand Duo Concertant (G. 128); Epithalam (G. 129); Élégie (G. 130); Second Élégie (G. 131); Romance Oubliée (G. 132)*. Endre Granat (violin); François Régat (piano). ORION ORS 76210 \$6.98.

Performance: **Good**

Recording: **Good**

This collection is labeled Liszt's "Complete Works for Violin and Piano," and indeed only the duo setting of *La Lugubre Gondola* is omitted. The six works are virtually unknown and certainly intriguing, but the album notes here are not very helpful in identifying them. Nowhere on the jacket cover or liner is there a list of titles. The liner heading reads "This album is dedicated to the memory of Andrea Granat," but we are not told anything about Andrea Granat either. The annotation, by one of our most distinguished writers on music,

(Continued on page 114)

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Lily Pons, Coloratura Assoluta



Opera News

imposing *F in alt* at the conclusion of the Mad Scene, and at least three high E-naturals are scattered through the program. The Meyerbeer and David arias show her artistry most impressively.

The voice itself was small in size but well placed, and she was no mere coloratura warbler. Her poignant "Ah, fors'è lui" is no less effective than the florid "Sempre libera" which follows it. Her tone was sweet and sensitively modulated, and she had an enchanting way with French and Russian songs. Above all, she was neither dull nor predictable; even her *Olympia* (*Tales of Hoffmann*) was more a living doll than a mechanical one.

I remember doing a radio interview with her in 1968, en route between one of her homes (Palm Springs, California) and another (Cannes, France). Officially, at the time, she was sixty-four, but now it seems that she was actually seventy. No matter: with twinkling eyes, mercurial, irrepressible, she was still the eternally youthful Lily.

THERE are some wonderful memories tied up in this set, and they will be further enhanced by a rare group of photographs taken on stage, backstage, in Hollywood, overseas with the troops, etc. There is a discography, but no texts and only sketchy annotations. The sound, however, is surprisingly good. Intentionally or otherwise, an incomplete take of Donizetti's "Il faut partir" has been included.

—George Jellinek

... her *Olympia* was
more a living doll than
a mechanical one ...

FOR most of the years covered by Columbia's three-disc Lily Pons anthology (1941-1954), no opera singer in America rivaled that diminutive diva in popularity. Petite, vivacious, innately theatrical, she was the multimedia delight of millions. She was, already by 1941, a recording veteran: her foreign recordings preceded her Metropolitan debut of 1931, and for a full decade (1930-1940) before she went to Columbia she was the treasured property of the rival Victor label. Producer William Seward, longtime friend of the late soprano, nonetheless has a point in asserting that "in terms of her vocal maturity and artistic expression she considered the Columbia recordings as her musical and artistic legacy."

But then records never did Lily Pons justice. She was charm personified on stage: her fragile Gilda and firebrand Rosina are forever engraved on my memory. Vocally, by the Caballé-Sutherland standards of today, she was far from perfect. There was at times too much breathiness in her tones, and her florid work, though always respectable, missed the ultimate polish and exactitude. And yet she was a consummate singer: the overall technical level throughout this lengthy program is amazingly high. Her upper register was exceptional. Pons was almost unique in her habit of transposing music *upward*; you will find an

LILY PONS: Coloratura Assoluta. Donizetti: *La Fille du Régiment: Il faut partir. Lucia di Lammermoor: Regnava nel silenzio . . . Quando rapita in estasi; Mad Scene. Delibes:* *Lakmé: Pourquoi dans les grands bois; Bell Song. Verdi: Rigoletto: Caro nome. La Traviata: Ah, fors'è lui . . . Sempre libera. Gretry: Zémire et Azor: La Fauvette. Offenbach: Les Contes d'Hoffmann: Les oiseaux dans la charmille. Meyerbeer: Dinorah: Ombrage légère. Saint-Saëns: Le Timbre d'Argent: Le bonheur est une chose légère. David: La Perle du Brésil: Charmant oiseau. Proch: Theme and Variations. Dell'Acqua: Villanelle. Bishop: Lo, here the gentle lark; Pretty Mocking Bird; Home, Sweet Home. Moore: The Last Rose of Summer. Rachmaninoff: Oh, cease thy singing, maiden fair; Here beauty dwells; Vocalise. Alabiev: The Nightingale. Rimsky-Korsakov: The Rose and the Nightingale. Le Coq d'Or: Hymne au soleil. Sadko: Song of India. Jacobson: Chanson de Marie Antoinette. Fauré: Les Roses d'Ispahan. Duparc: L'Invitation au Voyage. Milhaud: Chansons de Ronsard. Bachelet: Chère Nuit. Lily Pons (soprano); orchestras, Pietro Cimara, André Kostelanetz, and Maurice Abravanel cond. COLUMBIA 34294 three discs \$13.98.*

has evidently been abridged, for there is a lot about Liszt but little on the music itself. While we are advised that the *Epithalam* was composed for Eduard Reményi's wedding in 1872 (the full title, after all, is *Epithalam zu E. Reményis Vermählungsfeier*), it is nowhere mentioned that the sonata is based entirely on a Chopin mazurka (Op. 6, No. 2) or that the later duo is similarly based on Charles-Philippe Lafont's romance *Le Marin*. The two elegies were composed in the late 1870's, with alternate settings for other instruments, and the *Romance Oubliée* of 1880 is a transcription of an 1848 *Romance* for piano solo.

The sonata was unpublished until 1963, when Tibor Serly's performing edition appeared in print (Peer-Southern); five years later Carroll Glenn and Eugene List (who had dug up the material and made it available to Serly) performed an edition of their own. None of this is mentioned, nor is the edition used in the recording identified. It seems to be Serly's, but with substantial cuts which, together with some very brisk tempos, reduce the work by almost half its length as played by Alfredo Campoli and Valerie Tryon in their Pye recording of 1968 (never issued in the U.S.).

It is regrettable that the pieces were not more fully identified, and I have dwelt on the point only because it is something that lessens the attractiveness of what is actually a most interesting release and an enjoyable one as well. That Liszt's assorted violin pieces are important works is debatable, but they do represent a little-known facet of an indisputably important musician's production. Endre Granat shows little of Campoli's imaginative feeling for the sonata, but he is a fine player in his own right, and so is his keyboard partner. The performances are accomplished, the sound is good, and the venture is not likely to be duplicated very soon.

R.F.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

MAHLER: Songs of a Wayfarer. Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau (baritone); Philharmonia Orchestra, Wilhelm Furtwängler cond. **Kindertotenlieder.** Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau (baritone); Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, Rudolf Kempe cond. SERAPHIM 60272 \$3.98.

Performance: **Treasurable**
Recording: **Good 1950's vintage**

This is a most welcome reissue, particularly for the 1952 collaboration of the young Fischer-Dieskau and the revered veteran Wilhelm Furtwängler. The German conductor's tempos may seem on the deliberate side in the *Songs of a Wayfarer*, but the impact of words and music are only that much greater—the anguish conveyed in "Ich had' ein glühend Messer" becomes almost physically painful here.

The *Kindertotenlieder* recording suffers somewhat from a rather reticent orchestral backing, but Fischer-Dieskau's contribution is musically and vocally of the utmost distinction and sensitivity. I am among those who prefer these lovely, poignant cycles sung by a male voice. If you share my preference, this is the disc to buy.

D.H.

MEYERBEER: Le Prophète. James McCracken (tenor), John of Leyden; Marilyn Horne (mezzo-soprano), Fidès; Renata Scotta (soprano), Berthe; Jules Bastin (bass), Count Oberthal; Jerome Hines (bass), Zacharie; Christian du Plessis (baritone), Mathisen;

Jean Dupouy (tenor), Jonas; others. Ambrosian Opera Chorus; Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Henry Lewis cond. COLUMBIA M4 34340 four discs \$27.98.

Performance: **A noble try**
Recording: **Good**

In one of his letters, Hector Berlioz gave this summation of Meyerbeer's *Le Prophète* following its 1849 première: "... The score contains some very fine things side by side with feeble and detestable ones. But the splendor of the show will make everything pass muster." That seems like a just and even kindly appraisal. But the "splendor" has faded considerably since 1849, and I am afraid those "feeble and detestable" elements seem even more noticeable in this, the opera's first complete recording.

One could begin with Scribe's slapdash and frequently silly libretto, more contrived than written and surely not the kind to inspire musical settings of profound and enduring significance. Nonetheless, Meyerbeer's score is not without merit. Practically all the music written for the formidable Fidès is of superior quality; the ballet music, however irrelevant from the dramatic point of view, is justly famous, and the Coronation March is a fine inspiration. These are all more or less familiar excerpts; encountering them now in their dramatic contexts simply confirms their effectiveness. But there is nothing, alas, among the score's newly discovered elements to match their worth. We find pages upon pages of empty or bombastic scenes, rigid and artificial-sounding rhythmic patterns, and awkward melodies. Indeed, much of the music seems to cry out to be parodied—a cry to which Jacques Offenbach gleefully rallied soon after the opera's première.

And yet Meyerbeer knew how to write effectively for the voice, and it is possible that a cast of exceptional singers would have recaptured more of this opera's lost glory. Unfortunately, only Marilyn Horne answers that description here. Hers is a performance in the grand manner: opulent in tone, uninhibitedly wide-ranging in her emotions. While the intonation at times falls short of perfection, her technique is dazzling, and she invariably takes on the bravura options where the score provides easier alternatives.

Fidès is the first great "mother role" in opera. (Azucena followed some four years later.) Its creation may have been due to the circumstance that the Paris Opera had no tenor to match the gifts of the legendary Pauline Viardot-Garcia, the first Fidès. Just the same, while the music written for the tenor hero is distinctly overshadowed by that of the mezzo, it is effective. Jean de Reszke, Caruso, and Martinelli were all celebrated Jeans, and we have historical recordings by Leo Slezak, Jacques Urlus, and Cesar Vezzani to show instances of thrilling vocalism in this music. What the part requires is a good technique, a clear, firmly centered sound, and a command of the *voix mixte*, a mixture of head and chest resonances, to negotiate the many passages Meyerbeer placed in the voice's most uncomfortable register. James McCracken is a conscientious and hard-working artist, but he lacks every one of these requirements; his resorting to an unsupported falsetto in passages marked *pp* or "*très doux*" is no solution.

Renata Scotta has problems in her first-act Cavatina, in which the writing is too florid and the tessitura too high for her. In the opera's final scenes she acquits herself impressively

with her familiar gifts of passionate commitment. Though rather light in timbre for the villainous Oberthal, Jules Bastin makes a welcome contribution with his smooth and elegant singing. Jerome Hines is the strongest of the three Anabaptists, but even he cannot do too much with the cardboard character he portrays.

Henry Lewis has obvious sympathy with the opera's grandiose gestures. He paces the music well and obtains generally good performances from the orchestra and the chorus. The vocal ensembles, however, frequently suffer from impure intonation, and the Coronation March is rather rough in sound. There are some cuts in the music—the second verse in the tenor's "*Sur Berthe moi*" should not have been omitted. But, in all fairness, enough of *Le Prophète* has been preserved in this undertaking—far be it from me to ask for more. G.J.

MOUSSORGSKY: Boris Godounov: Prelude to Act III and Polonaise. Khovantchina: Prelude; Dances of the Persian Slaves; Act IV Entr'acte. Sorochinsky Fair: Prelude; Hopak. Scherzo in B-flat; Intermezzo in B Minor; Triumphal March, The Capture of Kars; A Night on Bald Mountain. USSR Symphony Orchestra, Yevgeny Svetlanov cond. MELODIYA/ANGEL SR-40273 \$6.98.

Performance: **Vigorous, stylish**
Recording: **Good**

This is an attractive collection of orchestral Moussorgsky, most of it edited after the composer's death by Rimsky-Korsakov and others. Among the operatic excerpts, the *Khovantchina* prelude and entr'acte are the best performances. There is fine poetic communication in the prelude, and a real sense of tragic power is conveyed in the music depicting Prince Golitzin's departure for Siberian exile. *The Capture of Kars* strikes me as the most effective of the independent orchestral pieces. Its main theme, by the way, is the same folk tune used by Tchaikovsky to preface the finale of his string serenade. *Night on Bald Mountain*, in the familiar Rimsky-Korsakov edition, gets a rousing dramatic performance here, but Moussorgsky's 1867 original edition is a quite different and much more Lisztian piece. It can be heard on a 1972 Philips import disc (6580 053), excellently recorded, by the London Philharmonic Orchestra with David Lloyd Jones conducting. D.H.

MOZART: Arias (see Collections—Sylvia Sass; Frederica von Stade)

MOZART: Piano Concerto No. 23, in A Major (K. 488); Piano Concerto No. 19, in F Major (K. 459, "Coronation"). Maurizio Pollini (piano); Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, Karl Böhm cond. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2530 716 \$7.98, © 3300 716 \$7.98.

Performance: **Modern classical**
Recording: **Love that DG**

The nickname "Coronation" is usually applied to K. 537, which was written and played on the occasion of the coronation of the Emperor Leopold II in 1790. But the F Major Concerto, K. 459, written six years earlier, was also played on this occasion and has some claim to the title. It is much less often played than the remarkable series of concertos that followed it—noble all, with or without the royal title—and it is not quite on a level with these. The first movement of the F Major

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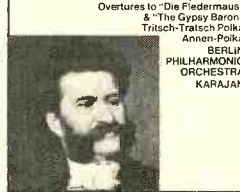
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Concerto is, for Mozart, almost conventional (it is based on his standard piano-concerto rhythm, which he did overwork a bit); the lovely slow movement and the brisk, buffa finale, however, are good stuff. The A Major, K. 488, is, of course, part of that great series that came later. What a slow movement! What a finale!

Pollini and Böhm take us through all this in what is by now Standard Modern Classical Style: clean, vigorous, not too fast, and with a gentler lyric touch than was common a while back. This produces a grateful, graceful Mozart, but it overlooks one important aspect of the music: its obvious operatic affinities. Operatic emoting aside, though, these are attractive performances recorded and produced in high-class classical German style. *E.S.*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

POULENC: Gloria. Norma Burrowes (soprano); City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra and Chorus, Louis Frémaux cond. **Piano Concerto.** Cristina Ortiz (piano); City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, Louis Frémaux cond. ANGEL □ S-37246 \$6.98.

Performance: **Just right**
Recording: **Suave**

Since everything about both of these performances is just right, projecting these joy-filled works in the most convincing way imaginable, there seems little point in cataloguing their particular virtues. Frémaux has a fine orchestra in Birmingham, a fine chorus too, and his superb soloists share his deep feeling for the

Poulenc idiom. The engineers have come through with a suave, well-balanced recording which allows us to hear just how superior the Birmingham horns are, in the concerto, to those of the Paris Conservatoire Orchestra under Prêtre in the otherwise equally persuasive version with Gabriel Tacchino (Angel S-36426, backed by Tacchino's splendid account of Poulenc's *Aubade*). Norma Burrowes easily holds her own against the soloists in the two other current recordings of the *Gloria*, though the Carteri/Prêtre version (Angel S-35953, with Duruflé in the Organ Concerto) has the historical/sentimental value of having been recorded in the composer's presence. It comes down to a matter of couplings and of which Poulenc works one may be willing to duplicate or do without, but both performances on the new disc strike me as having at least a slight edge over the best of their respective predecessors. *R.F.*

PROKOFIEV: Sonata in C Major for Cello and Piano, Op. 119 (see FRANCK)

ROSSINI: Arias (see Collections—Frederica von Stade)

SCHUBERT: Piano Quintet in A Major (D. 667, "Trout"). Tashi (Peter Serkin, piano; Ida Kavafian, viola; Fred Sherry, cello); Joseph Silverstein (violin); Buell Neidlinger (double-bass). RCA ARL1-1882 \$7.98.

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

Only a few months ago in these pages I indicated my preference for Peter Serkin's 1966 Vanguard recording of the *Trout* Quintet (with Scheider, Tree, Soyer, and Levine) as against the then two most recent versions, and I was hoping that Mr. Serkin and his present collaborators might equal or surpass the earlier achievement, so remarkable for its sheer exuberance and youthful ardor.

The new recording is a good one in terms of performance with a rather close microphone placement that underlines the rhythmic thrust brought to the opening movement. However, comparing the old and new performances, movement by movement, I find I still prefer the old, not only for its greater spontaneity and its retention of the first-movement repeat, but also because I prefer the somewhat brighter and more spacious recorded sound. Perhaps the best point of comparison is in the famous variation movement where the double-bass has the tune with the piano providing the sparkingly decorative obbligato. There is no question in my mind as to which recorded performance brings this off best. *D.H.*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

SCHUBERT: String Quartet No. 14, in D Minor (D. 810, "Death and the Maiden").
WOLF: Italian Serenade. Guarneri Quartet. RCA ARL1-1994 \$7.98, © ARS1-1994 \$7.98, © ARK1-1994 \$7.98.

Performance: **Strong and brilliant**
Recording: **Good**

Presumably, it will not be too long before the Guarneri Quartet completes its traversal of the mature Schubert string quartets with the last of the series and the least represented in the catalog, No. 15, in G Major. Meanwhile, let me say that this strong and forthright reading of *Death and the Maiden* augurs well for the future. There is no romantic mooning



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here, but rather an emphasis on the inherent architectural strengths of the piece and on the fierce rhythmic pulse that sparks the developmental episodes of its end movements. This is a real "blood-and-guts" realization.

The delectable minor masterpiece from Hugo Wolf gets a marvelously zestful realization here too, in a performance marked by the same rhythmic propulsion and precision brought to the Schubert score. Excellent sound throughout. *D.H.*

SCHUMANN: *Liederkreis, Op. 39; Frauenliebe und Leben, Op. 42.* Janet Baker (mezzo-soprano); Daniel Barenboim (piano). ANGEL S-37222 \$6.98.

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

These two Schumann song cycles, excellent disc-mates, probe intimate human feelings in different ways. The Chamisso poems on which Op. 42 is based relate to interactions of man and woman, while the Eichendorff verses of *Liederkreis* link human emotions to a wide range of subjects, mostly drawn from observing nature.

Janet Baker's excellence as a song interpreter has been proved on countless occasions, and it is documented time and time again in this recital as well. It is hard to resist tones of such voluptuous quality, and her sense of coloration and her imaginative command of dynamics add dimensions to her singing that are extraordinary. This said, I must nonetheless concede that she is not up to her own exalted vocal standard here: her vibrato is occasionally wider than it should be, and the tones above the staff are not fully centered. In both cycles she surpasses Elisabeth Schwarzkopf's recent versions (Angel S-37043), but I prefer Elly Ameling's lighter-toned and vocally more assured rendition of *Frauenliebe und Leben* on Philips 6500 706. I miss, in particular, the rapture Miss Ameling imparts to "*Helft mir, ihr Schwestern.*"

Miss Ameling also enjoys better rapport with her pianist partner. Daniel Barenboim is a sensitive collaborator, but, in this instance, a rather self-effacing one in such voice-piano dialogues as "*Er, der Herrlichste von allen.*" The recorded sound is very fine. *G.J.*

SCHUMANN: *Piano Concerto in A Minor, Op. 54* (see GRIEG)

SHOSTAKOVICH: *The New Babylon, Op. 18.* Ensemble of soloists from the Moscow Philharmonic, Gennady Rozhdestvensky cond. COLUMBIA M 34502 \$6.98.

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

Since to all intents Dmitri Shostakovich began his professional career playing piano for silent movies in order to feed his family during hard times, it is not surprising that elements of cinematic action music keep cropping up in his music. Thus, the rediscovery of his first full-scale film score, done for a silent in 1928-1929, has both historic as well as stylistic interest.

During the interregnum between the last days of Lenin and the full accession to power of Stalin, many young Russian composers, dramatists, and artists were drawn to the works of their colleagues in post-World War I Germany, in particular the cabaret-style productions with music by the then young Weill, Křenek, and Hindemith. This music was a

counterpart of the music-hall style being cultivated by the young Parisians, but in Berlin it was endowed with a far more ferocious irony and politically leftward thrust.

Certainly the young Shostakovich was influenced by that movement when he wrote *The New Babylon*. Since the film scenario deals with the Paris Commune of 1871, there is much parodying of Offenbach along with collage elements juxtaposing the frivolous-capitalistic and the serious-revolutionary. The scoring for a largish pit band is highly effective, and the early pages of the music are good fun to listen to. About halfway through, however, things begin to pall and one's end reaction is that *The New Babylon* is more interesting as history than as music. The performance is zestful, the sound good. *D.H.*

SHOSTAKOVICH: *String Quartets Nos. 8 and 15.* Fitzwilliam String Quartet. L'OISEAULYRE DSLO 11 \$7.98.

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

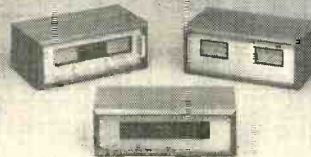
This is one of the most depressing records I have ever heard, but it is also a moving document of a kind. The Quartet No. 15 was one of the composer's last works. Alan George, the violist of the Fitzwilliam Quartet, points out (in a reminiscence of the composer) that Shostakovich was writing his own requiem just as certainly as Mozart wrote his. The difference is that Mozart's Requiem is full of affirmation in the midst of despair while Shostakovich created despair in the midst of what is supposed to be affirmation. *(Overleaf)*

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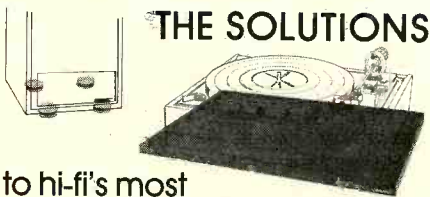
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As is well known, the principles of socialist realism call for optimism. The utter bleakness of this music seems to be not merely the reflection of the soul of a sick and tormented man but a kind of protest in reverse—a protest of withdrawal and hopelessness that is, finally, beyond the reach of Zhdanov, the Stalinists, and the cultural commissars. It is a frightening commentary on the dashed hopes of Soviet art and a black legacy from the Soviet's greatest musical voice.

In case you think I might be exaggerating the case, let me point out that Shostakovich's Quartet No. 15 consists of six consecutive adagios, ending with a funeral march. (And I was only recently complaining that the American avant-garde seemed preoccupied with death.) The whole is permeated by a gloom that alternates only slightly between classic Slavic melancholy and an expressionist dissonance that is positively disconnected, existentialist, and avant-garde in its morbidity. Whew!

Next to this, the Eighth Quartet is almost jolly; it doesn't have a single adagio and only three largos (out of five movements). The work is based on a motif derived from the letters of the composer's name and is full of quotes from earlier works. Still, it is no *Hel-denleben*. Not all of the quotes are from Shostakovich's own work; one is an old revolutionary song entitled *Languishing in Prison*.

The works are performed with great intensity and devotion by this young English quartet. But don't expect anything particularly life-affirming. E.S.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

SHOSTAKOVICH: *Trio No. 2, in E Minor, Op. 67*. FAURÉ: *Trio in D Minor, Op. 120*. Hans Pålsson (piano); Arve Tellefsen (violin); Frans Helmerson (cello). HNH 4007 \$7.98 (from HNH Distributors Ltd., P.O. Box 222, Evanston, Ill. 60204).

Performance: **Glorious**

Recording: **Unexaggeratedly rich**

The urgency, compassion, and mordant wit of the Shostakovich E Minor Trio put the work on a level with the composer's eloquent piano quintet and the finest of his string quartets; it is not a piece to be tossed off casually. This Swedish performance is even more compell-

ing than the fine Beaux Arts version on Philips (6500.860, coupled with the Ives trio), and the unexaggeratedly rich sonic frame provided by Robert von Bahr is a decided plus. The Fauré trio might seem an improbable coupling, but why not? The two works would surely be welcome together on a recital program, and both are gloriously realized here. The Fauré performance, as soaring, intense, and radiant as the music itself, is simply the finest presentation of the work I have ever heard, on records or otherwise.

Frans Helmerson has been heard in impressive recordings of Bach and Kodály, and he and Hans Pålsson have recorded together the cello sonatas of Prokofiev and Franck; Arve Tellefsen, the Norwegian concertmaster of the Swedish Radio Orchestra, has made a brilliant recording of the Nielsen Violin-Concerto for EMI. The three together constitute a formidable and exciting new chamber-music entity whose further recordings must be awaited with the highest expectations. In the meantime, this is an altogether exceptional release, not to be missed on any account. R.F.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

JOHANN STRAUSS I: *Täuberln Waltz, Op. 1; Hungarian Galop (Frischkka), Op. 36; Artists' Ball Dances, Waltz, Op. 84; Ladies' Souvenir Polka, Op. 236; Ball-Raketen Waltz, Op. 96; Jubilation Quadrille, Op. 130; Austrian Jubilation Sounds, Waltz, Op. 179*. Classic Vienna Strauss-Lanner Orchestra, Kurt Rapf cond. MUSICAL HERITAGE SOCIETY MHS 3396 \$3.50, © 596 \$4.95 (plus 95¢ handling charge, from Musical Heritage Society Inc., Oakhurst, N.J. 07755).

Performance: **Idiomatic**

Recording: **Good**

This appears to be the first LP devoted entirely to music of the founder of the great Strauss dynasty, the father of the Waltz King; since it includes neither the *Radetzky March* nor any other piece most of us are likely to know, it qualifies *in toto* as a discovery. The performing ensemble numbers twenty-six ("the classic strength of the Strauss orchestra"), and the disc, the second volume in the MHS "Biedermeier Dance Music" series, carries the impressive imprimatur: "Works performed in their original settings from manuscripts in the



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Vienna Municipal Library. Produced by order of Felix Slavik, Mayor of Vienna." The mayor's order has been carried out with obvious love and enthusiasm, and the result should make him an international hero.

Father Strauss was born in 1804 and died in 1849; the works recorded here were composed between 1827, the year of Beethoven's death, and 1845, a year after Johann II's debut with his own orchestra. Actually, the *Radetzký March* does make a brief appearance: it is quoted in the *Jubilation Quadrille*, composed in 1841 for the nameday of the Empress Maria Anna. If the other tunes are less familiar, they are hardly less fetching. The celebrated (but rarely heard) *Ball-Raketen Waltz*, dedicated to the Turkish ambassador, is colored with "Turkish music" effects, but it is thoroughly Viennese in its insinuating lilt and piquant wind figures. The spicy little *Hungarian Galop*, the vivacious polka, and indeed all seven pieces in this collection are gems. If "adorable" seems too mawkish a term for this music and its unsurpassably idiomatic presentation, call it "gemütlich"—but don't fail to order a copy. R.F.

TCHAIKOVSKY: *Symphony No. 6, in B Minor, Op. 74 ("Pathétique")*. London Symphony Orchestra, Jascha Horenstein cond. VANGUARD VCS 10114 \$3.98.

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

The 1967 Horenstein recording of the *Pathétique* has been available for some years as an EMI import, but even in Vanguard's excellent processing I'm afraid it doesn't represent the late maestro at his best. There are lovely details throughout the introductory pages, but there is no urgency in the build-up toward the first decisive climax; indeed, the reading of the first movement as a whole seems carefully studied and lacking in vital rhythmic impulse. The 5/4 movement comes through with a certain cool elegance, but not much charm. The excitement of the march movement is vitiated by a curious slowing down of tempo just at the point where the music begins its crescendo toward the all-out assertion of the march proper. The mournful finale fares best on the whole, but it too lacks the intensity characteristic of the most memorable readings. The best features of this disc are the superb playing of the London Symphony, the brass section particularly, and recorded sound of a brilliance and clarity that can stand up to today's best. D.H.

VERDI: *Macbeth* (see The Opera File, page 48)

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

VIVALDI: *Concertos for Oboe in A Minor (RV 463); in C Major (RV 447); in G Minor, Op. 11, No. 6 (RV 460); and in C Major (RV 450)*. Heinz Holliger (oboe); I Musici. PHILIPS 9500 044 \$7.98, © 7300 443 \$7.95.

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

Nothing but superlatives should attend the appearance of this remarkable album. The music is Vivaldi at his best, with an excessively rich palette of harmonies, textures, and figurations, and the oboe playing of Heinz Holliger is, as usual, perfection itself. Holliger's ability to toss off violinistic figuration on the oboe is staggering. He has, in addition, a fine sense of articulation, and he provides imagi-

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native ornamentation. I Musici's solid, driving support brings this happy partnering to the highest level of ensemble playing. Vivaldi lovers, oboe lovers, treat yourself to this marvelous disc! (Those who may be mystified, as I was, by the "RV" numbers cited above should know that they refer to a new catalog of Vivaldi's compositions by Peter Ryom, published in 1973. While they are not given on the record, the corresponding Pincherle numbers of the four concertos are, respectively, P. 89, P. 41, P. 339, and P. 50. S.L.

VIVALDI: Concerto for Oboe, Violin, and Organ (P. 36); Concerto for Violin and Organ (P. 274); Concerto for Violin and Organ (P. 311); Concerto for Four Flutes, Four Violins, and Two Organs (P. 226). André Isoir (organ); Monique Frasca-Colombier (violin); Michel Giboureau (oboe); Paul Kuentz Chamber Orchestra, Paul Keuntz cond. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2530 652 \$7.98, © 3300 652 \$7.98.

Performance: **Solid**
Recording: **Sumptuous**

Although Vivaldi never wrote any keyboard concertos as such, he preoccupied himself with the coloristic properties of the organ in these four wonderful concertos. Putting aside the organ's full grandeur and treating it more like an oboe or a flute, the Venetian master pits it against and pairs it with violin, oboe, and/or flutes. The flat, white sound of the organ here combined with various solo strings and winds is striking, and we are treated to a fascinating series of textures and sonorities.

While the performances on this disc are not outstanding, they are clean, well put together, and probably better than anything Vivaldi ever heard from his dilettante female orphans. The recording engineer is to be congratulated: the balance is excellent, and the complex interplay between soloists and antiphonal orchestras is magnificently captured.

S.L.

WALTON: Sonata for Violin and Piano (see ELGAR)

WOLF: Italian Serenade (see SCHUBERT)

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WILHELM KEMPF: Piano Transcriptions. J. S. Bach: *Chorale-Preludes: Nun komm' der Heiden Heiland (BWV 659); Es ist gewisslich an der Zeit (BWV 307 and 734); Herzlich tut mich verlangen (BWV 727); In dulci júbilo (BWV 751); Ich ruf zu dir, Herr Jesu Christ (BWV 639).* Cantata Chorales: *Jesu bleibet meine Freude (BWV 147); Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme (BWV 140).* Largo, from *Clavier Concerto in F Minor (BWV 1056); Siciliano, from Flute Sonata in E-flat Major (BWV 1031); Sinfonia to Cantata, Wir danken dir, Gott (BWV 29).* Handel: *Minuet in G Minor.* Gluck: *Orfeo ed Euridice: Che farò; Dance of the Blessed Spirits.* Wilhelm Kempff (piano). DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2530 647 \$7.98, © 3300.647 \$7.98.

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

The market for piano transcriptions of Bach's works is probably not what it used to be, and those of us who question the "necessity" for such things, now that authentic performances are so easy to come by, may be missing some altogether worthwhile listening experiences. More than a few of Bach's own compositions, after all, were transcriptions of a similar sort; the tradition should hardly need justifying now. Granted that not every transcriber is a Bach, not every musician is a Kempff, either, and it is gratifying to have this collection of some of the most effective arrangements the venerable pianist has fashioned and performed over the last four decades or so.

The annotation advises that Kempff's setting of the melodies from Gluck's *Orfeo* was made "to extend the art of playing legato," and this quality is very much evident in all the pieces presented here. The "*Wachet auf*" transcription, be it noted, is based on the choral aria in the Cantata No. 140, not on Bach's own instrumental setting as the first of the six Schübler chorales; this and the piece we all know as *Jesu Joy of Man's Desiring* seem to generate their own flow, and the legato quality is felt even amid the glitter of the Sinfonia to Cantata No. 29 (which is the same music as the Preludio to the final partita for violin solo). The shortest piece on the disc, "*In dulci júbilo*," is the essence of majestic simplicity and should be enough to convert anyone. Eloquent playing and good piano sound make this a most appealing package. R.F.

MUSIC OF THE GOTHIC ERA (see Best of the Month, page 78)

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

FRANK PATTERSON: John McCormack Favorites. Handel: *Semele: Where'er you walk; O sleep, why dost thou leave me.* Mozart: *Don Giovanni: Il mio tesoro.* Martini: *Plaisir d'amour.* Wolf: *Schlafendes Jesuskind.* Franck: *Panis angelicus.* Schubert: *Ave Maria.* Godard: *Jocelyn: Berceuse.* Crouch: *Kathleen Mavourneen.* Glover: *The Rose of Tralee.* Marshall: *I hear you calling me.* Trad.: *Lna Bán; My Lagan Love.* Frank Patterson (tenor); orchestra, Christopher Seaman cond. PHILIPS 9500 218 \$7.98.

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

This is a good cross-section of the John McCormack repertoire, a baker's dozen of his most celebrated "titles." Frank Patterson,



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whose bright Irish tenor is already familiar from previous releases, sings elegantly and effortlessly, with lightness, charm, and pure intonation. In attacking the notes he may not match the pinpoint accuracy of his legendary predecessor, but in all respects he does him honor. In any case, this is no slavish imitation: Patterson favors some *appoggiaturas* McCormack regarded as unnecessary, and the rather over-ornamented "O sleep, why dost thou leave me" is not in the McCormack manner. Still, the illusion is strong at times that we are hearing the great John himself in modern sound—and that is high recommendation. The orchestrations are tasteful, well played, and captured in rich sound. G.J.

SYLVIA SASS: Mozart Arias. *Ah lo previdi (K. 272). Idomeneo: D'Oreste, d'AJace (K. 366, No. 29). Bella mia fiamma (K. 528). Ch'io mi scordi di te? (K. 505).* Sylvia Sass (soprano); András Schiff (piano, in K. 505); Orchestra of the Hungarian State Opera House, Ervin Lukács cond. HUNGAROTON SLPX 11812 \$7.98.

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

The young Hungarian soprano Sylvia Sass zoomed into international prominence as a result of her highly praised Violetta at the Aix Festival of 1976. In the present sequence of rarely heard Mozart arias she justifies her reputation but offers more in the way of bright promise than complete fulfillment. Her agreeable voice handles all demands fluently, though her tone is not even in all registers. Her singing is decidedly more effective in soft passages (quite lovely in the concluding Cavatina of K. 272) than in music conveying passion. "*Ch'io mi scordi di te?*," a gem of an aria with a delightful piano obbligato sensitively played by the equally youthful András Schiff, lacks involvement and vitality. With all that, there is talent here in abundance. Miss Sass has a future. G.J.

RENATA SCOTTO: Serenata. Tosti: *Serenata: Malia.* Respighi: *Soupir; Au milieu du jardin; Povero core; Razzolan.* Puccini: *Sole e amore; Menti all'avviso.* Leoncavallo: *Sérénade Française; Sérénade Napolitaine.*

Pizzetti: *I Pastori*. **Wolf-Ferrari:** *Il Campiello*. **Mascagni:** *M'ama, non m'ama; La luna; Sere-nata*. **Catalani:** *Vieni, deh, vien*. Renata Scot-to (soprano); John Atkins (piano). COLUMBIA M 34501 \$6.98.

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

A potentially excellent idea—a sequence of little-known songs by Puccini, Mascagni, Leoncavallo, *et al.*—is frustrated here by the obvious fact that Renata Scotto was in poor vocal estate at the time of this recording. There are some bright spots—Pizzetti's impressionistic *I Pastori*, Leoncavallo's charming *Sérénade Française*, and Tosti's magical *Malia*—but most of Scotto's renditions are flawed. Her top notes are shrill, and she tends to lose true pitch in emotional climaxes.

Full texts and translations are provided, but the annotations are of little value. What made Puccini write new words to his own melody (from the third act of *La Bohème*) to create the song *Sole e amore?* When did he write *Menti all'avviso* (in which Manon Lescaut is quoted)? Why did Respighi choose French texts for his songs? *G.J.*

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FREDERICA VON STADE: *Rossini and Mozart Arias*. **Rossini:** *Il Barbiere di Siviglia: Una voce poco fa. Otello: Assisa a piè d'un salice. La Cenerentola: Nacqui all'affanno*. **Mozart:** *Le Nozze di Figaro: Non so più; Voi, che sapete. Don Giovanni: Vedrai, carino. La Clemenza di Tito: Non più di fiori; Parto, parto*. Frederica von Stade (mezzo-soprano); Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra, Edo de Waart cond. PHILIPS 9500 098 \$7.98, © 7300 511 \$7.95.

Performance: **Expert and endearing**
Recording: **Very good**

Frederica von Stade's second solo recital (for a different company than the first) finds the young mezzo in congenial repertoire, with the Mozart side slightly in the lead. Her soprano-like timbre is ideal for Zerlina, her breathlessly amorous Cherubino is a good replica of a stage characterization that has been admired on two continents, and the two arias from *La Clemenza di Tito*, with their elaborate bass horn and clarinet obligatos (played here by George Pieterston and Bas de Jong, respectively), are expertly and elegantly rendered. On the Rossini side, too, the artist winningly meets the contrasting challenges of elegiac expression and virtuosic agility.

Minor reservations must be voiced, however: Von Stade's Rosina, though not lacking in temperament, sounds a shade too studied, not spontaneous enough. And the *fioriture* (in "Parto, parto" as well as the Rossini arias), while fluent by the usual standards, fall short of the accuracy to which such paragons as Baker, Berganza, and Horne (the list is alphabetical!) have lately accustomed us. The orchestral accompaniments are nicely articulated and warm in sound, but the tempo for the *Otello* aria is far too languid. *G.J.*

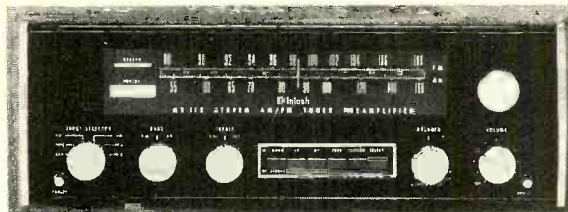
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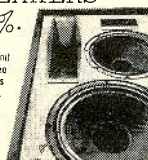
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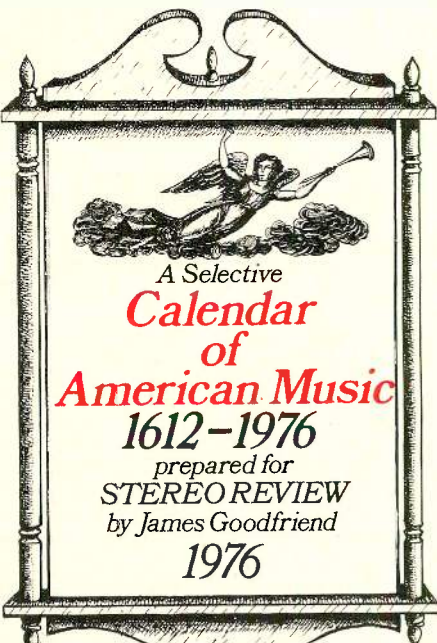
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Introducing the Staff . . .

When a personal opinion, particularly a publicly expressed one, grates on our nerves, one of the commoner responses is to ask, either under or at the top of our voices, just who that so-and-so thinks he or she is. The question is asked of STEREO REVIEW with respect to our regular contributors and staff many times each month, and in this column we endeavor to supply the answers. —Ed.



Assistant Music Editor

Vivienne Winterry Goodman

CAN a girl from deep in the heart of Texas find happiness in New York City as the Assistant Music Editor of the world's most widely read music and equipment magazine? In the case of Vivienne Winterry Goodman, who currently occupies that position, the answer is a resounding yes, and the reason, unsurprisingly, is her lifelong love of music.

Vivienne grew up in the midst of an intensely musical family in Dallas ("... when it was a small town—but don't write that," she cautions, though whether that's for personal or civic reasons she declines to say). Her father was a fiddler "who could play anything he heard," and his home was a haven for many of the best musicians in the city.

The home also contained a wind-up phonograph, and Vivienne recalls that the family record collection included a strange disc of the sounds of hunting dogs that only she and Contributing Editor Richard

Freed seem to remember. Fortunately for Vivienne, who had started violin lessons while very young, the collection also included "all the Red Seal artists—Heifetz, Elman, Zimbalist, Kubelik." And with "a great record background like that," Vivienne had soon acquired enough skill on her chosen instrument that by the time she was a teenager she was not only teaching and giving concerts and lectures throughout the Southwest, but had joined the Dallas Symphony Orchestra as well. While she was still quite young, her hopes for a full-time career as a professional musician were dashed by an automobile accident which put her out of commission for a time (and from which, I hasten to add, she has fully recovered).

Having begun to dabble with music journalism, Vivienne eventually gravitated to the Big Apple, where a photographer had asked her to work on background material and write some captions for a book he was preparing. She wound up doing two books, and later she began to write essays for the Lewisohn Stadium concerts program book, which is fondly remembered by many New Yorkers. Having retained an intense interest in performing—now on an amateur level—she helped to establish Chamber Music Associates at the Brooklyn Academy of Music. This organization is dedicated to bringing together people who play, no matter at what level, from beginners to virtuosos. She is particularly proud of this accomplishment.

Vivienne is one of those who can actually say, "I got my job through the New York Times." She came to STEREO REVIEW in 1963 "only to do a few days work," she says, but she has been here happily ever since, functioning as the editorial right arm for the rest of the musical staff of the magazine. Her varied duties include research, helping maintain liaison with record companies, and seeing to it that the reviewers stay on schedule. This last task is a difficult one, which she performs with tactics ranging from cajolery to terrorism.

CURRENTLY, she resides in Manhattan with her husband Johnny and an elegant Persian cat named Miss America. Perhaps because of her Southwestern background or perhaps because she has traveled a good bit in Mexico, Vivienne's tastes in music include a fondness for Latin popular singers such as Jorge Negrete, Imperio Argentina, Amalia Rodrigues, and more recently Nati Mistral. When she plays records, Vivienne tends to listen to Mozart operas, Italian operas, and lots of Mahler, in addition to string quartets.

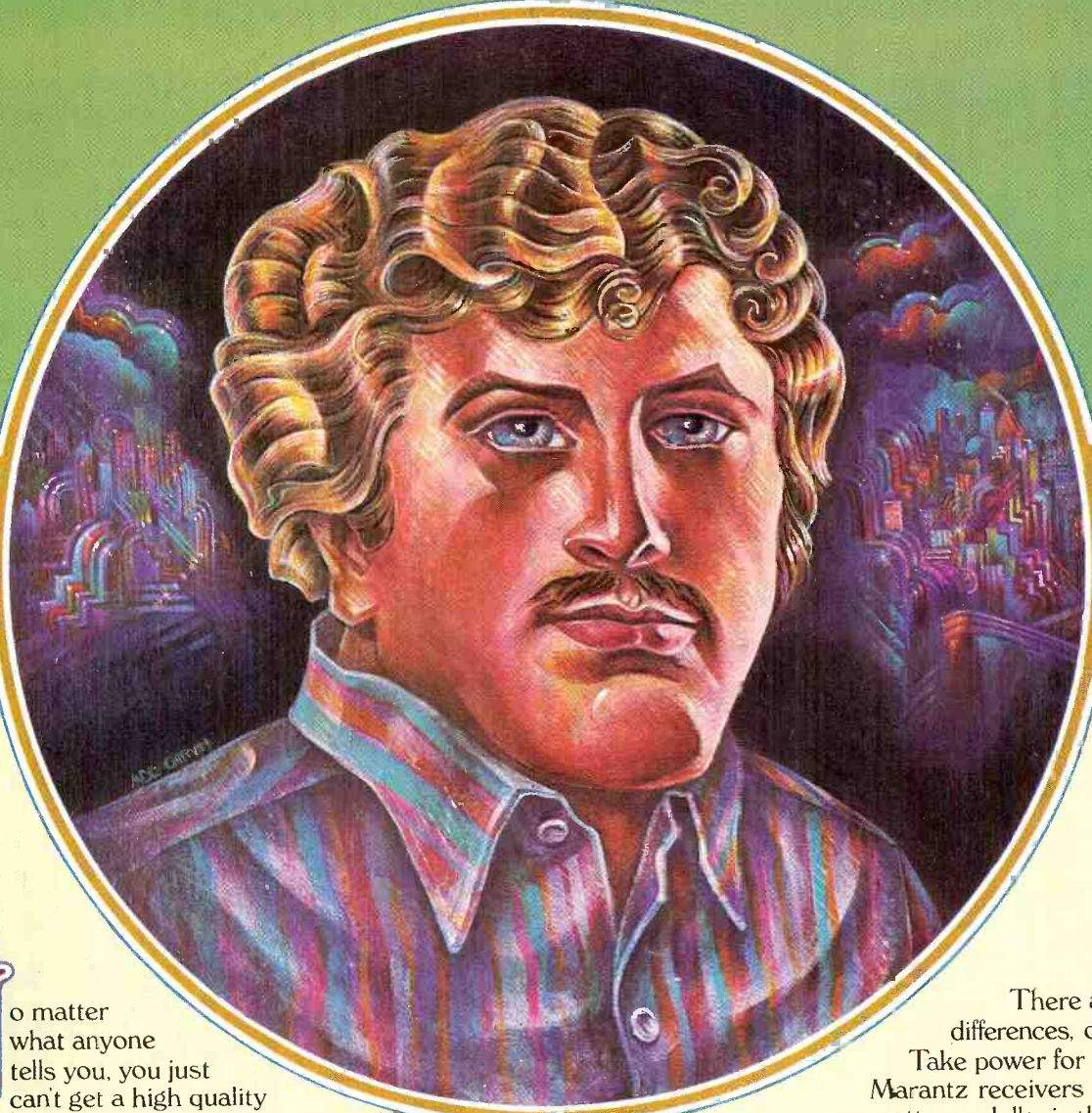
Weekends at home and summer vacations in Maine are enlivened for her by get-togethers of her amateur chamber music quartet, some of whose members have been regulars for almost twenty years. Dvořák is one of the composers she most likes to perform. "But we also play endless Haydn and fathomless amounts of Beethoven," she says, "and we do a lot of exploration among neglected works, such as those of Cherubini. Making music in this way is the ruling passion of my life."

—Drummond McInnis

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