

Little Xmas Music

\$1.25

Stereo Review

DECEMBER 1977

CHRISTMAS SPECIAL: BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO HI-FI BALLET DISCO (GRAPHY) • THE ROOTS OF JAZZ

Equipment Test Reports: Acousti-phase Phase III+ Speaker System
ADC ZLM Phono Cartridge • Akai GXC-725D Cassette Deck
Sony EL-5 Elcaset Deck • Sound Concepts SD550 Time-Delay System



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SMITHS
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Stereo Review

Retailers: Notice of display allowance plan is within last three pages.

DECKS, OR OLD IDEAS.

controls plus two large VU meters. All of which helps reduce the dimensions considerably.

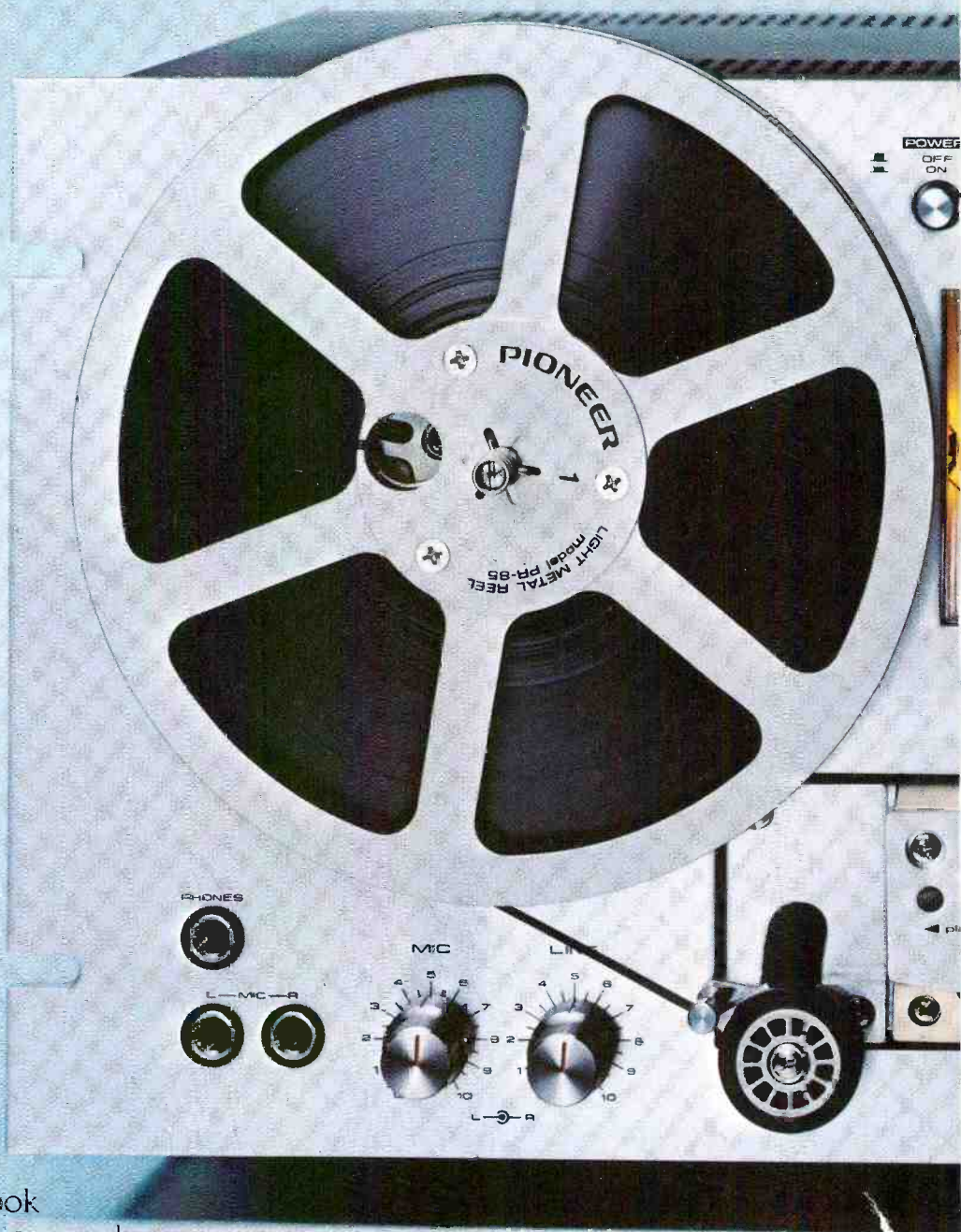
Of course, as you can see from the picture, the entire unit is rack mountable. But what you may not have noticed is that the RT-707, unlike any other tape deck, is stackable. It's made to fit right in with the rest of your components.

AUTO-REVERSE AND OTHER EXTRAS.

While many tape decks have auto-reverse, chances are you won't find it on other comparably priced 7-inch tape decks. You also won't find a repeat button that lets you listen to your tapes endlessly, or circuitry that allows you to hook the RT-707 up to a timer, so you can make recordings even when you can't be there to supervise them.

Obviously, these are only a few of the virtues of our new RT-707. But there are also things like a highly accessible tape head alignment that lets you adjust and clean the tape heads without removing the cover. Solenoid push-button controls that give you direct function switching, so you can go from one mode to another without damaging the tape. And a floating guide roller that helps decrease intermodulation.

The point is, you'll see a lot of things on the RT-707, that you won't see on any other 7-inch tape deck.



But all this revolutionary thinking wouldn't mean much if the RT-707 weren't built to fit comfortably into your budget. It is. In fact, its price is comparable to any "good" tape deck.

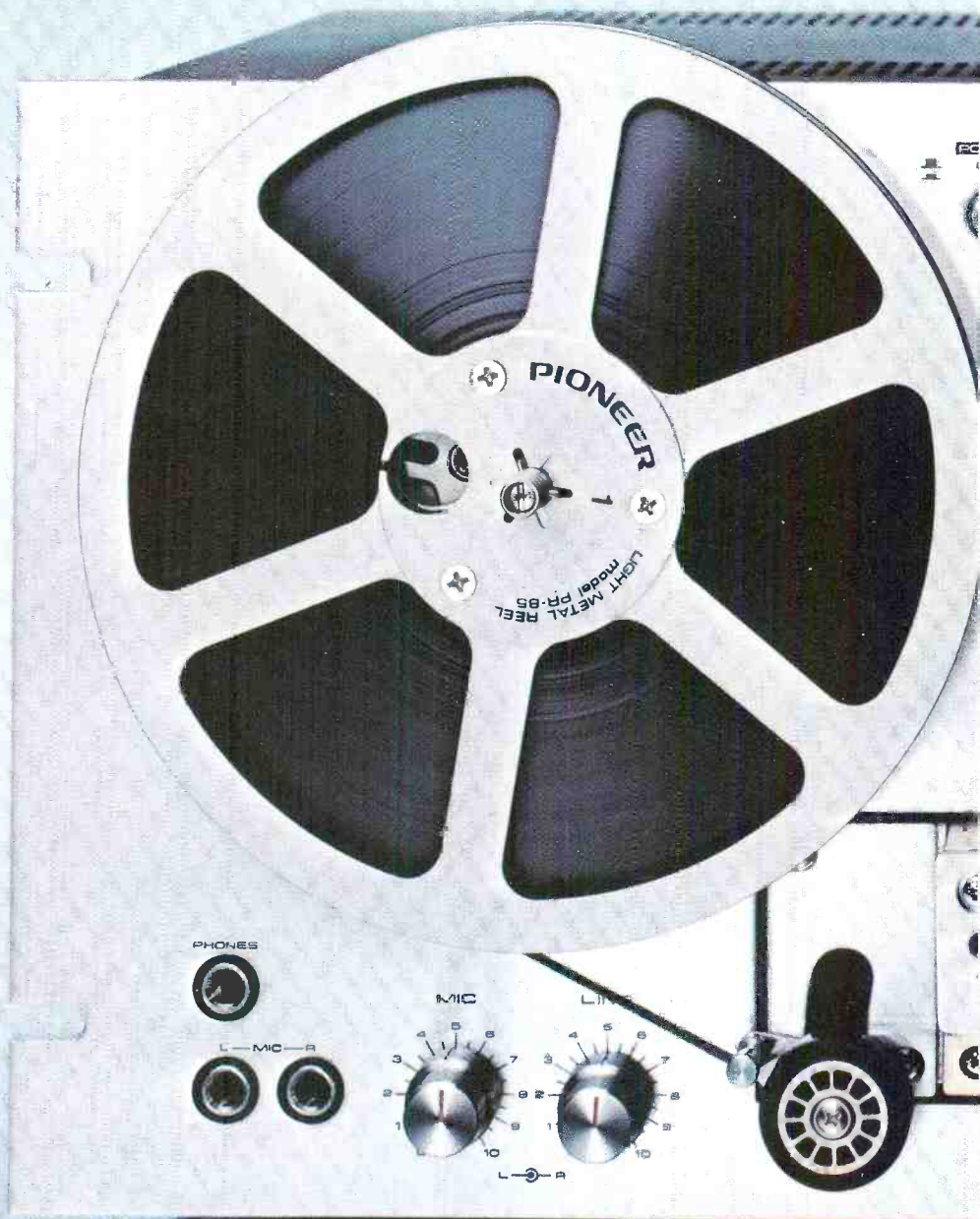
See your Pioneer dealer and get a closer look at the most extraordinary 7-inch tape deck ever built.

We think you'll find the only things that the RT-707 has in common with other 7-inch tape decks is the size of the reels. And the size of the price.

High Fidelity Component
PIONEER
WE BRING IT BACK ALIVE.

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FREQUENCY RESPONSE: 20-20,000 Hz ± 3 dB
130-24,000 Hz ± 5 dB
WOW AND FLUTTER: @ 7 1/2 ips 0.05 % WRMS
SIGNAL TO NOISE RATIO: More than 58 dB
HARMONIC DISTORTION: No more than 1.0%
SPEEDS: 7 1/2 ips (19 cm/sec.) 3 1/4 ips (9.5 cm/sec.) - 0.05%
MOTORS: FG AC Servo direct drive motor x 1 (capstan drive), 6-pole inner-rotor special induction motor x 2 (reel drive)
REFERENCE TAPE: Scotch #206



**THE ONLY THING IT HAS
IN COMMON WITH
OTHER 7-INCH
TAPE DECKS IS THE
SIZE OF ITS REELS.**

THE RT-707.

UNLIKE OTHER 7-INCH TAPE DECKS THIS ONE ISN'T FILLED WITH 15 YEARS

Now there's one 7-inch open reel tape deck with the kind of technology and features found in some of today's most sophisticated 10-inch tape decks. Pioneer's new RT-707.

In fact, the 707, when compared to other 7-inch tape decks, makes them look and sound 15 years old.

THE MOST ACCURATE DRIVE SYSTEM: DIRECT-DRIVE.

The average 7-inch tape deck is equipped with an old fashioned, high speed drive system that works on belts or pulleys.

A system that generates excessive heat, wow and flutter and comes with its own nifty little "noisemaker": a fan. Not the RT-707. It's driven by a far more accurate and efficient AC Servo direct-drive motor. A motor that generates its own frequency to monitor and help correct variations in tape speed. Which results in incredibly little wow and flutter—0.05% (WRMS). In addition, the drive system of the RT-707 is unaffected by fluctuations in line voltage and won't deteriorate with age like belt-drive. And because it doesn't generate heat it doesn't need a fan. So what you'll hear is music with a clarity and crispness not possible on any 7-inch, or many 10-inch tape decks.

A FIRST FOR 7-INCH TAPE DECKS: PITCH CONTROL.

Thanks to this extraordinary direct-drive system, it's also made pitch control possible for the first time on any 7-inch tape deck. Which means that you can regulate the speed of the tape, so your recordings will

have perfect pitch even if they weren't originally recorded that way.

BEYOND THE RANGE OF MOST 7-INCH TAPE DECKS.

In the past, the most you'd expect from any 7-inch tape deck in terms of frequency response was respectability.

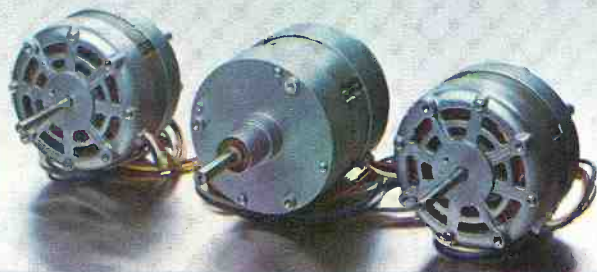
But Pioneer's engineers have gone far beyond that. Our super-sensitive tape heads, for instance, will pick up and deliver frequencies from 20 to 28,000

Hertz. The preamplifier, which is built around Pioneer designed integrated circuits, will handle up to 30 decibels more input than any other 7-inch tape deck without distorting. So you can capture all the depth and presence of each and every instrument without losing any part of the music.

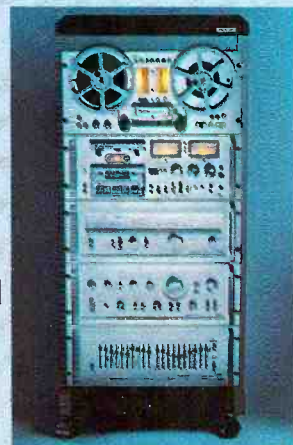
A WHOLE NEW WAY OF LOOKING AT TAPE DECKS.

Where most 7-inch tape decks are big and clumsy, new technology has helped us make the RT-707 smaller and more compact.

For example, between the take-up reels on the "dinosaurs" of the past, you'll find nothing but wasted space. On the RT-707, however, you'll find this space occupied by a series of highly sensitive

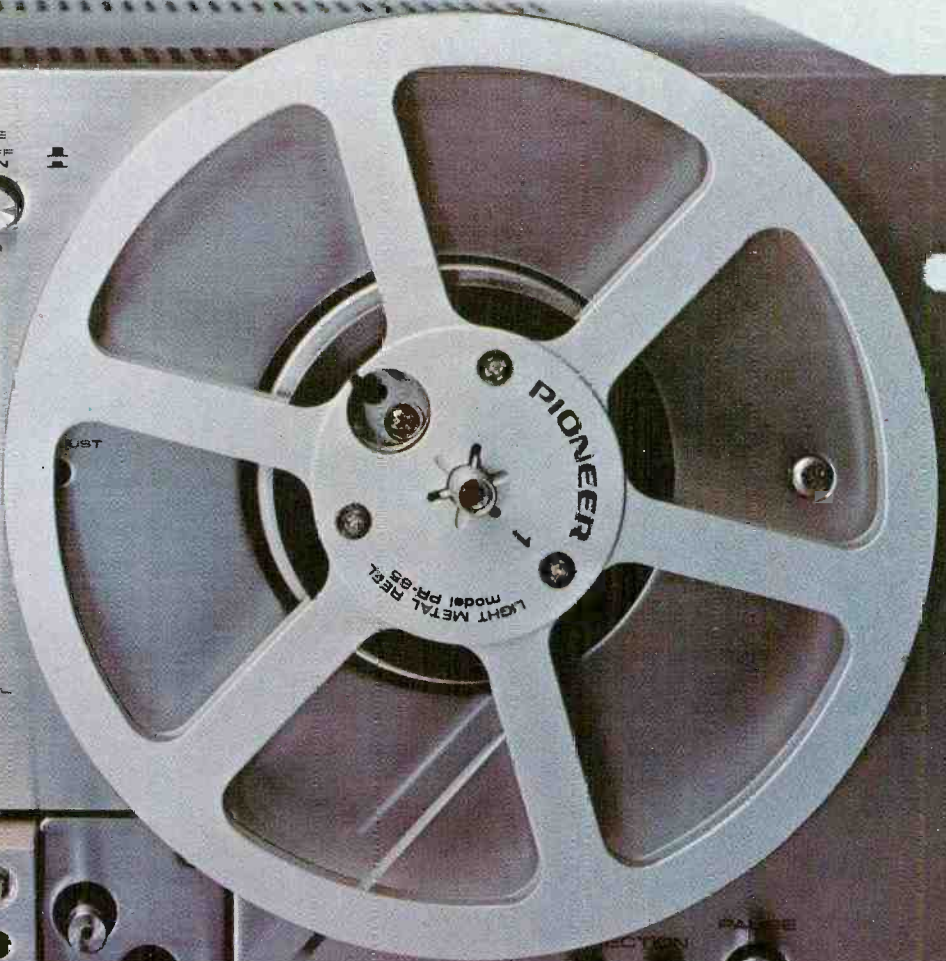
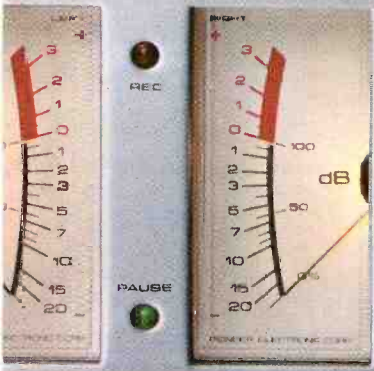


The extraordinary direct-drive system.



Unlike others, the RT-707 can be stacked or rack-mounted.

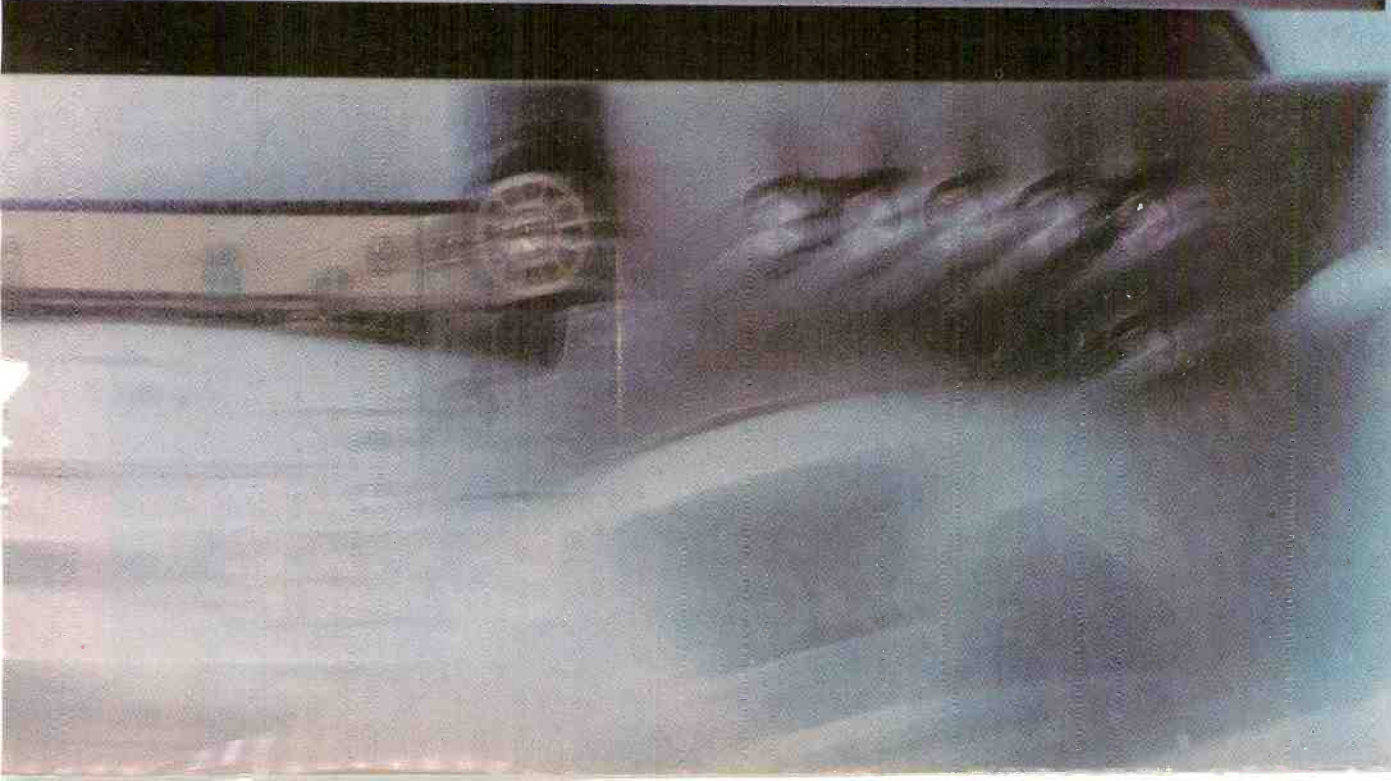
MONITOR BIAS EQ REC MODE
TAPE SOURCE STD LH STD LH OFF ON OFF ON
L R



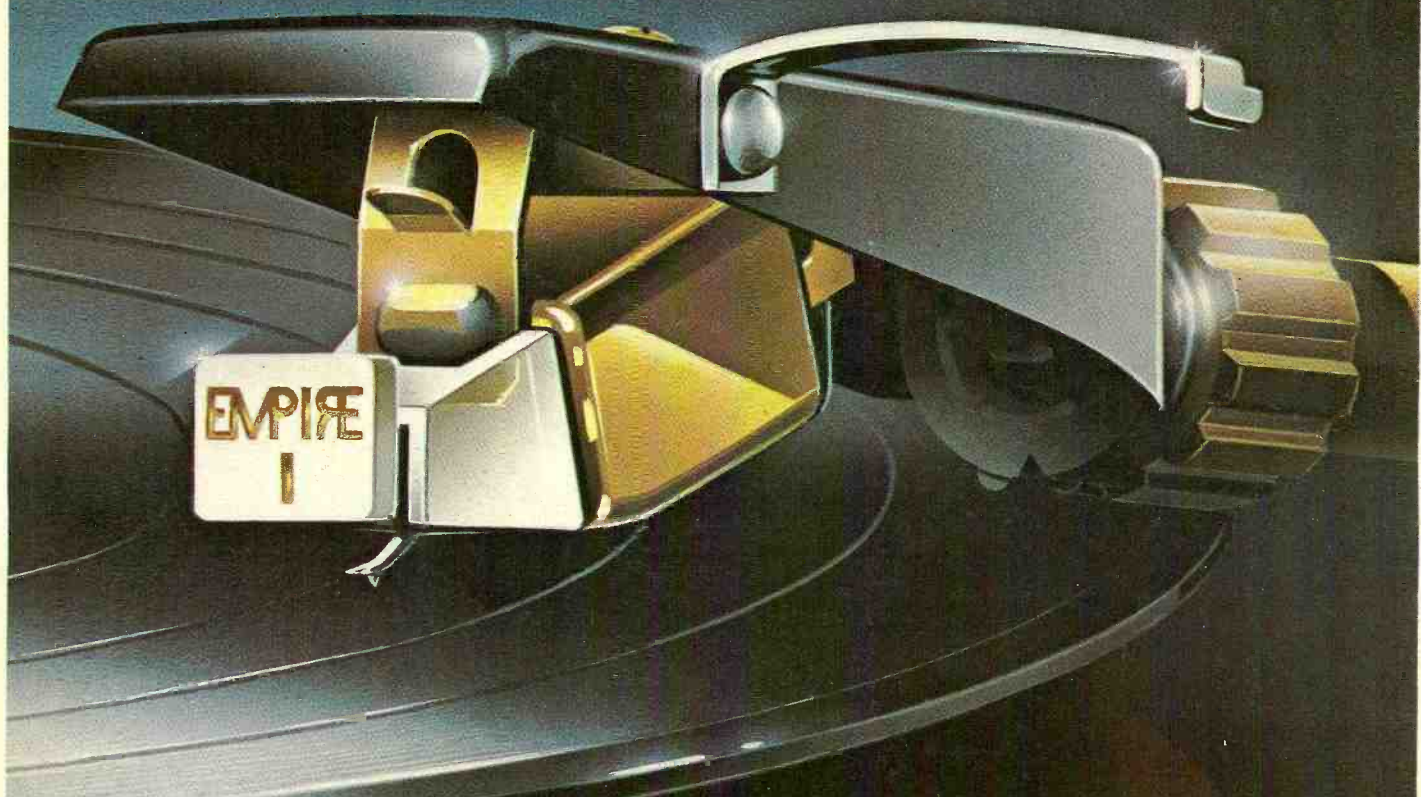
REC PAUSE
RESET REPEAT PITCH CONTROL
PUSH ON

PIONEER AUTO REVERSE DIRECT DRIVE AT-707
rec azim play azim

STOP PAUSE
PLAY
REVERSE



Here's a tip to make your records last longer.



No matter what system you own, a new Empire phono cartridge is certain to improve its performance, three ways.

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.

Two, you get better separation. The small, hollow iron armature we use allows for a tighter fit in its positioning among the poles.

So, even the most minute movement is accurately reproduced to give you the space and depth of the original recording.

Three, Empire uses 4 poles, 4 coils, and 3 magnets (more than any other cartridge) for better balance and hum rejection.

The end result is great listening. Audition one for yourself or write for our free brochure "How to Get the Most Out of Your Records".

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DECEMBER 1977 • VOLUME 39 • NUMBER 6

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Editorially Speaking

By William Anderson



MANDATORY RETIREMENT

THE chief failing of critics, says author/conductor/critic Robert Craft in his aptly titled book *Prejudices in Disguise* (Knopf, 1974), is that they don't know when to retire: "The mortal kind grows stale very quickly, after a year or so at the most . . . the critic confines his subject more and more to himself." It is a failing, thank goodness, that Craft apparently shares, for his *Current Convictions*, a hard-to-put-down collection of opinionated critical essays on subjects variously musical, literary, and sociological (*Mary Hartman*?!), has just been published by Knopf.

It is true that criticism is inescapably subjective, mere prejudice disguised or made plausible, but that is no reason for an able critic to retire after indulging it for only a year or so—let his audience do that. Those who have been persuaded, either by irrefutable logic or natural sympathy, to make his opin-

ions their own do not need further tutelage. Those who reject his opinions should find themselves a more congenial teacher. A critic should retire only when it becomes clear that he can no longer replenish his audience.

What we want from critics are strong opinions well argued and well expressed. It delights me when a critic, grown older and bolder in office, drops the polite mask of scholarly omniscience, the pose of detached objectivity, in favor of the disquieting candor of those who have nothing to lose. There is a danger in long incumbencies, however, even for critics, for many of them tend to develop Golden Age Syndrome, turning critical of the decayed times in which they live and prattling invidiously about how Melba, Nikisch, or Hofmann (ah, there were giants in those days!) would have done it.

But those are opinions too, and they have their supporters, as a miffy letter from a read-

er recently reminded me. It seems that critic Richard Freed, in reviewing two new recordings of the Dvůřák A Major Quintet (one by Emanuel Ax and the Cleveland Quartet, the other by Rudolf Firkušny and the Juilliard) in our September issue, failed to mention a 1963 release, by Clifford Curzon and the Vienna Philharmonic Quartet, that is just beginning its fifteenth year in the catalog.

There are, as a matter of fact, two Curzon recordings still in the catalog, one with the Vienna group (London CS 6357) and another with the Budapest Quartet (Odyssey 32260019, an even older mono recording). This popular work is also represented in performances by pianists Stephen Bishop, Jacob Lateiner, Artur Schnabel, György Sándor, and Peter Serkin. That makes a total of seven old recordings critic Freed might have compared with the two new ones and didn't. Why didn't he?

First, richly comprehensive though I know his record collection to be, I doubt that he had all seven of them on hand, and rounding up the missing ones would almost certainly have meant a month's delay in bringing readers the good news of the two new ones (they are both splendid recordings). Second, the review was just that—a review—and not an article about all the available recordings of the Quintet. (If reviews of current releases had to be burdened with complete catalog surveys—imagine what that would mean for Beethoven's Fifth!—reviewers would run out of time and we would run out of space each month before we got fairly started.) Third, the tone of the review convinces me that these two new performances are in no way inferior to any of the others—which is not to say that the oldsters should be forcibly retired, only that they now exist in a new competitive context.

By the way, Curzon's deservedly popular London disc of the Quintet is being withdrawn (it will reappear in the Stereo Treasury Series), but Clifford Curzon himself, bless his fingers, is not: he will be appearing in concert in the U.S. sometime next spring.

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Every TEAC cassette deck from the least expensive to the most expensive is built to last a long, long time. That's been true since the first TEAC was built more than 25 years ago.

A-103 Specifications:

Wow & Flutter:
0.10% (NAB weighted)
Signal-to-noise ratio:
50dB (without Dolby)
55dB (with Dolby at 1kHz)
60dB (with Dolby over 5kHz)
Frequency Response:
30-14,000Hz (CrO₂/FeCr)
30-11,000Hz (Normal)

Take the new A-103, one of the least expensive TEAC's you can buy. Despite its low price, the A-103 is manufactured to the same tolerances as decks costing three times as much. And, where most decks have a maze of hand-wired switches, harnesses and boards inside, the A-103 boasts an innovative design which replaces all that with a single circuit board directly coupled to the front control panel.

A-640 Specifications:

Wow & Flutter:
0.06% (NAB weighted)
Signal-to-noise ratio:
57dB (without Dolby)
62dB (with Dolby at 1kHz)
67dB (with Dolby over 5kHz)
Frequency Response:
30-16,000Hz (CrO₂)
30-14,000Hz (Normal)

TEAC's more expensive A-640 brings engineering sophistication to a new high with plug-in circuit boards, two motors and electronically operated push buttons for feather-touch, maintenance-free reliability. People who work with tape recorders know

TEAC tape recorders work and keep on working. That's the reason people whose living depends on sound judgement, depend on TEAC. You can, too.

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INTRODUCING THE LOUDSPEAKER OF THE FUTURE

THE FULL RANGE HEIL AIR-MOTION SOUND SYSTEM BY ESS

Four years ago last March, ESS, a small California based corporation, electrified the high fidelity world by introducing the AMT-1, the first loudspeaker to incorporate the revolutionary Heil air-motion transformer as its midrange-tweeter. Two thousand AMT-1's were sold in the first ten days; twenty thousand in the remaining nine months of 1973 — more loudspeakers than any similarly priced loudspeaker in the history of the high fidelity industry.

Immediately, fierce controversy swirled around the new loudspeaker principle invented by and named after Dr. Oskar Heil, the musician and physicist who in 1934 invented the FET (field effect transistor). So advanced was that device that only now, long after the patent has expired, is it being used in state-of-the-art electronics. Even as a young man, Dr. Heil's profound insight into the laws of physics put him and his inventions far ahead of their time.

The Heil air-motion transformer, like all great breakthroughs, was not a mere improvement on conventional technology; it was the discovery of a better way. As such, it was as radical an improvement over conventional loudspeaker technology as the jet engine was over conventional propeller

technology. And for the same reason. Like the propeller plane, conventional speakers have to move a solid object — a cone or dome — in order to move air. The Heil air-motion transformer, like the jet engine, moves air directly.

No increase in the number of propellers, no amount of research into the materials used in making propellers, no amount of altering the arrangement or placement of propellers, no amount of computer programming of propeller technology could alter the basic inferiority of propeller design. Similarly, no amount of tinkering with the material, or number, or placement, or computer programming of conventional driver design alters the basic inferiority of conventional loudspeaker technology when compared to the Heil air-motion transformer.

The Heil, like the jet engine, moves air directly — but with one major difference: unlike all other speakers, instead of **pushing** air, the Heil air-motion transformer **squeezes** it. Dr. Heil has a simple experiment that dramatically illustrates the

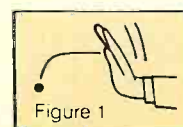


Figure 1

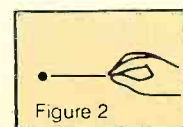


Figure 2

superiority of the squeezing motion. Imagine trying to "shot put" or **push** a light object like a cherry pit with the palm of your hand (Figure 1). It won't travel very far or very fast. Now put the cherry pit between your thumb and forefinger and **squeeze** (Figure 2). The cherry pit squirts out at high velocity. The physics of the Heil air-motion transformer are as simple and brilliant as this illustration of the principle of leverage.

The Heil owes its great clarity and definition, superb dynamic range, crisp transients and remarkable dispersion — in sum, its audible superiority — to this increase in air motion velocity. It is what ESS calls the "instant acceleration"™ of the Heil.

Just as power is critical to an amplifier, acceleration is critical to a loudspeaker. Thus, while all loudspeakers are "transducers", and therefore **convert** electrical energy into acoustic or sound energy, only the Heil is also a "transformer" — a loudspeaker that "transforms" or **increases** the velocity of the energy output 530 percent.

In its first year, the astounding breakthrough represented by the Heil air-motion transformer midrange-tweeter was obscured by arguments. There are no arguments about the superiority of Transar/atd, the first full range Heil air-motion sound system to unite the Heil air-motion transformer with the new Heil low frequency driver. It is so clearly, audibly, a monumental achievement that Dr. Heil's genius is now firmly and forever enshrined in the annals of high fidelity history.

SHOWN BELOW: A close-up view of one of the five Lexan® diaphragms specially designed for the new Heil low frequency driver.



The technical brilliance of Transar can be explicated at great length, but not in a few paragraphs. We do, however, invite requests for ESS's theoretical monogram "Transar: A Study in Genius, A Study in Physics".

But Transar is not the kind of product that stands or falls on theory. Its profound superiority — indeed, its greatness — is something experienced with a sudden "shock of recognition."



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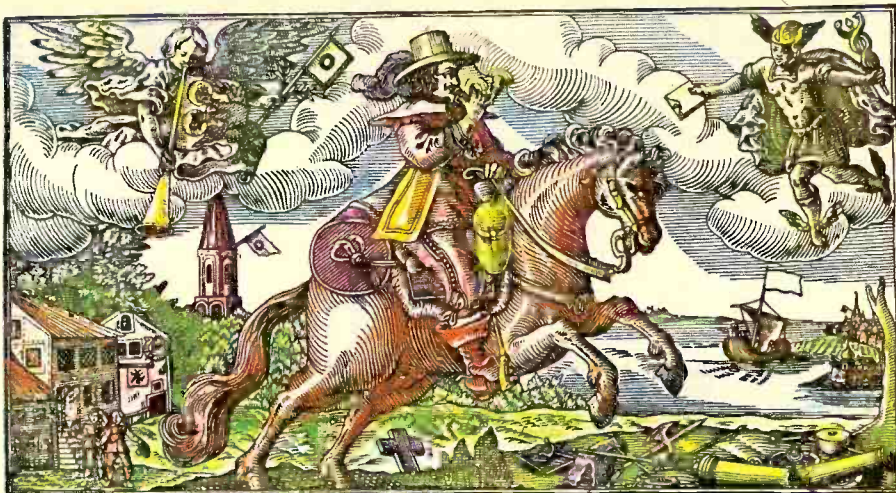
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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Jefferson Airplane

● Congratulations to Josh Mills for his exquisite article on one of rock's all-time great bands, the Airplane. In an age when so many talentless bands are out to make a buck and that only, it is encouraging to remember once again the electric career of a group that cared about its audience and what its songs were saying. Although we still have the Who, the Stones, and (stretching a point) Led Zep, the heart and soul of rock-and-roll has diminished. Reading about the Airplane did my heart and head good. It made me want to give my "Surrealistic Pillow" a few turns; although through years of listening it has acquired the "fireplace effect," the sound is still real and important.

MATT ROTI
Bronx, N.Y.

Frank Sinatra

● I wholeheartedly agree with Paulette Weiss ("The Pop Beat," October 1977) that the evening of July 16, 1977, was one of Frank Sinatra's finest hours. After seeing The Man in concert some sixteen times since his "return" in January 1974 at Caesar's Palace in Las Vegas, I must admit that he has sometimes been vocally rough (downtight woeful). At a concert in Pittsburgh last year he all but ruined the beautiful *Embraceable You* and turned his very own *My Way* into something best left unsung. But in recent months his voice has seemed to be back in exquisite form, as at Forest Hills that horribly muggy July night and in two earlier engagements at the Latin Casino in Cherry Hill, New Jersey.

Just one small correction: the King opened the Forest Hills show with Cole Porter's *Night and Day*, not (as Ms. Weiss had it) *I've Got You Under My Skin*. And could you tell me why Reprise Records has put "Here's to the Ladies" on "indefinite hold"? What a bummer!

PAUL M. MORK
Avoca, Pa.

The delay in releasing "Here's to the Ladies" has been caused by the Boss himself. He was dissatisfied with several cuts on it and is re-recording some and scrapping others entirely. A

Reprise spokesperson said simply, "When Frank says it's ready to go, we go."

Opera Library

● I enjoyed George Jellinek's "Essentials of an Opera Library" in the October issue, but I disagree with some of his choices. The best version of *Tosca* I have heard is the one conducted by Colin Davis for Philips. Herbert von Karajan is a great conductor, but I find his London version of *Tosca* lacking in drama—and it is a very dramatic opera—compared with the one by Davis. With respect to French opera, I wonder if Mr. Jellinek is anti-Berlioz. There are two fantastic versions of *Le Damnation de Faust* available on discs, not to mention Davis' complete *Les Troyens*, which really brings the glories of the opera house into the home.

WILLIAM W. FIELD, JR.
Tucson, Ariz.

Not anti-Berlioz—it's just that none of Berlioz's works are basic repertoire.

● The performance preferences listed by George Jellinek in his "Essentials of an Opera Library" I found, in the main, unexceptionable . . . except that one is struck immediately by the preponderance of all those "same old voices." I know that superstars sell records and that they all want to record their whole repertoire before they retire, but shouldn't we be getting just an occasional glimpse of the coming generation of singers anyway?

HERBERT KAUFFMAN
New York, N.Y.

The world's opera houses have been struggling with the question of retirement age for much longer than the U.S. Congress has. Unlike most employment situations, however, this one directly involves the wishes of the public as well as the employer (opera house or record company) and employee (singer). See this month's "Editorially Speaking" for more on the subject.

● The photograph that accompanied George Jellinek's *Essentials of an Opera Library* in (Continued on page 10)

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October caught my eye. Frank Dunand's photo of Verdi's *Otello* at the Metropolitan Opera has done what would seem to me impossible. When one studies the marvelous expressions on the faces of the singers and realizes that not one is obscured from view, it becomes apparent what a task this must have been. The amber overtones and costumes remind me of Rembrandt's famous painting *The Night Watch*.

HAL BROWN
Vancouver, Wash.

Who Writes the Songs?

I was so carried away by the charm of Barry Manilow's *Mandy* that by the time he

worked his way up to *I Write the Songs* I was really impressed with his ability to write hit songs.

So I started buying his albums.

And reading the liner notes.

And he didn't.

Write the songs, I mean.

Well, okay, he writes the *music* for some of his songs, and an occasional lyric; but his skill seems to lie more in selection and arrangement. For the most part, his hits—like *Mandy* and *Weekend in New England*—have been written by other people. I was glad, though, to see the positive review of "Barry Manilow Live" (September), since he has considerable talent whether or not he writes the songs.

DONNA SELLERS
O'Fallon, Mo.

Reel-to-reel Rawhide

I had just finished checking my oil wells on my ranch in my pickup truck when I read (October "Editorially Speaking") about this Texas millionaire who tapes his direct-to-disc records. I fail to see how this is possible. Down here we use thin strips of rawhide for recording, not tape. Guess we're a mite behind you city fellers. By the way, my prescription-ground windshield got busted at the local honky tonk.

BILL PATRICK
Pinehurst, Tex.

Barbra

In his October review of Barbra Streisand's album *Superman*, Peter Reilly states that Streisand picked up another Grammy for her song *Evergreen* from *A Star Is Born*. In fact, it was another Oscar. But my biggest gripe about this review is that Reilly falls in line with the rest of the country's critics who review Streisand the superstar and not the work she produces. Not once does he deal directly with what Streisand is doing with her voice these days, and, for all the article tells us, the album could have been recorded in Barbra's Jacuzzi with a cassette recorder. It's fine to reflect on an artist's professional motives, but when the reviewer neglects to report whether Streisand sounds nasal, mellow, on key, or whatever, I think it is time to re-evaluate his reason for being a critic.

GREG MITCHELL
Wichita, Kan.

Foster's Hits

In October's "Pop Rotogravure" Rick Mitz underestimates Bruce Foster's "Uncle Stephen" in saying that he "hasn't had a hit single in about one hundred and thirteen years." In 1940-1941, during a dispute between the broadcasting industry and ASCAP, several versions of Foster's *Jeanie with the Light Brown Hair* made the Hit Parade. It might be added that Nonesuch's two recent discs of Foster songs performed by DeGastani, Guinn, and Kalish and the second volume in the Gregg Smith Singers' "America Sings" series for Vox constitute a welcome, if modest, step toward the "comeback" Mr. Mitz mentioned.

ROGER A. BULLARD
Wilson, N.C.

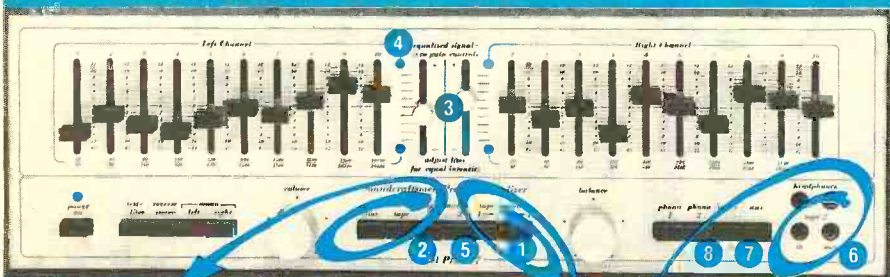
The Long View

Joel Vance's choice of 10cc's "Deceptive Bends" as a "Best of the Month" record for September strikes me as the most unfortunate mistake by one of your reviewers since Tina Turner's "Acid Queen" earned Peter Reilly's "BOM" nomination in January 1976. I think an important consideration in choosing records for this category—which often leads to a STEREO REVIEW "Best of the Year" award—should be the music's ability to endure and delight for many years after the record's first appearance. Among the September choices Woody Herman, Wagner, and Arriaga probably qualify on this count; 10cc does not.

What is the "charm" in lines such as "Ah, you made me love you/Ah, you've got a way"? Lyrics like this are banal, moronic,

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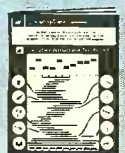


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and all but useless, regardless of their context. I suggest that Mr. Vance take a refresher course in song lyrics. He might examine or re-examine the words and their relation to the music in Jethro Tull's "Aqualung," Steely Dan's "Countdown to Ecstasy," or any of the later Beatles albums. These are records that have achieved permanence through quality. I very much doubt that "Deceptive Bends" will do the same.

CONRAD BAHLKE
Clinton, N.Y.

Well, check back in about twenty years.

Heart's Country

● In his review of Heart's "Little Queen" in the September issue, Joel Vance said that the group is from Seattle, Washington. In 1976 Heart won a "Juno" award as the most up-and-coming band in Canada. Heart is from Vancouver, British Columbia. Please don't try to steal our thunder.

IAN SAMS
London, Ontario

The Beatles Standard

● If Alan Karpusiewicz (October "Letters") really wants to make a case against overpraising the Beatles, saying that the Searchers, the Hollies, and the Escorts (whoever they were) were better is idiotic. The Beatles may not have been the most technically proficient musicians around, but they were not sloppy. Their greatness wasn't really related to this anyway. Their genius was to combine singing, songwriting, and playing with a certain indefinable special quality so as to create pure musical magic that has never been equaled by any other group. The Beatles will always be the standard for judging the accomplishments of any rock group. For what they accomplished and the joy that they provided in the very short period of time they were together, the Beatles can never be overpraised.

JON WOOLSEY
Fairfax, Va.

RFI

● While I am glad the FCC is finally deciding the fate of quadcasting, I believe this is the wrong issue at this time. The FCC should now be devoting all its efforts to the problem of radio-frequency interference (RFI). Let quadcasting wait; why take on new problems if you can't solve the old ones?

I was the proud owner of a Fisher Model 634 quad receiver until it was besieged by the local CB operator—now I own a four-channel CB receiver! It is just one year old and it has visited the Fisher factory not once or twice but *four times!* It has spent more time there than at my house. Fisher went the full route—installing capacitors, rewiring grounds, shielding antenna leads, and installing filters—before giving up. I installed and grounded shielded 18-gauge speaker leads and filtered the FM antenna. But I am still plagued by RFI.

Not about to give up, I took on the FCC. Over the past year I have written twelve letters, but they have taken no action. The FCC seems to have an endless supply of Bulletin 25 (on RFI) and maybe they think it helps solve

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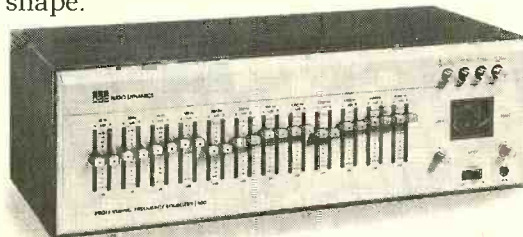
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the problem, but believe me, it doesn't! I have heard that the FCC is understaffed and overworked, but isn't every federal agency?

Every door of escape from the RFI problem has been shut in my face. Practical anti-RFI measures have been taken with no results, I have been abandoned by the manufacturer of my equipment, and the FCC ignores me, so here I sit with the RFI problem smack in my lap! That is why I would like to see the FCC adopt a quadcasting standard—after the RFI problem is solved!

GLENN DRAKELEY
Clifton, N.J.

Technical Director Larry Klein responds: Your experience confirms my statement made a year or so ago that the FCC is relatively in-

sensitive to the RFI problem, even if much audio equipment isn't. From your description of your troubles and your inability to effect a cure even with shielding, filtering, and modifications by the manufacturer, it seems likely to me that your "local CB operator" is using illegal amounts of transmitting power. That is the responsibility of the FCC! Do you have neighbors whose TV reception is troubled by the CB'er? Perhaps you can all get together to petition the FCC to send an investigator. (The FCC seems to respond more readily to complaints of interference with television than with audio.)

Have you checked the article on RFI in the May 1977 STEREO REVIEW? You may find some helpful anti-RFI techniques you have not yet tried. (Back issues are available from Ziff-

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CSN

● When I first read Steve Simels' September article, "Regress Report on CSN . . . and Y." I was furious. But I reread it several times and find that I agree—in part.

True, neither new album has the same position in my collection as the first CSN album or "Déjà Vu" by all four of them. But then the music doesn't have the same frame of reference; that is, it doesn't remind me of the same period of time. Seven years have come and gone—as have two Presidents, three Vice-Presidents, two national elections, and our involvement in Southeast Asia. The country has changed. It isn't that the music isn't good. It's just that it's different, and we all will look at it differently.

ROD REEVES
Orient, Iowa

● If Los Angeles is "a living organism growing inexorably eastward," as Steve Simels calls it in his September review of new records by Neil Young and Crosby, Stills, and Nash, then it is only returning to its origin—New York City, the source of everything cheap and vulgar in entertainment. It is also the source of the "music business" Simels derides because it no longer has a N.Y.C. zip code.

I haven't noticed any increase in vacuity or tastelessness in records made since the move to Los Angeles—since they could hardly get any worse! The record companies have always been noted for the very low percentage of excellent records they release.

SUE W. MOORE
San José, Calif.

Stereo Separation

● I've been reading the letters STEREO REVIEW has been publishing about disc quality and just have to add a complaint no one else has mentioned. I can tolerate pops, clicks and warps, but I can't tolerate there not being any separation in new records. There is getting to be less separation in stereo records now than when they cost a dollar extra, and as a result I'm buying more older records than new ones. Why have expensive stereo equipment to play mono?

B.R. BILLINGS
Perrytown, Ark.

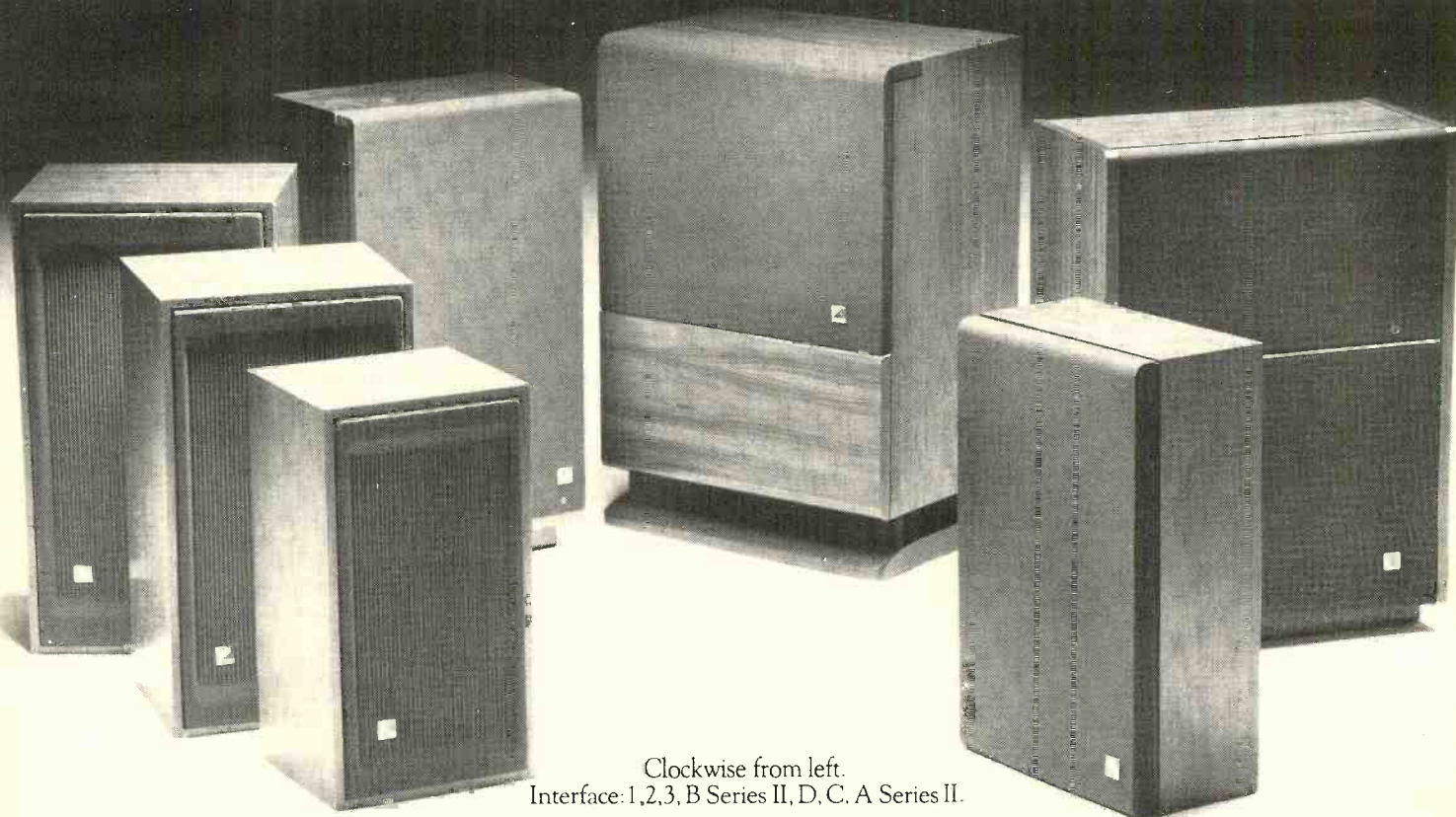
Have any other readers observed a falling off in stereo separation?

Jethro Tull

● I was astonished at all the fallacies in Lester Bangs' review in the August issue of the Jethro Tull album, "Songs from the Wood." First, he did a critique of the group instead of the album. I would be the first to admit that this album is not the best of Jethro Tull's twelve releases, but it is obvious that Mr. Bangs does not like the group's style at all. Second, he said that Ian Anderson once heard something of Roland Kirk's entitled *Song for a Cuckoo*. It was actually called *Serenade to a*

(Continued on page 14)

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Cuckoo. Third, he said that Anderson stole his entire flute style from that one song by Kirk. Poppycock. It was merely the first thing Anderson learned to play on the flute; he liked it so well that he put it on his first album for Chrysalis Records in 1968, with credit to Kirk. If a performer could steal another's style just by learning one of his songs, a lot more people would be buying the Beatles' song books.

CRAIG COLE
Garnett, Kan.

● Lester Bangs' August review of Jethro Tull's "Songs from the Wood" was like a slap in the face. I generally don't pay much attention to what critics have to say (they are an insulting bunch, aren't they?), but when writers continually knock Ian Anderson it does make me a bit angry and even a little confused.

Since its beginning, Jethro Tull has produced good, quality material. Maybe the critics resent Anderson for moving Tull out of its original jazz/blues-influenced style into a more British one. Or maybe they're angry because someone as dull and boring as they say he is actually excites people. Whatever the reasons, Tull's critics are wasting their time on a lot of garbage when they could be listening to classics such as "Thick as a Brick," "Passion Play," or just about anything else Jethro Tull has produced.

KEITH BRODY
Miami, Fla.

● STEREO REVIEW should help Lester Bangs find a new job. His August review of Jethro Tull's "Songs from the Wood" proved his to-

tal incompetence as a record reviewer. As the not-so-proud owner of a copy of this album, I'll easily agree that it is below par. However, it is not reasonable to say, based on this one disc, that Jethro Tull's music has "... never been anything but ugly and trite." Mr. Bangs' characterization of the group's attitude as "up-tight, pretentious, and haughty" is a real example of the pot calling the kettle black. If he were not so busy impressing his very narrow attitudes on us, perhaps he'd have the time and the good judgment to review the music on a record rather than the "pose" and "attitude" of the performers.

DON MERZ
Bridgeville, Pa.

Reading Binary

● In "Audio's Digital Future" in the July issue, the caption on page 83 gives 00101101 as an example of a binary number and states it is to be read from left to right, "from least-significant to most-significant bit." Binary numbers are interpreted just the opposite; the left-most bit is the highest power of 2, hence it is the most significant.

JOHN Q. DOOLAN
Arlington, Va.

Technical Editor Ralph Hodges replies: Digital numbers usually appear in print as Mr. Doolan describes. However, so far as we know there is no iron-clad convention for the sequencing of bits in audio-recording systems of the type discussed in the article. The flow of the diagram in which the number appeared

was from left to right. Assuming that the most-significant bit would lead the data stream emerging from the recording system, we reasoned that it should take up the right-most position in the sequence, and the least-significant bit the left-most. We are sorry for any confusion, but we feel that the instructions given for interpreting the number were adequate.

Last Things

● In his article "Making the Case for Elgar" (April 1977), Bernard Jacobson stated that in the end Elgar's religious faith turned to ashes and he refused the rites of the church on his deathbed. In his recent biography of the composer in the Master Musicians Series, Ian Parrott comments on the matter as follows:

"Since some doubt has been expressed on Elgar's faith at the end of his life, a letter from his daughter to the *Musical Times* of January 1969 needs quoting: 'Father Gibb, S.J. from St. George's, Worcester, was asked to attend, and to him my father re-affirmed his faith in the Roman Catholic Church.' Peter J. Pirie, in a letter in the same issue, confirms this, adding the significant comment that 'Elgar would utter extravagant things under provocation or pain.'"

JAMES REIDY
St. Paul, Minn.

The Editor replies: Yes, and I recall my Irish grandmother commenting that we shouldn't be too hard on those who suffer a late access of piety, for it is simply unwise to take chances when it comes to our "latter end."

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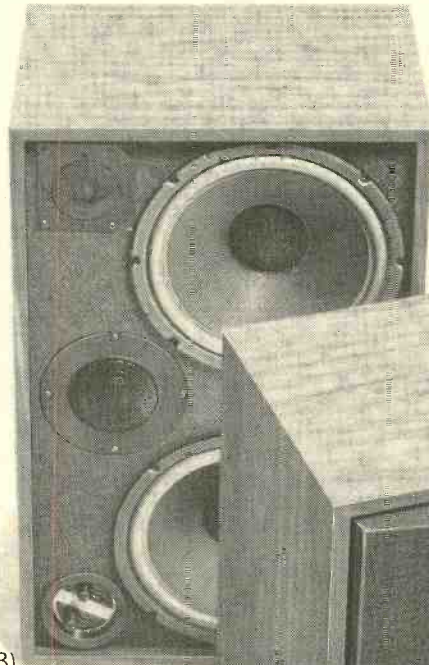
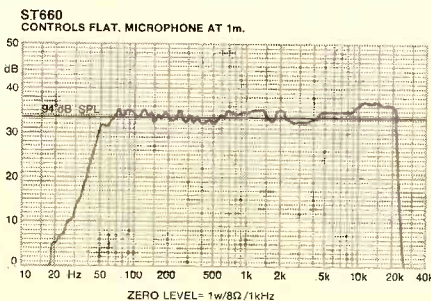
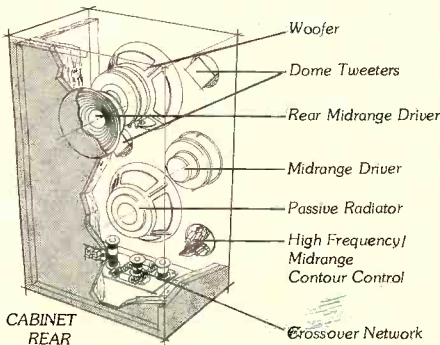
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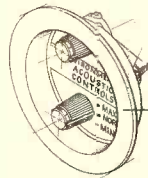
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Bass Loudspeaker and Passive Radiator. The 10-inch bass speaker, having a 1½-inch heat-resistant voice coil and 2½-pound magnetic assembly, is reinforced by a passive radiator, a precisely tuned cone driven by the rear pressure wave of the speaker.

Two Midrange Drivers. Up front a 6½-inch driver with a 2-inch dome, 2-inch

voice coil and 26-ounce magnetic assembly delivers clarity and wide sound dispersion. A rear 6-inch cone midrange, driven by a ¾-inch voice coil and 5.6-ounce magnetic assembly, reflects sound off walls and ceiling to recreate concert hall ambience.

Two Dome Tweeters. Treble accuracy is provided by two 1-inch dome tweeters. Each has a 1-inch voice coil and 5.6-ounce magnetic assembly for wide sound dispersion and high power handling capacity.

The Fisher tradition

Fisher is credited with starting the high fidelity industry in 1937.

The same dedication to excellence that existed then, in a modest New York City facility, still flourishes today in Fisher's ultra-modern 200,000 square foot plant in Milroy, Pennsylvania.

Perfection is the Fisher tradition. A tradition that has, over the years, resulted in an incredible number of audio innovations... like the first coaxial speaker system and the first stereophonic receiver. In keeping with this, the Studio Standard (ST) series are Fisher's premier loudspeakers. The ST series consists of the ST660 and the more compact ST640.

To fully appreciate their performance, you will have to audition them for yourself at fine audio stores or the high fidelity section of department stores.

Frequency Response	39 Hz/22 kHz
3 dB Passband Limit	
Sound Pressure Level (SPL)— Efficiency SPL. at 1 Meter with 1-Watt Input	94 dB
Maximum Distortion-Free Peak SPL obtainable in a Typical Living Room with Two Speakers	113 dB
Components	
Low Frequency	12" loudspeaker 12" passive radiator
Midrange—Front	6½" (2 dome)
Midrange—Rear	6" cone
High Frequency (Two)	4" and 1" dome
Controls	
Midrange Rear Driver	3-position switch
Tweeters	3-position switch
Dimensions (HWD)	29¼"x18¼"x12½"
Weight	45 pounds

Fisher Corporation, 21314 Lassen Street
Chatsworth, Ca. 91311

 **FISHER**

The first name in high fidelity.

New Products latest audio equipment and accessories



New Full-range Isolating Headphones From Superex

□ Superex is launching a new line of stereo headphones with the SM-700 "Studio Master," a dynamic headphone using 2¾-inch Mylar-diaphragm drivers in vented enclosures. The 10-ounce headphone has Leathette-covered foam cushions that rest on the ear, isolating it from outside sounds. The metal headband is also covered with foam padding, and a 15-foot extended retractable cable with a clothing clip is provided.

The frequency response of the SM-700 is rated at 10 to 20,000 Hz ± 3 dB. Distortion is rated at 0.25 per cent for a 400-Hz signal at a sound-pressure level of 110 dB. A 0.6-volt (10-milliwatt) input is required to produce this acoustic output. Impedance is a nominal 35 ohms. Price: \$65.

Circle 115 on reader service card



Sony Turntable Uses Carbon Arm

□ Sony is offering three new quartz-controlled direct-drive turntables, the PS-X7 (shown), PS-X6, and PS-X5. Each has a quartz-crystal oscillator that generates a sta-

ble reference signal; this is compared with a signal derived from the platter's speed, and speed fluctuations are then corrected by a servo system. All three turntables are semi-automatic and have a safety clutch in the tone-arm return mechanism. Operating controls (other than speed and record-size selection) are located on the front panel of the base and can be manipulated with the dust cover closed. The turntable bases are made of an acoustically inert material and mounted on liquid-filled feet to prevent acoustic feedback.

The top-of-the-line PS-X7 features a carbon-fiber tone-arm shaft as well as a liquid-filled turntable mat. Both the PS-X7 and PS-X6 have an optical sensor that triggers the tone-arm return mechanism as well as touch-sensitive front-panel switches for the start/stop and repeat functions. Key specifications are identical for all three turntables and include 0.025 per cent wow and flutter (wrms), better than 99.99 per cent speed accuracy, and a rumble level of -73 dB (DIN B weighting). All three have approximate dimensions of 6 x 17½ x 14¾ inches. Prices are \$330 for the PS-X7, \$275 for the PS-X6, and \$230 for the PS-X5.

Circle 116 on reader service card



New Lower-cost Satin Cartridges

□ Osawa announces two additions to its Satin M-18 series of moving-coil phono cartridges. The M-18E and M-18X are basically similar to the M-18BX cartridge already on the market but are lower in cost and have different stylus assemblies. The M-18 series cartridges do not require a pre-preamplifier ("head" amp) since they have rated outputs of 2.5 millivolts, suitable for a standard magnetic phono input. The M-18E and M-18X use the Satin's fixed-point pivot in the stylus-cantilever mechanism for improved groove tracing and a specially formulated viscous fluid for damping.

The M-18E, with a 0.2 x 0.8-mil elliptical diamond stylus, has a frequency response of 10 to 30,000 Hz. The M-18X is rated at 10 to 35,000 Hz and is intended for both stereo and CD-4 four-channel use; it has a 0.1 x 2.5-mil Shibata stylus. Compliance is 15 x 10⁻⁶ centimeters per dyne for each cartridge, and the recommended tracking-force range is 0.5 to

1.5 grams. Price of the M-18E is \$195; of the M-18X, \$250.

Circle 117 on reader service card



First Dynamic Speakers from Koss

□ Koss has taken the plunge into the dynamic-speaker market with three new systems designed according to Thiele's vented-box loudspeaker theory and using Small's computer methods to optimize parameters. The new line consists of the CM 1010, a passive radiator system, and the CM 1020 and CM 1030 (shown) ported systems. The CM 1030 is a four-way system with a 10-inch woofer, two 4½-inch mid-ranges, and two 1-inch high-frequency dome drivers for the lower- and upper-treble ranges. Crossover points are at 400, 2,500, and 6,000 Hz. The system has dual ports for supplementing bass output. The high-frequency drivers are loaded with different phase plugs, which increase their efficiencies but restrict their bandwidths, so that one covers the 2,500- to 6,000-Hz range and the other is active above 6,000 Hz. There are three level controls on the CM 1030, for mid-range, treble, and high treble. Each is a three-position switch with settings of +3, 0, and -3 dB. Overall on-axis frequency response in the far field is 26 to 20,000 Hz ± 3 dB. Far-field response is down 3 dB at 70 degrees off-axis and 6 dB at 80 degrees off-axis. A sound-pressure level of 96 dB is produced at a 1-meter distance on-axis with a 1-watt input; Koss recommends amplifiers delivering between 15 and 200 watts per channel continuous power into 8 ohms. The speaker is fused to prevent overload. Nominal impedance is 7 ohms. The cabinet, which measures 39 x 16½ x 14½ inches, is finished in pecan veneer and has brass lift handles on the sides.

The CM 1020 uses drivers similar to the CM 1030's but in a three-way configuration with one mid-range and one high-frequency driver.

(Continued on page 18)

HIGH BIAS.

These cassette deck manufacturers use SA
as their reference for the High (CrO₂) bias/EQ setting:

AIWA · AKAI · DOKORDER · JVC
KENWOOD · MERITON · NAKAMICHI
OPTONICA · PIONEER · SANSUI
SHARP · TOSHIBA · TEAC
UHER · YAMAHA

And are joined by these
in recommending SA for use in their decks:

BANG & OLUFSEN · DUAL · FISHER
HARMAN/KARDON · LAFAYETTE
ROYAL SOUND · SANKYO · TANDBERG
AND MANY OTHERS.



There's been a quiet revolution going on in the cassette world. □ Leading makers of quality cassette decks have adopted TDK SA as their reference standard tape for high (CrO₂) bias and equalization settings. Why TDK SA? Because TDK SA's advanced tape formulation and super precision cassette mechanism let them (and you) take full advantage of today's advanced cassette deck technology. □ In addition, a growing number of other companies are recommending SA for use with their machines. □ So for the ultimate in cassette sound and performance, load your deck with SA and switch to the "High" or "CrO₂" bias/EQ settings. You'll consistently get less noise, highest saturation and output levels, lowest distortion and the widest dynamic range to let you get the best performance from any quality machine. □ But you needn't believe all this just because we say so. All you have to do is check our references.

 **TDK**®

The machine for your machine.

TDK Electronics Corp., 755 Eastgate Blvd., Garden City, N.Y. 11530.
In Canada: Superior Electronics Industries, Ltd.

CIRCLE NO. 77 ON READER SERVICE CARD

New Products latest audio equipment and accessories

The CM 1010 is a two-way system with an 8-inch woofer and a 1-inch dome tweeter; its 10-inch passive radiator can be adjusted for flat response to 35 Hz or for augmented output in the 50- to 80-Hz range (with the rolloff occurring at 40 Hz) using a removable weight attached to the center of the diaphragm. Both of these units are finished in pecan veneer. Price of the CM 1030 is \$395; of the CM 1020, \$295; and of the CM 1010, \$195.

Circle 118 on reader service card



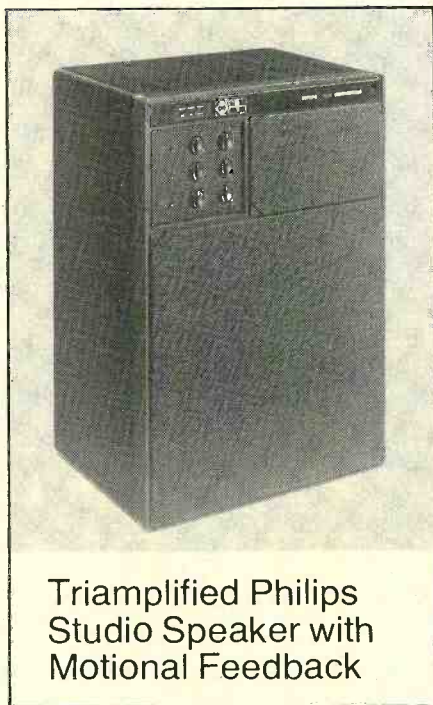
**Teac's New
Three-head
Elcaset Deck**

□ Teac's new elcaset deck, the AL-700, is a three-head, three-motor machine employing the new quarter-track, two-channel cassette format. The AL-700, like other elcaset machines, has a detector that automatically senses tape type (ferric, ferrichrome, or chromium-dioxide) according to coded notches on the elcaset shell, and it sets bias and equalization accordingly. The transport can be started automatically with a timer, and a photoelectric sensor detects the end of the tape and disengages the transport mechanism. A memory function for tape stop and replay is also included. The AL-700 has built-in Dolby noise-reduction circuitry; in addition, it will interface with an external compander and has a front-panel switch for this (Teac offers a dbx unit as an option). The front panel of the AL-700 has touch-button transport controls and lever switches for memory, timer, noise reduction, input source, and output. There are separate level controls for the two microphone inputs, line level, and output. There are also indicator lamps for noise-reduction system, tape type, record, pause, and record mute (this last function can cut off any incoming signal from the recording head without switching out the record mode).

The AL-700 records at a tape speed of 33 1/3 inches per second with wow and flutter at 0.04 per cent (NAB weighting). The frequency response is 25 to 20,000 Hz for ferric and 25 to 22,000 Hz for ferrichrome or chromium-dioxide tape. Signal-to-noise ratios are 59 dB with ferric and 62 dB with ferrichrome or chromium-dioxide tape. Improvements of up to 10 dB above 5,000 Hz can be realized with the Dolby circuitry. Input sensitivity is 0.25 millivolt for the microphone inputs and 60 millivolts for the line inputs. Output is 0.3 watt

into 50,000 ohms. The AL-700 has approximate dimensions of 10 3/4 x 18 1/2 x 13 1/4 inches and weighs 45 pounds. Price: under \$1,000.

Circle 119 on reader service card



**Triamplified Philips
Studio Speaker with
Motional Feedback**

□ The RH 545 from Philips is a triamplified motional-feedback loudspeaker system utilizing a 12-inch acoustic-suspension woofer, a 2-inch dome mid-range, and a 1-inch dome tweeter. The feedback system, which operates on the woofer only, consists of a piezoelectric acceleration sensor on the woofer cone. The sensor generates a voltage proportional to the physical movement of the woofer cone, and this voltage is compared with the audio input signal. Any deviation is used to "correct" the signal that drives the woofer. The RH 545 accepts the output from any preamplifier (input sensitivity can be adjusted between 1 and 23 volts into 10,000 ohms) and divides the signal into three bands: below 500 Hz, 500 to 3,000 Hz, and above 3,000 Hz. Adjustable low- and high-frequency filters are provided. The treble roll-off can be set to start at 7,000 or 10,000 Hz with the slope variable between 0 and 20 dB per octave (a pilot light indicates when the treble roll-off is in use). The bass may be either boosted or attenuated below 350 Hz (by ± 10 dB at 60 Hz).

After the signal is split up, each frequency band is directed to its specific power amplifier. The tweeter is driven by a 15-watt (continuous) amplifier, the mid-range by a 35-watt unit, and the woofer by a 50-watt unit. Maximum total harmonic distortion is 0.2 per cent for each of the three amplifiers. In addition to the bass and treble controls, the RH 545 has response adjustments for room placement. There are three adjustments—for "on floor," "back against the wall," and "side against the

wall" placements. These are intended to provide uniform power response in an average listening room. The RH 545 can be driven by amplifiers with power stages (up to 100 watts output) as well as directly from preamplifiers. Power is drawn from a standard 117-volt a.c. line.

The rated frequency response range of the RH 545 is 20 to 20,000 Hz. At full power output it develops a maximum sound-pressure level of 108 dB at 1 meter. Standard phono jacks are provided for the audio inputs, as well as three-conductor DIN jacks for studio-type balanced inputs. The black-ash cabinet measures 25 1/2 x 17 x 12 1/2 inches, and the system weighs 67 pounds. Price: approximately \$1,200.

Circle 120 on reader service card



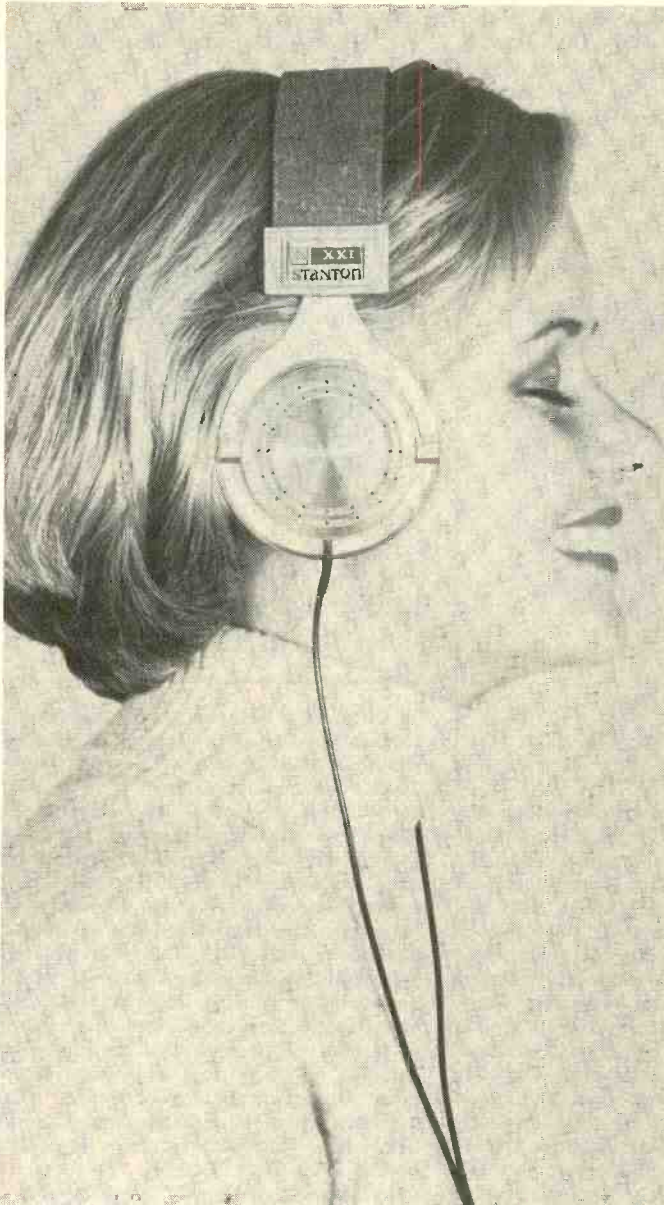
**Sharp Cassette Deck
Has Microprocessor
Control Circuitry**

□ Sharp's new RT-3388 cassette deck is a two-head machine incorporating a microprocessor circuit for a high degree of control over the tape-transport functions. The deck has a liquid-crystal display (LCD) panel that acts as a tape counter, timer, and indicator for the built-in Dolby system and the various memory functions. A built-in digital clock operates in either the 12- or 24-hour mode (with AM/PM indicators for the former). The LCD also serves as the clock display. The RT-3388 can be programmed to play any sequence of selections (up to a total of nineteen) on a cassette; it searches out particular selections by counting the blank sections of tape between recorded items. An "editor" function allows the user to insert these spaces in home-recorded tapes. There is a memory-rewind feature that permits the user to set the counter to read zero at any selected point on the tape and the rewind function will return the tape automatically to that point. A direct-memory function is used to address any point on the tape (whether between selections or not) and later recall that point for playback. The tape counter can be set to read tape footage or time (in the "time" mode, the readout is in minutes and seconds). The built-in clock can be used for timed switching of accessory devices plugged into the RT-3388's rear-panel a.c. outlet or to switch in a program source (such as a radio broadcast) for taping at a particular

(Continued on page 20)

Stanton Stereo Wafers™

The livest sound, the highest fidelity
...plus the livest look.



Looks Just Great...

Hail to a totally new concept and technology in headphones. And hail to an Open Audio design that gives you the lightest weight comfort you've ever experienced with headphones that possess truly top quality sound.

These ultra thin headphones have been designed and engineered to meet important professional needs: extreme comfort over long listening periods, a particular wide frequency response, and a broad dynamic range. A major factor in the success of the design is the use of rare earth elements in the compound of the permanent magnets of each earpiece. Besides having superior magnetic properties, these magnets



...Any Way You Look At It!

are also of much smaller size, while still allowing Stanton to achieve an improved response over headphones incorporating conventional permanent magnets.

The soft foam cushioned headband is exceptionally comfortable and has a trendy brushed denim fabric covering. The earpiece yokes incorporate specially designed pivots which allow the earpieces to fit perfectly against the ear, whatever the shape of the head.

Write us for the specs — they're magnificent! And ask for a demonstration as soon as possible at your Stanton dealer.



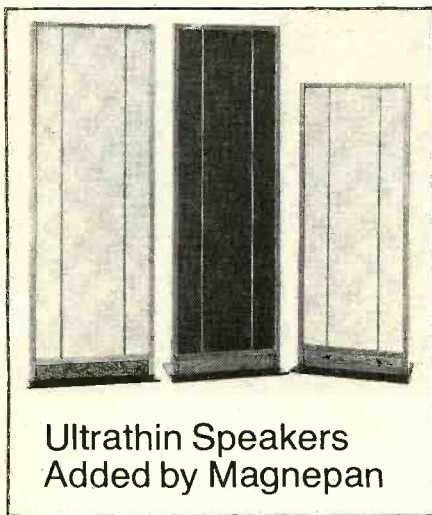
Write today for further information to Stanton Magnetics, Inc., Terminal Drive, Plainview, N.Y. 11803.

New Products latest audio equipment and accessories

time. A built-in battery provides standby power for the clock if the a.c. source fails.

In addition to all its program-locating features, the RT-3388 has separate microphone and line-level controls for each channel, plus an output-level control and adjustable bias and equalization for ferric, ferrichrome, and chromium-dioxide tapes. There is a peak-indicator light on the meter panel underneath the two level meters. Specifications include a frequency response of 30 to 15,000 Hz \pm 3 dB for chromium-dioxide tape and a signal-to-noise ratio of 64 dB (for all tape types) with the Dolby circuitry engaged. Approximate dimensions are 5½ x 17½ x 13 inches; weight is 20 pounds. Price: under \$300.

Circle 121 on reader service card



Ultrathin Speakers Added by Magnepan

□ Magnepan Inc., manufacturers of the Magneplanar MG-II loudspeaker, has added two more Magneplanar speakers to its line, the MG-I and MG-III. These speakers use ultrathin film diaphragms (imprinted with a zig-zag conductor pattern) suspended in a planar magnetic field to produce their acoustic output. The MG-I (shown at right) has two Magneplanar drivers: a 428-square-inch diaphragm for bass and mid-range and a 68-square-inch diaphragm for the high frequencies. The crossover occurs at 2,400 Hz with a slope of 6 dB per octave. The MG-I has less dispersion in the vertical plane and lower acoustic output than the MG-II; these differences can be attributed to its smaller size. It shares all the other features of the larger Magneplanar speakers, including a bipolar radiation pattern, purely resistive impedance, and freedom from cabinet resonances.

The frequency response of the MG-I is 30 to 16,000 Hz \pm 4 dB. The manufacturer recommends using an amplifier delivering between 40 and 80 watts continuous power per channel to drive the speaker; minimum input is 10 watts continuous, and the speaker can be safely operated with amplifiers of up to 200 watts output per channel if it is properly fused. A sound-pressure level of 82 dB at 3 feet is produced by a 1-watt input. Impedance

is 5 ohms. The MG-I's flat base measures 24 x 14 inches and the 22 x 60-inch panel is only 2 inches thick. The frame is of solid oak, and either off-white or black acoustically transparent grille fabrics are available. Price: \$495.

The new MG-III speaker (shown at left with both off-white and black grille-cloths) is also similar in design to the MG-II but is a still larger and higher-performance model. Price: \$895.

Circle 122 on reader service card



Marantz's New Cassette Decks

□ Marantz has three new front-loading cassette decks, each with Dolby circuitry, extended-range level meters, and a defeatable peak-limiter for attenuating sudden high-level inputs. The top-of-the-line Model 5030 is a three-head system with "full-process" Dolby: two Dolby circuits are provided so that inputs may be encoded for taping and instantaneously decoded for monitoring. Separate level controls are provided for microphone and line inputs, which may be mixed, and there is a master level control. There are LED's for indicating peak inputs. The tape-transport system, driven by a d.c. motor, is servo-controlled. Key specifications for the 5030 include a wow and flutter figure of 0.08 per cent and overall signal-to-noise ratios (S/N) of 52 dB (Dolby off) and 60 dB (Dolby on). The playback-only S/N is 54 dB. Frequency response is 40 to 13,500 Hz \pm 3 dB with ferric tape, 40 to 15,000 Hz \pm 3 dB with chromium-dioxide tape, and 35 to 16,000 Hz \pm 3 dB with ferrichrome tape. Approximate dimensions are 5¾ x 17½ x 11½ inches.

The Model 5025 is similar to the 5030, the major difference being that it is a two-head deck. Key specifications of the 5025 are identical to those of the 5030. The lowest-priced deck in the new Marantz line is the Model 5010, a two-head machine with a single record-level control for each channel. Wow and flutter are 0.1 per cent, and overall S/N is 50 dB (Dolby off) or 58 dB (Dolby on). Playback S/N is 52 dB. The dimensions of the 5025 and the 5010 are identical to those of the 5030. Optional walnut-veneer cabinets are available

for all three, as are optional rack-mounting adapters. Price of the 5030 is about \$420, of the 5025 about \$310, and of the 5010 about \$250. A walnut cabinet is \$35.

Circle 123 on reader service card



New Speakers from Ultralinear Include Time-array Model

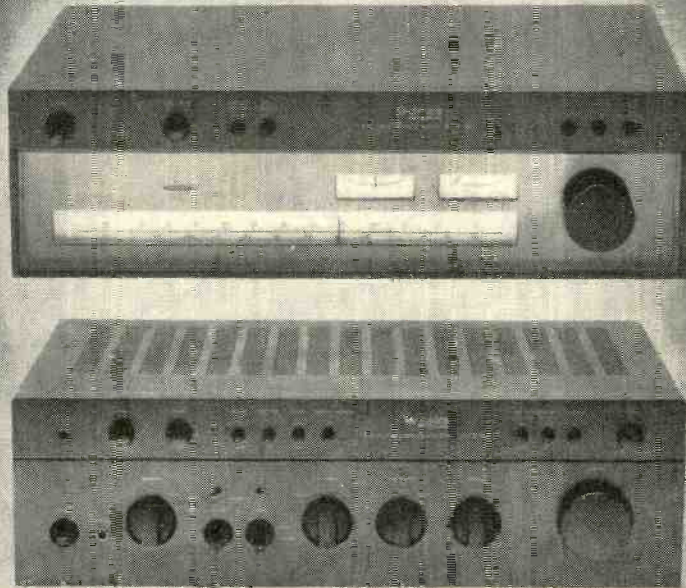
□ Ultralinear has announced several new loudspeaker systems, including a three-way phase-corrected system, the ST-525 (shown). The ST-525 employs a 10-inch woofer, 2-inch dome mid-range, and 1-inch dome tweeter, with the woofer installed several inches forward of the other two drivers. Level controls are provided for all three drivers; the woofer output is adjusted by varying the mechanical impedance of a passive radiator mounted on the back of the cabinet. This passive radiator is actually a dynamic speaker that is not connected to the amplifier outputs; however, a variable resistance can be switched in across its terminals to increase the electromagnetic damping that acts on the passive radiator cone. The drivers are crossed over at 700 and 4,300 Hz, and the system impedance is a nominal 8 ohms. The stated frequency response of the ST-525 is 30 to 22,000 Hz. The minimum recommended continuous power input is 20 watts per channel, and the maximum continuous input is 75 watts (a circuit breaker is included for overload protection). The cabinet is available in walnut, oak, or Melamine finishes; approximate dimensions are 27¾ x 14 x 12½ inches. Price: about \$390 in walnut or oak, \$350 in Melamine finish.

Circle 124 on reader service card

NOTICE: All product descriptions and specifications quoted in these columns are based on materials supplied by the manufacturer.

Recent fluctuations in the value of the dollar will have an effect on the price of merchandise imported into this country. Please be aware that the prices quoted in this issue may be subject to change.

What you should expect from a \$700 DC amp and matching tuner. Waveform fidelity.



Introducing the 8080 Series, Technics integrated DC amp and matching tuner. Two remarkable components with waveform fidelity: The ability to reproduce sound waves. Square waves. Even tone burst signals. It's the only kind of performance you could expect from an integrated amp and tuner. Especially for \$700*.

To create an amp that would accurately amplify waveforms, we took some unusual steps with the SU-8080. Like eliminating all coupling capacitors and thereby eliminating a major source of phase shift, noise and distortion. Another step toward waveform fidelity is a frequency response of DC ~ 100 kHz \pm 1 dB.

And to complement our unconventional DC integrated amp, we added an extremely quiet phono equalizer complete with Technics own ultra-low-noise transistors. The result: An increased phono S/N ratio of 100 dB at 10 mV with sharply reduced circuit and transistor noise especially when compared to conventional amps. We also added some unconventional controls. Like a subsonic filter in the phono equalizer and a four-step phono impedance selector.

Equally impressive is the performance of our ST-8080 tuner. To boost sensitivity while greatly reducing interference signal levels, there are two RF stages with low-noise, 4-pole, dual-gate junction FETs as well as a

linear FM variable tuning capacitor. At the same time, Technics-developed flat group delay filters increase selectivity without increasing distortion.

There's also a new Phase Locked Loop IC in the MPX circuit as well as a pilot signal canceler for razor-sharp cancellation of the 19 kHz pilot signal and ruler-flat high-end response: 20 kHz to 18 kHz (+0.2 dB, -0.8 dB).

Now that you know what waveform fidelity means in a DC amp and tuner, take a look at what waveform fidelity means in the specs.

SU-8080 Amp. POWER OUTPUT: 72 watts per channel min RMS into 8 ohms from 20 Hz to 20 kHz with no more than 0.02% total harmonic distortion. S/N (HF A): 115 dB. PHONO S/N (HF A): 100 dB (10 mV).

ST-8080 Tuner. 50 dB QUIETING SENSITIVITY: Mono 13.6 dBFS Stereo 34.3 dBFS. SELECTIVITY: 85 dB. THD: Mono 0.15%. Stereo 0.3%. CAPTURE RATIO: 1.0 dB.

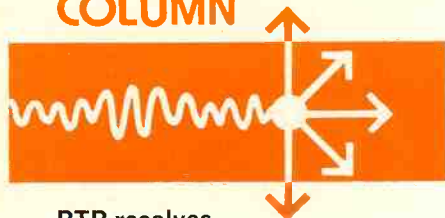
Technics 8080 Series. A rare combination of audio technology. A new standard of audio excellence.

*Technics recommended prices: SU-8080 is \$449.95 and ST-8080 is \$249.95, but actual retail prices will be set by dealers.

Technics Professional Series
by Panasonic

At last . . .
a flawless midrange
built to take full power . . .
300D 3-Way System

THE CORINTHIAN COLUMN



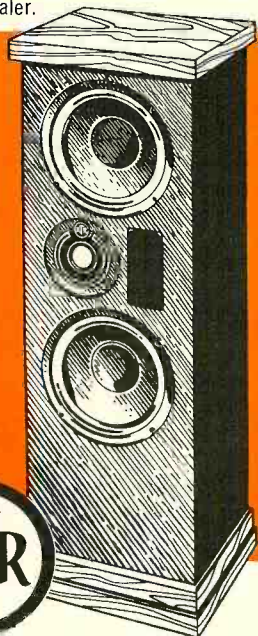
RTR resolves point-source radiation

Originators of column loudspeakers in the United States, RTR has introduced the most meaningful statement of column design since 1970. The RTR 300D 3-Way Speaker System.

What makes the 300D immediately fresh, almost startling, is its "Resolved Point-Source Radiation Field" which projects a stable image regardless of frequency. Musical instruments are reproduced in a virtually stationary position — just as they were in live performance.

This positive move toward audio reality is the result of significant technological advancements in the design and positioning of each driver within the 3-way system. Primary is the new RTR soft dome midrange system — the first to successfully integrate smooth response and broad dispersion with outstanding dynamic range and transient response. In consort with the two 10" woofers and solid state supertweeter, this milestone midrange reproduces music with the highest degree of audial integrity.

Packaged superbly in an acoustically transparent, Corinthian column and affordably priced. Audition the 300D at your RTR dealer.



RTR Industries, For dealer list,
write: RTR, Dept. SR, 8116 Deering Ave.
Canoga Park, CA 91304

CIRCLE NO. 60 ON READER SERVICE CARD

Audio Q. and A.

By Larry
Klein



Technical Director Klein
congratulates Dr. Oskar Heil
on the development of the
Transar loudspeaker system

Electric-bass Input

Q. *Is it harmful to play my electric bass through the microphone input of my 85-watt receiver? It seems to sound all right at all volume levels, and my speakers are well known for extended bass response, so that should be no problem.*

MICHAEL AUBIN
Fremont, Calif.

A. I assume that you know your bass does not have the same tonal quality through your hi-fi system as it does through a bass-guitar amp and speaker. The overload properties, resonances, frequency response, etc. of an electric-bass amp/speaker are all selected to provide special sonic effects, and thus normal "fidelity" rules don't apply.

As for what can go wrong, I don't think your amplifier will run into trouble, but be careful not to drive your speaker cones into excessive excursion. Since your guitar will produce a strong low E with a fundamental tone at 41.2 Hz, you can avoid woofer damage by keeping your levels moderate. Do not turn up your amplifier's bass or loudness control in pursuit of a "gutsier" sound. However, if you can move your speakers easily, place them side by side in a corner. This will provide some bass enhancement without putting additional stress on the speaker's cone structures and suspensions.

Power Consumed

Q. *Is there any way I can tell how much current my audio equipment draws?*

ABRAHAM MOREL
Chicago, Ill.

A. Yes, and with most components fairly easily. You'll find a label on the back panel or underside of most current-consuming audio products that gives its power consumption in watts. Sometimes the information is provided in "VA" or volts/ampères, which is roughly the same as watts. In the absence of labels, you can assume the usual solid-state preamplifier draws perhaps 15 watts, a tuner perhaps 20 or 30 watts, and a turntable anywhere from 20 watts down to 2 or 3 watts for the direct-drive models. All of these figures are very low in respect to current consumption. However, some of the big three-motor

open-reel decks may draw considerably more.

One rule of thumb you can use to estimate current consumption is to place it (your thumb) on the unit's case. In general, the hotter the unit the more current it is drawing from the a.c. line. An amplifier, whether power, integrated, or one of those found in receivers, is the big drawer in the crowd. With most amplifiers, the current drawn varies with the audio power output they are driven to. The more audio-signal wattage pushed out, the greater the line current drawn in. I checked my manual files and found these figures: a 25-watt-per-channel quad receiver drew 22 watts with no signal, 300 watts with full power output. A 20-watt-per-channel stereo receiver drew 20 watts with no signal, 85 watts at full power output. A 60-watt-per-channel stereo receiver drew 40 watts with no signal, 356 watts at full output power. A 350-watt-per-channel power amplifier drew 50 watts with no signal and 1,100 watts (!) at full output.

There are several variables (aside from speaker impedance) that affect the amount of current drawn by a component under no-signal and full-output conditions. Although use of a large number of pilot or indicator lamps, or a built-in oscilloscope display, will add watts to the no-signal rating, the major contributing factor is the power amplifier's class of operation.

Class-A operation is the least efficient mode in that it involves a large current flow through all the output transistors whether or not there's an audio signal present. With Class B there's a small "idling" current flowing under no-signal conditions, which increases with the signal level. A high-power Class-A amplifier used five or six hours a day might well cost you as much to run as your air conditioner, whereas the conventional Class AB, D, G, or H amplifiers typically cost perhaps as much as a 75-watt lamp bulb for the same operating time in normal home use.

Hi-fi Shock

Q. *I would like your advice on a method to ground my stereo equipment. I live in an apartment building where the floors are marble. I usually get a slight shock on touching the turntable, tape decks, and receiver, but it depends upon the kind of shoes I wear. There is no water pipe or other type of ground-*

(Continued on page 24)

STEREO REVIEW

Technics introduces cassette decks that only sound expensive.

You can build a \$200-\$250 front-loading deck to look expensive. Or you can build one the way Technics does—to sound expensive. Without those meaningless knobs and gadgets on the outside. But with Technics high-priced, high-performance technology on the inside.

Technology that makes Technics RS-615US and RS-630TUS sound a lot better than you'd expect a mid-priced deck to sound.

Both decks give you inaudible wow & flutter: 0.10% RMS for the 615, 0.09% RMS for the 630. The reason: The kind of electronically controlled DC motor found in our more expensive decks.

And instead of tape hiss, you'll hear music, even in soft musical passages. Because Technics low-noise circuitry in addition to Dolby* give both decks a distinctively

expensive S/N ratio: -63 dB (C.O₂ tape).

Both decks also give you long-lasting super alloy heads. Oversized VU meters. Lockable pause control. And automatic pre-timed recording or playback with a standard timer (not included).

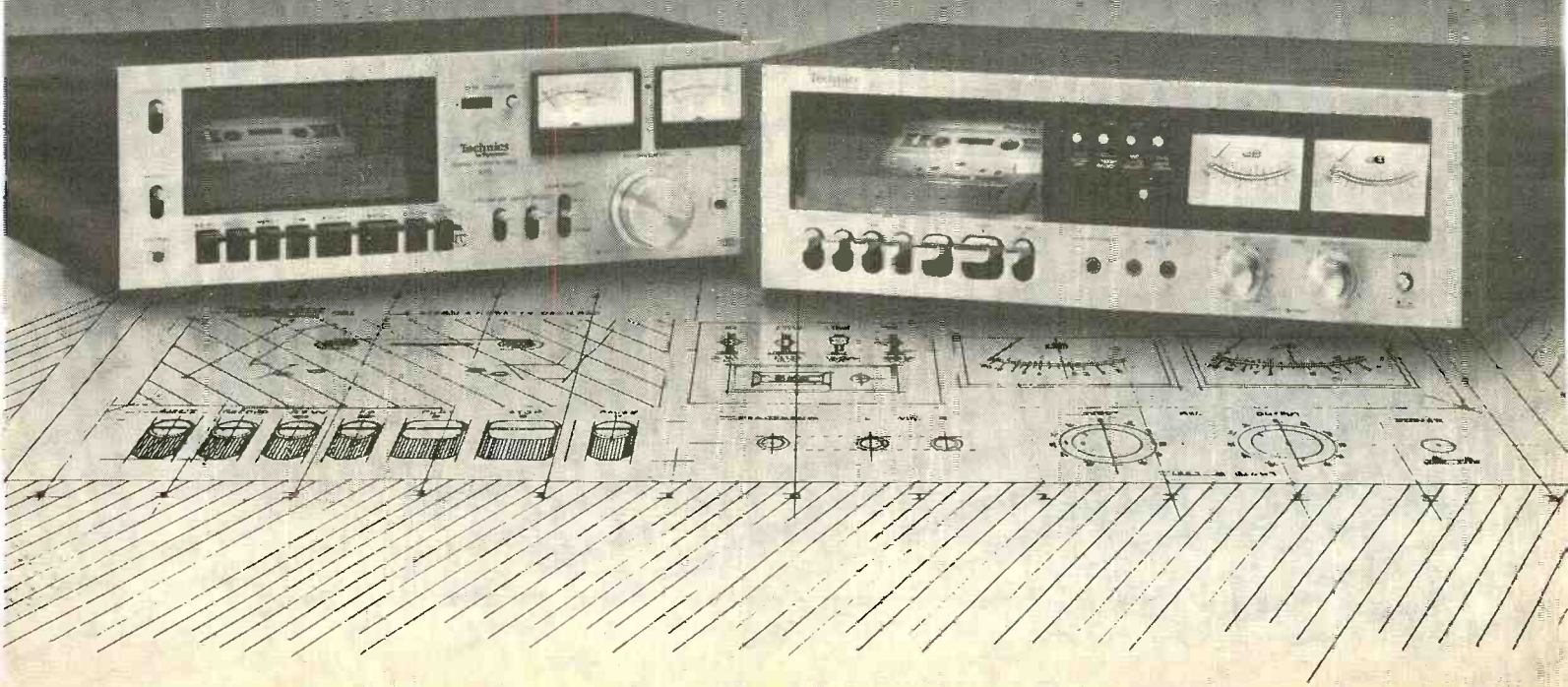
The 630 adds a dual-output control. Separate bias and EQ switches to get the most out of normal, C.O₂ and ferrichrome tapes. And a peak check meter to help avoid overload distortion.

The RS-615US and the RS-630TUS. Everything about them sounds expensive. Except the price.

*Dolby is a trademark of Dolby Laboratories, Inc. Simulated wood cabinet for RS-630US.

Technics by Panasonic

CIRCLE NO. 79 ON READER SERVICE CARD



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DRY CLEAN THEM.

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Restore the original brilliant sound of your records—the Pixoff dry cleaning way. Write today for your nearest dealer.

Sonic Research, Inc.,

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PIXOFF™

The International Award-Winning Record Cleaning System

CIRCLE NO. 69 ON READER SERVICE CARD

Audio Q. A.

ing device near the equipment or even within a reasonable distance.

RAYMOND K. PANCZYK
Pompano Beach, Fl.

A. The fact that you live in Florida pretty much rules out the possibility that your problem is caused by *electrostatic* shocks such as trouble drier areas of the country or where steam heat is used. What you need to do first is properly polarize the a.c. wall plugs of all your equipment. A neon tester (see illustration) available in most hardware stores will serve as a "hot" chassis indicator. It works like this: touch either one of the probes to an externally grounded point and the other to the chassis of any plugged-in component. If the tester lights, this indicates a voltage potential on the chassis which can cause a shock.

The test procedure is as follows:

1. Find an electrical ground. If any of your wall outlets accept three-prong plugs directly (without an "adaptor"), the off-center U-shaped hole should provide this (it doesn't always). To check whether it does, insert one of the probe tips of the neon tester into the supposed ground hole and plug the other probe alternately into the two other slots. If the U-shaped hole really is an electrical ground, the bulb will glow when connected to one of the slots (it doesn't matter which) but not to the other. If it doesn't glow when connected between "ground" and either of the slots, the grounding connection has been omitted (this happens sometimes in older houses in which the original wiring was not required to provide the additional electrical ground and the original wall outlet was later replaced with a modern, three-conductor receptacle even though no means of grounding it was available). If you don't have three-conductor outlets, however, you may have an electrical ground right at that same outlet box (this would be the case with premium-quality wiring done before 1962). To check for this, touch one test prod to the metal screw that holds the cover plate in place and insert the other alternately into each of the two regular plug slots (be sure you get through any paint on the screw so as to ensure a solid connection). If the light glows, that metal screw can become your grounded test point. If you can't find a ground this way, you'll have to run a wire to a ground clamp attached to a cold-water pipe (electrical supply stores have inexpensive ground clamps). This will then become your ground, but you should be careful not to touch it (or the wire coming from it) and your equipment simultaneously until everything is safely interconnected—you could get a shock.

2. Unplug all audio cables as well as separate ground connections (if there are any) between the components (you don't need to disconnect your loudspeakers, however). Connect a length of insulated wire between one probe of the neon tester and the ground test point as shown. Make sure to wrap insulating tape around the probe/wire connection. With the component plugged in and turned on, see if the tester glows when its other probe is touched to the metal chassis of the component. If it does, reverse the component's a.c. plug in the wall socket and try again. This time it will probably not glow, in which case this is the way to leave the plug inserted for proper grounding. (Put a spot of paint or other mark on the plug and wall plate to insure proper reinstallation if it is ever unplugged.)

3. Repeat this procedure with each of your components, including the turntable. If a given piece of gear doesn't light the bulb in either way, then it doesn't matter which way its a.c. plug is inserted. If it glows both ways, pick the position with the dimmer glow.

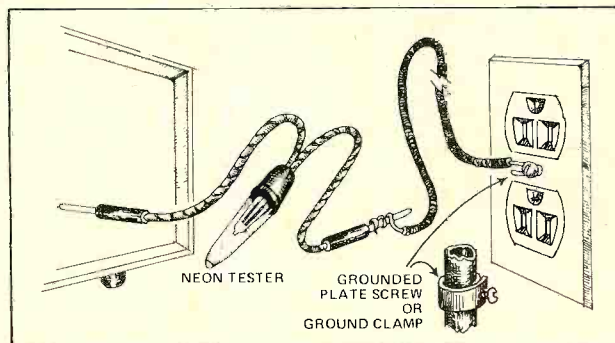
4. Reinstall the audio cables between the components (along with any separate ground wires you may have been using between chassis) and see whether your system as a whole would benefit in respect to shock (or hum) from a connection between the test ground point at the wall socket and the chassis ground terminal on your receiver or preamp. Of course, if you have any components with three-prong plugs and your wall a.c. receptacles are grounded, this connection is made automatically through the line cord. In respect to hum testing, switch to phono playback, turn the bass up, the treble down, and set the volume at a level at which hum is clearly audible. If the additional ground to your test point gives you lower hum, make it permanent.

Whale Oil

Q. *Recently I have been using Maxell audio tape and am very happy with its performance. Unfortunately, I have just heard that Hitachi, the producers of Maxell tape, use whale oil in their manufacturing process. Could you confirm or deny this for me?*

KENNETH LIBBY
Kailua, Hawaii

A. I checked with Maxell's representatives in the U.S. and they assured me that, unlike some yogurts, their tape includes absolutely no "natural" ingredients. In short, it's all "chemicals." Furthermore, my informant went on, Maxell's major executives in Japan are ardent conservationists and would be among the *least* likely to engage in such practices. I thus suspect the presence of some competitive snake oil in the whale-oil rumor.



When handling the neon tester make sure not to touch the insulated parts of the prods. The length and type of wire connecting to the external ground point is not critical; ordinary speaker wire will do.

NEW KOOL SUPER LIGHTS

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KINGS

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9 mg. "tar," 0.8 mg. nicotine, av. per cigarette, by FTC method.

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Even before you switch on the STR-7800SD receiver, it'll be receiving. Receiving oohs and aahs.

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After all, it is the finest receiver ever designed by Sony. The 7800 puts you on the receiving end of the most tomorrow-looking technology available today.

You'll receive a feeling of power.

The 7800 brings power to the power-hungry, and can even make the mild-mannered lust for power. Rated

at 125 watts per channel, it's powerful enough to drive any speakers—satisfy any need.

The 125 watts, minimum RMS at 8 ohms, is from 20 to 20kHz—with no more than 0.07% Total Harmonic Distortion.

And that's Sony's conservative rating.

How this combination of power and low distortion was achieved, is an example of Sony's engineering muscle.

Let's start with the toroidal coil transformer. A more efficient structure, it fully exploits the high-perform-

ance power amp. As do two over-sized capacitors, each 22,000uF.

So the feeling of power throughout the frequency range is unmistakable.

You'll receive tuning that'll leave you swooning.

FM circuitry found usually in separates appears in the 7800.

Pardon our initials, but MOS FET's are used in the FM RF amplification. The result: good linearity, low noise and high sensitivity.

For you FM Dolby listeners, a complete FM Dolby noise reduction system, to minimize noise and over-



load distortion.

And there's a new local oscillator circuit. Plus our uni-phase IF filters are so advanced, a computer designed them.

A Multipath switch and meter indicate optimum antenna orientation, thereby reducing distortion. An LED dial pointer doubles in length when an FM signal is received for easy tuning.

You'll receive a pre-amp that's pre-eminent.

High marks for our low emitter concentration (LEC) transistor. Designed, made by, and exclusive to

Sony. It guarantees low noise, and a wide dynamic range. It also keeps RIAA equalization to within ± 0.5 dB.

You'll receive power. And the means to control it.

The pre-amp section also gives you the control you need to keep all that power in line.

A presence switch is a special present: it lets you equalize the mid-range.

Importantly, the 7800 was built with a Professional Attenuator Main Volume Control. It eliminates gang error between channels.

Nor have we overlooked a special loudness network, or an audio muting switch.

Some input on the inputs: Phono 1, Phono 2, External Adaptor, Auxiliary, two tape decks—and tape-to-tape dubbing facilities.

Certain pieces of machinery simply ooze quality and power. Such is true of the 7800SD. It'll put you on the receiving end of the living end.

SONY

Audio Basics

By Ralph Hodges



MOVIE SOUND

LONG ago, in a movie studio far away, plans for a motion picture to be called *Star Wars* were beginning to take shape. History records that the studio moguls were not wholly optimistic about the economic possibilities of the film, but it was nevertheless decided to give it the full "wide-screen" treatment. This meant that it would be made available to exhibitors (read "theaters") suitably equipped to handle it as a 70-millimeter print with six-track sound recorded on four magnetized stripes running along either edge of the film. The sound would be Dolbyized (the Dolby A process), and if they hadn't already acquired it, participating theaters could get the necessary Dolby equipment installed and gone over by Dolby technicians. The theater sound system from projector to loudspeakers would also be checked out and equalized.

If you are one of the lucky few living within reach of perhaps ten to twenty theaters in the U.S. that have received this full treatment, you will have the chance to see and hear *Star Wars*—if you haven't already—in this rather impressive format. Unfortunately, most of the country will see the film as a 35-millimeter print and will hear it in glorious mono, the standard format of movie sound since the days of the Great Depression. But there is an intermediate possibility. The soundtrack on the 35-millimeter movie film is of course optical, meaning that it is a dynamic light pattern to which the film itself has been exposed, and it is intended to be played back by a light beam and photoelectric sensor within the projector. Actually, there are *two* optical tracks that the typical projector effectively mixes in much the same way as a mono cassette machine mixes both channels of a stereo cassette; the result is mono sound. However, the potential for at least two-channel stereo is certainly there, and some—by no means all—35-millimeter films have taken advantage of this.

Star Wars in fact goes a step further. Not only are the optical tracks of the 35-millimeter print Dolbyized; they are also encoded by the (are you ready for this?) Sansui QS four-channel matrix system. Mind you, this does not mean you'll necessarily get even a hint of this at your neighborhood theater. Just as anyone converting to multichannel sound must, the theater owner will have to invest in additional

amplifiers and speakers to reproduce everything that's on the "record." Many exhibitors refuse to, in which case they're free to go on playing the *Star Wars* soundtrack in mono for as long as they please. But a Dolby spokesman estimates that between one hundred and two hundred smaller movie houses screening the 35-millimeter print have gone along with the new system. This is significant when you consider the exceedingly plodding past progress of movie sound in its history of fifty years plus.

The Jazz Singer of 1927 is usually hailed as the first "talkie," but it didn't even *have* a soundtrack, unless you consider phonograph records synchronized with the film to be a soundtrack. Within a very short time the "Phonophone" process—the archetypical op-



tical soundtrack—took over completely. Nothing much new happened for some time until 1940, when "Fantasound," the first multichannel movie sound process, was developed for and used exclusively by Walt Disney in his animated film *Fantasia*. There is some

(Continued on page 30)

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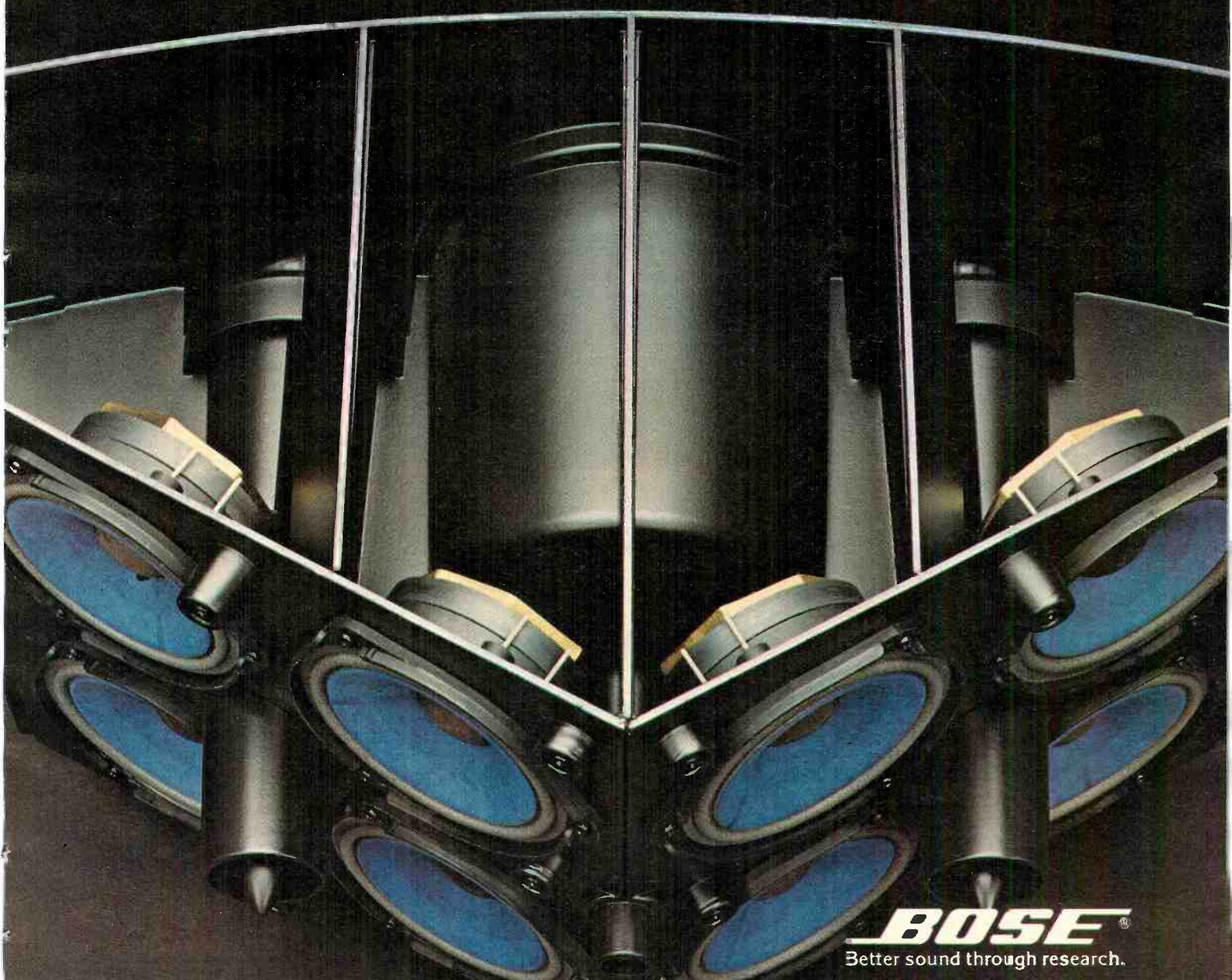
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In one page we cannot begin to describe the 901 Series III and the technology behind it. So we've put together a comprehensive literature package that includes a detailed 16-page color brochure, a 20-page owner's manual, and a copy of Dr. Amar Bose's paper on "Sound Recording and Reproduction," reprinted from Technology Review. To receive this literature, send \$1.00 to Bose, Dept. SR11, The Mountain, Framingham, Mass. 01701. Patents issued and pending. Cabinets are walnut veneer.

416+100= Double Dyna

When sonic perfection is the goal, sheer power is not enough. The new "double Dyna" STEREO 416 is—there is no other term—State of the Art. Double the number of output transistors in the most proven high power amplifier, Dynaco's Stereo 400, to create the most advanced power house without a whisper of limiting. Absolute accuracy into the most difficult loudspeaker loads. 300 WATTS CONTINUOUS AVERAGE POWER PER CHANNEL INTO 4 OHMS*, and over 400 watts short-term continuous power per channel at 2 ohms. Circuits have been further refined with a switchable front end by-pass and close tolerance components for improved detail and smoothness. Two-speed fan cooling, rack mounting, and digital control LED readouts for the most accurate power monitors.

*Measured in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's Trade Regulation rule on Power Output Claims for Amplifiers.

Then add the ultimate: The C-100 Energy Storage System. This supplemental power supply reserve adds 100,000 microfarads of capacitance for perfectionist listeners who distinguish the subtleties of reproduced music that defy conventional specifications. A single C-100 quick-connected to the STEREO 416 improves detail and transparency from the lowest bass to the most delicate highs. At any volume setting from background music to all-out demonstration—if you know your sound, you won't believe the difference.

Write for the new Stereo 416/PAT-5 BI-FET brochure. Ask your dealer for an in-depth demonstration. Don't be switched. If not available at your dealer, phone collect at 609/228-3200, or write Dynaco, Dept. SR-12.

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Audio Basics . . .

debate over what Fantasound actually was (it went through a number of evolutions), but it is clear that in its original form it used at least four optical tracks, one of which was a *control* track that regulated, from moment to moment, the assignment of different audio tracks to different speakers located throughout the theater.

WE now skip twelve years to the three-projector "Cinerama" system, first of the highly publicized wide-screen processes. Cinerama's original soundtrack was on a separate 35-millimeter magnetic film synchronized with the picture, and it had seven tracks feeding five up-front loudspeakers and as many as eight speakers positioned around the sides and rear of the theater. A year later (1953) "Cinemascope" made its debut with four magnetic tracks applied to the image film itself. Track assignments were made in a way that has become something of a standard: the first three were left, center, and right, corresponding to appropriately placed loudspeakers behind the movie screen. The fourth, the "surround" track, fed speakers located here and there around the rest of the theater. Inaudible control signals recorded on the surround track along with the audio could switch the track on and off and assign it to different speakers. The apotheosis of the surround track is the curiosity known as "Perspecta Sound," in which a single (mono) signal can be switched by control tones to any of three loudspeakers.

With "Todd-AO" (1955), which employed a 70-millimeter projection print, the wide-screen productions acquired the six magnetic tracks that are pretty much standard today. A move by Cinemascope the following year to seven tracks (increasing its film width to 55 millimeters in the bargain) tried to up the ante, but in time the industry lapsed back to six tracks. Today the standard formats are 70 millimeters and six magnetic tracks for wide-screen presentations (including those modern films billed as Cinerama productions, such as *2001*, *Grand Prix*, etc.), and 35 millimeters and two optical tracks (as often as not reproduced monophonically) for showing in smaller movie houses.

THE six magnetic tracks provide the filmmaker with plenty of flexibility. In *Star Wars*' case the track assignments are left, center, right, surround, and two remaining tracks for special low-frequency effects (the deep, seat-shaking roar of battle cruisers, for example). When the 35-millimeter print is reproduced in QS, we get a left-front signal and a right-front signal, while a derived center-channel signal drives the center loudspeaker. Rear-channel information derived from the QS decoder becomes the surround track, feeding speakers (when available) located at the sides and rear of the audience section. Reportedly, most of this is ambiance information, with only an occasional attempt at side or rear localization.

The evolution of movie sound, of course, is open-ended, and new developments may be in the works. By the time the next installment of *Star Wars* reaches your local movie screen, some additional sound barrier may have been broken to give audiophiles in the audience a new thrill. □

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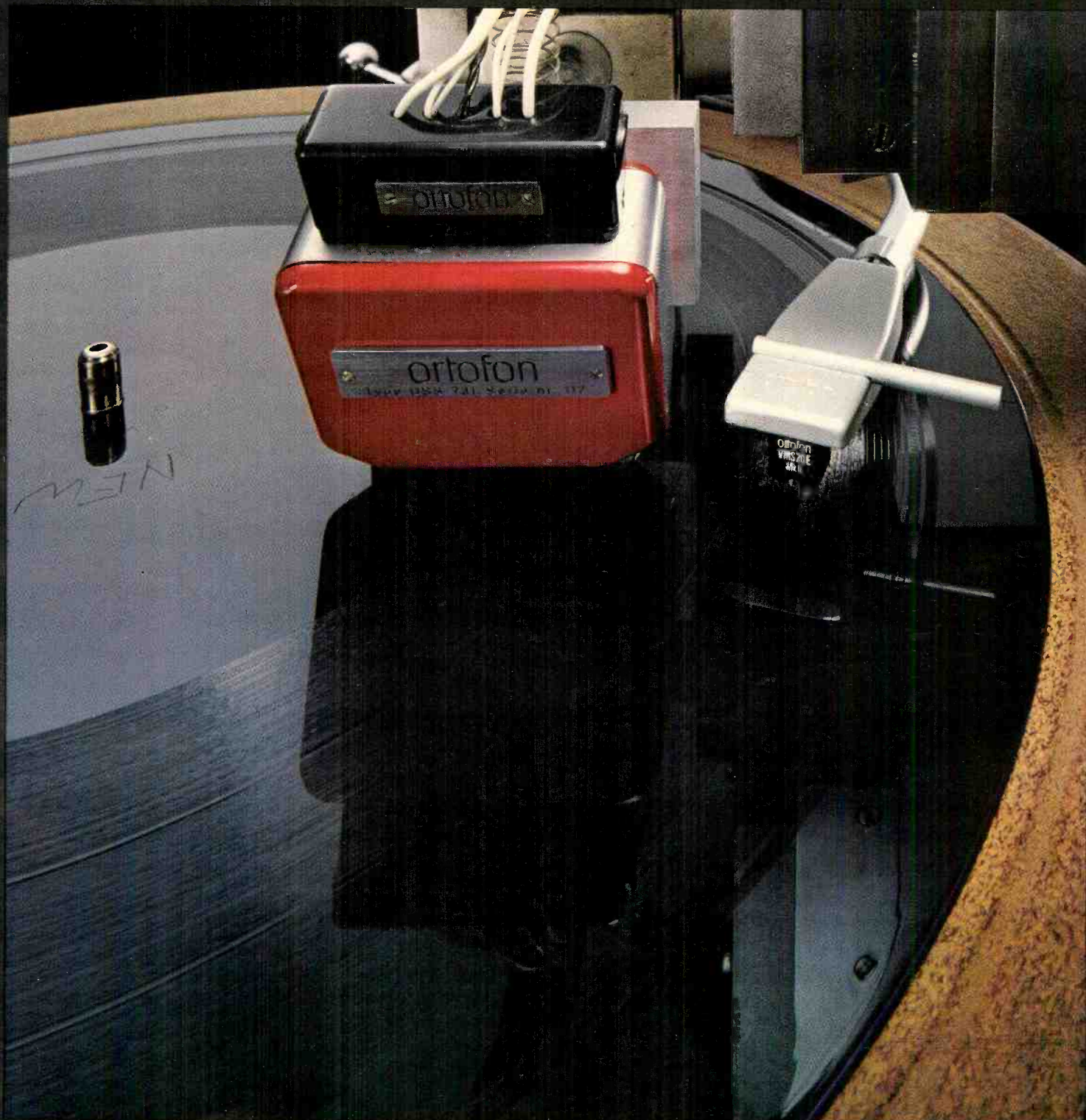
Each will play the music exactly as the music was laid down.

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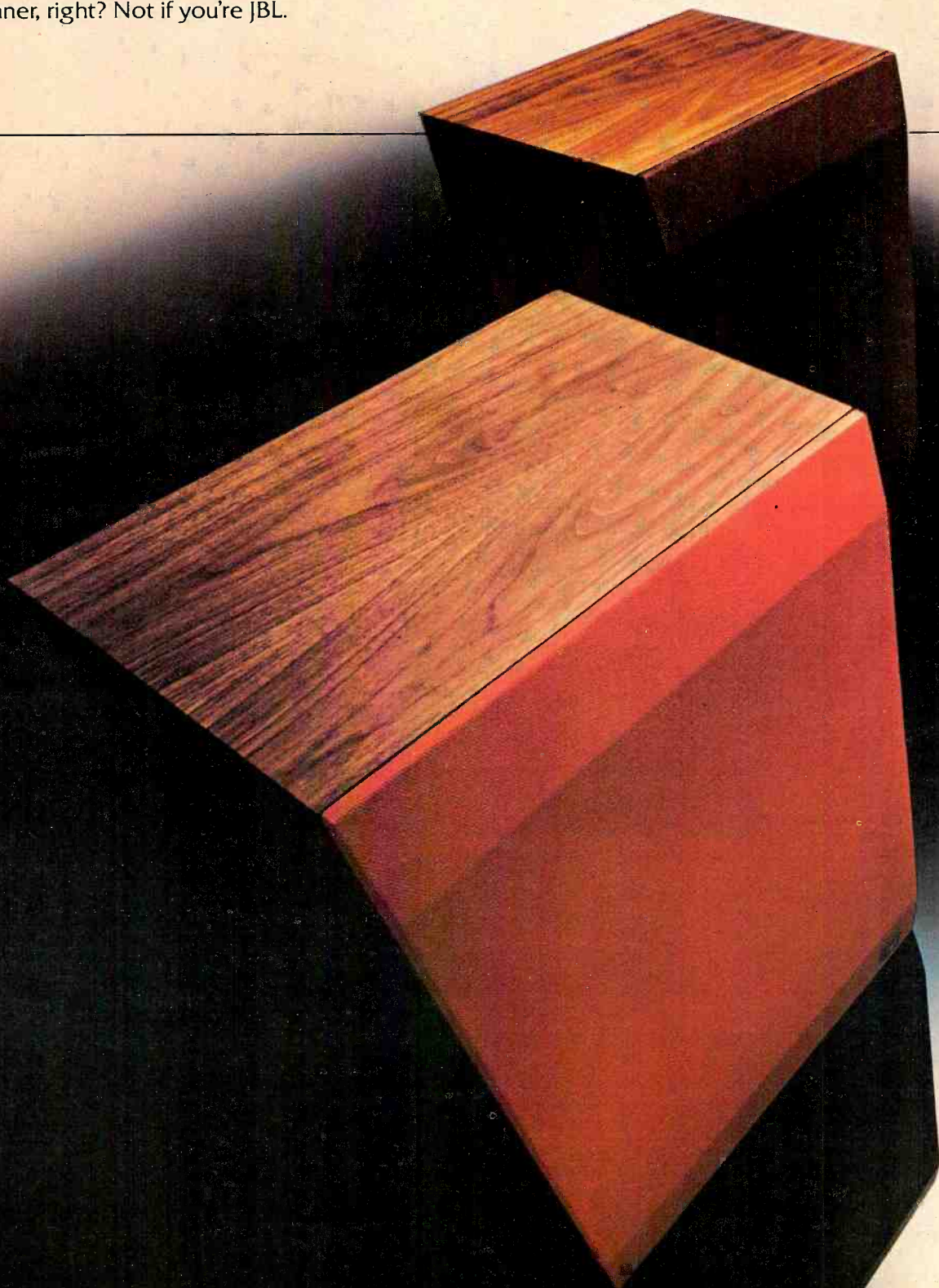
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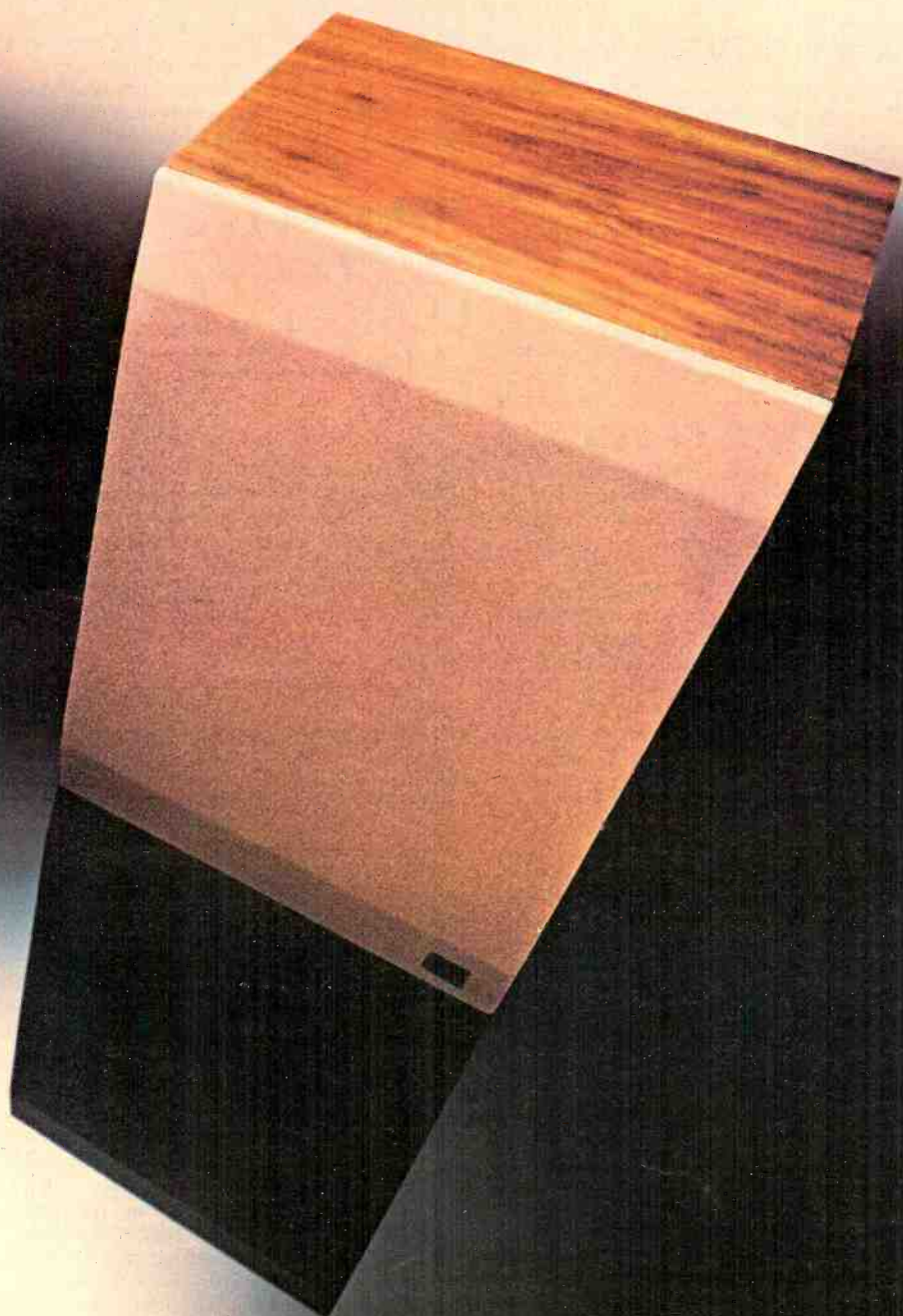
Every sound is clean and clear. Listen to the snap of a rimshot, the crash of a cymbal. Pure. Accurate. Perfectly defined. (If you'd like the technical information on the L40, write us and we'll send you an engineering staff report. Nothing fancy except the specs.)

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If you've been thinking about getting into high performance high fidelity, we know a great place to start: JBL's new L40. It's a whole lot of JBL for not a whole lot of money.



Ranked by the number of Top Fifty albums they produced last year, seven of the ten leading recording studios in the world used JBL to record or mix their music. They used our sound to make theirs. Source: Recording Institute of America.



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CIRCLE NO. 56 ON READER SERVICE CARD

Tape Talk

By Craig Stark



Recording TV Sound

Q. I have tried recording TV programs by using a microphone in front of the speaker, but this leaves a lot to be desired in sound quality. Is there any way I can record the TV audio by hooking the set directly to my receiver?

LUIS BOTAS
Davie, Fla.

A. If your TV set uses a power transformer—and a service man can tell you this from looking at its schematic diagram—you can make an interconnection with safety. Many TV sets have an earphone jack, and this would be the easiest point from which to feed the TV audio to your receiver's auxiliary or tape input. If there is no jack, you could simply clip the inner conductor and shield of ordinary audio interconnection cable to the TV set's speaker wires and then over to the receiver—if the TV set has a transformer.

Many—perhaps most—TV sets today do not use a power transformer, however, and in this case there is a fifty-fifty chance that the chassis of the TV set (to which one of its speaker wires will be attached) is electrically “live,” meaning that it carries a 120-volt a.c. charge. *The shock hazard is potentially lethal*, and you risk possible damage if you try to connect it to your receiver. You can determine whether your TV chassis is “hot” by using an inexpensive (under \$1) neon tester, available at any hardware or electrical store. You connect one end of the neon tester to a known electrical ground (a cold water pipe will do) and touch the other lead of the tester directly to the metal TV chassis. If the bulb glows, the chassis is “hot.” Reverse the plug from the TV set to the wall outlet and try again. If the lamp lights in either position you have a “hot” chassis. Only when a TV chassis is known to be electrically isolated from the a.c. line is it safe to connect it to a system. (Sorry, we have not tested any of the commercial TV sound adapters.)

Whether all this is worth the effort is a debatable question. All of us have been conditioned to expect a certain kind of sound from the modest, unsophisticated speakers used in TV sets. But played through a hi-fi system, the full horror of the original TV sound becomes apparent. In listening to a TV concert, for example, the volume compression that

passes as “normal” through the TV speaker becomes very disturbing—to say nothing of the very high hum levels you didn't hear before because the TV speaker couldn't reproduce the relatively low frequency.

Mixing High Frequencies

Q. Recently I tried playing some of my stereo tapes in mono mode and was surprised to find that all the high frequencies seemed to disappear. The tapes sound fine in stereo. Is there some connection between stereo and high-frequency response?

TREVOR BRYANT
Cambridge, Mass.

A. The problem you've encountered has nothing to do with stereo or mono per se, but indicates that you have a tape head that is out of adjustment (or defective). If the problem occurs only with tapes you have recorded yourself and not with prerecorded tapes, the record head is at fault; if you experience it with all tapes, the trouble is in the playback head.

The difficulty arises because the two head gaps are not perfectly aligned with each other. This introduces phase differences between channels, and these are most pronounced at the high frequencies. In stereo these phase differences may pass unnoticed, but when the two signals are added together, one may cancel out the other, leading to the treble loss.

Rewind Tension

Q. When I rewind a tape on my reel-to-reel machine, the tape is always very tight. Will this cause a loss of the signal? The fast-forward mode doesn't have this problem.

CALVIN OLSEN
Fair Oaks, Calif.

A. An excessively tight rewind won't cause a loss of the signal itself, but it can lead to physical deformation of the tape, which will show up primarily as an apparent high-frequency loss. If the edge of the tape becomes deformed, the head gap can't remain perfectly perpendicular to it, since the tape no longer has a true edge. The loss of perpendicularity (Continued on page 36)



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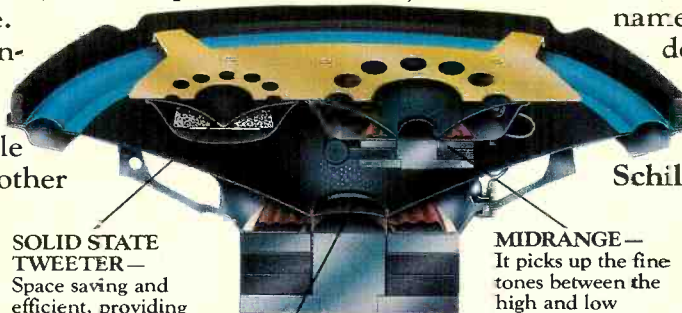
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SOLID STATE TWEETER — Space saving and efficient, providing distortion-free high frequency response.

WOOFER — Designed to reproduce lower frequency tones just as you would hear them in person.

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CIRCLE NO. 37 ON READER SERVICE CARD

Tape Talk

dicularity ("azimuth error") will result in deficient treble. Tight winding may also cause—or aggravate—problems with print-through, which is the tendency of a "loud," heavily magnetized section to transfer itself to an adjacent layer where it is heard as a faint pre-echo or post-echo.

While the change from acetate to polyester backing materials has lessened the problem of expansion and contraction of tape during seasonal (temperature/humidity) changes, tape should certainly not be stored for any length of time in too tightly wound a condition. Professionals all advise that tapes be stored in a "played" rather than a "rewound" (or "fast-forward-wound") condition, and that advice goes double if you suspect excessive winding tightness. I suspect it on your machine; the fact that you can notice a difference in tightness between the two high-speed directional windings is an indication of trouble. Excessive holdback tension (caused by a too-tight brake, for example) will cause a tight rewind and should be fixed.

Dolby: Better Off?

Q. I record cassettes with the Dolby switch on. On playback, if I switch the Dolby circuits off, the higher frequencies are much more apparent—the whole recording sounds clearer and better. Why?

DEBORAH KEYES
 New York, N.Y.

A. During recording (the "encode" cycle), the Dolby system picks out those high frequencies that are low in level and deliberately boosts them up in amounts that vary, but which may be as much as 11 dB. If, during playback, you do not "decode" the tape, you lose the benefit of the noise reduction, of course, but you get instead a somewhat "brighter" sound in which the originally soft high frequencies have been accentuated. This lends a somewhat crisp, articulated character to the sound that quite a few people besides yourself find preferable to objectively "flat" frequency response. (And, if the combination of your machine and the tape being used does not provide flat response to begin with, you may have good reason to prefer the non-decoded playback.)

High-level ("loud") treble sounds are not affected by the Dolby system in either the encode or decode modes, but in cassette recording and in normal FM broadcasting they are subject to an overall treble boost (equalization) that often exceeds the capacity of the tape or the maximum permissible broadcast modulation on FM. When such excesses occur, the result is—at the very least—a loss of treble material that, musically speaking, ought to be there. The exaggerated brightness of a non-decoded Dolbyized tape or broadcast might help the ear to overlook this loss.

Equivalent Tapes?

Q. Is there an easy-to-read interchangeability chart accepted by tape manufacturers that provides straightforward information on the comparative quality of one "model," "brand," or "type" of tape with another?

How can you tell which kinds are really the same?

KELLY HUNT
 El Paso, Texas

A. Yes, there are such charts—one per manufacturer, and usually jealously guarded to ensure secrecy! And there are great similarities among a number of brands of tape because most manufacturers do not make their own oxide particles, but buy them instead from big chemical companies such as Pfizer and Hercules Powder.

Even if I were able to give you a partial customer list for Pfizer's very popular No. 2228 (known affectionately in the trade as "two cubed eight") particle, however, you could get only approximate equivalencies, for ultimate performance depends on the individual manufacturer's binder formulation and coating procedures. And, at the "leading edge" of tape technology there are particle developments in the works that remain—for a time, at least—exclusive to the individual companies that are working on them.

So the best you can do, unfortunately, is to be guided by the periodic test reports on tape that appear in this and other magazines, on the groupings of "recommended tapes" the recorder manufacturers provide, and ultimately on your own experience of what works best for your machine.

Oral History

Q. I am planning to make oral history recordings to be used for libraries and schools (after editing and duplication). The originals will be recorded in the home of the subject—usually an old-timer. Would you recommend that I use a cassette or reel-

VAN ESSAYAN
 Monterey, Calif.

A. My suggestion would be to make the original recordings on a high-quality cassette machine equipped with an automatic recording-level control. When you go into the home of an elderly person to interview him on tape, you want your unfamiliar and possibly intimidating paraphernalia to be as inconspicuous as possible. Of course, the subject knows he's being recorded, but you should prevent him from being distracted by your fumbling with record-level controls or by the sight of reels hypnotically spinning around and "wasting" tape while he struggles to recall something. For best-quality results, you should select a machine that is a.c. operated (to maintain good speed stability) and mechanically quiet (so it can be reasonably near your microphone without its sound being picked up). Don't put microphone and machine on the same coffee table, or you'll pick up a lot of rumble.

For editing purposes, you'll want to dub the original cassettes onto an open-reel machine, preferably half-track (full-track if you've recorded in mono and have such a machine), preferably at 15 or at least 7½ ips. This transfer should entail little if any audible loss, and it can easily be edited into a first-class master. Whether you then use the spliced-up open-reel tape or a one-to-one copy of it as your duplicating master depends simply on the number of copies you will require. (See "Noise Reducers" in the October issue for devices that may be helpful to you in the duplicating process.)



Nikko's Mix and Match Components

The separate components series from Nikko Audio features two well-designed tuners and three integrated amps. New this year is the NA 550 integrated amplifier with 45 watts* per channel, with less than 0.05% THD.

Also new in the Nikko line is the NA 850 with 60 watts* per channel, and less than 0.05% THD. Both the NA 550 and NA 850 integrated amps have myriad features like responsive VU meters with variable control, 5-position tape control switch (for dubbing), speaker protection circuitry, and Nikko's exclusive circuit breakers. The NA 850 also features a subsonic filter and tone defeat.

The TRM 750 integrated amp, like all

Nikko products, is a superb performer, from its quality features to its built-in reliability. The TRM 750 delivers 55 watts* per channel, and no more than 0.15% THD.

Nikko's NT 850 AM/FM tuner is uncannily quiet and station grabbing. Normal and narrow IF circuitry provides high selectivity and low distortion while a front mounted multipath switch aids in reducing noise.

Last, but not least, is the FAM 450 AM/FM tuner. It's an established performer with excellent specifications and a typically modest Nikko price.

Now that you've read about our exciting separate components, we invite you to write to us for complete product infor-

mation and the name of a Nikko Audio dealer near you.

Once you have seen and heard Nikko Audio products, we think you'll make this year of Nikko.

*Minimum RMS per channel, both channels driven into 8 ohms from 20Hz to 20kHz.

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AF-3030

AD-6300



AD-6550

AIWA's newest response

With the new AD-6800, AIWA attains a flatter than ever frequency response with any tape on the market. For the first time, a cassette deck can use its own circuitry to measure the precise bias figure of every brand of cassette tape. Our new 3-head Flat Response Tuning System (FRTS) and built-in 400 Hz and 8kHz mixed oscillator lets you monitor a tape by watching the 400 Hz and 8kHz output levels. For optimum bias setting, you simply adjust the Bias Fine Adjustment knob to get equal output as you

record. Consider too, the many other advanced features in the AD-6800: double needle metering combines the VU level and peak level into a single meter, a Peak Hold button locks the peak metering system preventing distortion-causing peak pulses, and an extraordinarily low wow and flutter of 0.05%.

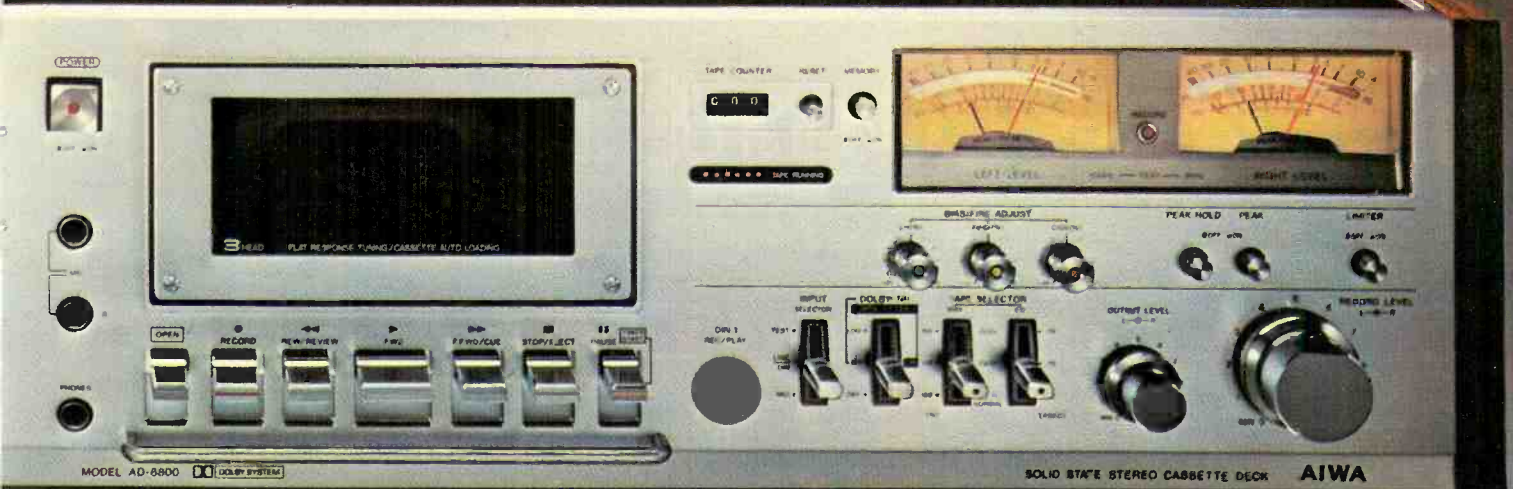
The AD-6550 has a Bias Fine Adjustment knob to give optimum performance with any brand of LH tape on the market, a Remaining Tape Time Meter that shows



AD-6500



AD-1250



AD-6800

is a flatter response

exactly how many minutes remain on the tape when you record, and an outstandingly low wow and flutter of 0.05%.

And there's a lot more to the AIWA family.

The AD-6500, the first cassette deck to feature an automatic front loading system.

The AD-6300, a manual front loader with all the important features of top quality cassette decks.

The AD-1250, an ultra modern 20° slant-

backed deck designed for maximum visibility and ease of use.

The versatile AF-3030 combines all the features of the AIWA line of cassette decks with an FM-AM receiver.

So before you run out and buy a cassette deck, consider the engineering innovation that went into the AIWA family. And weigh AIWA's response carefully.

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Audivideo

● Of course it was inevitable, but to have it happen this soon comes as a slight shock: the video disc has gone audio. The companies involved are Mitsubishi, Teac, and an outfit known as Tokyo Denka. The happening was a series of demonstrations in Japan recently of a music reproducer that turns out, upon even casual examination, to be a direct adaptation for audio purposes of the Philips-MCA video player, with its 1,800-rpm speed and its scanning laser. The recorded information takes the form of pulse-code modulation which is converted by electronics within the machine's base to an analog signal that appears at the output at a nominal level of 300 millivolts. (The demonstrations reportedly involved two-channel material only, but this does not preclude the addition of more channels.)

As a system, the optical audio machine provides a frequency response of 10 to 20,000 Hz ± 0.1 , -0.5 dB, total harmonic distortion of under 0.1 per cent, no detectible wow and flutter, and a whopping 98-dB dynamic range. Playing time is 30 minutes per disc. Projected prices are in the neighborhood of \$600 for the player and \$10 for each disc. A Teac spokesman was hopeful that record companies will be willing to loan master tapes (possibly on a royalty basis) which can be turned into audio-only "video" discs—even though they will fall short of the new medium's technical potential. (Incidentally, Philips and MCA just announced an improved version of the video disc which now has a playing time of at least one hour, utilizing *both* sides of the disc. This implies that any future audivideo disc will play at least as long as a conventional LP. Magnovox plans to begin regional marketing of the video players, and MCA's Disco-Vision division will be selling the sound-and-sight video disc in the fall of 1978.)

We would suggest, however, that readers refrain just now from holding their collective breaths against the day the audivideo disc takes over the market. Reflect: is it likely that record companies will invest in an entirely new recording and playback technology because it is "better" when they won't take the (relatively) simple steps necessary to improve their current product? If the record companies believed that a new format—or a better product—would generate substantially increased sales, quality would improve overnight. However, the companies will hardly be rushing into an entirely new and expensive recording format (especially one which would also require new consumer playback equipment) without the assurance of a reasonable (and fairly prompt) return on investment.

When the video-playback disc becomes a mass-market product sometime in the next ten years, then our 1974 prediction of a dual-purpose video/audio disc player should come to pass. Such a machine would, depending upon the kind of "record" placed on its turntable, play either a color program with stereo sound through your TV or an hour or more of multichannel sound through your audio system. The fact that an audio/video disc is now

technically feasible has little bearing on its immediate commercial viability.

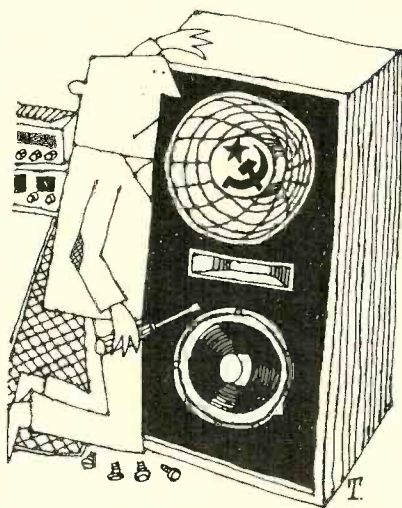
—Larry Klein and Ralph Hodges

Russian Interference

● STEREO REVIEW's article on radio-frequency interference (RFI) and its cures last May reminded me of a recurring problem I've been having with my hi-fi. One night about a year ago I turned on my equipment (a modest assemblage by purist audiophile standards, worth only about \$6,000) to play some new records only to be greeted by a rhythmic ticking sound. At first I thought it was a leaky capacitor charging and discharging, but as I investigated further I found I could not trace it to any piece of my equipment, and so had to conclude that it was some sort of RFI.

Which mystified me all the more, for there were no voices, no one saying, "Breaker, breaker," nor was there any Morse code. The noise was a very distinct *ticking* at a rate varying from about one to three per second, and it would come and go at random intervals during the day. At first I thought the signal was being generated by some sort of malfunctioning machinery or even a nearby neon sign, but the actual source finally turned out to be a bit farther away—in Russia!

While reading the CB/ham column in my local paper I noticed a letter by a ham complaining about interference on certain frequency bands, and what he described was identical to



my problem. The editor of the column replied that the RFI (nicknamed "The Woodpecker") is man-made and is being heard all over the world. As far as anyone can determine, it is caused by the Russians' testing of a new "over-the-horizon" radar system! All of the pieces of the puzzle now fell into place. This explained the ticking sound, the change in repetition rate, and the unusual times of day I kept it up.

The solution? I have none. The noise is very broadband and so powerful I can hear it in my speakers with my power amps turned

off! Let me hasten to explain (before someone accuses me of spending too much time in a John Birch Society Reading Room) that my loudspeakers are of the electrostatic type and have their power supplies on at all times to maintain charge. The wires from the power amps pick up enough signal to generate an audible (though faint) ticking. Fortunately, my listening and the Russians' testing schedule haven't coincided too much recently, but if the problem gets any worse, I'll make a suggestion to Jimmy that the matter be brought up at the next round of the SALT negotiations.

—Charles Repka

Quadcasting

● If you act quickly, you may have one last chance to help rescue four-channel sound from its current parlous plight—or, if you prefer, pound another nail into its coffin. The Federal Communications Commission, presently inviting comment from all interested parties on the desirability and feasibility of quadrasonic FM broadcasts, has extended its original September 15 deadline for receipt of comments on the subject to December 16. The FCC is particularly interested in whether there is sufficient active support for four-channel amongst the general public and broadcasters to justify the creation of a standard for "discrete" (or quasi-discrete) quadrasonic FM transmission and, in particular, whether both parties are willing to spend the money necessary (for equipment adaptation or replacement) to make use of such a system.

At the moment, of course, broadcasts of *matrixed* four-channel material are permitted under existing FCC regulations, and a number of FM stations have availed themselves of this opportunity to provide quadrasonic programming. Whether any rules should be adopted to govern matrix transmissions is another question on the FCC's mind. At least one matrix proponent, CBS, is pressing for adoption of its system (SQ) as a quadrasonic broadcasting standard. If the FCC were to look sympathetically upon the CBS petition, it could make SQ the "official" FM quadrasonic matrix—which is to say that your local station would retain the right to broadcast any matrix recording, however encoded, but when it *announced* a quadrasonic matrix broadcast, that broadcast would be SQ. Such an announcement could even take the form of a special subcarrier transmitted with the program to turn on a "quadrasonic" light on the front panel of suitably equipped tuners and receivers.

Whether or not you are interested in quadrasonic FM, any FCC decision—for action or inaction—is bound to affect the fortunes of all four-channel formats. It could, for example, spur the production and availability of every type of four-channel equipment, which has been a little scarce recently. And it couldn't help but have a positive influence on software manufacture as well.

The FCC's inquiry therefore shapes up as an excellent opportunity for you to strike a telling blow, pro or con, for four-channel's future. Comments must be received by the FCC on or before December 16 to be considered. If you wish all responsible members of the FCC staff to see your letter, you should send a total of six copies. Address—Re: FM Quadrasonic Broadcasting (Docket 21310), Federal Communications Commission, 1919 M Street N.W., Washington, D.C. 20554.

—Ralph Hodges

Installation of the Month

By Richard Sarbin



MOVING to a new home in Lansing, Michigan, gave audiophile Karl Weathers the necessary motivation to get down, finally, to constructing this rugged and efficient audio installation. Working from a design in an 8:1 scale balsa-wood model, Mr. Weathers built the one-piece, slant-top console in a week's time using 3/4-inch plywood over a frame of two-by-fours. All exterior surfaces are covered in rose-wood-grain formica to provide an attractive finish and protection against possible heat or water damage.

Nine rectangular cutouts in the central equipment section accommodate the basic system. The all-McIntosh lineup in the bottom row includes (left to right) an MC 2105 power amplifier, an MPI 4 performance indicator, a C 28 preamplifier, and an MR 74 tuner. In the top row are (left to right) a McIntosh MQ 101 equalizer, a Heath IG-18 sine-wave test generator, a dbx 119 dynamic-range enhancer, a switch panel (to control lighting, speaker-system selection, and reverb level), and a Panasonic eight-track car-

tridge deck. To maintain proper cooling, the cabinet is vented with 4-inch-square screens at each end while an exhaust fan positioned above the power amplifier draws a steady flow of air over the equipment.

The recessed center and the angled top of the main housing were designed to create a space-age look and offer the system's "navigator" sufficient room in which to operate his program sources. Its ample interior provides easy access to all the equipment for repair or system-rewiring projects.

RESTING on the tops of the left and right storage cabinets are a B&O 4001 radial-arm turntable with B&O cartridge and a Nakamichi 700 cassette deck. Below each of these units are drawers containing both cassettes and eight-track cartridges as well as equipment-maintenance materials. Lights built into the side walls of the record cabinets illuminate the titles of Mr. Weathers' collection of rock, classical, and easy-listening discs. The doors to both side cabinets and the central housing unit are equipped

with spring-loaded hinges and are therefore self-closing.

Two ESS amt-3 speakers positioned directly across the room from the equipment complex serve as the main (front) speakers for the system. A pair of smaller Genesis II bookshelf speakers mounted in the left and right walls face each other at ninety-degree angles to the main speakers. A synthesized "ambiance" rear channel based on the difference signal between the right and left front channels is achieved by connecting the positive leads of each bookshelf speaker to the amplifier and the negative terminals of each speaker to each other.

Mr. Weathers, a purchasing agent with Delta Dental Plan of Michigan, reports that the basement of his new home was specially designed to accommodate the sizable audio console and to serve as an acoustically correct listening environment. Although satisfied with the overall performance of his system, he is preparing to upgrade it with a McIntosh MC 2205, which has twice the power output of his current amplifier. □

WHY MOST CRITICS USE MAXELL TAPE TO EVALUATE TAPE RECORDERS.

Any critic who wants to do a completely fair and impartial test of a tape recorder is very fussy about the tape he uses.

Because a flawed tape can lead to some very misleading results.

A tape that can't cover the full audio spectrum can keep a recorder from ever reaching its full potential.

A tape that's noisy makes it hard to measure how quiet the recorder is.

A tape that doesn't have a wide enough bias latitude can make you question the bias settings.

And a tape that doesn't sound consistently the same, from end to end, from tape to tape, can make you question the stability of the electronics.

If a cassette or 8-track jams, it can suggest some nasty, but erroneous comments about the drive mechanism.

And if a cassette or 8-track introduces wow and flutter, it's apt to produce some test results that anyone can argue with.

Fortunately, we test Maxell cassette, 8-track and reel-to-reel tape to make sure it doesn't have the



problems that plague other tapes.

So it's not surprising that most critics end up with our tape in their tape recorders.

It's one way to guarantee the equipment will get a fair hearing.

MAXELL. THE TAPE THAT'S TOO GOOD FOR MOST EQUIPMENT.

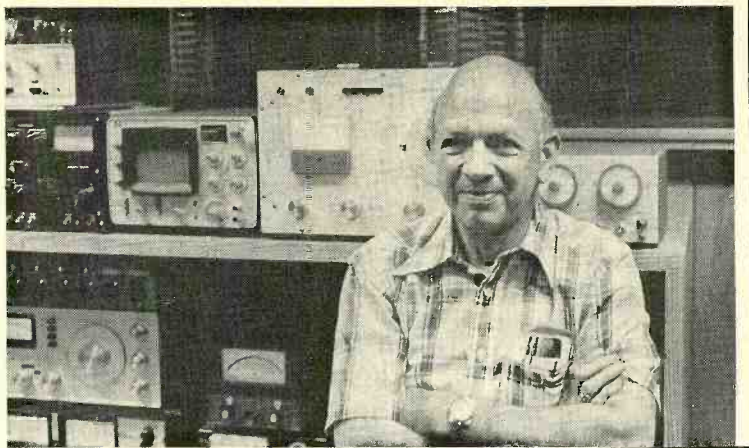
Maxell Corporation of America, 100 West Commercial Ave., Moonachie, N.J. 07074

CIRCLE NO. 23 ON READER SERVICE CARD



Technical Talk

By Julian D. Hirsch



● **PHONO-CARTRIDGE LOADING:** Over the years I have written several articles dealing with the problems that arise at the interface between the preamplifier and the cartridge (including one way back in February 1972 on the little-appreciated effects of phono-cartridge inductance on high-frequency performance), but the matter has continued to be neglected by many preamp designers and testing laboratories. In recent months, however, the effect of the load impedance on the frequency response of a magnetic phono cartridge has been receiving some long-overdue attention in the audio press, and capacitive/resistive cartridge-load adjustments are showing up regularly in the latest equipment.

To appreciate why the load (the capacitance and resistance seen by the cartridge before—and at—the preamplifier's phono input) can have such a strong effect on conventional magnetic cartridges (moving-coil cartridges and those *not* based on magnetic principles are relatively immune to such effects), it is necessary to understand the electrical equivalent circuit of a magnetic cartridge. This is shown in Figure 1, greatly simplified by the omission of the cartridge's internal resistance and stray capacitances.

In this circuit, the voltage E_G , generated by the cartridge as a result of stylus motion, is assumed to be a faithful replica of the recorded program waveform. At some frequency, usually in the highest audible octave or even at an ultrasonic frequency, the coil inductance L_C will resonate electrically with the total circuit capacitance C_L . This causes a frequency-response peak at the resonance frequency. The amplitude of this peak is reduced by the load resistance R_L . If this resistance is made small enough, there will be no output rise at all, but rather a steady decrease in output as the frequency increases.

As a rule, the cartridge's electrical resonance is used to compensate for other response aberrations arising from the mechanical operation of the system. A real stylus and generating system will usually have its own *mechanical* resonance, between 15,000 and 25,000 Hz, which can affect the tracking ability as well as the frequency response of the cartridge if it is not controlled. Some form of mechanical damping is normally applied within the cartridge structure to reduce the effect of the stylus resonance. This also tends to re-

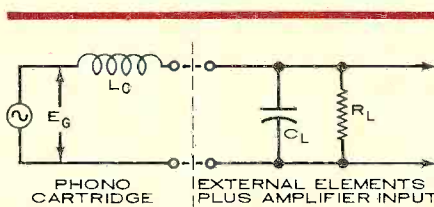


Figure 1

duce the high-frequency output, just as a heavily damped electrical circuit does.

By locating the electrical resonance peak at the correct frequency in relation to the mechanical resonance, and by adjusting the amplitude properly, the cartridge designer can compensate for much of the mechanical high-frequency loss by using the boost from the electrical resonance. If all goes well, the result is a flat response through the audio range.

To ensure the correct frequency and amplitude for the electrical resonance, the cartridge designer must specify the proper resistance and capacitance loads. In most cases, the resistance is the now-standard 47,000 ohms (nominally 50,000 ohms) used in all phono-preamplifier input stages (100,000 ohms for CD-4 cartridges). The capacitance is much more difficult to predict, however, owing to variations in the length and type of shielded cable connecting the record player to the amplifier and similar differences in the wiring within the tone arm. In addition, the capacitance of the input circuits of phono

preamplifiers is far from standardized and can be almost anything from nearly zero to hundreds of picofarads (pF).

A typical stereo cartridge is designed to operate with a capacitive load of 250 to 300 pF. This matches fairly well the actual situation existing in a hi-fi installation. Fortunately, the exact capacitance is not very critical. Some manufacturers, notably Shure and Ortofon in their non-moving-coil models, design their cartridges for flattest response when loaded by 400 to 500 pF, and many music systems will require the addition of external capacitors to achieve these values.

What is the actual result of a load-capacitance mismatch? The effect depends to a great extent on the inductance of the cartridge's coils as well as other characteristics. A low inductance implies less dependence on critical loading for a correct frequency response (unfortunately, it also implies a lower output voltage, all else being equal). We made frequency-response measurements on a cartridge having the moderately low inductance of 580 millihenries and whose specifications are based on a 275-pF capacitive load in parallel with 47,000 ohms. The results of changing the total capacitance from 160 to 400 pF, with the resistance maintained at 50,000 ohms, are shown in Figure 2.

The effect of the capacitance change, though hardly of major magnitude, might change the sound of the cartridge enough to influence some people's choice, and it might easily be overlooked by many others. The correct load of 275 pF gave a response curve essentially identical to the one shown for 160 pF. Notice that a higher load capacitance does *not* reduce the apparent high-frequency response of the cartridge. Quite the contrary: it gives about 2 dB *more* output in the most audible part of the high-frequency range, and on many systems will make most records sound brighter, more "open," more "detailed," and so forth. The output loss above 15,000 Hz is much less likely to be audible.

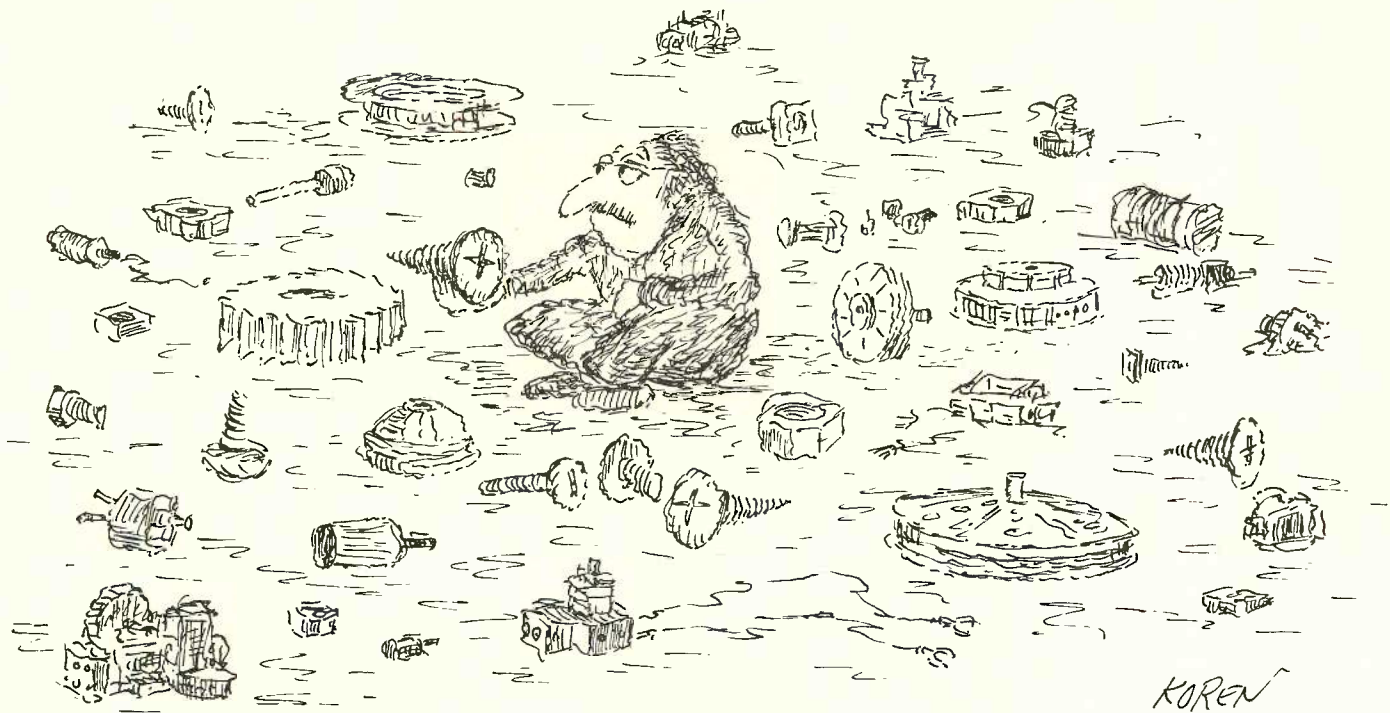
When we fixed the capacitance at 250 pF and varied the resistance termination from 25,000 ohms to 100,000 ohms, the effects were much more pronounced. Figure 3 shows the impressively flat response obtained with the rated load of 50,000 ohms. Despite its specification, the actual input resistance of an

(Continued on page 46)

Tested This Month

Akai GXC-725D Cassette Deck
Acousti-phase Phase III+ Speaker
Sound Concepts SD550 Time Delay
Sony EL-5 Elcaset Deck
ADC ZLM Phono Cartridge

"My, my, how complicated."



"So many pieces and parts! That's what I used to think about turntables that could change records.

And you know something? I was right for once. Until B·I·C came along.

But when I looked at the underside of a B·I·C turntable and compared it with the (name deleted) I was amazed.

The B·I·C has fewer parts and linkages than other changers. And fewer than many turntables that won't change a record.

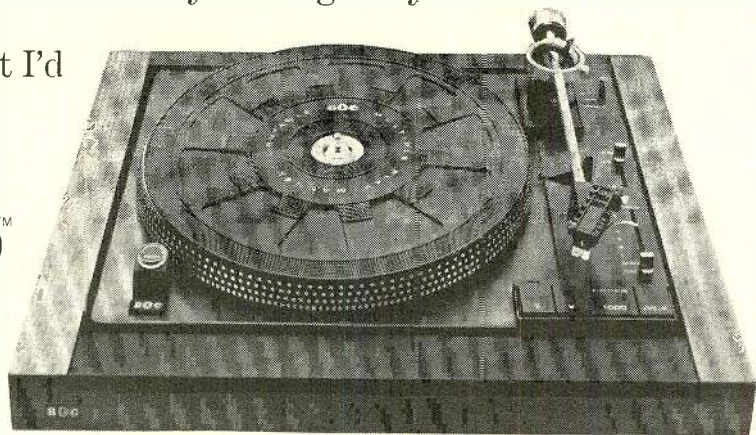
It looks simple and it is. Even I can understand that fewer parts mean fewer potential problems.

The B·I·C is truly a triumph of American ingenuity. (It's made in the USA.) And it has a two-year warranty which gives you a nice warm feeling.

Fewer parts. More functions. I never thought I'd see the day.

B·I·C certainly un-complicated *my* life."

B·I·CTM



"BEE-EYE-CEE" TURNTABLES SELL FROM ABOUT \$85 TO ABOUT \$289. FOR DETAILS AND SPECS GET OUR "5 TURNTABLES" FOLDER FROM YOUR DEALER OR WRITE US. B·I·C, WESTBURY, LI, NY 11590. ©1977 BRITISH INDUSTRIES CO. A DIVISION OF AVNET INC.

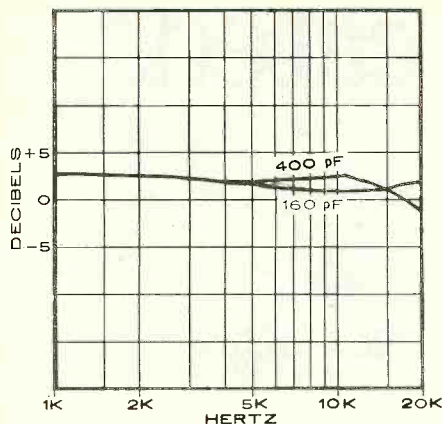


Figure 2

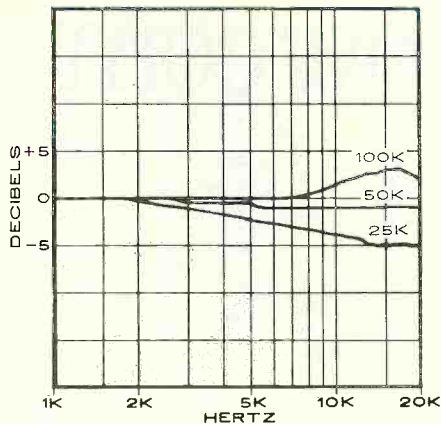


Figure 3

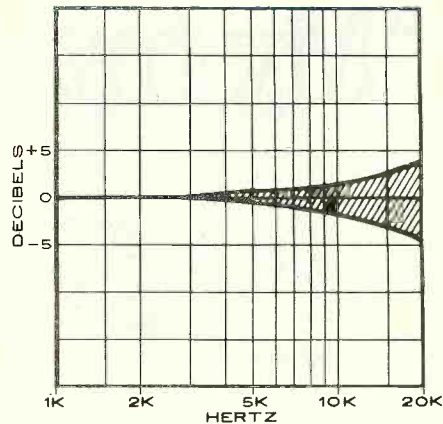


Figure 4

amplifier may differ somewhat from the nominal 47,000 ohms. According to the results of a survey of twenty-six different phono preamplifiers printed in the Boston Audio Society's *Speaker* in April 1977, input resistances fell between 35,000 and 60,000 ohms. Judging from the curves we measured at 100,000 and 25,000 ohms on this cartridge (it is quite typical in its reaction to load changes), audible response might be affected materially by the choice of amplifier.

There is yet another effect to be considered. The cartridge's coil inductance can interact with the RIAA equalization circuits of some preamplifiers in such a way as to alter the internal equalization accuracy of the amplifier. The curves in Figure 4 show the

typical range of variation we have found in a number of preamplifiers when the measurement is made through the coil of a phono cartridge. This change should be added to whatever curves result from the specific resistive and capacitive loads to obtain the net response of the cartridge/amplifier system. (In each case it is assumed that the cartridge and amplifier, in themselves, have a perfectly flat frequency response curve when measured separately.)

Note that these changes can improve the sound in many cases by bringing a system's overall response closer to flat. And although only the frequency response is affected by the interface mismatch, many subjective effects (openness, nasality, harshness, etc.) resulting

from frequency-response aberrations are charged against other, sometimes mystical, factors. I would suggest therefore that many—if not most—of the apparent differences between cartridges and/or phono preamplifiers are really the result of these and similar random interface problems. No wonder there is so much disagreement as to the specific, or comparative, sound properties of these components!

A final note: there are other cartridge properties, such as distortion and channel separation, that have not been covered in this discussion because they are determined largely by the design of the cartridge and are affected only slightly, if at all, by external electrical load conditions.

Equipment Test Reports

By Hirsch-Houck Laboratories

Akai GXC-725D Cassette Deck



THE Akai GXC-725D is a moderately priced, front-loading, three-head cassette deck powered by a single electronically controlled d.c. motor. The transport mechanism is operated by the familiar row of levers below the cassette opening. Akai has arranged things so that the levers of the GXC-725D can be used in any sequence without going through STOP.

A single lever serves for both STOP and EJECT functions; the first pressure (even a very light one) stops the tape, and releasing it and pressing again opens the cassette door.

The cassette is loaded into retaining clips built into the hinged door. The door opens quietly, with a slow damped motion. It can be removed easily for cleaning or demagnetizing

the heads. Most of the cassette can be seen through the window in the door, and it is back-lit so that one can always see how much tape remains to be played.

The recording and playback heads of the Akai GXC-725D, though electrically and magnetically separate, are built into the same housing, which fits through the hole in the edge of the cassette usually occupied by a combination record/playback head. Since the azimuths of the two head gaps are set precisely during manufacture, the GXC-725D does not require the alignment adjustments that are necessary with cassette recorders using physically separate recording and playback heads.

The cassette opening at the left of the panel is flanked by a pushbutton power switch and an index counter with reset button. The upper right portion of the panel is devoted to two large illuminated VU meters calibrated from -20 to +5 dB. Between them is a PEAK LEVEL

(Continued on page 48)

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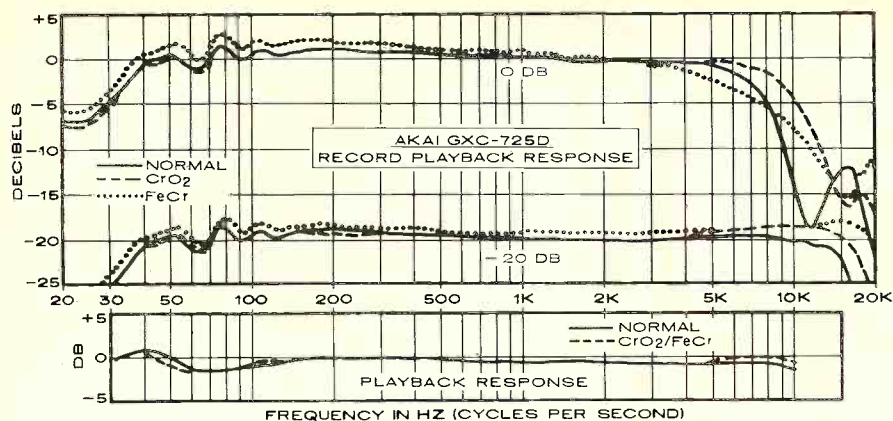
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4. Employees of TEAC Corporation of America (distributor of Accuphase), affiliated companies, and sales agents, and the families of any such employees are not eligible. Void where prohibited or restricted by law.

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light that flashes when brief signal peaks reach +7 dB.

Below the meters are the two recording-level controls and a single playback-level control. Two indicator lights show when the machine is set for recording and when the Dolby system is turned on. Across the bottom of the panel, to the right of the transport controls, are pushbutton switches for MONITOR (delivering either the input source or the playback-output signals to the line outputs), DOLBY noise reduction, and the MPX FILTER that removes any 19-kHz pilot signal remaining in an FM stereo program, which might affect the operation of the Dolby circuits. There is a TAPE SELECTOR knob that simultaneously changes bias and recording and playback equalization for four basic tape formulations. These are identified as LN (low noise), LH (low noise/high output), CrO₂, and FeCr. A stereo headphone jack and two microphone jacks complete the front-panel features. The line input and output jacks are in the rear.

The instruction manual for the Akai GXC-725D contains complete performance specifications, which are too lengthy to repeat here. It also has a table listing the recommended settings of the TAPE SELECTOR for some twenty-five types of tape and shows the "reference" tape used for each of the switch settings to establish the recorder's performance specifications. The Akai GXC-725D is supplied in a vinyl-clad wooden cabinet finished in simulated walnut grain. It is approximately 17½ inches wide, 11¼ inches deep, and 6½ inches high and weighs about 15 pounds. Price: \$399.50

● **Laboratory Measurements.** The playback frequency response was measured using TDK AC-331 and Nortronics AT200 test tapes for the "standard" 120-microsecond equalization, and Teac 116SP tape for the 70-microsecond equalization used with CrO₂ and FeCr tapes. In both cases the response was within ±1 dB over the full range of the tape (31.5 to 10,000 Hz), most of the variation being at the lower frequencies.

The record-playback frequency response was measured for each of the tape-selector positions using the recommended reference tape or a close equivalent. For the LN and LH tapes we used TDK SD and Maxell UD-XL in place of the specified Fuji FL and Maxell UD tapes. We also tried a Scotch Master tape with the LH setting. It is interesting to note that the CrO₂ performance of the recorder is specified only with cobalt-treated ferric "chrome equivalents" such as TDK SA and

Maxell UD-XL II, and no actual chromium-dioxide tapes are listed in the table. We tested the machine with the recommended TDK SA and also with BASF Chromdioxid Super. Finally, the FeCr position was checked with the recommended Sony Ferrichrome and the alternate Scotch Classic.

Although there were of course differences in frequency response between the tapes, the similarities between them were striking. For example, the overall response of the TDK SD and Maxell UD-XL were virtually identical over most of the audio range. Most of the deviation from flatness was in the low-frequency "ripples" caused by the head geometry. The overall response was within ±2 dB from 36 to 13,000 Hz with SD and from 34 to 15,000 Hz with UD-XL. Scotch Master (LH) had a mild high-frequency rise and a ±2-dB variation from 35 to 15,000 Hz. The TDK SA, used as a CrO₂ tape, had a slightly stronger and extended high end, with a ±1.5-dB variation from 37 to 16,500 Hz. The BASF chrome tape had a more pronounced high-frequency rise above 4,000 Hz, giving it a ±2.5-dB variation from 35 to 18,500 Hz. The ferrichrome tapes gave the widest and flattest frequency response. Sony FeCr was within ±1.5 dB from 36 to 19,000 Hz. Scotch Classic had a very smooth, linear response which sloped downward slightly. It was within ±3 dB from 34 to 17,000 Hz. All these figures result from the tape/machine interface and do not necessarily reflect results that would be obtained with the same tapes on other machines.

All measurements were made at a -20-dB recording level. At a 0-dB level there was the

expected rolloff of high-frequency response due to tape saturation. However, the loss of highs was much less than we normally measure on cassette decks, and the 0-dB curve remained above the -20-dB curve at all times instead of intersecting it, as usually happens with cassette recorders. This can undoubtedly be credited to the use of separate recording and playback heads whose gaps have been optimized for their particular functions.

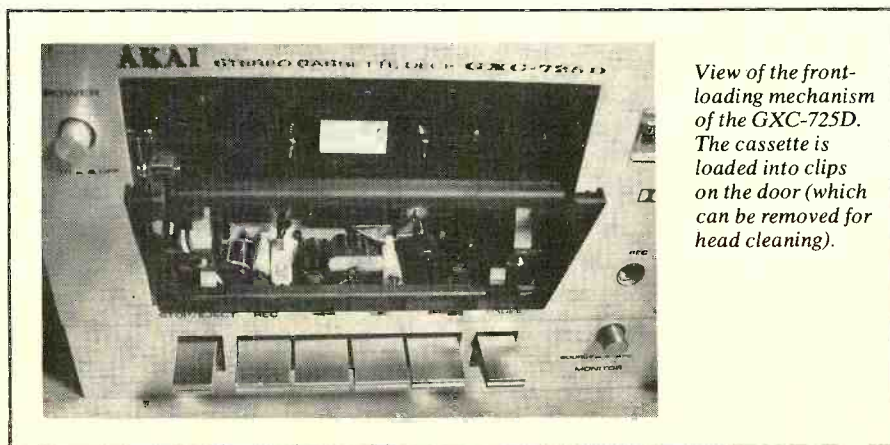
The MPX FILTER cut off sharply above 13,000 Hz, reducing the recording response at 19,000 Hz by nearly 20 dB. The "tracking" of the Dolby circuits was excellent, with no more than a 2-dB difference between frequency-response curves run with and without the Dolby system at levels of -20 and -30 dB. The GXC-725D uses a "double-Dolby" system with separate Dolby circuits for recording and playback functions, so that programs can be monitored from the tape as they are made and heard with the correct frequency response and noise levels.

For a 0-dB recording level, the required input was 53 millivolts at the line jacks and 0.18 millivolt at the microphone jacks (the microphone amplifier overloaded at 43 millivolts input). The meters were calibrated so that the Dolby level of 200 nW/m registered +3 VU as marked. Their ballistic characteristics were exactly as specified for VU meters, so that they indicated 100 per cent of steady-state readings when driven with 0.3-second tone bursts once per second. The PEAK LEVEL light began to glow at a +7-dB input.

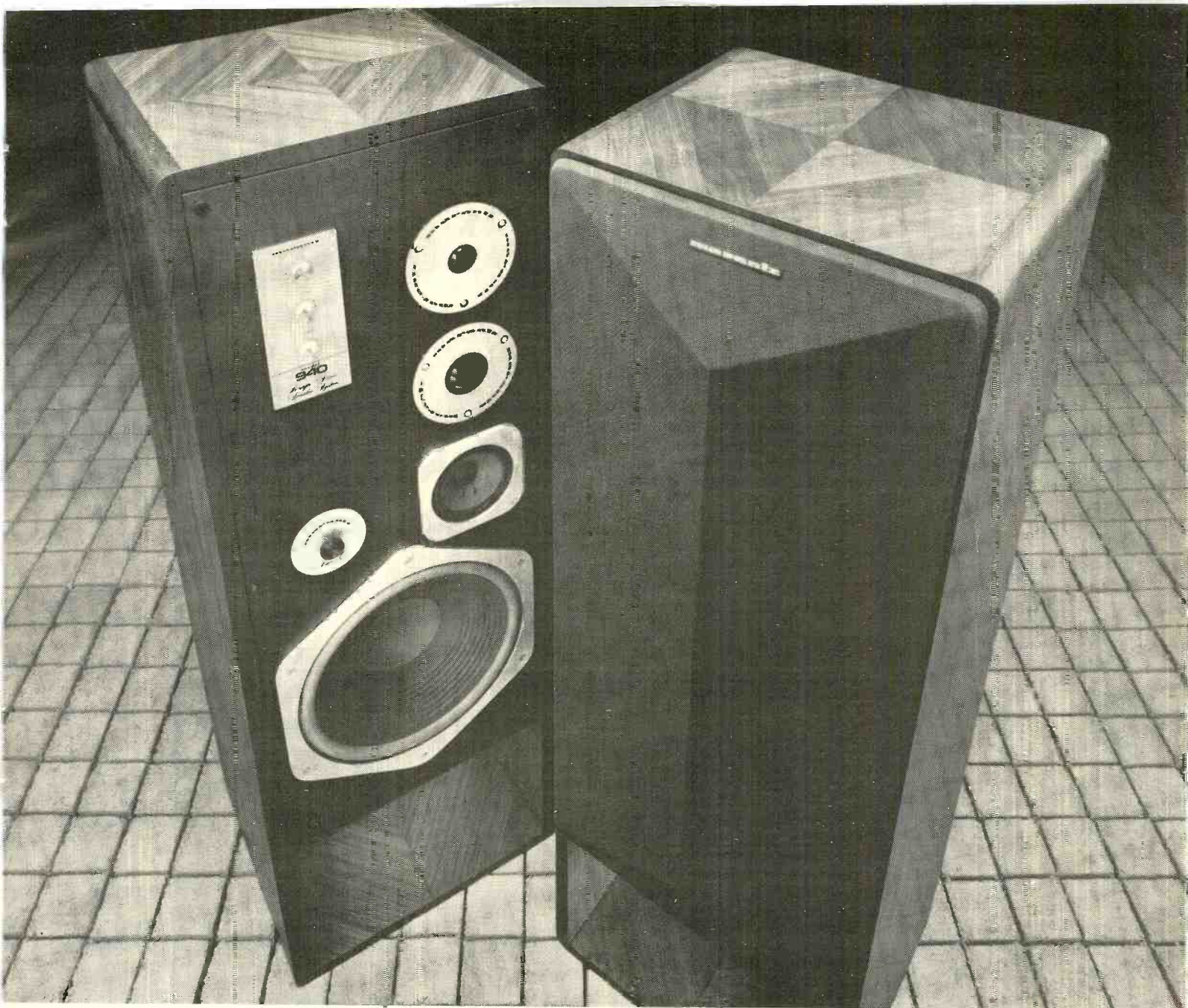
The 1,000-Hz, 0-VU playback distortion was only 0.25 per cent with TDK SD (LN), about 0.45 per cent with Maxell UD-XL (LH) and TDK SA (CrO₂) and 1 per cent with Sony FeCr. All of these are well below the rated distortion levels for the recorder. The reference distortion level of 3 per cent was reached at an input of +9 dB for LN, +10 dB for LH, +7 dB for CrO₂, and +6 dB for FeCr.

The signal-to-noise ratio (S/N) was measured for each tape using unweighted measurements, IEC "A" weighting, CCIR weighting, and CCIR with Dolby noise reduction. The differences between tapes were slight, with only about 2 dB separating Maxell UD-XL from TDK SD in a weighted measurement with Dolby. Considering that the worst S/N we measured under those conditions was a very good 64.6 dB, it seems that "noisy" is hardly the proper adjective to use when discussing either the machine or any of the tapes! The noise level increased by 8.5 dB

(Continued on page 50)



View of the front-loading mechanism of the GXC-725D. The cassette is loaded into clips on the door (which can be removed for head cleaning).



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through the microphone inputs at maximum gain, but it was not obtrusive at normal gain settings.

The tape transport worked smoothly and quietly. The unweighted rms flutter was only 0.09 per cent. In fast forward or rewind the machine covered a C-60 cassette in 90 seconds. The PAUSE control started up the tape with a short but perceptible "fade in" that effectively eliminated any transient start-up speed variation. The headphone volume, even with 200-ohm phones, was very good.

● **Comment.** Before making any measurements on the Akai GXC-725D, we connected it to a music system and put it into operation. Its quality was immediately audible, to the extent that the later measurements did not surprise us at all. For example, we could record interstation FM tuner hiss and hear almost no difference between the input and playback signals from the recorder at a -10-dB recording level. Instead of the usual dulling of the highs, the major change in the playback quality was a slightly heavier low end, perhaps

from the cyclic response variations below 100 Hz. In this test, the performance of the GXC-725D was closer to that of an open-reel tape deck than to other cassette decks (especially those in its price range).

We noticed that recording levels can be set up without placing the machine in the record mode (or even loading a cassette). The "headroom" is considerably greater than is common in cassette recorders, so that it was safe to let the meters reach 0 dB regularly (which resulted in an occasional flash from the PEAK LEVEL light) when recording from FM or records. Of course, with live program material having greater dynamic range, one should keep the average levels a bit lower.

It was also apparent that the bias and equalization characteristics had been chosen to make the machine compatible with a variety of tapes, unlike some machines whose proper performance can be realized only with the specific type of tape for which they have been adjusted.

The GXC-725D lacks a few features found on some other de luxe cassette decks. For ex-

ample, it has no "memory rewind" or provision for unattended recording with a timer switch. Its Dolby circuits cannot be used to decode an FM Dolby broadcast for listening only. Some of these features may be of importance to some people. To us, in view of what the GXC-725D *did* do and how well it did it, their absence was hardly noticed.

The Akai GXC-725D is a rare combination of an absolutely first-rate recorder (which sounds every bit as good as it measures) with a highly affordable price tag. This caliber of performance is available in a very few other cassette decks, all of which are much more expensive than the GXC-725D. It is also worth mentioning that this machine met or surpassed—usually by a wide margin—every one of the ratings for which we were able to test, and it had not a single idiosyncrasy or "bug" that we could find. This might seem to be no more than one would expect from any well-made product, but it is nonetheless rare, and it contributed to our totally positive feeling about the GXC-725D.

Circle 105 on reader service card

Acousti-phase Phase III+ Speaker



COMPARED with some widely sold and long-established speaker brands, the Acousti-phase name is perhaps not very well known to American audio hobbyists. This is partly because of the marketing policy of this relatively new, Vermont-based company, which limits its distribution to a single dealer in each geographic area. The Acousti-phase line includes models priced for budget systems and goes all the way to high-performance systems designed to compete with some of the most highly regarded brands.

The Phase III+ which we tested is one of their top models. It is a conventional three-way ported system in a walnut-veneer cabinet suitable for floor or shelf mounting. The

brown foam-plastic grille is held in place by Velcro fasteners and is easily removable. A single 12-inch woofer is employed, and the enclosure's ducted port opens to the rear. Middle and high frequencies are handled by a 5-inch cone driver and a 1-inch Mylar dome tweeter. There are 12-dB-per-octave crossover points at 900 and 5,000 Hz. Inset in the rear of the cabinet are the speaker terminals, a continuously variable tweeter-level control, and the reset button for a circuit breaker that protects the mid-range and high-frequency drivers against overload. Minimum and maximum continuous-power ratings are 8 and 100 watts. The speaker carries a 5-year unconditional and transferable warranty covering all

defects not resulting from abuse, neglect, or accident, without charge for parts or labor. The Acousti-phase Phase III+ is 25 inches high, 15 inches wide, and 13½ inches deep. It weighs approximately 41 pounds. Suggested retail price: \$289 in walnut veneer, \$349.95 in solid-wood butcher block.

● **Laboratory Measurements.** The reverberant-field response of the Acousti-phase Phase III+, with the tweeter-level control set at maximum, was within a 5-dB overall range up to about 5,000 Hz and rose smoothly at higher frequencies.

A close-miked measurement of the woofer response by itself showed a rising output with decreasing frequency down to the resonant frequency of about 80 Hz and then a steep fall-off at lower frequencies. This is a characteristic of ported systems, whose output goes to a null at some low frequency (in this case 37 Hz). The measured port radiation, corrected for the relative diameters of the port and the cone, was dominant below 45 Hz but was at a much lower level than the mid-range output of the woofer. When the curves were combined, the overall frequency response of the Phase III+ was ± 3 dB from 60 to 5,000 Hz, with the output rising to a maximum of +8 dB at 12,000 Hz and falling rapidly below 60 Hz.

The tweeter-level control had a maximum range of about 10 dB and affected frequencies above 1,500 Hz. The tweeter dispersion was only fair, with a noticeable decrease in extreme top-end response at angles of 30 degrees or more off the central axis of the speaker. The system efficiency was quite high, with a sound-pressure level of 92 dB delivered at 1 meter from the grille when the system was driven by 1 watt (at 8 ohms) of random noise in the octave centered at 1,000 Hz.

(Continued on page 52)

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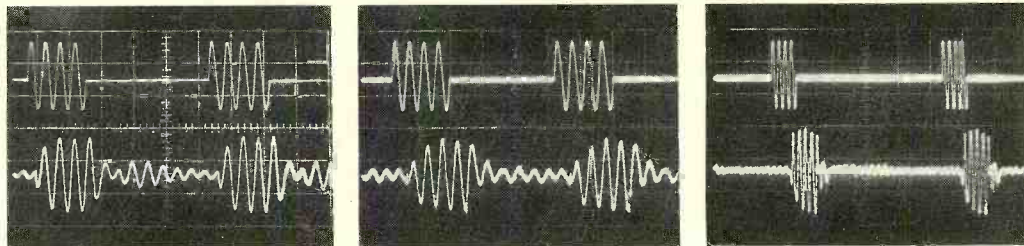
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Tone-burst response of the Phase III+ at (left to right) 100, 1,000, and 5,000 Hz. The upper trace is the input signal and the lower trace is the output of the speaker.



Since the bass distortion was measured only at the woofer cone, the test was valid only down to 45 Hz or so. At a nominal 1-watt input, the distortion was very low (under 0.5 per cent) at 100 Hz and higher frequencies, increasing smoothly to 4 per cent at 50 Hz and 14 per cent at 40 Hz. At a 10-watt drive level, the low-frequency distortion was approximately doubled, but it was not affected significantly above 100 Hz.

The impedance of the Phase III+ should be rated at 4 ohms, according to our measurements. That impedance value was found in the 30- to 40-Hz and 100- to 200-Hz ranges and above 1,500 Hz. There was a rise to 10 ohms at the lower measurement limit of 20 Hz (and it probably increased at still lower frequencies), a fairly sharp peak to 18 ohms at 75 Hz, and a broad plateau of 10 ohms at 600 Hz.

Tone-burst measurements at low and middle frequencies showed a fairly slow rise and fall time, covering one or two cycles at 100 and 1,000 Hz, with sustained ringing between bursts. The 5,000-Hz burst response was much better, with little interburst ringing.

● **Comment.** The smooth frequency-response curve and slightly rising high-end re-

sponse were good clues to how the Phase III+ would perform in our simulated live-vs.-recorded listening test. We have found that a measured rising high-frequency characteristic is generally associated with accurate reproduction of the highest audible octave in a normal listening room, and in this test the Phase III+ proved to be very good. The extreme top end, in fact, was outstanding, although on some "hot" program material a slight reduction in the tweeter level was desirable. Overall, the sound was smooth and free of the lower mid-range colorations heard from many speakers when their sound is compared directly with the original.

It is obvious that the Phase III+ was designed to compete with some of the popular and expensive speakers having the so-called "West Coast" sound. It has clarity, high efficiency, smoothness, and an adequate bass response. It can be played very loud, if that is your preference, but it is equally at home with chamber music because of its smoothness and lack of coloration. We felt that the veneered finish of the cabinets left something to be desired in that it appeared to be more or less an ultra-thin (and virtually invisible) protec-

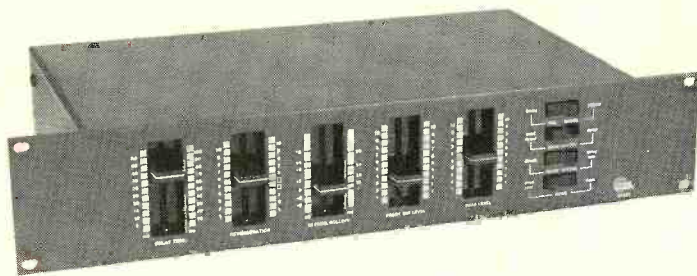
tive coating over the veneer that shields it from stains—but prevents further finishing.

We operated the Phase III+ on the floor, on shelves, and on tilt stands that raised the speaker about a foot from the floor. In our room, the differences were slight, but it is always worth experimenting with speaker placement to obtain the best bass response in a particular room. Although, according to our measurements, the Phase III+ is not a speaker with a strong low bass, it certainly gave no audible hint of weakness in that area. Likewise, although its high-frequency dispersion properties were not outstanding in our test, in our listening room it gave no sign of audible beaming of highs. In general, it delivers a smooth, well-balanced sound without unnatural emphasis on any one frequency range.

Judging from several months of use tests, we would have to say that the total audible performance of the Phase III+ is considerably better than might be inferred from some of our measurements. As a matter of fact, these speakers "wear extremely well," and we enjoyed listening to them for extended periods—which certainly cannot be said for all speakers that come our way.

Circle 106 on reader service card

Sound Concepts SD550 Time-delay System



TIME-DELAY devices have long been used to provide a more convincing illusion of reality in musical reproduction by simulating a concert-hall ambience. In fact, years before stereo, acoustically driven spring devices were offered as "reverberation" accessories for home music systems. They usually imparted an unnatural "boinggg" sound to the program, however, and never met with much success in the marketplace. These crude devices should not, of course, be confused with

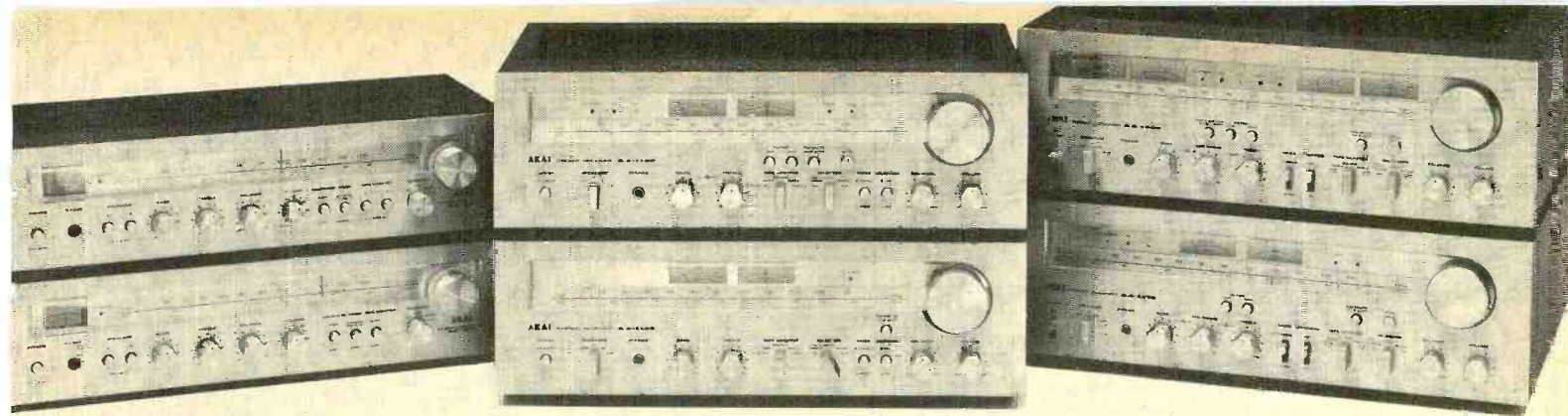
the sophisticated (and expensive) mechanical delay devices made by AKG and others for professional use.

Several years ago, all-electronic time-delay devices began to appear on the professional market, but the first intended for consumer use was the Sound Concepts SD-50, a product of a small, newly formed company in Brookline, Massachusetts. It was based on the so-called "bucket-brigade" principle, employing charge-coupled devices (CCD) to delay the

program signal. The CCD is an integrated circuit containing hundreds of small capacitors separated by semiconductor switches which are opened or closed by signals from an external "clock" or timing oscillator. The signal waveform is sampled at regular intervals, and the first capacitor element is charged to the instantaneous amplitude of the signal. The next clock pulse causes the transfer of the stored voltage to the next capacitor, and the first element is then ready to sample the program level at the next moment of time. Every other clock pulse causes the stored signal to be shifted from one capacitor to the next and enters a new signal sample at the input to the CCD (the analogy to a fire-fighting "bucket brigade" is obvious).

Depending on the frequency of the clock pulse, the time it takes a signal to pass through the CCD array can be adjusted over a wide range. However, the clock frequency must be at least twice the highest program frequency, which sets a limit on the maximum

(Continued on page 54)



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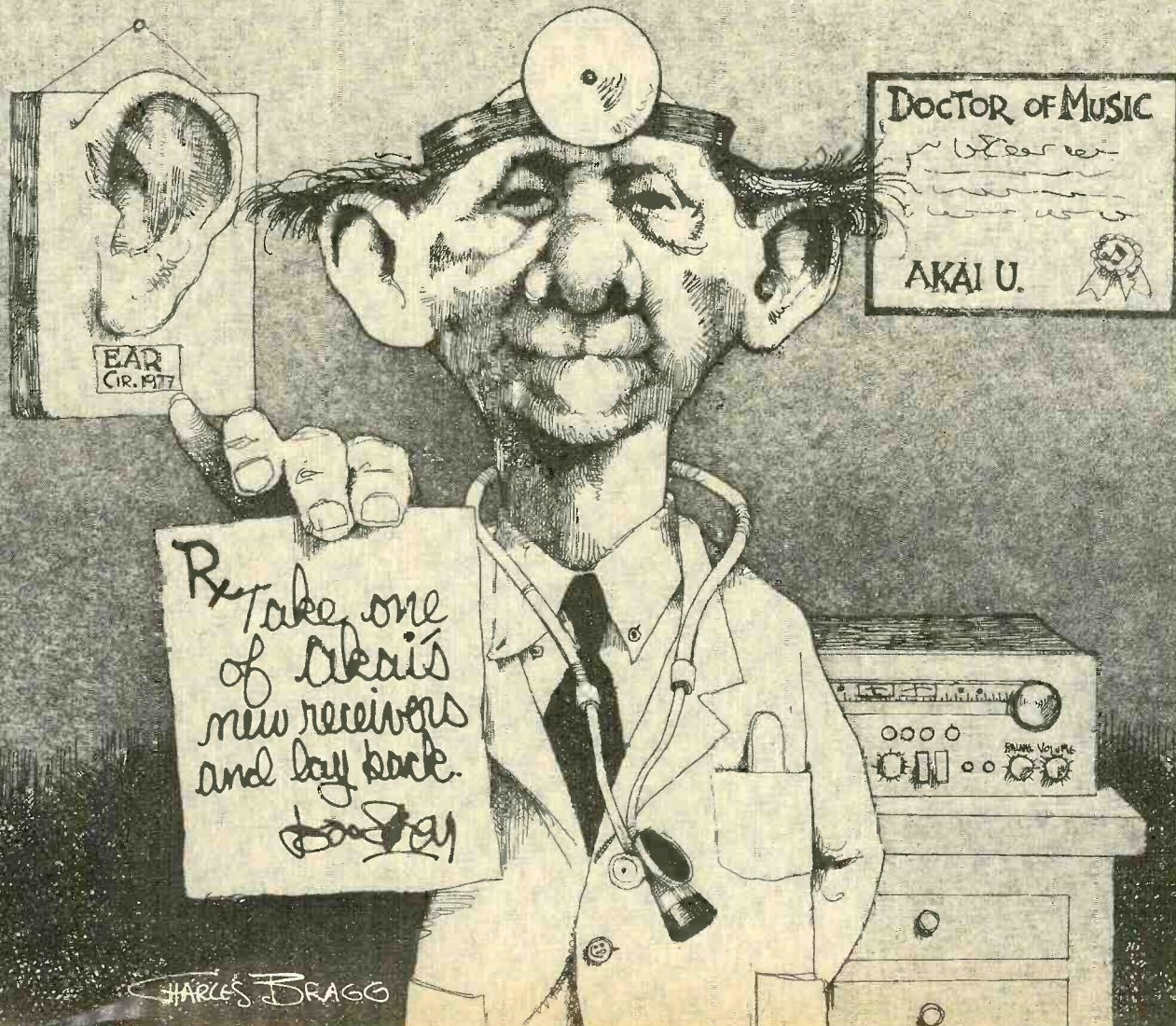
dealer. And start hearing what you've been missing.

Model	Watts/ RMS	OHMS	Power Band Width	Total Harmonic Distortion
AA-1115	15	8	40-20,000 Hz	no more than 0.5%
AA-1125	25	8	20-20,000 Hz	no more than 0.3%
AA-1135	35	8	20-20,000 Hz	no more than 0.2%
AA-1150	50	8	20-20,000 Hz	no more than 0.1%
AA-1175	75	8	20-20,000 Hz	no more than 0.08%
AA-1200	120	8	20-20,000 Hz	no more than 0.08%

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delay. There is also a potential loss of high-frequency response and an increase in noise level as the delay time increases.

Time-delay units have also been made with digital circuits which first convert the analog program to a series of digital pulses. These, in turn, are passed through a series of digital memories or "shift registers," at a rate determined by the internal clock, before being reconverted to analog form. Both types of delay systems (analog and digital) operate in much the same manner, although each has its advantages and disadvantages. One feature shared by all presently available time-delay units is their high price—\$600 and up—because of their circuit complexity, which far exceeds that of any other hi-fi component.

Sound Concepts is now producing their second-generation time-delay unit, the SD550. Based on the same bucket-brigade principle used in the original SD-50, its control features have been extensively redesigned to increase its versatility, and it has been completely repackaged. The SD550 is intended to be con-

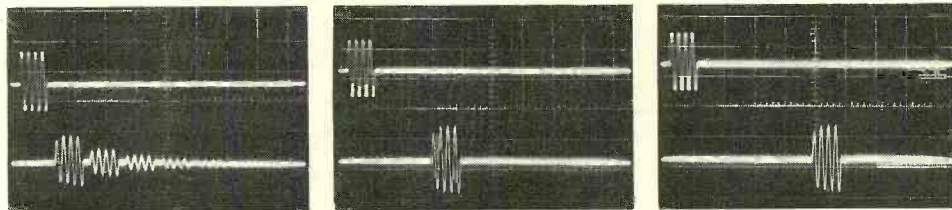
toward the rear of the room. Since the entire configuration then closely resembles a conventional four-channel playback arrangement, the SD-550 has been designed to interface easily with a four-channel amplifier and speaker systems. It even has front-panel controls that switch the listening arrangement between four-channel and delay-enhanced stereo.

The front panel of the SD550 contains five vertical slider controls and four rocker switches. The DELAY TIME slider varies the internal clock frequency, and thus the delay time, between limits of 5 and 50 milliseconds (roughly corresponding to physical path-length differences of 5 to 50 feet). Next to it is the REVERBERATION control which varies the amount of cross-feed between the channels from 0 to 100 per cent. The HI FREQ ROLLOFF is a specialized tone control affecting only the rear (delayed) signals. At its 0-dB setting, the high-frequency rolloff of the rear channels increases as the time delay is increased. This corresponds to the normal attenuation of

inches wide, depending on whether the standard or rack-mount version is used. The entire unit is finished in black with white panel markings. It weighs 7 pounds and consumes 10 watts from the power line. It has no power switch, and the manufacturer suggests that it be left on continuously to eliminate any turn-on transients that might be fed to the rear speakers.

The gain of the unit is factory-set to 1, but it can be adjusted by screwdriver controls accessible in the rear. The input and output impedances are, respectively, 60,000 and 300 ohms. The rear-channel frequency response is rated at ± 1 dB from 20 to 5,000 Hz with 5 milliseconds delay and a 0-dB high-frequency rolloff. With the rolloff set to match the delay, the response is down 3 dB at 8,000 Hz for all delay settings. The A-weighted output-noise level is at least 85 dB below 1 volt. The 1,000-Hz distortion at 1 volt is less than 1 per cent and is almost entirely second harmonic. The manual accompanying the SD550 is complete, written in a straightforward, "no-non-

Oscilloscope photos show the time relation between input (top) and delayed (bottom) signals. Delay times are (left to right) 5, 25, and 50 milliseconds. Photo at near right shows the effect of the reverberation circuits.



nected between the preamplifier and power amplifier (it can be placed in a tape-monitor loop, but since it does not duplicate the tape-monitor switching this capability would be lost without the aid of an external tape-switch box). The incoming signal is connected to rear terminals marked FRONT IN; the adjacent FRONT OUT jacks go to the front-channel power amplifier. Normally, there is a direct connection internally between these jacks, so that the SD550 has no effect on the stereo program going to the front speakers.

Within the SD550, each channel of the incoming signal passes through a 10,000-Hz low-pass filter, a pre-emphasis network, and a 2:1 compressor before reaching the CCD delay circuits. After the delay, there is a 2:1 expansion (complementary to the compression) and a de-emphasis network. The purpose of these circuits is to reduce to inaudibility any noise added to the delayed program by the CCD. The delayed signals then go to the REAR OUT jacks.

There are separate time-delay circuits in each channel, both of them set by the same clock signal. A portion of each delayed output can also be fed back to the input of the opposite channel, where it is again delayed, and so on. This multiple delay technique adds reverberation effects to the sound. It is also possible to mix a selected fraction of the delayed rear signals with the otherwise unmodified front signals. Under certain circumstances this can enhance the overall effect, and it can also add delay and reverberation to the signal for stereo headphone listening or recording.

The rear-out signals go through another amplifier to a second pair of speakers located

highs experienced as one moves back in a concert hall, where a greater portion of the high-frequency energy is absorbed by the surroundings. If one wants to retain the flattest possible response, the HI FREQ ROLLOFF control set to one of the "plus" positions boosts the rear-channel high-frequency response to compensate for the loss of highs at long delay times. The control is calibrated both in decibels (+6 to -3) and in milliseconds (5 to 50) to correspond to the settings of the DELAY TIME control for which it compensates.

The remaining sliders are level controls. The FRONT MIX LEVEL adjusts the fraction of the delayed signal that can be added to the front outputs. REAR LEVEL is a level control for the delayed outputs. Most of the rocker switches are used to convert the system for either four-channel or time-delay operation. An INPUT switch feeds the time-delay circuits with either the front-channel program or with the rear-channel program from a quadraphonic source. The FRONT OUTPUT switch connects the front-channel input and output jacks directly or mixes the delayed program with the front outputs under the control of the FRONT MIX LEVEL slider. The REAR OUTPUT switch connects either the delayed signals or the rear channels of a quadraphonic preamplifier to the rear-output jacks. The DELAY RANGE switch has positions for 50 (normal) and 100 milliseconds. However, the two stereo channels can be connected in tandem for very long delays, and they are driven by a summed signal (L + R) to give a monophonic delay of up to 100 milliseconds.

The Sound Concepts SD550 is 3½ inches high by 9 inches deep and either 15½ or 19

inches wide, depending on whether the standard or rack-mount version is used. The entire unit is finished in black with white panel markings. It weighs 7 pounds and consumes 10 watts from the power line. It has no power switch, and the manufacturer suggests that it be left on continuously to eliminate any turn-on transients that might be fed to the rear speakers.

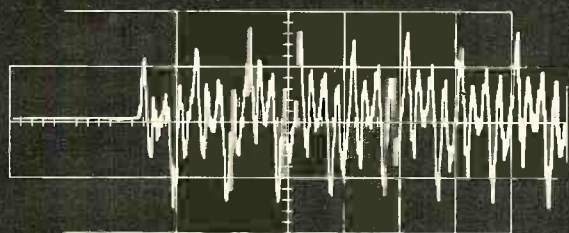
© **Laboratory Measurements.** Since the reasons for using time-delay enhancement are largely psychoacoustic, conventional measurements are not too informative. We did make frequency-response measurements through the rear delayed channels with various control settings. The manufacturer points out that the internal compander action will exaggerate any frequency-response variations measured with sine-wave signals. Taking that into account, our measurements nevertheless agreed closely with data supplied by Sound Concepts.

Using 0-dB rolloff, the response was flat within about 1 dB from 20 up to 6,000 Hz with a 5-millisecond delay, falling to -6 dB at 9,000 Hz (the equivalent of the -3-dB frequency in the equipment specifications, measured in a different manner). A 25-millisecond delay reduced the -6-dB frequency to 7,000 Hz; at 50 milliseconds it was 5,000 Hz. The HI FREQ ROLLOFF control could be used to restore the response at any setting of the DELAY control to approximately the 9,000-Hz value which was measured at minimum delay.

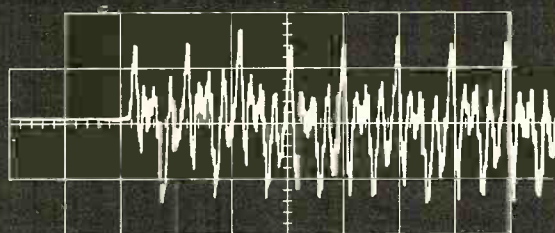
The distortion was, as claimed, virtually all second-harmonic, which is recognized as being least objectionable to the listener. At 1,000 Hz it varied from 0.28 per cent at 0.1 volt to 0.79 per cent at 1 volt and 1 per cent at 3 volts. The distortion at 10,000 Hz was roughly the same. Noise levels could not be measured directly because the noise level of

(Continued on page 56)

Will the real B.B. King please stand up.



B.B. King Live.



B.B. King reproduced by SB-7000A.

What the legendary B.B. King's rapid guitar picking style did for players like Eric Clapton, Mike Bloomfield and Alvin Lee is music history. He fathered a generation of blues-influenced rock guitarists.

But what B.B. King is doing with Technics Linear Phase Speaker Systems is making another kind of history. Hi-fi history.

Look at the waveforms. On the left is B.B. King playing live. On the right is the same music reproduced by Technics Linear Phase SB-7000A.

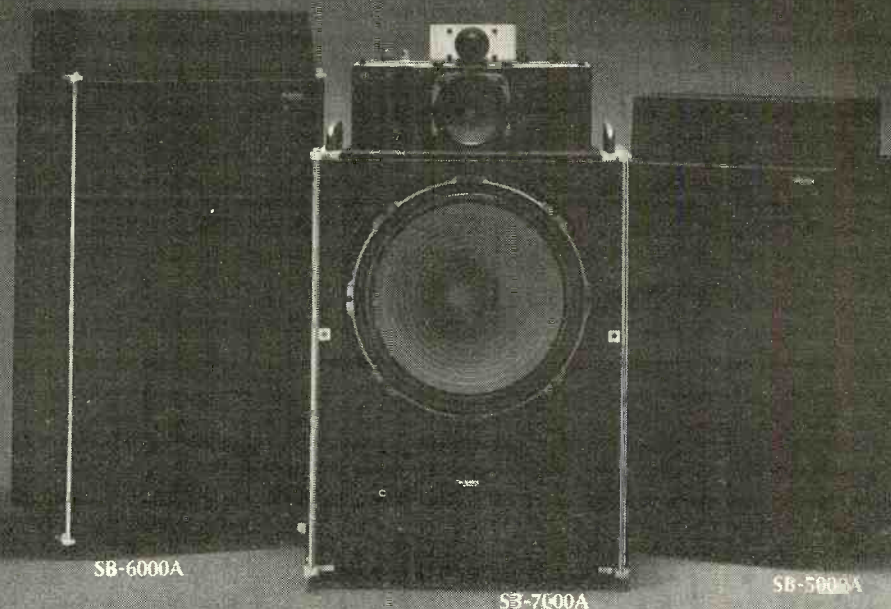
It's hard to tell the difference. And that's our point. Technics Linear Phase Speaker Systems are the first speaker systems with not only a wide frequency response but also flat amplitude and complete linearity. And that makes them the first speaker systems capable of reproducing a musical waveform that's virtually a mirror image of the original.

How did we do it? First by conducting exhaustive amplitude and phase studies in acoustically perfect chambers. Then by developing a unique new phase-

controlled crossover network that not only compensates for the time delays caused by different frequencies but simultaneously corrects any acoustic differences in the drivers. And finally by staggering each driver unit for the optimum acoustic position.

Technics Linear Phase SB-7000A, SB-6000A and SB-5000A. For music that sounds as it was originally played.

Technics Professional Series
by Panasonic

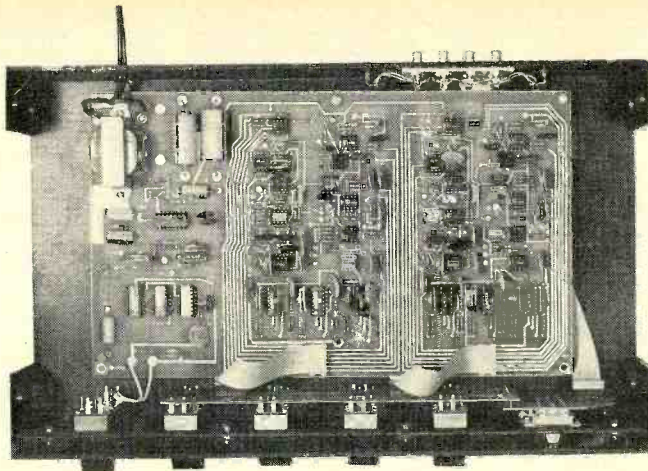


our active "A"-weighting network was greater than that in the SD550. We could see that the "noise" in its output was entirely composed of clock pulses at a frequency which varied between approximately 30 and 300 kHz, depending on the setting of the delay control. Hum and random noise were substantially lower than -80 dB relative to 1 volt, although we could not establish the actual figure.

By driving the SD550 with a four-cycle tone burst of a 400-Hz signal, we were able to verify the accuracy of the DELAY time calibration and the effect of the REVERBERATION control. The oscilloscope photos were taken with a time base (horizontal) of 10 milliseconds per division. The upper burst is the signal going into the unit and the lower one is the delayed output. Note that the actual time delay was very close to the control settings of 5, 25, and 50 milliseconds. When maximum REVERBERATION is used, a series of successively weaker pulses can be seen in the rear output following the delayed pulse. Note that a similar series will appear in the other (undriven) channel at slightly different times. The short delay of 5 milliseconds was chosen for this so that several delayed signals could be seen in their correct relationship to the primary pulse. At the longer delays that would normally be used, the reverberant pulses could cover a much longer time span.

❁ **Comment.** Measurements on a device such as the Sound Concepts SD550, though interesting to make, really do little more than confirm that it is operating properly. Any real judgment of its worth must be based purely on subjective impressions. We became aware of the advantages of time-delay systems when we first used the Sound Concepts SD-50 a couple of years ago, although the unit lacked a number of the refinements that have been incorporated into the SD550. Having lived with time-delay devices for some time, we had a pretty good idea of what problems to look for in any such system.

One difficulty is that the conditions which are optimum for one kind of music are not suitable for others, and none of them are correct for use with the human voice. A relatively long delay that sounds fine with music makes an announcer sound like he is talking



Top view of the SD550 shows the complexity of the circuitry and the extensive use of integrated-circuit chips.

from the other end of a long tunnel. This can be most disconcerting when listening to FM broadcasts! The seriousness of the effect seems to depend somewhat on the manner in which the reverberation system processes the multiply delayed signals. In no case should time-delay units be viewed as "echo" systems. If the controls are set so that everything sounds as if it were taking place in a cavern or a huge stadium, the unnaturalness of the effect soon becomes irritating.

Although the SD550 controls *can* be set to produce unnatural effects, its continuous adjustments make it easy to find the exactly correct delay, reverberation, and level that will yield satisfactorily natural ones. One advantage of the SD550 is the fact that it cannot be overloaded by any signal that is likely to exist between a preamplifier and a power amplifier and therefore needs no input-level controls. And it is *quiet*—under *no* conditions could we hear any noise from the rear speakers.

Anyone who has not heard a time-delay system might wonder just what it does for the sound. In our experience, the ambiance contributed by a properly adjusted time-delay system does more to provide an illusion of reality in reproduced music than anything else we know of. Theoretically, good quadraphonic program material feeding a high-quality reproducing system should do as well or better, but in practice this hardly ever happens. Furthermore, time delay imparts the same quali-

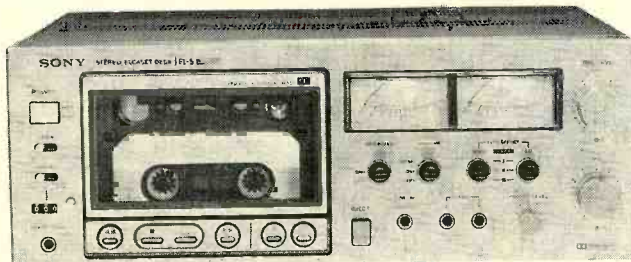
ties to *any* stereo (or even mono) program instead of being limited to special quadraphonic program material.

At its best, a time-delay system gives a sense of life and openness to the program, providing a spaciousness that simply cannot be realized naturally in a normal-size listening room. To achieve this, the channels must be balanced so that one does not hear the rear speakers as discrete sound sources, for this would completely destroy the illusion of reality. So, whatever one's choice of delay and reverberation conditions, the rear level should first be turned up until the rear speakers can just barely be heard, and then backed off until they cannot. If you doubt that the system is functioning, switch off the rear speakers while music is playing. The loss of reality is not at all subtle—it is so devastating that you will wonder how you ever got along without a time-delay system.

The Sound Concepts SD550 is not inexpensive, and when the cost of another stereo amplifier and a pair of speakers (which do not have to have the range of your main speakers) is included, a delay system can run to well over \$1,000. Is it worth it? If you can afford it, yes! One thing is certain: you are not likely to be able to improve the sound of your present system, if it is already of reasonably high quality, by a comparable degree with any other expenditure of a lesser amount.

Circle 107 on reader service card

Sony EL-5 Elcaset Deck



WELL over a year ago, the elcaset format was announced to the audio world. The name is derived from *L*(arge) cassette, which

is a fairly apt description of this new tape format. Developed by a consortium of Japanese manufacturers—JVC, Technics, Sony, and

Teac—it is intended to bridge the gap between cassette and open-reel recording, to combine the convenience of the former with the performance of the latter. It also provides a few advantages peculiar to itself. At present, all the tapes are made by Sony, but each of the participating manufacturers (and some of their subsidiaries and affiliates) produces a line of elcaset decks that use them.

The elcaset cartridge is considerably larger than the familiar compact cassette, which it resembles in general configuration. Measuring roughly 6 x 4 x 3/4 inches, it is slightly larger than a standard eight-track tape cartridge. It

(Continued on page 58)

LIGHTS: 12 mg. "tar", 0.9 mg. nicotine
av. per cigarette by FTC method.
LIGHT 100's: 12 mg. "tar", 1.0 mg. nicotine
av. per cigarette by FTC method.

I want low tar. But taste is a must.

I wanted less tar. But not less taste.
I found Winston Lights. I get the low tar numbers
I want, and the taste I like. If it wasn't for
Winston Lights, I wouldn't smoke.

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



Winston Lights. Winston Light 100's.

contains standard-width 1/4-inch tape, which in the elcaset format is recorded in four parallel tracks, a pair of stereo tracks running in each direction of tape movement. In addition, there is provision for recording two narrow control tracks between the pairs of signal tracks; these might be used for controlling slide projectors or operating sophisticated signal processors in any machine designed to make use of them. At present, elcaset cartridges are available only in LC-60 and LC-90 lengths, or 30 and 45 minutes of program in each direction, respectively.

Unlike the cassette, with its 1 7/8-ips tape speed, the elcaset is designed to operate at 3 3/4 ips. The combination of nearly doubled tape-track width and doubled tape speed gives the elcaset format a powerful advantage over the standard cassette in terms of freedom from high-frequency tape saturation, which is probably the most serious technical limitation of the cassette medium. Another important

makes accidental movement impossible). The internal tape hubs are locked in place when the cartridge is removed from the elcaset recorder, thus preventing the creation of tape slack during shipping or handling.

The Sony EL-5 is probably the most basic elcaset machine presently available. It has no automatic parameter-selection features and uses a two-head configuration that has a combined record/playback head (as mentioned above, the elcaset format makes three-head tape transports perfectly practical, and Sony does make a more expensive model with that feature). Physically, the Sony EL-5 very much resembles a front-loading cassette deck. It is 17 inches wide, 6 3/4 inches high, and 12 3/4 inches deep; it weighs about 23 pounds. The cartridge loads vertically behind a transparent hinged door at the left of the front panel; an EJECT button opens the door. Below the door are light-touch pushbuttons that control the usual transport functions through sole-

removes whatever 19-kHz pilot carrier might otherwise remain in the stereo FM signals being recorded.

At the right of the panel are two sets of concentric right-left recording-level controls for the LINE and MIC inputs, which can be mixed. Across the bottom of the panel are the two microphone jacks, a stereo LINE input jack that replaces the normal LINE jacks on the rear apron when a plug is inserted, and a small knob that controls the playback level through the headphone jack.

The rear panel bears the LINE input and output jacks, a level adjustment for the line outputs, two FM CAL level controls, a socket for an optional remote-control accessory, and one switched and one unswitched accessory outlet. Suggested list price for the EL-5 is \$630. Elcaset tapes range in price from \$7 to \$12, depending on type and length.

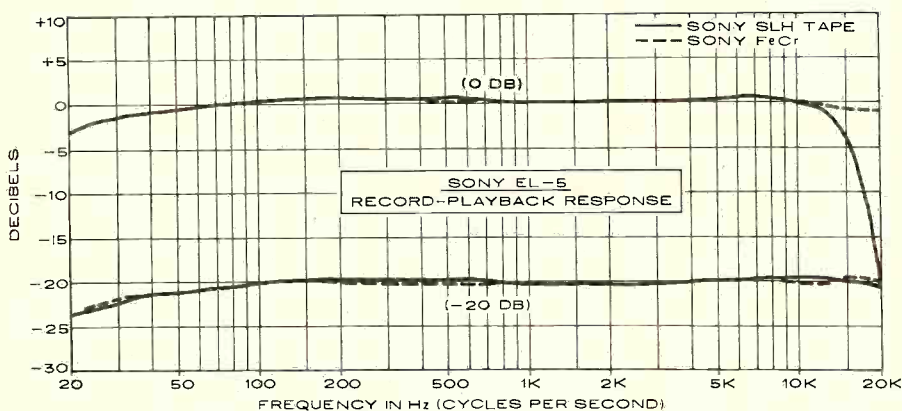
● **Laboratory Measurements.** The Model EL-5 elcaset deck we tested came with a pre-recorded demonstration tape and samples of several blank elcaset cartridges. Since there are no standard playback test tapes as yet for the elcaset, we made all our measurements by recording and playing back the same tape.

With the Sony SLH tape, the record-playback frequency response at a -20-dB level was within ± 0.5 dB from 60 to 20,500 Hz. It was down 4 dB at 20 and 22,400 Hz. At a 0-dB recording level, the playback output dropped rapidly above 10,000 Hz owing to tape saturation. The superior high-frequency qualities of the ferrichrome tape were dramatically demonstrated by its frequency response, which was within ± 0.5 dB from 60 to 24,000 Hz at -20 dB and down 4 dB at 20 and 26,200 Hz. Even at 0 dB, the FeCr tape revealed little evidence of tape saturation, with a response within ± 2 dB from 20 to 21,500 Hz. The MPX filter, which operates only during recording and had no effect up to 15,000 Hz, cut the 19-kHz response by at least 25 dB.

To reach a 0-dB recording level, a LINE input of 56 millivolts (mV) or a MIC input of 0.145 mV was needed. The resulting playback level was about 0.65 volt. The microphone preamplifier overloaded at a 70-mV input. The superior tape headroom of the elcaset format was further demonstrated by a very low distortion (at a 0-dB recording level) of only 0.08 per cent with SLH and 0.28 per cent with FeCr tape. In fact, to reach a 3 per cent distortion level on playback we had to record the tapes at +10 and +12 dB, respectively. Without Dolby, the unweighted signal-to-noise ratio (S/N) was 47.5 dB with SLH and 50 dB with FeCr. With the Dolby system switched in and using the CCIR weighting recommended by Dolby Laboratories, the S/N figures improved to 67.7 and 70.5 dB. Through the microphone inputs, at maximum gain, the noise increased by 8.5 dB. The Dolby circuits tracked closely between the recording and playback modes, changing the overall record-playback frequency response by no more than 1 dB at levels from -20 to -40 dB.

The unweighted rms wow and flutter was only 0.07 per cent. An LC-60 elcaset was moved from end to end in the fast speeds in about 76 seconds. The VU meters were slower in their response than a true VU meter, reaching 65 to 70 per cent of their steady-state readings on 0.3-second tone bursts. The headphone volume was adequate with 8-ohm phones but rather low with 200-ohm phones.

(Continued on page 60)



feature of the elcaset is that the tape is withdrawn from the housing during recording and playback, being passed over fixed heads in the machine as in an open-reel recorder. This makes possible almost any type of head configuration. By contrast, the heads in the cassette format must be moved to contact the tape *within* the cassette, and a third (monitor) head can be used only with the exercise of technical and mechanical ingenuity.

The elcaset cartridge contains a number of coding notches and holes that give it a potential capability for almost totally automatic selection of operating parameters. For example, three types of elcaset tape have been announced (or are contemplated): a low-noise ferric-oxide tape (currently Sony SLH), Sony ferrichrome (FeCr), and a chromium-dioxide (CrO₂) tape. Holes near one corner of the elcaset cartridge identify the tape type, and in a recorder equipped to use this information they could automatically select the required bias and equalization when the elcaset cartridge is inserted. Other "break-out" tabs, like those used on standard cassettes as a recording lock-out, are used when a recording has been Dolbyized, and they could automatically switch a deck into Dolby mode if, again, the deck were designed to respond.

The elcaset can be made proof against accidental rerecording over a tape whose contents are to be preserved: instead of a break-out tab, a slide near one corner of the cartridge is moved to its "safety" position. If you want to record over the tape, the slide can easily be returned to its original position (the design

noises: rewind, fast forward, play, record, and pause. Colored symbols above the buttons glow to show the operating mode of the machine, and a logic system allows the buttons to be operated in any sequence without damage to the tape.

To the left of the elcaset door is a pushbutton POWER switch and two three-position levers that control TIMER and MEMORY functions. The TIMER switch can be used to start the deck in either the record or playback mode when there is an external clock timer installed in the power line. The MEMORY circuit can be set simply to stop the tape in rewind when the counter returns to 000 or to go into play automatically at that point. Below the MEMORY switch are the index counter and its reset button, plus a headphone jack for low-impedance phones.

Below the two large illuminated VU meters are four lever switches, two of which separately control the recording bias and equalization for the three available types of elcaset tape. A third switch controls the Dolby circuits, with an extra position for recording Dolby FM broadcasts. In the DOLBY FM mode the de-emphasis time constant of the tuner signal is changed to the required 25 microseconds and the recording level is set by a pair of controls in the rear of the machine so that the Dolby-level tone transmitted by some FM stations gives a 0-dB meter reading on the EL-5. The signal is recorded in its encoded form while the EL-5's outputs simultaneously provide a decoded version of the signal. The fourth switch turns on the MPX filter, which



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time relationships. It gives you a sound that stays open and accurate, clear on down to the bottom.

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● **Comment.** There can be no doubt that the elcaset, especially with the FeCr tape, is a medium that is technically superior to the compact cassette, especially with respect to high-frequency recording headroom. Operating at 3¾ ips, the elcaset matches the performance of some open-reel decks operating at 7½ ips. Of course, much of the credit for this must go to the FeCr tape, which is not generally available for open-reel machines (nor are such machines, with the exception of one or two Sony models, equipped to use it). Nevertheless, judged solely on its own merits, the elcaset, even in the form of the modestly priced EL-5, appears to be a no-compromise high-fidelity recording medium for the home recordist. Only the best cassette recorders can approach its overall performance, and then only when their recording levels are carefully monitored.

We found the Model EL-5 to be a very easy deck to use. The absence of a third head for monitoring caused us some concern at first,

but we soon found that the entire recording process was so noncritical that there was little need to monitor while recording. The elcaset is as easy to handle as a regular cassette (perhaps easier, because of its larger size). Presumably it could be spliced and edited like open-reel tape, although we would have misgivings about withdrawing any substantial amount of the tape from an elcaset housing.

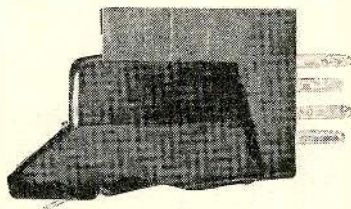
We have given considerable thought to the place of the elcaset in the audio market. Our first reaction to its announcement was one of skepticism. After all, who needs a "better" cassette? But, having lived with the EL-5 for some time now, we appreciate how much of a "better cassette" it really is. The FeCr cartridge is really a full equivalent of 7½-ips open-reel tape in terms of overall performance. In contrast to the handling clumsiness of open-reel tape, the elcaset offers all the convenience of use that has helped make the compact cassette so popular. Further, the elcaset recorder is closer in size and weight to a

cassette deck than to an open-reel machine.

One should be aware that, for dubbing most phonograph records and FM broadcasts, the elcaset does *not* offer any quality advantage over the compact cassette. Only when the dynamic range of cassettes is inadequate or marginal (as in the case of most "live" recording) does the elcaset audibly demonstrate its superiority. There are no commercially recorded elcaset tapes on the market, and we would not expect any significant number to be produced. The elcaset is strictly for the do-it-yourself tape enthusiast who has access to the finest recorded program material or to the real thing—live music. In respect to the big question—Which of the three formats is best for any individual's purposes?—the answer is obvious: it is a simple matter of weighing each format's pros and cons (including cost and available recording and playing time) against the requirements of the recordings you want to make.

Circle 108 on reader service card

ADC ZLM Phono Cartridge



SEVERAL major manufacturers are now producing stereo phono cartridges whose stylus shapes were derived from the special styli originally developed for playing CD-4 records. These stereo versions are not quite so extreme in their edge contours as the Shibata

and similar designs, but like them they contact a much longer portion of the groove wall than conventional elliptical or conical shapes do. The result is extended high-frequency response, reduced distortion (since the stylus shape is closer to that of the chisel-tipped cut-

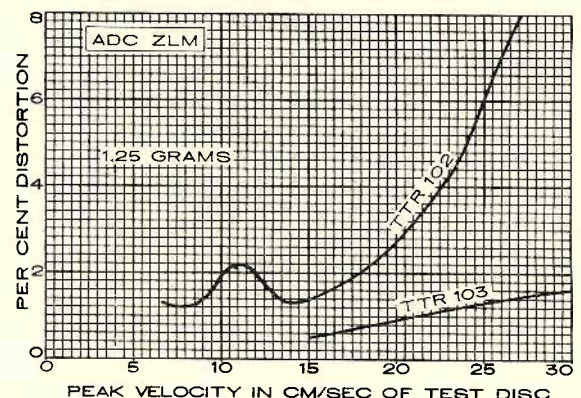
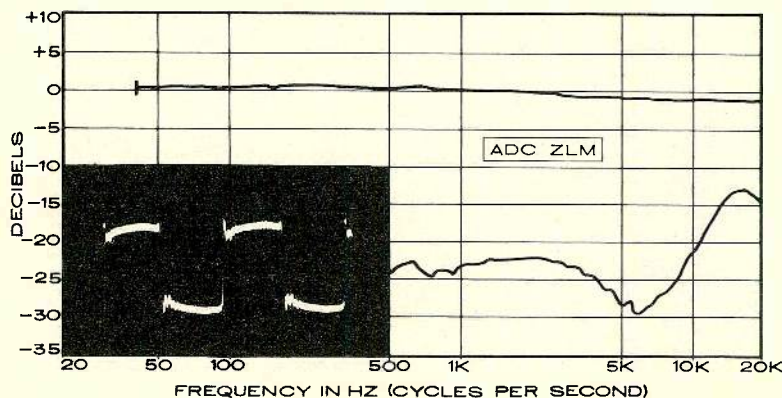
ting stylus that made the master disc), and reduced record wear because of the greater contact area between the stylus and the record groove.

The latest of this new breed of cartridges is ADC's top-of-the-line ZLM, which features the company's "Alicptic" stylus. Its scanning radius, which traces the groove modulation, is only 0.2 mil, and its bearing radius, across the groove wall, is 1.5 mils. ADC makes the claim of "zero record wear" for the ZLM. They justify this by pointing out that the average record is played only about sixty times during its life, and microscopic examination of records played with the Alicptic stylus show no wear after seventy-five or more plays. Thus,

(Continued on page 64)

In the graph at left, the upper curve represents the smoothed, averaged frequency response of the cartridge's right and left channels; the distance (calibrated in decibels) between it and the lower curve represents the separation between the two channels. The inset oscilloscope photo shows the cartridge's response to a recorded 1,000-Hz square wave (see text), which indicates resonances and overall frequency response. At right is the cartridge's response to the intermodulation-distortion (IM) and 10.8-kHz tone-burst test bands of the TTR-102 and

TTR-103 test records. These high velocities provide a severe test of a phono cartridge's performance. The intermodulation-distortion (IM) readings for any given cartridge can vary widely, depending on the particular IM test record used. The actual distortion figure measured is not as important as the maximum velocity the cartridge is able to track before a sudden and radical increase in distortion takes place. There are very few commercial phonograph discs that embody musical audio signals with recorded velocities much higher than about 15 cm/sec.



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CIRCLE NO. 38 ON READER SERVICE CARD

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All of which brings to life the 939's impressive specifications for wow and flutter (0.05%), signal-to-noise (65 dB) and frequency response (20-17,000 Hz.)

We assume you'll want to audition the 939 yourself. For now we'd like to take you through its astonishing array of design and operating features. You won't find many of them available on any other cassette deck.

Auto/reverse playback, bi-directional record.

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With the 939's unique fade/edit control, you can fade out those annoyances gradually, smoothly and permanently. And then fade back into the music. While listening to the entire process. Because it's all done during playback.

LEDs and uncompressed limiting.

Meter needles can't move fast enough to keep up with musical signals. Which is why the 939 uses instantaneous-reacting LED (light-emitting diode) record-level indicators. They can be switched from VU

to peak read-out. They tilt to the best viewing angle. And they are visible from across the room.

For still more insurance against distorted recordings, a special limiter can be switched in to protect against overload—without compressing normal dynamic range.

Still more features.

Separate slider controls allow mixing of live material from microphones with other material fed into the line inputs: There's Dolby* NR plus Dolby FM decoding with calibrations that automatically set the correct record-level for FM broadcasts. Also: memory stop; unrestricted tape-direction switching without going through stop; output and headphone level controls.

Drive system and tapeheads like no other.

Dual's powerful Continuous-Pole/synchronous motor, two capstans and two drive belts maintain speed accuracy of within 0.5%.

A C-90 cassette fast-winds in just over a minute, the time other decks need for a C-60.

Hard permalloy tapeheads are used for their extended life and superior magnetic linearity at both high and low signal levels. The four-track record/playback head switches electronically when the tape changes direction; it never shifts position. The result: perfect tape alignment in both directions at all times.

Six ways to install.

Which way would you find more convenient to load a cassette: from the front or the top? You can install the 939 either way, plus three other angles. And you can also hang it on a wall.

The last word.

You've probably noticed that we haven't attempted to lean on Dual's reputation for fine turntables. We didn't think we had to. The 939 will build its own reputation, on its own merits.

Price: less than \$550.†

†Actual resale prices are determined individually by and at the sole discretion of authorized Dual dealers. *TM Dolby Laboratories.



United Audio, 120 So. Columbus Ave., Mt. Vernon, NY 10553

CIRCLE NO. 50 ON READER SERVICE CARD

for all practical purposes, they feel, the ZLM cartridge will never wear out a record in home use.

The ADC ZLM is designed to track at forces between 0.5 and 1.25 grams. Its rated frequency response, when terminated in 47,000 ohms and 275 picofarads, is within ± 1 dB from 10 to 20,000 Hz, or ± 1.5 dB from 20 to 26,000 Hz. The rated output voltage is 1 millivolt per cm/sec of stylus velocity, and the nominal channel separation is 30 dB at 1,000 Hz and 20 dB at 10,000 Hz. Physically, the ZLM resembles the XLM series which formerly headed the ADC line (it is still there, just behind the ZLM).

Like the other ADC cartridges, the ZLM is an induced-magnet type with an easily replaceable stylus assembly. The nude diamond is mounted at the end of a tapered cantilever. Each cartridge is supplied with its individually run response curve. It is packaged in a truncated conical plastic case somewhat resembling an Apollo spacecraft, together with a small screwdriver and a stylus cleaning brush. Price: \$135.

● **Laboratory Measurements.** The ADC ZLM was tested in a tone arm with an equivalent mass of 16.5 grams, typical of today's better integrated record players. Initial tracking tests with several high-stress test records established that the 1.25-gram rated maximum tracking force was optimal for these discs, and all subsequent tests and listening were carried out with a 1.25-gram force. That was sufficient to enable the cartridge to track the 30-cm/sec, 1,000-Hz tones and the very high-level 32-Hz tones on a couple of our test records. However, with the German Hi-Fi Institute record, the highest level of the 300-Hz test tones that could be played without obvious mistracking was the 60-micron level.

The measured vertical tracking angle was 20 degrees, the industry standard. The cartridge output, which was identical on both

channels, was 2.95 millivolts at 3.54 cm/sec. The square-wave response from the CBS STR112 record showed a single moderate overshoot, with very low-level ringing at about 40,000 Hz across the full width of the square wave. This is a property of the test record, not the cartridge, but it is rarely seen in the output of magnetic cartridges because of the rolloff of high frequencies caused by their coil inductance. Previously, we have seen this ringing principally in the output of moving-coil magnetic cartridges and nonmagnetic types; its presence in the output of the ZLM implies a frequency response extending far above the audio range.

We measured the frequency response with the CBS STR100 record using a 250-picofarad capacitive load. The response was exceptionally flat, with a slight downward slope as the frequency increased. Overall, the response was within ± 1 dB over the full 40- to 20,000-Hz range of the test record. Channel separation averaged 20 to 25 dB through the mid-range, 15 to 18 dB at 10,000 Hz, and 13 dB at 20,000 Hz. The low-frequency resonance in the test arm was at 9 Hz with a 6-dB amplitude. Although most arms are slightly more massive than the one we used, we would expect the resonance to occur above 7 Hz in almost any arm.

Tracing distortion was measured with two Shure test records, the TTR102 (IM distortion) and the TTR103 (high-frequency tracking of a 10.8-kHz tone-burst signal). The IM was a moderately low 1 to 2 per cent up to about 18 cm/sec velocity, increasing to 8 per cent at 27 cm/sec. The high-frequency distortion was very low, increasing smoothly from 0.7 per cent at 15 cm/sec to 1.6 per cent at 30 cm/sec. In this test the ZLM ranked with the best cartridges we have tested.

A subjective tracking test with Shure's "Audio Obstacle Course—Era III" essentially confirmed these measurements. The musical sections, whose highest levels frequently

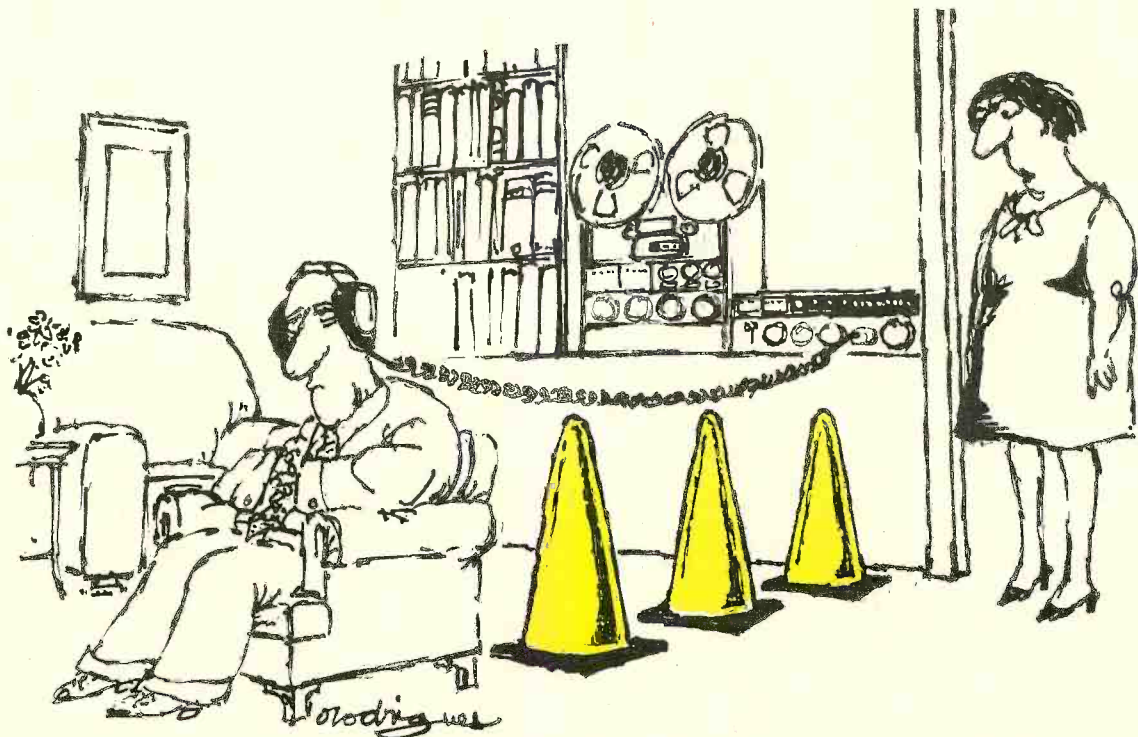
overtax the tracking abilities of even very good cartridges (musical bells, sibilants, and violin), were played easily by the ZLM at 1.25 grams. In particular, the very difficult sibilance test, which tends to sound "sandpaper" on its highest level when played by most cartridges, was reproduced flawlessly by the ZLM. On the other hand, the bass drum proved to be too much for the ZLM. There was a slight buzz on level 4 and a definite rattle on level 5.

● **Comment.** ADC cartridges, including the ZLM, have a flat bottom that lies just above the plane of the record. This requires that the cartridge be exactly parallel to the record or the cartridge body will contact the record surface. Since the stylus protrudes only slightly from the bottom of the cartridge, it is not possible to operate the cartridge significantly above its rated maximum force, which would cause the stylus to retract within the protective body.

Aside from its test-record performance, we found the sound of the ADC ZLM to be absolutely first-rate on music records of all types. High-velocity test records greatly exceed the maximum recorded levels one is likely to find on a music record, so that an inability to track a particular test band does not necessarily rule out the cartridge for critical music listening (most of the highly touted moving-coil cartridges do not do well on test records, but they are esteemed by critical listeners).

In particular, we listened on music for signs of low-frequency mistracking, since that seemed to be the weakest part of the ZLM's performance. Even with the drums on some of the Sheffield direct-to-disc recordings we heard no sign of distress from the cartridge. And at high frequencies it was superb, with the effortless transparency that comes from low tracking distortion and a ruler-flat frequency response.

Circle 109 on reader service card



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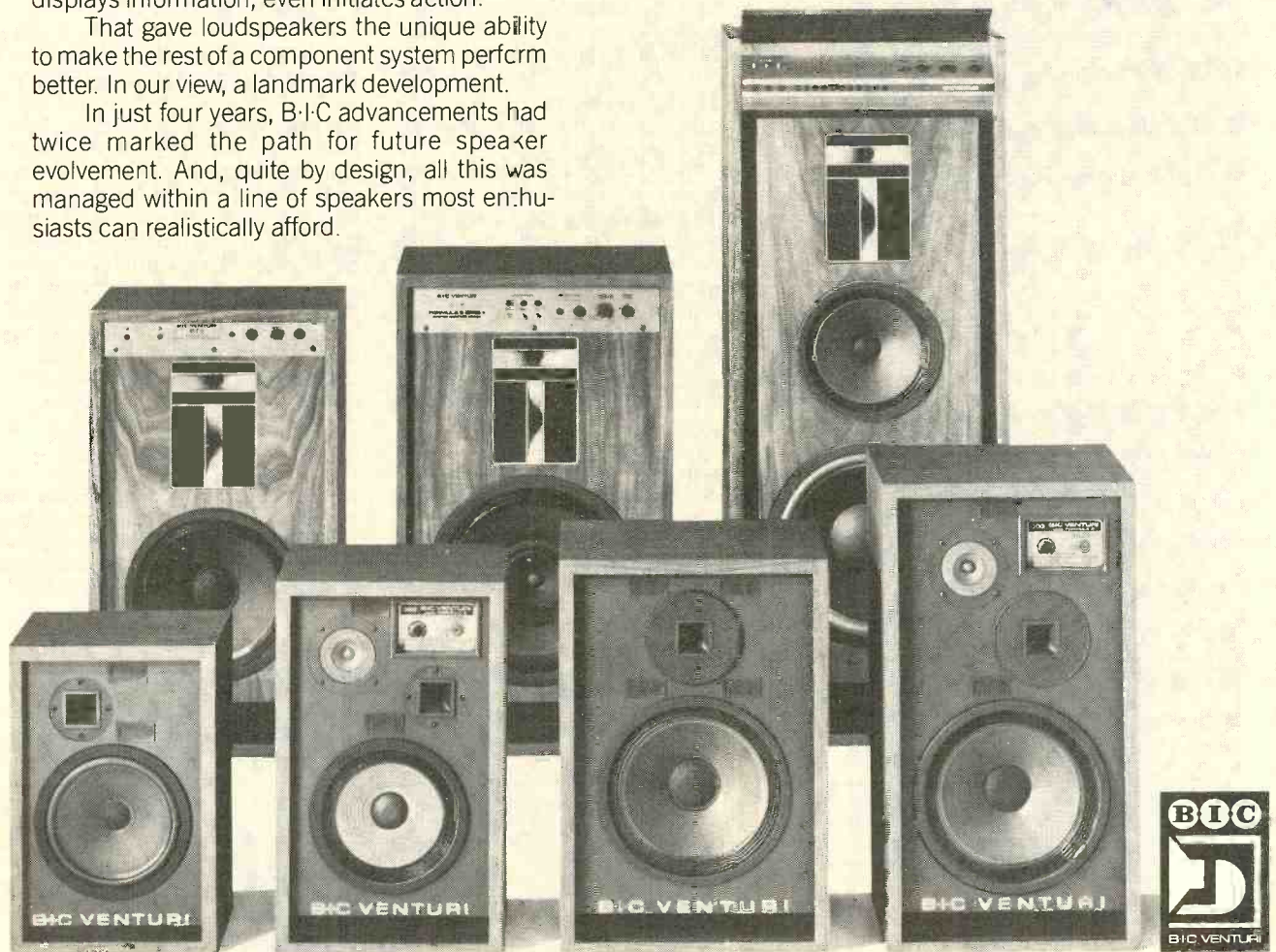
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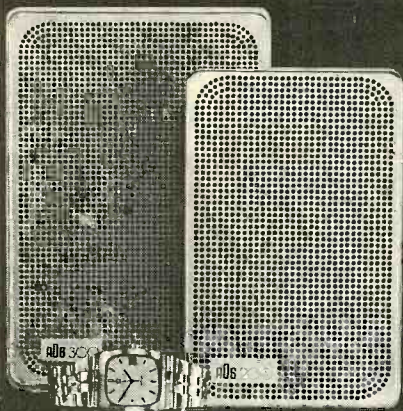
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CIRCLE NO. 6 ON READER SERVICE CARD

The Pop Beat

By Paulette Weiss



DISCOMANIA

THE hottest item at a rock-'n'-roll convention in New York City several months ago was a tee-shirt bearing an extremely obscene comment on disco. Most rockers just don't take kindly to disco music. They act as though its very existence were a personal affront, and they tell whoever will listen that it is soulless, mechanical, and likely to cause softening of the brain. One frustrated rocker known only as La Lumia has actually organized a nationwide movement called "Death to Disco." He provides buttons and bumper stickers bearing the grisly slogan, plus a manifesto stating his creed. (If you're interested, Mr. La Lumia is available for lectures and rallies.)

And it's not just the rockers who have gone off the deep end on the subject of disco. Jazz purists, too, complain that disco is not only a cheap form of music, but that it has robbed them of fine musicians who have "sold out" their art in crossing over to the greener pastures of commercial success it offers. The complaints come fast and furious: disco wipes out an artist's individuality, mashing his efforts into the pulp of its monotonous sound; disco is fickle and trendy—last night's hot platter is tonight's cold potato; and so on.

Even though it may be true up to a point, complaining is as futile as shaking your fist at a hurricane. Disco is an outgrowth of the times, which are confusing, often depressing, and not likely to change quickly. What disco provides is a little vacation from all that—and it's fun. It tends to be *mindless* fun, but there-

in lies its appeal. Its emphasis is on the feet, not the head, and dancing to it is an escape from the heavy burdens of both the day and the decade. Discotheques are glittering little fantasy worlds where elaborate lights and hypnotic music conspire to make every patron the star of his own romantic scenario for a night.

Disco does have its virtues. It has provided a shot of vitamin B₁₂ to the careers of both new and established artists and to a number of small record companies. It has rejuvenated the night life of urban centers, boosted the fashion industry, added a little spice of glamour in places where there was none before, given many their only form of exercise, and probably trebled the income of Arthur Murray Dance Studios throughout the land.

Yes, some jazz artists have sold out for commercial success (hardly a new phenomenon, by the way). But some have simply temporarily gone after the rewards that, sadly, artistic integrity never brought them. Take the case of jazz keyboardist Herbie Hancock, who was ripped into by jazz critics in 1973 for his first patently commercial (and enormously popular) album, "Headhunters." This year he had money in his pockets and the grin of a satisfied man on his face when the same critics who had mourned his loss to jazz were bowled over by his latest release, "VSOP."

Disco has resurrected and similarly rewarded neglected r-&b performers like Thelma

GRACE JONES: disco's Most Promising Female Vocalist, 1977



Island Records

Houston and Loleatta Holloway, who have returned the favor by breathing life into its often rigid form. Unfortunately, solo artists whose fame rests solely on disco tend to disappear in the overall crush of heavy orchestration favored by most disco producers. The vocals of Carol Douglas, Silver Convention, and the relentlessly loving Barry White, for instance, are reduced to premeasured structural blocks slipped into premeasured holes in assembly-line songs. Occasionally a Vicki Sue Robinson or a Savannah Band will appear with the ability to soar above the formula, but they are the exceptions.

But whether disco music makes your feet tap or your flesh crawl, it's here to stay for a while. As an industry, it grosses four to five billion dollars annually, second only to organized sports in the entertainment field. There are over 11,000 discotheques in the U.S., nearly 1,500 in Europe, and even the Soviet Union, at last report, sports a pair. Thirty-five per cent of the records currently sold in the U.S. are disco oriented, thirty million people listen to them, and approximately fourteen million dancers flock to discotheques every week.

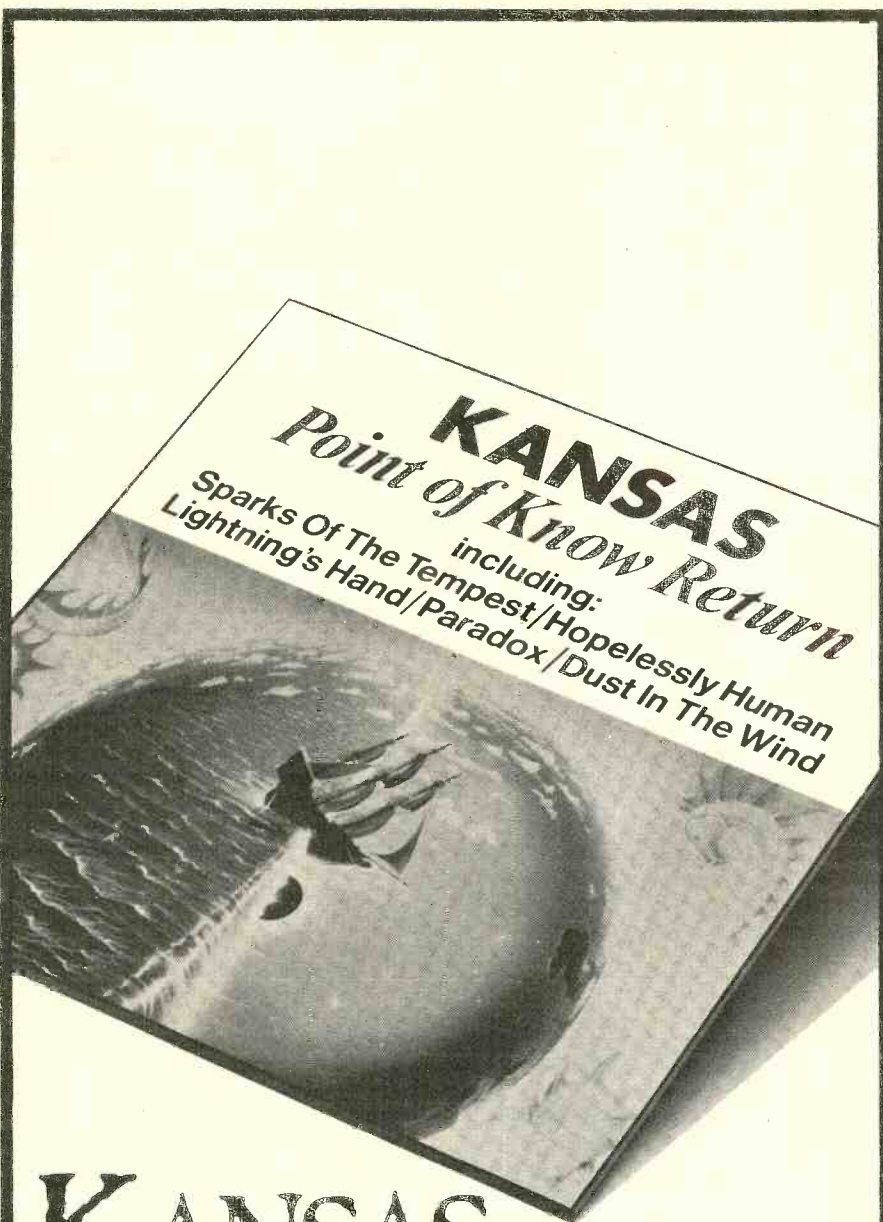
FOR four days in September, Disco III, a forum sponsored by the music trade magazine *Billboard*, brought home the growing clout disco has in all areas of the entertainment business. The panel discussions and exhibits left the impression of a young and booming industry delighted with its success and groping for a formula to insure it. Artists, producers, record-company representatives, club owners, disc jockeys, and equipment manufacturers participated, and some of the news they imparted was pretty impressive.

If you thought disco was just an urban phenomenon, think again. *Mobile* discos have been bringing joy to hundreds of pairs of suburban and rural feet. The mobile units are equipped with sound systems, portable lighting equipment, and sometimes even with portable dance floors and smoke machines. Usually rented by schools, charitable organizations, and such, the units can set up a functional, parking-lot disco in nothing flat.

The exhibit areas at Disco III featured other eye-opening developments. Many clubs employ the very latest in modern electronics, and the advanced sound systems, the astonishing array of lighting equipment, and the matter-of-fact use of holography, lasers, and large-screen TV projections were all but mind-boggling.

Top disco acts (Gloria Gaynor, Tavares, and the SaSoul Orchestra, among others) provided entertainment each evening, and the four-day affair culminated in an awards dinner as boringly predictable as any tedious organizational function you can imagine. One high point (if one can call it that) of the awards ceremony was singer Grace Jones' acceptance of the Most Promising Female Vocalist plaque while her purse was being stolen from her seat on the dais six feet from where she stood. The incontestable low point was the seemingly endless parade of disc jockeys accepting awards (there must have been at least one platter handler from each state in the union).

IN short, disco is not about to go away, so you might as well give in, dress up, and accept Irving Berlin's invitation to "face the music and dance." Who knows—you might just get to like it.



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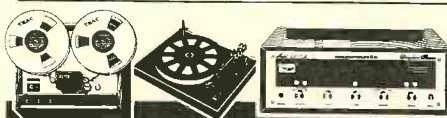
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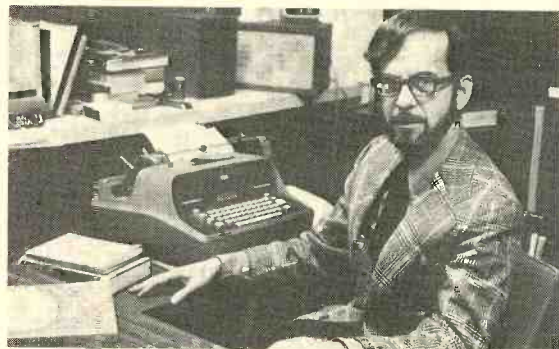
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CIRCLE NO. 76 ON READER SERVICE CARD

Going on Record

By James
Goodfriend



FROM SWEDEN WITH LOVE

THIS past summer, in conjunction with Sweden's challenge for the America's Cup and under the patronage of the royal family, the Swedes decided to send us, on loan, their Michelangelo *Pietà*, their Scythian gold, their *Mona Lisa*, their Laurence Olivier, their Noël Coward, their Edith Piaf, their Dylan Thomas, and their Bob Dylan. He arrived in July to begin a brief tour, five concerts of "A Swedish Musical Odyssey" in Newport, Rhode Island, Saratoga Springs, Washington, D.C., New York, and Detroit. *He* is Sven-Bertil Taube, actor, singer, reciter, and balladeer, and as charming a personality as ever graced a concert stage.

To say that Taube is one of the premier entertainers of the world is only to state what is obvious after seeing and hearing him. If he is not yet a household word throughout the western world, it is only because not everyone has yet seen and heard him. He is the latest in a long series of fine Swedish exports: Jenny Lind, Ingrid Bergman, Jussi Bjoerling, Carl Milles, Birgit Nilsson, Ingmar Bergman, Bjorn Borg. If he has been slower in coming to us, it may just be because the Swedes have held on to him more tightly. Certainly, they have bought more of his records than those of any other musical artist, classical or popular, including the Beatles. But Taube has now stepped upon a wider stage; what he does is international.

To explain precisely who and what Taube

(pronounced "tohb") is, and what he represents, is a complex task. "I come from a tradition," he has said—meaning one *specific* thing, the balladeer, but unintentionally implying a whole range of possibilities. Certainly, he is the embodiment of traditions, many of them. He is the son of Evert Taube, the late composer of ballads that are so revered in Sweden they seem to have become, at the very moment of their creation, an integral part of the history of Swedish culture. Evert Taube himself was in the tradition of that fascinating eighteenth-century poet and troubadour Carl Michael Bellman, whose songs—the perfect aural equivalent of the prints and water-color paintings of the great Thomas Rowlandson—give us a living portrait of the low life of an age. Sven-Bertil Taube has for years been the outstanding interpreter not only of Bellman's work but of his father's as well.

BUT Taube is not just a singer; he is an actor with the most sensuous of feelings for the sounds of words. His singing voice is an attractive but relatively ordinary instrument, but his speaking voice is altogether extraordinary. Capable, through pitch, inflection, and language, of delineating half a dozen different characters in the space of a minute (a task he performs in Bellman's *Fredman's Epistle No. 33*), it is a real virtuoso instrument. And he drops into a new language in somewhat the

Swedish balladeer Sven-Bertil Taube and conductor Ulf Bjorling



same way a jazz musician drops into a new rhythmic groove.

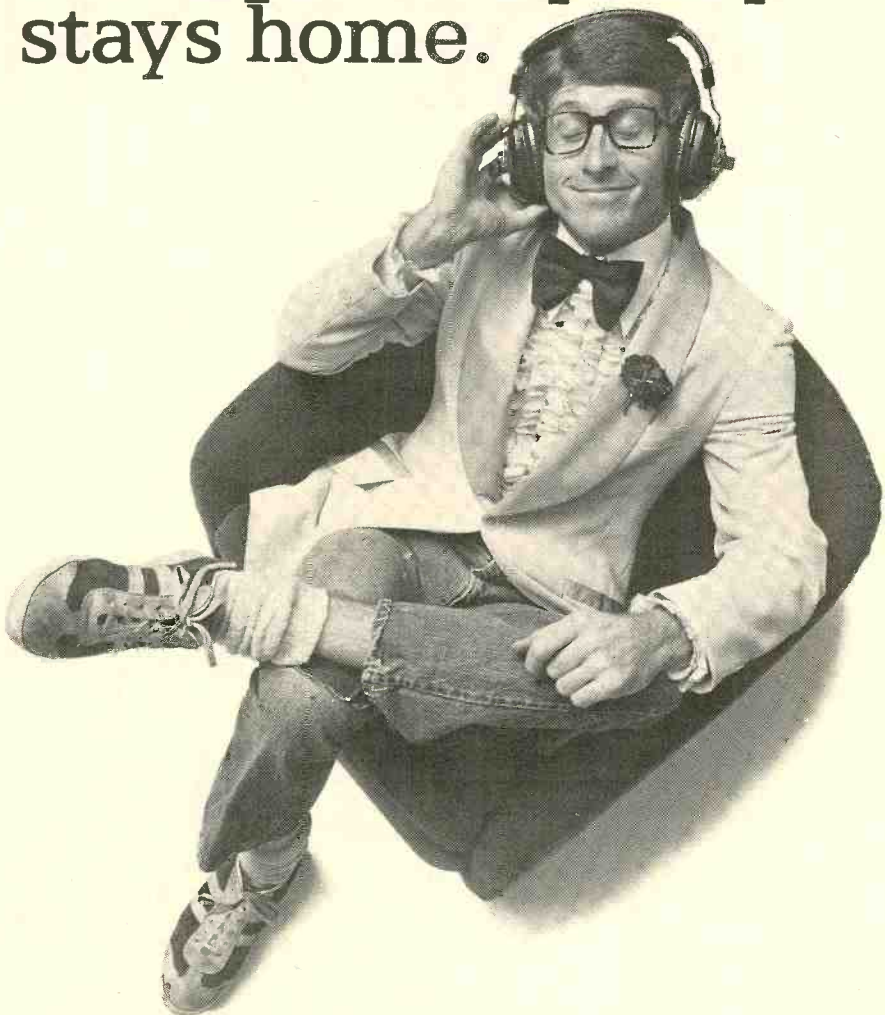
Taube was a leading actor with the Royal Dramatic Theatre in Stockholm, under the direction of Ingmar Bergman, for ten years. He has made films and television appearances in England as well as in Scandinavia. He has given concert performances in many places in Europe. In New York he appeared with the American Symphony Orchestra, conducted by his friend and associate Ulf Bjorlin, an excellent musician who frequently guest-conducts the Stockholm Philharmonic and who has a recorded discography of over two dozen discs, from Johann Helmich Roman to Webern. The orchestral part of the program comprised Handel, Blomdahl, Ibert, and Wagner; Taube sang (with the full orchestra) and recited Bellman and Evert Taube, plus poems by the Nobel prize-winning Harry Martinson which were interspersed with sea chanties. The orchestra played as well as I have ever heard it; Bjorlin's arrangements were altogether splendid; and Taube himself was completely winning.

Just to watch him on stage is an object lesson in what to do with your hands while performing, and his wordless interpretation of an orchestral postlude—standing, one hand in his pocket, his back three quarters to the audience, seeming to gaze at some far-distant scene located about ten feet up on the rear wall of the stage—had the audience “seeing” pictures that were not physically there. The vigor of his songs—with elegant articulation in English (a trace of Winston Churchill in the sound), French, Swedish, high and low German, and Spanish—wonderful waltzes, marches, dramatic ballads, chanties, and all was completely captivating. Through everything came the feeling of a real and unique personality—rooted in historical tradition, yes, but very much a contemporary—who can play at will with the space created by an intimate performing medium and a large orchestra, hall, and audience.

ARRANGED to have lunch with Taube the following week. I was delighted that he brought with him his latest recording (HMV England 862-35135), but somewhat nonplussed when it turned out to be songs of the Greek political writer Mikis Theodorakis, which Taube sang in English accompanied by a guitar consort and a bouzouki. I confess that when I heard it I understood for the first time (no printed lyrics were necessary) just what those songs were all about—the irony of bitter lyrics coupled with infectious music. It was fascinating to match that with Taube's admitted major concern: he did not want the songs he sang, whatever their origin, to be *less* in English than they were in their native tongues.

Taube has made over a dozen records, mostly in Swedish and mostly for the Swedish HMV label (EMI Svenska). While more than half of them were at one time imported, they do not seem to be so today. Obviously, that situation will soon be remedied as Taube's star rises. There is, at present, one record on the domestic Fiesta label (Fiesta 1589) on which he performs music of his father. The Theodorakis record will certainly find its way into stores that do direct importing, and it may yet be released over here. And the “Swedish Musical Odyssey” concert has been recorded and released in England and is under consideration for American release. Most important, Taube himself will be back in person. Watch for him. □

On our opening night we hope everybody stays home.



It's the opening of a new season of **Earplay**, a series of plays written and produced especially for radio. The idea itself isn't new, but the approach is. If you've never listened to an earplay before, you may be surprised.


Earplay commissions original works from some of America's foremost writers. The season opens with Arthur Kopit's **Wings** starring Mildred Dunnock. Other plays in the series include works by John Gardner, David Mamet, Richard Howard and Mark Medoff.

The plays are produced in stereo using the most sophisticated recording techniques available—you'll find it hard to believe you're listening to the radio. Stereo speakers are good, headphones are better. But all you really need is a radio.

Dress up if you want. Have a big-deal dinner. But be sure you're back home in time for our opening.

Contact your National Public Radio member station this month for scheduling information.

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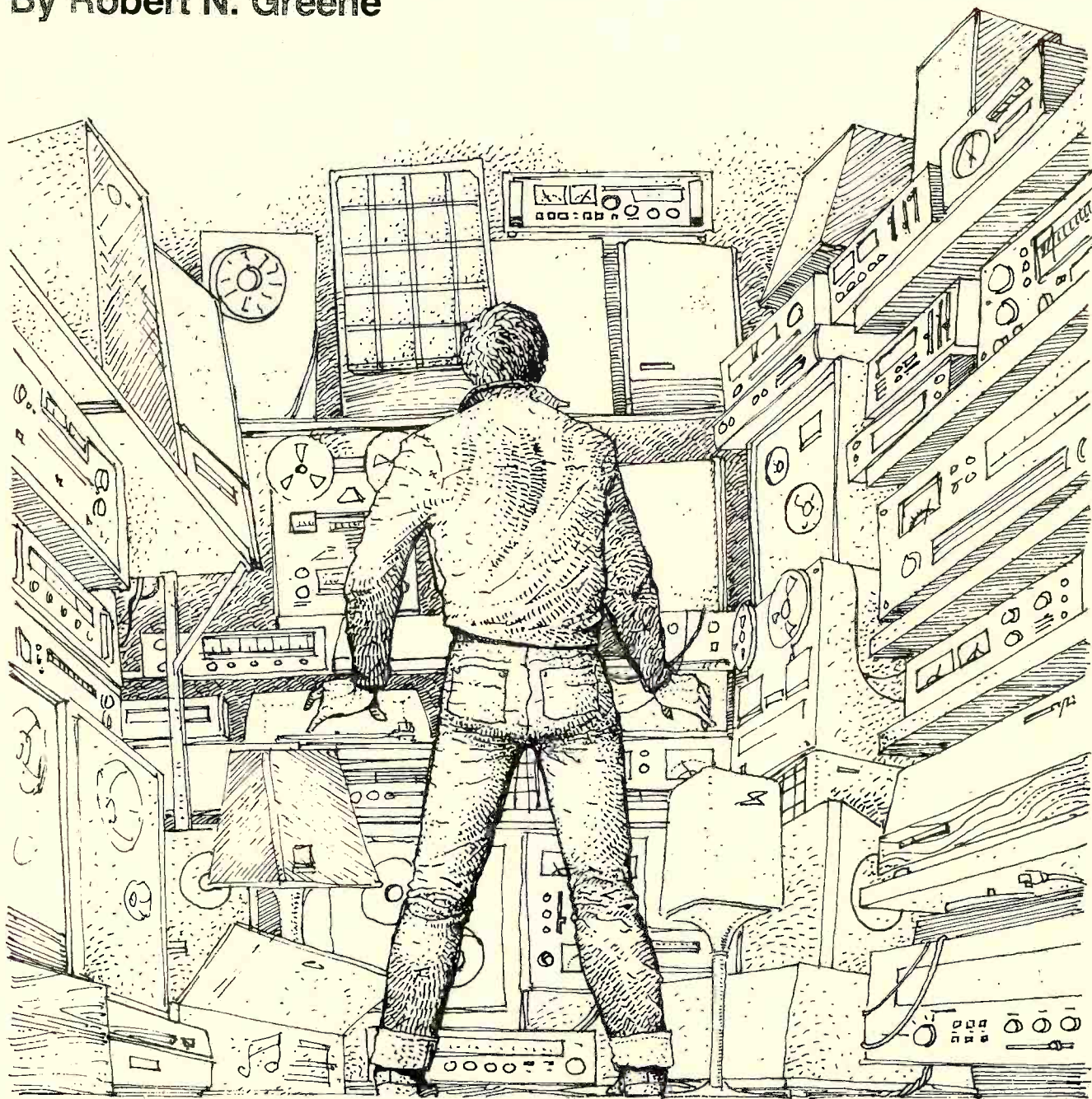
Earplay is a project of WHA, the University of Wisconsin-Extension, in cooperation with Minnesota Public Radio, with funding from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and the National Endowment for the Arts. 

A BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO HI-FI

All you need is

- a clear idea of your own requirements
- a properly directed use of your time and energy
- a little old-fashioned common sense

By Robert N. Greene



You might start with a receiver (or an amplifier plus a tuner) and a pair of speakers . . . ▶

CHOOSING audio equipment isn't the easiest thing in the world, especially for the novice. Because there are usually no clear-cut rights and wrongs about it, many people need help when it comes to deciding what equipment to plunk their money down for. Can we help? Yes. Can we make your selection for you? No, because there are no *easy* answers. But we can give you some guidelines on *how to buy*, we can alert you to *things to look for* and warn you about *things to watch out for*.

Part of the problem is that there's almost *too much* technical information available about hi-fi equipment, probably because the hi-fi world is composed largely of hobbyists who enjoy the same technical jargon that the novice finds bewildering. We can't make anyone an expert with a few well-chosen words, but we can pass on some practical information that, combined with common sense, can make selecting equipment a lot less intimidating. And for those of you to whom much of the following lecture may seem very elementary, please bear with us; we might just come up with one or two new ideas helpful to you too.

To start with, let's puncture a couple of balloons some of you may be carrying around unknowingly in the back of your mind. The first is that there's something magical or mysterious about audio equipment or the stores and people who sell it. There isn't. Receivers, speakers, and all the rest are only *merchandise* manufactured to be sold for profit, and the primary function of the audio salesman is to sell that merchandise. Is this intended to warn you that the industry is out to fleece the unwary? Not at all, but when you're spending money on anything it's best not to have too many stars in your eyes (but please keep a few—it's part of the fun!). Just bear in mind that the rules of judicious "consumerism" apply to audio as much as to any other buying.

Another balloon that may need pop-

Robert N. Greene has worked professionally as head of customer relations with an audio-equipment manufacturer; he has also done custom installation and hi-fi service work.

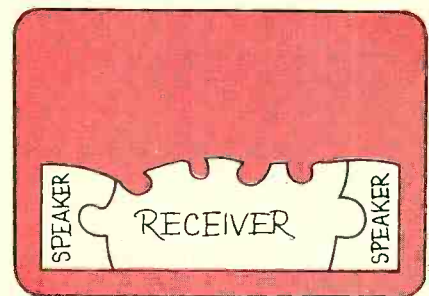
ping is the one with **BEST** printed on it in bright red letters. Even if you're lucky enough to have unlimited funds available, the quest for that elusive quality can lead into a blind alley: there is no "best." While a \$1,000 amplifier, for example, may be of better quality and greater performance capability than a \$250 one, it might well not be preferable *in your particular circumstances*. And even with all other things being equal, you'd have trouble getting any two experts to agree on the "best" unit for a given situation; their personal prejudices will lead them in different directions. In short, setting out to find any single, objectively "best" item of equipment is unrealistic. All we can try for is that which is best for our own purposes.

One more preliminary point: we'll be concerned in this discussion solely with *separate* audio components. Consoles, "compacts," and the like certainly have their appeal, but it is components that are looked upon as "defining" high fidelity, and we're concerned here with how you can get the most *accurate* sound for your money.

Getting Ready

Since our stated intent isn't instruction on *what* to buy but *how* to buy, our first suggestion is that you *not* go into an audio shop right away. Experienced or not, you might not yet be ready to face shelves full of equipment. All those dials and knobs and switches can overwhelm even the hardest shopper among us, and this is exactly what we're trying to help you avoid. The more comfortable you are once you do get into the store, the better your chances of ending up with a system suited to your requirements. The logical first step, then, is to figure out in advance what those requirements are as well as the limitations you'll have to work with in meeting them.

● **Money:** If you're thinking of high-fidelity equipment that will do reasonable justice to present-day records and FM broadcasts, you really have to prepare yourself for a minimum investment of *at least* \$300 to \$500. And the figure for what might be considered a notably good system increases to

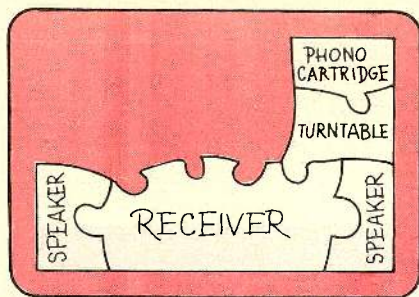


\$1,000 or more pretty rapidly. These are realistic price ranges to figure on in advance. The potential maximum is anybody's guess, but most of us can't work at those rarefied levels anyway—nor, we hasten to assure you, do any of us *have to*.

How much cash you'll be putting into this enterprise is of course up to you, but it's prudent to set at least a ballpark limit and stick to it as closely as possible; don't let yourself get carried away when you're in the presence of all that enticing equipment. The fact that you've established a general dollar figure will also be helpful to a salesman or anyone else you may enlist in helping you make a selection. Don't, incidentally, be above asking for help from friends and acquaintances. But even here be a bit wary: this is the kind of hobby that tends to breed "experts" who may be far from that; just be sure that those you listen to have some kind of reasonable credentials.

● **Space:** There are two kinds: the equipment installation space and the space to be filled with sound. The latter refers to the size of the room in which you'll install your system—information your salesman or other advisor should be aware of also. More on this later; for the moment we'll just suggest that you note down room dimensions, including ceiling height.

Space for the equipment itself is a nuts-and-bolts matter that won't determine the sound of your system, but it can influence your choice nonetheless. Some components are fairly sizable, and they tend to look smaller in the store than they actually are, so measure carefully just how much space you can make available. A matter of one inch of shelf depth, width, or height that you *don't* have could very well put a number of units out of the running for you—and no matter how great the component, a seventeen-inch anything



◀ . . . and then add a turntable (it may, or may not, come with phono cartridge already installed).

won't fit comfortably into sixteen inches of space. And don't forget, you have to allow at least two inches *behind* each unit for plugs and wiring. As for height, allow for a free flow of air around all electronic equipment; even some small units generate a bit of heat that should be allowed to escape. Large units can get quite hot and *must* be allowed to ventilate themselves.

Space must also be allowed for accessibility to record players and tape units. And remember that some of these have hinged plastic covers that take up quite a bit of space when flipped up. You can see why it's a good idea to take a tape measure with you to the audio shop.

Technical Requirements

Now to the business of your technical requirements: what you want and/or need from a stereo system. Here are some basic considerations:

1. Functions: Basically, there are three "program" sources from which a system can reproduce sound: radio, records, and tape. You can have any or all of these in the same system. In any case, you'll require an amplifier, either separate or part of a receiver, to power the loudspeakers. For FM radio reception you'll also need a tuner; this can be a separate piece or it can be built in with the amplifier, the result of this union being the receiver. If for any reason you don't want radio, then you've saved the price of a tuner, and the same naturally applies to a record player and tape machine.

Of course, you can start with any one of these sources and add the others later; if you're working on a limited budget this could permit starting with higher-quality basics—amplifier and speakers—and just one program source, the others being added as finances permit.

2. Listening-room size and acoustics: The amount of space you have to fill up with sound—and how loud you want that sound to be—to a great extent determines the amount of amplifier out-

put power you'll require. The efficiency of the speakers (the amount of sound that comes out for the amount of power that goes in) is of course another factor. If your listening room is acoustically "dead" (lots of sound-absorbing drapes, carpeting, and soft furniture), the power required from your amplifier will be somewhat greater. In this case speakers with a greater high-frequency output potential (which can be turned down if required) may also be desirable since the highs get soaked up by sound-absorbent materials more readily than the bass does.

If, on the other hand, your room is very small and you install a system that would almost fill a ball park with sound, you'll probably be paying for more power and loudness potential than you could ever need or use. Since amplifiers produce less distortion when run below their maximum output, it is desirable to have much more power available than the minimum required, but carrying this to excess can be uneconomical and may even, conceivably, endanger your loudspeakers. (Incidentally, you can also damage your speakers by use of an *underpowered* amplifier that you are driving into overload in an effort to get it to play loud enough.) A very rough rule of thumb seems to be that in an average-size room, with speakers of average efficiency, background music takes about 2 watts on peaks, normal loud listening may require 20 watts, and for disco levels 200 watts may not be enough. These figures refer to the amplifier's output on short-lived loud peaks. Music practically never requires *sustained* outputs at these levels. (An amplifier's inability to deliver a signal that exceeds its power capability is not crucial *unless* the excessive signals are frequent and very strong. In that case, distortion and possible damage to your speakers can result.)

Speaker manufacturers generally provide some information on the power requirements and capacities of their products, and your audio salesman can help with advice on what equipment will suit your acoustic environment (remember our earlier suggestion to note down your room size).

3. Your listening habits: Have a very good idea in mind of what kind of music you are going to be listening to. Pop ballads and chamber music are one thing; heavy rock and full classical orchestra are quite another. And as for disco sound, well. . . .

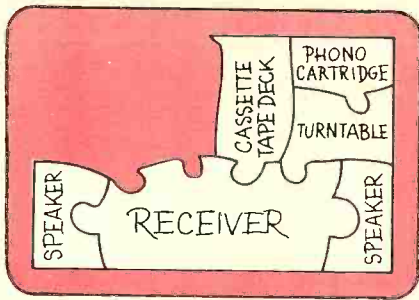
Beginning Your Selection

Let's assume that you've now begun to form some idea of the nature of your basic audio requirements. It seems reasonable to assume also that you've seen a certain amount of product literature and advertising, if only that scattered throughout this magazine. Advertisers quite sensibly want to convince you that their products are better than all the others. Result: probable confusion and possible panic. How can you begin to choose what's right for you amid this welter of conflicting claims? (Note the phrase, "right for you," rather than "best," and keep in mind our earlier comment on that.) Well, it should help calm you somewhat to learn that you've already begun.

Selecting an audio system is, like any other selection, largely a process of elimination. Our earlier comments were aimed at exactly that, so you've already effectively narrowed the field of choice considerably. *Just remember that most of the equipment available in the marketplace, regardless of quality, simply isn't suitable for your purposes.*

And another thing to help ease your mind: even though there's a fair amount of money involved, choosing Brand A as opposed to Brand B or C isn't really a matter of life and death. This is a competitive field, so an *electronic* component of a given price from one company is not going to be worlds apart from a similarly priced unit from another. Performance tends to be fairly comparable in a given price range, and manufacturers' reputations count a great deal with them; you needn't, in other words, worry about their being out to cheat you.

But, even so, how do you complete the process of elimination if you're unable to do it on your own and lack friends capable of real guidance? This



“most of the equipment available in the marketplace, regardless of quality, simply isn’t suitable for your purposes.”

▲ A cassette tape deck—for both playback and recording—probably ought to be the next step.

SPEAKER-LISTENING TECHNIQUES



KNOWING how to listen is a learn-by-doing skill that comes only with experience. It cannot be quickly imparted—and certainly not by the printed word. What we can pass on, however, are some hints about what to listen for so that you will have at least a fighting chance of evaluating what you’re hearing rather than just being overwhelmed with sound.

1. The sound you buy should be something with which you’re going to be entirely comfortable *in the long run*. The speaker that is the most sonically “exciting” in the store may, because of the same factors that originally turned you on, become unbearable after only a few weeks of home listening.

2. Carry your own records or tapes with you to the store. Even if they don’t happen to be the best in the world, they probably represent the kind of music you generally listen to, and they will certainly establish at least one constant element in a situation otherwise filled with unfamiliar variables.

3. Don’t try to compare too many different speakers at one sitting, and keep the speakers being auditioned within your price range (though you might listen to just *one* pair of expensive and highly esteemed models as a possible reference).

4. Avoid the speaker that has too much bass, seductive as that “big” bass may be. You should be well aware of bass when it’s actually present in the recording (a bass drum being struck, for example) but *not* when it isn’t. Try listening to a number of

male radio-announcers’ voices on FM. A few may sound boomy, depending on the actual voices and the stations’ equipment, but they shouldn’t *all* sound boomy. And bass sounds, when they do occur in the music, should be tight and hard, not “mushy.”

5. Listen closely to high frequencies—cymbals will do nicely. You should be able to hear the metallic *shimmer*, but if it sets your teeth on edge, something is not right.

6. If record-surface noise or tape hiss are overly evident, the speaker probably has an irregularity in its frequency response. An accurate speaker will reproduce whatever noise there is in the source material but will not exaggerate any of it. The other side of this is the speaker that doesn’t show up *any* flaws but makes everything pleasantly bland—fine if all you want is low-level background music, but not otherwise. (This could also be an indication that the dealer has, for whatever reason, improperly adjusted the high-frequency controls on that speaker.)

7. Choral music is good test material—given a high-quality recording: you should be able to hear “x” number of individual singers, not just a blur of voices.

8. Brasses shouldn’t be right there in your lap, nor should voices sound unduly nasal or honky; these conditions indicate overemphasis in the mid-frequencies.

9. Very important: price is by no means an infallible indicator of quality; a unit that costs, say, \$100 *may* well be better designed—and, consequently, sound more accurate—than one costing double or triple that amount.

10. Don’t get hooked on the idea that since you don’t have experience you can’t tell what you’re hearing anyway so it doesn’t matter. Once you get your system home you’ll be amazed how fast your ears become “educated” and how much you’ll start hearing that you may not have heard before. That’s when your investment of time in pre-buying homework and of effort in equipment selection will pay off.

is where we come to choosing a dealer—he’s the necessary link between your audio dream and its realization.

Of course, if you’ve heard any *negative* comments about any store it gets dropped from your list immediately. It’s now up to you to take the time for some searching around to draw your own conclusions about the remaining candidates.

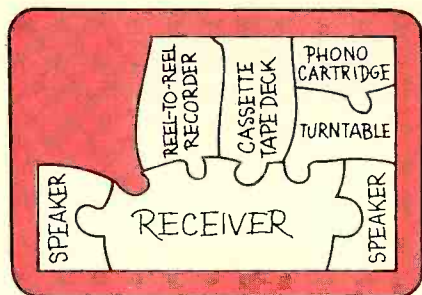
(In this discussion we’re really addressing ourselves to those living in an area with a selection of stores. If you’re in a location where you must shop by mail, the same basic principles apply, and we would remind you of the usual cautions about mail-order purchasing as well.)

If you’ve done any investigating at all, you’ve already learned that most dealers offer discounts of one sort or another from “suggested list prices.” This may be most economical and attractive, but common sense should lead you away from the discount that looks *too* good. A very large discount may leave the dealer with too small a profit margin for him to put much—or any—time into helping you make a selection or to provide any sort of after-sale service or consultation.

Conversely, if you can determine that a large discount is based on a unit’s being discontinued, or “dumped” in an effort to raise quick cash, it could be you’re onto a good thing. Audio equipment doesn’t generally undergo radical improvement in relatively short time periods—it’s more of an evolutionary process. Last year’s model could therefore prove to be an excellent purchase.

Salesmen, as we noted earlier, are there for the primary purpose of selling, but most of them are knowledgeable about at least the equipment in their stock (it is simply unreasonable to expect any one person to know everything about *all* equipment) and how to match it to your needs and pocketbook. If, however, you get the feeling a salesman is pushing too hard in one special direction, particularly if it’s away from equipment well recommended by other sources, be cautious. He may very well be directing you toward his honest personal preference and it just *happens* that he holds a minority opinion; that

BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO HI-FI



◀ More serious recording ventures at home and abroad will require a reel-to-reel recorder . . .

doesn't necessarily make him either wrong or unethical—in fact, he may indeed be more honest than some other salesmen you've met. But, on the other hand, he may be trying to sell off a back room full of off-brand lemons.

Unless you're in a position to walk into a store with a list of model numbers on which you've already decided, it's wise to stay away from stores in high-traffic areas that rely on fast turnover of customers, for the salespeople in such places simply may not have the time to spend with those needing help. And if you require much of a salesman's time, try to get to the store at other than peak business hours so he won't be forced to rush you.

Look for a dealer with a fairly broad range of brand names that you recognize (the names advertised in this magazine, for instance). There are also shops set up to cater to the audio cognoscenti, but though these give good service, they also generally handle rather expensive equipment and rarely discount. The dealer who limits his line for profit purposes will sometimes have a number of convincing-sounding (usually spurious) reasons why the lines he *doesn't* carry aren't any good ("poor performance," "unreliable," "doesn't meet stated specifications," "company doesn't honor warranty," and so forth). But, at the very least, his policy places an arbitrary limitation on your field of choice. With the dealer who vigorously promotes obscure brand names, however, exercise the greatest caution. Unknown brands often prove to have unknown repair facilities when servicing becomes necessary.

In your searching around you'll probably find some prearranged equipment packages being offered at prices lower than the total would be if the components were purchased separately. While these can be excellent buys (and incidentally relieve you of the problem of making up your own package), at times they are not. The package price may be low because some one of the units isn't up to the quality level of the others. A system, like a chain, is no stronger than its weakest link, so check out the *individual* pieces. (You might consider investing a couple of

bucks in a copy of the new 1978 *Stereo Directory & Buying Guide* [available for \$2.50 on newsstands or from the Ziff-Davis Service Division, 595 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10012]; it's a handy reference that describes just about all the current equipment and gives the prevailing "list" prices.)

When you think you have about decided on some unit, be sure to check its warranty and how it is implemented. Some dealers sell you a sealed box, bid you good-bye, and won't know you if you return with an unfortunately defective unit. As mentioned earlier, this can be the result of a very large discount, but it is not an *inevitable* consequence. There are dealers offering *both* service and discount, though perhaps not quite so large a discount. It's up to you which you want or can afford. (For the novice, it's often worth sacrificing some discount for a larger degree of service before and after the sale.) Certainly, working with a dealer who can put a bad situation to rights for you quickly through replacement or repair is to be desired. The next step down would be the dealer who will at least return a defective item to factory or warranty station for you. This is a more complicated and time-consuming situation, but it will save you packing up the unit and shipping it off yourself. And

remember that if return to the factory or warranty station is required, it could be weeks before you see your equipment again.

If you know from the outset that you're going to be entirely on your own should the worst come to pass, either in or out of warranty, it could possibly determine what brand of equipment you choose. All things being equal, manufacturers having authorized repair facilities close enough for you to bring in your defective unit would logically be more appealing than those requiring cross-country shipment.

Where to Start

Let's say that you're now up to the point where you have to begin thinking about the equipment itself. Unless you're going to buy a prepackaged system already put together by a dealer, it's entirely up to you how to go about this. The most logical starting point is the component having the greatest influence on the overall sound of your system. This is the loudspeaker—the component that, audibly and measurably, is the greatest variable in a sound system. The loudspeaker provides you with an excellent opportunity to make a bad choice, whereas with most of the

Recommended Reading

THE books listed below are mostly on an introductory level. If they are not available in your local bookstore, hi-fi shop, or library, they can be ordered directly from the publishers at the addresses given. Remember to include all local sales taxes when ordering.

● *Hi-Fi in the Home*, John Crabbe, 271 pp., illus., hardcover, \$8.75 plus 81¢ postage. Transatlantic Arts, Inc., North Village Green, Levittown, N.Y. 11756.

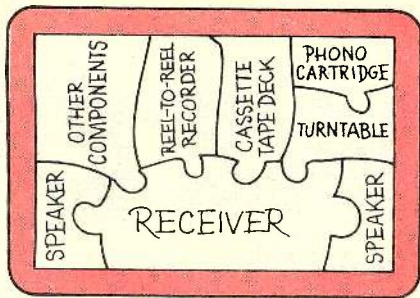
● *The Rolling Stone Guide to High Fidelity Sound*, Len Feldman, 160 pp., illus., paperbound, \$4.95 plus 55¢ postage. Straight Arrow Books,

745 Fifth Ave., New York, N.Y. 10022.

● *Official Guide to High Fidelity*, Institute of High Fidelity, 175 pp., illus., paperbound, \$2 postpaid. The Institute of High Fidelity, 489 Fifth Ave., New York, N.Y. 10036.

● *Master Hi-fi Installation*, Gordon King, 148 pp., illus., paperbound, \$5.45 postpaid. Hayden Book Co., Inc., 50 Essex St., Rochelle Park, N.J. 07662.

● *The Reproduction of Sound*, Edgar Villchur, 100 pp., illus., paperbound, \$2 plus 35¢ postage. Dover Publications, Inc., 180 Varick St., New York, N.Y. 10014.



“...selecting audio equipment intelligently isn't something that only engineers or advanced audiophiles can do.”

◀ and from then on the sky's the limit: expanders, noise suppressors, frequency equalizers, etc.

other components you are not likely to go terribly wrong if you stick to name brands. In addition, the choice of speaker will have a bearing on other characteristics of the system—the amplifier-power requirements, for example—and to a certain extent the overall quality appropriate for other components such as the turntable.

These days, when a dealer puts together a package system, the only component he can realize a sizable profit on is likely to be the speaker, since the standard-brand amplifiers, receivers, and record players are likely to be deeply discounted. Speakers are “blind” items, in that there is no FTC rule (as there is for amplifiers) that requires a manufacturer to state his specifications in such a way that you can make valid comparisons between brands. Furthermore, there is no way to tell from the outside of the speaker cabinet the relative cost or quality of the drivers installed inside it.

Well, you can at least trust your ears, can't you? No, not really—particularly when you don't have a chance to listen under carefully controlled conditions. And, in any case, the novice buyer seldom has any idea of what specifically to listen for during speaker demonstrations. Ideally, a speaker should be “accurate,” meaning that it should not add to (or subtract from) the bass, treble, or mid-range tones engraved in the record grooves. Boomy or screechy speakers are sometimes impressive on first hearing in a showroom, but they are not likely to be very satisfying in the long run in your home.

A loudspeaker's accuracy of reproduction is *not* a subjective matter, and if all loudspeakers were absolutely accurate, they'd all sound alike—assuming they were playing in the same location in the same environment. However, this being a somewhat less than perfect world, speakers display a variety of tonal characteristics, some of which are closer to accuracy than others. This is where “taste” comes into the picture—in your choice of which sonic aberrations are the least disturbing to you—but keep in mind that sound preference isn't *all* a matter of taste. Experienced listeners tend to

agree on which speakers are good (accurate) and which aren't. You should also remember that since the room in which the speakers are used literally becomes part of the acoustical system, it will introduce some variables in speaker performance. Most speaker systems have controls permitting a degree of adjustment of such variables.

All of this is by way of telling you that you must hear, compare, and de-

“fix” on your home listening environment and how it interacts with loudspeakers—or at least with the model of loudspeaker you have borrowed.

Extracurricular Research

When you've finished with this beginners' guide, flip back to this month's equipment test reports. These will help to acquaint you with the nature of at least a few of the units available in a given price range as well as providing some specifics on particular units worth investigating. If you don't care to wade through the technical data, just read the “comment” portion of the review. This will give you a good idea of how the test lab felt about the unit. Notice that not all the products reviewed are given uniformly high marks—a careful comparison of the comments will indicate that some units are clearly more highly thought of than others. A stamped, self-addressed long envelope and 25¢ sent to STEREO REVIEW, Dept. TRI, One Park Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10016, will bring you an index of all the test reports that have appeared in this magazine since 1965 as well as information about how to get copies of whatever back issues are available. And something else that will help you: on this page you will find a list of articles (available as reprints) that go into more detail about how to buy specific kinds of components (cassette decks, receivers, and so forth) and on the facing page are some recommended books for further study.

“How to” Reprints

- (1) *How to Correct Your Room Acoustics*
- (2) *Guidelines to Speaker Shopping*
- (4) *Loudspeaker Power Requirements*
- (8) *How to Choose an Amplifier*
- (10) *Speaker Myths (How to Avoid Bad Choices)*
- (12) *How to Select an FM Tuner*
- (16) *How to Buy a Cassette Deck*
- (18) *How to Buy a Receiver*
- (19) *How to Buy a Phono Cartridge*

Reprints are \$1 each except No. 16, which is \$1.50. Please order by number. A complete set of all nine reprints is available for \$7.50 as No. 100S. Order from STEREO REVIEW Information Center, Consumer Products Division, 595 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10012. (“How to Buy a Turntable” was covered in the November 1977 issue. Back copies of that issue are available for \$1.50 from Ziff-Davis Service Division at the address given above.)

decide on speakers for yourself. Since room acoustics have a profound effect on sound, the ideal would be to audition them in the room at home where they are going to be used. Failing that, the next best thing (not for comparisons between speakers, but just to orient yourself to the sound of different installations) would be critical listening to the systems of friends. Perhaps you could arrange to borrow a pair of speakers and a receiver—even for just an afternoon can be a great help. This would enable you to begin getting a

Now that you've read all this, where does it leave you? We hope with the well-established conviction that selecting audio equipment intelligently isn't something that only engineers or advanced audiophiles can do. All you need is a clear idea of your own requirements, a properly directed use of your time and energy, and a little old-fashioned common sense. These, of course, are available to virtually all of us, and they are quite enough to steer any buyer to a system he'll enjoy all the more for knowing that he “did it all himself.” □

ROOTS OF JAZZ

Amazingly, some of the artists who started it all are still around, offering living proof that jazz is not as ancient an art form as our ears might lead us to believe

ITS roots run deep and wide, its branches have touched virtually all twentieth-century music, and somehow it seems as if JAZZ has been with us longer than anyone can remember. That is, of course, partly because of electrical recording technology, which only fifty years ago began making the earlier acoustical jazz discs appear as primitive as the Wright Brothers' plane. But even more misleading is the music itself, for jazz has over the years taken on a sound so radically different from its earliest forms that many critics and musicians—with some justification—feel that the term no longer covers the music.

The turning point was bebop—the first so-called “modern” jazz—which emerged in the early Forties and immediately produced a cry of “foul” from the traditionalists, some of whom had yet to accept fully the swing style of the Thirties. As World War II ended, a jazz war was declared: “Hot versus Cool” band battles were staged on records, on the radio, and in clubs by enterprising critics and producers who saw commercial value in the conflict. But the polemicists eventually tired, and by the late Fifties, when Ornette Coleman entered the jazz arena, most people had agreed that old and new jazz could lead a healthy coexistence.

Coleman's music—a free-form style that disregarded chord changes and a regular beat—made bop (as it was now called) sound conventional by comparison, and, as this natural evolution has continued, some of today's music makes even Coleman's music of eighteen years ago seem amazingly accessible. It can be argued, as before, that some improvised music—such as that fostered by Chicago's *outré* AACM (Association for the Advancement of Creative Music)—just isn't, strictly speaking, jazz. That particular music certainly is a far cry from the music

originally named jazz, but no one can deny that even *this* “new music” at least has its roots in the works of the early jazz pioneers.

Amazingly, some of the artists who started it all are still around, offering living proof that jazz is not as ancient an art form as our ears might lead us to believe. More to the point, some of these survivors—and that is an apt term when one considers the rigors a life in jazz has traditionally entailed—are not only alive and well but *still performing*. Best known, and probably the oldest of these almost legendary stalwarts, is the composer/pianist Eubie Blake, who this February will be celebrating his ninety-fifth birthday. A frequent guest on TV's *Tonight* show, Blake was composing rags and playing them in Baltimore sporting houses before the turn of the century. In 1921, Blake and his long-time partner, the late Noble Sissle, co-produced and wrote the music for *Shuffle Along*, a black musical that was a smash success and pointed the way for Broadway productions to follow. One of its hits, *I'm Just Wild About Harry*, was to become Harry S. Truman's campaign song twenty-seven years later, and its star, Florence Mills, became one of the most beloved figures in the black entertainment world before her premature death in 1927.

Eubie Blake himself, a slender man of great wit and remarkable agility, was at his peak fifty-five years ago, but to see him perform today—charming his audience with humorous reminiscences and racing his nimble fingers across the keyboard to produce rags he wrote before our parents or grandparents were born—one would never guess it. A tireless traveler, Mr. Blake—who is managed by his “eightyish” wife, Marion—spent three weeks performing in Oslo and Copenhagen this past summer. He has been booked for the New Orleans Jazz Heritage Festival this coming April, and has also just received an offer to give concerts in Australia. Will he go? But of course.

At eighty-two, singer Alberta Hunter and bandleader/pianist Sam Wooding are not far behind Mr. Blake; they too began performing in the jazz idiom before the term was coined, and they share with their older colleague the belief that retirement is analogous to doom. “I have worked all my life,” says Miss Hunter, who became a nurse when she first left the entertainment field twenty years ago, “and I just can't see sitting around doing nothing and talking about one's yesterdays.” Mr. Wooding concurs: “My love affair with music has been going on for too long, and it's too deep for me to even consider breaking it off now. This business of retiring at sixty-five is plain nonsense—looking back will make you an old man, and who wants to be an old man?”

IT was to help her mother, who was born into slavery, that Alberta Hunter left her Memphis home around 1909 and ran off to Chicago. “I used to sing in school, and they told me I was pretty good,” she recalls, “so, when I heard that girls were making ten dollars a week singing in Chicago joints, I decided to catch a northbound train and make some money for my mother.” On the day of her arrival, an extraordinary stroke of luck put her in touch with an old family friend. “It must have been fate,” she says, “because I had no idea where this woman lived. I was so naïve that I thought all you had to do was to go to Chicago and ask around. Well, I walked into this office building and asked this cleaning woman if she knew where my friend lived. Don't you know, she was able to take me right to her. God was putting his arms around me.”

With her friend's help, little Alberta was soon earning her room and board peeling potatoes and washing dishes for a boarding house, but she hadn't lost sight of her goal. Adding a few

Young pianist/composer Eubie Blake appeared with the Boston Pops last year.

By Chris Albertson



Culver Pictures

DECEMBER 1977

JAZZ ROOTS...

Selected Discography

EUBIE BLAKE: *Rags to Classics*. Eubie Blake (piano). *Charleston Rag* (1921 and 1971 versions); *Capricious Harlem*; *Rustles of Spring*; *You're Lucky to Me*; *You Do Something to Me*; *Rain Drops*; *Pork and Beans*; *Valse Marion*; *Classical Rag*; *Scarf Dance*; *Butterfly*; *Junk Man Rag*. EUBIE BLAKE MUSIC EBM-2 \$6.95 (from Eubie Blake Music, 284-A Stuyvesant Avenue, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11221).

SISSLE AND BLAKE: *Rare Early Recordings, Vol. 1*. Noble Sissle (vocals); Eubie Blake (piano, vocals). *Baltimore Buzz*; *Love Will Find a Way*; *I'm Craving for That Kind of Love*; *Bandana Days*; *Pickaninny Shoes*; *Broadway Blues*; *I've Got the Blues*; *I've Got the Red, White, and Blues*; *I'm a Doggone Struttin' Fool*; *Boo Hoo Hoo*; *Down Hearted Blues*; *Waitin' for the Evenin' Mail*; *Sweet Henry*. EUBIE BLAKE MUSIC Ⓜ EBM-4 \$6.95.

SAM WOODING: *Sam Wooding and His Chocolate Dandies* [sic]. Sam Wooding and His Chocolate Kiddies Orchestra. *O Katharina*; *Shanghai Shuffle*; *Alabamy Bound* (two takes); *By the Waters of Minnetonka*; *I Can't Give You Anything but Love*; *Bull Foot Stomp*; *Carrie*; *Tiger Rag*; *Sweet Black Blues*; *Indian Love*; *Ready for the River*; *Mammy's Prayer*; *My Pal Called Sal*; *Krazy Kat*; *I Got Rhythm*. BTOGRAPH Ⓜ BLP-12025 \$6.98.

SAM WOODING/RAE HARRISON ORCHESTRA: *Bicentennial Jazz Vistas*. Sam Wooding and His Orchestra (instrumentals); Rae Harrison (vocals). *Sam's Jam*; *Either You Do, or Else You Don't*; *Blah Blah*; *Funky Joe*; *Love Is Just a Pretty Thing*; *Echoes of the Republic*. TWIN SIGN TS-1000A \$5.95 (from Twin Sign Records, P.O. Box 713, Radio City Station, New York, N.Y. 10019).

JACK JACKSON: *Jack Jackson and His Orchestra*. Jack Jackson and His Orchestra (instrumentals); Alberta Hunter (vocals). *Make Those People Sway*; *I'm Playing with Fire*; *Long May We Love*; *I Travel Alone*; *Come On, Be Happy*; *Miss Otis Regrets*; *I'm Gettin' Sentimental Over You*; *Two Cigarettes in the Dark*; *Dixie Lee*; *Two Little Flies on a Lump of Sugar*; *Settin' in the Dark*; *What a Little Moonlight Can Do*; *Stars Fell on Alabama*; *Blue River*; *Roll On*; *Be Still, My Heart*; *Let Bygones Be Bygones*. WORLD RECORDS Ⓜ SH 210 \$6.98 (British label, available at stores dealing in direct imports).

years to her appearance with a new hairdo and a dress borrowed from an older woman, she spent her nights making her singing talent known to club owners on the South Side. Soon she was singing at Dago Frank's, a gathering place for white hookers, who were known to brush tears from their eyes as little Alberta poured her Memphis soul into such popular fare of the day as *Where the River Shannon Flows*. At first she knew only two songs, but she made it a point to learn a new one every night until she had built up a good, varied repertoire.

WHILE Alberta Hunter was using Chicago's South Side dives as a training ground, Sam Wooding had moved from Philadelphia to Atlantic City, where he made his living performing under most unusual circumstances. "They used to call us pianists 'professors,'" he recalled recently, "and we would hang out on a street corner until one of the working girls in the area sent her maid to get one of us. The girl would have a client in her room, and a screen separated her bed from the piano. It was our job to accompany them as they made love. Through a crack in the screen, we were able to follow their action and provide the appropriate sensuous music. Naturally, as they worked themselves up, I brought the music to a sort of crescendo. It was interesting—like playing for a silent movie." Mr. Wooding's next job offered a change of pace; he traveled to Europe as a member of Lt. Will Vodery's 807th Pioneer Infantry Band.

In 1919, Wooding, once again a civilian, formed his first band. That same year, Alberta Hunter—having graduated from Chicago's Deluxe Cafe and Panama Club (where one of her co-workers was Florence Mills)—became a featured artist at the Dreamland Cafe, the finest of Chicago's many black cabarets. "Her salary was only \$17.50 a week," recalled the late Lil Armstrong, who often served as Miss Hunter's piano accompanist, "but she made three to four hundred dollars a night in tips, and when they boosted her salary to \$35 a week, we jokingly called her the highest-paid performer in Chicago. She wore heavily beaded dresses that glittered and sparkled as she shimmied around the room and sang. Every now and then she'd make her breasts jump, and then the cats really loosened up on their bankrolls." New songs were always being introduced at the Dreamland, a feature that attracted some of the most famous white performers of the day. "They said they were seeking inspiration," Lil Armstrong remarked, "but actually they were only stealing our material.

That's how Sophie Tucker got most of her stuff. She 'borrowed' Alberta's songs as well as her style. However, we were making so much money at the time that we really didn't care."

As the Roaring Twenties began and Prohibition went into effect, both Miss Hunter and Mr. Wooding found their way to New York City, he with his band at Barron's in Harlem, she to launch what would turn out to be a prolific recording career. The first Alberta Hunter records were made for W. C. Handy's Black Swan label, which boasted in its advertisements that it was "The only genuinely colored record—others are only passing." But a couple of months later she moved to Paramount Records (a subsidiary of the Wisconsin Chair Company), where she recorded her own *Down Hearted Blues*. It was a big hit, but it did even better for Bessie Smith, who recorded it on her first Columbia session and saw it sell some 800,000 copies.

By the summer of 1929, Miss Hunter had also graced the studios of Okeh, Victor, and Vocalion, recording over seventy-five sides with accompaniment by such outstanding artists as King Oliver, Fletcher Henderson, Fats Waller, and Louis Armstrong—not to mention her two fellow "survivors," Eubie Blake and Sam Wooding. She had also starred in a couple of Broadway shows, headlined in some of New York's biggest black-oriented night clubs, and, as she puts it, "made a pile of money"—enough to take a well-earned vacation in Monte Carlo.

SAM WOODING hadn't done so badly either. In 1925, while his band was engaged at the famous Club Alabam (where it had replaced the Fletcher Henderson Band), his unusual arrangements caught the ear of a famous Russian impresario. Dr. Leoni Leonidof, whose clients included Feodor Chaliapin and George Balanchine, had come to the U.S. to recruit a black show for a European tour. Arthur Lyons, a well-known American theatrical agent of the day, brought Leonidof to the Alabam, and the Wooding orchestra was hired on the spot. "The show was called *The Chocolate Kiddies* because we saw a billboard advertising a chocolate by that name when we got to Germany," Wooding recalls, "but it wasn't a scripted, story-telling show, just a bunch of acts put together."

They opened at Berlin's Admirals Palast on May 6, 1925, an assemblage of forty musicians, dancers, singers, and jugglers. It was a premiere Sam Wooding will never forget: "We had picked *By the Waters of Minnetonka* as our overture, and we really played it that night, but instead of the immediate

applause we were used to there was a stillness when we finished. Then, like a clap of thunder, the audience started banging their feet and shouting 'Bis nochmal hoch, bravo,' and the din was so great that 'bis' ['more'] sounded like 'beast' to us and some of the boys were about to run out of the orchestra pit before we realized that they were being complimentary."

The show created a sensation, and it gave many music critics their first taste of a live jazz orchestra. From Berlin, the Chocolate Kiddies revue moved on to Hamburg's Thalia Theater and Copenhagen's Cirkus. The reviews were uniformly enthusiastic, if somewhat confused: "It's something completely insane, fantastic, incomprehensible," wrote a bewildered Danish critic. "The black musicians toil so that only the whites of their eyes are showing, while Sam Wooding, quite aloof, waves his white stick and conducts with seriousness and reverence, as if a symphony were being performed. It is the wildest cacophony. One is angered, insulted, and ready to tear one's hair out. But listen! Out of this confused noise there rises a tone so clear and fine that it fills the ear with joy. Why, it's *Tannhäuser!*" And indeed it was. Sam Wooding was fond of presenting what he called "a syncopated synthesis" of the classics. "*Du holder Abendstern syncopated!*" continued the reviewer. "It's sheer blasphemy—and yet, out of all this mess one hears the most beautiful harmonies, the clearest tones. They are musicians, after all, and they know their stuff. It's not the monotonous pling-plang of the East. It's premeditated rape of the ears. . . . Intoxicated, anesthetized, and overwhelmed, one stumbles out of the theater." The rest of the show received equally enthusiastic reviews, prompting some of the acts to leave the show early and go out on their own. A replacement for one such deserter was a young English lady named Mabel Mercer.

AFTER the breakup of the Chocolate Kiddies, Wooding decided to stay in Europe with his band. They played all over the Continent, visited Moscow and Leningrad (decades before Benny Goodman's allegedly pioneering trip there in the Sixties), and even took a "side trip" to South America via Africa. In 1925, the band made a series of recordings for Vox in Berlin (thus becoming the first black American band to record outside of the U.S.), followed, in 1926, by a series for the German Polydor label, ten imaginative sides recorded for Parlophone in Barcelona in 1929, and numerous Paris sessions for Pathé and Polydor.

While Wooding spread his jazz to

Sam Wooding



Sam Wooding and his Original Chocolate Kiddies Orchestra in Hamburg in 1925.

different parts of the world, Alberta Hunter, still vacationing in Monte Carlo, received a telegram from Noble Sissle suggesting that she make a stop-over in London to perform at a much-heralded, star-studded, flood-relief benefit. "I jumped at the chance," she recalls, "because I had wanted to perform in England but couldn't get the required work permit." As luck would have it, the benefit was attended by Oscar Hammerstein II and Jerome Kern, who obviously liked what they heard. "I was staying with Marion Anderson, and Mr. Hammerstein called me there the next day, asking me to come down to the Drury Lane Theatre. Next thing I knew I had the part of Queenie in the London production of *Show Boat*, which had a wonderful cast, including Paul Robeson, Edith Day, and Sir Cedric Hardwicke."

The Kern/Hammerstein musical finished its one-year run at the Drury Lane, and Miss Hunter literally began commuting between New York and various European capitals. Showing her versatility, she became a sultry, sophisticated ballad singer when she recorded and performed, at the posh Dorchester Hotel, with Jack Jackson's Orchestra in the fall of 1934, adding to her growing coterie of fans the Prince of Wales and Noël Coward. Her elabo-

Alberta Hunter



Alberta Hunter was a tireless entertainer at World War II war-bond rallies.

Sam Wooding and orchestra appeared at this year's Zurich International Jazz Festival.



Sam Wooding

JAZZ ROOTS...

"It was my first appearance in Zurich in fifty-two years. It never hurts to make yourself a little scarce."

rate cabaret act, which featured a white chorus of feathered girls perched on a bar inside a giant birdcage, was a huge success from the Casino de Paris to Copenhagen's National Scala.

Also in 1934, Miss Hunter made history by appearing in the first English film to feature color, *Radio Parade of 1935*. Formulated after Hollywood's *Big Broadcast* films, its plot was designed to showcase some of England's favorite variety artists, and the color—a new and ill-fated process called Dufaycolor—was seen only in the film's last segment, when Miss Hunter sang a negro spiritual. "I don't know if the film was shown here at home," she says, "but I was getting so much publicity in Europe, and that made the people at home appreciate me more." In 1937 NBC signed her up to do broadcasts from New York and—via transatlantic cable—London. In 1939, while appearing in a dramatic role in *Mamba's Daughters* with Ethel Waters at New York's Empire Theatre, Miss Hunter also made her television debut with NBC and, reverting to the blues, was reunited with Lil Armstrong for a record session at Decca.

SAM WOODING had returned to the U.S. in 1935. "With Hitler on the loose, things were getting too hot over there," he recalls, "and one of our fans, who turned out to be a Gestapo man, knew what was brewing. So he told my agent 'Get Sam out of here before it's too late.'" Finding American audiences less receptive, and, one supposes, the competition stiffer, Wooding disbanded his orchestra the following year; four decades would pass before he formed his next big band.

While studying at the University of Pennsylvania for his bachelor's and master's degrees, he led his own Southland Spiritual Choir, a group partly inspired by the Cossack choirs he had heard in Russia. "We were about to depart on a world tour, sponsored by the International Baptist Association in London, when World War II broke

out," he recalls, "so we just toured the U.S. and Canada instead." Wooding entered the Fifties teaching music. Among his students (at Wilmington High School, Delaware) was a young man named Clifford Brown, who, before his premature death in 1956, pointed the jazz trumpet in a new direction. "There was another trumpeter in my class," muses Wooding, "and he was really much better. I suppose he's driving a truck now."

Alberta Hunter spent the war and postwar years entertaining troops from Burma to Berlin. She toured the U.S. and Canada in the early Fifties, worked with Eartha Kitt in the 1954 Broadway production of *Mrs. Patterson*, and retired from show business in 1956. "I made no big fuss over it, I just quit. The Lord had blessed me with a wonderful life, and I decided to do something that would help others, so I studied nursing." Miss Hunter's only musical activity over the past twenty-one years has been to record two albums (in 1961, for the Prestige and Riverside labels), but, as this issue goes to print, that has begun to change. Earlier this year, after twenty years of service, Alberta Hunter left her job at New York's Goldwater Memorial Hospital and returned to her first love: music. Barney Josephson, whose Café Society clubs featured some of the greatest talent around during the swing era, booked her to open at his Greenwich Village supper club, the Cookery, this past October. As of this writing at least two major magazines, *Newsweek* and the *New Yorker*, are planning feature stories on Miss Hunter's return, the *Today* show has booked her, and producer John Hammond has plans to record her.

STRANGELY enough, though their paths have often crossed, Alberta Hunter and Sam Wooding have not seen each other in over forty years. But don't be surprised if you see them sharing a billing in the future, for Wooding is back in full swing too. His new eleven-piece band, the Sam Wooding and Rae Harrison Orchestra, made a triumphant appearance at the Zurich International Jazz Festival last September, and returned home for a tour of the southern states later that same month. "They loved us in Zurich," Wooding beamed upon his return, "and they were even more enthusiastic this time around. I suppose that's because I brought over a fresh band of young musicians whose solos they hadn't heard before. It was my first appearance in Zurich in fifty-two years," he added with a smile. "It never hurts to make yourself a little scarce."

Who said jazz was old? □

JAZZ FLOWERS...

IN the early Sixties, long before RCA Victor threw its recently retrieved little dog into the garbage can, an executive of the company told me about a computer that determined when an album or a single was to be discontinued. Ruthless and alarmingly indiscriminate, this electronic decision-maker regularly removed from the RCA catalog some of its most meritorious items. "It rejects the *Star Spangled Banner* regularly," the executive confided, "but the company wants to maintain it in the catalog, so every three months they program it back in." Unfortunately, the national anthem—which, from a strictly musical standpoint, we probably all could do without—was (is?) a fairly isolated case; most records simply disappeared before the public had a chance to discover their existence.

The case of LPM-1372 was also an isolated one, but it proved that the wisdom of RCA's computer could successfully be challenged by a member of the record-buying public. The unavailability of this fine recording by the Jazz Workshop (a George Russell group) so upset pianist/composer Ran Blake that he launched a one-man crusade to have it reissued. It was in 1960 that Blake—then a waiter at the Jazz Gallery in Greenwich Village—began circulating a petition calling for the reinstatement of LPM-1372; by the time I added my signature there were several pages filled with autographs of the day's most significant jazz performers, producers, and writers. It was an imposing document, and it served its purpose. "At our next a-&-r meeting," recalled my informed RCA source, "we decided to reissue the album, and someone suggested using the signatures for the new cover, an idea that went over well until it was pointed out that we couldn't very well admit it took a petition to get us to release a good album." Thus LPM-1372 finally re-emerged as LPM-2534—but try to find it today. Ran Blake, now chairman of the New England Conservatory's Third Stream Department, later recorded for RCA himself, and, yes, his album has also long since fallen victim to the computer's axe.

IDON'T know whether RCA's records are still at the mercy of an electronic brain, but if a browse through your local record dealer's bins reveals such LP oldies as Victor Borge's "Comedy in Music," the Hi-Los' "Love Nest," or the Paul Robeson/Uta Hagen/José Ferrer recording of *Othello*, don't think you've discovered a computer error—they're on the Columbia label and they're part of a reissue program that is

one of the best-kept secrets in the record business. Since 1970, the Special Products division of Columbia Records has quietly (because they have no advertising budget) and with some regularity selected "the most sought-after albums from the archives of Columbia Records" and restored them to the catalog in a "Collectors' Series" that now numbers over 250 albums.

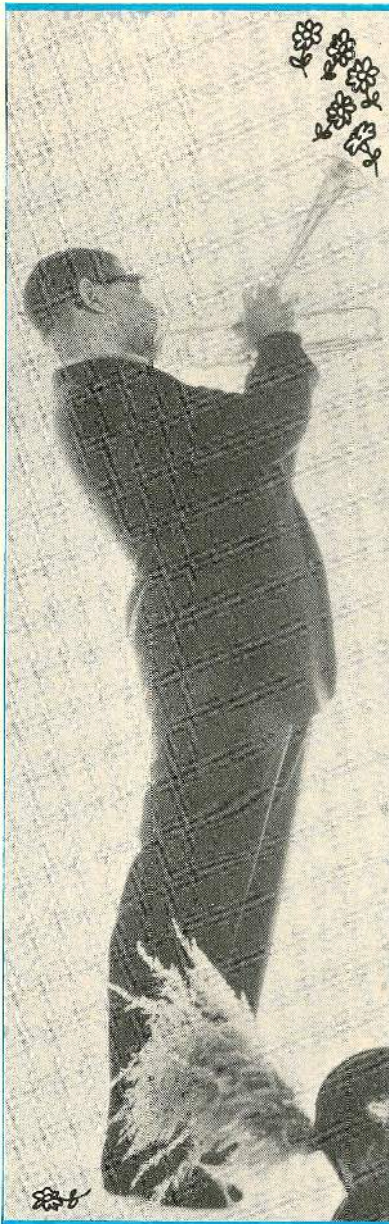
Most sought-after" is a little misleading, for many of the resurrected items are, in fact, quite esoteric; one can, for example, hardly imagine a big market for "An Evening with Alistair Cooke at the Piano" (AML4970) or "Bantu Music of East Africa" (91A02017). But on the other hand, 91B02058, a two-record set of heartbeats (mono only) is reported to be doing quite well in medical circles. Also doing well are soundtrack and original-cast albums and many of the catalog's resurrected Masterworks discs, which range from Vivaldi to Imbrie. In the area of jazz (yes, Columbia used to record honest-to-goodness jazz!) there are now over sixty albums in the Collectors' Series, including some recently known to have commanded five to ten times their original price on the out-of-print market.

Among the more outstanding jazz albums thus brought back are: "Ellington Jazz Party" (JCS8127), a spirited meeting of the Ellington orchestra with Dizzy Gillespie, Jimmy Rushing, and nine timpani players drawn from the symphonic world; "The Sound of Jazz" (JCL1098), the Count Basie Band, Billie Holiday, the Jimmy Giuffre Trio, Coleman Hawkins, Lester Young, Jimmy Rushing, and Henry "Red" Allen, among others, performing the music heard on the 1957 TV show of the same name, a show that remains, visually as well as aurally, the quintessence of American TV jazz presentations; "Louis Armstrong Plays W.C. Handy" (JCL591), 1954 recordings containing some of the trumpeter's finest post-war performances; "Paris Concert" (JLA16009), featuring the 1958 edition of Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers, with Lee Morgan and Bobby Timmons; and "Facets" (JP13811), an album of Miles Davis recordings made between 1955 and 1962 and compiled especially for this release.

For those wishing to dig even deeper into the jazz past, "The Sound of New Orleans Jazz—1917-1947" (JC3L30, three discs, \$17.94) and "Swing Street" (JSN6042, four discs, \$23.92) combine rare and well-known recordings to form fine anthologies of how it all began and developed, while "Stringing the Blues" (JC2L24, two discs, \$11.96) offers thirty-two 1927-1932 sides by violinist Joe Venuti and guitarists Eddie Lang and Lonnie Johnson with all-star supporting casts. The Collectors' Series has a list price of \$6.98 per single album. A full

catalog, listing dealers in your area, can be obtained from Columbia Special Products, 51 West 52nd Street, New York, N.Y. 10019.

In 1976 Columbia initiated the "Encore Collection," a \$4.98 series (also



available on eight-track cartridges at \$5.98) featuring items that were popular in the Sixties. The albums preserve the original cover art and liner notes. Thirty new releases in this series are due to start appearing this month. Unlike the twelve original Encore releases, they will retail for \$7.98 (for records, eight-track, and cassettes) and will be new compilations including many items not

previously available on LP's. Though details of the new releases are not available at this writing, they will probably bear some kinship to the series' biggest sellers so far.

Topping that list is "Johnny Mathis: A New Sound in Popular Song" (EN 13089, © ENA 13089), the singer's recording debut, made over twenty years ago with various orchestras. Among the musicians are Buck Clayton, Art Farmer, Phil Woods, and Hank Jones; among the arrangers are John Lewis, Manny Albam, and Gil Evans. The voice, though unmistakably that of Mathis, hasn't the tone quality he later developed, but no one concerned need feel bad about this reissue, and the arrangements make good use of the talent on hand. The second-best-selling item in the Encore series is an equally mellow 1970 outing called "Sarah Vaughan in Hi-Fi" (EN 13084, © ENA 13084), featuring the Divine One with an eight-piece Jimmy Jones band including Miles Davis, Benny Green, and Budd Johnson. Sarah too has sounded better since, but she is wonderful here all the same, and the accompaniment is, of course, choice.

Of richly violined, romantic love ballads perceptively sung are your cup of tea, you will welcome back "That's All" (EN 13090, © ENA 13090), which represents the early Sixties Columbia debut of Mel Tormé. There was more velvet than fog in Tormé's voice at that time, and his performance is as enduring as the songs he sings. Trailing behind Tormé in sales is "Johnnie Ray's Greatest Hits" (EN 13086, © ENA 13086). They're all there just as he originally cried them, selling neck-to-neck with an unusual meeting, which actually never took place, between Rosemary Clooney and the Duke Ellington Orchestra. "Blue Rose" (EN 13085, © ENA 13085) was recorded by Ellington's orchestra and Clooney on separate occasions in 1957, before multiple tracking made such trickery common practice. The result obviously lacks any kind of rapport between singer and orchestra, and it does justice to neither. Ellington, however, went on to record some very fine albums for Columbia, such as "Hi-Fi Ellington Uptown," "A Drum Is a Woman," and "Such Sweet Thunder," all of which—as CCL830, JCL951, and JCL1033, respectively—are back by way of the Collectors' Series. Other Encore albums feature the Hollies, polkas by Frankie Yankovic, Gary Puckett's soft rock of the late Sixties, stringy MOR sets by Kostelanetz and Percy Faith, a Harry James set with Rosemary Clooney, and, for older feet, some pre-disco dance music by the Les Elgart Orchestra. Future plans call for a generous amount of good jazz in the Collectors' Series, from that distant past when Columbia was less chart-conscious.

—Chris Albertson

A Little



Columbia Records

Xmas Music

By William Kimmel

DURING Christmas week the postman often delivers a package out of which tumble a number of smaller, gaily wrapped packages of various sizes—assorted gifts chosen to appeal to the various ages and tastes of the entire family. They may range from simple “stocking stuffers”—fun and games—to impressive and finely wrought *objets d’art*. It is just such a package that has recently arrived from Columbia Records. Called “A Renaissance Christmas Celebration with the Waverly Consort,” its dozen varied carols, chorales, dances, and motets were selected and most elegantly “wrapped” in the multicolored timbres of Renaissance instruments by director Michael Jaffee and his excellent group of singers and instrumentalists. The Waverly Consort (six singers and four instrumentalists, here augmented by seven additional performers) specializes in medieval, Renaissance, and Baroque music and has acquired an international reputation for the beauty, vitality, and authenticity of its performances.

Much of the music making of the Renaissance sprang from the art of skillful arrangers working with old, familiar melodies—liturgical chants, dance tunes, popular songs, and traditional carol or chorale melodies. And even when a composer had completed a new score, its performance again became an arranger’s art, a matter of “orchestration,” for the choice and disposition of voices and instruments for the various parts were left to the imagination and taste of leader, conductor, or chapel master. “Definitive” performances of these works are therefore no more possible than they would be for contemporary popular songs.

This art of arranging was described in detail in the writings of Michael Praetorius (1571-1621), prolific composer and musical scholar, eight of whose works are included in this Columbia program. His flair for the possibilities of vocal and instrumental color, varieties of sonority, contrasts of weight and texture, plus sheer sensuous pleasure—all characteristic of the musical taste of his time—parallels Berlioz’s gift

for orchestration two centuries later. The possibilities of combining solo voices with the instruments included in this recording (viola da gamba, organ, harp, shawm, recorder, dulciana, lute, sackbut, cornetto, Baroque trumpet, bells, tambour de Basque) are literally inexhaustible—if not all equally successful.

Two of the Praetorius arrangements included here are lively and sometimes rhythmically intricate dances. The other six are arrangements of some of the most familiar old Christmas melodies, varying from the simple, eloquent harmonization of *Es Ist ein Rös’ Entsprungen* to the large-scale, elaborate, one might almost say “concertato-fantasia” treatment of *In Dulci Jubilo*, where a succession of quickly changing textures and styles—now two or three voices, now seventeen; now polyphonic imitation, now homophonic sonority; now melodically simple and syllabic, now more elaborately ornamental—builds a sonorous architecture of multispaced and multicolored jubilation.

The program begins with three anonymous Spanish *villancicos*—popular, rustic dance songs with irresistibly “catchy” hemiola rhythms (three beats against two, or vice versa), breezy refrains alternating with solo verses. Simple strophic harmonizations of the melody acquire a new luster and beauty through the changes of instrumentation from stanza to stanza.

Side one includes the impressive eight-voice motet *O Magnum Mysterium* of Giovanni Gabrieli, the Venetian master of musical chiaroscuro, and the program concludes with Josquin’s motet *Ave Maria*, a most eminent model of classical Renaissance serenity, poise, equilibrium, and unruffled eloquence of expression. In this performance the voices are unobtrusively reinforced by instrumental color that adds clarity to the individual vocal lines, and this in turn gives a new and exciting dimension to the word “counterpoint.” Not only does one hear the familiar simultaneous unfolding of four separate melodic strands, but one also hears their “fitting together”—intervals of various sizes slipping easily into place as blocks of stone do when a mason fashions an intricate and varied pattern in a building facade. Here is “musical architecture” that is no longer a mere metaphor, a structure made possible as much by the singers’ vibratoless tone

production and faultless intonation as it is by Mr. Jaffee’s fine understanding of the compositional style and craft of the early sixteenth century. This is an album that deserves a permanent place of honor in anyone’s collection of Christmas-music perennials.

ANOTHER of the record business’ major contributions to the Christmas season this year is Angel’s stunning new recording of Bach’s Christmas Oratorio performed by the Choir of King’s College, Cambridge, the Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields, and four super-star soloists and conducted by Philip Ledger, director of music at King’s College.

The Christmas Oratorio was conceived as a set of six cantatas to be performed successively on the six feast days and Sundays of the Christmas season in the two major Leipzig churches in 1734. The Biblical story was thus narrated in six episodes: the Nativity, the Annunciation to the shepherds, the Adoration of the shepherds, the Circumcision and naming of Jesus, Herod’s search for the child, and the Adoration of the Magi. Though it appears to be a succession of six independent and self-contained pieces, it is everywhere obvious that Bach conceived it as a single, unified, and thoroughly integrated large-scale work similar to the Passions.

Much of the music consists of the reworking of movements from previously composed cantatas, especially those for the birthdays of the Elector and the Electress-Queen of Saxony of the previous year. Because of this fact, it has been assumed that the music is therefore less “inspired,” that Bach was taking the easy way out. But this was always a part of Bach’s compositional procedure and, indeed, of Baroque composers in general. Further, with respect to this work, there is evidence that the music of the birthday cantatas was originally conceived with an eye toward subsequent use in the oratorio. In all, the Christmas Oratorio is no secondary work and stands only slightly below the B Minor Mass and the St. John and St. Matthew Passions as crowning achievements of Bach’s liturgical music. Though the episodes of the story are not as dramatic as those of the Passions, the music is nowhere inferior, it is no less varied, nor is it less probing of the infinite

◀ Members of the Waverly Consort pose with their instruments before the tree erected each Xmas season in the Medieval Sculpture Hall of the Metropolitan Museum.

Xmas Music...



subtleties and ambivalences of the Christian faith.

There are at least two traditions of oratorio and oratorio performance. The first, that established by Handel out of Italian models, might be called the heroic-epic type. Based on Old Testament stories recounting the great deeds of heroic characters and intended for concert performance, it demanded large choruses and the great vocal art of renowned virtuoso singers, both male and female—those super-mortals who rise in august solemnity before the footlights, full-chested, with book in hand, fully conscious of their almost oracular responsibility. It is typically Baroque in that its aim is the marshaling of artistic effect to overwhelm the beholder.

The second tradition, established in Germany by Schütz from liturgical drama origins and continuing through Bach, might be called the liturgical-hermeneutic type. Since it was intended for performance as part of the liturgical service, its performing forces were relatively small and its soloists were generally choir regulars (all men and boys). The adventures of its nonheroic characters are told and immediately transposed and interpreted to become moments in the inner experience of the worshiper and the congregation. It contains, therefore, much that is more intimate, more personal and immediate, even homely in character.

Most of the recorded performances of the Christmas Oratorio currently available are hybrids from these two traditions—that is, the chorus of men and boys is relatively small while the solo arias and recitatives are performed by eminent virtuosos of the operatic stage. Unfortunately, not all of these soloists are able to shed the heroics of the Italian style or to forget themselves as exemplars of great singing art in order to portray the often simple, unheroic, troubled conscience of the child of faith.

ONLY one recording, that of Nikolaus Harnoncourt and his group of Bach scholars for Telefunken (3635022), can be called purist in its attempt to reproduce Bach's works as they would have been heard in Bach's day—the same size forces, Baroque instruments, falsettist and boy treble and alto, the pitch of that time (a half-tone lower), and articulations and rhythms based on the most recent investigation of Baroque performance practices. The result is highly unusual and untypical—for some, exciting and fascinating, for others, disturbing and even unmusical. It is therefore difficult to compare it with the others. Of those recordings with which I am familiar, almost all are of exceedingly high quality, so that it is almost impossible to single out one as unquestionably superior. The new Angel recording is in almost all respects a splendid and satisfying performance, both brilliant and moving—brilliant in sound as well as in the virtuoso performance of the choir, soloists, and instrumentalists, and moving in the eloquence of the accompanied

recitatives and arias and in the compelling momentum of the chorus.

Choruses and chorales provide the architectural pillars of the oratorio. Each of its six parts, excepting the second, opens with a large-scale, elaborately developed chorus which establishes the character, mood, atmosphere, and color of what follows. The dramatic episode is then developed through solo recitative, *arioso*, aria, and an occasional chorale. A strong, traditional, congregational chorale concludes each part as a kind of collective affirmation. The excellence of the choir of King's College in the area of English polyphonic music has been demonstrated in their several recordings. Their brilliant performance of the choruses of this work further attests to their superlative musicianship and to their ability to compete for honors with the seasoned German choirs whose very flesh and blood seem permeated with the Bach style (not to mention the German language). Though their tone quality is perhaps purer than the more open-diapasoned directness of German choristers, it is nowhere lacking in power, vitality, or character, and their enthusiastic approach to the work contributes to the overall freshness and *élan* that characterizes this performance. The clarity and ease with which they negotiate the rapid ornamental figures in the opening chorus is breath-taking. So also is the whole of the chorus "Ehre sei Gott" whose jubilant shouts and antiphonal responses issue into a fugue of irresistible momentum and cumulative drive. The trebles achieve an almost clarion brilliance and power, and these are matched by the strength and clarity of the altos.

ALL of the recording companies have enlisted first-rank singers for the solo arias. Those of Angel (Elly Ameling, Janet Baker, Robert Tear, and Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau) are artists of enormous stature and unquestioned artistry. If I have some reservations with respect to Mr. Tear and Miss Baker, it is not because their singing is not brilliant (it is), but because they were miscast. Both have voices of heroic size suited to the heroes of Handel and of Italian opera. Their virtuoso presence keeps them in the foreground, and one loses sight of the story, the inwardness of the sentiment, and the earnestness of each character's stance. My preference is for Christa Ludwig (DG Archive 2710004), who has achieved a remarkable warmth, intimacy, and simplicity appropriate to the characters she portrays. And I also prefer Fritz Wunderlich (Archive as well) with his much more lyrical and flexible approach to the predominantly bravura tenor arias. Tear's performance seems much too robust, aggressive, even violent, not only in the two arias of part six, where there is some justification, but also in others where there is not. Admittedly, this is a bravura role, but there are many qualities of bravura besides rage and vengeance.

Miss Ameling and Fischer-Dieskau both give superlative performances throughout the new Angel recording. Ameling's almost childlike fascination and play with her double echo (oboe and treble) in the dialogue aria of part four is sheer delight, and Fischer-Dieskau's ability to turn mere words into living beings, each with a character, shape,

and life of its own, is again apparent here. He too subordinates his voice and artistry to the spirit and intimacy of the texts. Too word conscious? Not, I think, for Bach.

Special comments must be directed to the brilliant performance by the instrumentalists of the Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields. Not only are they not suppressed by the engineers in order to give prominence to the voices, they are everywhere co-partners, equal in virtuosity, eloquence, and beauty of sound. Special honors must go to oboists Tess Miller and Celia Nicklin. Nowhere have I heard Bach's poignant oboe *d'amore* melodies played with greater beauty of sound, subtlety of articulation, and gracious expression. It is worth the price of the album for these movements alone. No less rewarding are the contributions of the other soloists, especially on trumpet and horn, from whom Bach demanded the *almost* impossible. But it is the perfection of the ensemble (especially in the concert-style movements) that gives this oratorio of joy and praise the radiance appropriate to the Christmas story.

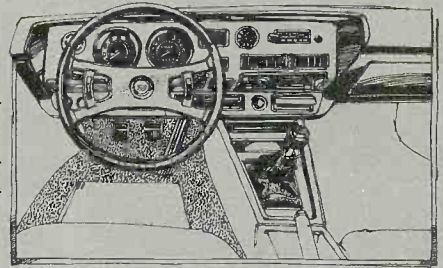
A FINAL word about the ambiance of the performance. It was recorded in the King's College Chapel, where there is a very lively reverberation which is sometimes exciting in the afterglow of the brilliant choruses but slightly disturbing elsewhere. At the opening, the timpani generate an almost *too* voluminous volume of sound, and occasionally—but only occasionally—the reverberation intrudes during the course of a movement, especially as a third and unwanted echo in the soprano aria of part four. Otherwise it contributes to the very live quality of the recording.

All in all, and in spite of the few reservations voiced above, I find this a highly satisfying version of the oratorio, sometimes breath-taking and electrifying, sometimes tremendously moving, and almost always sensuously beautiful. The package includes the usual text with translation and two pages of useful notes. □

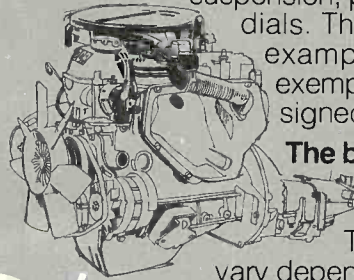
THE WAVERLY CONSORT: A Renaissance Christmas Celebration. Spanish Villancicos (Anon.): *Dadme Albricias; Riu, Riu, Chiu; E la Don, Don, Verges Maria.* **G. Gabrieli: O Magnum Mysterium. Josquin des Prés: Ave Maria. Praetorius: Courante; Philov-Volte-Philov; In Dulci Jubilo; Ein Kind Geborn zu Bethlehem; Nun Komm, der Heiden Heiland; Psallite Unigenito Christo; Joseph, Lieber Joseph Mein; Es Ist ein Rös' Entsprungen.** Waverly Consort, Michael Jaffee dir. COLUMBIA M 34554 \$7.98.

J. S. BACH: Christmas Oratorio (BWV 248). Elly Ameling (soprano); Janet Baker (alto); Robert Tear (tenor); Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau (bass); Choir of King's College, Cambridge; Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields, Philip Ledger cond. ANGEL □ SC 3840 three discs \$23.94.

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Royce Fernandez partners ballerina Lupe Serrano in the American Ballet Theatre's production of *Swan Lake*, the Beethoven's Fifth of ballet.

By the 1960's and early 1970's the growth of ballet in the United States had become truly phenomenal. An article in the *Wall Street Journal* of March 14, 1968, bore the headline "The Dance: Signs of a Boom Market." In 1972 the *New York Times* published statistics showing that attendance at ballet and modern-dance events had increased 500 per cent since 1965. New York no longer contained the majority of the dance audience—73 per cent of it was spread across the country. The young were especially prominent in this larger audience, and a survey made by the Association of College and University Concert Managers yielded the incredible bit of information that, on the 140 campuses included in the study, more ballet performances were sold out than rock concerts.

In the years since the Thirties the sissy image that once plagued ballet has almost disappeared, probably because of the emergence of such virile dancers as Jacques d'Amboise and Edward Villella, who were capable of performing feats of strength and endurance that few professional athletes could duplicate. The elitist label persisted a bit longer.

In its origins and for much of its history ballet was indeed elitist. It was a court entertainment, whether the dancers were the ladies and gentlemen of the court of Louis XIV of France or professionals hired to dance for the imperial court of czarist Russia. But the

BACKGROUND

governments that have replaced those royal courts have since used ballet companies as cultural ambassadors to friendly nations—not to dance for audiences made up only of heads of state and cabinet members, but to convey to the public at large the message that "our country is cultivated, our men are strong, and our women are beautiful."

As for the performers, such gifted dancers as Mikhail Baryshnikov and Gelsey Kirkland may belong to an elite, but it is the same elite that includes soccer players Shep Messing and Pelé, tennis players Virginia Wade and Jimmy Connors, football's O. J. Simpson, baseball's Tom Seaver. God, the supreme elitist, has endowed these lucky few with physical and mental skills that enable them to do certain things better than the rest of us. The

"Our country is cultivated, our men are strong, and our women are beautiful."

public, always fascinated by excellence, is willing to pay for the excitement of seeing that excellence demonstrated, whether in arena or theater.

It is not unusual at dance events in New York and Washington to spot such diverse public figures and Beautiful People as Jacqueline Onassis, Woody Allen, Betty Ford, Katharine Hepburn, Paul Newman, and Joanne Woodward. Neither is it unusual to see a sprinkling of such celebrities at a tennis match. But the majority of the audience for ballet, as it is for sports, is made up of the rest of us plain clumsy folks.

Happily, television, the Medium of the Common Man, is now taking the best the dance world has to offer into the homes of those who lack the funds, transportation, or energy to attend live performances. There have been some fabulous programs in Exxon's distinguished *Dance in America* series, and the American Ballet Theatre's performances of *Swan Lake* and *Giselle* in the *Live from Lincoln Center* series (also sponsored by Exxon) got ratings among the highest recorded for any "cultural" program disseminated by the Public Broadcasting Service. *Swan Lake* even won an Emmy this summer. Happily, too, the greater part of the music for the "classical" dance repertoire is available on discs, and the record companies are responding to the increase in the size of the audience by bringing out more ballet on records.

Ballet Disco

A BASIC LIBRARY OF SELECTED RECORDINGS
COMPILED BY WILLIAM LIVINGSTONE

Disco dancing has become so much a part of American life in the last few years that churches now advertise Saturday-night disco parties for senior citizens. But when news magazines speak of the United States as the world's leading dance power, they are not referring to the billion-dollar disco industry, but to the enormous increase in the popularity of ballet and related forms of theatrical dance that has taken place in this country since World War II.

Much as I love ballet, it strikes me as incongruous that such a traditional art

form should flourish and appeal to wide audiences at just this time. Ballet requires rigorous training, extreme discipline, and great virtuosity, yet its significant expansion has come during the last three decades, a period when practitioners of other arts rejected traditional forms and techniques in favor of "self-expression" and "getting loose," creating meterless poetry, non-objective art, and junk-yard sculpture.

One explanation of this paradox was offered by Lincoln Kirstein, general director of the New York City Ballet, in an article in the Schwann record cata-

log of May 1974: Kirstein said that, in a world rendered anxious by random absurdity and disorder, "the ballet represents humane order, or at least a metaphor, on an active plane of an ordered and civilized practice."

I agree, but I think the appeal of ballet is more basic than that. Dance, like song, is one of the elemental forces that animate all music, and just as sculpture is a more primitive art than painting, dance is more primitive than song. Ballet dancers communicate with their audiences in a heightened form of body language that is curiously satisfy-

Ballet...

ing on some primitive, nonverbal level. Similarly, I find that music for the ballet stimulates not only the mind and the heart, but the very muscles and sinews of the listener. It's exhilarating. While listening to records to compile the basic library of ballet music that follows, I found it very difficult to sit still and had to get up periodically and leap over the coffee table.

Choreographers today do not limit themselves to music written specifically for ballet, but choose as their scores anything from Bach to the Beach Boys. The dividing line between ballet and modern dance has become very fuzzy as ballet dancers have become so versatile that the same companies that perform *Giselle*, *Coppélia*, and *Swan Lake* can also perform works by such modern-dance choreographers as José Limón, Alvin Ailey, Paul Taylor, and Twyla Tharp. I have limited this basic library to works composed or specially arranged for ballet, and this eliminates the scores for such popular ballets as Balanchine's *Symphony in C* and *Concerto Barocco* and all those works commissioned by Martha Graham and other modern dancers.

The list below is nearly the same as the one Clive Barnes and I prepared for a similar article in *STEREO REVIEW* ten years ago. The works included are perennial favorites representative of ma-

ior periods from the eighteenth century to the present, and with few exceptions they are still danced regularly by major companies. Where possible, I have avoided suites of excerpts and have looked for complete performances. The choices reflect my own tastes, of course. When several recorded versions of a given work were available, I've tried to select those that suggested the theater rather than the concert hall, recordings that made me want to get up and dance.

In the last ten years there have been many first recordings of unusual ballet scores. Richard Bonyngue has been especially active in recording nineteenth- and early twentieth-century works for London, and Angel and Columbia have released some fascinating items from the Russian Melodiya catalog. A selection of my preferences among these less usual works is appended for those who wish to go a little beyond the basics. All these records have given me immense pleasure, and I hope they will do the same for you. But move some of the furniture out of the way before you start listening.

- **HÉROLD: *La Fille Mal Gardée* (excerpts).** Orchestra of the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, John Lanchbery cond. LONDON CS 6252.

The only ballets of the eighteenth century still performed are the comedies *Whims of Cupid and the Ballet Master* (preserved by the Royal Danish Ballet) and *La Fille Mal Gardée*, which has been danced in recent

years by American Ballet Theatre, the Joffrey Ballet Company, and the Royal Ballet of Britain. Dating from 1789, *La Fille Mal Gardée* is the oldest ballet in the international repertoire. Its story about a vivacious peasant girl who circumvents her mother's plans to marry her off to a rich suitor still amuses audiences.

The score for the first production in Bordeaux was the work of various hands. Louis-Joseph-Ferdinand Hérold provided a new score in 1828, and Peter Ludwig Hertel composed yet another in 1864. This recording derives from the Hérold score as arranged by conductor Lanchbery for Frederick Ashton's new version of the ballet premiered in 1960 in London. It includes a clog dance from the Hertel version and some melodies borrowed from Donizetti operas and interpolated for Fanny Elssler in 1837. It's a witty, melodious score conducted authoritatively by Lanchbery. Be careful going over the coffee table.

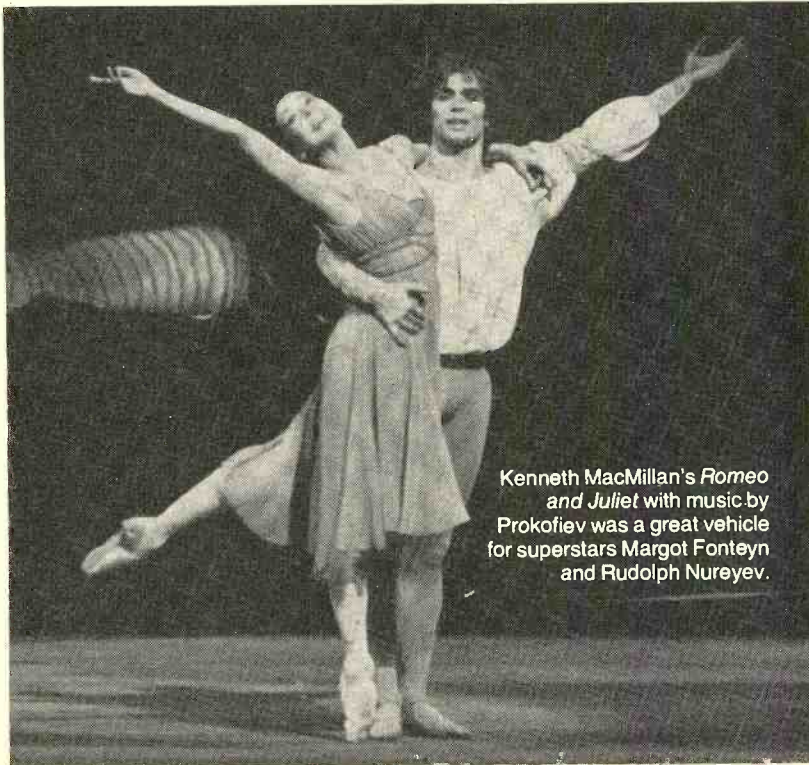
- **ADAM: *Giselle*.** London Symphony Orchestra, Anatole Fistoulari cond. MERCURY SRI 2-77003 two discs.

In discussing ballet, the terms "Romantic" and "Classic" do not conform to the periods to which they refer in music history. In ballet the Romantic period occurred in the middle of the nineteenth century when Paris was the dance center of the world. The Classic period came later in the century and reached its culmination in Russia. But the music composed for ballets in both periods is Romantic.

Giselle, premiered in 1841, was not the first Romantic ballet, but it has been the most enduring one. Sometimes described as the *Hamlet* of the ballet repertoire, it has a mythic quality that goes beyond its rather simple story of a peasant girl betrayed by her aristocratic lover. Dancers who have specialized in the roles of *Giselle* and her lover Albrecht have been among the most famous in history, and balletomanes argue endlessly about Carla Fracci's *Giselle* as compared with Natalia Makarova's, about Igor Youskevitch's Albrecht as compared with Erik Bruhn's.

No ballet season is complete for me unless I get a few more performances of *Giselle* under my belt. I love Adolphe Adam's charming, theatrically effective score, and I love Fistoulari's recording of it. He toured with Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo, and his experience conducting for dancers is evident in this very idiomatic, "dancey" performance. It is the same one recommended in our 1967 basic library, but it has since been subjected to a sensational remastering job and is now available in excellent sound on European pressings in the Mercury Golden Imports series.

My only quibble with this recording has to do with the edition Fistoulari conducts. It observes most of the cuts that are standard in performances in the theater—and then some. Where for example, is the repeat of *Giselle*'s first dance when she emerges from the grave in Act Two? A more scholarly version, which includes some music I'd never heard before, is conducted by Richard Bonyngue on London 2226, and some listeners might prefer that one—but mostly for its completeness.



Kenneth MacMillan's *Romeo and Juliet* with music by Prokofiev was a great vehicle for superstars Margot Fonteyn and Rudolph Nureyev.

Louis Pétres

- **DELIBES: *Coppélia*.** Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra, Antal Dorati cond. MERCURY SRI 2-77004 two discs.

Like Giselle, Swanilda, the heroine of *Coppélia*, is a peasant girl in love, but she is a great deal more practical than Giselle, and after a suitable amount of intrigue and dancing around, she gets her man. *Giselle* is the great tragedy of ballet's Romantic period; *Coppélia* is the period's great comedy.

Musically, *Coppélia* is considered a landmark in ballet history because of the high quality of its score, which is more sophisticated than most of the ballet music that preceded it. In *Coppélia* the music was integrated with the story as never before in a narrative ballet. The melodies that seem hackneyed when played as salon music in Muzak-like arrangements are still fresh and sparkling in a good performance of the complete score, and Delibes is ranked with Tchaikovsky and Stravinsky in the triumvirate of great ballet composers.

In 1967, Mr. Barnes and I lamented the deletion from the catalog of the Mercury recording of *Coppélia* conducted by Antal Dorati, who, like Fistoulari, paid his dues as a ballet conductor in the pit of the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo. I am happy to report that this performance has been restored in Mercury's Golden Imports series. The remastering, though less impressive than that of Fistoulari's *Giselle*, is satisfactory.

My second choice would be Yuri Fayer's performance on Melodiya/Angel SRB 4111, which has a good bit of theatrical snap and brilliance. The brand new recording by Jean-Baptiste Mari (Angel SB 3843) has a great deal of silken Gallic elegance to recommend it, but there is insufficient brio for my taste. Ernest Ansermet's somewhat genteel performance is a good buy on London's budget-price Stereo Treasury series (STS 15371/2).

- **TCHAIKOVSKY: *Swan Lake*.** Netherlands Radio Philharmonic Orchestra, Anatole Fistoulari cond. LONDON PHASE FOUR 21101/2/3 three discs.
- **TCHAIKOVSKY: *The Sleeping Beauty*.** London Symphony Orchestra, André Previn cond. ANGEL SCLX 3812 three discs.
- **TCHAIKOVSKY: *The Nutcracker*.** Amsterdam Concertgebouw Orchestra, Antal Dorati cond. PHILIPS 6747 257 two discs.

It sometimes seems that everything Tchaikovsky ever wrote, except his letters to Mme. von Meck, has been used at one time or another for a ballet score—symphonies, piano concertos, fantasy overtures, tone poems, orchestral suites, and piano pieces. But these three monumental works of ballet's Classical period suffice to give Tchaikovsky the status in the dance world that Verdi and Wagner have in opera. *Swan Lake*, *Sleeping Beauty*, and *The Nutcracker*, all three with fairy-tale librettos, simply are ballet to many dance fans, and they would cheerfully go to see one or the other every night. *Swan Lake* and *Sleeping Beauty* made the international reputation of England's Royal Ballet, and they have sustained it. All three of these works are now in the repertoire of American Ballet Theatre. The New York City Ballet's *Nutcracker* has become

for children in New York what the Christmas pantomimes are in London, and other American cities, such as San Francisco and Seattle, have followed suit with their own productions. These scores are indispensable to any collection of ballet music.

So far as I know, André Previn does not have Dorati's and Fistoulari's experience in working with a ballet company, but he has shown a commendable aptitude for conducting great ballet scores, and his recording of *Sleeping Beauty* replaces George Weldon's, which was our choice in 1967.

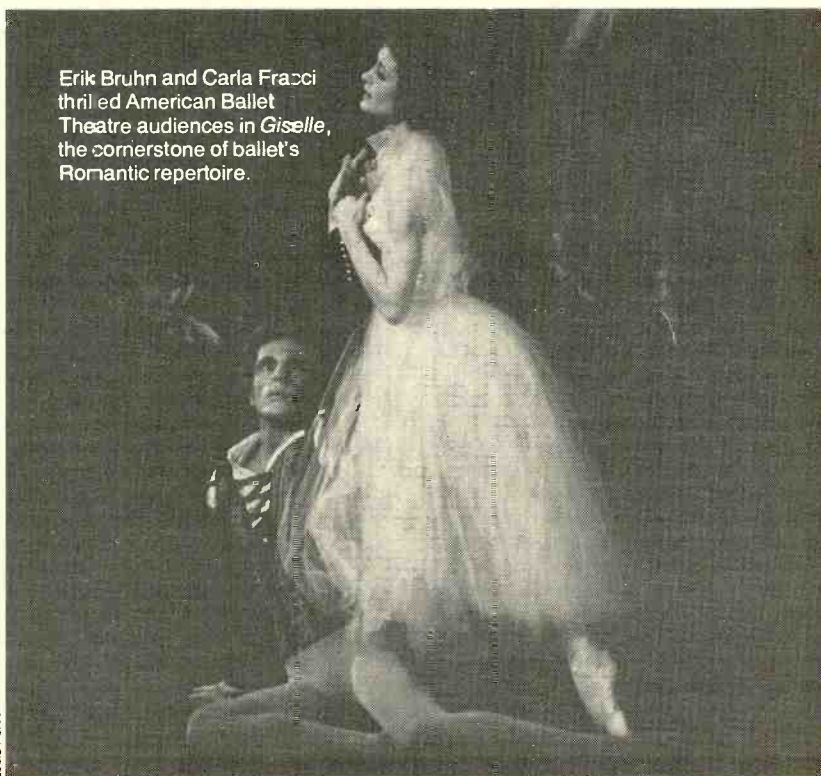
Richard Freed, who prepares STEREO REVIEW's discography *The Basic Repertoire*, chooses Previn's recording of *The Nutcracker* over all others, and I do not argue with that choice. But when Dorati conducts ballet music, it makes me think of taking down the dancing shoes I have hung up forever and trying to see if a daily *barre* might not do something for this waistline. Dorati has recorded *The Nutcracker*, perhaps the most classic of Tchaikovsky's ballet scores, three times. Mr. Barnes and I chose his recording with the London Symphony Orchestra in 1967, and I choose the one with the Concertgebouw now. When I listen to it, I remember what Music Editor James Goodfriend once wrote of the opera *Hansel and Gretel* (another Christmas treat for kids): "This music is too good for children."

And what can I say of *Swan Lake*? With audiences it ranks in popularity with *Giselle*, and for me these two dance dramas are not just two of my favorite ballets, but two of my favorite works of all the performing arts. *Swan Lake* is, of course, a greater score than *Giselle*, and of all the works in this list it is probably the best seller on records. I am told that at repertoire planning sessions for classical labels some sales manager usually pipes up and asks wistfully, "Can we have a new recording of *Swan Lake*?" It is the Beethoven's Fifth of ballet music.

New in this listing is Fistoulari's *Swan Lake*, and I react to it as I did to Carlos Kleiber's recording of Beethoven's Fifth. It's the aural equivalent of seeing a familiar painting cleaned of years of accumulated grime. It sparkles, it glisters, and best of all it dances. A lot of scholarship has gone into reconstructing the score of *Swan Lake* as it was initially presented (unsuccessfully) in 1877. I am not a purist about this score and would actually prefer to have the music from the end of Act One (beginning on side two of Fistoulari's recording) placed where it is customarily performed as the music for the Black Swan *pas de deux* in Act Three. But the music is all there somewhere on the records, the original Act Three music on side five is quite beautiful, and Ruggiero Ricci's solo violin playing is glorious. If you buy only one recording from this list, I suggest that you celebrate the centenary of *Swan Lake* by acquiring this one.

- **CHOPIN: *Les Sylphides*.** Philharmonia Orchestra, Charles Mackerras cond. ANGEL S-35833.

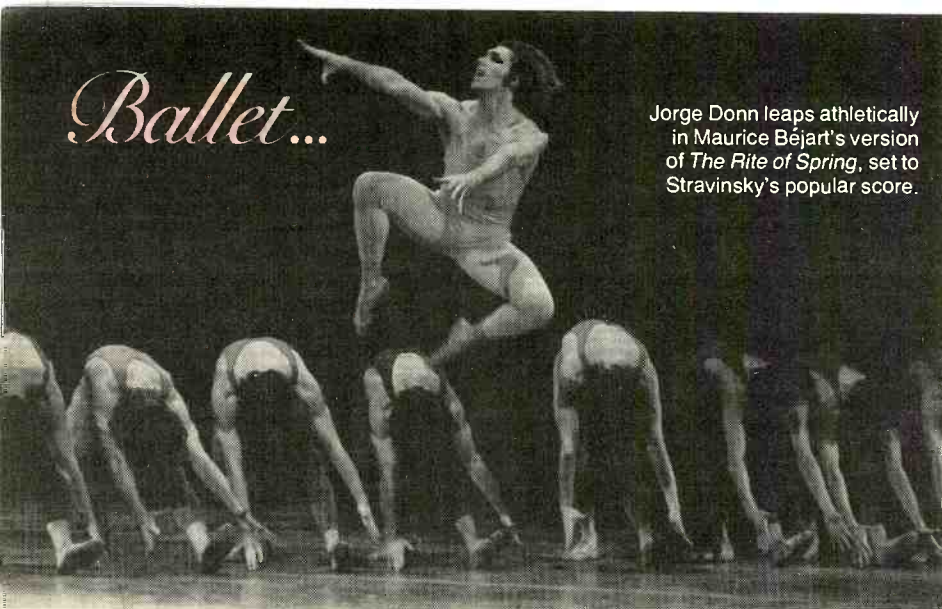
Chopin never composed ballet music, but a group of his piano pieces was orchestrated to form the score of Michel Fokine's plotless evocation of the Romantic ballet. The first work ever performed by the American Ballet Theatre (in 1940), *Les Sylphides* is a repertoire staple in that company and many others. I have seen so many bad performances of it that I feel about *Les Sylphides* the way I do when confronted with Puccini's *Tosca* in the opera house—oh, not that damned thing again! But a good performance of *Sylphides*, like a good *Tosca*, grabs me every time. Mackerras has theater sense acquired as a conductor of the Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet, and, as you must have figured out, I give extra points for that. His recording of *Sylphides*, though not new, has proved to be very durable. Its inclusion



Erik Bruhn and Carla Fracci thrilled American Ballet Theatre audiences in *Giselle*, the cornerstone of ballet's Romantic repertoire.

Louis Pérez

Ballet...



Jorge Donn leaps athletically in Maurice Béjart's version of *The Rite of Spring*, set to Stravinsky's popular score.

Louis Fèrès

of Ponchielli's *Dance of the Hours* and the Meyerbeer-Lambert score for Frederick Ashton's *Les Patineurs* makes it a very good buy.

Les Sylphides was first performed in St. Petersburg in 1908 as *Chopiniana*, orchestrated by Alexander Glazounov. Among the many who have reorchestrated the score are Anatole Liadov, Igor Stravinsky, Leroy Anderson, and Sir Malcolm Sargent. (Mackerras performs the version by Gordon Jacob.) Glazounov's orchestration, revised by Maurice Keller, is now available under the original title *Chopiniana* on Melodiya/Angel SR-40231, conducted by Algis Zuraitis. Fascinatingly different from what we hear in Western theaters today, it occupies both sides of a whole LP.

- **STRAVINSKY: *The Firebird***. New York Philharmonic Orchestra, Pierre Boulez cond. COLUMBIA M 33508, MQ 33508.
- **STRAVINSKY: *Petrouchka***. London Symphony Orchestra, Chas. Mackerras cond. VANGUARD 10113, VSZ 30021.
- **STRAVINSKY: *The Rite of Spring***. Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Georg Solti cond. LONDON CS 6885.
- **STRAVINSKY: *Apollo (Apollon Musagète)***. Columbia Symphony Orchestra. *Orpheus*. Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Igor Stravinsky cond. COLUMBIA MS 6646.

Stravinsky is to twentieth-century ballet what Tchaikovsky was to the Classic period and more besides. He was a member of the illustrious group of composers, choreographers, dancers, and painters that Sergei Diaghilev (1872-1929) gathered together in Paris to create and perform some of the greatest ballets of all time. Stravinsky later continued to serve ballet in a great collaboration with another alumnus of Diaghilev's Ballets Russes, George Balanchine of the New York City Ballet. *Agon*, my favorite of Stravinsky's later ballets, was included in our 1967 basic library, but since no recordings of it are currently available, I have substituted the earlier *Rite of Spring* (*Le Sacre du Printemps*). With choreography by Vaslav Nijinsky (1913) and later by Leonide Massine, *Rite of Spring* did not succeed as a ballet, but it quickly became a concert-hall

favorite. Later versions by choreographers Maurice Béjart (1959), Kenneth MacMillan (1962), and others have restored it to the ballet stage.

It is difficult to select recordings of Stravinsky's scores because there have been so many good ones. I agree with Richard Freed on his first choices for *Petrouchka*, *Rite of Spring*, and the complete *Firebird* and with his view that Dorati's *Firebird* (Mercury SRI 75058) is a magical reading of the score despite its age. Pierre Monteux conducted the first performance of *Petrouchka*, and his polished recording with the Boston Symphony (RCA Gold Seal AGL1-1272) has authority as well as historical value. Similar virtues can be attributed to all the performances of Stravinsky's ballets by Ernest Ansermet on the London label. Ansermet was a friend of the composer, who introduced him into the circle of creative geniuses surrounding Diaghilev. In the same way that London has repackaged, in various combinations, Ansermet's recordings of Stravinsky ballets, Columbia has repackaged those conducted by Stravinsky himself. To my mind the latter are not always the most satisfying performances, but they do have the composer's own insights.

- **FALLA: *The Three Cornered Hat***. Victoria de los Angeles (soprano); Philharmonia Orchestra, Rafael Frühbeck de Burgos cond. ANGEL S-36235.

Diaghilev never composed a score, choreographed a ballet, or designed a set, but he had a gift for drawing the best from those who could do what he could not. Falla's *Three Cornered Hat* is one of the finest scores Diaghilev commissioned, a really gorgeous work. The ballet is not currently danced, but I hope it will soon be revived. The Angel recording by Frühbeck de Burgos from the middle Sixties used to be a demonstration disc to show the uninitiated what hi-fi really sounded like (those castanets!). The performance is still the most idiomatic reading of this music, and the sound holds up remarkably well. There is a new recording (reviewed in this issue) on Deutsche Grammophon with Seiji Ozawa conducting the Boston Symphony and Teresa Berganza singing the brief vocal solo.

- **ROSSINI/RESPIGHI: *La Boutique Fantasque***. Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, Georg Solti cond. LONDON STS 15005.

Rossini wrote a great deal of ballet music to be included with his operas, and a good recording of it is available on Philips 6780 027, a two-disc set with Antonio de Almeida conducting the Orchestre National de l'Opéra de Monte Carlo. But *La Boutique Fantasque* with a score of Rossini melodies arranged by Ottorino Respighi was among the great ballets Boris Lermontov (Anton Walbrook) promised to revive for Victoria Page (Moira Shearer) in the movie *The Red Shoes*. Was it such a great ballet? I don't know; I've never seen it. Like *The Three Cornered Hat*, it was premiered in 1919 by Diaghilev's Ballets Russes and is not often performed today. But its lively score endures on records, and Solti's is the most durable performance.

- **J. STRAUSS II: *Le Beau Danube***. National Philharmonic Orchestra, Richard Bonyng cond. LONDON CS 6896.
- **J. STRAUSS II: *Graduation Ball***. Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, Willi Boskovsky cond. LONDON STS 15070.

Since a strong feeling for dance animated so much of the music of the entire Strauss family, it is hardly surprising that pastiches of their work have resulted in two such popular, waltzy ballets as *Le Beau Danube* (1924) and *Graduation Ball* (1940), the former orchestrated by Roger Désormière, the latter by Antal Dorati. Bonyng's performance of *Beau Danube* (filled out with orchestral excerpts from *Die Fledermaus*) is among his best ballet recordings. I've chosen the recording of *Graduation Ball* by Strauss specialist Willi Boskovsky, which also contains Weber's *Invitation to the Dance* (the music for Fokine's ballet *Le Spectre de la Rose*). Dorati's own recording of *Graduation Ball* (backed by Offenbach's *Gaité Parisienne*) is still available on Mercury 75014.

- **OFFENBACH: *Gaité Parisienne***. Monte Carlo Opera Orchestra, Manuel Rosenthal cond. ANGEL S-37209.

During the economic depression of the 1930's the successors to Diaghilev's Ballets Russes—Colonel de Basil's Original Ballet Russe and the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo—cheered audiences up with good-humored, chic (even chi-chi) ballets such as *Le Beau Danube*. None of these succeeded more than *Gaité Parisienne*, whose score of Offenbach melodies was skillfully arranged by Manuel Rosenthal for the première in Monte Carlo in 1938. No one of the many available versions has more good humor or good cheer than Rosenthal's own new recording made last year in Monte Carlo.

- **COPLAND: *Billy the Kid; Rodeo***. New York Philharmonic Orchestra, Leonard Bernstein cond. COLUMBIA MS 6175.
- **BERNSTEIN: *Fancy Free***. New York Philharmonic Orchestra, Leonard Bernstein cond. COLUMBIA MS 6677.

Ballet Theatre (now American Ballet Theatre) announced its first season in 1940 as being staged by the "greatest collaboration in ballet history." Among the eleven choreographers represented in that debut

season were two Americans, Eugene Loring and Agnes de Mille, both relatively young and unknown. Their first works for the company disappeared quickly, but his *Billy the Kid* and her *Rodeo*, both created (for other companies) to scores by Aaron Copland, became among ABT's greatest hits. Just as Copland's music incorporated American folk elements, their choreography included American dance forms and movements then thought to be more appropriate to modern dance than classical ballet. Ballet in America has never been the same since. They opened a door, and Jerome Robbins was quick to come through it in 1944 with *Fancy Free*, a ballet about three sailors on shore leave, set to a jazzy score by Bernstein. The public loved it so much that Bernstein and Robbins expanded it into the Broadway musical *On the Town*. Both Miss De Mille and Robbins had great success choreographing musical comedies, but they did not turn their backs on ballet. Their artistic progeny, who have continued to narrow the gap between modern dance and ballet and to widen ballet's range of subject matter and style, are too numerous to mention.

- **PROKOFIEV: *Romeo and Juliet*.** London Symphony Orchestra, André Previn cond. ANGEL SC-3802 three discs.

Giselle, *Coppélia*, and the three Tchaikovsky blockbusters are thought of as the Big Five of Ballet. If I could nominate a Big Sixth, it would be Prokofiev's *Romeo and Juliet*. I was present at the first performance of this ballet in a version by a Western choreographer (Frederick Ashton) at the Royal Theater in Copenhagen in 1955, and I have never tired of the music. In versions by different choreographers *Romeo and Juliet* has been a great vehicle for ballet's most famous stars, such as Margot Fonteyn and Rudolf Nureyev. The score continues to inspire new choreographic treatments, and the Joffrey Ballet is offering one this season.

In 1967, Mr. Barnes and I complained that Prokofiev was poorly treated by record companies because there was no complete recording of *Romeo and Juliet*. Now there are two. I have chosen Previn's on Angel

because I think it has a slight edge in theatricality, but Lorin Maazel's somewhat more symphonic performance on London CSA 2312 with the Cleveland Orchestra is also a splendid recording.

- **RICHARD BONYNGE: *Homage to Pavlova*.** Luigini: *Ballet Egyptien*. Saint-Saëns: *The Swan*. Massenet: *Thaïs: Meditation*. Tchaikovsky: *The Seasons: December. Melody, Op.42, No. 3*. Rubinstein: *Feramos: Danses des Fiancées de Cachemir*. Czibulka: *Love's Dream After the Ball*. Kreisler: *Schön Rosmarin*. Drigo: *Le Reveil de Flore*. Assafieff: *Papillons*. Lincke: *Glow Worm Idyll*. Delibes: *Naila: Intermezzo*. Catalani: *Danza delle Ondine*. Krupinski: *Polish Wedding Mazurka*. John Georgiadis (violin); Jascha Silberstein (cello); Osian Ellis, Marie Goossens (harps); London Symphony Orchestra, Richard Bonyngé cond. LONDON CSA 2232 two discs.
- **RICHARD BONYNGE: *The Art of the Prima Ballerina*.** Minkus: *La Bayadère: Grand Pas de Deux*. Don Quixote: *Grand Pas de Deux*. Drigo: *Harlequin's Millions: Pas de Trois*. Rossini: *William Tell: La Tyrolienne*. Adam: *Giselle: Danse des Vignerons; Pas Seul; Peasant Pas de Deux; Grand Adage and Variations*. Løvenskjöld: *La Sylphide: Scène de la Sylphide*. Tchaikovsky: *Swan Lake: Grand Pas de Deux (The Black Swan)*. *The Sleeping Beauty: Bluebird Pas de Deux*. *The Nutcracker: Grand Pas de Deux*. Donizetti: *La Favorita: Ballet Music*. Trad. (arr. O'Turner): *Bolero 1830*. Pugnini: *Pas de Quatre*. London Symphony Orchestra, Richard Bonyngé cond. LONDON CSA 2213 two discs.
- **RICHARD BONYNGE: *Pas de Deux*.** Minkus: *Paquita: Pas de Deux*. Pugnini/Drigo: *Esmeralda: Pas de Deux*. Auber: *Grand Pas Classique*. Helsted: *Flower Festival in Genzano: Pas de Deux*. Drigo: *Le Corsaire: Pas de Deux*. London Symphony Orchestra, Richard Bonyngé cond. LONDON CS 6418.

Richard Bonyngé has been tireless in searching out and recording the big solos

NOT SO BASIC

GLUCK: *Don Juan*. Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields, Neville Marriner cond. LONDON STS 15169.

ADAM: *Le Diable à Quatre*. London Symphony Orchestra, Richard Bonyngé cond. LONDON CS 6454.

BURGMÜLLER: *La Péri*. London Symphony Orchestra, Richard Bonyngé cond. LONDON CS 6627.

OFFENBACH: *Le Papillon*. London Symphony Orchestra, Richard Bonyngé cond. LONDON CS 6812.

DELIBES: *Sylvia*. London Symphony Orchestra, Anatole Fistoulari cond. MERCURY SRI 2-77005 two discs.

MINKUS: *Don Quixote*. Elizabethan Trust Melbourne Orchestra, John Lanchbery cond. ANGEL S-37008.

GLAZOUNOV: *The Seasons*. Moscow Radio Symphony Orchestra, Boris Khaikin cond. MELODIYA/ANGEL SR 40088.

RAVEL: *Daphnis and Chloë*. Orchestre de Paris, Chorus of the Paris Opera, Jean Martinon cond. ANGEL S-37148.

DEBUSSY: *Jeux*. DUKAS: *La Péri*. Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, Ernest Ansermet cond. LONDON STS 15022.

BARTÓK: *The Miraculous Mandarin*. New York Philharmonic Orchestra, Pierre Boulez cond. COLUMBIA M-31368.

PROKOFIEV: *The Stone Flower*. Bolshoi Theater Orchestra, Gennady Rozhdestvensky cond. MELODIYA/COLUMBIA M3 33215 three discs.

KHACHATURIAN: *Gayne, Suites 1, 2, and 3*. National Philharmonic Orchestra, Loris Tjeknavorian cond. RCA CRL2-2263 two discs.



ABT's Terry Orr and Rebecca Wright square dance to Aaron Copland's music in the American classic *Rodeo* by Agnes de Mille.

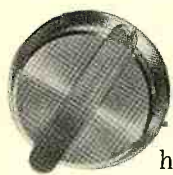
Marina Swopes/ABT

and *pas de deux* with which great dancers have thrilled their audiences, and many of these star turns are recorded here for the first (and only) time. Anna Pavlova, one of the greatest ballet dancers in history, was very astute in selecting what would show her work off to best advantage, but her choices were often hard to defend on purely musical grounds. Dame Alicia Markova worked with Bonyngé on "The Art of the Prima Ballerina," and all three albums have a fine exhibitionistic authenticity. Compared with such a great score as Prokofiev's *Romeo and Juliet*, many of these excerpts and short pieces are ballet's equivalent of disco. Much of the music is trashy, but it's a lot of fun. If you are too inhibited to do pliés and pirouettes in the family room, I think you will find that this very rhythmic music will speed up such chores as washing windows and painting, and it's marvelous accompaniment if you go in for morning push-ups and sit-ups. After all, it helps keep dancers in great shape. □

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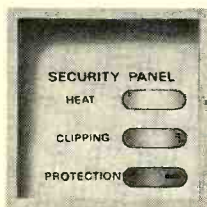
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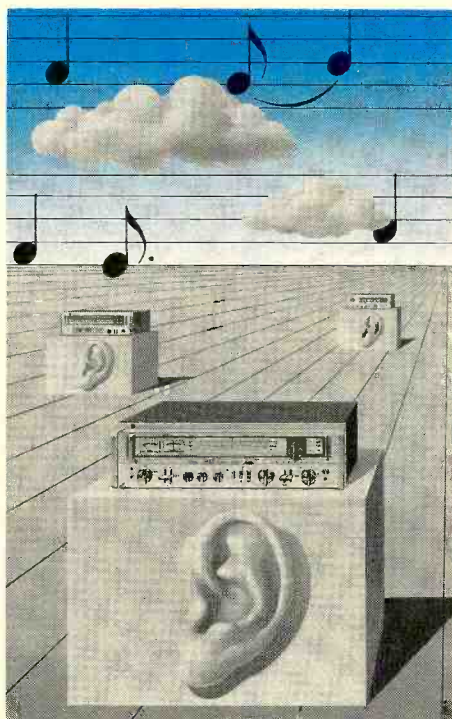


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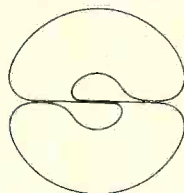
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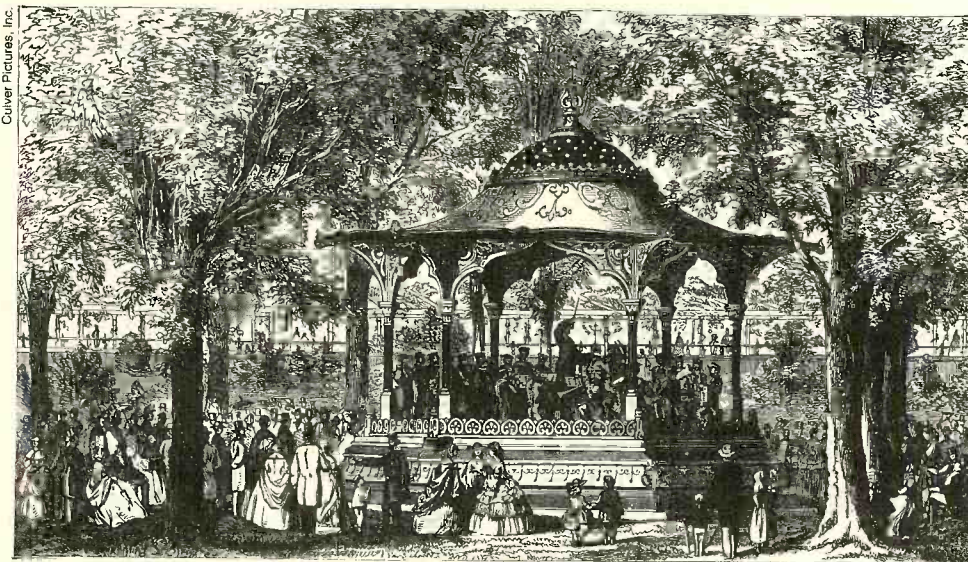
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STEREO REVIEW'S SELECTION OF RECORDINGS OF SPECIAL MERIT BEST OF THE MONTH



A late-nineteenth-century band concert in San Francisco's Woodward's Gardens

“His execution . . . killed the gold fishes and stunned the canaries all the way out to the packing plant. . . .”

THE sort of exultant, unabashed virtuosity exhibited on a new Nonesuch disc called “Cousins—Polkas, Waltzes, and other Entertainments for Cornet and Trombone” is always a delight in itself, but it is doubly delightful to have it lavished on such a surprising and altogether irresistible souvenir of a vanished era. Where, today, does one come across these gems—or, coming across them, can one hear them played with such spectacular aplomb? That they should be taken up with obvious affection by principals of the New York Philharmonic (trumpeter Gerard Schwarz) and the Boston Symphony (trombonist Ronald Barron) is only fitting, for they are for the most part challenging display pieces written by the most celebrated performers of their time—the brilliant Herbert L. Clarke, the immortal Arthur Pryor.

Robert Offergeld's characteristically

thorough annotation, easily worth the price of admission in its own right, identifies the composers, some of whom did *not* play these instruments (one of them was even a music critic), but the good-natured brilliance of the music is something that really cannot be described. (Not that some have not tried. The notes quote an Omaha newspaper review of boy-wonder Pryor in the 1880's: “His execution set the prairies afire; his vibrating pedal tones rattled the windows of the Theater and killed the gold fishes and stunned the canaries all the way out to the packing plant. . . .”) The rapid-fire triple-tonguing and swells of pure golden tone, the cantabile sections, the sassy “smears” in Henry Fillmore's outrageous *Trombone Family*, the feeling of exuberant comradeship in the duets and trios—these are enough to enchant the heart of anyone who might have

thought his allegiance was only to Dufay, Dvořák, or Dallapiccola.

Sensational as the brass players are, Kenneth Cooper's stylish keyboard accompaniment identifies him as a full and splendid partner, and the extremely lifelike sound is the final touch in making this happy package so extraordinarily effective: it is ideally focused, comfortably “open,” and, combined with the unusually silent surfaces, presents an all but visible image of the burnished brass. In short, this disc is a knockout.

—Richard Freed

COUSINS—POLKAS, WALTZES, AND OTHER ENTERTAINMENTS FOR CORNET AND TROMBONE. Clarke: *Cousins; The Maid of the Mist, Polka; Twilight Dreams, Waltz Intermezzo.* Pryor: *Blue Bells of Scotland; Polka, Exposition Echoes; Thoughts of Love, Valse de Concert.* Hanneberg: *Triplets of the Finest, Concert Polka.* Fillmore: *Trombone Family.* Gum-



PLACIDO DOMINGO



ILEANA COTRUBAS



TITO GOBBI

Clive Barda photos

bert: *Cheerfulness*. Buchtel: *Polka Dots*. Smith: *The Cascades*, *Polka Brilliant*. Gerard Schwarz, Allan Dean, and Mark Gould (cornets); Ronald Barron, Norman Bolter, and Douglas Edelman (trombones); Kenneth Cooper (piano). NONESUCH H-71341 \$3.96.

Tito Gobbi as Puccini's Gianni Schicchi: First Choice Artistically And Technically

THE second installment in Columbia's proposed complete recording of Puccini's *Il Trittico* is a near-perfect triumph. In the preceding *Suor Angelica* there was too much reliance on star names and not enough on atmospheric authenticity. For the new *Gianni Schicchi*, however, which is even more of an ensemble opera (and a tricky one at that), a whole troupe of seasoned Italian veterans was brought to the London studio to impersonate the rapacious crowd of Buoso's relatives with the right flavor and gestures.

Above all, the production has to its credit in the title role the baritone Tito Gobbi. It is a delight to see that, at sixty-two, almost twenty years after his original recorded impersonation of the comic rogue (Angel S-35473), he can still outshine all contenders. His Schicchi has plainly become a somewhat old-

er man, even a shade angrier one, but the passing of time is barely noticeable in Gobbi's singing. There is a certain loss of smoothness in his "Addio Firenze," but elsewhere his remarkably expressive resources conquer all challenges—singing, squeaking, or thundering—with a marvelous sense of comedy and with compelling overall authority.

Plácido Domingo is unquestionably the best Rinuccio on records—fervent, secure, really youthful in sound. Ileana Cotrubas shares this welcome youthful quality, but she sounds fragile and at times unsteady. She is an adequate Lauretta, but I had expected better. The Buoso relatives are all strongly and colorfully in the picture, particularly Giancarlo Luccardi, an unctuous, sonorous Simone.

Except for the Nella-Ciesca-Zita trio, which he takes much too slowly, I found conductor Loren Maazel's tempos convincing throughout. His grasp of the opera's busy musical strands and quicksilver action is impressive, and the orchestra plays beautifully for him. Technically, the production is conscientious. Though some of the chaotic scenes and certain vocal gestures are not ideally highlighted, and though its superiority over London 1153 (a 1962 production) is marginal, this is technically the best *Gianni Schicchi* so far. In overall artistic merit it is also my first choice—but of course no one owning the Angel set could bring himself to part with the Lauretta of Victoria de los Angeles. (*Il Tabarro*, the final installment in Columbia's survey of the trilogy, is scheduled for 1978 release.)

—George Jellinek

PUCCHINI: Gianni Schicchi. Tito Gobbi (baritone), Gianni Schicchi; Ileana Cotrubas (soprano), Lauretta; Anna di Stasio (contralto), Zita; Plácido Domingo (tenor), Rinuccio; Florindo Andreoli (tenor), Gherardo; Scilly Fortunato (soprano), Nella; Alfredo Mariotti (baritone), Betto; Giancarlo Luccardi (bass), Simone; Stefania Malagu (mezzo-soprano), La Ciesca; Leo Pudis (baritone), Spinelloccio; Guido Mazzini (baritone), Notary; others. London Symphony Orchestra, Lorin Maazel cond. COLUMBIA M 34534 \$7.98.

Benjamin Luxon: *Rocked in the Cradle Of the Deep* and Other Maligned Old Favorites

BENJAMIN LUXON is a baritone whose striking vocal and dramatic gifts have been heard in English-made recordings of operas and art songs from Delius to Moussorgsky. In a new two-record set from Argo called "Give Me a Ticket to Heaven" he applies his marvelous voice and exceptional talent for interpretation to a program made up largely of forgotten ballads whose composers were destined to remain less famous than the poets (Kipling, Tennyson, and others) who supplied the texts. Even those songs that have not been completely forgotten, hardy perennials from a more sentimental age,

have never sounded so good—Rasbach's setting of Joyce Kilmer's *Trees*, for example; Huhn's of W. E. Henley's bloody, unbowed, and still impressively stoical *Invictus*; or the two-hundred-proof Irish of Clover's *Rose of Tralee*.

Luxon sings all these warhorses, long since put out to pasture, with a power and a conviction that are simply overwhelming. He does the same for Mascagni's *Ave Maria*, for the anonymous but utterly charming children's ballad *Mr. Shadowman* (where he supplies a jauntily whistled chorus), and for a number of other songs, both secular and religious, which once brought tears to the eyes of nineteenth-century recital audiences on both sides of the Atlantic.

It may be argued that some of these items richly deserve forgetting; I will merely point out that it is a proposition impossible to entertain while Mr. Luxon, superbly accompanied by pianist David Willison, is singing them. It is, as far as subject matter goes, a rather melancholy concert, but it is a splendid one nonetheless, entirely free of arch kid-

ding or of camp. And remember that if we judge our forebears solely by the music they listened to, someone is bound, one day, to do as much for us.

—Paul Kresh

BENJAMIN LUXON: *Give Me a Ticket to Heaven*. **Harrison/Elton:** *Give Me a Ticket to Heaven*. **Tosti/Weatherly:** *Parted*. **Huhn/Henley:** *Invictus*. **Sanderson/Weatherly:** *Friend o' Mine*. **Quilter/Tennyson:** *Now Sleeps the Crimson Petal*. **Moss:** *The Floral Dance*. **Murray/Lockton:** *I'll Walk Beside You*. **Pepper:** *Over the Rolling Sea*. **Knight/Willard:** *Rocked in the Cradle of the Deep*. **Lohr/Weatherly:** *When Jack and I Were Children*. **Gould/Tobin:** *The Curfew*. **Stern-dale-Bennett/Hayes:** *The Carol Singers*. **Rasbach/Kilmer:** *Trees*. **Watson/Cowan:** *Anchored*. **Anon. (arr. Kaye):** *Mr. Shadowman*. **Tours/Kipling:** *Mother o' Mine*. **Adams/Weatherly:** *The Holy City*. **Jacobs-Bond:** *A Perfect Day*. **Clover/Spencer:** *Rose of Tralee*. **Lamb:** *The Volunteer Organist*. **Mascagni/Weatherly:** *Ave Maria*. **Clarke/Radclyffe-Halk:** *The Blind Ploughman*. **Brahe/Taylor:** *Bless This House*. **Davis:** *God Will Watch Over You*. **Benjamin Luxon** (baritone); **David Willison** (piano). **ARGO ZFB 95-6** two discs \$15.96.

Cleo Laine with an Audience: More Color, More Drama, More Feeling

"My last high note knocked my ear-ring off," Cleo Laine announces to her cheering audience just after she's finished a performance of Noël Coward's *London Pride* that the master himself would have loved. That moment is preserved on her new RCA album "Return to Carnegie" along with a collection of songs that will knock your head off and permanently dispel any reservations you may still have about her being only a cult artist revered by musicians but Just-Too-Damned-Much for everyday listening.

I will here confess that this was exactly my opinion for a long time. It began to change only recently, most particularly after hearing her spectacular work as Bess in the jazz version of Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess* RCA released last year (CPS2-1831). Mostly, though, I've had to deal with my grudging admiration for the technical ability she has displayed in her recordings even as I wished she'd stop fiddling around with lyric meaning whenever it got in the way of showing off her vocal range. No such trouble on the present "Return to Carnegie," however—just an extraordinarily gifted actress-singer radiating first-class musicianship, enormous intelligence, and wit.

The presence of an audience seems to ignite Laine in a way that I've never heard in her other recordings. She takes command from the moment of her entrance with *Blues in the Night* and doesn't let go of our attention until the final chord of her closing song, *Be a Child*. In between she sings such things as *Streets of London* and the aforementioned *London Pride* with all the show-stopping excitement of a Thames-side Judy Garland. She also busses Sigmund Romberg's slumbering *One Alone* into living, breathing pop life and weaves two extended medleys in each of which she manages to make a long-neglected piece of the musical past unforgettable (Gershwin's *By Strauss* for one, and a little bit of nonsense called *Broadway Baby* for another—it is an exquisite send-up of all those singers of dread memory who are given to on-stage attacks of the Pouting Cutes).

Through it all, there is the glory of Laine's voice, big, flexible, and gloriously secure as always—except that this time out I notice many more mood-filled colorings, more levels of dramatic meaning, and more nuances of feeling.

(Continued overleaf)

BENJAMIN LUXON: overwhelming power and conviction



So okay, Cleo, you've got me. Now just what do you intend to do with me?

—Peter Reilly

CLEO LAINE: *Return to Carnegie*. Cleo Laine (vocals); orchestra. *Blues in the Night; How Long; Streets of London; London Pride; Direction; Medley—Company/Miller's Son/Broadway Baby; Being Alive; Born on a Friday; One Alone; Medley—I Got the Music in Me/Fascinating Rhythm/Jazzman/By Strauss/I Gotta Right to Sing the Blues/Don't Mean a Thing If It Ain't Got That Swing/Playoff; Be a Child.* RCA APL1-2407 \$6.98. © APS1-2407 \$7.95, © APK1-2407 \$7.95.

George Jones: The New King of Country Music Wants to Sing

Is that Roy Acuff I hear, making a move to turn in his yo-yo? Those who've already taken to calling George Jones the king of country music are going to do it even louder when they hear Jones' new "I Wanna Sing" for Epic.

This may not be *the* album we've been waiting for Jones to make, but it's *an* album we've been waiting for, one in which several good things about Jones' talent and about country music coalesce, and it comes at the crest of a new excitement about Jones. A few more efforts like this and he will have bent the future of Nashville.

Every now and then country music "discovers" someone who has been around for years (in some cases selling a lot of records for those same years) and gets all in a dither about how underrated this great artist has been in the past. It happened to Charlie Rich not too long ago, you'll recall. It's happening to George Jones now, and he is (has been) every bit the talent they say he is and—more portentous for the immediate future of the genre, copy cats thriving in it as they do—he will influence the music back toward hard country, the opposite direction, roughly, from that taken by jazz singer Rich. Jones is produced by Billy Sherrill these days, and Billy likes to layer on globs of orchestrated Nashville Sound—but he hasn't this time. Here he has gone with George's instinct for traditional country, and the result is a sad and funny album of some integrity.

Jones comes about as close as any singer I've heard to actually bleeding for his art. The way he sings, back to back, *Please Don't Sell Me Anymore*

Whiskey Tonight and *They've Got Millions in Milwaukee* ("... thanks to guys like me") creates some of the keenest pathos one could get from any Toast of Nashville. Here's Jones, with a real drinking problem that may yet become as well publicized as Farrah Fawcett-Majors' chevelure, and here are these two would-be "fun" songs on that same subject, one a sort of set piece for a melodrama on the order of *Please Daddy Don't Get Drunk This Christmas*, and the other a standard country novelty tune, honky-tonk division, turning mainly on a wry and (the writers surely hope) catchy phrase. You wouldn't dream of taking either seriously with 99 per cent of the singers singing them, but Jones is going to make your response a lot more complicated, a lacy pattern of contradictions, for he manages to get *all* the meaning out of them.

So you get that *Old King Kong* as well, the sort of country joke he and Buck Owens used to try to top each other doing. There's also a song that touches bases with both CB radio and Jesus, some good, solid, three-chord country songs in between, and the most impressive singing anybody's recorded in years. If you're willing to cut up the back of the jacket ("It's OK, it's yours," the instructions say—I love that), you also get a cardboard model of George Jones' bus. —Noel Coppage

Left to right, three voices:
Cleo Laine's (big, flexible, and gloriously secure), George Jones' (sad and funny honky-tonk pathos), and B. J. Thomas' (perhaps our most artistically important pop baritone).



RCA Records

GEORGE JONES: *I Wanna Sing*. George Jones (vocals, guitar); instrumental accompaniment. *I Wanna Sing; Please Don't Sell Me Anymore Whiskey Tonight; They've Got Millions in Milwaukee; If I Could Put Them All Together; I Love You So Much It Hurts; Rest in Peace; Bull Mountain Lad; Old King Kong; You've Got the Best of Me Again; It's a 10-33 (Get Jesus on the Line)*. EPIC PE 34717 \$6.98, © PEA-34717 \$6.98, © PZT-34717 \$6.98.

B. J. Thomas Delivers Some of the Best Pop Vocals to Be Heard on This Planet

GIVE a cheer, ladies and gents, for a pro. On his eponymously titled latest recording, B. J. Thomas delivers some of the best pop vocals to be heard on this planet. He has been doing this for quite some few years now, and with the recent loss of Elvis Presley it is probable that Thomas can be ranked as the most artistically important pop baritone in this country.

The comparison between Thomas

and Presley is not whimsical: Presley had a unique feel for the pop song, which he used as a showcase for his voice and as a challenge for his interpretive artistry. In pop-rock, both Presley and Thomas (Sinatra and Crosby do the same in straight pop) emphasize lyrical content, and this requires that the singer concentrate on the text, that he know and feel the emotions of the song. This means he must size up the character doing the singing, imagine the other character(s) he is singing to, and create a credible dramatic situation. The tools he uses are phrasing, vocal color, rhythm, ornament, and dramatic intensity, and in expert hands these are not wasted even when applied to the simplest materials.

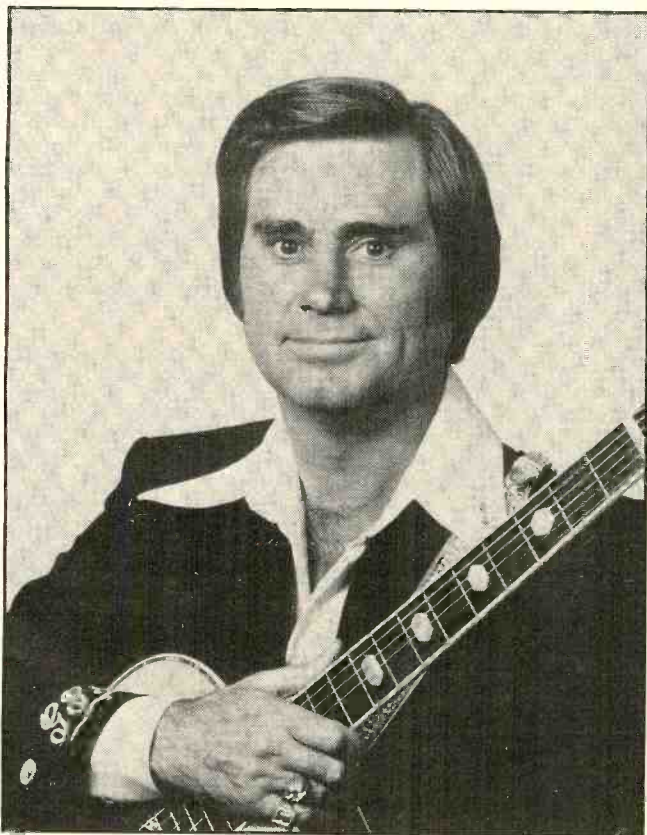
Presley seldom gave a bad performance of a song no matter what its merits. The same holds true for Thomas. When a singer with Thomas' skill and insight continues to practice his art so well for so many years, there is a tendency to take him for granted. He shouldn't be: these days we need all the superior pop singers we can get. Starting in the very early Sixties (when he recorded *I'm So Lonesome I Could Cry* at a small Texas studio), on through the middle and late years of that decade (when he hit with *Hooked on a Feeling* and *Raindrops Keep Fallin' on My Head*), and now into the Seventies (with *Somebody Done Somebody*

Wrong Song), Thomas' mellow and agile baritone has graced whatever material he sang. It is not only that he often had good, sturdy tunes to sing, but that he sang them so well.

His current album is a case in point. The featured song, *Don't Worry Baby*, is a fine Sixties Beach Boys tune. Most of the rest of the material, contributed by various writers including Mac Davis, Barry Mann and Cynthia Weil, Troy Seals, Dennis Linde, Donny Fritts, and others, is also of A-1 quality. There are only two dog tunes on the whole album, but even with them Thomas pulls off convincing performances. The album does not pretend to be a work of art; it is straight-ahead, top-forty pop meant for an adult audience, with a few uncompromising references to The Kids tossed in as freebies. But it is so well constructed as a program and so perfectly tailored to Thomas' gifts that it can stand as a definitive example of first-class production and of first-class pop singing.

—Joel Vance

B. J. THOMAS. B. J. Thomas (vocals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Don't Worry Baby; Here You Come Again; Play Me a Little Traveling Music; Even a Fool Would Let Go; Our Love Goes Marching On; Still the Lovin' Is Fun; Plastic Words; It's Sad to Belong; Impressions; We Had It All; My Love*. MCA-2286 \$6.98, © MCAT-2286 \$7.98, © MCAC-2286 \$7.98.



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MCA Records



POPULAR DISCS AND TAPES

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

ALLSPICE. Allspice (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *Love Fire; Destiny; Give It Time; Hungry for Your Love; I Don't Know;* and three others. AT-HOME AH-401 \$6.98.

Performance: **Promising**
Recording: **Very Good**

According to the dictionary, allspice is a "mildly sharp" condiment made from the berry of an aromatic tropical tree. Well, the new group of that name is mildly sharp in its appeal, and at least a heaping tablespoon of the spice was provided by producer Wayne Henderson, who came up with pleasant, though unexciting, material and a battery of veteran back-up musicians.

The five newcomers (three guys and two girls) perform with exuberance, and their voices blend well, with the lead shifting among four of them. Some sing better than others; Sandra "Pan" Alexander exhibits the most talent. Allspice is funkier than the old Fifth Dimension, which employed the same sexual mix, and there are occasional jazz touches in its arrangements, mostly of the soul-crossover type. While a dash of red pepper might have heightened the flavor of Allspice's debut album, it is sufficiently tasty to stimulate an appetite for more. P.G.

BE-BOP DELUXE: *Live! In the Air Age.* Be-Bop Deluxe (vocals and instrumentals). *Life in the Air Age; Ships in the Night; Piece of Mine; Fair Exchange; Shine; Sister Seagull;*

and five others. HARVEST SKB-11666 \$6.98, © 8XTT-11666 \$7.98, © 4XTT-11666 \$7.98.

Performance: **Heavy, man**
Recording: **Good remote**

Having been the sort of boy who grew up to become a Peter DeVries buff, I naturally can't help laughing at any writer who uses such phrases as "somewhere a dog barked." Imagine my reaction, then, to *Mill Street Junction* by Bill Nelson, the writer and lead singer of Be-Bop Deluxe. Most of its lines fall into that category—for instance, "Somewhere cathedral bells are screaming . . . As someone's dog answers a call." *Piece of Mine* (if you're wondering what *that* might mean, wonder no more) is constructed somewhat the same way, although it does reveal that Nelson has some ambition as a phrase-maker: "[She] took my love by the trigger . . . shot me like a gun." Those are the two songs whose lyrics he furnishes; the words are hard to catch by ear, since this is the sort of neo-primitive hard-rock band that buries the vocals under electric-guitar distortion. Actually, this is a record and a half—literally, not figuratively—as the "album," in albino vinyl, is accompanied by a bonus twelve-inch 33-1/3 rpm disc called an "EP." Turns out its grooves are spaced wide apart and there's about nine minutes of music on one side and less than half that on the other. And it's mostly average rock-band stuff of ten years ago, except for Nelson's strange combination of naïveté and sophistication as a writer. It's a competent job of playing neo-primitive hard rock, though, if that's what you want done. N.C.

ELVIN BISHOP: *Raisin' Hell.* Elvin Bishop (guitar, vocals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Raisin' Hell; Rock My Soul; Sure Feels Good; Calling All Cows; Juke Joint Jump; Hey, Hey, Hey, Hey; Joy; Stealin' Watermelons; Little Brown Bird; Yes Sir;* and five others. CAPRICORN 2CP0185 two discs \$9.98, © L80185 \$9.98, © L50185 \$9.98.

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

Elvin Bishop is a fine, rowdy fellow with a good-old-boy attitude toward his audiences

that his band apparently shares. The cuts from this live album are from five different cities and were recorded over a period of a year.

Bishop's performances, and those of his hardy and hearty band, are commendable for their cheeriness and stamina. Being on the road is a rough way to go, but this outfit seems to make the best of it—at least they *sound* glad to be wherever they're playing. I am usually suspicious of live albums on the grounds that the performances are most often not as good as the studio versions of the same tunes and that one is generally released when the label and/or performer doesn't know what else to do. But "Raisin' Hell" really does communicate the excitement of Bishop's live performances, perhaps because the stage is really more comfortable to him than the studio and his music is meant for howlers and stompers rather than stay-at-homes. The material provides a sturdy background for some shouting and prancing, with the notable exception of *Fooled Around and Fell in Love*, which stands on its own. If by chance you've never caught a Bishop concert, this two-disc set is, truly, the next best thing to having been there. J.V.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

NORTON BUFFALO: *Lovin' in the Valley of the Moon.* Norton Buffalo (vocals, harmonica, percussion); instrumental accompaniment. *Lovin' in the Valley of the Moon; Ghetto Hotel; Nobody Wants Me; Puerto de Azul; Hangin' Tree; Another Day; Eighteen Wheels;* and four others. CAPITOL ST-11625 \$6.98, © 8XT-11625 \$7.98, © 4XT-11625 \$7.98.

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

Norton Buffalo was the one who took that harmonica solo in Bonnie Raitt's *Runaway* on her last album, "Sweet Forgiveness," which might lead harp connoisseurs to believe he has great style but that his technique is an unknown factor. His first solo album suggests it's the other way around. Technically he is the best harmonica player to come along in

Explanation of symbols:

- Ⓜ = reel-to-reel stereo tape
- ⓑ = eight-track stereo cartridge
- Ⓒ = stereo cassette
- Ⓛ = quadraphonic disc
- Ⓡ = reel-to-reel quadraphonic tape
- ⓑ = eight-track quadraphonic tape

Monophonic recordings are indicated by the symbol Ⓜ

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

years; the question is, what does *he* sound like? This album has him sounding like a diverse assortment of harp notables, from Stevie Wonder to Charlie McCoy to James Cotton to the Harmonicats. The other thing it suggests, harp-wise, is that he has a much greater aptitude for filling breaks than for backing vocalists.

But the harp is not all there is to it. Buffalo's singing and songwriting are major elements, too, and as a bonus he does a cracker-jack imitation of Walter Brennan in *Hangin' Tree*. His songwriting, like the whole album, tries to be too diverse, I think, but it has a spark to it and is almost certain to settle into something interesting. His singing has, as they say, arrived. It has a kind of wobbly tonality, the sureness of a veteran at phrasing, and enough range for any song that isn't bizarre; it is instantly recognizable. Buffalo even did some of the engineering, apparently, and *somebody* deserves credit for the fine, crisp sound. The album tries a little too hard to have something for everybody, but it makes it clear enough that there's a fine future in pop music for Norton Buffalo. N.C.

ERIC CARMEN: *Boats Against the Current*. Eric Carmen (vocals, keyboards, guitars); David Wintour (bass); Jeff Porcaro (drums); other musicians. *Boats Against the Current; Marathon Man; Nowhere to Hide; She Did It*; and four others. ARISTA AB 4124 \$7.98, © 8301-4124(H) \$7.95, © 5301-4124(H) \$7.95.

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

Once upon a time, Eric Carmen was a modest young man who had a knack for crafting catchy little *homages* to Paul McCartney, Brian Wilson, and the Brill Building staffers of the Sixties plus a nice little flair for the pop single. Eric is still a modest young man (who, as Churchill put it, has much to be modest about), but now he is suffering from terminal Neil Diamonditis, a particularly nasty syndrome that transforms talented purveyors of pop fluff into *artistes*. "*Boats Against the Current*" is a ghastly example of the results of the disease, consisting as it does almost solely of overblown, *Angst*-ridden piano-and-orchestra epics that suggest an unholy marriage between Dmitri Tiomkin's film scores and Elton John's very earliest work when he was still pretending to be "sensitive."

Oh, vestiges of the old Eric linger on. *She Did It*, practically the only up-tempo thing here (and the only thing that is even close to palatable), shows a strong Beach Boys influence, both melodically and in the production (Bruce Johnston, an actual ex-Beach Boy, chimes in on the vocals, which may explain it). As for the rest of the album . . . well, I never thought I'd miss the Raspberries, the group Eric fronted when he was healthy, but that's how it makes me feel. As for Eric . . . take him away, fellas. He'll never rock again. S.S.

JESSI COLTER: *Miriam*. Jessi Colter (vocals, piano); instrumental accompaniment. *For Mama; Put Your Arms Around Me; I Belong to Him; Consider Me; God, I Love You*; and five others. CAPITOL ST-11583 \$6.98, © 8XT-11583 \$7.98, © 4XT-11583 \$7.98.

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

Jessi Colter's singing is an acquired taste—it's improved technically, for what that's worth—



James Shea/Asylum

Pretty Linda Ronstadt

LET me read a little something to you if I may:

"See the Stone Poneys. See Linda Ronstadt. Linda is pretty. Linda sings. Linda sings like Mary. I like Peter, Paul, and Mary. Do you like Peter, Paul, and Mary? The Stone Poneys like Peter, Paul, and Mary. The Stone Poneys try to sing like Peter, Paul, and Mary. The Stone Poneys are copy-cats. I don't like the Stone Poneys. I don't like copy-cats. Do you like copy-cats? Then you may like the Stone Poneys. Have you bought every album Peter, Paul, and Mary have made? You have? You have a lot of money. Spend your money. Buy tapes of Peter, Paul, and Mary. Forget the Stone Poneys. But see Linda Ronstadt. Linda is very, very pretty."

That was Peter Reilly reviewing the Stone Poneys (Capitol ST 2666) in STEREO REVIEW in May 1967. If it transgresses slightly against the Reviewer's First Commandment—"Thou shalt review the art, not the artist" (the Second Commandment is "Thou shalt not review the audience")—it perhaps does so because there was, at the time, very little art to review. But that has all changed now: Dick and Jane are married and living in Phoenix, the Stone Poneys *have* been forgotten, and the little filly who sang with them has gone on to become a consistent winner in the pop-vocal sweepstakes. She is still pretty, and that prettiness is still noticed, but not as much as her vocal artistry is. She no longer sounds like Mary Travers but like herself, a finished musician who has polished her abundant natural gifts by "tending to business" as much as Elvis ever did.

One characteristic of those gifts is her habit of pouncing on a song with the first lyric line in such a way that your attention is immediately seized. It is, I would judge, an even

more effective way of getting attention than (merely!) being pretty: it seems to work even when the song she is attacking is scarcely worth the trouble—and you appreciate the effort all the more. Her latest album, "*Simple Dreams*," is a case in point. For me, its weakest songs are Warren Zevon's tuneful *Carmelita* (a very personal topology—Ensenada, Echo Park, Alvarado Street, the Pioneer Chicken stand—make it impossible for anyone but provincial Los Angelenos to relate to), his *Poor Poor Pitiful Me* (fatally marred by a silly, set-up rhyme—"He was a credit to his gender/ . . . Sort of like a Waring blender"), and Mick Jagger and Keith Richard's mock-macho *Tumbling Dice* (cleverness for cleverness' sake—"I don't need your jewels in my frown" . . . yes, that's frown). Despite their unpromising first lines ("I hear mariachi static on my radio," "Well, I lay my head on the railroad track," and "People try to rape me," respectively), Ronstadt manages to hold your attention and make you care (a little) how they come out.

WHAT she can do with a *good* song, however, is just marvelous. If you want to know what happened to rock-and-roll (it's sick and living in London, according to *Rolling Stone*), Ronstadt tells you, not very subtly, here: they stopped writing songs like Buddy Holly and Norman Petty's *It's So Easy (To Fall in Love)*, a lovable song lovingly performed. The traditional *I Never Will Marry* is poignantly, tenderly impressive, quite enough, with Dolly Parton (!) contributing folk harmony, to give the McGarrigle sisters a turn. And who else but Linda Ronstadt would be bold enough to close her program with an affectionate reading of that almost forgotten cowboy lament *Old Paint*? The first lines of these three are "It's so easy to fall in love," "They say that love's a gentle thing," and "I ride an old paint." None of them are what you would call a piece of cake in the attention-grabbing

a finished musician
who has polished her
abundant natural gifts

department, but you wouldn't dream of cutting them off once Linda gets those first few notes into your ear.

The album was mixed using a psychoacoustic system called the Aphex Aural Exciter system. I don't know just what it is, or even what it does, but I think you will notice it.

—William Anderson

LINDA RONSTADT: *Simple Dreams*. Linda Ronstadt (vocals, guitar); Dan Dugmore (acoustic guitar); Waddy Wachtel (electric guitar); Kenny Edwards (bass); Rick Marotta (drums); other musicians. *It's So Easy; Carmelita; Simple Man, Simple Dream; Sorrow Lives Here; I Never Will Marry; Blue Bayou; Poor Poor Pitiful Me; Maybe I'm Right; Tumbling Dice; Old Paint*. ASYLUM 6E-104 \$7.98, © ET-8104 \$7.98, © TC-5104 \$7.98.



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but she writes a very nice tune now and then, and a little less often she comes up with an affecting lyric. Writing is her stronger suit, and here she's done what appears to be about two-thirds of a "songs of faith" album from scratch. It not only has an odd mix of songs, but there is an interesting secular tone to the ones about God. The ability to come to the edge, lean over, and look into the Gulf of Bad Taste sometimes serves Colter well, particularly in *For Mama*, a strange, raw thing. A lot of her tunes sound a little tired, though, and trying to figure out what in the (pardon the expression) hell she was trying to accomplish with the overall theme is maybe a little more trouble than it's worth. N.C.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

RY COODER: *Show Time*. Ry Cooder (vocals, guitar); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *School Is Out; Alimony; Jesus on the Mainline; The Dark End of the Street; Viva Sequin/Do Re Mi; Volver, Volver*; and two others. WARNER BROS. BS 3059 \$6.98, © M83059 \$7.98, © M53059 \$7.98.

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

I continue to marvel at Ry Cooder's nice sense of antiquity in his choice of material. The program on this, his first released live album, includes two Fifties r-&-b/rock-'n'-roll top-forty numbers, *School Is Out* and *Smack Dab in the Middle*, as well as a Thirties spiritual (*Jesus on the Mainline*), two Dustbowl ditties from the Great Depression (*Do Re Mi* and *How Can a Poor Man Stand Such Times and Live*), and a jump-dance tune and romantic ballad from Mexico (*Viva Sequin and Volver, Volver*). I have no idea where Cooder found the bitter and hilarious *Alimony* but I'm glad he did. To complete the roundup there is the brilliant *The Dark End of the Street*, a Sixties ballad of adultery and guilt written by Dan Penn and Chips Moman.

Cooder is not much of a singer, but he doesn't let that stand in his way. He presses on valiantly and manages to be true to the sentiments of the song. As a guitarist, though, he is something else again. People are used to hearing pop guitar players make a lot of noise or play flurries of notes to demonstrate their agility. Few guitarists today understand the use of tension and relaxation in playing, especially at medium tempos. Where there is space in a tune—a hole to fill—most pickers try to stuff it with bluster because they don't have the imagination to do anything else. Cooder, however, is an expert at filling the holes with exquisite ideas, short phrases, sustained and stretched tones, and dramatic inchings toward the resolution of a solo idea—in other words, this man *thinks* as he plays, making knowledgeable decisions that are right for the tune he is playing. He is, God be praised, a real musician. J.V.

DONOVAN. Donovan Leitch (vocals, guitar, harmonica); instrumental accompaniment. *Lady of the Stars; Sing My Song; Maya's Dance; The Light; Astral Angel; Dare to Be Different*; and four others. ARISTA AB 4143 \$6.98, © 8301-4143 \$7.95, © 5301-4143 \$7.95.

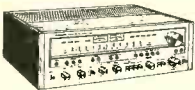

Performance: **Fair**
 Recording: **Excellent**

Poor Donovan. Only a few years ago he seemed to be one of the few pop poets deserving
(Continued on page 102)

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Columbia Records

THE EMOTIONS: silky smooth ensemble singing with a wallop

ing of that title who could also claim a mass audience. Today he's a pale version of his old psychedelic self (even *that* self was pretty pale), and his new album is as enervating as a rainy month in the West of Ireland. He still paints in pastels, but now the colors have faded into barely distinguishable gradations of off-white. Even when he tries to liven things up, as in *Sing My Song*, the results are as jauntily as a *boulevardier* on lithium singing to his wilted boutonniere. His satire, in *Kalifornia Kiddies*, for example, has in place of savagery only the skittering impudence of a mouse running across the keys of a piano. But enough of this poetic imagery. *Astral Angel* and *Brave New World* are the kind of songs that gained him fame in the first place: heavily symbolic, poetic, and elfin. In the context of the late Seventies, however, they seem only naive, artless, and—worst of all—pointless. The production, by Mickie Most, is gorgeous throughout. If only Donovan had more to say these days *about* these days. P.R.

ly what he's driving at—you're not even sure he always knows—but in his swirling melodies and softly slurred lyrics there is a beauty and depth of feeling that transcend the usual banality of the singer-songwriter tribe. There is something ghostly about Drake's songs, a familiarity with other vistas we may be fortunate in not perceiving. He may not have been a genius and this album may be a little too emotionally reticent (though *not* dishonest or soulless) for some tastes, but three years after his death, when prefab dementia has become a major commodity, Nick Drake's reality is more compelling than ever. —Lester Bangs

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

THE EMOTIONS: **Rejoice**. The Emotions (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *Best of My Love*; *A Long Way to Go*; *Key to My Heart*; *Love's What's Happenin'*; *Don't Ask My Neighbors*; and four others. COLUMBIA PC 34762 \$6.98, © PCA 34762 \$6.98, © PCT 34762 \$6.98.

Performance: **Thrice nice**
Recording: **Very good**

This album generated waves of excitement among soul buffs the moment it appeared. No wonder. The three young ladies who make up the Emotions can pack more bounce and wallop into a four- or five-minute song than the collected patrons of a bustling after-hours disco can muster on a particularly good night.

The Emotions' spirited performance calls to mind the old Supremes of the early Sixties, but their style is strictly a product of the Seventies. Their complex vocal interplay, silky smooth ensemble singing, and melodically interesting songs are complemented by instrumental backings that enhance their drive without overwhelming their finely blended sound. A not-so-secret ingredient here is the talent of Maurice White, guiding spirit of Earth, Wind, and Fire. He produced this album, collaborated on some of the songs, and plays drums or sings on a few tracks. Though there is nothing here that is truly new in terms of musical format or content, "Rejoice" demonstrates what can be done within the limits of popular style when talent and imagination are applied. P.G.

(Continued on page 104)

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

NICK DRAKE: **Bryter Layter**. Nick Drake (vocals, guitar); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *At the Chime of a City Clock*; *Fly*; *Poor Boy*; *Northern Sky*; *Sunday*; and five others. ANTILLES AN 7028 \$5.98.

Performance: **Lapidary dream-songs**
Recording: **Excellent**

Nick Drake was not just another professionally introspective singer-songwriter. Before his early death (by suicide, I think) in 1974, he made three strange, lovely albums for Island Records that garnered him an intensely devoted cult-following that persists to this day. "Bryter Layter" is a rerelease of one of those albums.

Although Drake was the type of artist given to disappearing in the middle of a recording session and turning up days later registered under a pseudonym in some fleabag hotel, his actions were not concocted for the sake of a marketable image, nor was he given to parading his neuroses and private pains through the tracks of his records *à la* Dory Previn. There is an elusive, almost ethereal quality both to Drake's lyrics and to his whole compositional and vocal style. You're not always sure exact-

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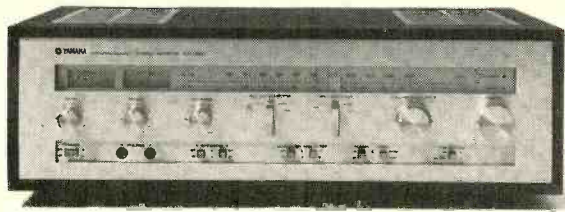
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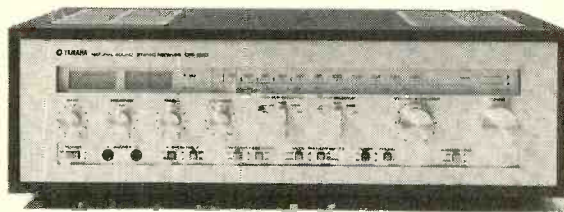
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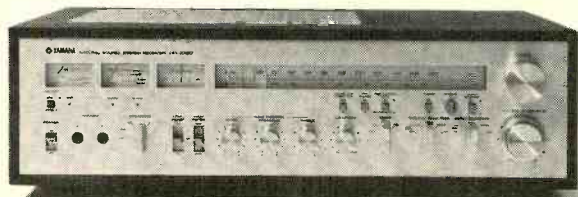
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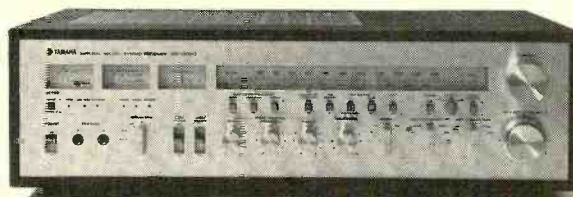
CR-620 0.05% THD 0.05% IM



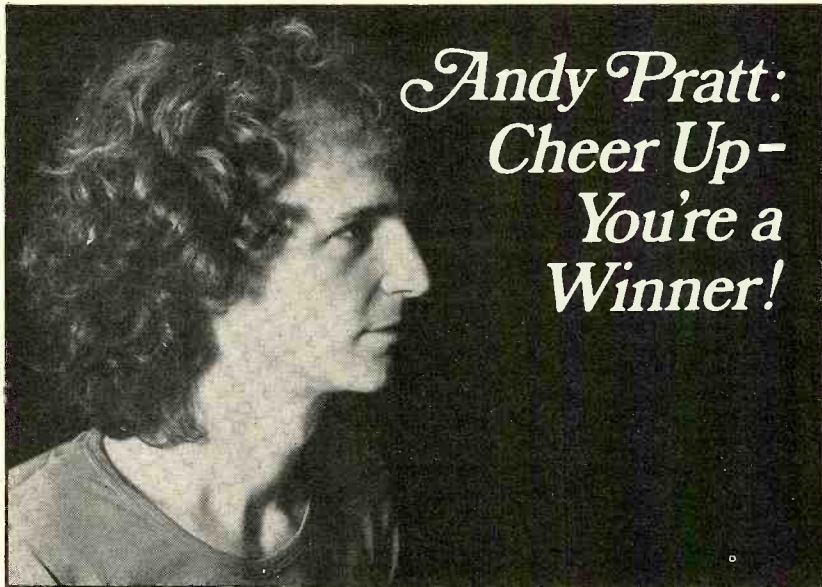
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CR-1020 0.05% THD 0.05% IM



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Andy Pratt: Cheer Up- You're a Winner!

ENGELBERT HUMPERDINCK: *Miracles*. Engelbert Humperdinck (vocals); orchestra. *I Believe in Miracles; Look at Me; Without You; You Are There; What I Did for Love*; and six others. EPIC PE-34730 \$6.98, © PEA-34730 \$7.98, © PET-34730 \$7.98.

Performance: **For fans**
Recording: **Good**

One of the lesser glories of Western civilization here endows the world with another album of musical bon-bons. Humperdinck's approach to a song has an elephantine logic about it: if he can't goose it to life with his trunk, then he gingerly tips it over with one enormous foot. If all else fails he sits on it with an enormous thud and presumably thinks about peanuts—which is obviously what he's resorting to here in *Without You* and *Look at Me*. What he does to Marvin Hamlisch's show-stopping *What I Did for Love* from *A Chorus Line* should be enough to send Marvin's mother out with an elephant gun. P.R.

GEORGE JONES: *I Wanna Sing* (see Best of the Month, page 96)

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

DANNY KIRWAN. Danny Kirwan (vocals, guitars); Steve Emery (bass); Jeff Rich (drums); John Cook (piano). *I Can Tell; Life Machine; Let It Be; Angel's Delight; Misty River*; and six others. DJM DJLPA-9 \$6.98.

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

Danny Kirwan was responsible for nudging Fleetwood Mac away from blues purism and toward the blatantly pop style they have now parlayed into big bucks. Since his departure from the band, he's become something of a cult figure, and justifiably so; he's an impeccable craftsman both as a guitarist and as a writer. There's more than a bit of Paul McCartney in his basic approach, and at the risk of committing critical heresy I'd venture to say he's probably got more talent than the estimable Buckingham/Nicks team that replaced him.

His new solo effort is more or less a continuation of his work on the two Fleetwood Mac LP's he fronted. The songs have cheerily friendly melodies that take a little listening before they sink in, the vocals are warm and ingratiating, and there are layers upon layers of shimmering guitar lines that never sound cluttered. It's a very laid-back, California kind of sound, but for once I mean that as a compliment—the overall hazy, dreamy quality of the record is immensely appealing, and unless you're the most hardened heavy-metal zealot you'll probably adore it. J. D. Souther, Dan Fogelberg, or any of the other Hollywood cowboys working in this same genre will never come within shooting distance of making music as good. Highly recommended. S.S.

PATTI LABELLE. Patti Labelle (vocals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Joy to Have Your Love; Funky Music; Dan Swit Me; You Can't Judge a Book by the Cover*; and five others. EPIC PE 34847 \$6.98, © PEA 34847 \$6.98, © PET 34847 \$6.98.

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

Dissolution of the group called Labelle caused some of us to wonder why so many
(Continued on page 106)

Do you want to . . . get in control of your life? get in touch with the better part of your character? let love conquer all? Well, you can, if you believe Andy Pratt. He says that all that happened to *him* after he enrolled in the Boston Life Institute. "It's magic," says Pratt, who makes records as well as promises. "It changed my life."

Enthusiastic converts usually write boring books or record ponderous albums. Not Pratt. Even though his recent albums have been about his transformation, he sings about it without preaching. Pratt is a man with a past. In the music business, he had what is known as a Bad Rep. He has been described as, among other things, confused, frustrated, and at loose ends, and his history bears these characterizations out. In 1973 he quit right in the middle of a successful tour because he was feeling, he said, "aimless, scared, and confused."

When his band broke up, he very nearly had a nervous breakdown. Pratt would take an uneasy two or three years between albums back then, and he went through more therapy than you could shake a couch at. It all became just too much to handle in 1975 when his father died and Columbia Records suddenly dropped him. That's when he entered the Life Institute. It must have done *something* good for him, since he popped up last year with an astonishing, superb comeback album, "Resolution." And now he's followed that one up with "Shiver in the Night."

You shouldn't need to know someone's psychiatric history to judge his artistry, but with Pratt they are too close to untangle. In the bad old days, he conveyed his pain in every cut on his records. There was a tentativeness about his work, so that as you listened to side one you wondered if he would make it all the way through to the end of side two.

That's all different now. "Shiver in the Night" is so stunning, so positive, so—all right, I'll say it—so *uplifting* that it makes me shiver in the night (and day) to listen to it. The sorcery of producer Arif Mardin (who has also waved his wand over the Bee Gees and Judy Collins) has given Pratt's new album something very rarely heard on records: tex-

ture. The sound has been woven as if on a loom, in layer upon layer of orchestration, solo instrumentals, voice, and more voice, all carefully integrated. It's not a concept album, but each song is a collage of musical elements, as though Pratt and Mardin started out to make a simple soup but kept adding ingredients until they created a gourmet treat—which nonetheless somehow manages to retain the basic flavor of the original recipe. For all its complexity, this is rock-and-roll in the purest sense. "Shiver" shimmers.

Plainly, Pratt is more comfortable, more relaxed with himself than ever before, for "Shiver in the Night" is loaded with love songs. They are addressed to various people, but ultimately they are all paeans of self-affirmation. One of the most exciting is *Rainbow*: "Deep inside there's a song so bright/Take me higher in its rainbow flight/Oooh Jesus—I got a rainbow in my life. . . ." The most touching and eloquent song is the final cut, *Born to Learn*, a sweeping statement of commitment.

PRATT'S music is full of contradictions, full of tension: love lyrics are set to harsh chord arrangements and fast-tempo tunes, tender words are set to grand melodies, and the simple line "I wanna see you dance" is turned into a taunt. Yet there is a basic sweetness to all these songs, and not a touch of bitterness.

The album cover photo haunts me, though. Pratt looks so pained, so vulnerable, that I was afraid to remove the plastic shrink wrap for fear he'd get hurt. Each time I pick it up I hope that this time he will have changed expression, that he'll be laughing, or at least smiling. Cheer up, Andy—you're a winner!
—Rick Mitz

ANDY PRATT: *Shiver in the Night*. Andy Pratt (vocals, piano); instrumental accompaniment. *All I Want Is You; Rainbow; I Want to See You Dance; My Love Is So Tender; So Faint; Keep Your Dream Alive; Landscape; What's Important to You; Mama's Getting Love; Dreams; Born to Learn*. NEMPEROR NE 443 \$6.98, © NE-TP 443 \$7.97, © NE-CS 443 \$7.97.

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good things must come to an end. They were all guts and nerve, those girls—uninhibitedly outrageous. Who but Patti Labelle would have made her debut at the Metropolitan Opera by having herself lowered from the ceiling adorned in the plumage of a tripped-out, Jabberwockyish peacock? Patti was the last hot gal. While she was with the group, her bravura was tempered by the iron-edged restraint of Nona Hendryx, who wrote many of the trio's most memorable songs, and Sara Dash, who was the epitome of sensual softness.

Unfortunately, if Patti's first solo album is representative of what can be expected, the trio's break-up was all but disastrous. Patti was great with the group, but nine consecutive tracks of her relentlessly abrasive delivery might be compared to dining on a meal consisting of red peppers, brine-soaked fish, salt pork, and barbecued ribs, all liberally sprinkled with hot sauce. Taken in a single heavy dose, Patti's music goes down with great difficulty. She comes on with such a monochromatic tone that I hungered for the mellowing input of her former companions. If Patti wants to make it on her own, she's got to do better than this. P.G.

CLEO LAINE: *Return to Carnegie* (see Best of the Month, page 95)

LONNIE MACK: *Home at Last*. Lonnie Mack (vocals, guitar); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Running Wild*; *My House*; *Funky Country Picnic*; *Lay Some Loving on Me*; *Glad That I'm Home*; *Britches*; and five others. CAPITOL ST-11619 \$6.98.

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

Over the last decade, country music has been moving close, closer, closest to urban damn-Yankee pop, utilizing pop's forms without wholly surrendering to it while continuing to honor and refer to the grass-roots sentiments of country's primal audience. Dolly Parton is the most conspicuous recent example of a performer following this trend, and Lonnie Mack is another. Mack is a straight-ahead vocalist and songwriter with a smooth delivery. Nashville probably has more proficient and flexible musicians than any other large city in the world, and Mack is backed here by some of the best of them, including legionnaires from the elite Area Code 615 group.

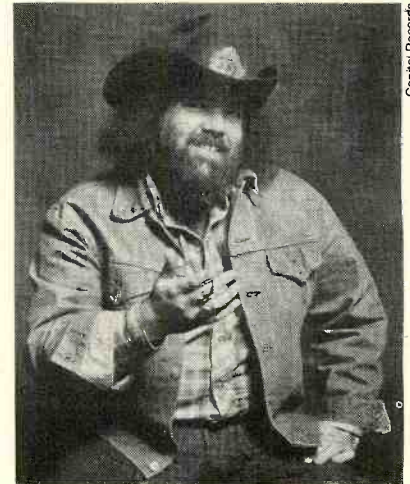
The arrangements on "Home at Last" are a mixture of polite yahoo and cosmopolitan country, some of it hokey, some of it a bit too studied, but all of it pleasurable nonetheless. *Running Wild* is the crossover bid for top-forty pop-chart success, and *The Other Side* is the ringer from the classic-country-plot mold (man/woman drinking his/her life away in a local bar). David Briggs, of Area Code 615, arranged the signing strings on the former tune; Stu Basore on dobro and Johnny Gimble on fiddle and mandolin provide the high spots on the latter. J.V.

SERGIO MENDES: *The New Brasil '77*. Sergio Mendes (keyboards); Brasil '77 (vocals and instrumentals); other musicians. *Love City*; *Mozambique*; *Peninsula*; *P-Ka-Boo*; and five others. ELEKTRA 7E-1102 \$6.98, © ET8-1102 \$7.98, © TC5-1102 \$7.98.

Performance: **Yesterday's bialy**
Recording: **Okay**

Eleven years ago, Sergio Mendes' "Brasil '66" album established him as one of the

slickest producer-arranger-performers in the recording industry. It was a stunning album for its time, and even today it has a super-cool stylishness and elegant sheen, combined with a rakish Latin verve, that make it irresistible. But, oh man, has custom staled and age withered *his* style! It has now calcified into something like a stale bialy, which can't be softened even by Stevie Wonder, sitting in on a performance of his own *The Real Thing*. Mendes and his group of instrumentalists and singers hum, sing, and chant against that same damned pluck, thruuum, chick-a-chick background that he's been repeating, in one variation or another, for over a decade. And it's *boring*. The monotony is unrelieved by the production, which features the same heightened reverberation that passes for "spaciousness" in some recording studios. P.R.



Capitol Records

LONNIE MACK
Polite yahoo and cosmopolitan country

CHARLEY PRIDE: *She's Just an Old Love Turned Memory*. Charley Pride (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *Rhinestone Cowboy*; *The Hunger*; *A Whole Lotta Things to Sing About*; *I'll Be Leaving Alone*; *We Need Lovin'*; and five others. RCA APL1-2261 \$6.98, © APS1-2261 \$7.95, © APK1-2261 \$7.95.

Performance: **Above the material**
Recording: **Good**

Charley Pride here maintains the high percentage of junk songs characteristic of his recent albums, though to call things like *We Need Lovin'* and *A Whole Lotta Things to Sing About* "songs" is to stretch the language a bit. *Rhinestone Cowboy* looks good in this company, although Pride's cover isn't as interesting as Glen Campbell's original version. And his cover of the one that's really good, *The Hunger*, is too straight-ahead to compare well to Waylon Jennings' version. What's left is an odd moment here and there of the smooth, pliant singing Pride does so well and some slightly too-smooth but mostly unobtrusive backing.

I don't know why Pride keeps pushing so many ricky-tick songs when he is so well equipped to deliver heavy-duty expressive ones, but here's another feast for junk-song junkies. Man does not live by Hostess Twinkies alone, Charley. N.C.

JONATHAN RICHMAN AND THE MODERN LOVERS: *Rock 'n' Roll with the Modern '66'* (Continued on page 108)

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Lovers. Jonathan Richman (vocals, guitar, saxophone); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Ice Cream Man*; *Rockin' Rockin' Leprechauns*; *Roller Coaster by the Sea*; *Dodge Veg-O-Matic*; *Egyptian Reggae*; *Afternoon*; *Summer Morning*; and six others. BERSERKLEY PZ 34800 \$6.98, ® PZA-34800 \$6.98, © PZT-34800 \$6.98.

Performance: **Moronic**
Recording: **Okay**

Somebody ought to put this record in a time capsule as proof of just how desperate culture consumers, music fans in particular, got in the Seventies. Here we have a guy who once showed some real rock-'n'-roll ability but turned his back on it in order to write nursery rhymes and sing them in a cloying nasal whine

with a living-room skiffle-group back-up. Jonathan Richman's *original* Modern Lovers made one near-classic album, "The Modern Lovers" (Beserkley 0050), which is still available and features his certified classic *Roadrunner*. But even back then he had a self-righteous strain. He imitated Lou Reed, but with the crucial and absurd difference that whereas Reed is an out-and-out misogynist, Richman felt downright smug about being rejected by women: since everybody laughs at me, I must be superior, he seemed to say.

I suppose that after beginning with such twisted logic an album like this makes sense. Richman used to write almost nothing but songs about how he couldn't get girls. Now he's into total regression, basking in the ostentatious dopiness of such odes as *Ice Cream*

Man and Rockin' Rockin' Leprechauns, in which he exhibits the mental prowess of a four-year-old. I look forward to the album in which he at length returns to the womb and offers his cracked-voice insights into the uterine mysteries. —Lester Bangs

THE RUMOUR: Max. Rumour (vocals and instrumentals); other musicians. *Mess with Love*; *Hard Enough to Show*; *Do Nothing Till You Hear From Me*; *Looking After No. 1*; *Airplane Tonight*; and five others. MERCURY SRM-1-1174 \$6.98, ® MC-8-1-1174 \$7.95, © MCR-4-1-1174 \$7.95.

Performance: **Good, but . . .**
Recording: **Good**

It must be fun being Graham Parker and the Rumour. Parker gets the services of a superb back-up ensemble of the finest British-pub-scene refugees who do a bang-up job of complementing his terrific tunes and impassioned singing, and the Rumour get to do solo albums of their own material, thus avoiding the usual jealousy and competitiveness.

Anyway, the Rumour's first effort on their own is not as exciting as the two albums they've done with Graham, or even quite as consistent as the ones they made when they were Ducks Deluxe and Brinsley Schwarz (which are well worth checking the bargain and import bins for). It is, however, a solid piece of r-&-b that sounds more like the Band, surprisingly, than the Stax/Motown synthesis they had previously been pursuing, and Bob Andrews continues to shine as one of the most thoughtfully lyrical organists in all of rock. It seems silly to call them a "promising" band, as they've already more than fulfilled their promise with Parker, so let's just say that although "Max" is a fun record, it lacks the total commitment of their work with him. I hope their next one will be a little more intense. S.S.

LEON AND MARY RUSSELL: Make Love to the Music. Leon Russell (vocals, keyboards, guitar); Mary Russell (vocals); instrumental and vocal accompaniment. *Easy Love*; *Joyful Noise*; *Now Now Boogie*; *Say You Will*; *Make Love to the Music*; *Love Crazy*; and three others. PARADISE PAK 3066 \$7.98.

Performance: **Mechanical**
Recording: **Murky**

Since the mid-Sixties, as pianist, singer, writer, arranger, producer, and organizer, Leon Russell has been responsible for some minor gems as well as a lot of paste. His 1971 recording of his own tune, *Delta Lady*, is a lone, superb example of what the man can do with all his skills and talents when he is able to focus them.

Russell's finest achievement as an organizer was the Joe Cocker tour of the late Sixties, which was the peak of Cocker's brief and sad fame. In the decade since, Russell has released a number of solo albums on his own labels, all of which contain at least one outstanding cut. But that is just the puzzle, for he surrounds these successes with more mere filler than most other mortals would dare try to pass off. Perhaps he just wants to seem busy all the time. The riddle is whether we should wait for him to do something marvelous again or abandon the lifewatch. Is he a flim-flam man or just slow to come to a boil?

Unfortunately, the present outing doesn't provide any answers. There are tunes that
(Continued on page 110)



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Spring Records

Compelling Millie Jackson

THE cover of Millie Jackson's latest album, "Feelin' Bitchy," bears the admonition "Please audition before airing." That's polite enough but hardly sufficient to prepare an uninitiated listener for the potent raunch that is Millie Jackson's standard fare. She might well be called the Cassandra of the Bedroom. She talks almost as much as she sings, prophesying doom for trifling women who spend so much time watching soap operas that they overlook their men's needs and making equally dire predictions for lazy men who do not extend the boundaries of their love-making technique.

What elevates Jackson's raunch above the merely obscene is its natural, even humorous, manner of expression. Her spicy comments are as spontaneous as a conversation overheard on a Saturday afternoon in a Black Belt beauty shop, replete with profanity, sexual references, and grammatical imperfections. And she is as relentless as a telephone gossip. Of all the popular soul artists on the scene, Millie Jackson most closely approaches the fundamental earthiness of the classic blues singers, translating their enduring man-woman themes into modern terms and adding the trappings of solid rhythm-'n'-blues.

"Feelin' Bitchy" is fully representative of her talents, with songs and commentary flowing together logically. Though Jackson has written much of her own material in the past, this album is enhanced by the songs of other soul, rock, and country writers. Somehow she

manages to make it all fit into her own scheme.

While some might be titillated by the explicit sexual references of the long opening track, *All the Way Lover*, the real highlight of this set is the concluding number, *Feelin' Like a Woman*, which summarizes what Millie Jackson is all about. Here her singing talent is most apparent. Equipped with a voice that sounds like it's been soaked in whiskey over-

. . . the fundamental
earthiness of the
classic blues . . .

night, Millie Jackson can transform even the simplest song into an intimate, compelling statement.

—Phyl Garland

MILLIE JACKSON: *Feelin' Bitchy*. Millie Jackson (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *All the Way Lover; Lovin' Your Good Thing Away; Angel in Your Arms; A Little Taste of Outside Love; You Created a Monster; Cheatin' Is; If You're Not Back in Love by Monday; Feelin' Like a Woman.* SPRING SP-1-6715 \$6.98.

come close to being substantial, but again there's a lot of filler. Leon's wife, Mary, is a good soul singer, but if there was ever a field oversupplied with qualified artists, soul singing is it. "Make Love to the Music" is more an exercise in rhythm-and-blues than a statement or an expression of it. It's well performed, well produced, and well arranged, the work of solid professionals; but it's also hollow and stale, a textbook representation rather than the real thing. Leon, old son, will it ever be worth the waiting? J. V.

THE SECTION: *Fork It Over*. Danny Kortchmar (guitars); Craig Doerge (keyboards); Leland Sklar (bass); Russ Kunkel (drums); vocal accompaniment. *Suckers On Parade; L.A. Changes; Street Pizza; Hamsters of Doom; Bad Shoes;* and four others. CAPITOL ST-11656 \$6.98, © 8XT-11656 \$7.98, © 4XT-11656 \$7.98.

Performance: **Witty**

Recording: **Very Good**

Messrs. Kortchmar, Kunkel, Doerge, and Sklar are Los Angeles studio musicians; among them they have backed up just about every major or minor artist who ever cut a record in that town. It is perhaps surprising that the quartet has much energy left, having ploughed through thousands of sessions over the years, but studio men are a hardy breed.

The music on "Fork It Over" is an amalgam of pop, rock, light jazz, and what can only be described as "the West Coast sound." As played by the Section, it is pixilated and sometimes gently hilarious. They have fused all the arrangements they've ever heard or been required to play—from neo-folk to fake-symphonic—and transformed them into satires. *Suckers on Parade* and *Hamsters of Doom* are two especially satisfying examples.

The album is nearly all instrumental, but David Crosby sings wordless ooh-be-doo stuff on *Magnetic Lady* and James Taylor, an old chum and bandmate of Kortchmar's from the 1967 Flying Machine days, takes on the daffy lyrics of *Bad Shoes*. This album is well worth several hearings. J. V.

STRAWBS: *Burning for You*. Strawbs (vocals and instrumentals). *Burning for Me; Cut Like a Diamond; I Feel Your Loving Coming On; Barcarole; Alexander the Great; Keep On Trying;* and four others. OYSTER OY-1-1604 \$6.98, © 8T1-1604 \$7.98, © CT1-1604 \$7.98.

Performance: **Nice**

Recording: **Good**

Strawbs is somewhat less grandiose than usual here in an album that would have seemed great about four years ago when we were all, like, you know, more into rock. But actually this one is no slouch even in these troubled times. What you get is your basic Strawbs, which is mainly your Davids, Cousins and Lambert, without the whipped-cream topping we've come to expect lately. This one is melodious as all get-out, with fairly basic instrumentation that actually works for instead of against that quality, leaving you to put up only with the way their voices seem routed around some really classic adenoids. The words are off-center enough to make it interesting fairly regularly too, and all things considered I expect to play this one some on my own time. The only thing is, it'll have to be when I'm in the mood for something that sounds best fairly loud, which mood doesn't

(Continued on page 112)

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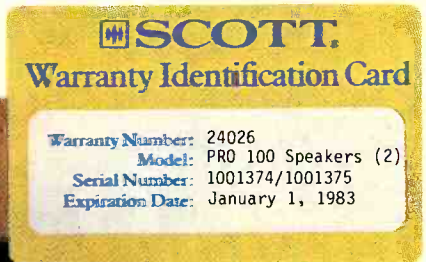
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HI-FI STEREO BUYERS' GUIDE, March-April, 1976

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TAPE DECK QUARTERLY, Winter, 1975

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HIGH FIDELITY, January, 1976

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come as often as it used to when we were all, like, you know. . . . N.C.

B. J. THOMAS. (see Best of the Month, page 97)

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

JOHNNY WINTER: *Nothin' but the Blues.* Johnny Winter (vocals, guitars); Muddy Waters (vocals); James Cotton (harmonica); "Pine Top" Perkins (piano); Bob Margolin (electric guitar); Charles Calmese (electric bass); Willie "Big Eyes" Smith (drums). *Tired of Tryin'*; *TV Mama*; *Sweet Love and Evil Women*; *Everybody's Blues*; *Drinkin' Blues*; and four others. BLUE SKY PZ 34813 \$6.98, © PZA-34033 \$6.98, © PZT-34033 \$6.98.

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

Johnny Winter was the victim of late-1960's hype in which he was cast as *the* guitarist, the one who would put everyone else out of business. Despite the inevitable negative results of the hype, he built up an audience over the years by issuing a stream of albums on which he played flashy guitar and growled his way through vocals. His albums have generally been facile but dreary—until this one.

Here Winter plays the post-World War II urban blues personified by Muddy Waters (who is along on this date), Elmore James, Howlin' Wolf, Little Walter, and others. For the first time in his recording career, Winter cuts out the fooling around and just *plays*, and much of what he does is perfectly fine. With the exception of Waters' *Walking thru the Park*, the material is by Winter, and he closely follows the models of the masters. He is nobly aided by pianist "Pine Top" Perkins, harmonica man James Cotton, and drummer Willie "Big Eyes" Smith, all veteran bluesmen. This is a surprising and uplifting Winter album, doubtless the best he has ever made.

J. V.

DISCO



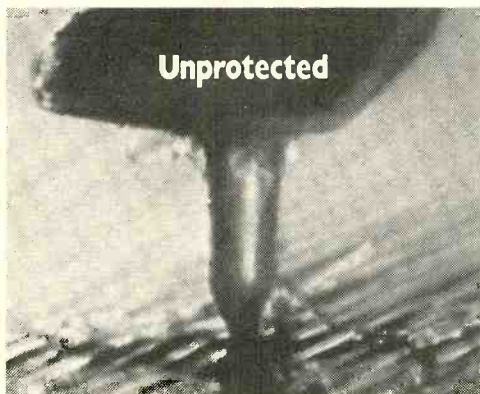
MECO: *Star Wars and Other Galactic Funk.* Meco (instrumentals). *Title Theme*; *Imperial Attack*; *The Desert and the Robot Auction*; *The Princess Appears*; *The Land of the Sand People*; *Princess Leia's Theme*; and four others. MILLENIUM MNLP 8001 \$6.98, © MLN8-8001 \$7.98, © MLN5-8001 \$7.98.

Performance: **Fun**
Recording: **Could be spacier**

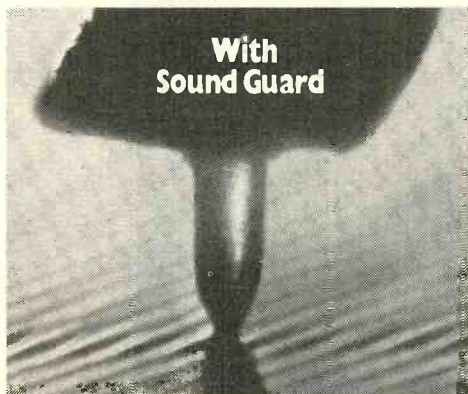
Well, everybody, here's your chance to dance your way through a movie. The movie is *Star Wars* and the beat is disco. You can close your eyes and pretend you're in outer space (or Hollywood at least) as most of the impor-

(Continued on page 114)

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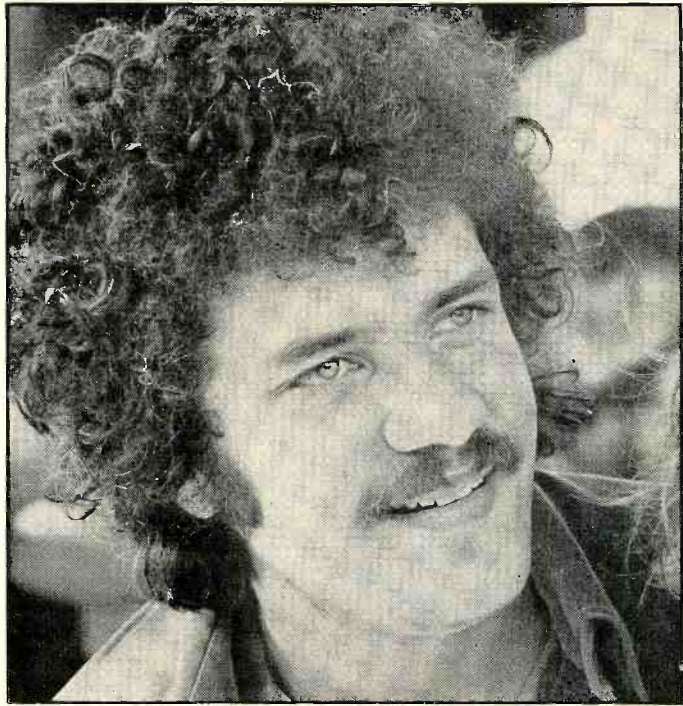


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Takoma Records

Guitarist Mike Bloomfield

A NEW album titled "Analine" on the Takoma label is a sort of busman's holiday for Mike Bloomfield, a facile and versatile guitarist. Takoma was founded by master guitarist John Fahey as a haven for pickers who were not ready for, wanted by, or comfortable with the large commercial labels. Bloomfield's career has taken him through associations with many bands and labels, and he seems to have approached this album as a kind of recorded spiritual retreat.

The selections range from the title ballad to blues to gospel to border Latin to jazz to . . . well, to guitar music for its own sweet sake. First out is *Peepin' an a Moanin Blues*, a funny, erotic entry with antecedents in the scatological blues of the Twenties; its construction is similar to that of many blues tunes penned in that era by such prolific writers as Thomas Dorsey and Perry Bradford. *Big "C" Blues*, also by Bloomfield, is about cancer; it recalls the way Jimmie ("The Father of Country Music") Rodgers referred to tuberculosis (of which he was dying) in recordings made in the early Thirties.

Mr. Johnson and Mr. Dunn is Bloomfield's tribute to the superb series of guitar duets recorded in the late twenties by Lonnie Johnson and Eddie Lang. Johnson was black, and an agile, larkish player with a fine feel for jazz. Lang was white (his real name was Salvatore Massano) and was responsible, so great was the influence of his style, for the passing away of the banjo in jazz orchestras. One of the busiest studio musicians of his era, Lang sometimes masqueraded under the *nom du disque* of "Blind Willie Dunn" on blues records meant for black audiences. Bloomfield's homage is accurate and affectionate.

Hilo Waltz has a Spanish tinge to it, resembling the border music of the Mexican bands

operating around South Texas in the Thirties and Forties; in this, as in several other cuts, Bloomfield is heard on multiple instruments through overdubbing. *Effinonna Rag* is a dandy solo workout, while on *Frankie and Johnny* he plays in the folk-picking style. *At the Cross* is a hymn, which he renders on electric guitar using a slide bar to reproduce the "Hawaiian" effect developed by black bluesmen in the Twenties. *Mood Indigo*, the superb melody by Duke Ellington and the great clarinetist Barney Bigard, is here given a mellow and relaxed treatment.

Analine is the production number of the album, with Bloomfield aided by cronies and mates from the old Electric Flag band, among them Nick Gravenites, Roger Troy, and Mark Naftalin. Although the vocal is credited to Gravenites, who wrote the tune, it sounds very much like Troy doing the singing. Either he and Gravenites share similar timbres and phrasing or the personnel listings are askew—as they are on *Mood Indigo*, where the pianist (probably Bloomfield on overdub) isn't named. At any rate, *Analine* is a slow, sweet thumper building up to a repeated chorus that tempts one to sing along. Bloomfield obviously enjoyed his working vacation, and we can enjoy its fruits.

—Joel Vance

MICHAEL BLOOMFIELD: *Analine*. Michael Bloomfield (guitars, banjo, bass, drums, piano, vocal, organ, ukulele); Nick Gravenites (piano, vocal); Roger Troy (bass, vocal); Mark Naftalin (piano, accordion); Bob Jones (drums, vocal); Anna Rizzo, Marcia Ann Taylor (background vocals). *Peepin' an a Moanin Blues*; *Mr. Johnson and Mr. Dunn*; *Frankie and Johnny*; *At the Cross*; *Big "C" Blues*; *Hilo Waltz*; *Effinonna Rag*; *Mood Indigo*; *Analine*. TAKOMA B-1059 \$6.98.

tant themes are played. They're all imaginatively turned into very danceable disco that is also fun to listen to whether or not you've seen the movie. There are even some electronic comments from R2-D2, the lovable little robot, and a few terrific laser-weapon sounds. The title theme begins straight, but a disco beat sneaks in from underneath and pulls you right onto the dance floor. The Cantina Band episode has a Thirties feel to it—sort of Lionel Hampton gone disco. But it is strange that the princess' name is spelled Leis, when all of us Star Warriors know that she is Leia Organa. Also strange is the relatively cramped sound of the disc. Surely "space" music demands more openness.

The flip side of the record is devoted to "Other Galactic Funk" (band one, *Other*; band two, *Galactic*; band three, *Funk*). Even with a long marching-band section that sounds like the Philadelphia Mummers' Parade going through a discotheque, this side is, I'm afraid, definitely other galactic junk. Stick to side one.

—Ed Buxbaum

OTHER RECOMMENDED DISCO HITS

- **ASHFORD & SIMPSON:** *Send It*. WARNER BROS. BS 3088 \$6.98.
- **CHOCOLATES:** *King of Clubs*. TOM & JERRY TJS-4500 \$6.98.
- **EDDIE HENDERSON:** *Comin' Through*. CAPITOL ST-11671 \$6.98.
- **EVELYN CHAMPAGNE KING:** *Smooth Talk*. RCA APL1-2466 \$6.98.
- **MANDRILL:** *We Are One*. ARISTA AB 4144 \$6.98.

(List compiled by David Mancuso, owner of the Loft, one of New York City's top discos.)



RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

CHICK COREA/DAVID HOLLAND/BARRY ALTSCHUL: *ARC*. Chick Corea (piano); David Holland (bass); Barry Altschul (percussion). *Games*; *Nefertitti* [sic]; *Vedana*; and three others. ECM ECM-1-1009 \$7.98, © 8T-1-1009 \$7.98, © CT-1-1009 \$7.98.

Performance: **Good old Chick**

Recording: **Excellent**

When I first listened to this album, my immediate thought was that Chick Corea had at last come to his senses and returned to good taste and musicianship. But then I noticed the recording date, 1971. That was, of course, before he formed Return to Forever, the cross-over group I'd like to see him abandon forever. This, then, is Corea without the cheap

(Continued on page 116)



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frills, without the buttons and switches that so often turn artistry into gimmickry. This is also Corea in the company of two of his peers, creating music that will surely remain vital long after his souped-up, plugged-in flirt with rock has faded from memory and the record catalogs.

We are not told what the album's title, "ARC," stands for, but I suspect it has something to do with Corea, Holland, and Altschul being members of the celebrated group Circle at the time of these recordings. This is not a commercial album, but it is one that I can unhesitatingly recommend. C.A.

LARRY CORYELL/ALPHONSE MOUZON: *Back Together Again.* Larry Coryell (guitar, vocals); Alphonse Mouzon (drums, vocals);

other musicians. *Transvested Express; Mr. C; The Phonse; Beneath the Earth; Rock 'n' Roll Lovers;* and five others. ATLANTIC SD 18220 \$6.98, © TP 18220 \$7.97, © CS 18220 \$7.97.

Performance: **Not so together**
Recording: **Very good**

You may have heard Larry Coryell and Alphonse Mouzon together in the former's Eleventh House group, and you may well have liked what you heard. I did. But this reunion is a great disappointment. Both men are excellent musicians, and I can find no fault with their individual performances here, but this is a bland collection of "original" material and the commendable solo efforts simply drown in a sea of all-too-familiar crossover sounds. C.A.

CHICO HAMILTON: *Catwalk.* Chico Hamilton (drums, percussion, vocals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *August Tempest; Theme from Big Blue Marble; Forked Tongue; The Baron;* and five others. MERCURY SRM-1-1163 \$6.98, © MC-8-1-1163 \$7.95, © MCR-4-1-1163 \$7.95.

Performance: **No frills**
Recording: **Very good**

The arrangements here are simple and the playing is straightforward. Except for a disorganized (purposely so, one presumes) children's chorus on *Theme from Big Blue Marble*, there are no gimmicks. Chico Hamilton's drums are a joy throughout, and his brushes are excellent on *Forked Tongue*. There is also good solo input from the two guitarists, Michael Santiago and Marvin Horne, and from Hamilton regular Arthur Blythe on saxophone. The tunes are short and the album seems brief, but that is partly because the music is never boring. This is not Chico Hamilton's best, and, like his other albums of the past few years, it cannot remotely stand comparison to most of his Impulse releases. But it is *honest*, and that is rare today. C.A.

PAUL HORN: *Inside the Great Pyramid.* Paul Horn (alto flute, "C" flute, piccolo, vocals). *Initiation; Meditation; Enlightenment; Fulfillment.* MUSHROOM MRS-5507 two discs \$7.98.

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

As regular readers of these pages know, I hold the music of Paul Horn in high esteem. The former Sauter/Finegan and Chico Hamilton sideman has been making eloquent statements on his own for some time now, and he has always done so with admirable imagination and taste. Almost ten years ago, Horn made what I have described as the ultimate mood album, a series of solo improvisations recorded inside the Taj Mahal, but this time he has chosen surroundings that make even that three-hundred-year-old Indian mausoleum seem comparatively recent: the Great Pyramids at Gizeh.

The star here is the environment rather than Horn himself. But that is no reflection on Horn's music, for the awesome four-and-a-half-millennium-old structures would dwarf *anybody's* playing. Horn's flute improvisations and chants are lyrical and appropriately reverent, but I venture to guess that even Bobbi Humphrey—who isn't exactly my favorite flutist—might have come away from the pyramids with a tape worth listening to.

The sound of Horn's flutes and voice gains weight and takes on an eerie dimension as it bounces off the ancient walls of the Cheops (sides one through three) and Kephra (side four) pyramids, sometimes traveling through passageways to return new sounds from other chambers; it is often as if several flutes were being played at once. The result is quite extraordinary, but four sides of it is more than enough, and I am not sure that the proposed follow-up album—featuring recordings made in the Kephra and Mycerinus pyramids—is such a good idea. C.A.

BARNEY KESSEL/HERB ELLIS: *Poor Butterfly.* Barney Kessel and Herb Ellis (guitars); Monty Budwig (bass); Jake Hanna (drums). *Dearly Beloved; Brigitte; Poor Butterfly; Make Someone Happy; Early Autumn;* and four others. CONCORD JAZZ CJ-34 (Continued on page 118)

IOC

The different distortion indicator

The Input-Output Comparator (IOC) now available on Crown D-150A and DC-300A amplifiers is a significant departure from traditional overload indicators. The IOC reports all types of overload distortion by telling the user that the output waveform no longer matches the input waveform. The IOC is so sensitive that distortion is reported before it is audible.

In the feedback system used in Crown amplifiers, the input IC is continually comparing input and output waveforms. If there is a difference, indicating a non-linearity in the amplifier, the input IC generates a correction signal.

If the output is distorted from some cause other than overload (for example, crossover distortion) the correction signal will bring the output waveform into compliance with the input.

Overload distortion, however, results from some circuit component operating beyond its linear range. The correction signal cannot change the characteristics of the component, so the input IC continues to generate a large correction signal. This will happen regardless of the kind of

overload—clipping, TIM or protection circuit activation.

The IOC was designed by Crown engineers to take advantage of this behavior, and to use it to report significant information about overload distortion to the user of the amp. The Crown IOC analyzes the correction signal and reports the existence of non-linearities in the output waveform through a front-panel LED.

The IOC is highly sensitive and detects overload distortion that is a great deal less than the .05% THD and IMD ratings of the D-150A and DC-300A. The user is thus notified about overload distortion *before* it is audible. The user also knows that the Crown IOC is reporting distortion of a music waveform, not just a laboratory test signal. Maximum useable gain for the D-150A or DC-300A can be determined by adjusting gain so the front panel LED's stay off, or come on briefly during the highest music peaks.

The IOC is available on all Crown DC-300A and D-150A amps manufactured after October, 1977. Because of its value to any serious music listener, a factory retrofit is available for earlier units.

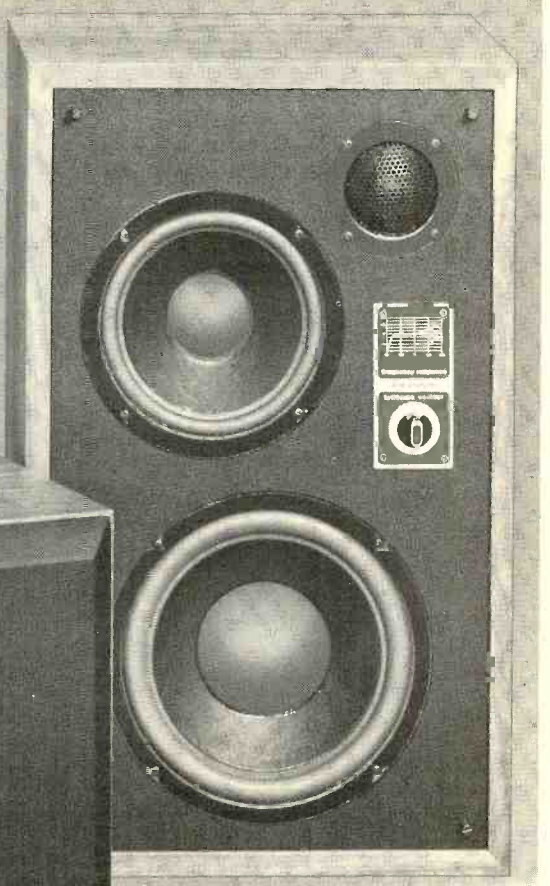
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Pianist Dick Wellstood

PIANIST Dick Wellstood may not have a recognizable individual style, but he does have good technique and he can whip up a fine blend of two-fisted piano music that shows traces of the colleagues he admires. One thing I've always liked about him is his wide-ranging taste, and he is obviously a man who listens with his mind as open as his ears. Two new albums—"This Is the One" and "Some Hefty Cats!"—present, respectively, Wellstood playing by himself and with a band consisting of four of England's finest mainstream musicians.

It's a shame that the balance on the ensemble album, a British import, is so bad, for the music is mostly excellent. Reed player Ian Wheeler and bassist Peter Ind are so dominant in volume on some tracks that trumpeter Keith Smith and Wellstood himself appear to be playing in another room of the Copley Arms, the inn near Plymouth where all but one track of "Some Hefty Cats!" were recorded. The engineer grants Wellstood some presence on a couple of the band tracks and on his two solo efforts, *Carolina Shout* and *Snowy Morning Blues*, but Smith—who has a delightful Armstrong/Eldridge style—is relegated to the background throughout the seven tunes where he appears. All this is particularly regrettable in view of the good musical quality. Ind, who has recorded with numerous top artists both here and in England (from the superb Lennie Tristano to a disastrous Prestige vocal session with actor Billy Dee Williams) is the featured soloist on *Don't Get Around Much Any More*. His solid, driving bass is prominent throughout the album, which, despite the improper balance, is worth acquiring.

The solo album, recorded in October 1975, is called "This Is the One" because Wellstood feels that way about it. I am inclined to

agree, for rarely have I heard the pianist sound so relaxed and loose. Reflecting his catholic taste, the program ranges from tunes by Fats Waller, Earl Hines, and James P. Johnson (three Wellstood favorites) to more recent compositions by John Coltrane and Stevie Wonder—all played with joyous stride and *elan*. Much is made of the technical aspects of this recording (there are two paragraphs about it and a photo of engineer Dick Burwen on the back cover), but it too leaves something to be desired in the way of presence. That is easier to cope with in the case of a solo recording, but it is nevertheless disappointing considering that today we have technology that allows superb recordings to be made even on relatively inexpensive home equipment. Dick Wellstood deserves better.

—Chris Albertson

DICK WELLSTOOD: *Some Hefty Cats!* Dick Wellstood (piano); Keith Smith (trumpet); Ian Wheeler (clarinet, alto saxophone); Peter Ind (bass); Barry Nicholls (drums). *Chinaboy; Save It Pretty Mama; Carolina Shout; Gone with the Wind; Snowy Morning Blues; Monday Date; Red Rides Again; Sweet Lorraine; Don't Get Around Much Any More; S'Wonderful; Blues at the Copley; Beale Street/Bounce It.* HEFTY JAZZ HJ 100 \$6.98 (from ZIM Records, P.O. Box 158, Jericho, N.Y. 11753).

DICK WELLSTOOD: *This Is the One.* Dick Wellstood (piano). *Paganini's Thing; Keepin' Out of Mischief Now; You Are the Sunshine of My Life; The Steeplechase; You Go to My Head; Rosetta; Sugar; Giant Steps.* AUDIO-PHILE AP-120 \$15.00 (from Decibel Records, P.O. Box 631, Lexington, Mass. 02173, or through Burwen Research dealers).

\$6.98 (from Concord Jazz, Inc., P.O. Box 845, Concord, Calif. 94522).

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

Like fish in familiar waters, the nimble-fingered and complementary Messrs. Kessel and Ellis swing ever so lightly through a mostly familiar repertoire, making this a very pleasant and enduring set. The assistance rendered by bassist Monty Budwig and drummer Jake Hanna is predictably kindred in spirit. We could well do with a few encore albums, and perhaps the quartet could be augmented to recall some of the fine sessions Ellis did for the Epic label fifteen years ago. C.A.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

STEVE LACY: *Trickles.* Steve Lacy (soprano saxophone); Roswell Rudd (trombone, chimes); Kent Carter (bass); Beaver Harris (drums). *I Feel a Draught; Papa's Midnight Hop; Robes;* and two others. BLACK SAINT BSR 0008 \$7.98.

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

Steve Lacy wrote all the music in this album, but all four members of this excellent quartet are given equal billing. Perhaps they are known collectively as "Trickles"; it's hard to tell album titles from group names these days. Anyway, who cares? The important thing is that this set—recorded in New York last year and imported from Italy—is one of the most delightful jazz albums I have heard in a long time. The musicianship is of the highest caliber, the material is uniformly interesting, and the quartet's members are very compatible.

This is modern, sometimes free-form jazz, but it is also music that bares its roots, and one reason for this is undoubtedly that both Lacy and trombonist Roswell Rudd started out playing music that was already old-fashioned when they were born, in the mid-Thirties. I hope this quartet does not turn out to be a one-album group. It should be recorded again, preferably by an American record company that can give it the distribution and promotion it deserves. C.A.

OSCAR PETERSON, JOE PASS, AND RAY BROWN: *The Giants.* Oscar Peterson (piano, organ); Joe Pass (guitar); Ray Brown (bass). *Sunny; Caravan; Jobim; Riff Blues;* and four others. PABLO 2310-796 \$7.98, © S10-796 \$7.98, © K10-796 \$7.98.

Performance: **Generally excellent**
Recording: **Unbalanced**

Pablo regulars Peterson, Pass, and Brown probably couldn't make a bad record together even if they wanted to, but even the greatest performances can be marred by poor engineering. Whoever operated the console for this session clearly discriminated against the piano. Much as I twiddled my own knobs and controls, I found it impossible to bring Peterson out of the background, even when he was taking a solo. Assuming that at least three tracks were used, I'd say that a remix could probably correct the balance, and in this case the music is worth the expense. Peterson's organ performances—on *Blues for Dennis, Eyes of Love,* and *Sunny*—get the same treatment, which almost makes these tracks sound like those Music Minus One records. (*Sunny*, incidentally, is credited to Kern/Hammerstein/

(Continued on page 120)

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Harbach, who wrote a tune by that title in 1925, but it is actually the Bobby Hebb song of the late Sixties.) If the balance were corrected, this would be a very fine album of unpretentious, often dazzling swing and mellow, bluesy sway delivered in a style that will sound fresh forever. C.A.

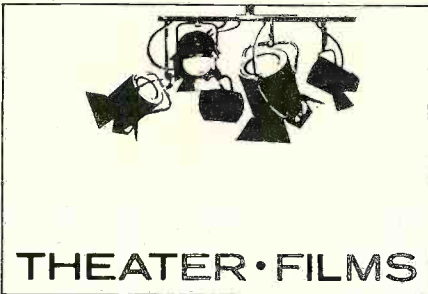
JACK TEAGARDEN/TEDDY BUCKNER: Sessions, Live. Jack Teagarden (trombone, vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *Dixieland One Step; After You've Gone; If I Could Be with You; That's a Plenty.* Teddy Buckner (trumpet); instrumental accompaniment. *Honky Tonk Parade; Mood Indigo; When the Saints Go Marching In; Just a Closer Walk with Thee.* CALLIOPE CAL 3004 \$6.98 (from Calliope Records, Inc., P.O. Box 5698, Sherman Oaks, Calif. 91403).

Performance: **Poor to good**
Recording: **Phony**

Don't buy this album. It's a gyp. It is advertised as "live," but the applause at the end of each selection was obviously recorded separately and just tacked on. The total length of the Jack Teagarden side is ten minutes and eighteen seconds and that of the Buckner side is twelve minutes and thirty-eight seconds, for a grand total of twenty-two minutes and fifty-six seconds—about half the playing time a consumer would normally expect (and have a right to expect) on an average LP. The grooves are spaced wider than usual to give the visual impression that each side is chock-full of music—a shabby trick first used on pop albums in the mid-Sixties.

The Teagarden selections are fine—it would

be hard to find anything he recorded that was certifiably lousy—but the Buckner sessions are examples of sloppy Dixieland in which the players (who are not credited on the album, nor are Teagarden's sidemen) sound bored and half in the bag. J.V.



COLE PORTER: Classic Cole. Jan DeGaetani (mezzo-soprano); Leo Smit (piano). *At Long Last Love; I've Got You Under My Skin; Just One of Those Things; Easy to Love; It's Bad for Me; Night and Day; I Get a Kick Out of You; Good-bye, Little Dream, Good-bye; Love for Sale;* and ten others. COLUMBIA M 34533 \$6.98.

Performance: **Musical misalliance**
Recording: **Excellent**

The notion of a mezzo-soprano with a voice as lovely as Jan DeGaetani's getting turned loose on a whole concert of Cole Porter favorites struck me as so promising that I could hardly wait to hear the results. First of all, a

program of popular favorites by Porter is in itself something of a novelty these days, since everybody seems to be busy rummaging in bottom drawers for "unknown" pieces by the master, some few of which deserve nothing better than neglect. And then there is DeGaetani's marvelous reputation as an interpreter of emotional music. But I am afraid that what we have on this disc is a simple case of misapplied art. Columbia would be well advised to straighten out its assignments: DeGaetani should have been hired to do the art songs Barbra Streisand turned into such disasters in "Classical Barbra" and Barbra herself should have been encouraged to come in and take over "Classic Cole."

DeGaetani's attempts to make art songs out of *Night and Day, I've Got You Under My Skin,* and *Love for Sale* misfire hopelessly; the sizzle goes out as the "art" goes in. When the singer gets operetta-arch on the more carefree ballads such as *I Get a Kick Out of You, Ridin' High,* and *Just One of Those Things,* the results are plain embarrassing. Her version of *It's Bad for Me,* from the charming score of *Nymph Errant,* made me long for Gertrude Lawrence, who could barely sing but who knew exactly what to do with a Cole Porter song. DeGaetani doesn't. Leo Smit's pristine accompaniments are equally inappropriate to the material, and his "pointifical" liner notes, in which, with apparent earnestness, he presumes to trace the Porter tunes to Tchaikovsky, J. S. Bach, and other classical sources, are an example of pretentious academicism at its worst. The songs themselves are so witty and melodic that they manage

(Continued on page 124)

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somehow to survive even this mistreatment, and I must admit I enjoyed those stanzas of *Find Me a Primitive Man* sung in impeccable French. Most of the time, though, I just wished Merman or someone else were in there belting away. P.K.

LEONARD SILLMAN'S NEW FACES OF 1952 (Ronny Graham-June Carroll-Arthur Siegel-Sheldon Harnick-Michael Brown). Original-cast recording. Virginia Bosler, June Carroll, Robert Clary, Allen Conroy, Virginia de Luce, Michael Dominico, Alice Ghostley, Ronny Graham, Patricia Hammerlee, Eartha Kitt, Joseph Lautner, Carol Lawrence, Paul Lynde, Bill Mullikin, Carol Nelson, Rosemary O'Reilly, Jimmy Russell (vocals); orchestra, Anton Coppola cond. RCA © CBM1-2206 \$6.98.

Performance: **Gala nostalgia night**
Recording: **Very good**

A quarter of a century ago, a musical revue opened on Broadway that was a joy from start to finish. It was called *Leonard Sillman's New Faces of 1952*, and my own memory of it is so sweet that I was almost afraid to spoil it by placing this reissue of the original-cast recording on the turntable. You know how it is with memories.

Mr. Sillman has so far produced thirteen such shows, starting back in 1934, with the latest edition coming out this year. But 1952 was a landmark. Folks just around the bend from their dotage, like myself, still mumble nostalgically about Alice Ghostley's devastating performance of *The Boston Beguine*, which almost put an end forever to on-stage

dancing of beguines. They will tell you of the tear that came to the eye when the ensemble sang *Love Is a Simple Thing*. If you let them, they will wax ecstatic over the nostalgic charms of that tribute to the whims of childhood, *Penny Candy*. They will sigh as they describe the tingling thrill of hearing Eartha Kitt, who could clip a syllable like nobody else in the business, turn the attention of her feline talent to a song called *Monotonous*. Some even pine to this day for the running gag of the show, a song for a businessman's mistress called *He Takes Me Off His Income Tax*, which Virginia de Luce was never allowed to finish. There are women who insist that no personality has ever appeared on a stage as winning as the pint-size Frenchman Robert Clary (certainly nothing "cuter" ever has; the Fifties were a time when whimsy had not yet been run out of town). And there are those still angry because RCA left out of the earlier version the duet for two spinsters of a bygone age, a ballad titled *Time for Tea*, which afforded a full and equal opportunity to the satirical gifts of June Carroll and Alice Ghostley.

Well, they needn't fret any longer. The missing number has been restored, and this disc contains every item RCA was sensible enough to record at the time, although why they left out the parody of Menotti called *The Great American Opera* I'll never know. But here you'll find all the above and more, rounded out by the directing genius of John Murray Anderson and the music, lyrics, and dialogue of Ronny Graham, Sheldon Harnick, Michael Brown, and Peter de Vries, of all people (he collaborated on the text of the opening number, which contains the great-vintage line,

"Love is the lotus/That turns into lettuce.').
Nourishing fare. P.K.



RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

THE CHIEFTAINS: LIVE! The Chieftains (vocals and instrumentals). *The Morning Dew*; *George Brabazon*; *Kerry Slides*; *Carriackfergus*; *Carolán's Concerto*; *The Foxhunt*; and five others. ISLAND ILPS 9501 \$6.98.

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

The Chieftains, portrayed on their album cover with a full panoply of bodhrans, concertinas, tin whistles, Irish harp, uilleann pipes, and all manner of other Irish instruments surrounding them, and rigged out in heavy woolen sweaters, look as if they're going to sound like every other Irish group who ever made a record. As it turns out, they don't at all, something their work on the *Barry Lyndon* soundtrack should have prepared me for. This

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listener, who can take his Irish jigs or leave them alone, has never heard a reel or a Kerry slide piped out with greater skill or energy. I tell you, these lads get to you. They really whoop it up, and between the numbers they provide brisk descriptions of whatever's coming next. Most of the time it's purely instrumental except for a vigorous chorus here and there, and the pace never flags. The album was apparently recorded live, and the enthusiastic response from the highly audible audience is richly deserved. *P.K.*

JEAN RITCHIE: *None but One.* Jean Ritchie (vocals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Fair Nottamun Town; Too Many Shadows; Black Waters; None but One;* and seven others. SIRE SA7530 \$6.98, © 8147-7530 (H) \$7.95, © 5147-7530 (H) \$7.95.

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

For some time now, folk singers seem to have been paying less and less attention to traditional folk songs and more and more to inventing their own. The new product, usually self-conscious as well as socially conscious, tends to combine the bucolic sound of the backwoods ballad with lyrics exhorting the listener to come out four-square against environmental pollution or police brutality. On this new record, Kentucky-born Jean Ritchie, who in the past has generally occupied herself with traditional songs, sings several songs she has written herself, including a couple of religious hymns. The message in Ritchie's title song is that "all of us are one." Leave it to a folk singer to stumble on a home truth like

that and make a song out of it! Her voice was never remarkable, being a resonant but rather nasal instrument, and her own songs are certainly simplistic, but her wholesome, forthright manner is a likable one. Whether she is resurrecting a nineteenth-century ballad about starving orphans who must join their mother in heaven or lamenting "sad scenes of destruction" along the blackened waters of Kentucky rivers, her open, honest style is consistently winning. One feels that the celebrated colleagues she invited to join in just

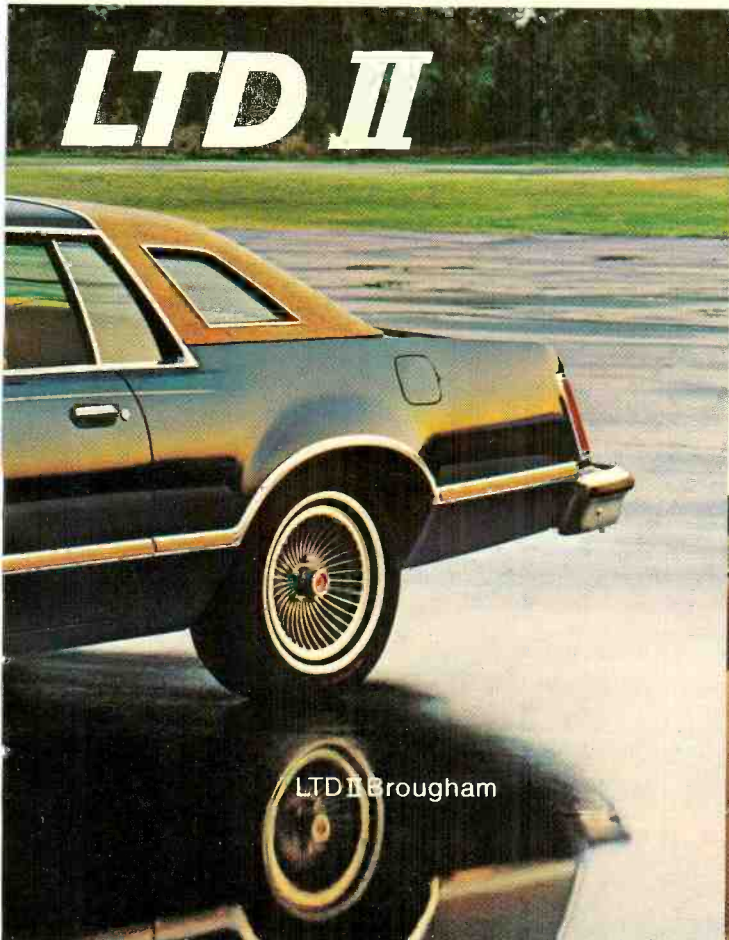
couldn't refuse her. They include Janis Ian with vocal support in *Black Waters*, Oscar Brand, who chimes in during *The Riddle Song*, and Susan Reed, who turns up with her own madrigal group to join the choir in *Wonderous Love*. For a folk-music record, there is also an unusually large group of instruments employed—mandolin, electric guitar, electric bass, drums, fiddle, banjo, cello, and a dulcimer. It's quite a production. *P.K.*

(Continued on page 129)

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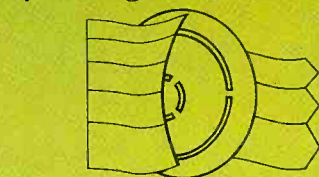


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Judy Collins' First Fifteen

RIFLING through the Sixties and Seventies with Judith Collins, as one does listening to "So Early in the Spring, the First 15 Years," a retrospective collection from Elektra, is a vivid experience. Memories of places, people, events, politics come up with one rush after another. The people, especially: it turns out there's a whole string of them in my personal life, and probably in yours too, associated with something Judy Collins was singing at the time—*Pretty Saro* back in 1961, or *Both Sides Now* in 1968, or whatever. Judy Collins has *always* been there, it seems, through almost two tumultuous decades, and I now realize that I regularly heard her on the subject (whatever the subject was) and filed away a set of impressions and associations without pausing to consider what a constant of the times she was.

This retrospective album takes you by the shoulders and gives you a shake. You can't help reflecting on what a presence Collins has been when you hear such a concentrated version of those fifteen years. The album is so rich in good tunes, compared to 90 per cent of the other four-sided albums in captivity, that your mind doesn't wander when it's playing. All her clinkers (a real dog about Vietnam stands out in my memory, as does almost one whole side of the album "Judith") are edited out of this one, of course. But the collection is not only selective about content, it is also carefully set up. Side one is old public-domain folk stuff; side two is "folk" music formally written down by early-Sixties troubadours and is mostly political; side three is about relationships and the "revolution" being more cultural than political in the old sense; and side four is about a lot of things—dreams, vi-

sions, personal growth, all probably summed up best in *Houses*: "Searching for myself . . . /Searching for my life." Side four is also entirely *written* by Judy Collins. And not only is the music carefully selected and ordered, but it is all carefully packaged; there are jacket photographs by Richard Avedon, and the liner notes were specially written by Judy herself.

Since she continued to record traditional folk songs throughout this period and since she recorded manufactured "folk" songs fairly early on, the organization of the album doesn't jibe with chronology until you get to side four, and that's only because Collins has been a late bloomer as a songwriter. The way it is organized is a good thing, though, if you want to indulge in the pastime of charting how Collins' singing style has evolved right under our noses. *Pretty Saro* of 1961 and *Farewell to*

a more ethereal, pastel, classical-leaning, queenly presence

Tarwathie (the one where she's backed by whales), released eleven years later, are on the same side. The proximity makes it easier to hear how her style has drifted from a kind of earthiness toward a more ethereal, pastel, classical-leaning, queenly presence. You don't have to have heard her pronouncement

earlier this year that she no longer considers herself "just" a folk singer to catch her drift. She has gone from folk music in the basic sense (that is, homemade, which is to say made by generalists) toward a more urbane music (made by professionals, which is to say specialists), and her sound has changed just as her material has. She used to have a kind of bite, or verve, in her voice in the days of *Prickly Bush*; now she's not only singing the kind of satin-shirt song Stephen Sondheim writes but is singing it in a way that puts it into soft focus, puts the sonic equivalent of gossamer veils and subtle lighting between herself and her audience. Strictly speaking, she has moved toward some idea of purity, which by definition involves becoming less personal, but she has not in the process exactly moved away from us. It is a most delicate and curious situation.

THE elusive nature of this relationship with the audience is echoed in the long, well-written liner notes. A series of essays on what her life has been like, darting chronologically back and forth as the album gleanings in the collection do, they appear on the surface to deal with the surface of things, but by some devious means they manage to convey that Collins felt a lot—if not exactly *what* she felt—about the times and lives she passed through.

And listening to "So Early in the Spring," I find it so damned pretty and so well connected to the times of my own life that I conclude that, well, we all have to evolve in *some* direction, like it or not, and if Collins still sounded like the original "Maid of Constant Sorrow" we'd certainly find *that* unsatisfactory. Anyway, there's no particular breach of integrity in the way she's drifted. She was the daughter of a blind minstrel, but she was trained in classical piano as a kid; a couple of teachers thought she might amount to something before she got hooked on folk music. It isn't too surprising that she'd eventually write winding, gothic-staircase melodies such as the one in *Secret Gardens* or (not included here) *Che*, and that they'd sound so nice with cellos. She's also kept in touch with the times of her life. Like any good folk artist, she's part journalist. What has happened to her style over the years (with the technical exception that she actually held pitch a little truer when she had the old earthiness) is the folk process personified. This album, all things considered, is a class product from a class person, extremely pretty to listen to, and an emotion-charged recapitulation of some of the most interesting times anybody ever lived through.

—Noel Coppage

JUDY COLLINS: *So Early in the Spring, the First 15 Years.* Judy Collins (vocals, guitar, piano); instrumental accompaniment. *Pretty Polly; So Early, Early in the Spring; Pretty Saro; Golden Apples of the Sun; Bonnie Ship the Diamond; Farewell to Tarwathie; The Hostage; La Colombe; Coal Tattoo; Carry It On; Bread and Roses; Marat/Sade; Special Delivery; The Lovin' of the Game; Both Sides Now; Marieke; Send in the Clowns; Bird on a Wire; Since You've Asked; Born to the Breed; My Father; Holly Ann; Houses; Secret Gardens.* ELEKTRA 8E-6002 two discs \$9.98, © T8-6002 \$9.97, © C2-6002 \$9.97.



Richard Creamer

□ It was sort of like one of those old Ruby Keeler movies in which the leading lady breaks her leg and the chorus girl has to go on in her place. This time the scenario went like this: Alice Cooper's boa (which performs with him on stage) died after its breakfast (a live rat) turned on the snake and tried to eat it. Alice, heartbroken, ran a contest (see photo) for a replacement. But choosing a winner wasn't the end of it. The chosen boa, a cuddly thirty-foot-long cutie named Angel, turned out (a) to be pregnant and (b) *serpens non grata* in Canada (she didn't have the correct papers). To complete this comedy of miscalculations, the indigenous reptile Alice hired as an understudy refused to go on stage for the final Canadian concert. If you missed it, you can still curl up with Alice's "Lace and Whiskey" album (Warner Bros. BSK 3027), but you'll have to provide your own snake.

POP PHOTOGRAPHY

By Rick Mitz



Lee & Lesser

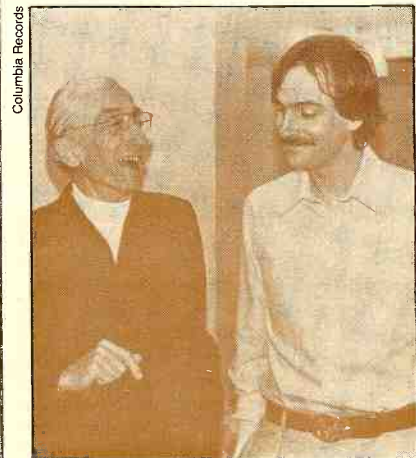
□ It's pop ecology, energy-conservation division. When ZZ Top, those nonstop touring Texas rockers, were performing in Florida they were met at the airport not by the usual fleet of limousines, but by a small flock of minibikes. Seems that someone decided that the limos were "too pretentious," and something more down to earth would be preferable. The guys pedaled off to their gig, but they weren't smiling much.

□ Marge and Gower? Fred and Ginger? No, it's Elton and Kiki! This chip-off-the-old-Lindy executed by Elton John (in shorts) and his high-kicking partner Kiki Dee was the high point of a party thrown in New York by their manager John Reid. Reid tossed the gala for Kiki's

record label, Rocket, which Elton just coincidentally happens to own. Her latest album is "Kiki Dee" (PIG-2257), his is "Greatest Hits, Vol. Two" (MCA 3027). There is no recorded evidence of any dancing, not even of the disco variety, on either.



Mick Rock



Columbia Records

□ Submariner Jacques Cousteau and troubadour James Taylor met backstage after Taylor (whose latest album is "JT," Columbia JC 34811) headlined a benefit concert in Houston for the noted oceanographer and filmmaker. From the evidence of this photo, J.C. and J.T. had a whale of a time.

□ Shaun Cassidy, a Hardy Boy on the ABC TV series, has become, like his brother David before him, an idol of the Teen Mob. Shaun was mobbed by fans this summer in Detroit, right after he was mobbed in Australia, and right before he was mobbed in San Francisco. His second album, due shortly from Warner

Bros., is tentatively titled "Shaun Cassidy," and it should cause more of the kind of outrage documented by this photo taken at a Detroit radio station. Shaun is under the headphones, probably to block out the screaming, but they won't do him much good if that glass should happen to break.



Sollers & Roskin



RCA Records

□ A month before his death, Elvis Presley received a framed copy of his album "Moody Blue" (RCA AFL1-2428), which just happened to be the two-billionth record to roll off the presses of RCA's Indianapolis plant. Pressed in blue vinyl, "Moody Blue" was the last Presley album released during his lifetime, and when the King died RCA could not stamp them out fast enough to meet the demand. In this country alone, twenty million records from the Presley catalog were sold on the day following his death. Pictured here with Elvis in Indianapolis are Ernie Ruggieri, RCA division vice president of manufacturing (left), and Elvis' father, Vernon Presley.



Russell Reif

□ "Here's to the Ladies" is not only the title of an upcoming Frank Sinatra album, but also of an exhibit saluting our "unsung women songwriters" at New York's Songwriters' Hall of Fame. Mae Boren Axton, who wrote the late Elvis Presley's hit *Heartbreak Hotel*, and Andrea McArdle, who's been breaking hearts of Broadway audiences in the title role of *Annie*, got together for some show-biz chatter at the opening of the exhibit. These days, Mae, mother of country musician Hoyt Axton, has been active writing songs and heading up her own publicity firm in Florida. These nights, Andrea keeps herself busy singing on stage, but she can be heard any time on the Columbia original-cast album of *Annie* (PS 34712).



Rogers & Cowan

□ Beach Boy Dennis Wilson cuddled up with principals of the Joffrey Ballet one night after the company had danced to his song *Cuddle Up*. The number is the final movement of *Deuce Coupe II*, a thirty-minute montage of Beach

Boys hits choreographed by Twyla Tharp. The Boys' latest *pas de cinq* is "The Beach Boys Love You" (Warner Bros. MSK 2258), and Dennis has leapt gracefully into solo recording with "Pacific Ocean Blue" (Caribou PZ 34354).

□ What's wrong with this picture? Well, let's see: Phyllis Hyman (right) is missing a shoe, Mick Jagger seems to be missing a few buttons, and Roberta Flack apparently thinks that Mick is her long-lost brother. Actually, Flack and Jagger came backstage to greet singer Hyman after a recent New Jersey concert, though it looks more like they're greeting each other. Hyman's new album is cleverly called "Phyllis Hyman" (Buddah BDS 5681), and the Stones' new one (with cover art by Andy Warhol, no less) is "Rolling Stones Love You Live" (Rolling Stones COC 2-9001). Flack, after a long absence from the recording studio, has an album due any minute.



Roberta Crane



CLASSICAL DISCS AND TAPES

Reviewed by RICHARD FREED • DAVID HALL • GEORGE JELLINEK • PAUL KRESH
STODDARD LINCOLN • ERIC SALZMAN

J. S. BACH: *Sonata in B Minor for Flute and Harpsichord (BWV 1030); Sonata in A Major for Flute and Harpsichord (BWV 1032); Trio Sonata in G Major for Flute, Violin, and Continuo (BWV 1038); Sonata in E Minor for Flute and Continuo (BWV 1034); Sonata in E Major for Flute and Continuo (BWV 1035); Trio Sonata in G Major for Two Flutes and Continuo (BWV 1039)*. Leopold Stastny, Frans Brüngen (flutes); Alice Harnoncourt (violin); Nikolaus Harnoncourt (cello); Herbert Tachezi (harpsichord). TELEFUNKEN 6.35339 two discs \$15.94.

Performance: **Echt!**
Recording: **Excellent**

As we have come to expect from this Telefunken Bach series, the presentation is exquisite: the box is strong and handsome; the historical notes are detailed, copious, and trilingual (German, English, and French); scores are included; and the manuscript of Herbert Tachezi's excellent reconstruction of the first movement of the A Major Sonata is reproduced. The music is performed on original instruments, and articulation and ornaments are executed with the utmost historical accuracy.

All of this is, of course, admirable. But there are some serious musical problems. In the two sonatas with harpsichord obbligato, for example, the performers seem to be at odds about rhythmic alterations. Although both articulate clearly, Tachezi favors rhythmic alterations that conflict with Leopold

Stastny's even flow of notes. Also, some of the tempos are misjudged. In the B Minor Sonata, the first movement sounds nervous because of a too-quick tempo, and the slow movement lacks grace and repose because of a pushed *andante* rather than the *largo* Bach calls for.

Alice Harnoncourt joins in for the G Major Trio Sonata with a sound that is so deliberately devoid of vibrato and warmth that the result is overwhelmingly disappointing. Musically the two continuo sonatas come off better, especially the one in E Major. Here Stastny, as soloist, apparently feels free to make music the way he likes without worrying about what his peers are up to. The finest reading in the collection is of the G Major Trio Sonata for two flutes and continuo. Stastny and Brüngen think alike, and the continuo players have no choice but to accompany them without interference.

The album as a whole, then, is for the music history buff only. Presence, projection, and individual interpretation are often completely lacking. The hoops, wigs, and lace have been donned, but the wearers have not yet learned to move naturally in them. S.L.

BEACH: *Sonata in A Minor for Piano and Violin, Op. 34*. **FOOTE:** *Sonata in G Minor for Piano and Violin, Op. 20*. Joseph Silverstein (violin); Gilbert Kalish (piano). NEW WORLD NW 268 \$6.98.

Performance: **Excellent**
Recording: **Clean but a mite constricted**

These sonatas by Amy Marcy Cheney (Mrs. H.H.A.) Beach (1867-1944) and Arthur Foote (1853-1937) are thoroughly representative examples of what the pre-World War I group of American composers centered around Boston was turning out. Within a stylistic framework bounded essentially by Schumann and Brahms, both works display a high level of craftsmanship and by no means lack innate vitality. My own preference between the two is for the Foote. His 1890 sonata dates from his forty-seventh year; regardless of the Brahmsian elements, there are terseness and rhythmic virility in the opening movement and ingenuity in the *siciliana* scherzo. Brahms is

much to the fore throughout the *adagio*, but Foote the organist-choirmaster emerges triumphantly in the finale, which builds up around a fugato texture and concludes in a splendid blaze of Victorian hymnody.

Mrs. Beach's 1896 work is notable for its predominantly lyrical first movement, a charming lightweight scherzo, and, most especially, the eloquent closing pages of the slow movement. Like Foote, she included a healthy dose of fugal writing to spur the pace of her finale. However, I do find the level of her thematic material occasionally undistinguished compared with Foote's.

In the performances here, Boston Symphony concertmaster Joseph Silverstein displays a small but well-focused tone, ample rhythmic vigor, and right-on-target intonation. Gilbert Kalish negotiates in sterling fashion the highly elaborate piano writing in both sonatas (they are billed as for piano and violin, in the German Classical manner). The recording, done at Columbia's New York studios, is very clean, but I do wish there had been a bit more audible acoustic space. This kind of music can use it. D.H.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

BEETHOVEN: *Lieder*. *Maigesang; Marmotte; Neue Liebe, Neues Leben; Wonne der Wehmut; Sehnsucht; Mit einem Gemalten Band; Freudvoll und Leidvoll; Ich Denke Dein; Aus "Faust" (Flohlied); Urians Reise um die Welt; Die Liebe; Gellert-Lieder, Op. 48, Nos. 1-6; Opferlied; Des Kriegers Abschied; Das Blümchen Wunderhold; Die Laute Klage*. Peter Schreier (tenor); Walter Olbertz (piano). TELEFUNKEN 6.41997 \$7.98.

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

Beethoven wrote nearly a hundred songs, but, except for the *An die Ferne Geliebte* cycle and a handful of others, few singers seem to favor them. A notable exception is Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, whose collection on Deutsche Grammophon 139 197 includes some of the better-known individual songs in addition to the cycle. This new release by tenor Peter Schreier duplicates none of Fischer-Dies-

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

kau's choices, which means that lieder aficionados who own both discs have about half of Beethoven's total output. Schreier's choices for this disc, labeled Volume 1, are mainly early songs, from the period of about 1793 to 1811, and nine of them are settings of Goethe texts.

I find this a virtually flawless recital. Schreier's tone is not particularly sensuous, but he can achieve exquisite effects through means that are tasteful and unfaillingly musical. Very properly, he does not over-romanticize these songs, which are closer in spirit to Mozart than to Schubert. They call for a Mozartian command of tonal purity and sensitive control of dynamics, which the singer supplies in abundance. He also rises with virtuosic ease to certain technical challenges, such as the delicate transitions from full voice to head tone in *Neue Liebe, Neues Leben*. I would prefer the solid weight of a baritone voice for the solemn utterances of the six Gellert songs (among them the reasonably familiar *Die Ehre Gottes aus der Natur*), but Schreier surely delivers them as effectively as any tenor can.

Pianist Walter Olbertz, who excelled in the singer's recent Mendelssohn collection, again provides distinguished support, and the engineering is splendid. Texts are provided in German only and there are no notes. Just the same, bring on Volume 2! *G.J.*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

BEETHOVEN: *Piano Sonata No. 1, in F Minor, Op. 2, No. 1; Piano Sonata No. 7, in D Major, Op. 10, No. 3.* Sviatoslav Richter (piano). ANGEL □ S-37266 \$7.98.

Performance: **Superbly fluent**
Recording: **Good**

Word had it some years ago that Russia's Sviatoslav Richter was not happy recording under studio conditions and that those who wished to document his interpretations for public issue would have to take their chances with his concert performances. But to judge from the production/engineering credits on the jacket of this Angel disc, it appears that he was lured into EMI's Paris studios in the course of a European tour, and the result is as lovely a pair of readings of early Beethoven sonatas as you'll ever hear.

Typically, Richter enjoys making the most of the potential for contrast inherent in the works, so he chooses a very deliberate tempo for the minuetto of Op. 2, No. 1, which enhances the stunning brilliance and dazzlingly smooth passagework he brings to the final *prestissimo*. In Op. 10, No. 3, the high point is the great *largo e mesto* slow movement, the first of Beethoven's many profound essays in this vein, and Richter plays it wonderfully.

EMI's Paris recording team has managed the body and presence of the piano tone nicely, with just enough room coloring to provide a necessary aura of warmth. The slightly hard middle-register tone in *forte* passages I am inclined to ascribe to the instrument rather than to the performer or producers. A touch of equalization adjustment may help, especially if your listening room happens to be on the live side, as mine is. *D.H.*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

BERLIOZ: *L'Enfance du Christ, Op. 25.* Janet Baker (mezzo-soprano); Thomas Allen (baritone); Eric Tappy (tenor); Jules Bastin (bass);
(Continued on page 136)

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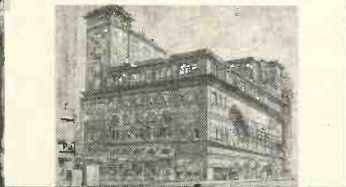
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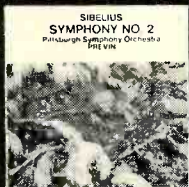
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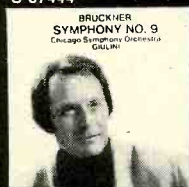
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Leonhardt's Brandenburgs

THE first time I played continuo in Bach's *Brandenburg* Concertos was an extremely startling experience. The orchestra started out bravely, and then, suddenly, the horns went wild; a veritable fox hunt seemed to be going on at their end of the stage. A glance at the score revealed that that was how it was supposed to be; the notated hunting calls and tattoos were right there, even though in all the times I had heard these wonderful concertos I had never really heard the horns sound that way. I never heard them sound that way again until I listened to the superb new ABC/SEON recording of the concertos conducted by Gustav Leonhardt. It is the clarity of the inner parts that characterizes these discs, and it is, of course, Bach's uncanny treatment of the inner parts that gives these works their very life.

This inner clarity stems both from the use of original instruments and the carefully executed Baroque articulation. In the First Concerto, Bach set up opposing choirs of strings, oboes, and horns. Modern instruments used according to the precepts of modern orchestral blending produce a smooth, homogenized sound. Bach's ideal, however, was not homogeneity but colorful contrast, which can be achieved only with raw-sounding natural horns, cutting oboes, and vibratoless strings. Performed by such forces, as it is here, the concerto becomes a lively dialogue. In the Third Concerto the contrast between the choirs is more difficult to bring out, since all three choirs are made up of strings, but in Leonhardt's reading the contrast is as clear as I have ever heard it.

With the various solo instruments in the concertos the problem is not contrast, but blending and balancing the different timbres. Rarely, for instance, do the recorder and the trumpet of the Second Concerto come off as equal partners, and one often wonders if Bach was not asking for the impossible when he placed them side by side. It is not impossible, however, for this recording accomplishes it.

Perhaps the most ravishing sonority of the entire set is to be found in the Fifth Concerto.

Bach himself was surely aware of this, for there are many passages in the first movement where the harmony and figuration become static and only the sonority carries the music forward. Such moments of limpid clarity are beautifully presented in this performance, and the recording by the German SEON company has caught them perfectly.

Research and experience have taught us that intricate Baroque figuration can be heard best when it is highly articulated. But when the articulated units become too small and detached, because there is too much diminuendo on each unit and too much space between units, the phrase is lost and the result is incompatible with today's tastes. Many contemporary groups that play original instruments fall into this trap; the Leonhardt ensemble does not. Just the right balance is achieved: detail is underlined by articulation, and a long line is produced by a controlling overall sense of phrasing.

In a delightfully whimsical essay included in the notes, Leonhardt modestly points out that we will never know exactly how music was performed in Bach's time and that therefore no performance—including this one—can ever be definitive. It is this sort of modesty that makes these records so wonderful. Nothing is pushed for effect or brilliance; the music expands in its own world unhampered by any pressure from without. The result is a completely *believable* performance.

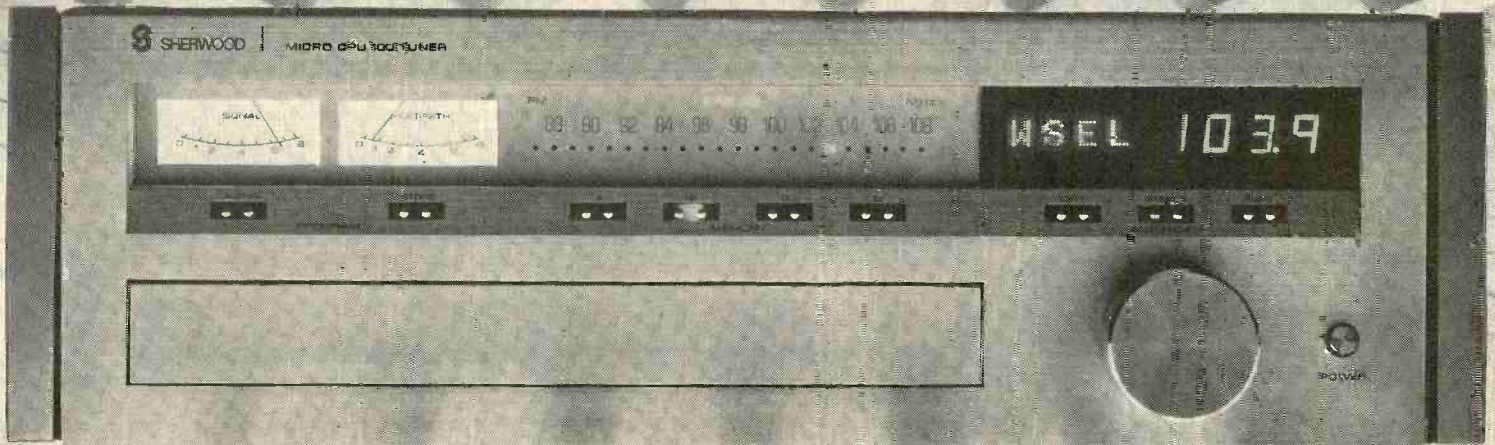
Obviously, this new set of the *Brandenburgs* must be seriously considered no matter how many other fine recordings of the works one already has. And, as a special enticement, there is included a full-size reproduction of Bach's complete autograph score as it was exquisitely copied out and presented to the "Marggraf de Brandenburg." It is a thrill to follow this music, superbly performed, from the master's own score. —Stoddard Lincoln

J. S. BACH: The Brandenburg Concertos (BWV 1046-1051). Amsterdam Ensemble, Gustav Leonhardt cond. ABC/SEON AB-67020/2 two discs \$19.95.

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

Since its release in 1961, I have regarded Colin Davis' L'Oiseau-Lyre recording of *L'Enfance du Christ* as the classic realization of Berlioz's delectable masterpiece—even compared with the distinguished readings by Munch, Martinon, and Cluytens (whose Angel album with De los Angeles and Gedda is no longer listed in Schwann). The new Philips recording of the work, part of that label's admirable Berlioz series, puts the mature Davis in competition with his younger self, albeit with largely different performers under his direction. (Joseph Rouleau, who doubled in the roles of Herod and the Ishmaelite Householder in the earlier recording, sings the latter part in the new one.)

Comparing the 1961 Colin Davis performance with that of 1977, I find that the latter offers decidedly more refined orchestral playing (the London Symphony winds are truly wonderful), more polished choral work, and a more dramatically effective balance between the chorus and the rest of the ensemble—particularly in the offstage angelic warnings, hosannas, and alleluias, which sound as seraphically disembodied as anyone could wish. The recording quality too is audibly superior, in overall sonic richness and stereo depth perspective, to that of the 1961 set.

Nevertheless, I am not about to dispose of the earlier L'Oiseau-Lyre album, for not only is it more sharply focused dramatically, but the team of soloists—Peter Pears (in top form), Elsie Morison, John Cameron, and the young Joseph Rouleau—wins hands down over the new Philips team, even though the latter includes the formidable Janet Baker. On the new set Jules Bastin sings Herod's monologue in a beautifully classic manner, but with not a trace of the Moussorgsky-like brooding that Rouleau brought to the 1961 recording. Eric Tappy represents the classic type of high Gallic tenor, but his voice is too light in texture to elicit the tenderness called for in the "Holy Family by the Wayside" solo, let alone the pathos of the footsore arrival at Saïs. Even if he strained a bit at the top, Pears in the same passages managed to sustain the Gluckian melodic line and also to convey the gripping drama in the subsequent narrative. For all the beauty of her delivery, Baker sounds like a fully mature woman rather than the frightened young mother depicted so vividly by Morison in the arioso-recitative dialogue between Mary and Joseph as they seek refuge in Saïs. Similarly, Thomas Allen seems totally unable to convey Joseph's desperation the way Cameron did in the earlier recording.

To sum up, then, I sense a far greater degree of *interaction* both among the soloists and between soloists and conductor in the 1961 performance than in the new Philips effort, and it is just this element of interaction that makes the L'Oiseau-Lyre realization truly involving instead of merely enjoyable.

D.H.

BERLIOZ: Te Deum, Op. 22. Jean Dupouy (tenor); Choeur de l'Orchestre de Paris; Choeur d'Enfants de Paris; Maitrise de la Resurrection; Jean Guillou (organ); Orchestre de
(Continued on page 138)

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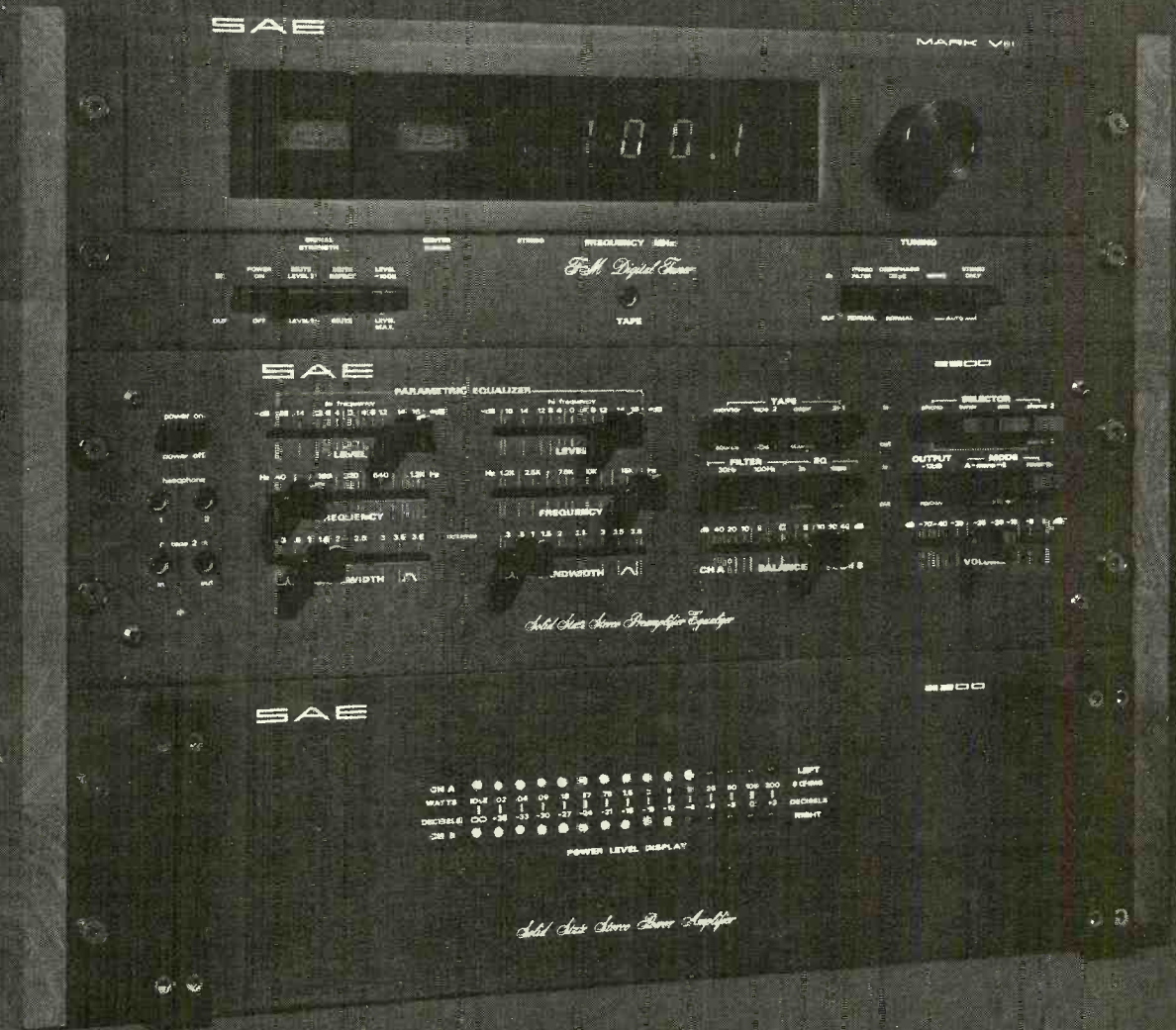
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Performance: **Radiant**
Recording: **Mushy**

Sir Thomas Beecham's première recording of this work is still in circulation (Odyssey 32 16 0206), and that performance still carries unique power and conviction. But the recording, now in artificial stereo, was made nearly twenty-five years ago, and sonic considerations are especially meaningful in this case. Indeed, it may be that sonic differences, almost as much as actual interpretive ones, account for the different effects made by Colin Davis' 1969 Philips recording (839 790LY) and the new Barenboim one. For the sake of brevity, it might be said that Davis emphasizes the work's dignity and grandeur and Barenboim its radiance. Both are intense, well organized, obviously committed performances. The new Columbia recording was made in the Eglise de Saint Eustache, the site of the *Te Deum*'s 1855 première, and the somewhat over-reverberant acoustics tend to blur some of the lines, frequently making the words sung by the sopranos and the boys' choir all but unintelligible, rendering the orchestral punches a little mushy, and even swallowing up some of the instrumental solos (I found more or less the same effect in SQ playback as in two-channel stereo). The site of the Philips sessions, presumably one of the town halls or large churches regularly used for recording in London, made for a cleaner sonic frame in which every syllable is understandable and the orchestral wallops are not diffused. There are some clear musical advantages in Davis' majestic presentation, too: the London Symphony is a more precise ensemble than the Orchestre de Paris, Franco Tagliavini's fervor is more appealing than Jean Dupouy's stylish but very cool singing of the solo part, and at the very end Davis leaves the listener with a feeling of noble uplift, while Barenboim's handling of the final bars leaves one wondering if they ought to sound quite so much like the end of Ives' Second Symphony. The *Te Deum* is a work that deserves far wider circulation than it has so far enjoyed; those who have not made its acquaintance are urged to remedy that oversight—via the Davis recording on Philips. R.F.

BRAHMS: A German Requiem, Op. 45; Variations on a Theme by Haydn, Op. 56a; Tragic Overture, Op. 81. Anna Tomowa-Sintow (soprano); José van Dam (baritone); Vienna Singverein; Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, Herbert von Karajan cond. ANGEL □ SB-3838 two discs \$15.96.

Performance: **Orchestrally superior**
Recording: **Good except for overture**

Karajan's third go at the *German Requiem* (his earlier essays were in 1948 and 1965) is superior to the others in point of orchestral balance, particularly in the timpani department, but comparison with Klemperer's monumental 1962 reading for Angel finds the Vienna chorus hopelessly weak next to the magnificently trained Philharmonia group. Only in the evocation of the Last Judgment do the Viennese work up a real head of steam and bring to Brahms' music the elemental power it deserves. As for the soloists, Anna Tomowa-Sintow is no match for Gundula Janowitz (in Karajan's earlier DG recording) when it comes to floating the ethereally lovely lines of "*Ihr habt nun Traurigkeit*," nor does

José van Dam command the magisterial quality of Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau (in Klemperer's version) in "*Herr, lehre doch mich*." On the other hand, Karajan's orchestra plays magnificently throughout, and the recording, particularly in the lower end of the frequency spectrum, is absolutely stunning in power and body—which shows up all the more the weakness of the Vienna Singverein.

Karajan's tempos differ only marginally from those of his 1965 DG recording, and

recording date, when the Karajan sessions were still being favored with rather churchy acoustics. D.H.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

BRAHMS: Symphony No. 1, in C Minor, Op. 68; Symphony No. 2, in D Major, Op. 73; Symphony No. 3, in F Major, Op. 90; Symphony No. 4, in E Minor, Op. 98; Academic Festival Overture, Op. 80; Tragic Overture, Op. 81;



MAURICE ABRAVANEL: an appealing combination of vigor and expressiveness

there is somewhat more spontaneity in the handling of dynamics, though the opening "*Selig sind*" is all but inaudible in my copy. Oddly enough, Klemperer, usually associated with slow and ponderous pacing, is no slowpoke in his handling of this score, being slightly faster than Karajan in all but "*Wie lieblich sind deine Wohnungen*." Indeed, I find far more dramatic urgency throughout the whole of Klemperer's reading, which remains the one I prefer.

Karajan's treatment of the Haydn Variations is as elegant as ever, but I'd like a bit more starkly granitic approach to the *Tragic Overture*. The two orchestral tracks were evidently recorded in different locales. The rather obtrusive reverberation characteristics in the *Tragic Overture* indicate an early 1970's

Variations on a Theme by Haydn, Op. 56a. Utah Symphony Orchestra, Maurice Abravanel cond. VANGUARD CARDINAL VCS 10117/20 four discs \$15.92.

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

The four symphonies, the two overtures, and the Haydn Variations are, except for the two serenades, all the purely orchestral music that Brahms ever wrote (and even the variations are really the composer's own arrangement of a two-piano work). But what a lot of music to be packed into a set of only four discs! Maurice Abravanel, his Utah Symphony, and Vanguard pack most of it in very well indeed. The performances give the feeling of Brahms as a poet, as the last optimist. The orchestra is

a bit short of first-rate, but, in compensation, Abravanel has been directing it for so long that they make a real team.

There's no heavy, long-beard stuff here; Abravanel's Brahms is "up." It is also rather sensitively worked for both detail and broad shaping. When Abravanel wants to shade the tempo—which he does often and nearly always to good effect—the musicians are right there with him. This combination of vigor and expressiveness is appealing, and something of a bargain at the price. A very musical essay by Bernard Jacobson, giving a remarkably succinct explanation of how Brahms' musical mentality actually functioned, is a valuable extra. *E.S.*

BRAHMS: Violin Sonata No. 1, in G Major, Op. 78; Violin Sonata No. 2, in A Major, Op. 100; Violin Sonata No. 3, in D Minor, Op. 108. Georg Kulenkampff (violin); Georg Solti (piano). RICHMOND Ⓜ R 23213 \$3.98.

Performance: **Refined**

Recording: **Variable late-Forties mono**

These Brahms sonatas, together with Bruch's G Minor Concerto done with the Zürich Tonhalle Orchestra under Carl Schuricht, were the last recorded performances by Georg Kulenkampff before his death in 1948 at the age of fifty. Kulenkampff had previously enjoyed a distinguished career as soloist and teacher and recorded a goodly portion of the classic violin solo and concerto repertoire, chiefly for Telefunken.

Young Georg Solti had just been appointed conductor of the Munich Opera—a first major step toward his present superstar status. The original English Decca 78's of the Brahms sonatas were transferred to long-play format in 1965 and issued in England when Solti was at the peak of his Covent Garden career.

Kulenkampff plays Op. 78 and Op. 100 in a warm but somewhat over-refined fashion, striking sparks of genuine passion only in the great D Minor Sonata. Solti is an able and, for the most part, sensitive keyboard partner, but he is relegated to the background in the Op. 78 recording. Balances in the other two works are more just. In any event, none of these performances effaces for me the rugged pre-LP versions of Opp. 78 and 100 by Busch and Serkin, or of Op. 108 by Szigeti and Petri, not to mention such more contemporary recordings as those by Suk and Katchen. The recorded sound varies from dim in Op. 78 to relatively good in Op. 108. *D.H.*

BRUCKNER: Symphony No. 7, in E Major; Symphony No. 8, in C Minor. Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, Karl Böhm cond. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2709 068 three discs \$26.94.

Performance: **Forthright**

Recording: **Very good**

Karl Böhm's Dresden recordings of the Fourth and Fifth were among the few complete Bruckner symphonies to appear on 78's; his Vienna Philharmonic concert take of the Seventh (now in Vox set VSPS-14) was one of the first to appear on LP. More than twenty-five years went by before he began what was announced as a complete Bruckner cycle with the Vienna Philharmonic for London/Decca, but it got only as far as Nos. 3 and 4. Now, with the same orchestra, Böhm's Bruckner is continuing on Deutsche Grammophon. What is more surprising than the change in affiliation is DG's issuing these particular sympho-

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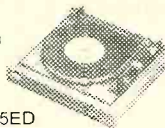
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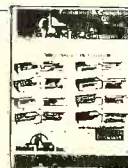
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nies only a few months after Karajan's remake of the Eighth appeared on the same label (2707 085) and virtually on the eve of the release of that conductor's new DG recording of the Seventh. There is some justification for this duplication of repertoire, in that Karajan recorded the 1887 version of No. 8 while Böhm has done the now virtually standard Nowak edition of the version of 1890. There is also a great deal of pleasure in Böhm's handling of this material and in hearing Bruckner played by the Vienna Philharmonic, whose brass—whether by tradition, instinct, or a combination of both—brings a unique glory to the big proclamative gestures. The very opening of the Seventh Symphony here radiates such unpretentious security, such effortless grandeur, together with a striking vitality, that

the listener at once feels a safe and satisfying journey is under way. By and large, that impression has been justified by the end of the Eighth, but one may also have a feeling that the journey has been rather uneventful.

The word that best suits these performances is probably "forthright." There is unquestionable integrity and a gratifying absence of interpretive clutter in Böhm's approach, and the playing itself is glorious, set off in a lambent, clear acoustic frame. What is missing is the sense of *exaltation* one expects from this music. This is not the same thing at all as grandeur of execution and glory of sound (which can be, and here are, exhilarating in themselves). Rather, it is the mystery of what Bruckner is all about, and it requires a bit of indulgence in the way of dramatic shap-

ing, of softer playing here and there than Böhm apparently asks from his orchestra, and of greater subtlety in building to so crucial a climax as that of the great adagio of the Seventh Symphony. Better by far Böhm's noble forthrightness (which is far from bland, and which some will find purifying) than the sort of "Brucknerism" characterized by abrupt gear-shifting and dynamic excesses; but better still the passion that illumines the recorded readings of Haitink, Horenstein, Jochum, and Karajan. *R.F.*

CARPENTER: *Adventures in a Perambulator*. **MOORE:** *The Pageant of P. T. Barnum*. **NELSON:** *Savannah River Holiday*. Eastman-Rochester Orchestra, Howard Hanson cond. **MERCURY SRI** 75095 \$7.98.

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

This reissue of material from the Mercury archives features American symphonic music at its most winning and agreeable. The stunning Hanson/Eastman-Rochester performance of John Alden Carpenter's *Adventures in a Perambulator* was out of the catalog for a while. Now it is back on two labels: the ERA label, backed by Burrill Phillips' *Selections from McGuffey's Readers*, and this Mercury Golden Imports release.

Carpenter's contribution is by far the most interesting of the three pieces here. The Harvard graduate who wrote it lived from 1876 to 1951, and when he wasn't managing his father's mill, railway, and shipping supplies business he composed some of the most inventive scores ever produced in this country. It is a pity that his songs, his orchestral suite *Krazy Kat*, and his elaborate, high-voltage ballet score *Skyscrapers* (represented only by a thin, abridged performance on Desto) are not more readily available on records today. It is certainly good at least to have *Adventures in a Perambulator* back. Written in 1914, this suite of sketches depicting a baby's day in his carriage is impressionism translated from the French into a distinctly American idiom.

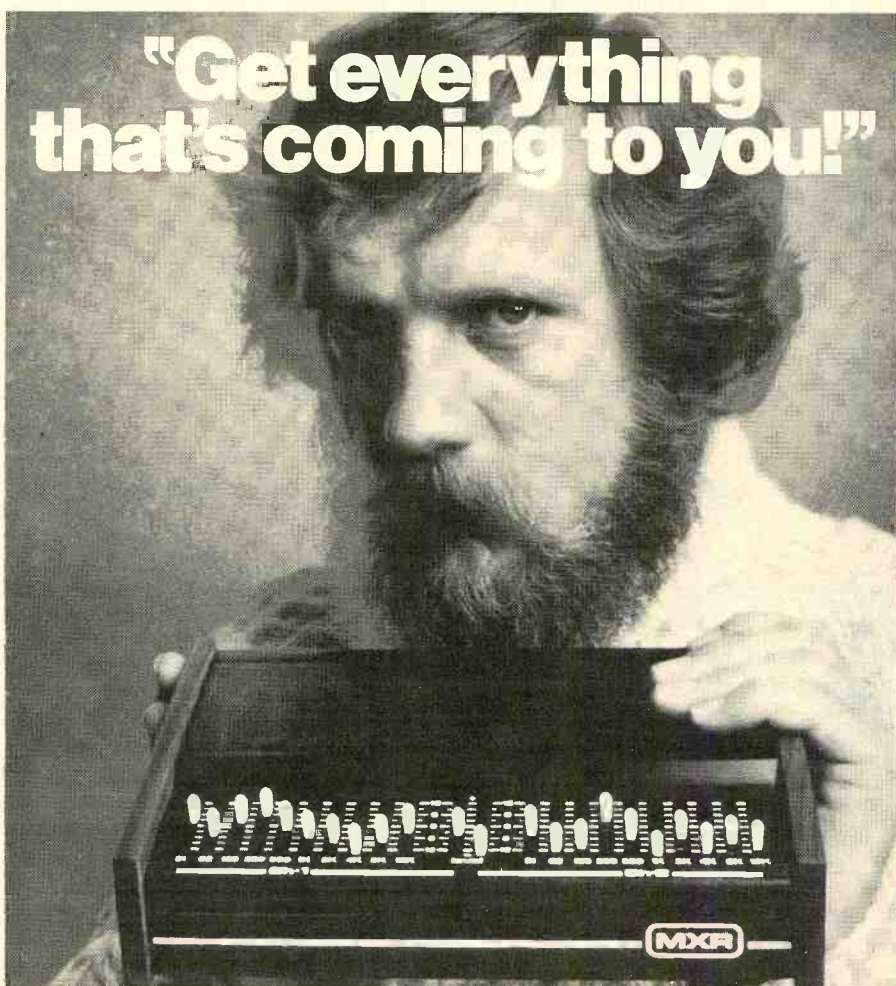
Douglas Moore's *The Pageant of P. T. Barnum*, the first work still extant by the composer of *The Ballad of Baby Doe*, evokes episodes in the life of Barnum: here are the country fiddles of his boyhood, a flute solo suggesting the coloratura of Jenny Lind, a mock-military allegro depicting General and Mrs. Tom Thumb, and a full-fledged circus parade, with an out-of-tune clarinet caricaturing the calliope. It is delightful stuff, as is Ron Nelson's *Savannah River Holiday*, an eight-minute revel replete with the spirit of summer. The performances all have that incisive excellence Hanson drew from the Eastman-Rochester Orchestra, and technically they reflect the high quality of recording achieved by Mercury way back there in the Fifties. The surfaces are flawless. *P.K.*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

DVORÁK: *Piano Concerto in G Minor, Op. 33*. Sviatoslav Richter (piano); Bavarian State Orchestra, Carlos Kleiber cond. **ANGEL** □ S-37239 \$7.98.

Performance: **Grand**
Recording: **Quite good**

Presumably on the premise that everyone knows who Richter is by now, Angel has printed a jacket blurb about the conductor but
(Continued on page 144)



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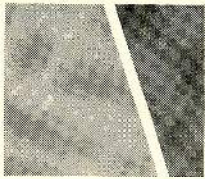
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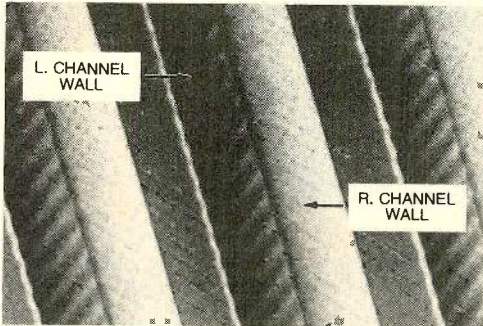
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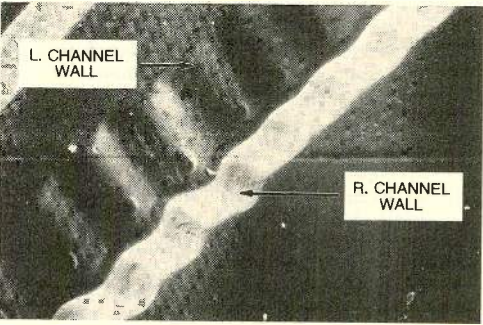
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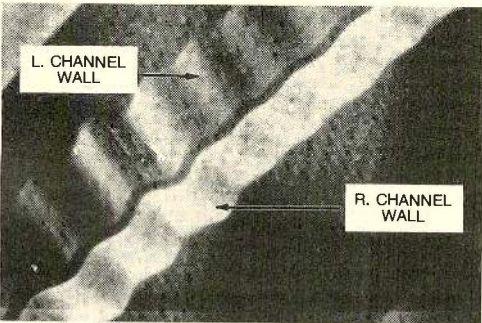
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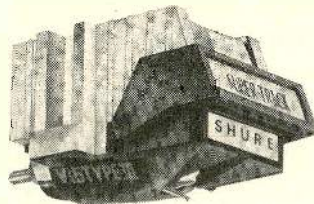
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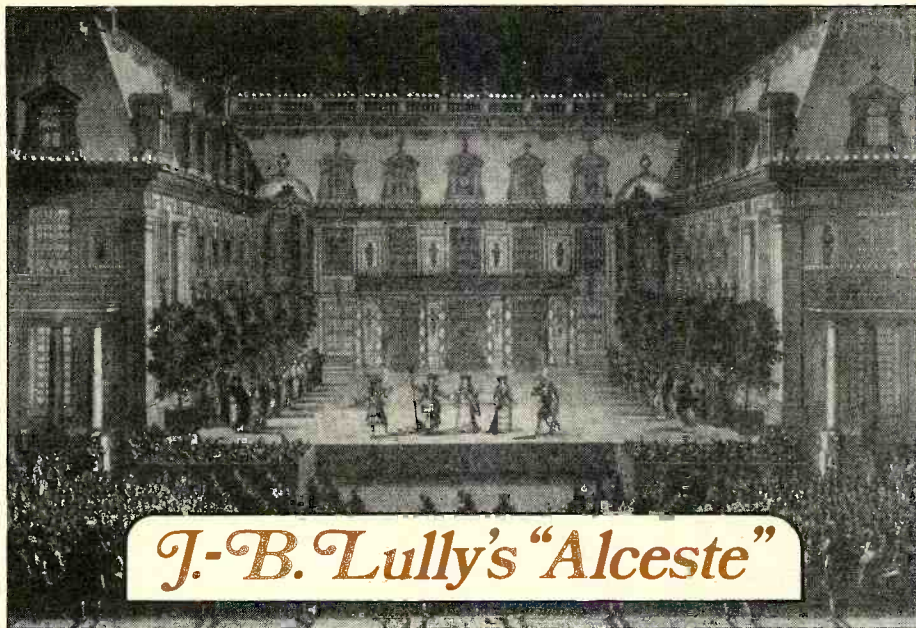


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Alceste, Versailles, 1674/etching by Jean Le Pautre

J.-B. Lully's "Alceste"

JEAN-BAPTISTE LULLY. What a name to conjure with! Born in Florence in 1632, he came to Paris at the age of eleven and had careers as a dancer, violinist, and music director for the king before he turned to opera in 1672. Louis XIV promptly took the Théâtre de l'Opéra and gave it, lock, stock, and barrel, to Lully. No one else in the history of opera, not even Wagner, ever held such power. The king's patent granted Lully a virtual monopoly on opera in France for the rest of his life.

Working with the poet Philippe Quinault, the designer-engineer Vigarani, and the resources of the grandest court in Europe, Lully ran the most magnificent show-business establishment of all time. Nothing was left out: there were arias, recitatives, and choruses, huge casts and big orchestras (including the largest string section in Europe, plus ample winds and percussion), extensive dances and ballets, magnificent scenery and costumes, and spectacular stage effects (storms, gods descending, a maritime festival, the siege of a fortress, and the fires of hell all appear in Lully's *Alceste*). Hollywood at its most "epic" was crude compared to the French opera of *le grand siècle*.

Lully's musical style derives from the Venetian opera of Monteverdi and Cavalli, which he adapted to the French language and taste. His works were genuine music-dramas: long before Gluck and Wagner, Lully created a total theater in which melody, recitative, poetry, stage action, dance, the visual arts, solo virtuosity, orchestral and choral effects, comedy, and tragedy are intertwined on a grand scale. For three-quarters of a century his operas reigned supreme, only to disappear finally in favor of the works of Rameau and Gluck. They have never come back. Only their reputation—a certain perfume of a distant, heroic time—remains. After his death Lully was violently attacked by the supporters of Italian music, and they succeeded in establishing an image of him as merely the composer of endless boring recitatives. But the reality—as we hear it on the new, complete Columbia recording of *Alceste*—turns out to

be something quite surprisingly different.

Alceste was one of the earliest, grandest, most successful, and longest-lived of Lully's operas. It was the only one that he based on Greek tragedy, and even then the plot was severely modified to suit the French Baroque taste. Its subject, a favorite of the French, is love in its various shapes and forms. The main plot goes like this: Alceste is about to marry Admetus when she is abducted by Lycornes. Admetus and his friend Alcides give chase and rescue her, but Admetus is mortally wounded. The god Apollo appears to announce that Admetus must leave this life unless someone else can be found to take his place in death. No one is willing except Alceste, who sacrifices herself. Alcides then boldly descends to the underworld, rescues Alceste, and—though he also loves her—restores her in the end to Admetus. Mixed in with this more or less serious plot is a comic subplot involving a young lady whose enthusiastic principle in love is fickleness.

*No one else in the
history of opera
ever held such power*

One's first surprise, given Lully's reputation, is the popular character of *Alceste's* libretto. Like Shakespeare, Lully and his librettists were not afraid to mix the learned and the contemporary, the formal and the emotional, the tragic and the comic, the courtly and the popular—and the mix is pleasing. Similarly, Lully's music blends the formal and the free, the declamatory and the melodic in a particularly satisfying way.

Of the opera's fall from grace, one can only suppose that the old court tradition seriously deteriorated after Lully's death and every-

thing began to seem terribly old-fashioned. The very continuity of the vocal lines, gliding so smoothly from recitative to heightened speech-song to a truly Baroque melodic flowering, must have contrasted sharply with the simplicity and clarity of the new Italian style, in which everything was arranged in neat, easy-to-grasp tunes. To make matters worse, French singing had declined in quality (some say it has never recovered), and performances had become encrusted with layers of fossilized tradition.

To recover Lully's original from under the grime of centuries was certainly no easy task, but it has been admirably accomplished by Jean-Claude Malgoire and an excellent cast. As is often the case in old vocal music, the men make a stronger impression than the women, particularly the two tenors—John Elwes, an Englishman, and Bruce Brewer, an American—and the versatile Dutch baritone Max von Egmond. The English soprano Felicity Palmer is effective in the (surprisingly small) title role, and the coquette Céphise is charmingly sung by Anne-Marie Rodde. The key element in the success of the recording is Malgoire's direction, for he has recaptured the exquisite flow of vocal and instrumental music with an unerring sense of tempo, phrase, and color. The results are impressive. Lully is not, as we thought, grand and cold. Quite the contrary: he is grand and warm.

—Eric Salzman

LULLY: *Alceste*. Renée Auphan (mezzo-soprano), Nymph of the Seine, Thétis, Diane, grieving woman; Anne-Marie Rodde (soprano), Gloire, Céphise; John Elwes (tenor) Lychas, Apollon, Alec-ton; Max von Egmond (baritone), Alcide, Eole; Marc Vento (bass), Straton; François Loup (bass), Licomède, Cléante, Charon; Pierre-Yves Le Maigat (baritone), Phérès, grieving man, Pluton; Felicity Palmer (soprano), Alceste; Bruce Brewer (tenor), Admète; others. La Grande Écurie et la Chambre du Roy, Jean-Claude Malgoire cond. COLUMBIA M3 34580 three discs \$20.98.

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not about the soloist. That's an unusual gesture for a concerto recording, but Carlos Kleiber's contribution here is certainly a major one. The performance is symphonically conceived and thoroughly integrated between soloist and orchestra from first note to last. It is on a very grand scale, and may strike some listeners as a little larger than life, but its integrity and sweep easily sustain the expansive proportions. My one disappointment is the reticent quality of the horn solo that opens the second movement, and even this is almost forgivable in view of the excellent playing by the winds in their exposed passages.

The annotation states that this is the "first time the solo score is played without the stylistic changes subsequently introduced by Vilém Kurz," but Rudolf Firkusny, in his

third recording of the concerto (with Walter Susskind conducting, in Vox QSVBX-5135, © CT-2145), also went back to Dvořák's original version. Angel's annotator goes to great lengths to find a connection between the performers and the Czech milieu, whereas a much happier point to be made about the concerto is its adoption at last into the repertoire of musicians who are *not* Czechs. That Firkusny (who has done more than anyone else to keep this work alive) and Susskind both grew up in Prague and studied with musicians who had known Dvořák doesn't hurt, of course, and if I were compelled to choose a single recording of the concerto, the greater intimacy and straightforwardness of their authoritative approach would appeal to me a little more than the more expansive, grander-

scaled one of Richter and Kleiber. Both recordings are quite good technically—the Vox a little crisper, the Angel a little warmer—and I would not willingly part with either. *R.F.*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

DVOŘÁK: *The Water Goblin, Op. 107; The Noonday Witch, Op. 108; Symphonic Variations, Op. 78.* Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra, Rafael Kubelik cond. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2530 712 \$8.98.

Performance: **Very dramatic**

Recording: **Very good**

With this disc Rafael Kubelik completes his traversal for Deutsche Grammophon of the four Dvořák symphonic poems based on folk ballads of Karel J. Erben, the others being *The Golden Spinning Wheel*, Op. 109, and *The Wood Dove*, Op. 110. Dvořák's mastery of his musical material for the symphonic poems, particularly in terms of thematic metamorphosis and harmonic coloring, was absolute. A singularly striking aspect of *The Noonday Witch* is the composer's use of speech rhythms and dissonance in a way that looks forward to the late works of Leoš Janáček.

Kubelik has the Bavarian Radio Orchestra performing in a manner reminiscent of the Czech Philharmonic in the palmy days of Václav Talich. His readings are extraordinarily dramatic, making the London Symphony recordings by the late István Kertész seem tame indeed in comparison. Dynamic and dramatic contrast also characterizes the Kubelik treatment of the colorful *Symphonic Variations*, composed nearly twenty years earlier than the symphonic poems. Whether one prefers the dance emphasis in Kubelik's reading or the marvelous flow of the 1969 Colin Davis performance with the London Symphony for Philips (for the moment out of print) is a matter of taste.

The DG sound has both richness and brilliance, though the deepish stereo perspective may offer just a shade less immediate detail than the Kertész London discs of the symphonic poems. But for *performance* of these works, Kubelik is tops. *D.H.*

FALLA: *The Three-Cornered Hat.* Teresa Berganza (mezzo-soprano); Boston Symphony Orchestra, Seiji Ozawa cond. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2530 823 \$8.98, © 3300 823 \$8.98.

Performance: **More brilliant than authentic**

Recording: **Orchestrally excellent**

Ozawa and the Bostonians have some hot competition in recordings of Falla's fascinating and witty ballet score about the ups and downs of young love and the discomfiture of middle-aged lust. Ansermet, whose 1962 London recording also has Teresa Berganza as vocal soloist, conducted the world première in 1919. In Angel's Frühbeck de Burgos and Everest's Enrique Jorda, we have Spanish conductors born and bred to the Falla idiom. And then there is the Columbia recording with the New York Philharmonic led by the formidable Pierre Boulez, who in his ballet recordings has displayed a striking feel for the theater along with remarkable musicianship.

I had only the Everest disc on hand for detailed comparison, but I remember the others, and I would sum up the Ozawa performance as long on orchestral virtuosity and somewhat

(Continued on page 146)

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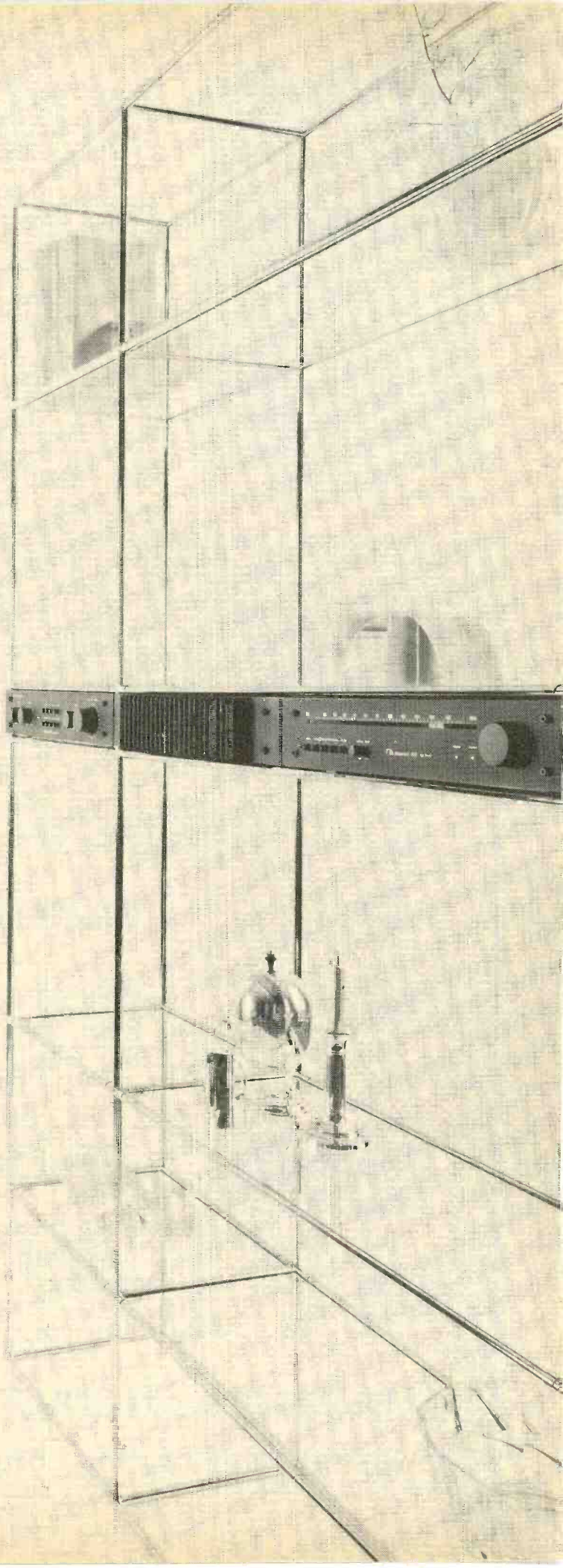
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JINDŘICH FELD
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short on authenticity of feeling. The opening shouts of "Olé!" and the handclapping that set the atmosphere come off rather tamely, as does Mme. Berganza's following solo. The first dance of the miller and his wife is decidedly fast for my taste, the later *fandango* for the miller's wife alone lacks the nuances of phrasing specifically called for by Falla in his score, the *seguidilla* for the neighbors' festivities is rather on the languid side—and so on.

So, while the orchestral playing is superb and the recording is up to the best Deutsche

Grammophon standard, if I were to choose a recording of *The Three-Cornered Hat* it would be—on the basis of the best combination of sound, vitality of performance, and style—Frühbeck de Burgos' version by a very narrow margin over Boulez. *D.H.*

FELD: Symphony No. 1. Czech Philharmonic Orchestra, Antonio de Almeida cond. **Flute Concerto.** Jean-Pierre Rampal (flute); Czech Philharmonic Orchestra, Vaclav Jiracek cond. SERENUS SRS 12074 \$6.98.

Performance: **Fine**
Recording: **Symphony good, concerto suspect**

This record is my first exposure to the music of Jindřich Feld (born 1925), a Czechoslovak composer noted in Baker's *Biographical Dictionary of Musicians* for his "chamber music in a neo-Baroque manner." On the evidence offered here, he is a brilliant craftsman, and imaginative too, though not particularly original. Throughout his First Symphony (1970) one is constantly imagining oneself in the domain of some other composer or work, the Shostakovich First Symphony intruding with special prominence among echoes of Bartók, Honegger, Stravinsky, Ravel, and others. It is nevertheless (or perhaps *because* of these elements) a most attractive work—taut, balletic, a symphony in name only whose five movements (Prologue, Scherzo, Passacaglia, Interludio, Epilogue) have a dramatic thrust suggesting incidental music for a play. Antonio de Almeida, who conducted the première in 1972, makes a strong case for the work, and the sound is as fine as the performance.

Jean-Pierre Rampal has spoken with enthusiasm of Feld's Flute Concerto of 1954, and it is likely that this recording dates from the time he played the première. It sounds like artificial stereo to me, though it is not so labeled, but it is well managed for all that, with ample smoothness and detail. Actually, the work is not given in its entirety; this extraordinary note appears on the jacket:

"We have included only the first and third movement [sic] of the work because 1.) the total length of the work would demand more record space than Serenus can provide; 2.) the movement is so reminiscent of the symphony of another great earlier composer that, as capably as it is written, it might be subject to critical misinterpretation, something we believe Feld does not deserve; and 3.) the work has enough slow, moving [sic] parts in the two present movements that a slow movement might actually seem redundant; plus the fact that parts of the second movement are repeated in the third."

Again, though, it is a really attractive work, with no dead weight (at least in the two longish movements offered here), but with an abundance of echoes and "reminiscences." The writing for the flute is sinuous and silky, and it is effectively contrasted with the generally driving orchestral material in the first movement (where the spirit of Honegger seems ever-present) and the more cantabile *tuttis* and greater rhythmic and color variety in the third (where Poulenc seems to peep through). The flute has hardly any rests and is called upon for the sort of endurance and big gestures one hardly associates with the instrument—no wonder Rampal loves the work!

(Continued on page 150)

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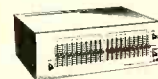
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PERLMAN

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Kreisleriana

THE simultaneous appearance of three generous helpings of "Kreisleriana" (a fourth, an Elman reissue, is pending from Vanguard) points up once again the enduring appeal of Fritz Kreisler's violin miniatures, virtuoso pieces that dazzle while they delight. Unlike Paganini, Kreisler never sets up a bravura challenge that cannot be met without sacrificing beautiful sound. No one ever wrote for the instrument more lovingly.

It is part of the virtuosic challenge of the Kreisler repertoire that the pieces be performed with seeming effortlessness—the debonair charm of Kreisler's own recordings shows the way. This is easier said than done, for the violin writing harbors treacherous reefs under its smooth surface. Mendelssohn's *May Breezes* is a good case in point. Its basic songfulness would seem to make the arranger's lot relatively easy, but Kreisler wrote virtually the entire piece for the violin's D and G strings. To achieve the required cello-like sonorities, the fiddler must constantly play in the highest and most exposed positions—and sound effortless, of course.

Itzhak Perlman in his second Kreisler album manages all this and more with stunning ease. He plays not only elegantly but also in the Kreisler spirit of romantic abandon, caressing his phrases and fearlessly using Kreisler's brand of old-fashioned portamento. But his innate taste allows for no exaggerations: no *jondo* emotionalism in Albéniz, no bearing down on the G string in Mendelssohn, not even an excess of Viennese schmaltz. Technically, he could not be more impressive, right down to the treacherous *Devil's Trill* cadenza.

Eugene Fodor has a flashier style. His technique may be as formidable as Perlman's, but he does not round off his phrases with the latter's elegance and caressing touch (a rather over-assertive *Old Refrain* here is a good case in point). There is plenty of dazzle and even sweetness of tone, but the spiritual identification with the Kreisler world is missing.

That elusive quality is decidedly present in the playing of Beverly Somach, the erstwhile prodigy who with her "Homage to Fritz Kreisler" returns to concertizing after several years' absence. I enjoy the affecting lyricism

she brings to the music, and she meets the technical challenges too, but not quite with the triumphant ease of her two colleagues.

There are surprisingly few duplications among the three discs (though Perlman's *first* Kreisler album, Angel S-37171, duplicates many of Fodor's choices). The accompaniments are good in all three collections, and all are well engineered, though Angel's exemplary balance gives the Perlman recording a slight edge.

—George Jellinek

ITZHAK PERLMAN PLAYS FRITZ KREISLER, ALBUM 2. Tartini/Kreisler: *Sonata in G Minor* ("The Devil's Trill"); Poldini/Kreisler: *Dancing Doll*. Wieniawski/Kreisler: *Caprice in A Minor*. Trad. (arr. Kreisler): *Londonderry Air*. Mozart/Kreisler: *Rondo from the "Haffner" Serenade*. Corelli/Kreisler: *Sarabande and Allegretto*. Albéniz/Kreisler: *Malagueña*. Heuberger/Kreisler: *Midnight Bells*. Brahms/Kreisler: *Hungarian Dance in F Minor*. Mendelssohn/Kreisler: *Song Without Words, Op. 62, No. 1* ("May Breezes"). Itzhak Perlman (violin); Samuel Sanders (piano). ANGEL □ S-37254 \$7.98.

EUGENE FODOR PLAYS FRITZ KREISLER. Kreisler: *Praeludium and Allegro* (in the Style of Pugnani); *Sicilienne and Rigaudon* (in the Style of Francoeur); *Menuet* (in the Style of Porpora); *La Chasse* (in the Style of Cartier); *Recitativo and Scherzo*; *The Old Refrain*; *Caprice Viennois*; *Tambourin Chinois*; *Schön Rosmarin*; *Liebesfreud*; *Liebesleid*; *La Gitana*. Eugene Fodor (violin); Stephen Swedish (piano). RCA ARL1-2365 \$7.98.

BEVERLY SOMACH: Homage to Fritz Kreisler. Tartini/Kreisler: *Sonata in G Minor* ("The Devil's Trill"); *Variations on a Theme of Corelli*. Gluck/Kreisler: *Melodie from Orfeo ed Eurydice*. Mendelssohn/Kreisler: *Song Without Words, Op. 62, No. 1* ("May Breezes"). Kreisler: *Praeludium and Allegro* (in the Style of Pugnani); *Andantino* (in the Style of Padre Martini); *Liebesfreud*; *Liebesleid*. Beverly Somach (violin); Fritz Jahoda (piano). MUSICAL HERITAGE SOCIETY MHS 3612 \$4.95 (plus \$1.25 handling charge from Musical Heritage Society, 14 Park Road, Tinton Falls, N.J. 07724).

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Now I'm really curious about that omitted slow movement, and (bearing in mind that one man's "eclectic" is another's "derivative") I'd like to hear more of Feld's music—which Serenus will be offering, apparently, since this disc is labeled "Volume 1." R.F.

FOOTE: Sonata in G Minor for Piano and Violin, Op. 20 (see BEACH)

GOUNOD: Faust. Montserrat Caballé (soprano), Marguerite; Giacomo Aragall (tenor), Faust; Paul Plishka (bass), Méphistophélès; Philippe Huttenlocher (baritone), Valentin; Anita Terzian (mezzo-soprano), Siebel; Jocelyne Taillon (mezzo-soprano), Marthe; Jean Brun (baritone), Wagner. Chorus of the Rhine Opera; Strasbourg Philharmonic Orchestra,

Alain Lombard cond. RCA FRL4-2493 four discs \$31.98.

Performance: **Vocally compelling**
Recording: **Very good**

In "Essentials of an Opera Library" (October 1977 STEREO REVIEW), George Jellinek said that this new *Faust* (he had heard the advance pressings) would not replace the old De los Angeles/Gedda/Christoff/Cluytens Angel recording as his favorite. Well, I would agree, but there are more than a few things to be said for the new RCA recording nevertheless. Montserrat Caballé's Marguerite is special: sweet, gentle, exquisite. There's no passion, but then there's not much real depth in the role to start with. Her portrayal is close to a certain kind of perfection; almost the only jar-

ring note comes at the very end, when Marguerite suddenly and astonishingly throws Faust out so she can be suitably saved. Nothing in Caballé's performance prepares us for this sudden transformation of Marguerite from virgin to avenging angel.

Paul Plishka is a classic Méphistophélès with a dark, firm bass. Giacomo Aragall, a big, new talent, has a magnificent tenor voice that is a bit unpolished musically (compared with Gedda's, at any rate) but is certainly compelling. The weakness of the cast is the Siebel; Anita Terzian is not on a level vocally with the rest.

The orchestral forces are not first-rate, and Alain Lombard is not a great genius of the podium, but these faint damns are not far from praise. Lombard is a fluent and highly competent practitioner, and he gets highly competent results out of the Strasbourg musicians. This is, after all, Gounod. *Faust* is a work with a strong opening and much striking and beautiful music to follow. But there is also a steady and inexorable slide into sentiment, and Lombard's own enthusiasm seems to rise and decline on that same curve. He is a supple, sure-handed, but somewhat slippery craftsman who threads his way through Gounod's pious sexiness (or is it sexy piety?) with ease, but never lifts us up beyond it. E.S.

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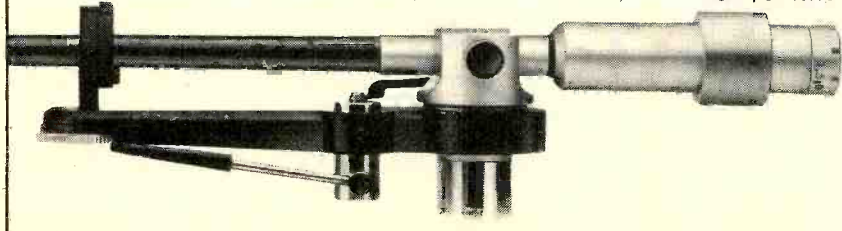
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RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

GRIFFES: Piano Sonata; Three Tone-Pictures, Op. 5. RAVEL: Le Tombeau de Couperin. Susan Starr (piano). ORION ORS 77270 \$7.98.

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

Susan Starr, trained at the Curtis Institute in Philadelphia, is yet another of the crop of younger-generation pianists to be reckoned with—and not just on the basis of virtuoso equipment but of innate musicality as well. I especially enjoyed Starr's handling of the Ravel masterpiece, inasmuch as she gives its poetic essence fully as much attention as its neo-Classical aspects. The music gains enormously thereby. And if it's sheer brilliance you're after, her playing of the final toccata will stand up against any other performance available on discs.

But the Griffes side of the disc gives me even more pleasure. I have been a strong partisan of the fierce and power-packed sonata ever since I heard Harrison Potter play and record the piece back in the 1930's. There was a spate of early LP recordings of the work in the 1950's, but no stereo version appeared until 1976, when the enterprising British pianist Clive Lythgoe recorded it for Philips as something of a Bicentennial tribute. Miss Starr's performance of the sonata is dynamic and brilliant, and an added attraction of her disc is the first stereo recording of the Op. 5 *Tone-Pictures*—*The Lake at Evening, The Vale of Dreams, and The Night Winds*—in their original piano version (the woodwind-piano-harp arrangement was issued in 1976 by New World Records). In contrast to the Scriabin-influenced style of the sonata, the *Tone-Pictures* are delicate and masterly impressionist essays. Miss Starr's playing is for me beyond criticism throughout, and the recording quality is altogether first-rate. D.H.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

HANDEL: Sonatas for Oboe and Continuo in G Minor, Op. 1, No. 6, and in C Minor, Op. 1,

No. 8; Trio Sonatas for Two Oboes and Continuo No. 2, in D Minor, and No. 3, in E-flat Major. Ronald Roseman and Virginia Brewer (oboes); Donald MacCourt (bassoon); Timothy Eddy (cello); Edward Brewer (harpsichord). NONESUCH H-71339 \$3.96.

Performance: **Sensual**
Recording: **Clear**

Ronald Roseman brings to these sonatas of the youthful Handel the kind of Italianate exuberance that went into their composition. Treating them more as sketches for controlled improvisation than as specific notations for exact readings, Roseman spins garland after garland of sensuously ornate phrases, especially in the slow movements. Performed in a seamless legato with a rich tone, the music emerges with the effect of inspired rhapsody. Although the amount of ornamentation is necessarily curtailed in the trio sonatas, Virginia Brewer is an excellent foil and expertly tosses back whatever challenges come her way.

The balance of the ensemble is excellent, and the use of a cello continuo for the solo sonatas and a bassoon for the trio sonatas is an admirable notion. Edward Brewer's harpsichord realizations are beautifully wrought and discreetly performed, the hallmark of good continuo playing. Although the trio sonata is to Baroque chamber music what the string quartet is to Classical chamber music, there are very few really good recordings derived from this vast and rich repertoire. This disc is a valuable addition to the catalog. **S.L.**

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

JANÁČEK: *Katya Kabanová*. Naděžda Kniplová (mezzo-soprano), Marfa Kabanová; Vladimír Krejčík (tenor), Tichon; Elisabeth Söderström (soprano), Katya Kabanová; Dalibor Jedlička (bass), Dikoj; Petr Dvorský (tenor), Boris; Libuše Márová (soprano), Varvara; Zdeněk Švhlá (tenor), Vána; others. Vienna State Opera Chorus; Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, Charles Mackerras cond. LONDON OSA 12109 two discs \$15.96, ©5-12109 \$15.96.

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

By the time Leoš Janáček began *Katya Kabanová*, his sixth opera, in 1917, his style was fully formed; it is characterized by brief, fragmentary vocal melodies growing out of speech patterns, a combination of parlando devices and folkloric elements, and a frequent use of motivic reiteration. The sparse orchestration occasionally takes on an unexpected brilliance, which, combined with biting and slashing sonorities, can result in unforgettably striking effects. The curious thing about Janáček is that what may initially seem like a primitive device will often turn out to be cunningly sophisticated.

Katya Kabanová is based on Alexander Ostrovsky's play *The Storm*. (Tchaikovsky, who often turned to Ostrovsky's writings for inspiration, had written a programmatic concert overture on the very same subject.) The plot: caught in an unhappy marriage and sadistically hounded by an evil mother-in-law, Katya seeks solace in a love affair, but she cannot live with her guilt and destroys herself.

Unquestionably, this makes for powerful theater despite the highly condensed and not very skillful libretto (Janáček's own). The river Volga and the gathering storm are used with great tone-painting art to provide a frame for

the catastrophe. There is a sense of inevitability to the drama, and though the libretto does not allow for enough character development, the conflicts are real and full of impact.

In this performance the impassioned conducting of Charles Mackerras (pupil of the great Václav Talich and an authority on this music) must be singled out for special praise. He communicates the tenderness as well as the power of Janáček's quirky writing with a sure hand, drawing magnificent sounds from the Vienna Philharmonic. In the title role, Elisabeth Söderström, that exceptional singing actress, seizes our sympathy with Katya's yearning first-act aria and never lets go. Moreover, as the only non-Slav among the principals, she has mastered the Czech sounds remarkably well.

The other members of the cast appear thoroughly at home with the idiom. They form a very strong ensemble with certain standouts: Naděžda Kniplová as the monstrous mother-in-law is formidable yet laudably short of overdrawing the part, Petr Dvorský is convincing as the decent and not too bright lover caught in the triangle, and Dalibor Jedlička is colorful and sonorous as Boris' uncle.

Like all of Janáček's operas, *Katya Kabanová* cannot be related to any Italian, French, or German models. Its closest frame of reference is the same composer's earlier *Jenufa*. Of the two I find *Katya Kabanová* more successful. It may not instantly conquer you, but it will grow on you. **G.J.**

(Continued overleaf)

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CANNOT say that the new London recording of Verdi's *Il Trovatore* conducted by Richard Bonyngé lives up to the promise of its blockbuster cast—it includes not only Joan Sutherland but also Luciano Pavarotti, Marilyn Horne, Nicolai Ghiaurov, and Norma Burrowes. And yet, like the flawed but irresistible opera itself, it will undoubtedly have many partisans despite some few justifiable critical reservations.

Things begin—disappointingly—with a lifelessly conducted first scene in which Nicolai Ghiaurov sings the part of Ferrando well enough but not with the commanding authority he has displayed on past occasions (when, for moments, he could make us believe we were listening to operas named *Ramfis* or *Timur*). Bonyngé has some fine moments later, such as the “*Mal reggendo*” duet and the difficult ensemble at the end of Act II, which he holds together admirably. But his overall leadership is inconsistent: the Anvil Chorus starts out too fast and settles into an effective pace only in the repetition, the *Miserere* is too languid, and the final scene, though somewhat better, still lacks the right urgency.

I find Luciano Pavarotti's Manrico virtually flawless. Except for “*Di quella pira*,” this is really a lyric role, and from the very opening off-stage serenade Pavarotti imparts the proper melancholy coloration to his music. In all his big moments, and there are many, he sings meltingly, with elegantly turned phrases. The single martial outburst is also delivered in a manner that silences criticism; let us hope that such vocal escapades do not damage the tenor's invaluable equipment.

Joan Sutherland's Leonora is more debatable. It is a pleasure to hear the part sung with note-perfect accuracy, neatly executed trills, and no compromise whatever in the florid requirements. Temperamentally, though, Sutherland cannot manage the transition from the aloof and dignified Leonora of the early scenes to the courageous and determined woman of Act IV. This, combined with her improved but still indistinct pronunciation, creates merely admirable instances of vocal display where involved dramatic singing is called for. But that vocal display is consist-

ently beautiful in tone, a quality that simply cannot be dismissed.

If Verdi intended to make Azucena the central character in this opera, he must have had a mezzo with Marilyn Horne's extraordinary gifts in mind. She offers singing of all-out intensity and discriminating intelligence: her reverie-like approach to “*Stride la vampa*” and “*Ai nostri monti*” is not only right but also beautifully brought off. At *forte* levels, however, her vibrato sometimes takes the tone off the indicated pitch, to the detriment of an otherwise vital portrayal. Ingvar Wixell, a splendidly resonant, vigorous, and stylistically assured Verdi baritone, also lacks the smooth flow of consistently centered tone that would make his Count di Luna truly distinguished. Norma Burrowes presents an exceptionally good Ines, the other comprimarios are adequate, and, except for occasional imprecisions, the chorus does its work well.

This is the most complete *Il Trovatore* on records. The ballet sequence Verdi inserted for the opera's 1857 Paris première is dramatically irrelevant and disproportionately long, but in its own terms it is very good, and Bonyngé conducts it well. There are also various restored cuts and usually omitted second verses to which Sutherland, for her part, adds tasteful embellishments. (The appropriateness of the latter is debatable but certainly defensible. It would be interesting to read Bonyngé's thoughts on the matter.)

The engineering is especially praiseworthy for its clear reproduction of the vocal ensembles. I recommend this set not as the “best” *Trovatore* but, in the absence of a *uniformly* superior stereo version, one of the most valid alternatives.

—George Jellinek

VERDI: *Il Trovatore*. Luciano Pavarotti (tenor), Manrico; Joan Sutherland (soprano), Leonora; Marilyn Horne (mezzo-soprano), Azucena; Ingvar Wixell (baritone), Count di Luna; Nicolai Ghiaurov (bass), Ferrando; Norma Burrowes (soprano), Ines; Graham Clark (tenor), Ruiz; others. London Opera Chorus; National Philharmonic Orchestra, Richard Bonyngé cond. LONDON OSA 13124 three discs \$23.94.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

KALINNIKOV: *Symphony No. 1, in G Minor*. State Academic Orchestra, Yevgeny Svetlanov cond. COLUMBIA/MELODIYA M 34523 \$7.98.

Performance: **Enchanting**

Recording: **All right**

Svetlanov came surprisingly close to the standard set by Sir Thomas Beecham in his recent recording of one of Beecham's specialties, the Balakirev *Symphony No. 1* (Melodiya/Angel SR-40272), and this enchanting realization of the Kalinnikov First strikes me as the finest thing he has done on records so far. There is a firm but subtle hand in control here, encouraging the various wind soloists in particular to shape phrases freely and alluringly and infusing the proceedings with an altogether captivating air of spontaneity. The Borodin second theme in the first movement has a fine spring to it, and the andante, with the tasteful caressing of Kalinnikov's imaginative writing for harp, solo oboe, English horn, and clarinet (in that sequence), is sheer poetry. But the entire performance may be so described. The final movement is taken at a lick that will strike some listeners as excessively fast for the *allegro moderato* marking, but it works beautifully, generating a sweeping excitement that is ever so much more winning than the deliberately paced monumentalism usually visited on this dazzling piece. The recording could be richer, and the orchestra (probably the same one usually billed as the USSR Symphony Orchestra) shows some rough spots, but the shortcomings are easily overlooked amid the overall persuasiveness of the performance—which stands up splendidly in repeated hearings.

R.F.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

LISZT: *Piano Sonata in B Minor; Mephisto Waltz; Transcendental Etudes No. 5 (“Feux Follets”) and No. 12 (“Chasse-neige”).* Janina Fialkowska (piano). RCA FRL1-0142 \$7.98.

Performance: **Remarkable**

Recording: **Good**

On this French-recorded debut disc we have a brilliantly gifted young artist (with her share of competition laurels, too) whose musicality fully matches her seemingly limitless technical brilliance. Her *Mephisto Waltz* and *Chasse-neige* are fine performances indeed, but it is the gigantic B Minor Sonata that provides pretty much the ultimate test of virtuosity, endurance, and musicality. I can well understand the enthusiasm of Artur Schnabel for Miss Fialkowska's performance of this work in the 1974 Israel competition bearing his name. Without question, the most impressive aspect of her reading is an unerring sense of proportion, a feeling for the larger drama, that allows her to achieve a wonderfully satisfying sense of climax in the famous *grandioso* chorale-like episode. And yet she slights no detail of ornamentation and passagework. Everything falls into place musically and dramatically from beginning to end of this performance, which for me takes its place among the half-dozen or so really distinguished interpretations currently in the catalog. To hear Liszt with the poetry as well as the glitter is a fairly uncommon experience. Here is one disc that truly fills the bill. The recorded sound is full-bodied and brilliant, if now and then just a mite confined.

D.H.

“I find Pavarotti's Manrico virtually flawless. . . .”

MOLIQUE: *Concerto in B Minor for Flute and Orchestra, Op. 69.* **ROMBERG:** *Concerto in B Minor for Flute and Orchestra, Op. 30.* John Wion (flute); orchestra, Arthur Bloom cond. MUSICAL HERITAGE SOCIETY MHS 3551 \$4.95 (plus \$1.25 handling charge from Musical Heritage Society, Inc., 14 Park Road, Tinton Falls, N.J. 07724).

Performance: **Scruffy**
Recording: **Thin**

These two mid-nineteenth-century flute concertos are musically akin to the Hummel piano concertos and the Spohr clarinet concertos. Their gesture is pompous and serious, their form overblown, and their idiom padded with endless figuration and embroidery. But despite their old-fashionedness, they offer a fine flutist great moments of virtuosic revelry.

John Wion is a good flutist who employs a seamless legato appropriate to the style and, for the most part, gets around easily. There are, however, times when his pitch goes awry or his breath runs out and rhythmic smoothness vanishes in the interest of simply getting through long and difficult passages.

The orchestral sound is far thinner than that required in music of this bombastic period, and I wonder if this obvious pick-up group had sufficient rehearsals to give a confident reading and full support. Nonetheless, the concertos make a welcome addition to the early Romantic recorded repertoire, and John Wion deserves some credit for digging them up and having the patience to learn them.

S.L.

MOORE: *The Pageant of P. T. Barnum* (see CARPENTER)

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

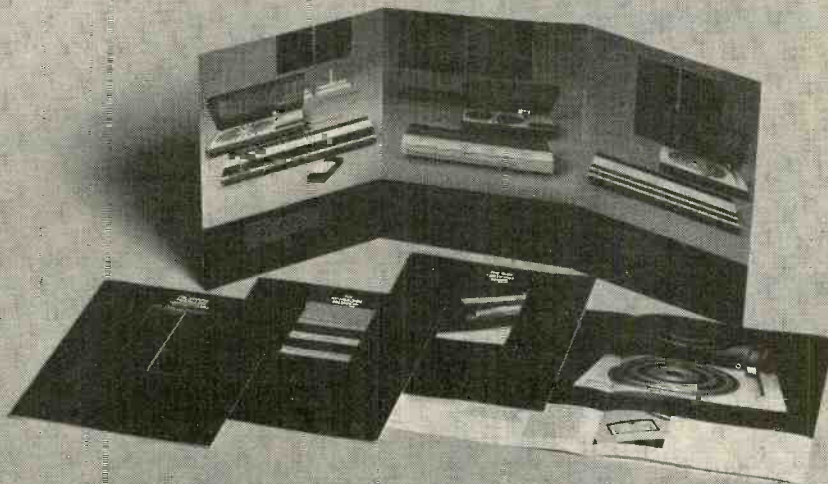
MOZART: *Piano Concerto No. 14, in E-flat Major (K. 449); Piano Concerto No. 23, in A Major (K. 488).* Ivan Moravec (piano); Czech Chamber Orchestra, Josef Vlach cond. SUPRAPHON 1 10 1768 \$7.98 (from Qualiton Records Ltd., 65-37 Austin Street, Rego Park, N.Y. 11374).

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

The stunning recording Moravec and Vlach made of the Concerto No. 25 with the Czech Philharmonic (Vanguard SU-11, reviewed here in February 1976) encouraged me to hope for more Mozart from the same team, and this pair of performances is every bit as distinguished as that earlier one. The K. 449 concerto lends itself especially well to the chamber-music approach it receives here—exquisitely balanced, marvelously integrated, giving one the feeling that Moravec and every member of the orchestra are actually listening to each other and playing as beautifully as they can for each other's pleasure. Moravec and Vlach take the adagio of K. 488 very slowly indeed; it is by no means heavy or thickened, though, but is tempered by the same aristocratic restraint as the arias of the Countess in *Figaro*, to whose music this concerto, its slow movement in particular, is so intimately related. The outer movements, too, are somewhat restrained, but never at the expense of their innate vitality. Both of the Serkins have given us similarly distinguished (and more imaginatively coupled) versions of K. 449, and Brendel and Pollini are equally persuasive in K. 488. But those to whom this particular coupling appeals, or whose en-

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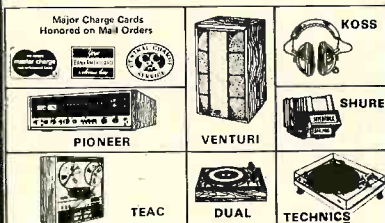
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thusiasm for exceptional Mozart playing is not dimmed by the prospect of a duplication or two, may regard purchase of this well-recorded disc as one of the safest investments they are likely to make. **R.F.**

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

MOZART: Violin Concerto No. 3, in G Major (K. 216); Violin Concerto No. 5, in A Major (K. 219, "Turkish"). José Luis Garcia (violin); English Chamber Orchestra, José Luis Garcia cond. HNH 4030 \$7.98 (from HNH Distributors, Ltd., P.O. Box 222, Evanston, Ill. 60204).

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

These two Mozart violin concertos have had more than their share of outstanding recorded performances. But José Luis Garcia, long associated with the English Chamber Orchestra, especially in Baroque repertoire, doubles as soloist and conductor and comes up here with as fine a realization of these delectable works as I have heard anywhere. His tone has sweetness and warmth without ever becoming cloying, and it is quite clear throughout the orchestral tuttis and ritornellos that conductorially he can keep things moving in an effortless ebb and flow. Especially in the slow movements, he melds the solo and orchestral dialogue into a truly organic whole. Superb recorded sound and noiseless playing surfaces add to a production that gives unalloyed pleasure from start to finish. **D.H.**

NELSON: Savannah River Holiday (see **CAR- PENTER**)

PETROV: Songs of Our Days, Symphonic Cycle; Poem for Strings, Organ, Four Trumpets, and Percussion. Leningrad Philharmonic, Arvid Yansons cond. COLUMBIA/MELODIYA M 34526 \$7.98.

Performance: **Heavy going**
 Recording: **Very good**

Andrei Petrov, born in Leningrad in 1930, is one of the younger composers in the Soviet Union seeking recognition in the face of the dominance of the modern big six: Prokofiev, Shostakovich, Khachaturian, Kabalevsky, Miaskovsky, and Glière. In 1968, Petrov wrote a letter to a Soviet newspaper suggesting that it was time some attention was paid to works by younger men. Well, this Soviet recording introduces us to Petrov's own work. He is a skilled orchestrator and an unabashed melodist and colorist deeply influenced by the work of the generation he is hoping to supplant in the concert hall, but there is something essentially banal and mechanical in the musical episodes that make up *Songs of Our Days*—though the charm of the pipings and the toy march in the section called "Childhood" indicates what he might achieve in an unpretentious way if he were to take himself less seriously. Yet there is real strength and power in the Poem for Strings, Organ, Four Trumpets, and Percussion dedicated "to the memory of those who died during the blockade of Leningrad." This is restless, belligerent music of impressive formal dimensions, and it makes me think that Petrov might yet be a worthy heir to Shostakovich himself—who, however, lived to outgrow this type of rhetoric in the subtler scores of his later years. Perhaps it is not too late for Petrov, not yet fifty, to outgrow it as well. The perform-

ances by the Leningrad Philharmonic under Arvid Yansons are hard-driving and heavy-handed, but given the leaden weightiness of these scores it is hard to imagine how they could have been otherwise. **P.K.**

PUCCINI: Gianni Schicchi (see Best of the Month, page 94)

PURCELL: Funeral Music for Queen Mary. Anthems: Hear My Prayer, O Lord; Remember Not, Lord, Our Offences; Rejoice in the Lord Alway; My Beloved Spake; Blessed Are They That Fear the Lord. Choir of King's College, Cambridge; Philip Jones Brass Ensemble; Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields, Philip Ledger cond. ANGEL □ S-37282 \$7.98.

Performance: **Churchy**
 Recording: **Resonant**

If the first side of this album plunges you into a fit of depression with its unmitigated gloom,



HENRY PURCELL
Joy in the choir stall

the second side will return you to a normal state of cheerfulness with its joyous verse anthems that so pleased the restored monarch Charles II. As one expects from the Choir of King's College, the choral sound is clear, but it is rather on the subdued side. Though the blend is particularly rewarding in the homophonic passages, the sound loses its richness in many of the contrapuntally conceived sections. In an effort to bring out various points of imitation and interesting individual lines, Ledger allows the sound to fall apart and become scruffy at times. The solo work by the countertenor, tenor, and bass is fine, but the various boy sopranos seem inadequate.

Perhaps the most frustrating aspect of this performance is the churchy approach to the music. Purcell was a full-blooded, lusty composer equally at home in chamber, church, or theater. He used much the same style for each, underscoring the meaning of the words with his music. Joy is joy whether it is in the choir stall or on the boards, and it must not be played down just because the text is biblical; Solomon's amorous expressions are just as sensuous as any uttered by rakes and shepherds. The King's College Choir seems to forget this, and as a result Purcell's passionate musical language suffers from unnatural restraint and understatement. **S.L.**

RAVEL: *Le Tombeau de Couperin* (see GRIFFES)

RIETI: *Conundrum, Ballet Suite*. Harkness Ballet Orchestra, Jorge Mester cond. *Sestetto pro Gemini*. Gemini Ensemble. *Second Avenue Waltzes*. Elda Beretta, Maria Madini-Moretti (pianos). SERENUS SRS 12073 \$6.98.

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

It brought me up short to see "The Music of Vittorio Rieti, Vol. VI," printed across the top of the jacket, but this is indeed the sixth generously filled disc of Rieti's works in various forms to be offered by Serenus in the last few years. The three works here are as ingratiating and solidly wrought as the better-known Harpsichord Partita (Sylvia Marlowe's remake of this is now preserved on CRI 312SD, together with the Harpsichord Concerto). Gold and Fizzdale's recording of the *Second Avenue Waltzes* (1941) on an early Columbia LP (ML 2147) has become a collector's item, so this new recording of the work, delightfully played by two Italian pianists, is especially welcome. The *Sestetto pro Gemini* (for flute, oboe, two violins doubling viola, one cello, and piano) was written only a few years ago for a Dutch chamber group whose personnel includes two sets of twins from the same family; of its four brief movements, the vivacious second and lyrical third are especially intriguing, but all four are graced with real tunes and lovely, fresh colors. These would seem to be the most prominent qualities of Rieti's music, as they are again in the *Conundrum* ballet suite of 1964, whose dramatic episodes and propulsive momentum seem to contradict the information that it was composed without a specific scenario. All three performances are fluent, involved, and of a quality to delight any composer's heart, and the recording itself is quite good. Altogether a handsome and enjoyable package.

R.F.

ROMBERG: *Concerto in B Minor for Flute and Orchestra, Op. 30* (see MOLIQUÉ)

SCHUBERT: *Lieder* (see Collections—Ian Partridge)

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

R. STRAUSS: *Don Juan, Op. 20; Macbeth, Op. 23*. Dresden State Orchestra, Rudolf Kempe cond. SERAPHIM □ S-60288 \$4.98.

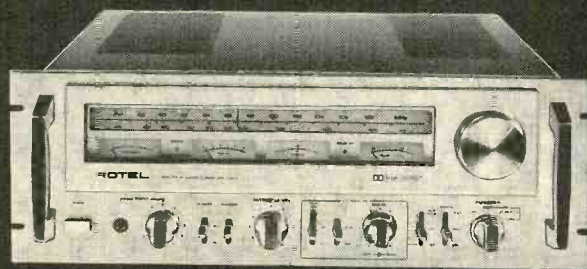
Performance: **Splendid**
Recording: **Vivid**

This would appear to be the first recording of *Macbeth* since Henry Swoboda's 1950 version for Westminster, which means it is only the second ever; it is curious that the work could have been neglected for so long, but then Strauss himself seems not to have bothered with it much either in conducting his music. It is an early work, as the opus number indicates, antedating *Don Juan* by a year in its original form, and even the revision made two years later shows more Lisztian characteristics than one finds in Strauss' other tone poems. Both historically and for its own worth, it is too valuable a piece to be abandoned, and it could not be in better hands than it is here. The Dresden orchestra, Strauss' own favorite, is justifiably proud of its unique tradition in performing his music, and Kempe too was more closely associated with the works of

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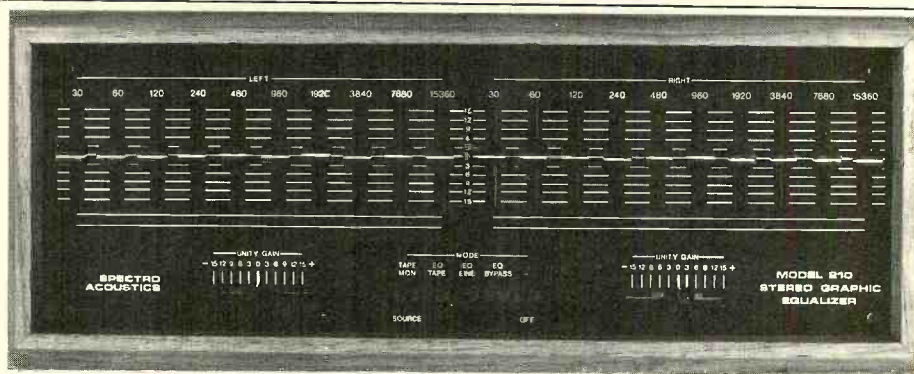
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Strauss than with those of any other composer. His magnificent cycle of all Strauss' orchestral works, from which these two splendid performances are drawn, is surely his finest memorial, and Angel is more than generous in making portions of it available on the low-price Seraphim label. Both sides shine with authority, conviction, and commitment, and the sound has a burnished glow—more mellow than brilliant, but agreeably rich and well defined. In view of the uniqueness of the coupling, this *Don Juan* might head the list of the versions now available. R.F.

TCHAIKOVSKY: Piano Music. Humoresque, Op. 10, No. 2; By the Hearth, Op. 37a, No. 1; Impromptu, Op. 72, No. 1; Valse, Op. 40, No. 8; Nocturne, Op. 19, No. 4; Chanson Triste,

Op. 40, No. 2; Christmas, Op. 37a, No. 12; In the Troika, Op. 37a, No. 11; Barcarolle, Op. 37a, No. 6; Dumka, Op. 59; Russian Dance, Op. 40, No. 10; Scherzo, Op. 40, No. 11; Song Without Words, Op. 2, No. 3; Harvest, Op. 37a, No. 8; Song of the Lark, Op. 37a, No. 3. Danielle Laval (piano). SERAPHIM S-60250 \$4.98.

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

There was a big demand for do-it-yourself piano music in the nineteenth century, and Tchaikovsky composed quite assiduously and successfully for this market. His own style and inclinations made him the perfect master of the lyrical small form. His innumerable salon and genre piano pieces combine the poet-

ic/meditative style of the early Romantics with the picturesque genre piece of the late nineteenth century. Silent-film pianists ripped off this music and almost killed it; no one has taken it seriously for a very long time.

Nevertheless, its appeal can be as strong as ever; a comeback was inevitable. Danielle Laval, a young French pianist, plays this music without affectation and with real charm. She is not brilliant or flashy, but there is warmth and just the right touch of sentiment in her performance. Not only is this disc engaging to listen to but it should send those home pianists still left among us rushing back to the keyboard. Tchaikovsky scores in hand. E.S.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

VIVALDI: Flute Concertos, Op. 10, Nos. 1-6. Stephen Preston (flute); Academy of Ancient Music. L'OISEAU-LYRE DSLO 519 \$7.98.

Performance: **Suave**
Recording: **Smooth**

In his ingenious liner notes for this record, Christopher Hogwood argues that these concertos were designed to be played as chamber music, with one instrument per part. And so they are performed here with excellent results. Moreover, these performers play original instruments and obviously feel at home with them. Vivaldi knew exactly how to get the effects he wanted with the instruments he had. His music, therefore, is best presented by using the instruments he had. Only the original instruments can produce the flat, eerie sound that was obviously what he wanted in the slow movement of the Second Concerto (*La Notte*) or the bird calls of the Third Concerto (*Il Gardinello*). But all is not imitative effect here. There is a great deal of art involved in both composition and performance, and, while the music is admittedly lightweight Vivaldi, the Academy of Ancient Music elevates it to the level of edifying amusement. S.L.

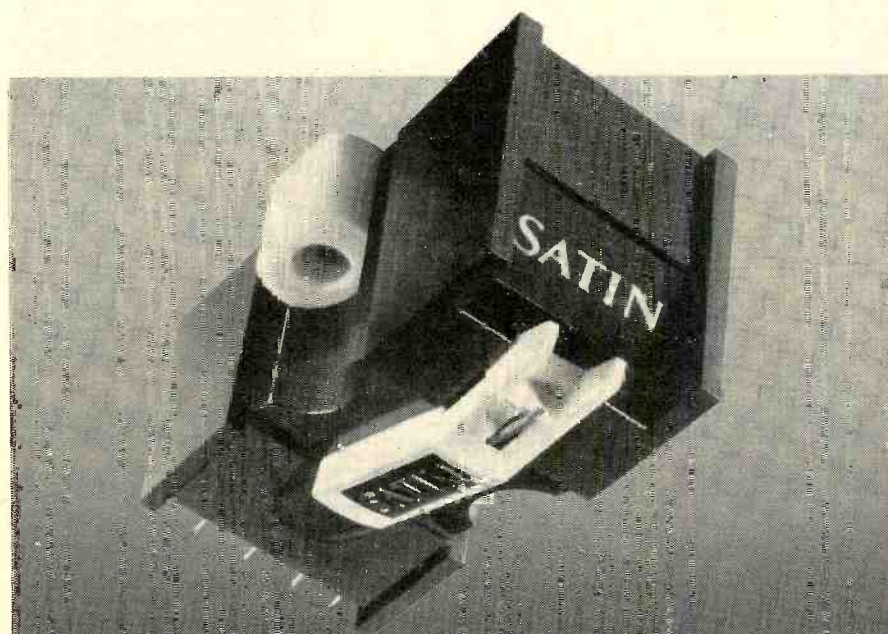
COLLECTIONS

COUSINS: POLKAS, WALTZES, AND OTHER ENTERTAINMENTS FOR CORNET AND TROMBONE (see Best of the Month, page 93)

DICRAN JAMGOCHIAN: Aria and Song Recital. Vivaldi: *La Fida Ninfa*. J. S. Bach: *Coffee Cantata*. Handel (attrib.): *Dank Sei Dir, Herr*. Mozart: *Don Giovanni: Madamina; Finch'han dal vino*. Borodin: *Prince Igor: Igor's Aria*. Bizet: *Carmen: Toreador Song*. Verdi: *La Traviata: Di Provenza il mar*. Chouhajian: *Garineh: Horhor's Aria*. Spendirian: *Oh, Rose!* Muradian: *Drunken with Love*. Dicran Jamgochian (baritone); Armenian Symphony, Rafael Mangasarian cond. GOLDEN AGE © GAR 1001 \$6.25 (from Golden Age Records, 5347 28th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20015).

Performance: **Fairly good**
Recording: **Acceptable mono**

Thinking of such fabulous Armenian singers as contralto Zara Dolukhanova and baritone Pavel Lisitsian, I approached this disc with keen anticipation. Well, I did not find their equal in Dicran Jamgochian, but I did find him to be an experienced and versatile artist with a bright and resonant sound and forthright delivery. There is quite a wide range of reper-



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toire covered here, with results ranging from mediocre to almost first-class. A not fully developed top range is the baritone's main drawback. His clear diction discloses a good command of Italian and a less idiomatic way with German and French texts. Of special interest to Armenian listeners (a very musical group) are three attractive and expertly sung Armenian selections. *G.J.*

A LITTLE NIGHT MUSIC. Mozart: *Serenade in G Major (K. 525, "Eine Kleine Nachtmusik")*. Gluck: *Orfeo ed Euridice: Dance of the Blessed Spirits*. L. Mozart: *Toy Symphony*. Schubert: *Rosamunde: Entr'acte in B-flat Major*. Handel: *Xerxes: Largo*. J. S. Bach (arr. Connah): *Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring*. Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields, Neville Marriner cond. ANGEL □ S-37443 \$6.98.

Performance: **Bright and burnished**
Recording: **Excellent**

By now there are enough *Eine Kleine Nachtmusik* performances on discs to cover the needs of at least twenty-eight nights, yet this latest addition sounds as fresh as though the ink had not yet dried on Mozart's "little serenade" of 1787. As usual, Neville Marriner's Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields intones every movement with a fine mixture of silken gloss and muted delicacy. Moreover, the program is a generous one, including the *Toy Symphony* (which was attributed to Haydn until they found the music in a manuscript by Mozart's father Leopold), played crisply and light-handedly on toy instruments whose quaint sounds pop out jack-in-the-box style from all directions in quadraphonic playback, and Bach's imperishable *Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring*—with the solo oboe of this arrangement beautifully placed against an orchestral tapestry of sound. *P.K.*

BENJAMIN LUXON: *Give Me a Ticket to Heaven* (see Best of the Month, page 94)

IAN PARTRIDGE: *Schubert Lieder. Liebesbotschaft; Ständchen; Fischerweise; An Sylvia; Auflösung; Der Wanderer an den Mond; Die Sterne; Wanderers Nachtlied; Bei Dir Alleine; Die Forelle; Ganymed; An die Musik; Über Wildemann; An die Laute; Der Einsame; Dass Sie Hier Gewesen; Der Schiffer.* Ian Partridge (tenor); Jennifer Partridge (piano). ENIGMA VAR 1019 \$7.98 (from HNH Distributors, Ltd., P.O. Box 222, Evanston, Ill. 60204).

Performance: **Sensitive and idiomatic**
Recording: **Good**

I have encountered Ian Partridge previously on records, but only in Baroque music. He must be very well known in England because this imported disc has dispensed with all biographical material. In any case, he is a well-schooled and experienced artist who appears quite comfortable with this group of irresistible Schubert songs. His voice is agreeable in tone but rather small in size and somewhat limited in its upper extension. It is used with excellent control, without undue forcing, so that the tone never fails to please, though turbulent passages in a song like *Auflösung* seem a bit stretched. There is in this case a certain problem in balancing voice and piano: the singer is at times blanketed by the pianist.

Nevertheless, I am quite impressed by this team. The tempos are just, and Mr. Partridge laudably refrains from rushing those marvelous songs about speedy brooks and playful

fishes, paying careful attention to Schubert's delicate ornamentations along the way. There aren't as many Schubert recital discs in the current catalog as one might think, and surely not many that contain such an abundance of "hits." With its full texts, translations, and excellent surfaces, this one therefore has my recommendation. *G.J.*

JEAN-PIERRE RAMPAL: *Carnival de Rampal. Doppler: Fantaisie Pastorale Hongroise. Kreisler: Liebesfreud; Liebesleid. Chopin: Nocturne in F-sharp Major, Op. 15, No. 2; Minute Waltz. Ravel: Habanera. Gluck: Orfeo ed Eurydice, Minuet. Yoshida (trans.): Variations on a Theme of "Sakura." Genin: Carnival of Venice. Debussy: Clair de Lune. Bizet/Borne: Carmen Fantasy.* Jean-Pierre Rampal

(flute); Futaba Inoue (piano). RCA JRL1-2315 \$7.98.

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

Looking over the list of nearly a dozen albums that Jean-Pierre Rampal has recorded in the past few years, one might suspect that this gentleman is determined to transcribe the entire classical repertoire for flute. Where is the line to be drawn? Certainly the flute's allure is evident in the languorous Ravel *Habanera*, the Chopin Nocturne and *Minute Waltz*, Debussy's opalescent *Clair de Lune*, and the variations on a Japanese theme so adroitly transcribed by Masao Yoshida. Yet even so versatile and songful an instrument has limitations that even the supple skill of Rampal can-

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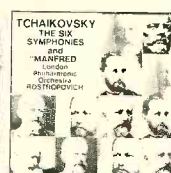
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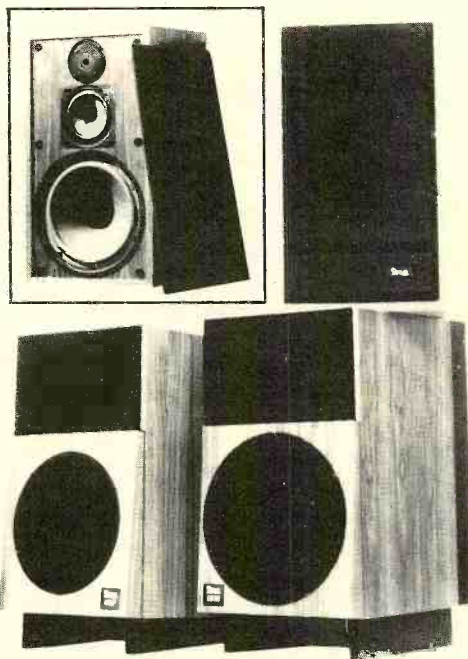
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not entirely conceal. It cannot, for example, compete with the violin in seductiveness, as becomes obvious in the transcriptions of Kreisler's *Liebesfreud* and *Liebesleid* and in the *Carmen Fantasy*. When it comes to *Carnival of Venice*, on the other hand, the banalities are built right into the score. In all, though, Rampal's elegant playing makes for pleasant listening throughout, especially with the alert piano accompaniments of Futaba Inoue. P.K.

LEOPOLD STOKOWSKI: Transcriptions for Orchestra. Rimsky-Korsakov: Flight of the Bumblebee; Ivan the Terrible. Debussy: Claire de Lune; La Soirée dans Grenade. Chopin: Mazurka in B-flat Minor; Prelude in D Minor. Nováček: Perpetuum Mobile. Tchaikovsky: Humoresque. Albéniz: Fête Dieu à Seville. Shostakovich: Prelude in E-flat Minor. National Philharmonic Orchestra, Leopold Stokowski cond. COLUMBIA M 34543 \$7.98.

Performance: **Overdressed but lovely**
Recording: **Superb**

Over the years—and there certainly were many of them—the late Leopold Stokowski occasionally took time out from the podium to apply a felicitous if florid hand to transcribing for orchestra some of his favorite non-orchestral works. Purists have held their ears in horror. Most of the rest of us have rather enjoyed the odd experience, especially when the white-maned maestro himself coaxed some giant orchestra to draw sensuous floods of sound from the page. This time around, with the National Philharmonic at his disposal, Stokowski for once gave the Bach Toccata and Fugue in D Minor a well-earned rest, turning his attention to the Romantic literature instead.

Most of the transcriptions here are based on piano solos. In every instance we are drenched in gorgeous washes of instrumental color that is in some cases more appropriate to the original material than in others. The tints and rhythms, the pulsing excitement, of Albéniz's *Festival in Seville* are dazzling. For Debussy's *La Soirée dans Grenade*, Stokowski seems to have turned for clues to that composer's own *Iberia*, and the effect is alluring—although the town has certainly been painted red for the occasion. On the other hand, there is a diffident Chopin prelude blown up to Wagnerian proportions, and Rimsky-Korsakov's buzzing bumblebee proliferates into an entire swarm. Even Nováček's *Perpetuum Mobile*, originally scored for violin and piano, glitters like a revolving Christmas tree in a shop window, for in this version Stokowski festooned his original transcription for violas and percussion with additional parts for woodwinds, brass, and harp. In some cases he toned down earlier conceptions: I recall an old recording he did of the Chopin Mazurka in B-flat Minor that swooned like a thousand sighing Victorian maidens; on this one, it only pants a bit. No matter. We always have the originals to turn to if we want to recall the composers' real intentions. Meanwhile, this colorful program—from the Tchaikovsky *Humoresque*, based on a pretty tune the composer once heard in Nice, to the "symphonic intermezzo" based on material from Rimsky-Korsakov's opera *Ivan the Terrible*—makes for luscious listening. The great conductor was never in better form, the National Philharmonic Orchestra responded to his whims with gusto, and the recorded sound is topnotch. P.K.

The Opera File

By William Livingstone



MARIA CALLAS (1923-1977)

WHEN the startling news that Maria Callas had died was broadcast in New York, several friends called me to commiserate as though I were a member of the bereaved family. But, although I admired Callas enormously, I didn't know her personally and had never so much as written her a letter. On the few occasions in the Fifties and Sixties when someone offered to introduce me to La Divina, out of shyness I always declined. I was afraid that confronted with such a great artist who had moved me so deeply I would lose all dignity and self-control and say something dumb like "Gee, Mme. Callas, I think you're grand!"

I heard her at every stage of her international career, beginning in Mexico City in 1951 before her name was a household word. She sang *Aida* and *La Traviata* there, and although I enjoyed her performances, I blush to confess that I did not foresee the great career that lay before her. I was young and hadn't been to the opera very much. *Pretty voices*, that's what I liked, and Callas' voice sounded strange to my inexperienced ears. I simply was not sensitive enough to appreciate her musicality, the purity of her diction, her genius for phrasing. Now when I listen to pirated discs or tapes of her Mexico City performances, I think I must have been not only young, but deaf.

My hearing improved greatly as her Angel recordings came out—*Lucia*, *Puritani*, *Tosca*, *Forza*, and *Norma*—and they sharpened my perceptions a great deal. Through them I found the beauty in her voice and realized that for me the most significant of her many gifts was an unparalleled ability to act with the voice and communicate feeling through music.

By the time I got to La Scala in Milan for the first time in 1955, I was an avowed Callas fan, and the first performance I attended in that historic theater was Bellini's *Norma* with Mario del Monaco, Giulietta Simionato, Nicola Rossi-Lemeni—and Callas in her prime. It took me several days to recover, and then I went back to see them do it all over again.

So much has been written about Callas the actress, and there is so much drama in her singing on records, that many people who never saw her think she must have caromed about the stage and clawed the scenery a lot. Nothing could be further from the truth. Her

acting was marked by delicacy, vulnerability, and taste. She always knew when a small gesture would make a greater effect than a large one, and she could command more attention by standing still and listening to a colleague than most singers get by rending their garments and tearing their hair.

Over the next decade, although I bought her records as they were issued, I saw her only intermittently in the opera house, but I was present at her last performance at the Met in *Tosca* on March 25, 1965. Some vocal decline was undeniable, but the magic was still there. In his memoirs, the Met's general manager Rudolf Bing wrote of that last evening: "She did not sing well, but it made no difference whatever—never had there been such a *Tosca*."



Christian Steiner/Angel Records

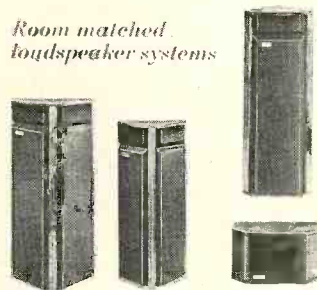
After years of inactivity Callas returned to New York to give a series of master classes at the Juilliard School in the season of 1971-1972, and they were also unforgettable performances. It gave me goose flesh to see her walk across the stage or hear her sing a few lines to illustrate a musical point. I don't know how much her young students profited from her coaching, but fortunately Callas' great career began simultaneously with the introduction of the long-playing record, and a

(Continued on page 168)

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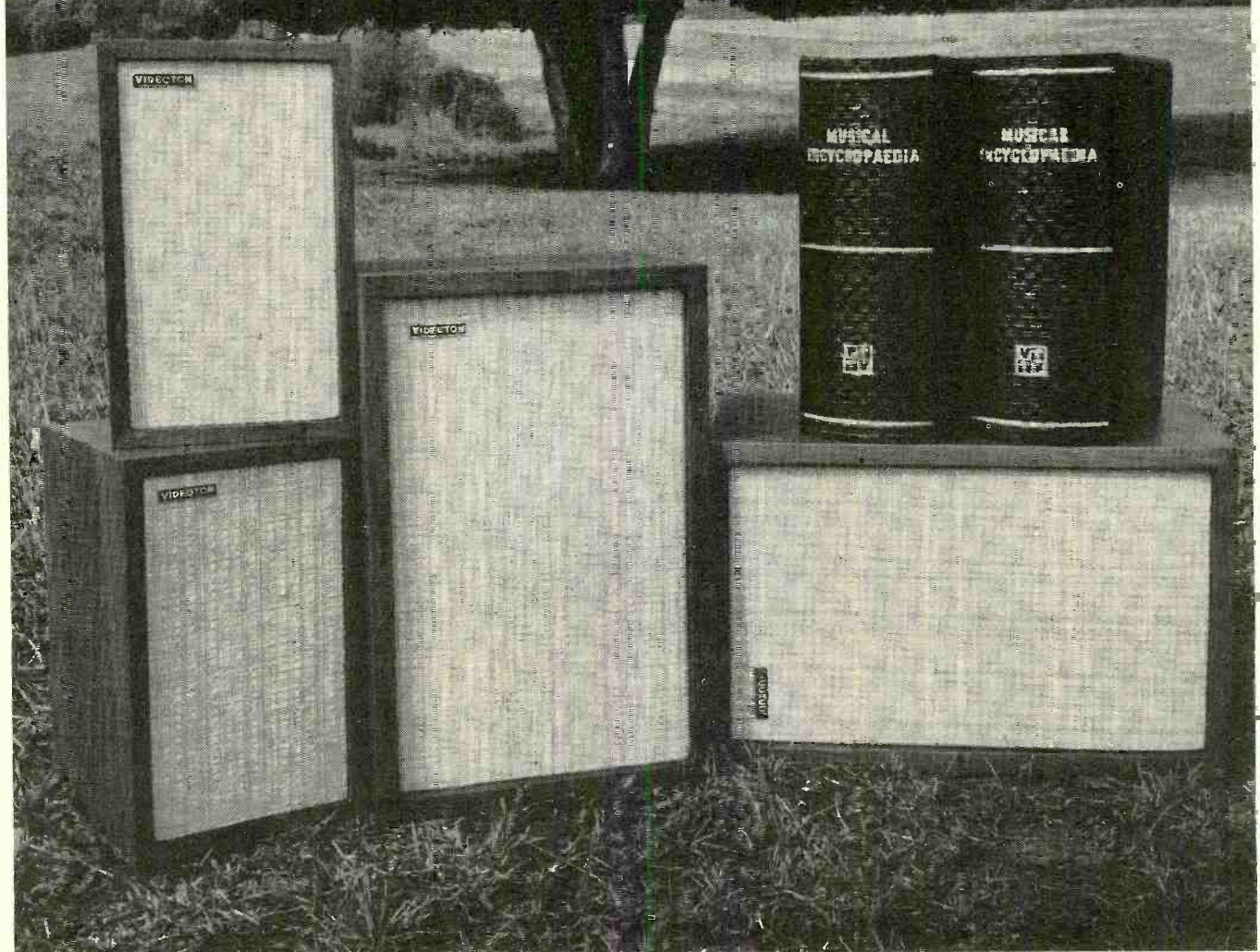
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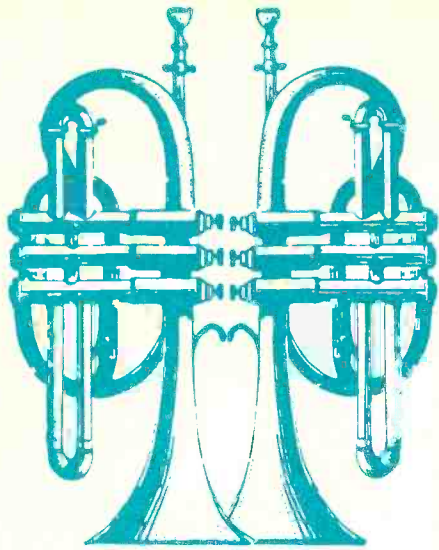
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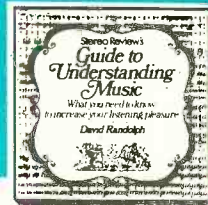
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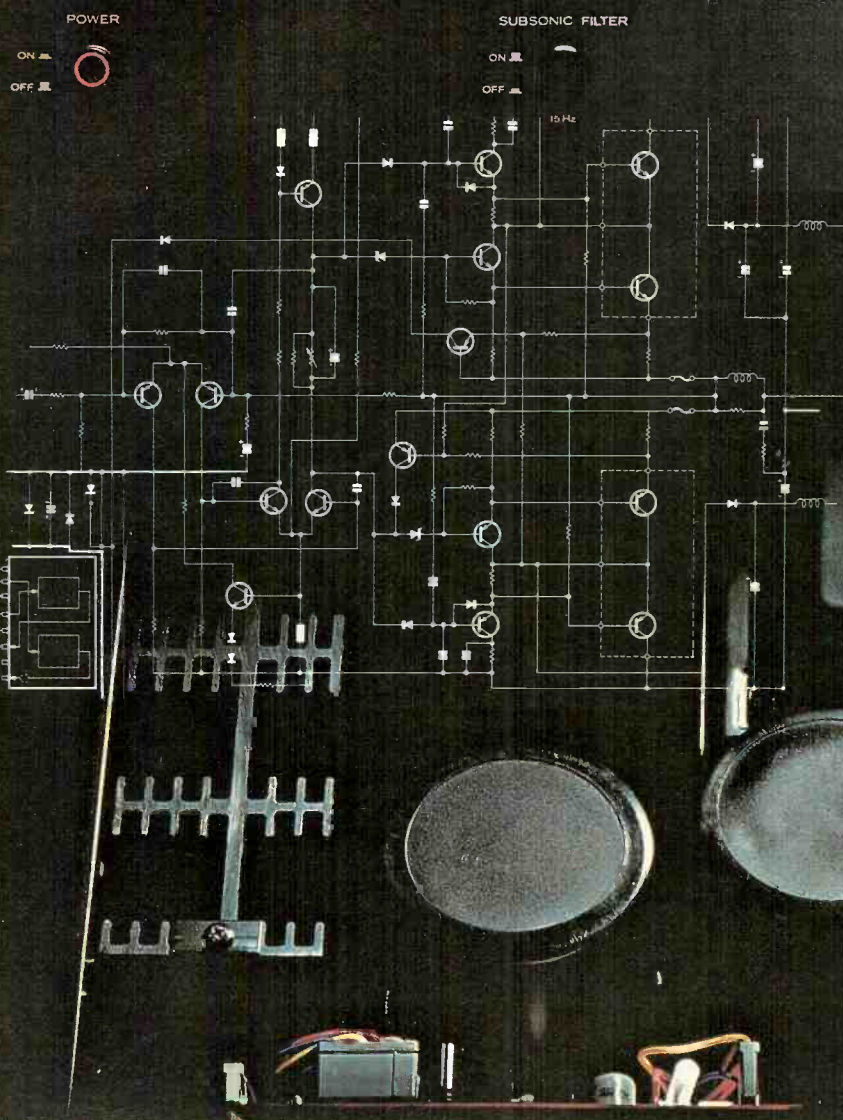
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The Opera File . . .

large body of her work is permanently documented not only for the pleasure of future record collectors but for the instruction of future students of singing as well.

My list of essential Callas recordings includes her *Lucia* (Seraphim 1B-6032), *Norma* (Seraphim 1C-6037), and *Tosca* (Angel 3508). I prefer these mono versions because here she is vocally more secure than in the later stereo remakes. Recorded in the early years of the bel canto revival, the *Norma* and *Lucia* make clear how Callas helped to bring that revival about. The *Tosca* with Giuseppe di Stefano and Tito Gobbi is generally regarded as the most nearly perfect operatic recording ever made. A vocal collector should have at least one of her Verdi operas, perhaps *Rigoletto* (Angel 3537), for her dramatic yet girlish Gilda, or *Ballo in Maschera* (Seraphim 1C-6087), for the intensity of her more mature Amelia.

Among the many recital discs, I would choose "Art of Maria Callas, Volume 3, Coloratura/Lyric" (Angel 35233) for its display of her versatility. One must also have "Verdi Heroines" (Angel S-35763) for her Sleepwalking Scene from *Macbeth* and "Mad Scenes" (Angel S-35764) for the excerpts from Bellini's *Il Pirata* and Thomas' *Hamlet*. "Great Arias from French Operas" (Angel S-35882) is uneven, but the two *Carmen* arias are splendid examples of her feeling for rhythm and musical line, and "Printemps qui commence" from Saint-Saëns' *Samson et Dalila* is quintessential Callas.


To list and analyze what Callas has left us on records would take a book. That book has been written. Published on September 12, only four days before her death, it bears the unintentionally apt title *The Callas Legacy* (Scribner's, 224 pages, \$12.50). It was written by John Ardoin, music editor of the *Dallas Morning News*, a critic who has admired Callas and studied her work for years. In his new book Ardoin examines every available bit of her singing that has survived, whether on pirate discs and tapes or commercial recordings. He points out faults as well as virtues, and I recommend the book not just for Ardoin's special insights into the artistry of Callas, but for his sensitive approach to operatic singing in general.

As I read *The Callas Legacy*, I realized that every time I saw her was such an important event in my life that I can still remember who attended each performance with me. And it occurred to me that just as a lot of my contemporaries conducted the love affairs and close friendships of their youth and early manhood to the musical accompaniment of Frank Sinatra or Mabel Mercer, I spent countless pleasant hours with the people I have loved most in the world listening to Callas records. Then it dawned on me that I was indeed a member of a large bereaved family, her public.

In the epilogue to his book Ardoin quotes Richard Dyer's review in *The Nation* of Callas' appearance in Boston on her disastrous final concert tour with Di Stefano in 1974: "Now in her struggle and in her exhaustion she asks and earns . . . what she has never before seemed to need, our love." It made me bitterly regret that I had never touched her hand, looked into her eyes, and said, "Gee, Mme. Callas, I think you're grand!"

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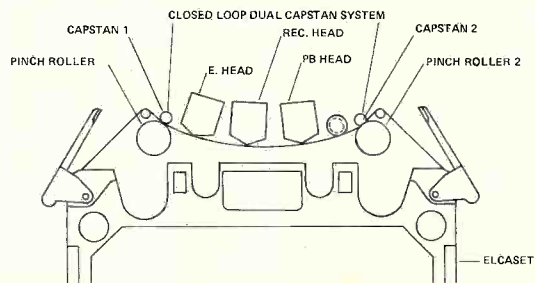
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