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Stereo Review®

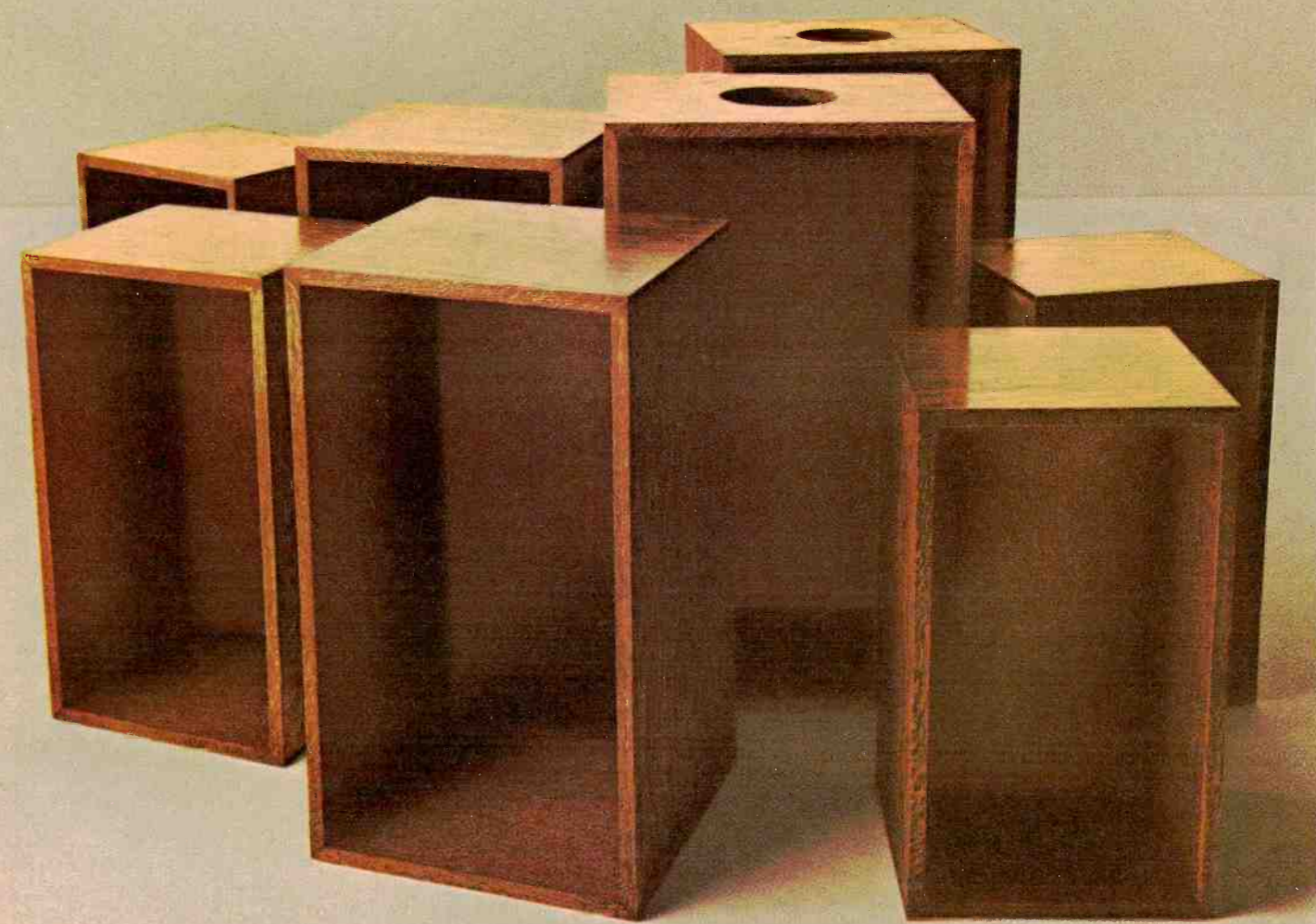
**RHYTHM AND BLUES: A BASIC LIBRARY OF A BASIC MUSIC
SUCCESS STORY: THE REMARKABLE TOKYO QUARTET**

EQUIPMENT TEST REPORTS: Carver C-4000 Sonic Holography/Autocorrelator Preamplifier
Fisher CR-4025 Stereo Cassette Deck • SAE Model 180 Parametric Equalizer
Shure/SME Series III Tone Arm • Sherwood S-7650 Stereo Receiver

LAS VEGAS SHOW REPORT: THIS YEAR'S NEW EQUIPMENT



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Most speaker companies try to impress you by describing the "wonderful" sound that comes out of their speakers.

At Pioneer, we think the most believable way to describe how good HPM speakers are is to tell you what went into them.

**THE HPM SUPERTWEETER:
SPEAKER TECHNOLOGY RISES TO NEW HIGHS.**

In many speakers, you'll find that the upper end of the audio spectrum is reproduced by an ordinary tweeter.

In HPM speakers, you'll find that the high frequencies are reproduced by a unique *supertweeter*.

It works by using a single piece of High Polymer Molecular film, (hence the name HPM) that converts electrical impulses into sound waves without a magnet, voice coil, cone, or dome.

And because the HPM supertweeter doesn't need any of these mechanical parts, it can reproduce highs with an accuracy and definition that surpasses even the finest conventional tweeter.

As an added advantage, the HPM film is curved for maximum sound dispersion. So unlike other speakers, you don't have to plant yourself in front of an HPM speaker to enjoy all the sound it can produce.

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MUDDLED.**

For years, speaker manufacturers have labored over mid-range driver cones that are light enough to give you quick response, yet rigid enough not to distort.

Pioneer solved this problem by creating special cones that handle more power, and combine lower mass with greater rigidity. So our HPM drivers provide you with cleaner, and crisper mid-range. Which means you'll hear music, and not distortion.

WOOFERS THAT TOP EVERY OTHER BOTTOM.
Conventional woofers are still made

with the same materials that were being used in 1945.

Every woofer in the HPM series, however, is made with a special carbon fiber blend that's allowed us to decrease the weight of the cone, yet increase the strength needed for clarity. So you'll hear the deepest notes exactly the way the musician recorded them.

And because every HPM woofer also has an oversized magnet and long throw voice coil, they can handle more power without distorting.

**OTHER FEATURES YOU
RARELY HEAR OF.**

Every HPM speaker has cast aluminum frames, instead of the usual flimsy stamped out metal kind. So that even when you push our speakers to their limit, you only hear the music and never the frames. In fact, our competitors were so impressed, they started making what look like die cast frames, but aren't.

HPM speaker cabinets are made of specially compressed board that has better acoustic properties than ordinary wood.

Their speakers have level controls that let you adjust the sound of the music to your living room. And these features are not just found in our most expensive HPM speaker, but in every speaker in the HPM series.

All of which begins to explain why, unlike speakers that sound great on only part of the music, HPM speakers sound great on all of it.

At this point, we suggest you take your favorite record into any Pioneer Dealer and audition a pair of HPM speakers in person.

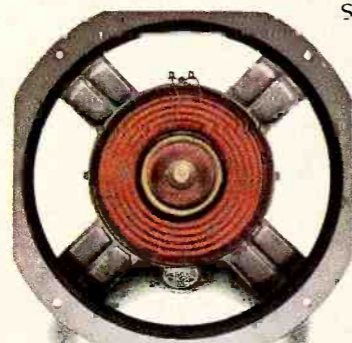
If you think what went into them sounds impressive, wait till you hear what comes out of them.

PIONEER®
We bring it back alive.

CIRCLE NO. 85 ON READER SERVICE CARD



The High Polymer Molecular Supertweeter.
So incredible, we named a whole line of speakers after it.



You'll never hear a sound out of these die cast aluminum speaker frames.



Level controls that let you adjust the sound to your listening area.

**AND IT'S WHAT GOES
INTO HPM SPEAKERS THAT
MAKES THEM SOUND GREAT ON
EVERY PART OF THE MUSIC.**



**WHAT COMES OUT
OF A SPEAKER IS ONLY
AS IMPRESSIVE AS
WHAT GOES INTO IT.**



INTRODUCING THE EMPIRE EDR.9 PHONO CARTRIDGE. IT SOUNDS AS GOOD ON A RECORD AS IT DOES ON PAPER.

It was inevitable . . .

With all the rapid developments being made in today's high fidelity technology, the tremendous advance in audible performance in Empire's new EDR.9 phono cartridge was bound to happen. And bound to come from Empire, as we have been designing and manufacturing the finest phono cartridges for over 18 years.

Until now, all phono cartridges were designed in the lab to achieve certain engineering characteristics and requirements. These lab characteristics and requirements took priority over actual listening tests because it was considered more important that the cartridges "measure right" or "test right"—so almost everyone was satisfied.

Empire's EDR.9 (for Extended Dynamic Response) has broken with this tradition, and is the first phono cartridge that not only meets the highest technological and design specifications—but also our

demanding listening tests—on an equal basis. In effect, it bridges the gap between the ideal blueprint and the actual sound.

The EDR.9 utilizes an L. A. C. (Large Area Contact) 0.9 stylus based upon—and named after—E. I. A. Standard RS-238B. This new design, resulting in a smaller radius and larger contact area, has a pressure index of 0.9, an improvement of almost six times the typical, elliptical stylus and four times over the newest designs recently introduced by several other cartridge manufacturers. The result is that less pressure is applied to the vulnerable record groove, at the same time extending the bandwidth—including the important overtones and harmonic details.

In addition, Empire's exclusive, patented 3-Element Double Damped stylus assembly acts as an equalizer. This eliminates the high "Q" mechanical resonances typical of other stylus assemblies, producing a flatter response, and lessening wear and tear on the record groove.

We could go into more technical detail, describing pole rods that are laminated, rather than just one piece, so as to reduce losses in the magnetic structure, resulting in flatter high frequency response with less distortion. Or how the EDR.9 weighs one gram less than previous Empire phono cartridges, making it a perfect match for today's advanced low mass tonearms.

But more important, as the EDR.9 cartridge represents a new approach to cartridge design, we ask that you consider it in a slightly different way as well. Send for our free technical brochure on the EDR.9, and then visit your audio dealer and listen. Don't go by specs alone.

That's because the new Empire EDR.9 is the first phono cartridge that not only meets the highest technological and design specifications—but also our demanding listening tests.

Empire Scientific Corp.
Garden City, N.Y. 11530 **EMPIRE**

FORMERLY HI FI/STEREO REVIEW

Stereo Review®

MAY 1979 • VOLUME 42 • NUMBER 5

The Equipment

NEW PRODUCTS		
<i>Roundup of the latest audio equipment and accessories</i>		18
AUDIO NEWS		
<i>You, Me, and the FCC</i>	GARY STOCK	30
AUDIO QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS		
<i>Turntable Troubles, Quality Loss, Nonlinear AM</i>	LARRY KLEIN	36
AUDIO BASICS		
<i>Signal Processing—2</i>	RALPH HODGES	40
TAPE TALK		
<i>Meters vs. Electronic Indicators</i>	CRAIG STARK	42
TECHNICAL TALK		
<i>Audible Differences</i>	JULIAN D. HIRSCH	45
EQUIPMENT TEST REPORTS		
<i>Hirsch-Houck Laboratory test results on the Carver C-4000 Sonic Holography Autocorrelator preamplifier, Fisher CR-4025 stereo cassette deck, SAE Model 180 parametric equalizer, Shure/SME Series III tone arm, and Sherwood S-7650 stereo receiver</i>	JULIAN D. HIRSCH	46
LAS VEGAS AUDIO SHOW		
<i>A preview of what the coming year in audio will bring</i>	RALPH HODGES	79

The Music

BASIC LIBRARY OF RHYTHM-AND-BLUES			
<i>Tracing the development of a significant American musical style</i>	PHYL GARLAND	72	
A VISIT WITH THE TOKYO STRING QUARTET			
<i>"... the Juilliard showed us the best side of quartet playing"</i>	ALLAN KOZINN	88	
BEST RECORDINGS OF THE MONTH		93	
<i>Youri Egorov's Schumann</i>	93	<i>Tchaikovsky's "Seasons"</i>	96
<i>Scotto and Domingo: Opera Duets</i>	94	<i>Milestone Jazzstars: "In Concert"</i>	96
<i>Dire Straits: Subtly Original</i>	94	<i>David Bromberg: "My Own House"</i>	97
<i>June Christy: "Impromptu"</i>	95		
CLASSICAL DISCS AND TAPES		98	
<i>Stunning Monteverdi</i>	99	<i>Copland and Ives</i>	108
<i>A Quartet of Chopinists</i>	100	<i>A Little Barber Festival</i>	115
POP ROTOGRAVURE		STEVE SIMELS	118
POPULAR DISCS AND TAPES			120
<i>Boomtown Rats: "Tonic for the Troops"</i>	121	<i>Dick Haymes: "As Time Goes By"</i>	134
<i>Marvin Gaye: "Here, My Dear"</i>	122	<i>Robert Gordon: "Rock Billy Boogie"</i>	138
<i>Blues Brothers: "Briefcase Full of Blues"</i>	124	<i>Louis Armstrong, Giant of Jazz</i>	142
<i>Voyage: "Fly Away"</i>	126	<i>Simels Contemplates the Grammys</i>	148

The Regulars

BULLETIN	WILLIAM LIVINGSTONE	5
SPEAKING OF MUSIC	WILLIAM ANDERSON	8
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR		12
THE POP BEAT	PAULETTE WEISS	68
GOING ON RECORD	JAMES GOODFRIEND	70
ADVERTISERS' INDEX		148

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The first high-technology record cleaner was the Discwasher System. Four scientific revisions later, the Discwasher is literally years ahead of all other devices.

WITH PRIORITY TECHNOLOGY:

Discwasher D3 Fluid is proven by lab tests to be the safest active cleaning fluid for record care. But a good fluid is not enough. The Discwasher System is also a *precision removal system* that uses capillary action with slanted micro-fibers to lift dust, dirt, and dissolved debris off the record, rather than pushing them around like "dry" and "constant humidity" methods. The real dimensions of record care are safety plus integrated function.

WITH PROVEN VALUE:

The uniquely styled Discwasher handle is constructed of hand-rubbed walnut which will long outlast "plastic wonders". This easily held handle is lightweight because of an integral cavity which conveniently holds the D3 Fluid bottle. A special brush to clean the directional-fiber Discwasher pad is included without charge, and also fits inside the handle cavity.

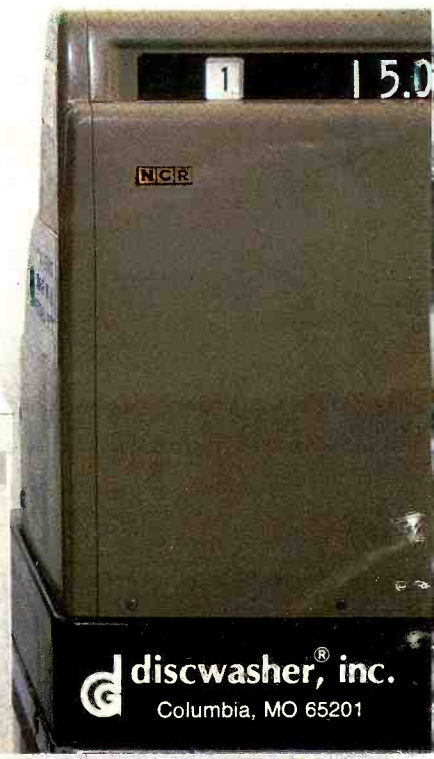
WITH GENUINE SATISFACTION:


Only Discwasher gives immediate performance, long-term record safety, pleasing physical characteristics and a price that hasn't changed in five years.

Seek out the Discwasher System, by name. Only Discwasher delivers technology, value and satisfaction.

CIRCLE NO. 18 ON READER SERVICE CARD

YOUR RECORDS DESERVE SUPERIOR CARE: SEEK OUT THE DISCWASHER® SYSTEM



 **discwasher, inc.**
Columbia, MO 65201



Stereo Review BULLETIN

Edited by William Livingstone

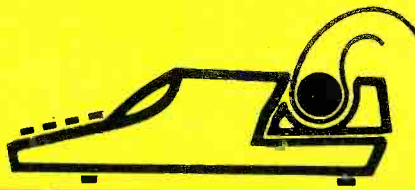
● IN-WARRANTY REPAIRS TO AUDIO COMPONENTS may become subject to regulations imposed by many state legislatures, according to Lawrence Kanter of the Federal Trade Commission. In a speech at the recent Las Vegas Consumer Electronics Show, Kanter said that consumer electronic products are among the goods about which the FTC receives large numbers of complaints about in-warranty service. The FTC believes that this is because electronic service shops are inadequately paid by manufacturers for warranty work and therefore cannot afford to do a thorough job of servicing. Upcoming state regulations might require that manufacturers pay repair stations warranty rates equal to those charged for out-of-warranty work. Another possibility would be an FTC-mandated requirement that audio manufacturers disclose, as part of the warranty information they make available to the consumer, whether they are paying warranty repair rates that are below retail-level repair rates.

● DISCO is now about 25 per cent of the United States' \$4 billion annual record business, according to an estimate by Robert Summer, president of RCA Records. RCA's emphasis on disco has helped quadruple the company's profits to record levels since 1975, when disco first began to seize a meaningful share of the market.

● ANGEL RECORDS' NEW AUDIOPHILE LINE, the 45 Sonic Series, consists of 12-inch, 45-rpm classical discs. Launched in April with a release of ten albums, the series contains such orchestral spectaculars as Gershwin's Rhapsody in Blue, Ravel's Boléro, Respighi's Pines of Rome, and Stravinsky's Firebird Suite. The works were chosen for their suitability for sonic demonstration, and the performances, which have previously been released on 33 1/3-rpm discs, have been remastered for the new series. Among the benefits Angel claims for the faster speed are greater volume and wider dynamic range. Playing time per record is about half that of a conventional LP. List price: \$8.98.

● MULTICHANNEL TV SOUND: The Electronic Industries Association (EIA) formed a special subcommittee in March to make technical recommendations for a system of broadcasting stereo TV sound. The recommendations will be submitted to the Federal Communications Commission. The EIA, an umbrella organization representing electronic manufacturers of all types, has long been active in advising the federal government on communications-related issues, submitting recommendations and studies on such subjects as stereo AM and FM quadrasonic broadcasting.

● TRAVELING WITH A RADIO is a 360-page guide to 8,096 AM and FM radio stations in 3,323 cities and towns in the United States. Designed primarily for motorists, the book lists, in addition to dial settings, the maximum broadcast power, program format, and network affiliations of the stations. It also indicates which stations broadcast in stereo or four-channel. Available from Donnelly & Sons Publishing Co., P.O. Box 4152, Colorado Springs, Colo. 80930 for \$5 postpaid.



Edited by William Livingstone

• NORTH AMERICAN STEREO AM BROADCASTS will probably originate with station CKLW in Windsor, Ontario, Canada. Approval for test broadcasts, which will try to determine the relative compatibilities of the five proposed stereo AM systems with existing mono receivers, has been obtained from both Canadian and U.S. governments. Depending on cooperation from the various system manufacturers, the transmissions could begin as early as mid spring. Station CKLW is a 50,000-watt facility broadcasting at 800 kHz with a reach that covers most of Michigan and parts of Ohio and Pennsylvania on good days.

• LONDON RECORDS' FIRST DIGITALLY RECORDED RELEASE is a two-disc album by the Vienna Philharmonic conducted by Willi Boskovsky. Recorded live at the orchestra's New Year's Day concert this year, it includes Franz von Suppé's Beautiful Galatea overture and waltzes and polkas by Karl Ziehrer and four Stráussés (Johann Jr. and Sr., Eduard, and Josef). Bearing a new LDR logo (for London Digital Recording), the set is priced at \$19.96.

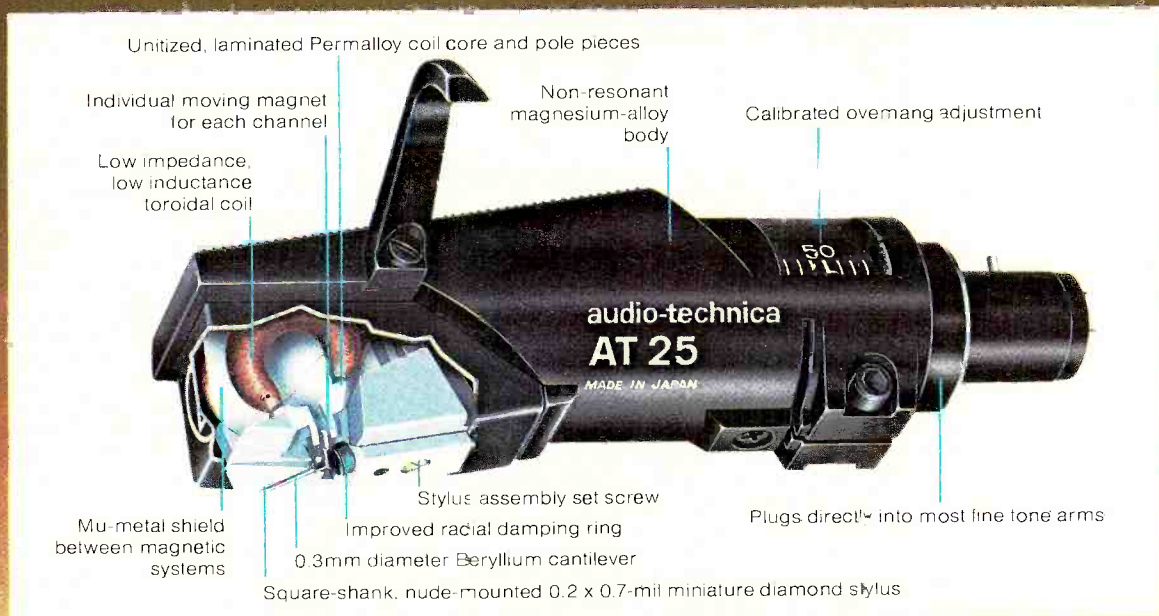
• THE SOCIAL NOTE OF THE SEASON: The irrepressible Nick Lowe (whose sequel to "Pure Pop for Now People" is expected momentarily) is reported ready to tie the knot with Carlene Carter, youngest member of the legendary Carter clan and an exceptional singer and songwriter in her own right. Carlene, by the way, will be assisted on her second album by Clover, the California pub band that provided the uncredited back-ups on Elvis Costello's "My Aim Is True."

• THE MAGNAVISON VIDEODISC SYSTEM will be on sale in three stores in the Seattle-Tacoma region of Washington by April. The dealers chosen by Magnavox are Allied's Bon Marché, Frederick & Nelson, and Doces Home Furnishings. Except for Atlanta, where the Magnavision player and MCA videodiscs were introduced last December, Seattle and Tacoma are the only cities in the United States to have access to videodisc hardware and software. Magnavox has also announced six new dealerships in the Atlanta area. Both announcements suggest increased Magnavox video production.

• MUSIC ON TV THIS MONTH includes a double header for strings on PBS May 8. It begins with Alexander's Bachtime (sic) Band, a documentary showing sixty-six gifted young music students under the tutelage of violinist and conductor Alexander Schneider playing three works by Bach. The Heifetz Concert which follows on most PBS stations is the TV "concert debut" of violinist Jascha Heifetz, originally aired on NBC in 1971. Heifetz plays works by Gershwin, Bach, Bruch, Mozart, Debussy, and Prokofiev. Check local listings.

• DEBBIE HARRY OF BLONDIE (Stereo Review's March cover girl) appeared recently at New York rock club Hurrah as a back-up musician for underground avant-garde violinist Walter Stedding, apparently to appease the fans who consider her group's unexpected disco hit, Heart of Glass (Chrysalis), a crass commercial sellout. Ms. Harry contributed appropriately atonal noodling on (no fooling) trumpet. But can she play Carnival of Venice?

We've just improved every record you own.



Bold, creative new technology sets new standards for clarity, dynamic range, and stereo separation.

Of course the new AT25 doesn't look like other stereo phono cartridges. It's entirely different. And not just on the outside. We've rethought every detail of design and construction. All in the interest of the smoothest, cleanest sound you've ever heard. The AT25 frequency response is utterly uniform. Definition and stereo separation are remarkable. Dynamic range is awesome. Even the most demanding digital and direct-to-disc records are more spectacular, more musically revealing.

But set our claims aside and listen. The AT25 is unexcelled for transparency and clean, effortless transient response. Individual instruments are heard crisply, without stridency even at extremely high levels. Even surface noise is less apparent.

The cutaway view shows you how we do it. Start with the coils. Just two, hand-wound in a toroidal (doughnut) shape. A unique shape which cuts losses, reduces inductance, and lowers impedance. The coils are wound on laminated one-piece cores which also serve as pole pieces. Again, losses are lower. Eddy current effect is also reduced. Which all adds up to superior transient response. It's like having the electrical performance of the finest moving coil designs, but with the high output of a moving

magnet. The best of both worlds!

Each magnetic system is completely independent. No common circuits. We even add a mu-metal shield between the coils to insure no leakage between channels. Which results in stereo separation which must be heard to be believed.

But there's more. An entirely new stylus assembly with one of the smallest whole diamond styli in series production. Only 0.09mm in cross section and almost invisible. It's nude-mounted and square-shank to insure exact alignment with the groove. And it's set in a Beryllium cantilever that eliminates flexing.

Instead of snapping into place, this stylus assembly is held rigidly to a precisely machined surface with a small set screw. A small detail which insures perfect alignment, no spurious resonances, and simple stylus replacement.

We treat cartridge shell resonances too, with special damping material applied to the top of the unique plug-in shell. The magnesium shell even has a calibrated adjustment for stylus overhang to insure perfect installation.

The many technical differences between the new AT25 and every other stereo cartridge are fascinating . . . and significant. But the real difference is in the resulting sound. It's almost as if you had plugged your stereo system directly

into the studio console. Every subtlety of artistic expression is intact, no matter how complex—or simple—the music, no matter how loud—or soft—the performance. It's as though a subtle barrier had been removed adding clarity and presence to every record you own.

A cartridge of this sophistication and high quality cannot be produced quickly. Initially the AT25 may be in short supply. But your patience will be rewarded with performance which will send you back through your record library to discover nuances you never suspected to hear. And you'll eagerly await the sonic splendors of tomorrow's digital recording techniques.

This outstanding performance is now available two ways: the direct plug-in AT25 and the standard-mount AT24. Either one will make every other component you own sound better, including your records!



Model AT25 Unitized Headshell/Dual Magnet™ Stereo Phono Cartridge \$275

Model AT24 Dual Magnet™ Stereo Phono Cartridge \$250



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CIRCLE NO. 4 ON READER SERVICE CARD

Speaking of Music...

By William Anderson



AESTHETOLOGICAL UNEMPLOYMENT

WHILE tending, as Elvis used to say, to business a few weeks back, my eye fell upon this headline in the record-industry newsweekly *Billboard*: "CBS and WEA Profits Sag." Since Columbia and the Warner Communications family of labels together account for something like a third of the discs sold in this country, I read on to see why. The reasons given were several: a strike; increased manufacturing, advertising, and promotional costs; and lagging sales in the second half of 1978, the year of the "sag." But I did not see among them the observation that neither Columbia nor Warners has been exactly at the heart of the disco market which is lately estimated to make up a hefty 25 per cent of domestic record sales.

Like the Grammy Awards (see Steve Simels' comments on page 148), Columbia and Warners are Johnnies Come Lately to disco, having vainly waited some five years for the

"fad" to go away, five years during which a number of small independent labels were having, so to speak, a ball. How is it that all those high-powered, visionary, with-it talent scouts, public-pulse feelers, and market experts managed to miss out on the Next Big Thing (which disco surely is) until it was almost too late? Well, there are, first of all, the penalties of gigantism: a slower reaction time, cumbersome movement, and, particularly, a long period of gestation (the elephant spends eighteen months *in utero*). But more to the point is the considerable power of a vested interest: rock. Almost two decades of incumbency have solidified the grip of the rock generation on the repertoire policies of most of the major record companies. During this period, a-&-r men (and women), publicists, and even a few executives earned their merit badges as *arbitri elegantiarum*, rock division, by out-predicting earlier seers who mistaken-

ly thought that pop music had reached its apotheosis in the art of, say, Miles Davis, Los Indios Tabajaras, and the Anita Kerr Singers. None of these office holders are going to give up their positions without a fight, particularly for a music they neither like nor understand.

In time, however, they will have to surrender to a new generation of pop-music manipulators: young disco jockeys, who speak an exotic technical lingo still in the process of being invented, are already making their way into recording studios to do things the "old timers" cannot. But where will they all go, these casualties of aesthetic change? Some few of the more flexible, more professional studio workers will doubtless weather this storm as they have others, but many can not (or will not) make the leap into disco and will simply (though not without bitterness) leave the music industry. The more business-minded will make their way into the executive suite, whence they will be in a position in future to decree "revivals" for rock as their predecessors have done in the past for jazz. And finally, the more articulate will talk their way into academia, either as "oldie-goldie" radio disc jockeys or as accredited classroom pundits. There they may be able to make common cause with the jazz specialists, perhaps even with the ethnomusicologists (when you get right down to it, rock is a kind of folk music). But they will not have an easy time of it. They will be at the bottom of the pecking order in a society where the infighting and backbiting of the record industry will seem mere child's play, and they will be competing with another group of displaced persons—the unassimilable rock critics—who are even more articulate than they.

THOUGH I do have opinions about all the music this discussion has been dancing around, I have kept them resolutely apart. That resolve does not forbid my pointing out a moral, however. It concerns the Peril of Excessive Contemporaneity: he who lives 100 per cent in the present has no future.

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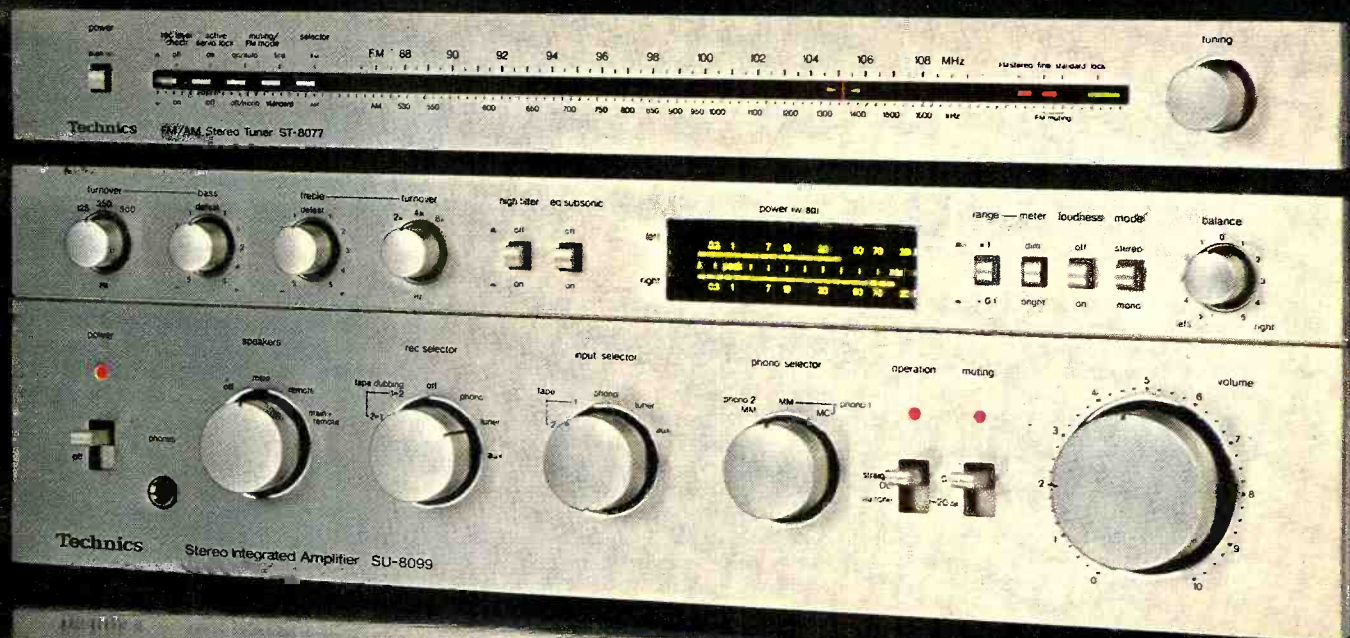
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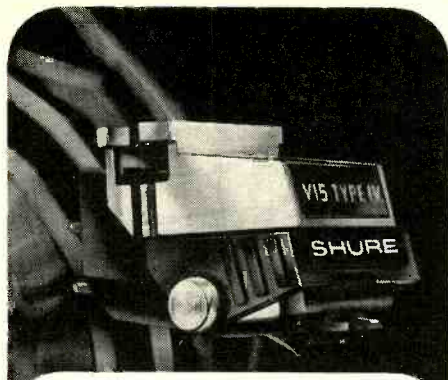


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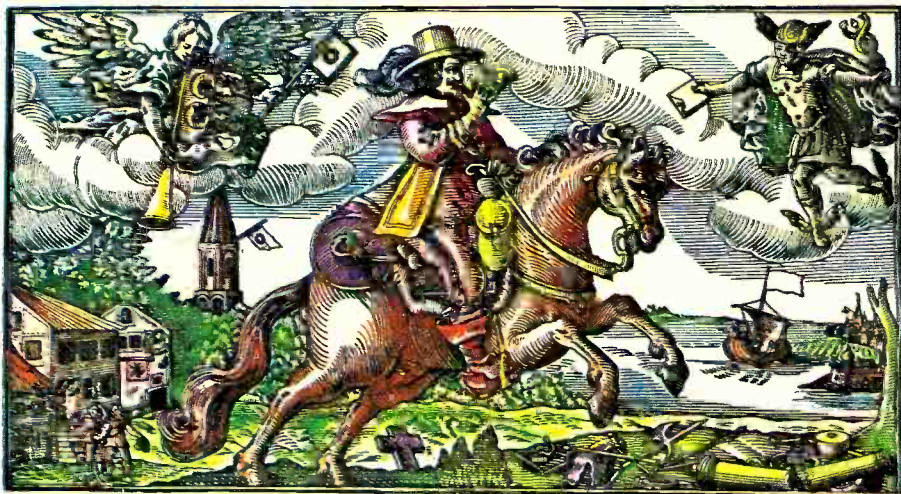
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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Class Conscious

● Peter Reilly's March reviews of "The As-taire Story" (not my cup of tea) and, especially, Barbra Streisand's "Greatest Hits, Volume II" (I can take it or leave it) were so beautifully written that I was once again reminded of the plain *class* of the material in STEREO REVIEW. I really only care about what Mirella Freni or Placido Domingo or Kiri Te Kanawa have done lately, but when the prose comes out like Mr. Reilly's I've got to write in with congratulations. I'll even forgive you for the blonde in tights on the cover!

RON MEYER
Kirkwood, Mo.

That wasn't just any blonde on the March cover—that was Blondie!

Incompatible Videodiscs

● Ivan Berger's and Gary Stock's "Audio/Video News" articles on the various approaches to videodisc recording (August 1978 and March 1979) were excellent. Unfortunately, the way the various manufacturers are going about choosing a standard format is very reminiscent of the way they approached the market with quadraphonics several years ago. Are they going to ruin a good thing again by introducing incompatible equipment? I would like to see the Magnavox optical-pick-up system adopted, since the old needle-in-a-groove method of extracting information from discs would seem to be a step backward rather than forward.

LARRY BERGESON
Racine, Wis.

Basic Repertoire

● I would like to thank STEREO REVIEW for undertaking the task of publishing and regularly updating *The Basic Repertoire*. I have just bought a stereo system, and choosing records has become almost as important to me as choosing the right components. Although I have made some poor selections (because I had no prior knowledge about orchestral recordings), I am sure that I can rely in the fu-

ture on Richard Freed's recommendations in *The Basic Repertoire*. I was pleased to find that some of the records I had selected on my own were on his list. The booklet is especially helpful in pointing out good budget-price recordings. If you lived in Hawaii you'd be shocked by our record prices!

JERRY M. YOUNG
Honolulu, Hawaii

See the announcement of the updated 1979 edition of The Basic Repertoire on page 135.

Pop's Dada

● In Steve Simels' review of Bryan Ferry's "The Bride Stripped Bare" in the March issue there is a reference to Ferry's "Marcel Duchamp Meets Ronald Coleman intellectual lounge-lizard act." Who is Marcel Duchamp? And what is a lounge lizard?

TOM COSTELLO
Anaheim, Calif.

Marcel Duchamp is a gentleman who descends staircases slowly; a lounge lizard reclines on the last step and watches him.

Hirschfeld

● I was thrilled to see theatrical caricaturist Al Hirschfeld's portrait of Beverly Sills on the cover of the February STEREO REVIEW. Is Hirschfeld represented by a gallery? I would like to see more of his work.

SHIRLEY WEINBAUM
Poughkeepsie, N.Y.

Al Hirschfeld does indeed have a gallery: he is represented exclusively by the Margo Feiden Gallery, 51 East 10th Street, New York, N.Y. 10003. We are told that they have more than fifty years of his work on permanent display.

Carlene Carter

● I was glad that STEREO REVIEW's critics and editors gave Carlene Carter's debut album an honorable mention in the 1978 Record
(Continued on page 14)



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of the Year Awards, though I would have preferred to see her get one of the top awards. I have never been more impressed with an artist's first recording effort, except possibly for Emmylou Harris' "Pieces of the Sky" LP. Ms. Carter is living proof that musical talent is an inherited trait.

KEVIN R. JONES
Springfield, Ill.

Klaus Tennstedt

Richard Freed's February "Best of the Month" review of Klaus Tennstedt's recording of the Mahler First was a remarkable testament indeed. I cannot recall another evalua-

tion in print of an active conductor's work that was so adulatory, and to call Tennstedt "an absolute master" seems almost reckless.

Readers who have actually heard Tennstedt in performance, however, know that such praise is not excessive. The apparently instinctive sense of phrasing, pacing, and continuity noted by Mr. Freed has contributed to the overwhelming success of many of his concerts. In the last few years the American Midwest has enjoyed Tennstedt's work on a fairly regular basis, with repeated appearances in Cleveland, Detroit, and Cincinnati, and at the Blossom and Meadowbrook summer festivals. A limited correspondence circle has developed to keep interested concert-goers apprised of forthcoming Tennstedt engagements

outside their own communities, as well as reviews and articles about him. This modest enterprise is unnamed, in order to minimize any impression of cultism, but should other STEREO REVIEW readers like to tune in to this network, they are welcome to write to me.

DAVID M. GRUNDY
2565 Warwick Road
Shaker Heights, Ohio 44120

Creme and Godley

Joel Vance's February article on Lol Creme and Kevin Godley was one of the most encouraging things I have ever read. After my local "progressive" radio station told me that their album "L" was "unprogrammable," I thought I would have to enjoy it alone; no one else would ever even hear about it. Now, thanks to STEREO REVIEW, people will not only hear about "L," they will get an excellent idea of the remarkable talents behind it and the duo's permanent contribution to music, the Gizmo.

By the way, all the 10cc, Phil Manzanera, and Creme and Godley albums on which the instrument is used refer to the invention as the Gizmo, not, as Mr. Vance had it, the Gizmotron. Also, at least in the U.S., "L" (like 10cc's "Bloody Tourists") is on the Polydor/ManKen label, not Mercury.

Anyway, you can tell Lol and Kevin that if they ever get too starved, they can come eat sandwiches at my place.

LISA ROCKWOOD
Albuquerque, N.M.

Popular Music Editor Paulette Weiss replies: "Gizmotron" is the new registered trademark of the device that Creme and Godley originally called the Gizmo. As for the label question, "L" was released on Polydor/ManKen in the U.S. and Canada but on Mercury/Phonogram in England. Sorry for not mentioning that Joel Vance reviewed an imported copy (which has exactly the same material as the U.S. version). And the guys say they're fond of ham and swiss on rye, heavy on the mustard, please.

Nyiregyházi

STEREO REVIEW's Record of the Year award to Ervin Nyiregyházi for his Desmar/IPA album gives new hope to all us frustrated weekend pianists. I was no child prodigy, nor have I been married nine times, but I can play Liszt nearly as slowly and with almost as many wrong notes as Nyiregyházi does. Perhaps the critics responsible for this selection should start taking piano lessons, and in a few years they might be able to play that way too. Ashkenazy, Berman, Horowitz—beware!

J. PLIVA
State College, Pa.

The Editor replies: There has been heard, in various disc incarnations over the decades, the voice of one Alessandro Moreschi, soprano, castrato, and member of the Sistine Chapel choir. The last of his "line" of castrato singers, Moreschi was well past his prime (in his seventies) when the recording was made in the earlier part of this century, and the recorded sound leaves a good deal to be desired as well. Nonetheless, it provides for a

(Continued on page 17)

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So instead of a race for speed or power per dollar, we prefer *goosebumps per dollar*. Because that has to do with music. And somewhere in the cacophony of claims for a *tad* less of this and a *lot* more of that, the *music* must be served. For it is the beautiful sweep of the strings, the bite of the brass, the crescendo that reaches deep into your musical consciousness and moves you to goosebumps that makes you buy high fidelity equipment in the first place. Without goosebumps, specifications are just a bunch of scribbles on paper.

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(IIM) by the minimal use of negative feedback and a slew (no pun intended) of other new understandings about high fidelity have been used in a totally *balanced* way to achieve the sound we get. No "hot buttons" here. Indeed, we believe the sound room is as important as the laboratory, that the music you hear is what counts — not the din of advertising claims. That's why when you buy one of our products, you get exactly what you pay for. More performance per dollar. More music per dollar. And more goosebumps!

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few moments a privileged answer to the question of what the great castrati singers of the first two centuries of opera actually sounded like: thrillingly, hair-raisingly incredible.

So, too, Nyiregyházi, the last of another line, is a kind of pipeline down time's corridors, one that permits us some idea of what the great piano virtuosos of the nineteenth century sounded like. The answer, for those who care to listen, is again hair-raising. The experience will be closed to those who cannot listen through the static of a couple—nay, fistsful!—of missed notes and beyond the (now) scandalous liberties those virtuosos customarily took with the music they played. More's the pity, for they will then never be able really to comprehend the almost hypnotic hold Liszt and others had on their audiences. The listening isn't easy, but suspend disbelief and it will be rewarding: there is no one else today who plays in this tradition, not even me.

Columbia's second album of Nyiregyházi (his first was reviewed in our October 1978 issue by Music Editor James Goodfriend) has just been released (M 35125), and I recommend it to all adventurous spirits, particularly for the performances of Grieg's Der Hirtenknebe and Tchaikovsky's Waltz in A-flat Minor, heterodoxical as all get-out, but a very definition of waltz rhythm nonetheless. (Nyiregyházi, by the way, recently brought to an end his tenth marriage.)

Young Masters

● In Peter Reilly's January review of Billy Joel's "52nd Street," he said that the album "belongs in any serious collection of young pop masters." I wonder if Mr. Reilly has ever sat down and made a list of other albums in that category.

ROGER FORD
Summit, N.J.

Peter Reilly replies: You won't wander too far off the mark if you check into the work of Janis Ian, Randy Newman, Peter Allen, Don MacLean, Harry Nilsson, the McGarrigle Sisters, Jimmy Webb, James Taylor, Jimmy Buffett, and, perhaps more variably, Arlo Guthrie. All these artists are working within a continuum, so it would be misleading to recommend any particular albums.

Hafler "Quad"

● Richard Marlen's outrage, in February "Letters to the Editor," over Ralph Hodges' column on the Hafler ambiance decoder ("Audio Basics," December 1978) is uncalled for. I have used this system, in the form of the Dyna Quadaptor, for about seven years, and I know the good things it does. Many stereo records come through with believable ambiance, though some do produce quad "Ping-pong" effects. Binaural recordings decode believably, sometimes to better effect than with their intended headphone listening. The best effects of the system constitute a significant step forward in fidelity to the original performance. And the bonus is that dynamic range seems to expand with no actual increase in volume; depth perspective is improved too.

It's amazing that this concept hasn't caught on. It's like the giveaway matchbook, which you can get anywhere, costs nothing, and works exactly as it is intended to. But some

people still prefer fancy, gold-plated lighters to do the same thing.

CARLOS E. BAUZÁ
San Juan, Puerto Rico

● My thanks to readers David Green and, especially, Richard Marlen, whose February letters rattled my cage and got me to reread Ralph Hodges' "Pseudo Time Delay" article. The diagram he provided revealed that my own setup could easily be adapted for pseudo time delay, and the result has been to transform my stereo room (which my wife calls her dining room) into a mini music hall.

DONALD H. CAMPBELL
Reading, Pa.

● I find it both amusing and frustrating to see the reader interest (as reflected in "Letters to the Editor") in the David Hafler "pseudoquad" or "pseudo time-delay" hookup. It's amusing because I first read about Hafler's circuit in Ralph Hodges' fantastic original article in the April 1971 STEREO REVIEW. Within minutes I had hooked up a couple of extra speakers and was overwhelmed by the result. I haven't returned to two-speaker stereo since.

It's frustrating because this indicates that quadruphony has become nothing more than a curiosity to many. Most quad records were deleted two years ago or more, and so far as I know there are no longer any quad amplifiers or decoders (except perhaps one or two quite expensive models) readily available. It's true that at its worst quad made classical music sound very unnatural and that the new time-delay systems provide sound closer to that of a concert hall. However, these systems are very expensive, and a sensibly used Sansui QS decoder will always provide more natural concert-hall sound than simple stereo. With popular music the difference between quad and stereo is even more dramatically apparent, since these days there's no such thing as a "natural-sounding" pop recording anyway.

It's a travesty that quad was allowed to die just because the manufacturers (except Angel and a few smaller labels) stopped making quad records. Special records aren't even necessary, because with all the out-of-phase information on today's discs a good matrix decoder will produce a dramatic effect even with only two channels.

DAVID M. DOLAN
South Pasadena, Calif.

Metric Lesson

● "Tape Recording: A Short Primer" in the March issue contains the statement (pages 75-76) that tape-deck head gaps are "measurable in microns (millionths of an inch) . . ." A micron is a millionth of a meter, or about 40 millionths of an inch. Many modern heads do in fact have gaps as small as 1 micron.

NORMAN BREMER
Ithaca, N.Y.

Technical Editor Ralph Hodges replies: Mr. Bremer is entirely correct about the definition of "micron," and we regret the error. But his concluding statement needs some qualification. A 1-micron head gap is adequate for a cassette-deck play head, but it is a little narrow for a head combining both the record and play functions.

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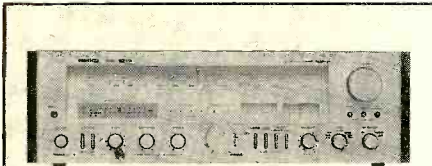
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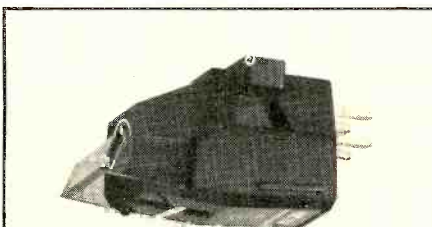
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LED's Indicate Power Output in New Nikko Receiver

□ The Nikko NR-1219 AM/FM receiver uses two horizontal rows of twelve LED's each to indicate the receiver's peak power output in each channel. The 1219 is rated at 100 watts per channel (both channels driven into 8 ohms), with a rated total harmonic distortion of 0.03 per cent or less. It is a direct-coupled design using a pure complementary output-stage configuration. Frequency response of the power-amplifier section is rated at 20 to 20,000 Hz. The FM tuner has a phase-locked-loop multiplex section and a circuit that uses phase cancellation, rather than simple filtering, to remove the multiplex pilot signal. A system Nikko calls "T-Lock" is used to assure exact FM tuning. Tuner specifications include: usable sensitivity, 1.8 microvolts; alternate-channel selectivity, 80 dB; capture ratio, 1 dB; total harmonic distortion, 0.15 per cent in stereo; image rejection, 90 dB; and i.f. rejection, 95 dB. Front-panel features of the 1219 include a midrange tone control, switchable FM de-emphasis, dual FM tuning meters (with a special status light to indicate when the T-Lock system is operating), and both audio and FM muting switches. Dimensions are 21¾ x 7 x 15 inches. Price: \$650.

Circle 120 on reader service card



Audio-Technica's First Moving-coil Phono Cartridge

□ Audio-Technica's new AT30E is unusual among moving-coil cartridges in that its stylus is user-replaceable and its compliance is fairly high. The latter characteristic, according to the manufacturer, enables the cartridge to have good tracking ability even at relatively

low tracking forces (recommended tracking force is 1.4 to 2 grams). The AT30E has a nude, elliptical stylus tip with dimensions of 0.3 x 0.7 mils. Output level is rated at 0.28 millivolt referenced to a 5-cm/sec lateral velocity, and frequency response is 15 to 25,000 Hz; stereo separation at 1,000 Hz is 25 dB. Price: \$100. For amplifiers or receivers without a moving-coil phono input, Audio-Technica offers the AT630 step-up transformer at a price of \$95.

Circle 121 on reader service card



New Horn Design, Power Limiter in Altec Speaker

□ The Altec Model 14 is a two-way, vented-enclosure loudspeaker with a 12-inch woofer and the company's "Mantaray" mid- and high-frequency driver. The Mantaray is a rectangular horn whose phasing plug uses radial rather than circumferential slots. This configuration, according to Altec, provides a frequency response wider than that of a horn with a conventional phasing plug. The Model 14 also incorporates a switchable power-sensing and limiting circuit ("Automatic Power Control") that lowers input power to the speaker, so as to prevent overload, without deactivating it entirely. The circuit is said to be sensitive to amplifier clipping and to sense average rather than peak levels, thus eliminating the possibility of a power reduction on normal musical peaks. Specifications of the Model 14 include a frequency response of 35 to 20,000 Hz, a sensitivity of 95 dB for a 1-watt input (measured at a distance of 4 feet), minimum power requirement of 10 watts, and a maximum power-handling capability of 60 watts without the Automatic Power Control and 200 watts with the circuit in use. Nominal impedance of the speaker is 8 ohms, and the crossover frequency is 1,500 Hz. Level controls for midrange and treble, as well as an overload-indicator lamp and test-switch for the lamp, are found on the system's front panel. Dimensions are 30 x 21 x 16½ inches and weight is 77 pounds. The enclosure is finished in oiled walnut. Price: \$495.

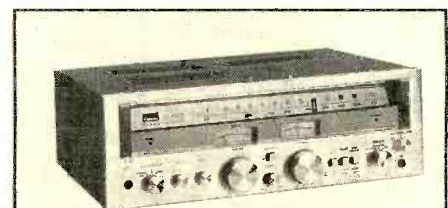
Circle 122 on reader service card



TDK's Latest Tape Accessories

□ TDK's HC-05 head maintenance kit (shown) contains an inspection mirror, brushes, felt cleaning pads that fit into a plastic handle, and a nontoxic and nonflammable head-cleaning fluid. The entire kit is housed in a plastic box that has the same dimensions as a standard cassette case. Price: \$5.99. The TDK Model CP-15 is a portable, stackable storage case designed to hold fifteen cassettes either in or out of their individual cases. The unit is made of chocolate-brown plastic with a clear hinged lid. Dimensions are approximately 12 x 6 x 3¾ inches. Price: \$5.99.

Circle 123 on reader service card



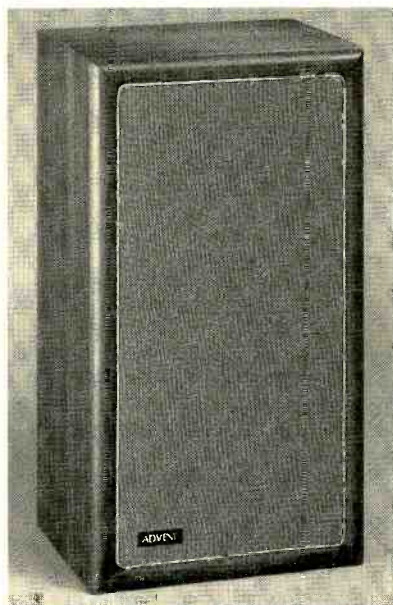
Fully Complementary, Medium-power Sansui Receiver

□ The power-output circuit of the Sansui G-4500 AM/FM receiver uses a true complementary-symmetry configuration, a circuit type long favored by audiophiles for use in high-power designs. The G-4500 is rated at 40 watts per channel, both channels driven into 8 ohms, with total harmonic and intermodulation distortion below 0.1 per cent.

The preamplifier section of the receiver incorporates a phono stage having a 200-millivolt input capability, a signal-to-noise ratio

(Continued on page 20)

(The New Advent Loudspeaker.)



The Standard.

The New Advent Loudspeaker is the newest version of this country's most popular and imitated speaker system. (More than eight hundred thousand original and New Advents have now gone into people's homes.) It is the standard of value in loudspeakers, the speaker most often used as a reference by the people who make and sell audio equipment.

Here are what we feel are the basic reasons for its popularity:

- For a fraction of the expected price, the New Advent covers the entire ten-octave range of music, with exceptional smoothness and low distortion.
- It provides the final half-octave of lowest bass response, supplied by very few speakers at any price. (This half-octave isn't present on all music and recordings, but when it is, the audible difference New Advents make is something to hear.)
- Its extended high-frequency response and excellent dispersion make for the kind of clarity and musical definition that helps bring music alive in your living room.
- Its power handling allows enjoyment of realistic sound levels in good-sized listening rooms. It can be used safely for music listening

with high-powered amplifiers and receivers, yet its efficiency is more than adequate for comfortable listening with moderately powered amplifiers and receivers. (People can and do start off with as little as 15 watts per channel to drive New Advents, graduating later to as much as 150 watts in no-holds-barred systems.)

- Its performance on any kind of music—rock, classical or anything in between—isn't at the expense of another. Its carefully chosen (and maintained) frequency balance across the audible range is designed to produce natural, convincing sound with the whole range of music and recording techniques found on recordings and broadcasts.

- Its quality is maintained by painstaking manufacture and testing. The drivers (designed and built by Advent) are individually response-tested before installation in their cabinets. And after manufacture every finished system is given a thorough response check before shipment. Speakers with very small deviations from the standard are rejected.

- Its price† (\$139 to \$169, depending on cabinet finish and how far it has been shipped), makes it one

of the few genuine bargains in audio equipment. (In its "Utility" cabinet version, at the lower end of that price spread, it is a superbargain by any standard.)

Behind all these factors is the basic design intent of the New Advent: to supply everything that has real importance for the great majority of critical listeners—with no corners cut, at the lowest possible cost.

If you are looking for exceptional performance, value, and enjoyment in a speaker, you owe it to yourself to hear the New Advent. We think you will have no trouble hearing why so many people buy and enjoy it.

For more information, including a list of Advent dealers, please send us the coupon.

Thank you.

SR-5/79

To: Advent Corporation,
195 Albany Street,
Cambridge, MA 02139

Please send full information on
the New Advent Loudspeaker.

Name _____

Address _____

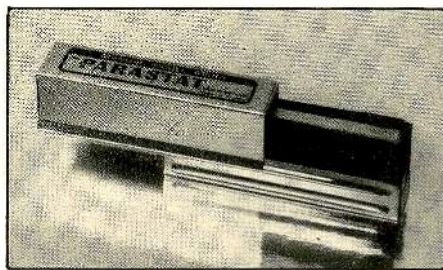
City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Advent Corporation, 195 Albany Street, Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139.

†Suggested price, subject to change without notice.

The Watts Parastat



**In 15 seconds
your records are
clean, dry,
and ready to play.**

With some systems you pour liquid on your records (and rub it into the grooves), while with others you brush the dirt around (and rub it into the grooves). The Watts Parastat is neither of these.

By placing a plush velvet pad on either side of a soft nylon brush and adding a drop or two of Parastatik® fluid, a remarkably efficient system is created.

The brush bristles lift the rubbish to the surface. The pads collect and remove it. And the Parastatik® fluid supplies just the right degree of humidity to relax dust collecting static without leaving any kind of film or deposit behind.

No other system does so much for your records in so little time.

So when you want the best, ask for the original. The Parastat, by Cecil Watts.

Cecil & Watts Ltd

Watts products are distributed exclusively in the U.S. by: Empire Scientific Corp., Garden City, NY 11530

New Products

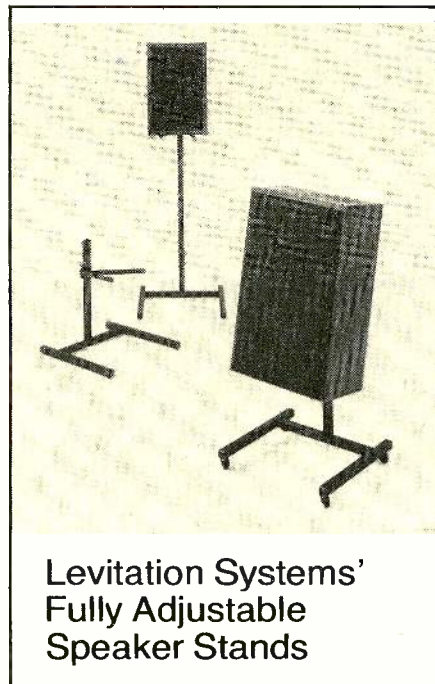
latest audio equipment and accessories

of 75 dB (measured using the IHF standard), and RIAA correction accuracy within ± 0.5 dB. The signal-to-noise ratio of the auxiliary inputs is 95 dB, tone controls (which are detented) provide a ± 10 -dB adjustment at 50 and 10,000 Hz, and the loudness-compensation switch boosts the frequency extremes of the receiver by a maximum of 7 dB at 50 Hz and 5 dB at 10,000 Hz.

The tuner of the G-4500 has an IHF sensitivity of 11 dBf (1.95 microvolts); 50-dB quieting in stereo is achieved with a 38-dBf (44-microvolt) input. Harmonic distortion in stereo is less than 0.3 per cent, capture ratio is 1.3 dB, and alternate-channel selectivity is 50 dB. The tuner's frequency response is 30 to 15,000 Hz $+0.5$, -1 dB.

Front-panel features of special interest include a microphone mixing circuit with a level control, two tuning meters, and an FM interstation-noise muting switch. Dimensions are approximately 17½ x 6½ x 14 inches. The receiver comes with a simulated-walnut-grain cabinet. Price: \$320.

Circle 124 on reader service card



**Levitation Systems'
Fully Adjustable
Speaker Stands**

□ Levitation Systems' speaker stands are continuously adjustable over a range of 1½ to 17 inches in height (up to 39 inches on special-order versions) and 0 to 25 degrees in upward tilt. According to the manufacturer, this permits the speaker to be optimally aligned for dispersion and stereo imaging.

The stands are constructed of tubular steel and are said to support speakers of up to 175 pounds. They are available in flat black and chrome finishes; adjustments in height and tilt are made using the supplied Allen wrench to

tighten the horizontal support member in the appropriate position. The support member has neoprene bumpers to prevent marring of cabinets, and the vertical stanchion can be used to conceal the speaker cable. Stands fitted with casters are available as an option. Price: \$45 to \$55 per pair, depending on configuration. For further information contact Levitation Systems, Dept. SR, 187 Streetsboro Street, Hudson, Ohio 44236.

Circle 125 on reader service card



**Sony Cassette Deck
Uses Microprocessor
To Select Programs**

□ Sony's TC-K60 is a single-motor, two-head cassette deck that uses an integrated-circuit microprocessor to control what is called an "Automatic Music Sensor" function. The AMS circuit permits the user to choose any one of nine recorded program selections (which must be separated by at least four seconds of blank tape) on a given cassette. There is a numerical LED readout for the selector, and pressing the play key together with either the rewind or the fast-forward key causes the deck to search out the chosen selection and switch into the play mode automatically. There is a "record-mute" control button for editing recordings and making the required blank segments between selections. The deck's transport controls also include an "Autoplay" function, which automatically replays a tape after rewind if the play and rewind keys are pressed simultaneously.

The tape-drive system of the TC-K60 has a slotless, brushless motor governed by a frequency-controlled servo system operating through a single capstan. The wow and flutter specification is 0.045 per cent (weighted rms), and rewind time for a C-60 cassette is 90 seconds. The record/play head of the deck is of ferrite-on-ferrite construction. Level metering is provided by two thirty-three-element liquid-crystal displays covering a range from -40 to $+5$ dB. The display changes from blue to red at the 0-dB demarcation point, and the response characteristics can be switched either to hold the highest peak during an entire program or to display peaks for a 1.7-second period. Other front-panel controls include memory and timer switches, a pair of

(Continued on page 22)



*The DGC-20

NOW, BEHIND THE BODY ARE BRAINS.

The Audiovox DGC-20 is the car stereo with a built-in computer. And some amazing capabilities.

It knows things.

A tiny micro-processor chip inside the DGC-20 has all the information to give you totally electronic tuning. And whether you choose to tune manually or automatically, the know-it-all chip stops and locks onto a station to virtually eliminate annoying drift.

It shows things.

Digital read-out displays the exact AM/FM when switched to mode 1. Also the exact AM/PM when switched to mode 2.

It remembers.

Memory pushbuttons can keep 12 stations "in mind." Even if you forget which station handles Handel or where Waylon wails, the DGC-20 remembers.

It understands.

How to search out and stop at the next available station. Automatic Seek does it.

And then, the Audiovox DGC-20 has some capabilities that are not amazing. Just important. Like a local/distant switch. And a mono/stereo switch. And outputs for 4 speakers and individual left-to-right and front-to-rear balancing controls. And a locking fast-forward and rewind on the stereo cassette player.

If you want to find out about the latest advances in car stereo, stop by your Audiovox dealer and test-listen the DGC-20. The car stereo that's so sophisticated, it thinks before it speaks.

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We build stereo for the road. We have to build it better.

CIRCLE NO. 5 ON READER SERVICE CARD

DISCWASHER

presents

The Clean Truth About Your Naked Stylus

When your stylus plays over one light fingerprint or one tiny "bead" of vinyl stabilizer, the clean naked diamond becomes a glazed, dust-holding abrasive weapon wearing away at your records and masking their true sound. This unseen build-up may actually hold the tracking tip of the diamond out of the record groove.



Accumulated grit on stylus that looks "clean" to the naked eye.

The SC-1 Stylus Cleaner from Discwasher is designed with a brush that is stiff enough to remove harmful accumulation, but gentle enough to avoid damaging delicate cartridge assemblies. Two drops of Discwasher's D3 Fluid add extra cleaning action to the SC-1 without the side-effects of alcohol, which can harden rubber cantilever mountings.



After cleaning with SC-1 and D3 Fluid by Discwasher.

The retractable, walnut-handled SC-1 includes a magnifying mirror for convenient inspection of stylus/cartridge alignment and wiring.

Get the clean truth from your records; get the SC-1.

SC-1 STYLUS CLEANER



discwasher® inc.
1407 N. Providence Rd.
Columbia, MO 65201

New Products

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three-position bias- and equalization-selection switches, and concentric record-level controls. Frequency response is rated at 30 to 13,000 Hz ± 3 dB for normal tape, 30 to 15,000 Hz ± 3 dB for chromium-dioxide tape, and 30 to 16,000 Hz ± 3 dB for ferrichrome tape. With the Dolby circuits switched out, signal-to-noise ratios are 53 dB (normal), 55 dB (chromium-dioxide), and 58 dB (ferrichrome). Total harmonic distortion is specified as 1.3 per cent or less. Dimensions are 18 $\frac{1}{8}$ x 6 $\frac{1}{8}$ x 12 $\frac{3}{8}$ inches. Price: \$550.

Circle 126 on reader service card



Two Nakamichi "Metal-ready" Cassette Decks

□ Nakamichi Research has introduced two front-loading cassette decks capable of recording and playing pure-metal tape. The Models 581 and 582 (shown) use much the same transport mechanism as the company's Model 580 in conjunction with new record and playback heads and electronics.

The transport of the 581 and 582 is logic controlled and has three motors—a d.c. servomotor for capstan drive, a high-speed motor for fast-forward and rewind functions, and a third electronically controlled motor used to engage the transport and control other functions through a multipurpose cam. The dual capstans and many of the other moving components in the transport have deliberately asymmetrical masses and dimensions to diffuse any resonances associated with rotational speed. Nonresonant alloys and plastics are also used to reduce resonance. The wow-and-flutter specification for both recorders is 0.05 per cent (weighted rms).

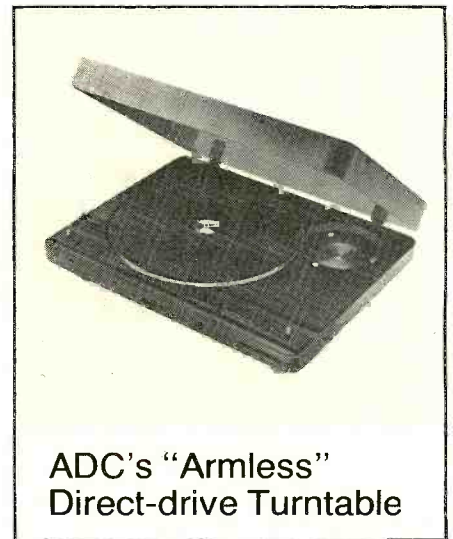
The record and play heads of the two decks are fully separate, with separate alignment adjustments, and are made of Crystalloy. Both heads engage the tape via the central opening in the cassette shell—a closely spaced arrangement designed to eliminate the azimuth adjustment for each cassette necessary with many other machines having three physically separate heads. A special mechanism in the transport forces the cassette's pressure pad away from the tape so that its motion is more directly under the control of the dual-capstan drive. The record head has a 3.5-micron gap and the playback head a 0.9-micron gap; both have slotted "cutouts" on the head surface that are said to promote even head wear. The erase head of the 581 and 582 is similar to the

"Direct Flux" head used in the Model 580. Its operating principle resembles that of a transformer in which the actual pole-piece assembly serves as the secondary "winding." Erasure is said to be better than -80 dB.

Specifications for the two units are identical (the sole difference being that the 582 permits off-the-tape monitoring while recording, with simultaneous Dolby decoding; the 581 does not). Frequency response is 20 to 20,000 Hz ± 3 dB with ferric, chromium-dioxide, or pure-metal tapes. Signal-to-noise ratio is 68 dB with the Dolby system operating (pure-metal tape). With conventional tapes, total harmonic distortion is below 1.5 per cent, measured at a 0-dB recording level; with metal tape it is 0.6 per cent.

Front-panel features for both units include peak-reading meters, fine-adjustment controls for bias and record level, switchable 70- or 120-microsecond equalization, and timer and memory functions. Test-tone oscillators operating at 400 and 15,000 Hz are provided for the bias and record-level calibrations, the results of which read out directly on the meters of both machines. Dimensions are approximately 19 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 5 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 13 $\frac{3}{8}$ inches. Prices: Model 581, \$770; Model 582, \$890.

Circle 127 on reader service card



ADC's "Armless" Direct-drive Turntable

□ The ADC Model 1750 DD is a two-speed (33 $\frac{1}{3}$ and 45 rpm) direct-drive manual unit with a quartz-governed, phase-locked-loop configuration for its motor-control circuit. It differs from ADC's Model 1700 DD only in that it does not come with a tone arm. An adaptor kit (included) has mounting plates that fit several popular arms (the ADC LMF, SME, Infinity Black Widow, and Grace among them) and a blank plate that can be drilled out to accept others. The 1750 DD has an unusual base, constructed of two layers of dissimilar materials, that is said to have reso-

(Continued on page 24)

If you're happy with your car stereo, it's probably because you don't know any better.

You can blame Detroit for pulling the wool over your ears.

They put an FM radio and tape deck in your dashboard and told you it was "stereo."

It wasn't.

They only gave you the start of a stereo system.

The rest of it, you get from us.

It's called the Fosgate system.

And it makes your car sound as good as your living room. Maybe better.

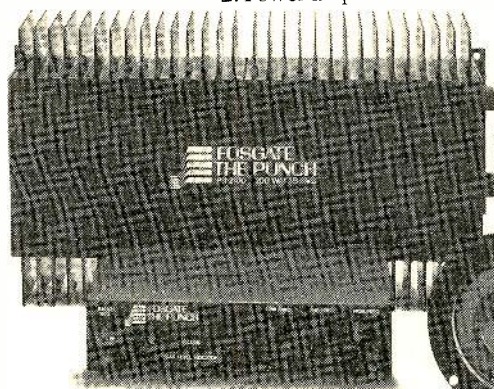
Take our Punch 2100 for instance.

Power amp, preamp, and your choice of speakers.

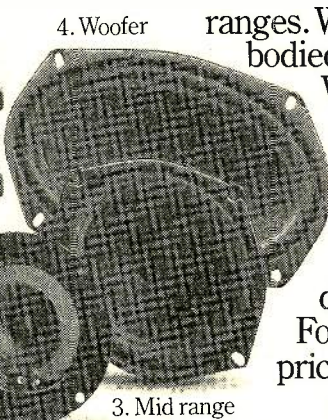
The power amp gives you 100 watts RMS per channel. The kind of power you need for clean, high fidelity playback on the highway.

With less than .05% THD, you'll hear no distortion all the way from 20 HZ to 20 KHZ.

2. Power amp



1. Preamp

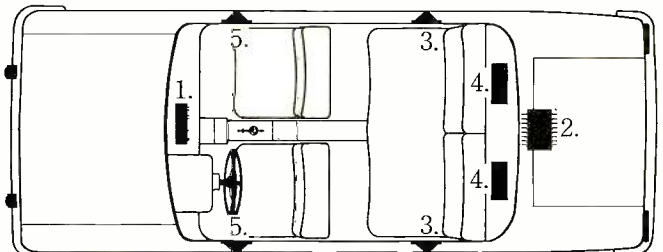


5. Tweeter

3. Mid range

4. Woofer

The preamp has LED readouts. And an active equalizer circuit with 216 different ways to shape the sound to your personal taste.



For your car, we make components good enough for your home.

When it comes to speakers, very few can handle the power of the Punch.

None can do it for the reasonable price of Fosgate's speakers.

When your Fosgate system is installed, you can crank up the volume so it literally vibrates your rear-view mirror.

With rich, well-defined bass. With brilliance and clarity in the mid and high ranges. With accurate separation and full-bodied imaging.

Without audible distortion.

Even the most demanding audiophile would be impressed.

Hear what you've been missing all these years. Visit any respectable car stereo dealer and listen to the four Fosgate systems in four different price ranges.

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We build
a speaker
that sounds
like music

It can accurately reproduce the 120+ dB peaks that are found in some live music. That's more than just being able to play music loud. It can accurately reproduce the music bandwidth—from below 25Hz to 20kHz. And the Interface:D's vented midrange speaker reproduces midrange sounds with the clarity and purity that allows precise localization of sound sources—both lateral and front-to-back.

The Interface:D is the only commercially available speaker we know of that can meet these criteria. Audition them at your Interface dealer.



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a gulton company
600 Cecil Street
Buchanan, Michigan 49107

Interface:D™

nance-cancellation properties. The turntable suspension consists of four resilient feet on which the base rests. The platter of the turntable is die-cast aluminum, and the turntable mat is made of an antistatic plastic substance. Specifications include a rumble figure of -70 dB (measured using the DIN-B standard) and a weighted rms wow-and-flutter specification of 0.03 per cent. Top-panel controls and features include a power indicator, speed switch, digital speed display, and a continuously adjustable variable-speed knob. Dimensions are 18½ x 6 x 15 inches. Price: \$179.95.

Circle 128 on reader service card

stereo separation at high frequencies only), selection from up to three pairs of speakers (alone or in combination), dual FM tuning meters, and indicator lights to show when the receiver's protection circuits are activated and when the FM section is optimally tuned and locked onto a frequency. Dimensions are approximately 21¾ x 7¼ x 16 inches. The SA-5601 has a rosewood-grain vinyl-finish cabinet with a silver-color metal faceplate; a black-faceplate version, the SA-5605, is available at no extra charge. Price: \$600.

Circle 129 on reader service card



Optonica Receiver
Has Three
Tone Controls

□ Optonica's SA-5601 is an 85-watt-per-channel AM/FM receiver with several unusual controls and features, including a midrange tone control and two power-output level meters. The preamplifier section of the SA-5601 has two phono inputs, an input-overload level of 250 millivolts, a signal-to-noise ratio of 76 dB, and an RIAA response accurate within 0.2 dB. The bass, midrange, and treble controls have turnover frequencies of 100, 1,000, and 10,000 Hz, respectively; the range of adjustment is ±10 dB for the bass and treble controls and ±8 dB for the midrange control. The high and low filters operate with 6-dB-per-octave slopes below 30 and above 7,000 Hz. The amplifier section has rated total-harmonic and intermodulation distortion of 0.05 per cent or less.

The SA-5601 has a switch that permits turning the tuner section off while the preamplifier and amplifier circuits remain active. The tuner stage also has an automatic fine-tuning system (called "Optolock") that is activated when the user removes his hand from the tuning knob after roughly tuning in a station. Usable FM sensitivity is 1.7 microvolts (9.8 dBf), rated sensitivity for 50-dB quieting is 2.5 microvolts (13 dBf), alternate-channel selectivity is 80 dB, and capture ratio is 1.2 dB. Total harmonic distortion in stereo is specified as 0.3 per cent or less, and the ultimate signal-to-noise ratio is 80 dB.

Front-panel features include a high-blend switch that reduces reception noise (and

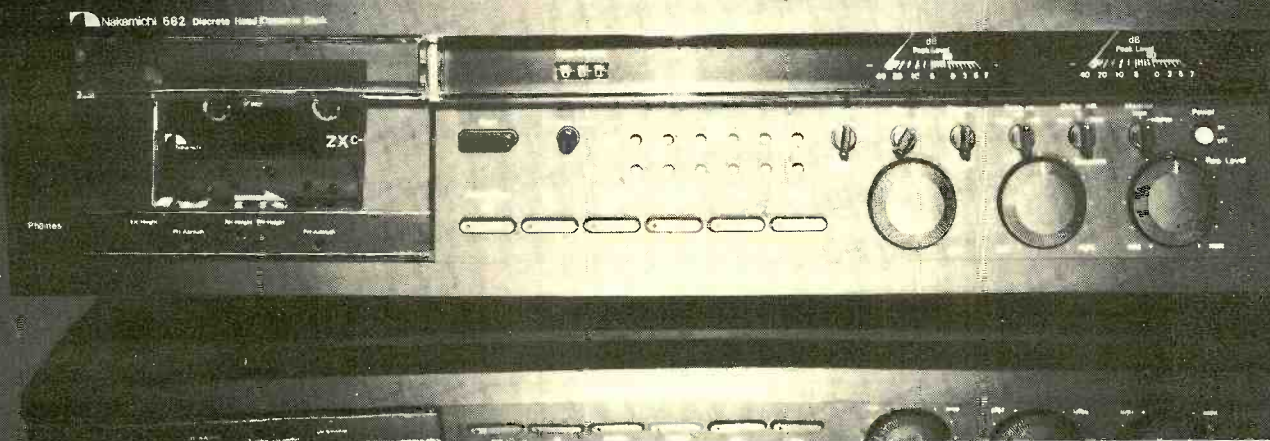


BES Introduces
"Sound Module II"
Loudspeaker Series

□ The BES Sound Module II loudspeakers use a single plastic-foam diaphragm divided into bass, midrange, and treble sections that are driven by separate voice-coil and magnet assemblies. Sound is radiated from both the front and rear surfaces of the diaphragm, thus setting up a horizontal and vertical dispersion pattern that BES calls "omnipolar."

There are six units in the new series. The SM350 is a two-driver system with 850 square inches total radiating area; claimed frequency response is 40 to 19,000 Hz and efficiency is 88 dB with a 1-watt input. The SM260 is a three-driver system with an 850-square-inch area; frequency response is 38 to 22,000 Hz and efficiency is 88 dB. The SM270, also a three-driver system, has a frequency response of 32 to 22,000 Hz and an efficiency rating of 91 dB. The SM 350 is a four-way design with a total radiating area of 1,300 square inches, a frequency response of 28 to 22,000 Hz, and efficiency of 93 dB. It includes provisions for bi-amplification. BES' top-of-the-line system, the SM600, has five drivers with a total radiating area of 2,175 square inches, a rat-

(Continued on page 26)



Metal... sound from another dimension

Metal tape is a shining breakthrough in magnetic recording. When matched with a suitably advanced cassette deck, metal tape delivers sonic excellence alien to conventional oxide tapes.

The Nakamichi 582 embodies years of intensive research and close work with many of the world's leading tape manufacturers. It is a cassette deck which sets the standard for performance with metal tape.

There is some history-making technology behind the 582's pace-setting performance. Hard-to-erase metal tape is no problem at all for the 2nd Generation Direct Flux Erase Head. The new micro-precision Crystalloy Record Head handles metal's super-high bias requirement with room to spare. And the ingenious "Discrete" 3-head configuration ensures optimum record and play without any of the drawbacks associated with past 3-head designs.

The 582's impressive specifications only hint at its sonic superiority. With metal tape, the 582 produces recordings of startling acuity and incomparable breadth.

But don't take our word for it. Ask your Nakamichi dealer to demonstrate the 582. He'll show you why your first metal-compatible cassette deck should be a Nakamichi.

Write for more information: 1101 Colorado Avenue,
Santa Monica, California 90401.

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SA-8800.....	358.00
SA-7800.....	293.00

PIONEER TUNERS

TX-9800.....	\$281.00
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SANSUI AU-717 SUPER INTEGRATED AMPLIFIER.....	\$335.00
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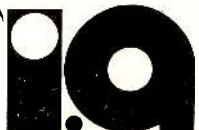
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ed frequency response of 25 to 22,000 Hz, and an efficiency rating of 93 dB. It also can be biamplified. Nominal impedance on all BES systems is 8 ohms. All units except the SM600 are fitted with oak bases and frames (the SM600 has a rosewood base and frame). Approximate dimensions (base depth included) are: SM250, 28¾ x 19¼ x 11 inches; SM260, 29¾ x 20¼ x 11 inches; SM270, 31¾ x 21¾ x 13 inches; SM350, 39 x 21¾ x 13 inches; SM600, 64 x 21¾ x 13 inches. Prices (in the same order): \$169, \$249, \$339, \$479, \$649.

Circle 130 on reader service card



Logical Systems Offers Noise Filter

□ The Logical Systems Model 8800 dynamic noise filter operates on the principle of reducing the bandwidth of a musical signal on quiet passages to remove noise while permitting a full-bandwidth signal to pass through its circuits on louder musical passages. The effect of this variable-bandwidth approach, according to the company, is to reduce the apparent noise level of program material by about 15 dB at 10,000 Hz. The audio signal is constantly analyzed not only for bandwidth and level, but also with respect to attack and decay time. A major feature of the unit is that the attack and release times of the bandwidth-limiting circuitry are program-dependent, thus preventing the audible "breathing" and "pumping" sounds of early noise filters.

Specifications of the Model 8800 include a maximum filter slope of 9 db per octave, frequency response of 20 to 20,000 Hz ±0.5 dB, a minimum bandwidth (the filter curtailing bandwidth to the greatest degree) of 1,500 Hz, and a signal-to-noise ratio of 85 dB referred to a 2-volt output. Total harmonic distortion is below 0.1 per cent at rated output, and intermodulation distortion is below 0.01 per cent. Dynamic range is 100 dB.

Front-panel controls include a tape-monitor circuit, a switch that defeats the filter for comparison of the processed vs. unprocessed program, a threshold control that varies the level at which filtering action begins in order to match the dynamic characteristics of different types of program material, and three light-emitting diodes that indicate the approximate bandwidth of the filter at a given moment. The Model 8800 uses standard phono connectors

and can be connected to a system through a tape-monitor circuit. Dimensions are 9¾ x 2½ x 6½ inches. Price: \$249. Further information is available from: Logical Systems, Dept. SR, 3314 "H" Street, Vancouver, Wash. 98663.

Circle 131 on reader service card



"Micron" Minispeakers Feature Distinctive Wood Cabinets

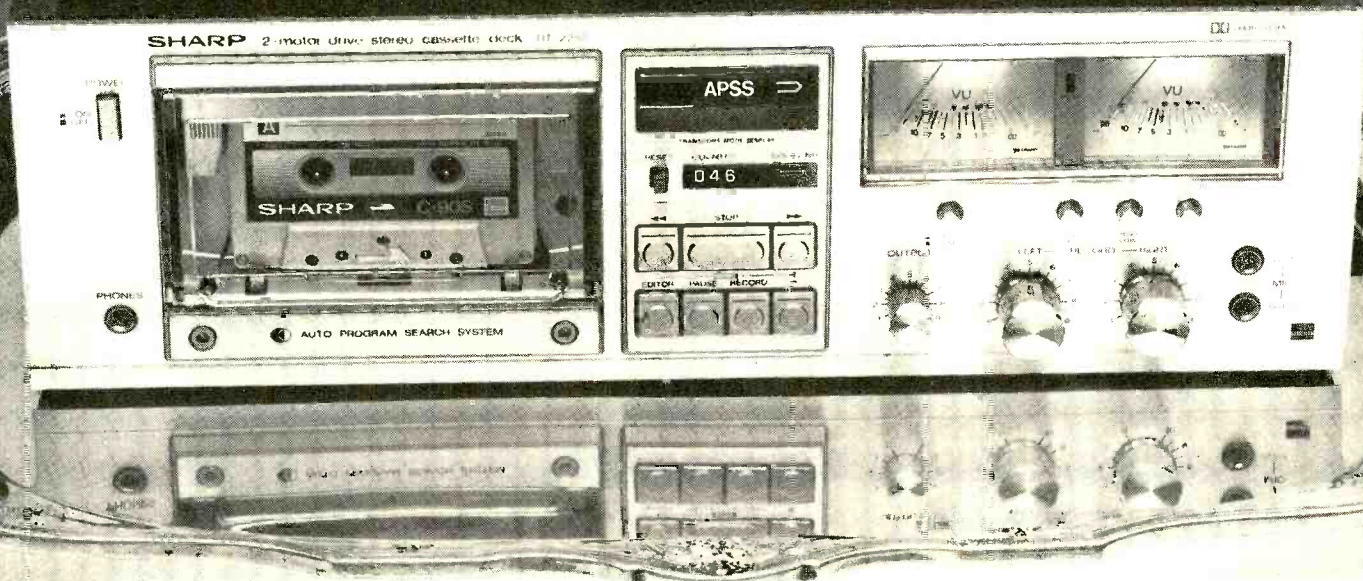
□ General Sound of Phoenix, Arizona, has introduced three small loudspeaker systems in their new "Micron" line. All three are available in a choice of white, black, or walnut-veneer enclosures with silver trim rings, and the speakers in each size are designated as belonging to the Micron 400, 500, or 600 series. The 400 series uses a 4-inch woofer and a 1-inch dome tweeter crossed over at 2,500 Hz; power-handling capacity is specified as 50 watts rms, efficiency is 77 dB at 1 meter with a 1-watt input, and rated frequency response is 125 to 20,000 Hz ±5 dB. The 500 series uses a 5¼-inch woofer and a 1-inch dome tweeter with a crossover at 5,500 Hz; power handling is 60 watts rms, efficiency is 78 dB with a 1-watt input, and frequency response is 100 to 20,000 Hz ±5 dB. The 600 series speakers have a 6½-inch woofer, a 2-inch midrange, and a 1-inch dome tweeter; power handling is 75 watts rms, efficiency is 78 dB with 1 watt, and frequency response is 70 to 20,000 Hz ±5 dB. Approximate dimensions are: 400 series, 8 x 6½ x 5¼ inches; 500 series, 9 x 6 x 7½ inches; 600 series, 11¾ x 7¾ x 8½ inches. Prices: 400 series, \$125; 500 series, \$150; 600 series, \$200. For more information write to General Sound, Dept. SR, 2434 South 24th Street, Phoenix, Ariz. 85034.

Circle 132 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.

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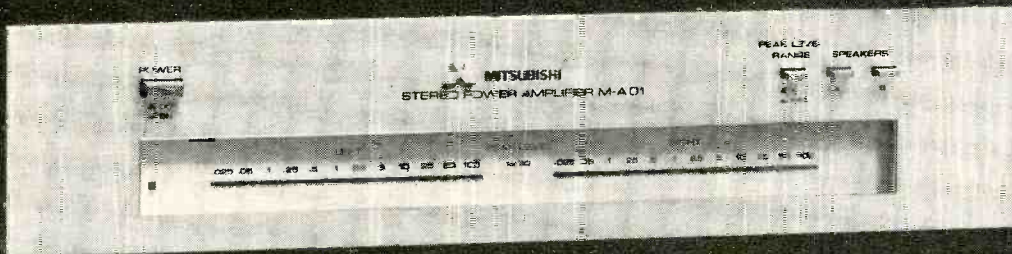
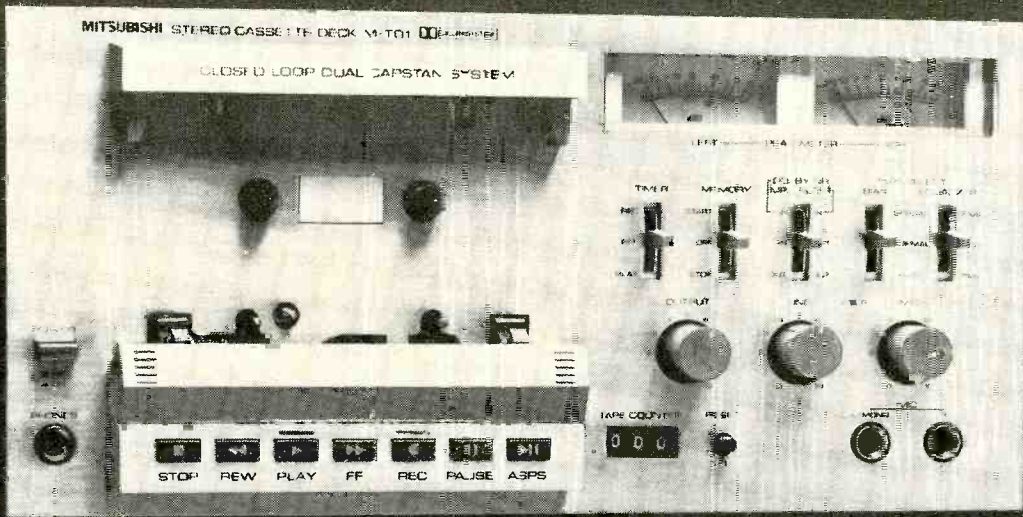
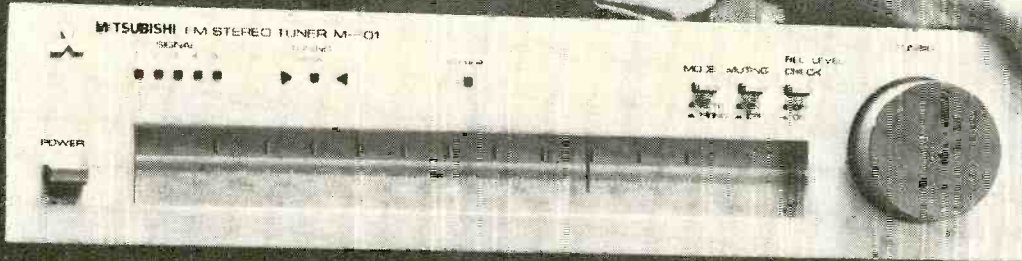
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Stereo components that are compact. But can hardly be called compacts.

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Mitsubishi's Microcomponents. Micro FM Tuner, M-F01. Micro Cassette Deck, M-T01. Micro Amp, M-A01. Micro Preamp, M-P01. For more information write Melco Sales, Inc., Dept. SR, 3030 East Victoria Street, Compton, California 90221.

CIRCLE NO. 45 ON READER SERVICE CARD

By Gary Stock



YOU, ME, AND THE FCC

HISTORICALLY, the audio industry has not had any substantial degree of contact with the forces of American Big Government. To be sure, almost everyone involved with high fidelity (and almost everyone not involved) pays his or her taxes, but aside from this well-known example of inevitability, and the occasional government-sponsored caucus on military electronic-parts standards, the Fed has remained until recently, in the eyes of those with an interest in sound reproduction, a sleeping or indifferent giant.

Hi-fi's spectacular growth over the past several years has changed all that; the audio-equipment manufacturers now constitute a business group large enough to receive the attention of federal agencies ranging from the Federal Trade Commission to the Environmental Protection Agency. The FTC's mandatory standardization of advertised power-output claims and the recent Congressional proposals to regulate levels of receiver and amplifier immunity to radio-frequency interference (RFI) are the best-known examples of increasing federal involvement, but there are dozens of less-publicized others.

Of all the government bureaus whose activities impinge on audio, the Federal Communications Commission stands out as one of the most directly influential. The FCC's impact on high fidelity, in fact, extends back to the early days of hi-fi. Its rulings in the Fifties and Sixties during the infancy of FM were among the first cases of hi-fi standards established by an authority outside the industry rather than by informal agreement between manufacturers.

At this moment, the FCC is in a position to exert a more profound influence on the world of audio, for better or for worse, than at any time in its past. The commission is now taking action on five separate and distinct issues relating directly to the high-fidelity industry, with rulings and standards on all of them either already issued or expected within the next two years.

The most exciting and potentially beneficial of the programs being addressed by the commission, the National Public Radio Satellite System, is actually not an idea conceived by the FCC but rather a brainchild of engineers at another federally financed office, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. The FCC's

involvement is concerned first with the system's legal approval and second with the ultimate indirect consequences of its implementation. In January of this year, the commission formally approved a satellite link system that will allow all of the approximately two hundred noncommercial public radio stations in the nation (both FM and AM) to receive and rebroadcast, through the satellites, stereo programs beamed from any of sixteen transmitting facilities. The system will utilize two Westar communications satellites already "parked" in orbit 22,000 miles above the center of the United States, and will provide reproduction quality fully as good as that afforded by conventional FM broadcasts (a 15,000-Hz bandwidth with an ultimate signal-to-noise ratio of at least 70 dB). The satellites will be able to receive and retransmit to the stations up to twelve separate channels of programming in any format, including discrete quadruphony.

Frank Mankiewicz, the president of National Public Radio, feels that the system will usher in "a new era" in public broadcasting. Music, public affairs, and news programs that would not have been technically feasible to produce or send from station to station via either telephone link-up or in the form of mailed tapes will be able to be carried by the satellite; programs in minority languages and on subjects of highly topical or regional inter-

est, at present too expensive to be prepared by individual stations, will become economically practical because the distribution capabilities of the system will allow many stations to share some of the costs of production. Mankiewicz foresees explosive growth in the public-radio sector as a result of the system. "I would be surprised," he says, "if there were not six hundred or so full-service public radio stations in operation ten years down the road from here."

If an additional four hundred public radio stations do indeed come into existence, they will occupy many of the broadcast frequencies still available. And this, coupled with the FCC's avowed determination to involve minorities in broadcasting to a greater degree than in the past, as well as the constant clamor of business groups for station allocations in profitable areas, has moved the commission to study, and to report upon in an obliquely positive fashion, another program with major consequences for the audio industry: reduction of the channel spacing between both AM and FM stations (although it is likely that the concept of reduced spacing would be under review even had the satellite system not been implemented).

In the light of the public interest, the principle by which the FCC is charged with making its rulings, the concept of reducing channel spacing to permit more channels (and, perforce, a greater diversity of radio programming) has obvious merit. Such an action would solve several thorny problems at the stroke of a pen: "equal time" and minority-viewpoint considerations that frequently dictate aspects of the character of present radio programming would have reduced importance with more stations in operation. Financial groups hungry for a piece of the profitable broadcast pie but now frozen out by lack of available channels in large cities could then be accommodated as well.

But, particularly on the FM band, adoption of reduced spacing might be a catastrophe in terms of broadcast quality (quality, paradoxically, is one of the primary concerns of the Public Radio Satellite System's development). According to FM expert and IHF technical director Leonard Feldman, the 100- and 150-kHz interstation spacings under study by the commission could render many receivers designed for the current 200-kHz spacings "virtually unusable" in urban areas because their tuning circuits and selectivity curves

(Continued on page 32)

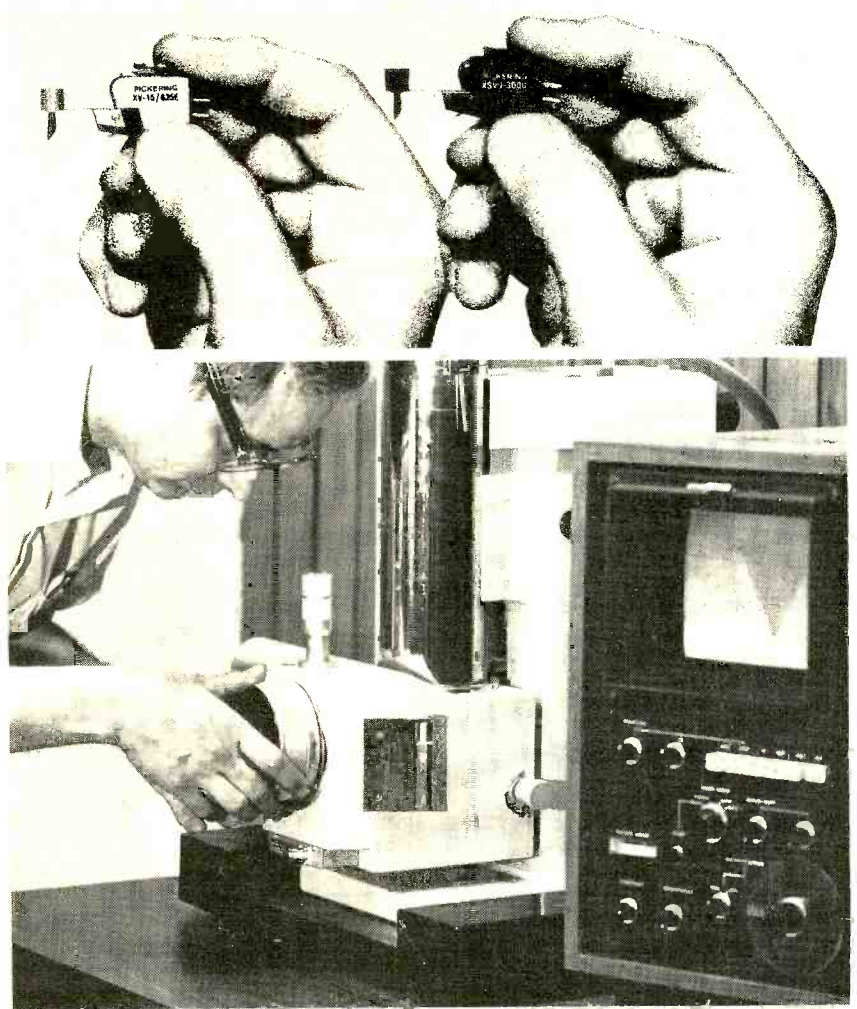
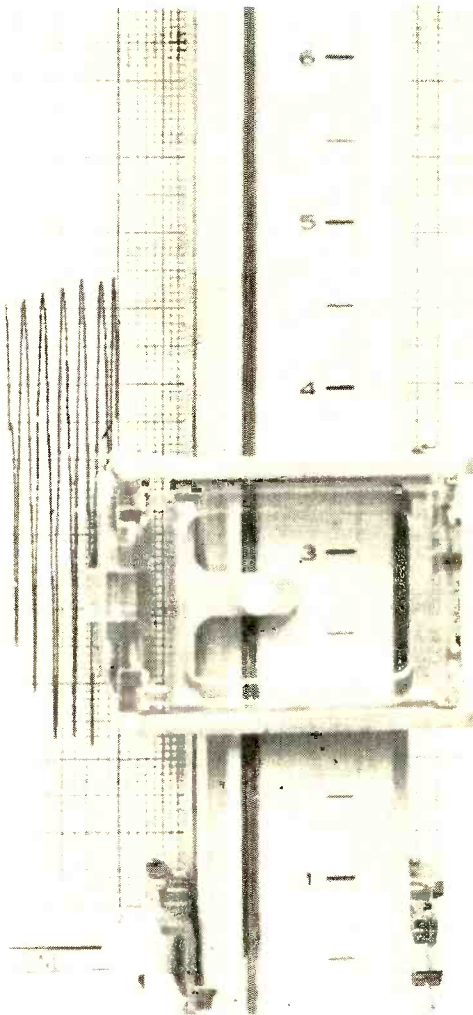
A 4.5-meter dish antenna of the type that will be used by individual public radio stations to receive broadcasts from the satellite link system.



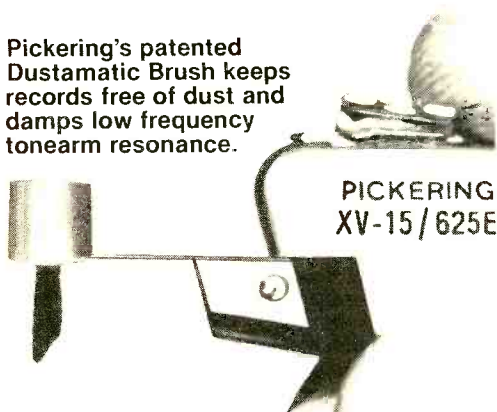
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CIRCLE NO. 44 ON READER SERVICE CARD

Audio News . . .

were designed for use with a 200-kHz spacing. Many frequency-synthesizing and quartz-locked tuners would be simply incapable of tuning in stations at certain frequencies, and the spacing would also summarily rule out many of the proposed discrete quadrasonic broadcast systems still under consideration (the study on reduced channel spacing was originally commissioned as part of an inquiry into quadrasonic broadcast standards). New tuner and receiver designs could probably be adapted to the changes, but a ruling in favor of reduced spacing would render millions of products now in use throughout the country technically obsolete, although usable in most cases.

As with all FCC studies, the FM spacing issue will pass through a number of intermediate steps, with public announcements and perhaps hearings, before it reaches the final decision stage. Consequently, it is likely to be at least eighteen months before any final standard is issued.

The commission has also funded a similar study with the idea of reducing the spacing between AM stations from 10 kHz to 9 kHz. Most experts agree, however, that such a reduction would not have nearly the effect on broadcast quality that the proposed FM reduction might. Most European and Asian nations now use the 9-kHz spacing, and the FCC permits a higher degree of "overlap" between stations. In fact, FCC regulations at present permit AM stations to broadcast with a signal bandwidth (50 to 15,000 Hz, almost the same as FM) that allows for a substantial 5-kHz overlap, though few stations take advantage of the option. Any decision on the AM-spacing question would have about the same timetable as the FM-spacing issue, according to FCC sources, and no action beyond the report stage is expected for some time.

The entire question of reduced AM-station spacing indicates the conflicting priorities of the commission, however, for while such a reduction is likely to have a negative (though admittedly minor) effect on AM sound quality, the FCC is simultaneously in the final stages of choosing a stereo-AM broadcast system. The intent of the move, according to the FCC, is to upgrade AM listening quality, provide facilities for stereo broadcasting in large, remote areas where the limited range of FM does not provide an adequate area of coverage, and give AM stations the potential of broadcasting signals competitive in sound quality to that of FM stations—and therefore attract advertisers now oriented solely toward FM. The stereo-AM question is well beyond the investigatory stage; five groups have submitted comprehensive proposals on the technical details of a broadcast standard, each proposal accompanied by the results of exhaustive FCC-sanctioned testing of prototype equipment, and a final ruling is expected within the year—presumably to be followed shortly thereafter by the introduction of stereo-AM-compatible consumer products.

THE FCC's investigation of questions of audio-component immunity to radio-frequency interference from ham and CB radio is the best-known of the commission's activities and has been covered in these pages in past months (see "Audio News," July 1978 and

September 1978) and elsewhere. As detailed in those columns, the original impetus to the FCC's investigation—the immense number of consumer complaints of interference with all types of electronic equipment (a total of more than 300,000 in the last five years)—led Senator Barry Goldwater (R-Ariz) and Representative Charles Vanik (D-Ohio) to draft two Congressional bills that would have empowered the FCC either to mandate measures to render electronic equipment immune to common types of interference or to prescribe minimum standards of immunity without regulating the specific countermeasures to be used by the equipment manufacturers.

These measures have been vigorously opposed by the audio community on the ground that the measures mandated by the FCC may have the indirect effect of degrading the performance of audio components significantly. Both bills were allowed to die in the last session of Congress, and Senator Goldwater has since announced that he believes audio manufacturers have begun to take the actions necessary to obviate reintroduction of his bill, though he intends to review the matter periodically. The commission, however, issued a "Notice of Inquiry," a request for industry and consumer comments on the subject, in November 1978, and FCC sources concede the probability that the update of the omnibus Communications Act of 1934 now being prepared in Congress will give the commission the regulatory powers originally proposed by Senator Goldwater and Representative Vanik *without the attention that would be focused on a bill proposed explicitly for that purpose*. If this is the case, the response to the Notice of Inquiry may be critically significant to whatever regulation the commission finally issues on the subject.

One clue to the perspective of the commission staff on questions of regulation is contained in the notice itself in the form of an attached copy of an advisory bulletin issued by the Canadian government in 1977. The bulletin (which the notice states has been attached for the purpose of soliciting public comment) specifies the level of interference likely to be encountered in various geographic areas and establishes a three-level grading system for electronic equipment. Canadian manufacturers are requested to label products in accordance with the grading system as a means of giving their customers some indication of the degree to which components will be affected by interference in different locales. It also warns, however, that the Canadian Department of Communications has the authority to mandate certain levels of performance in electronic components. It is interesting to note that FCC chairman Charles Ferris supported the concept of the Canadian bulletin in his testimony at the Senate subcommittee hearings on the Goldwater anti-RFI bill held last year.

THE prospect for major changes as a result of the upcoming FCC rulings is great, both for better (as with the Public Radio Satellite System and the advent of high-quality stereo-AM broadcasting) and for worse (as might occur in the case of station-spacing changes or anti-RFI rulings). Clearly, neither the FCC nor the audio community have answers that will please everyone, yet the hope persists that solutions that will satisfy both the interests of the audio enthusiast and the larger needs of the nation can be found. □

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The first time you hear the L220's, before you know what's happening to you, you smile.

Later, when you find the words, you'll be able to talk about things like "texture" and "detail" and "subtlety." But right now it's all feeling. It's love at first sound.

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Now turn them down for a minute and listen with your eyes. The L220's are tall, tapered, elegant — appearing more slim than they actually are.

Now slip the grille off and feast your eyes on the components: New high frequency elliptical ring radiator. New

refracting wave guide for the midrange. A 14" woofer with a massive, twelve pound magnetic assembly. A 15" passive radiator. Four superb individual performers. How do they work together? Magnificently.

Conventional Staggered Baffle Array



The L220 Flat Baffle Array

To attain proper phase relationships, the acoustic centers of the drivers must be aligned. The JBL L220 design accomplishes this while retaining the flat baffle necessary to prevent spurious reflections.

That breathtaking stereo imaging you hear is not by accident. It's by design. The components are in precise

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vertical alignment. They are in precise acoustical alignment, too. The time domain response, the phase linearity is flawless. JBL's engineers accomplished this without creating one of those staggered baffle fronts that cause as many problems as they solve.

Come celebrate the L220's. They're yours for \$1,750 a pair. They're a whole lot of loudspeakers from the people who gave high performance sound a first name: JBL.

JBL

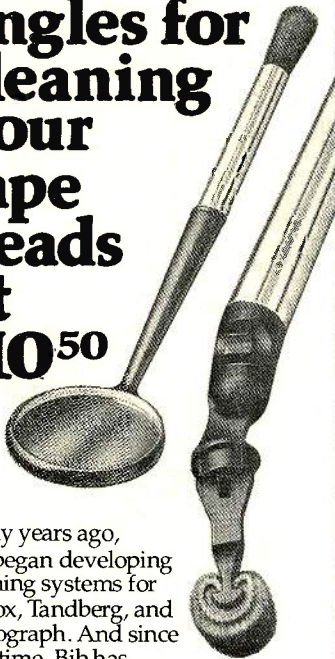
GET IT ALL.



Last year, 35 of the top 50 albums were recorded or mixed in studios using JBL loudspeakers. Shown here: Criteria Studios, Miami, Florida.



Bib has all the angles for cleaning your tape heads at \$10⁵⁰



Many years ago, Bib began developing cleaning systems for Revox, Tandberg, and Ferrograph. And since that time, Bib has sought a satisfactory answer to the problem of dirty tape heads and pinch rollers.

As a consequence of its diligent research, Bib has created the Tape Head Cleaner—a totally unique and completely effective instrument that can be used on any brand or style of tape deck.

Because the head rotates around 280° and locks into any position desired, the tool can reach the heads whatever their position. And the tip of the tool is made from a soft synthetic fiber that does not shed, unlike cotton pads or similar devices.

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Bib Hi-Fi Accessories, Inc.
3363 Garden Brook Drive, Dallas, Texas, 75234

Audio Q. and A.

By Larry Klein



Turntable Troubles

Q. *I, and many of my friends, have trouble with our turntables (different brands). The problem is that when we are playing records the right channel cuts out. If the tone arm is tapped, the right channel comes back in, only to go out again shortly thereafter. Tapes played through the same speakers don't do this. Can you tell me what's wrong and what I need to do about it?*

CLARENCE O. PECOY
Conway, Ark.

A. I can't imagine what could cause the same intermittent-right-channel problem with several different brands of turntables, unless perhaps you and your friends, being a little short of cash, formed a syndicate to buy a high-price (but unfortunately defective) cartridge that you share on some regular schedule. Or maybe it's a defective pre-amplifier that's being passed around.

In any case, ignoring for the moment your friends' record players, I would suggest some minor servicing steps for yours. First, remove the cartridge head shell from the arm. Then remove the cartridge stylus assembly (assuming it is removable) and put it aside for safe-keeping. Now gently rub a pencil eraser across the exposed contacts on both the head shell and the tone arm that provide the electrical connections between the two. This will remove any built-up insulating oxidation. Make sure that the four thin wire leads that go from the inside rear of the head shell to the cartridge's terminal pins are tight at *both* ends. Note that there are a few turntables whose head-shell leads are crimped rather than soldered to the terminal-pin clips. In a number of cases inadequate crimping has caused intermittent connections, with resulting signal loss and hum. The solution is to squeeze the crimped connections with a pair of long-nose pliers—or, better yet, to *solder* the wires to the pin clips (but *not* the cartridge pins).

The other common place for an intermittent condition to develop is in the shielded phono leads themselves, either at the tie points or sockets under the turntable base where they connect to the tone-arm leads, or at the preamp's phono-input end. Gently wiggling the leads while a record is playing will usually provoke the trouble if its source is in either of these two areas. Tightening, cleaning, or re-

placing the leads is in order once the problem has been localized. If none of these procedures help, check the muting contacts that are part of the turntable mechanism beneath the turntable base. The muting setup is usually nothing more than a flat spring-like arrangement that shorts out both signal leads (to prevent extraneous noises) when an automatic tone arm is cycling. Sometimes these muting switches get out of adjustment and blank out the signal at random intervals.

As to why you and your friends *all* suffer from the same turntable problem despite having different equipment . . . that remains a mystery.

Quality Loss

Q. *I was recently told by a salesperson at a relatively good audio store that the quality of a well-known line of receivers has dropped to the point where their life expectancy is only one or maybe, if you're lucky, two years. Is this likely to be true?*

ANDREW TOMERS
Chelsea, Mass.

A. Lately I've been receiving two or three letters a month from readers asking some variant of this question. Sometimes electronic components are involved, at other times tapes are the problem. Readers tell me about various "routines" they get from salespeople, such as, "Sure, I'd be glad to sell you a Piowood Model 99X, but it's only fair to warn you to hold onto the packing carton because when the unit breaks down in a month or so you'll have to ship it back to the manufacturer yourself." Or, "Sure, that product got a good review from the magazines, but they didn't test it long enough to find out it doesn't hold its specs for more than a week or two." Or, "Certainly that brand of tape sounds good, but are you willing to pay the price in worn tape heads?" And so on. . . .

First of all, my thirty-odd years of experience in designing, servicing, and using hi-fi equipment tells me that *any* component can—and will—break down at some point in its lifetime, no matter how well it was designed or how good the parts were that went into it. The best any manufacturer can do is to use "safe" designs, which will not stress the internal

(Continued on page 38)

BEYOND DC

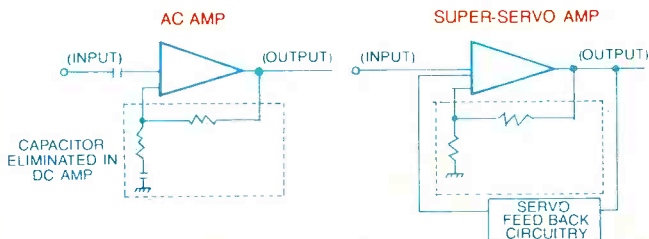


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ONKYO'S EXCLUSIVE SUPER SERVO INTEGRATED AMPLIFIERS.

Just when you think audio technology's reached its peak, along comes Onkyo, making it even better. Our latest is an improvement on the superb performance of DC amplifiers.

Super-Servo circuitry—another Onkyo exclusive—uses the extraordinary characteristics of operational amplifiers in a unique, negative feedback loop. Thus you get the benefits, particularly at the low (2Hz and below) frequencies not offered by other DC amps.



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While DC amplifiers increased bandwidth for better high frequency performance, spectrum analysis in Onkyo's labs found that very low frequency components below 2Hz, resulted from interactions with the amplifier's power supply. True, at 2Hz or less, you had to see it rather than hear it, but we felt that any unwanted component should be eliminated.

When we did, the result was three-dimensional imaging such as you've never heard. Sound you won't hear in conventional amplifiers. Or in other DC amplifiers. Only in Onkyo's Super-Servo amplifiers.

You have a choice of three, Super-Servo Integrated Amps:

A-7040—50 watts per channel, minimum RMS at 8 ohms, both channels driven from 20-20,000Hz with no more than 0.026% THD.

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A-7090—110 watts per channel, minimum RMS at 8 ohms, both channels driven from 20-20,000Hz with no more than 0.018% THD.

Talking about power is only part of it. Onkyo's Peak Power Indicator is an array of LED's which light up according to power output per channel, from the very bottom to, and over the top... calibrated in watts at 8 ohms.

Of course you get everything else you'd expect from Onkyo. Multiple inputs and outputs. Total protective circuitry for speakers and amplifier. Human engineered control placement with sound-shaping noise and filters. An immense, cool-running power supply.

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The Bib Electronic 3000 eliminates record static "like a miracle."

That's what professional reviewer John Borwick claims in the June issue of Gramophone. Here's why.

The Bib Groov-Stat Electronic 3000 emits only positive ions. And that's very important because positive ions completely neutralize the negative static charge on records.

All other anti-static devices emit both positive and negative ions even though record static is mostly a negative charge. So don't be fooled by demonstration gimmicks that "prove the superiority" of trigger-type devices.

The 3000 has a smoother, slower effect that keeps the record static-free longer. And the continuous emission of ions from the 3000 immerses the record in a bath of ions unlike the irregular flow emitted from trigger-type devices.

Simple to operate, the battery-operated 3000 has a double-checking system that includes a neon light and a high-pitched tone.

Ask for the Bib 3000. See for yourself why it works "like a miracle."



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Audio Q. and A. . . .

parts beyond their temperature, voltage, or current ratings; to install the best available parts the budget for the specific unit will allow; and then to employ adequate quality-control procedures in the burn-in, adjustment, and final check out. Nevertheless, the combination of human fallibility and the innate perversity of electromechanical devices will undoubtedly keep warranty stations and repair shops in business forever.

A leading manufacturer of high-power amplifiers once told me that about 5 per cent of his total units "out in the field" (meaning in customers' hands) have broken down in some way, minor or major, and he feels that 5 per cent is not out of line even for a company that scrupulously obeys the "rules" cited above. The same average-breakdown figure was provided by one or two other companies. Assuming that 5 per cent is an accurate average for the industry, I'm sure it *could* be reduced by several more points—but only by procedures that would add substantially to the ultimate consumer cost of the component. And, unfortunately, steps taken to reduce the failure rate by, say, 2 per cent would benefit only 2 per cent of the component's purchasers, while *everyone* who buys the component would pay a higher price.

Every manufacturer decides for himself exactly how far he will go in the effort to make his products 100 per cent reliable (an impossible goal). It's possible to keep costs down by skimping on parts and factory testing but, in the long run, it is obviously very risky for a company's reputation and profits to settle for too high a breakdown rate. Fly-by-night outfits run no such risks, of course, since they don't expect to be around for "the long run." But I strongly doubt that *any* established, well-known audio-equipment manufacturer knowingly or habitually ships defective or about-to-be defective merchandise to his dealers in an effort to realize a fast buck.

So what is the basis for these stories that readers pass on to me? I'm sure some of them originate with dealers who happen to have run into a couple of "lemons" in a particular line and are now so soured on the brand that they denigrate it at every opportunity. (Remember that when something goes wrong during the warranty period, it is usually the *dealer* who has to bear the brunt of the consumer's wrath and handle the repair.)

Other reasons for bad-mouthing a product are far less legitimate and may even constitute libel. Obviously, no store can carry *all* brands, since dealers have to exercise *some* discretion in the amount of money they tie up in stock. This, for some dealers, may seem adequate justification for disparaging a non-stocked product line when a customer asks about it. Certainly if a dealer doesn't want to sell a particular line because he can't make an adequate profit on it (usually as a result of competition from local discounters), that is his right. However, it is obviously *not* his right to lie about the reasons for his disenchantment with the line. (Note that in none of these product put-downs is sonic quality per se the issue, simply because there is no easy way to *demonstrate* the alleged sonic inferiority of a line of equipment.)

For some dealers, tape presents the same sort of problem. Some tape brands are more

profitable or more available to a given dealer than others. Among tape dealers (and, I'm sorry to say, some tape manufacturers), product derogation usually focuses on the question of excessive head wear—since there is no easy way a consumer can judge the truth of the matter for himself.

The only comfort I can offer on all these matters is to say that I have never seen or heard any convincing evidence that any brand-name component or tape presently available has a consistently bad record for blowups, breakdowns, or head damage. Despite his best efforts, you can find a bad batch in any manufacturer's line, but a dealer who says that a given manufacturer has a *consistently* bad record is kidding himself—or, more likely, you.

Nonlinear AM

Q. Only a few receivers have an evenly spaced linear dial scale for AM tuning similar to those now standard for the FM band. It can't be all that difficult or expensive to build in, since many cheap car radios have them. Since a linear scale makes tuning much easier, especially in the closely spaced higher AM frequencies, why aren't they used?

STEPHEN RICKETTS
Prince Edward Island, Canada

A. I find it hard to understand Mr. Ricketts' preoccupation with nonlinear dial scales when AM tuners also suffer from such a wide variety of severe *audible* defects, including very limited frequency bandwidth, noise, and distortion. A simple cure for *all* the audible ills—and the nonlinear dial scales—would be a liberal application of money to the problem areas. However, as long as the active element in the AM-tuner section of most receivers consists of a *single* integrated circuit, one must expect something substantially less than the ultimate in AM performance.

The as yet unresolved question (which I'm sure many manufacturers are asking themselves) is whether a sufficient number of audio consumers would pay the higher price that a higher-performing AM section would entail. Currently the single-IC AM section costs a manufacturer perhaps \$3 to \$4 overall, which raises the retail price of a receiver by perhaps \$15 to \$20. Given this five-times-the-parts-cost rule of thumb, I doubt that many listeners are so enamored of the idea of high-quality AM that they would be willing to pay a substantial premium (probably upwards of \$75) to achieve it.

This logically brings us to the question of stereo-AM broadcasting. I understand that in any of the contemplated stereo-AM broadcast systems, a single IC could provide all the stereo-adaptor circuitry required—which to me means that one IC is all that most receivers are likely to get. Why, then, do so many of the high-fidelity manufacturers appear ready to hop aboard the stereo-AM bandwagon when what is offered will almost invariably be lo-fi stereo? The reason, of course, is each manufacturer's fear that a competitor who does offer stereo-AM equipment will do better among first-time buyers and others who aren't aware of the equipment's limitations. This is not to say that stereo AM *can't* be broadcast and received with reasonably high quality. What I'm predicting, in the light of past experience, is that it *won't* be.

tech talk:

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Audio Basics

By Ralph Hodges



SIGNAL PROCESSING—2

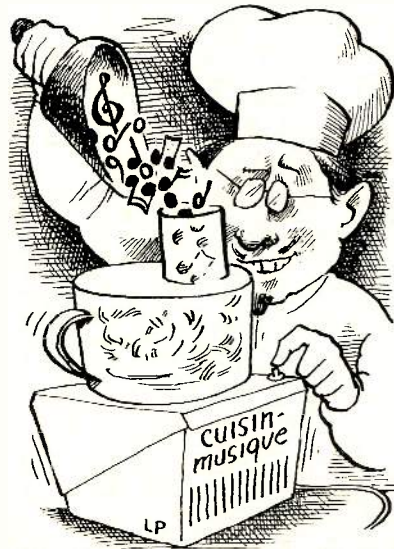
LAST month in this column we took a look at signal processors whose effects are specifically intended to be heard. There is also a large family of related devices that try to prevent you from noticing things you *don't* want to hear—such as noise, distortion, and limitations (deliberate or otherwise) in dynamic range or frequency response. And there are even some esoteric processors that work, often in mysterious ways, to correct various infelicities in microphone technique, in the recording chain, and in playback systems. In short, there is a host of “black boxes” out there—some used mostly in the professional sphere, some intended for the home listener or amateur recordist, and others straddling both worlds—that are capable of doing interesting, even surprising things to audio signals.

One of the most familiar is the Dolby B-type noise-reduction system, which is found in almost every cassette deck claiming high fidelity and in a fair number of receivers and tuners as well. The Dolby system has only one object: to prevent noise, specifically the hiss that plagues tape recording and FM broadcasts, from intruding upon the listening experience. The Dolby system uses a fairly complicated *dynamic* processing action (meaning that the action does not remain constant but changes with signal conditions) applied in two steps. Step one takes place before the noise source (the tape or the broadcast process) is encountered by the audio signal, step two during the actual listening. Step one consists of boosting the signal-to-noise ratio of the tape or broadcast medium by selectively compressing the dynamics of the signal, whereas step two undoes that compression and restores the original dynamics. If this suggests that a Dolby processor (or processors—for Dolbyized FM broadcasts the radio station must use one as well) must be carefully calibrated for precise complementarity of the two steps, that is indeed the case. Note also that any noise present in the original signal remains in it: the Dolby process is intended only to keep *more* noise from being introduced by the taping or broadcasting.

Although it is the best-known, Dolby B-type processing is far from the only example of this kind of noise reduction. JVC offers its own ANRS system, one version of which is compatible with the Dolby process (in other

words, step one can be done with a Dolby unit and step two with a JVC, and everything will still come out reasonably okay). The noncompatible dbx system is popular with some home recordists, as is its close relative, the MXR processor; and in professional recording studios you'll find several systems in use—one of which, developed by Telefunken, is due to be introduced shortly in a consumer version.

But what of noise that has already contaminated the signal, which the foregoing systems will treat just as if it were part of the music and let pass right on through? Handling this sort of noise is a difficult business. Any successful processor will first have to recognize the noise for what it is, then somehow contrive to get at it and pull it out without doing serious damage to the music, which undoubtedly shares some of the same frequencies. The simplest approach for hissy noise is the dynamic filter—a high-frequency filter that is automatically brought in and out of the signal path and altered in the degree of its effect by signal conditions. More specifically, when high-frequency information falls to a very low level, such a filter assumes that there is no music present, only noise, and acts to remove it. When significant high-frequency mu-



sical activity resumes, the filter becomes inactive, since the higher-level, high-frequency music will, it is hoped, mask the noise.

As these things go, a basic dynamic noise filter is a relatively simple affair, but its fundamental principles can be applied in much more complicated ways, such as in the “auto-correlators” offered by Carver Corporation and Phase Linear. Here the techniques for distinguishing noise from music are considerably more sophisticated, and the filtering action itself is no mere high-frequency rolloff but instead resembles the action of an automated multiband equalizer. These devices are dramatically more effective than a basic filter—and dramatically more expensive.

ENTIRELY different approaches to noise reduction are required for the amplified “Rice Krispies” noises so familiar to those who play records, because these noise signals would “look” like music to a dynamic filter. Accordingly, the noise-detection circuits of devices intended to deal with them are designed to concentrate on other criteria—usually the rise time of the signal (impulse noises such as record ticks and pops “attack” very quickly) and the phase relationships of the impulse signal between the two stereo channels. When the circuits have evidence that a signal is a spurious noise and not, say, castanets or a wood block, their usual action is to switch off the *whole* signal—or a good part of it—for a split second, so that the noise impulse never reaches the speakers. These tiny, fraction-of-a-second interruptions cannot be perceived, and special circuits are also employed to ease the transitions between the signal-on and signal-off status. Still, the technique has not yet reached perfection, and of the available “impulse-noise suppressors” (from Burwen, Garrard, and SAE), some do better with little tick-like noises and others excel with big “pops” such as are caused by deep record scratches.

Another type of signal processor, the dynamic-range expander, acts to make soft signals softer and (often) loud signals louder, so as to enhance the realism of the many recordings in which the dynamic range has been compressed for one reason or another. Some of these are pretty basic in their operating configurations, but others get quite elaborate—for example, by treating different groups of frequencies (or signal levels) independently. The most prominent company to offer consumer-type expanders is dbx, although RG Dynamics has also become popular recently. Incidentally, many of these devices can also be used to *reduce* dynamic range, making all sounds, whether originally loud or soft, come out at about the same level.

THE list of available signal processors is much longer than the space left to discuss them. There are time-delay units and other devices that process stereo signals in intricate ways to enhance some special aspect of the reproduction (see in particular the review of the Carver C-4000 preamplifier on page 46) and some that deliberately add strange effects for the sonically jaded. There is even one (from dbx) that synthesizes extreme low frequencies when there were none to begin with. Few audiophiles like the way all these devices sound, but many treasure a few. If you are interested in making a significant audible improvement in an already good system, signal processing is probably the way to go. □

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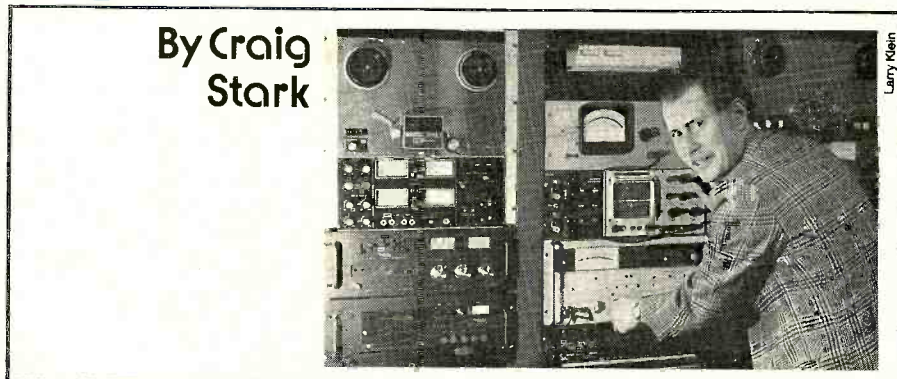
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Tape Talk

By Craig Stark



Larry Klein

METERS VS. ELECTRONIC INDICATORS

More and more of the new cassette decks use illuminating bar-type electronic displays to indicate signal levels instead of the level meters we've been accustomed to, and readers have asked me whether the new-style indicators are really accurate or are just another dramatic-looking gimmick.

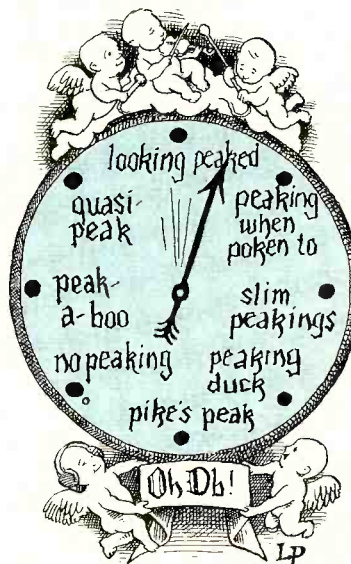
Considering the main function of record-level indicators in a consumer tape deck, I think that, in most systems, the advantages of the new electronic displays far outweigh the advantages of meters. For certain specialized applications, however—such as calibrating adjustable controls or noting actual signal-level measurements—the traditional meters continue to enjoy a slight edge. To understand why this is so, let's review what record-level indicators are supposed to do and how they go about doing it.

When you record music or speech, it is important to get as much signal as you can onto the tape before distortion becomes severe. This is because there is an irreducible minimum of tape noise ("hiss") present at all times, and only by recording at as high a level as is safely possible can you improve the chances that when you play the tape you won't have to turn your volume control up so high that this annoying background hiss becomes audible. The chief task of a record-level indicator, then, is to monitor the constantly changing input signal with reference to a known, calibrated point (conventionally marked "0 dB" or "0 VU") above which distortion problems are likely to occur.

The first consumer recorders I can recall actually used electronic indicators—to wit, a pair of neon bulbs, one of which was supposed to stay on more or less continuously while the other was supposed to flash only occasionally to give warning of the loudest peaks. Not only did this leave a considerable area of uncertainty, but the "firing point" of the bulbs themselves was next to impossible to calibrate accurately on a production-line basis. Fluorescent "magic eye" tubes were also popular for a while, but they suffered from similar problems with ambiguity and calibration difficulty. So the introduction of "professional-style" VU meters was heralded as a great step forward in giving the recordist a more accurate indication of the signal levels he was trying to tape.

But even the best VU meters have two drawbacks when used as record-level indicators. In the first place, they are, electrically speaking, "average-responding" instruments. If all you wanted to tape were pure tones in which the relationship between peak and average signal levels is fixed, this would be no difficulty. Unfortunately, both music and speech are characterized by the presence of many very large, very brief bursts of energy (called "transients"), and it is these peak levels, not the average levels, that drive tapes into distortion. And it is just these peak levels that a VU meter is least able to indicate reliably.

The addition of a little electronic circuitry can be used to transform an "average-reading" meter into a "peak-reading" meter (technically, a "quasi-peak-indicating" instrument), which is certainly easier for the average recordist to use and is preferred by



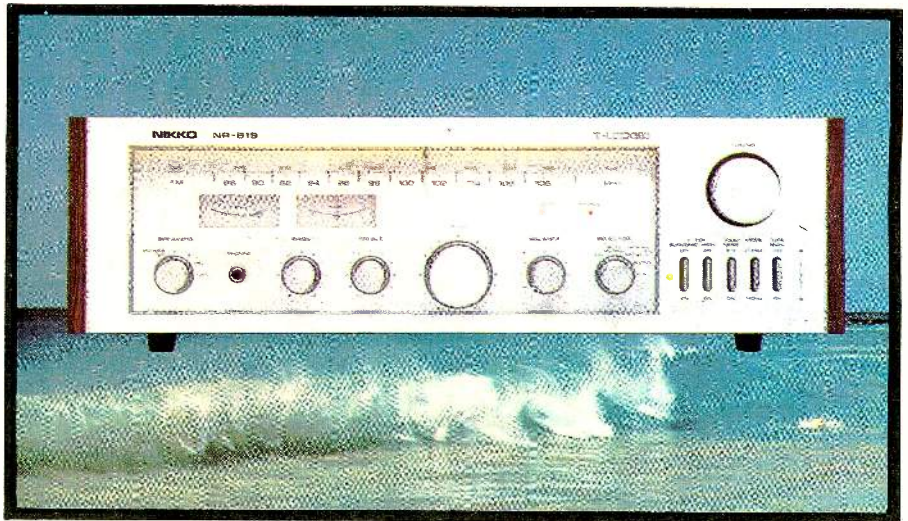
tween when a signal is applied and when it registers. Moreover, the pointer's momentum can cause it to overshoot the proper reading. Thus, depending on the mechanics ("ballistics") of their movements, two different record-level meters of the same general type (two VU or two peak-indicating meters, for example) can respond very differently to a series of rapidly changing signals.

At the professional level, where one can spend \$50 or so for a single meter, the complete electromechanical performance of a meter can be very tightly specified, but this is obviously impractical in the consumer marketplace. The practice of using VU-type meters together with a single peak-reading LED, as numerous cassette-deck manufacturers have resorted to in recent years, is in a sense just combining the meter system with the old neon-bulb overload indicator—though with one important difference: modern LED's can be calibrated to a much greater degree of accuracy than the old neon-bulb indicators. Thus, some of the "all-electronic" record-level indicators consist of a string of several such indicators (with modern, easily produced resistive voltage dividers feeding them). Other electronic displays are of the plasma or fluorescent type, and at least one (with sixty-four elements per channel!) is available that uses color-changing liquid crystals. All the new-style indicators completely eliminate the problems associated with mechanical meter movements. Indeed, their action is so rapid that special circuits are required to keep them illuminated long enough for the human eye to follow their shifting readings!

Because electronics alone govern the turn-on and turn-off times of these new record-level indicators, they can be given either the relatively slow-changing characteristics of a VU meter or ultra-rapid peak-indicating characteristics at the touch of a button. A further refinement built into some models is a "peak-hold" circuit that permits the user to store (from a few seconds to an hour or more) the maximum peak level encountered—which is, of course, very useful if one is planning to dub from LP's. The basic accuracy of these indicators in terms of the calibration scale is at least as great as that of all but the very finest meters.

THE one desirable feature that is lost (at least in some of the electronic displays) is the continuous and precisely calibrated scale resolution that a meter provides. This is no serious flaw in terms of recording, for with music or speech signals the illuminated pattern of the electronic indicators can be read as easily as the eye can resolve the continuous variations of a needle pointer. On the other hand, with machines that have user-adjustable bias and/or equalization controls or front-panel Dolby-level adjustments using steady, fixed-level tones, a conventional meter movement is somewhat more convenient.

In any case, the greater the number of discrete levels capable of being displayed on one of the new all-electronic indicators, the closer it will approximate the resolution provided by a meter. To measure very close differences, such as between the sensitivity of two samples of tape, I'd still be inclined to rely on an external, laboratory-grade meter, but for general recording purposes the all-electronic record-level indicators seem to me to be a real step forward, and not a gimmick—although they are fun to watch! □



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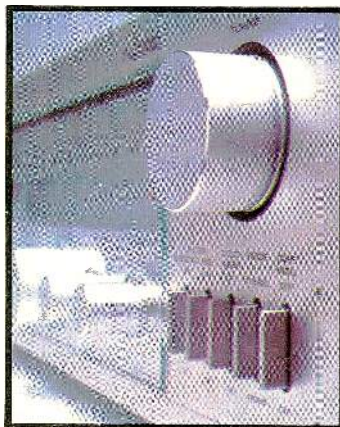
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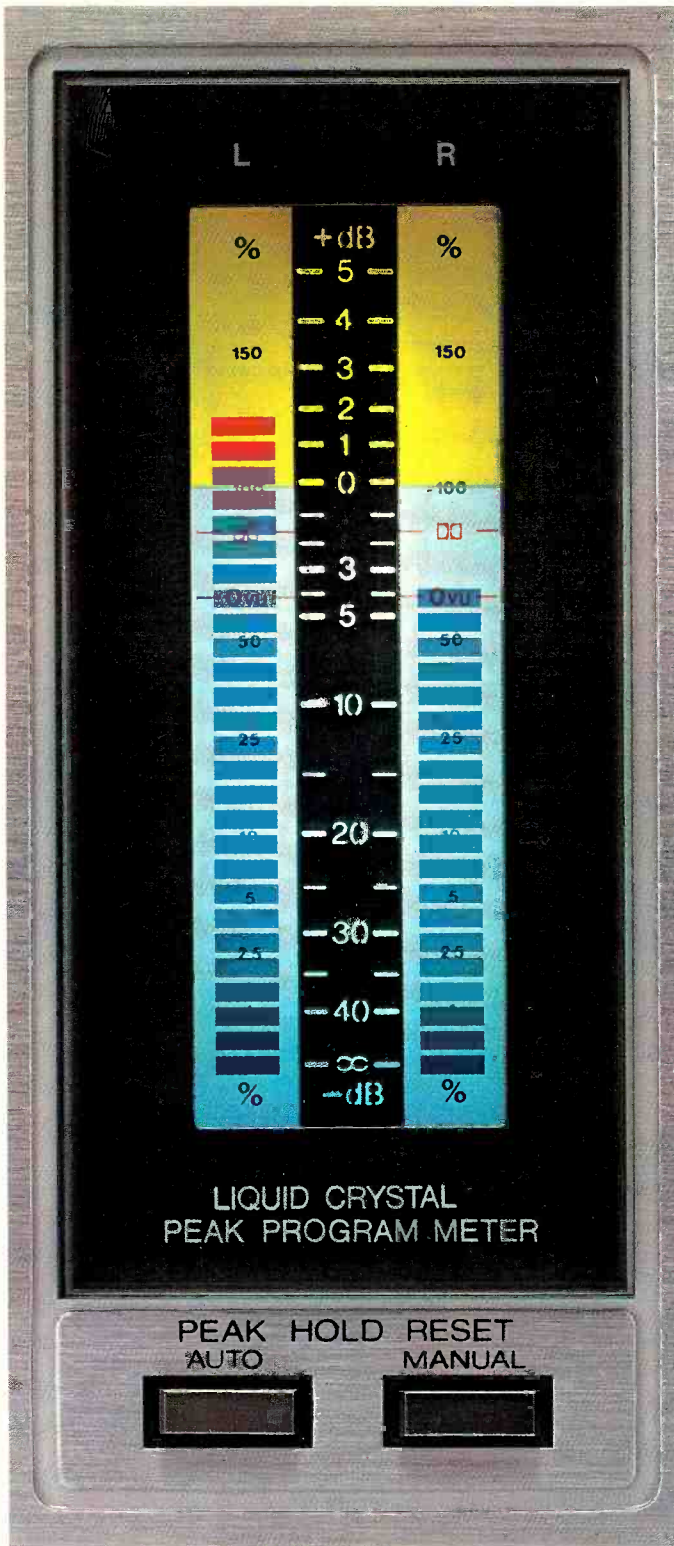


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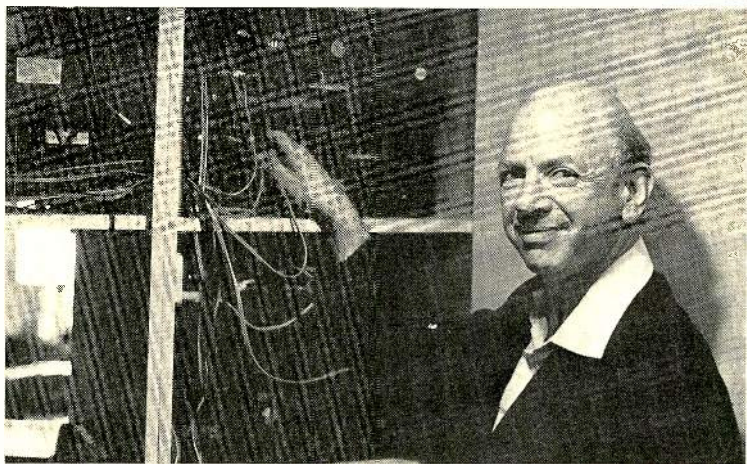
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SONY[®] AUDIO

Technical Talk

By Julian D. Hirsch



• Audible Differences •

FROM time to time (and with increasing frequency these days) I read subjective reviews of high-fidelity components that make me wonder whether I am living in the same world as their authors. Many, if not most, of the people who profess to hear sonic qualities that they feel are not explainable by objective testing hold such testing in contempt. From their point of view, given the occurrence of "huge," "tremendous," "dramatic" sonic differences between components whose performance appears to be essentially identical in laboratory measurements, only one conclusion is possible: those so-called "objective" tests are meaningless since they fail utterly to correlate with the subjective sound quality of an audio component.

However, there is a reverse side to this coin. Those of us who do *not* hear these vast differences during carefully controlled experiments—or who have repeatedly caught the subjective reviewers in inconsistencies that cast grave doubts on the validity of their conclusions—may perhaps be excused if we see them as irrational, technical ignoramuses, to say the least.

Before considering whether there is a "right" and a "wrong" way to evaluate audio components, let us admit from the outset that these controversies can be interesting and thought provoking, especially if one does not take them too seriously. There is ample room for a diversity of opinion in this as in any field, and surely life would be dull if we all saw (and heard) things the same way. I certainly do not rule out the ability of some people to hear certain things that I do not, as this has been demonstrated to me on a number of occasions. Some people are blessed with a sense of absolute pitch, for example, and for

all I know there may be some out there who even have extrasensory powers. All I can say with assurance is that *I* do not possess these talents, and therefore tend to believe what my training and experience as an engineer tell me are the most meaningful and valid answers to questions of fact. These answers are obtained by experiment and measurement rather than by intuition or prejudice.

My tolerance for some of the subjective critics is strained somewhat by their (to me) unbelievable excesses of hyperbole. On more than one occasion I have had some "tremendous" difference in sound pointed out to me and have indeed heard a difference—which I found not particularly significant. For reasons that escape me, many people insist not only on focusing on these minuscule differences, but on ranking them as "objectively" better or worse. When dealing with purely subjective effects, I view this attitude as one of intolerable arrogance bordering on idiocy (*I* hear a difference that I judge to be *tremendous*; therefore, *you* must hear it also—and find it *tremendous*).

I will grant that sometimes these subtle equipment differences can exist for no apparent reason. But when the difference is really "huge" it should be obvious to anyone. When I walk into a room in which a program of limited bandwidth, with severe distortion, is being played, no debate is necessary to establish that the sound quality is "bad." Measurements would surely confirm that judgment.

It seems quite evident to me that two things can be *different* without one's necessarily being better or worse than the other. I have heard live music played in a number of halls and rooms, each time with different audible qualities. Unless the acoustic effects of the

room were so extreme as to render this live sound unpleasant, I would feel no obligation to render a better-or-worse sonic judgment. It is clear to me that most of the subtle differences that are the bread and butter of the subjective critics fall in the same category.

As with a live performance, even if the reproduced sound is really very different, it is easy (for me, at any rate) to become accustomed to it so long as its quality is not actually bizarre or offensive. Note that I hold no brief for purely objective measurements, either. If we knew exactly what to measure to define the sound of anything, we would have no need for subjective judgments. Unfortunately, measurements do not tell us enough about how something sounds. They can tell us quite a lot about what it does, however, and how its performance compares with that of competitive products.

In closing, I would like to point out one very fundamental difference between objective and subjective measurements or tests. If our laboratory tests of a product produce results at variance with those obtained by the manufacturer or anyone else, it is usually possible to determine the reason for the difference without the necessity for argument. Also, in measurement we are never concerned with quality judgments—"better" or "worse"—but only with "how much" or "what." Subjective reviewers could benefit from a realization that their judgments are at least as fallible as those of a laboratory tester (in my view, much *more* fallible), with the added problem that differences are not so easily resolved between conflicting subjective opinions. For that is just what they are—opinions; it is risky to view them as facts. □

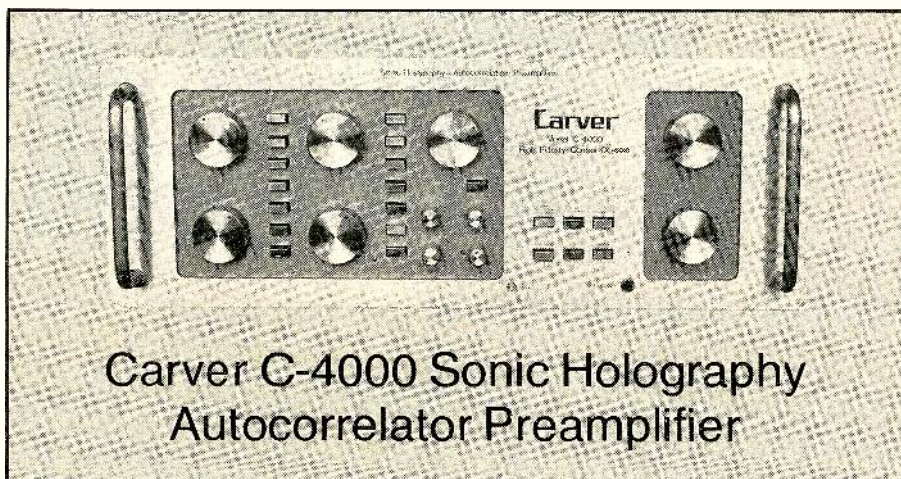
Tested This Month

Carver C-4000 Sonic Holography/Autocorrelator Preamplifier
Fisher CR-4025 Cassette Deck • SAE Model 180 Parametric Equalizer
Shure/SME Series III Tone Arm • Sherwood S-7650 Stereo Receiver

(Continued overleaf) ▶

Equipment Test Reports

By Hirsch-Houck Laboratories



Carver C-4000 Sonic Holography
Autocorrelator Preamplifier

BOB CARVER, one of the true innovators in the high-fidelity field, has devoted much of his professional life to finding ways to remove—or at least to minimize—those qualities in home music reproduction that prevent it from sounding like a live performance. The autocorrelator noise-reduction and peak-unlimiter circuits he designed for the first Phase Linear stereo control center several years ago effectively added about 17 dB to the dynamic range of home-music reproduction. We find that these circuits, used in combination, are almost always able to make a significant improvement in the sound of the program material. Although one can sometimes hear undesirable side effects, they are rarely evident. And, in any case, the benefits far outweigh the weaknesses.

In the first control-center preamplifier to come from Carver Corporation, a newly formed company, Carver has incorporated improved versions of the autocorrelator and peak unlimiter. The peak unlimiter is faster acting and the noise-reduction circuits have been redesigned with additional separate band sensing and gating, with the result that faults in its operation are now even harder to detect. But Carver's search for realistic reproduction has taken him well beyond the realms of dynamic-range expansion and noise reduction.

In the past few years, consumer add-on time-delay components have become technically feasible, making it possible to enlarge the apparent acoustic size of a home listening room and thereby provide many key aspects of the concert-hall listening experience (see "Time-Delay Systems," *STEREO REVIEW*, October 1978). Most commercial time-delay accessories are highly flexible, offering a choice of a number of delays and reverberation "mixes," and many listeners (myself included) have found that they deliver much of what was once promised, but seldom realized, by commercial quadraphonic hardware and software.

Although they are a step in that direction,

even the best time-delay systems fall short of providing a totally convincing illusion that the listener is *in* the concert hall. Now, Carver Corporation's new preamplifier has taken the illusion of sonic reality another significant step forward with its "sonic-hologram" system. (Holography is an optical technique that can create an *apparent* three-dimensional image in space by the use of optical-interference effects. The illusion of three-dimensionality is so great that one can walk around a holographic image, view it from the sides, and even photograph it just as one could do if the real object were there.)

The operating theory of Carver's "sonic hologram" is close, but not identical, to that of an optical hologram. Its audible effect is to extend the normally all but depthless sound stage heard with conventional stereo speakers around the sides of the room (even, to some extent, to the rear) so as to surround the listener with a sonic illusion that is remarkably close to what might be heard at some real performance. The "miracle" in Carver's technique is that it uses only the two normal front speakers—and that it works!

In order to make the acoustic magic work in full measure, however, one must sit at some point along a fairly narrow line equidistant from the two stereo speakers (in other words, on the perpendicular bisector of a line joining the speakers). The effect is not nearly so dramatic elsewhere in the room, but the sound is still noticeably better than normal stereo, particularly in respect to a greater sense of "warmth" such as is experienced in a concert hall.

The final bit of icing on this psychoacoustic cake is provided by a built-in time-delay system that is designed to operate with three small speakers (not included with the C-4000). Two of the speakers are placed at the rear of the room, each of them carrying a noncoherent cross-coupled mix of the two channels delayed in time, and a third identical speaker is placed at front center, midway between the

stereo speakers and carrying a sum (L + R) delayed signal.

The Carver Model C-4000 Sonic Holography/Autocorrelator Preamplifier includes a full stereo preamplifier (with a moving-coil-cartridge pre-preamplifier), a time-delay system with selectable delay times and controllable reverberation mix, a small stereo power amplifier for driving the delay speakers (with a nominal 20-watt rating per channel), the sonic hologram circuits, plus the autocorrelator noise-reduction and peak-unlimiter circuits mentioned earlier. In one attractively styled unit, it brings the hi-fi listener unparalleled control over the program material and his listening environment. Considering what it includes and how well it works, the \$850 price of the C-4000 makes it one of the best hi-fi bargains around.

● **Laboratory Measurements.** Measurement results on a prototype Carver C-4000 from the standpoint of its function as a preamplifier control center (and ignoring its unique features) were excellent. The RIAA phono equalization was accurate within ± 1 dB from 20 to 20,000 Hz and was absolutely unaffected by cartridge inductance. (Equalization accuracy will be rated at ± 0.25 dB in production units.) The phono-input capacitance can be set at 0, 200, or 400 picofarads (pF) to suit most cartridges (in the 0-pF position the capacitance was unmeasurably low—which means that the phono wiring and cables would establish the minimum capacitance level).

The distortion in the preamplifier outputs was barely measurable (0.005 to 0.02 per cent for output levels between 0.1 and 6 volts). The delay-channel power amplifiers in our prototype clipped at 26.5 watts into 8 ohms at 1,000 Hz. The distortion was higher in the prototype but will be rated well below 0.5 per cent. (The delay signals are also available ahead of the C-4000's built-in power amplifiers for use with a separate stereo power amplifier.)

The preamplifier required an *AUX* input of 50 millivolts (mV) or a *PHONO 1* (moving-magnet) input of 0.85 mV for a reference output of 0.5 volt. The phono input overloaded at a very safe 150-mV level. The moving-coil head amplifier on *PHONO 2* was not checked since its design had not been finalized. The A-weighted noise level, relative to a 0.5-volt output, was unmeasurable (less than 100 microvolts, or -74 dB) through the *AUX* input and a barely measurable 157 microvolts (-70 dB) through *PHONO 1*. These are extremely impressive figures when one considers that the rated output of the preamplifier is 2.5 volts and another 14 dB would be added to each figure if it were referenced to that level. Also, switching in the autocorrelator would have reduced the noise by at least another 8 dB.

● **Comment.** The unit we tested was a prototype whose design was not necessarily final in
(Continued on page 49)

GOOD SOUND IS ALL IN YOUR HEAD.

AKAI's GX Head is guaranteed* for over 17 years.

What you're looking at is AKAI's exclusive GX Head.

A technical departure from any other recording/playback head design on the market today. Its composition: glass and crystal ferrite.

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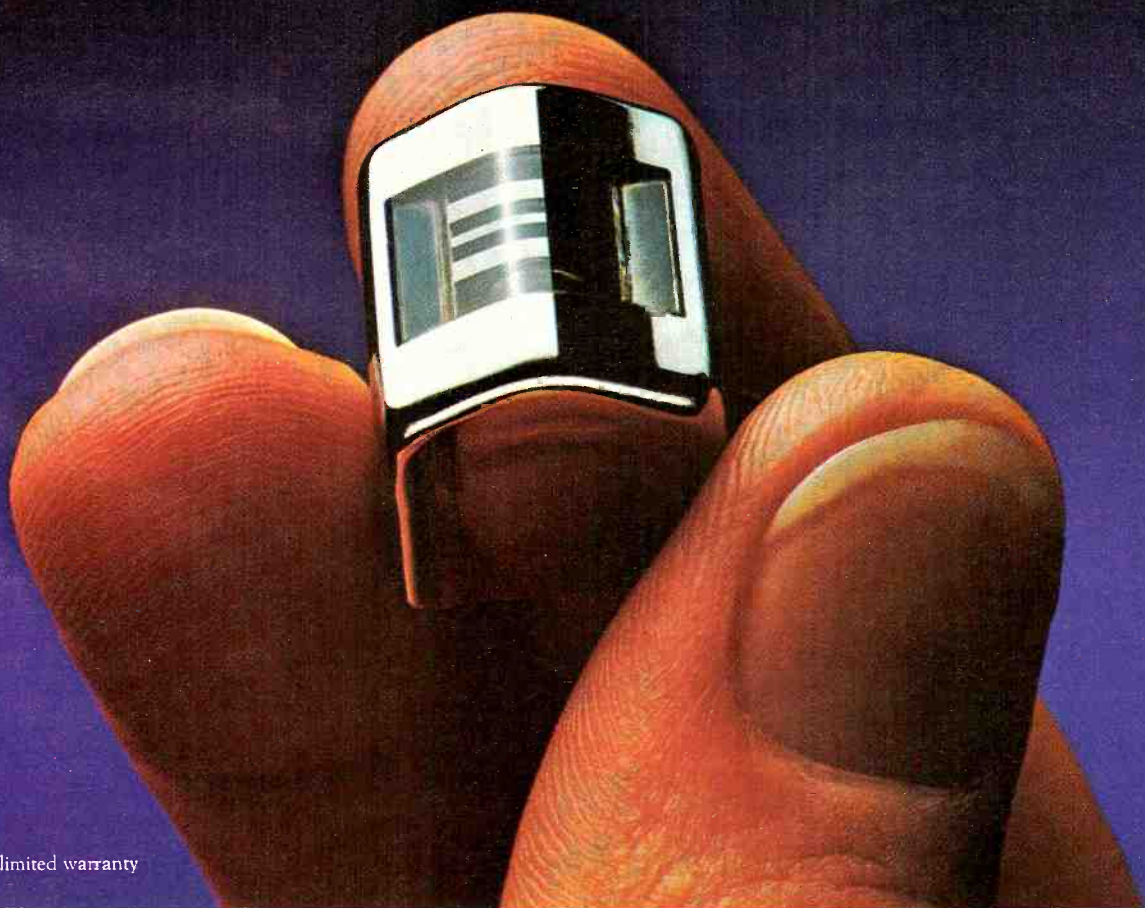
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Exclusive Spectro Peak Indicator System.

With almost recording studio vigilance, 25 instant-responding LED indicators offer fail-safe protection against distortion produced by tape over-saturation.

For the first time, you can constantly visually monitor the levels of five low-to-high musical frequency ranges. Then, on playback, the Spectro Peak Indicator actually lets you see how accurately the deck has performed.

Expanded Dynamic Range and Better Noise Reduction.

Our Super ANRS circuitry applies compression in recording and expansion in playback to improve dynamic range at higher frequencies. So distortion is eliminated in sudden high peaks of any musical

program. Super ANRS also reduces tape hiss by boosting the deck's signal-to-noise ratio by as much as 10dB over 5000Hz.

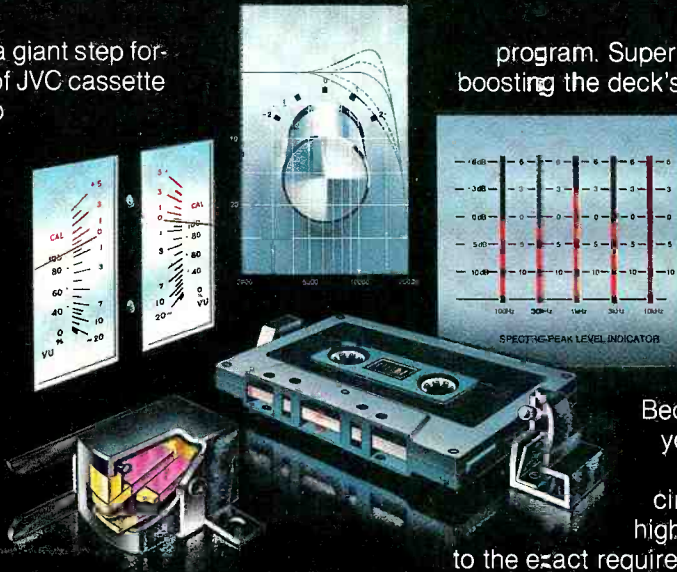
New Head Design.

Our refined Sen-Alloy head gives you the sensitive performance of permalloy head construction, combined with the extreme longevity of ferrite, for bright, full-sounding recordings.

Get the most out of any tape

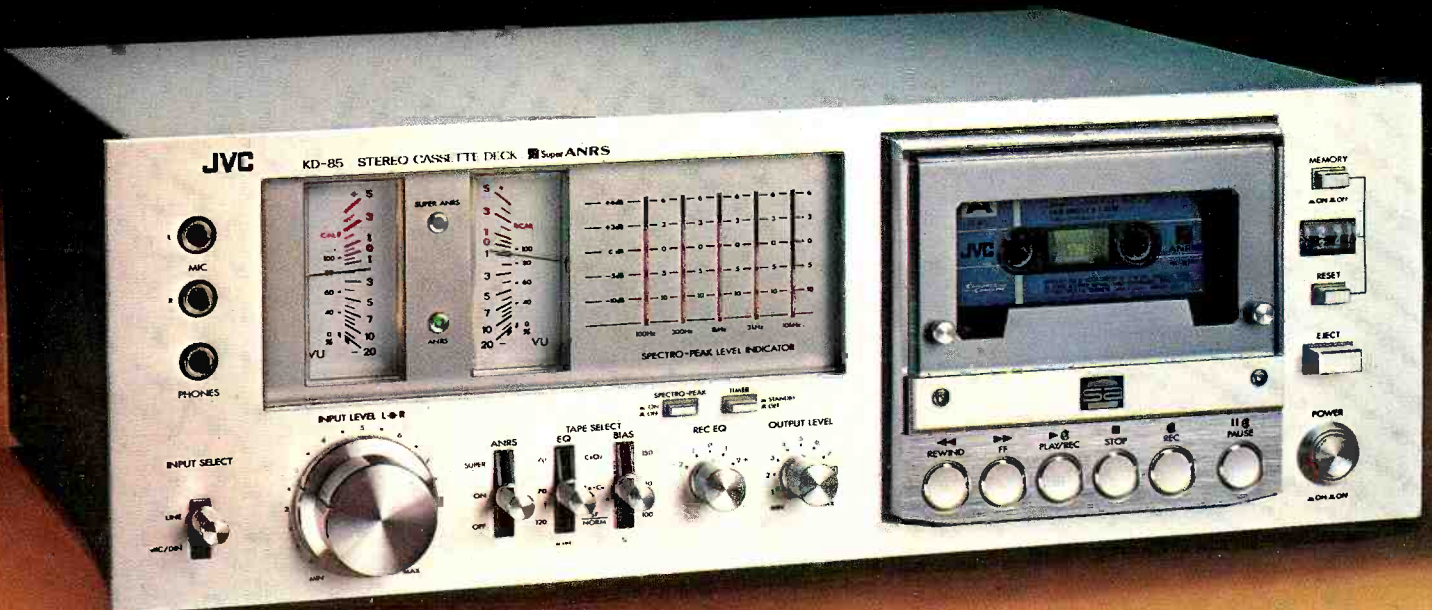
Because whichever type you select, you'll extract the most from it with our special recording equalizer circuit that lets you "fine tune" the high frequency response of the deck

to the exact requirements of the tape. These innovations alone set JVC cassette decks apart from all the others. Then, when you consider our other refinements, like precision-ground capstans, gear/oil-damped cassette doors, multi-peak LED indicators, independent drive mechanisms, plus top performance specifications, you can understand why we say that JVC gives you more of what other decks wish they could. Visit your JVC dealer and you'll hear why.



Top: KD-65, KD-55, KD-25. Bottom: KD-10, KD-1770 II, KD-1636 II. Not shown: KB-5, KD-3030, KD-S201.

JVC



JVC High Fidelity Division, US JVC Corp., 58-75 Queens Midtown Expwy., Maspeth, N.Y. 11378. Canada: JVC Electronics of Canada, Ltd., Ont.

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all respects, but there is no reason to expect that the performance quality will be degraded in any way in production. Clearly, the Carver C-4000's overall performance, aside from its special circuits, ranks with the most refined conventional preamplifiers now available.

The true qualities of the special circuits can be appreciated only by listening. For that reason, they were auditioned by several groups in several different environments, with different speakers and ancillary equipment (see Larry Klein's comments following). My remarks apply only to what was heard in the regular Hirsch-Houck Labs listening room, where we used the unit with a pair of test speakers with good polar dispersion but a balance tilted toward the higher frequencies. The delay-channel speakers were inexpensive "mini" systems costing less than \$50 retail; their 4-inch woofers would hardly be expected to augment the bass output of the much larger and far more expensive front speakers.

After Carver had made the necessary level and balance adjustments, we sat in the suggested optimum location and listened first in conventional stereo and then with the sonic-hologram generator switched in. To describe the change as "dramatic" would be a gross

understatement. The instrumental sounds, originally heard in a more or less narrow line between the speakers, were suddenly located down the side walls of the room to a point nearly as far back as we were sitting (about 12 feet from the speakers). The sound took on a rich, solid quality, and there was a great *apparent* increase in the bass output. As we settled back to savor a sound quality never before heard in this room, Carver turned on the delay channel and the richness and depth then extended all around us! He then turned off first the delay, then the hologram generator, and the sound simply collapsed to the front of the room and "only" stereo was left. The let-down was akin to what one might experience switching from a fine stereo system to an old mono console radio.

The prospect of sitting in one specific place to listen to music does not particularly appeal to us, though this is certainly a question of personal listening habits. If one moves somewhat forward or back along the line that extends through the preferred position, the "holographic" effect remains, but as you stray from the preferred axis the uncanny sense of reality becomes diluted and then disappears. What is left, however, is a still-strong bass

warmth and ambiance, seemingly at least as good as (or better than) anything we had heard in the same room from time-delay systems. That this effect was emanating from only two front speakers was a fact we found intellectually difficult to accept even though we knew it to be so.

This brings us to the "bottom line" in our appraisal of the Carver C-4000. We realize that the preceding description sounds as though it came straight from an advertising copywriter's overheated Remington. At H-H Labs, we consider ourselves to be reasonably objective when it comes to audio, but we were so impressed by what we heard in this brief exposure to the C-4000 that we greatly look forward to getting a production model so that we can listen at some length. I strongly recommend that any audiophile interested in the rapidly advancing state of the audio art listen to the C-4000 for himself just as soon as it reaches audio showrooms. We would not expect any reader to accept our reactions to the C-4000 without question—we probably would not have believed it ourselves had we not experienced it!

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Carver C-4000 Preamplifier Listening Tests

By Larry Klein

WHEN evaluating a product—be it a speaker or an amplifier—that provides special acoustic or psychoacoustic treatment of the signal, certain performance aspects should be checked that are not dealt with in conventional testing procedures. For example, will the product under test work equally well in different acoustic environments? Is the location of the listener (or the product) particularly critical in regard to the results achieved? Will a group of individuals with different prejudices (or tastes, if you prefer) and different hearing acuities have differing reactions—positive or negative—while listening to the same demonstration?

All these questions were considered when Bob Carver and I discussed a test report on his newly developed "Sonic Holography" preamplifier. I had listened to a prototype unit at the Carver Corporation exhibit room at the Las Vegas Winter Consumer Electronics Show, but considering the crowds and the unknown acoustics, all I was prepared to say was that the spatial characteristics of the sound were quite unlike what I normally hear from two conventional speakers. However, I wasn't sure how much I liked what I was hearing, and, of course, I didn't know whether the preamplifier responsible for the effects would sound better or worse at other times and places. So, in the words of Sam Goldwyn, I gave the product "a positive maybe" and I arranged with Carver to put the unit through a series of more controlled group listening sessions that would take place on the East Coast several weeks later.



Designer Bob Carver sets up the channel balance on his new C-4000 Sonic Holography/Autocorrelator preamplifier at Starksonic Studios while engineer Jerry Feder looks on.

Carver met with some of STEREO REVIEW's technical people at Craig Stark's home in New Jersey, where we intended to subjectively evaluate the sonic-holography function of the C-4000 preamplifier. In addition to Ralph Hodges and Craig Stark, two audiophile friends were invited—Bob Ajaye and Jerry Feder, both of whom are blessed with particularly keen ears. Ajaye is a laboratory technician who has worked in the design end of loudspeaker production and is presently employed in a motion-picture sound-recording studio. Feder has his doctorate in electrical engineering, works for a major communications company, and plays bass guitar. I was particularly interested in having Ajaye pres-

ent since over the years he has proved himself to be especially sensitive to audio-system phase aberrations (some *early* quad synthesizers gave him instant headache) and I wondered whether some aspect of the C-4000's special signal processing might produce a disturbingly audible side effect for him.

The Carver preamplifier was played through a 300-watt stereo power amplifier driving two very high-quality, wide-dispersion, floor-standing speakers placed with normal spacing at the front of the room. As the various participants arrived at Stark's finished-basement laboratory, each was seated facing the two front speakers while both

(Continued overleaf)

direct-cut and conventional discs were played through the preamp. In three cases, uninitiated late arrivals asked to hear the system again—this time without the two side speakers operating. When it was pointed out that the side speakers were part of Stark's four-channel system, which at the moment was completely disconnected, the reaction was startled disbelief.

We spent the better part of the day in Stark's laboratory auditioning a wide variety of records. The worst that could be said of the C-4000 system was that if a particular recording lacked phase integrity or reasonable stereo perspective, Carver's holographic circuits were not given enough information to generate the full effect. In such cases, sound reproduction might—or might not—be slightly better than normal, but it was not in any case degraded. When the program material was adequate (I suspect most available recordings are), the assembled golden ears judged that the effect ranged from merely good to startlingly realistic, particularly when directly compared with ordinary stereo reproduction. At its best, the holographic effect caused the sound to appear to originate from various points within a wide arc extending behind the speakers and beyond the walls of the room around to the listener's left and right sides. Within this half-circle area, instrument placement was clearly defined, open, and natural. No problems were experienced with effects such as 10-foot-long violins or stacked or clumped instruments. In addition, hall ambience, warmth, or "air" was present in full measure, providing a wonderful sense of acoustic space for much of the material. All of this, mind you, was with two front speakers only and without the help of the time-delay function built into the C-4000.

Toward the close of the main listening session, several of the participants expressed concern about the C-4000's possible tendency to produce "surround-sound" effects: the sort of unnatural wrap-around arrangements of instruments all too commonly heard during

the four-channel era. Surround sound doesn't particularly bother rock listeners, but for the critical classical listener who wishes to hear music sounding as it does in a live performance—that is, without unnatural spatial effects—the surround-sound approach exemplifies everything that was wrong with quadraphonics. Some of these listeners stayed on well into the evening, playing familiar classical tapes and discs (most recorded without extensive use of multimiking) in several different rooms and through various component systems. After several hours of critical listening, they agreed that the localization of voices and instruments in these "purist" recordings remained essentially unchanged, but the sense of air and space around them and the illusion of three-dimensionality were strikingly enhanced by the holographic processing.

The following week Carver took his show on the road: to Hirsch-Houck Labs, to the office of STEREO REVIEW Editor William Anderson, and to the home of *Popular Electronics* Editor Art Salsberg. In all cases, the response was overwhelmingly positive.

WHEN Carver returned from his travels and set the C-4000 up in my living room for the first time, the listening experience left me in a state that could best be described as "mind-blown." The initial setup procedure for balancing the sonic holograph consists of adjusting the sonic image one side at a time. The right-channel phono lead was unplugged, and we played one of my wife's favorite discs ("Japanese Melodies for Flute and Harp," Columbia M 34568). I clearly heard the flute as originating somewhat to the left of the left speaker and perhaps three feet in front of it. The harp was also heard on the left, but about six feet in front of the speaker! I was flabbergasted! I told Carver that I didn't believe what I was hearing—better stereo presentation from one channel than I normally get from two. Before that experience I was only casually interested in the operating theory of the sonic holograph, but at that point I had to

know more about how it worked—since what I heard apparently contradicted everything I knew about acoustics and psychoacoustics.

After several hours of discussion with Carver, I'm pleased to report that his preamp operates within the bounds of present-day acoustic understanding and that no basic revisions of the theory of sound and hearing are required. And Carver's use of the term "sonic holography" (which I had at first considered mere creative hyperbole) turns out to be reasonably descriptive. As will become clear, I wasn't listening to only one speaker, as I had thought. The right-channel speaker was alive, radiating the cross-fed "interference" signal that caused the sonic image to shift so radically to the left.

A very much oversimplified explanation of how the holographic-generator function works goes something like this: the signals fed to the two front speakers are separately processed to (in Carver's words) "produce a sound field that replicates the vector space information normally lost in stereo reproduction." The processing applied to each channel consists basically of shifting the phase of the mid- and high-frequency parts of the signal linearly. In addition, a somewhat differently processed portion of the signal is cross-fed to the opposite channel. The point of all this is to precompensate electrically for those sonic elements that are confused or lost acoustically in the speaker/room/ear interfaces. Some of the factors compensated for, according to Carver, are the frequency-dependent head-shadow effect, the time/phase delay between a listener's two ears, and the arrival times of the first four reflections from the room boundaries. In addition, the "difference signal" (which on a recording embodies much of the hall sound) is extracted acoustically as a result of phase interactions within the cross-fed signals. To put it another way, the sound field created around a listener's head (when he is seated on the critical listening line) is produced by carefully calculated and controlled interference effects, and this is where the holographic reference comes in.

I don't yet fully understand how the "holographic" effect is achieved, but my listening experiences leave no doubt that the technique produces a far more plausible sonic illusion of space and localization than is produced by normal stereo. Bob Ajaye (who is conservative enough to still be using a Marantz 7C tube preamp in his home system), after two days of critical listening, called the Carver invention "a giant leap forward for hi-fi." I agree.

I'm sure that there are at least a few purists among our readers who will be upset by what they feel to be Carver's high-handed manipulation of the stereo signal. To them I can only point out that the stereo-reproduction/perception process is itself totally artificial. Where in real life is the apparent source of a sound perceived between its two actual sources? But this is exactly what you are hearing when you listen to stereo—or even mono through two widely spaced speakers. Given the basic fool-the-ear artificiality of normal stereo reproduction, I see no reason to object to further psychoacoustic manipulation, particularly when (as in the case of the C-4000 preamplifier) it brings the listener substantially closer to that elusive sonic illusion of being in the presence of a live performance.

—L.K.



"Boy, no wonder they give big discounts when you get away from the high-rent district . . . !"

(Continued on page 54)

Yamaha goes its separates way.

With unprecedented performance, features and price.

C-4 Our new C-4 stereo preamp has the most advanced circuitry imaginable to give you sound so real and true, you'll swear it's live. Distortion in the phono preamp section has been reduced to a miniscule 0.0035% at 2V output. Signal-to-noise ratio has been tamed to the virtually inaudible level of 97dB at 40mV. A special Current Noise Reduction Circuit maintains this high S/N ratio regardless of varying impedances caused by using different cartridges. But you really have to hear the sound of the C-4 to believe such pure musical tonality could pass through a piece of electronics.

The C-4's features put you in total command of its superb sound. Unheard of tone control is yours with the exclusive, continuously variable turnover frequencies for the bass and treble controls. You can select from five ranges for both capacitance and resistance to load your cartridge for optimum performance. The C-4's built-in head amp provides the boost necessary for you to indulge in the transparently beautiful sound of a moving coil cartridge. Without extra expense or noise.

And these are just a few of the fabulous features that make the sleekly styled C-4 a super-sophisticated device with possibilities limited only by your imagination.

M-4 Our passion for pure tonality reaches toward perfection in the M-4 stereo power amp. To deliver the cleanest, most musical sound possible, we built it with DC circuitry in a dual mono amp configuration. The dual mono amp configuration results in dramatically reduced crosstalk for dramatically enhanced listening pleasure.

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Signal-to-noise ratio is, (please hold the applause) an utterly silent 118dB.

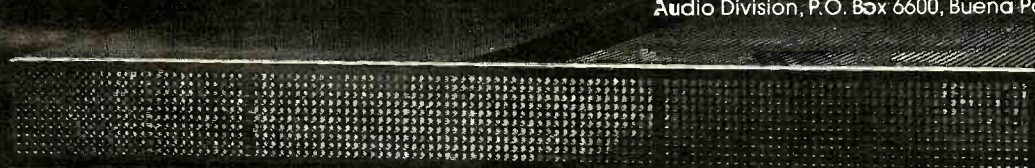
Again though, specs can't do the sound of the M-4 justice. This boldly styled, superbly functional power amplifier is solidly in the super state-of-the-art category.

That's what both our new separates are all about. Unprecedented performance, features and styling. And the price? Well, you can benefit from what we learned in precedent-setting sound with our legendary cost-no-object B-1 and C-1 separates. Without paying the price. Audition our new rack-mountable super separates, the C-4 and M-4 for yourself. It's an ear-opening experience you won't want to miss. For the name of your Yamaha Audio Specialty Dealer, check your Yellow Pages or write us.

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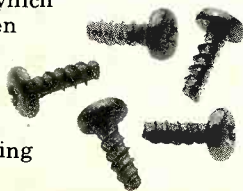
The TDK cassette shell and mechanism are every bit as good as our tape. And when you begin to understand the time and effort we've spent in perfecting them, you'll appreciate that our engineers wouldn't put TDK tape in anything less than the most advanced and reliable cassette available.

The Shell Our precision-molded cassette shells are made by continuously monitored injection molding that creates a mirror-image parallel match, to insure against signal



overlap, channel or sensitivity loss from A to B sides. We make these shells from high impact styrene, which resists temperature extremes and sudden stress better than regular styrene or clear plastic.

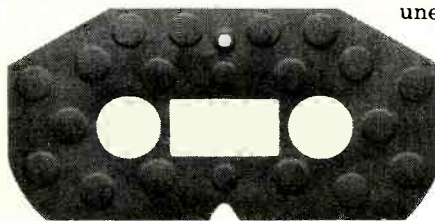
The Screws Our cassettes use five screws instead of four for warp-free mating of the cassette halves. We carefully



torque those screws to achieve computer-controlled stress equilibrium. That way, the shell is impervious to dust, and the halves are parallel to a tolerance of a few microns.

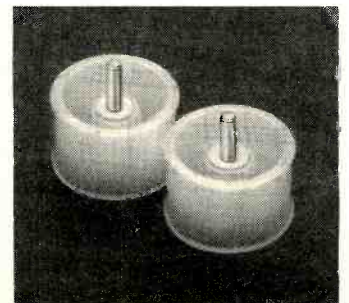
The Liner Sheet Our ingenious and unique bubble liner sheet makes the tape follow a consistent running angle with gentle fingertip-like embossed cushions. It prevents

uneven tape winding and minimizes the friction that can lead to tape damage. Also our cassettes will not squeak or squeal during operation.

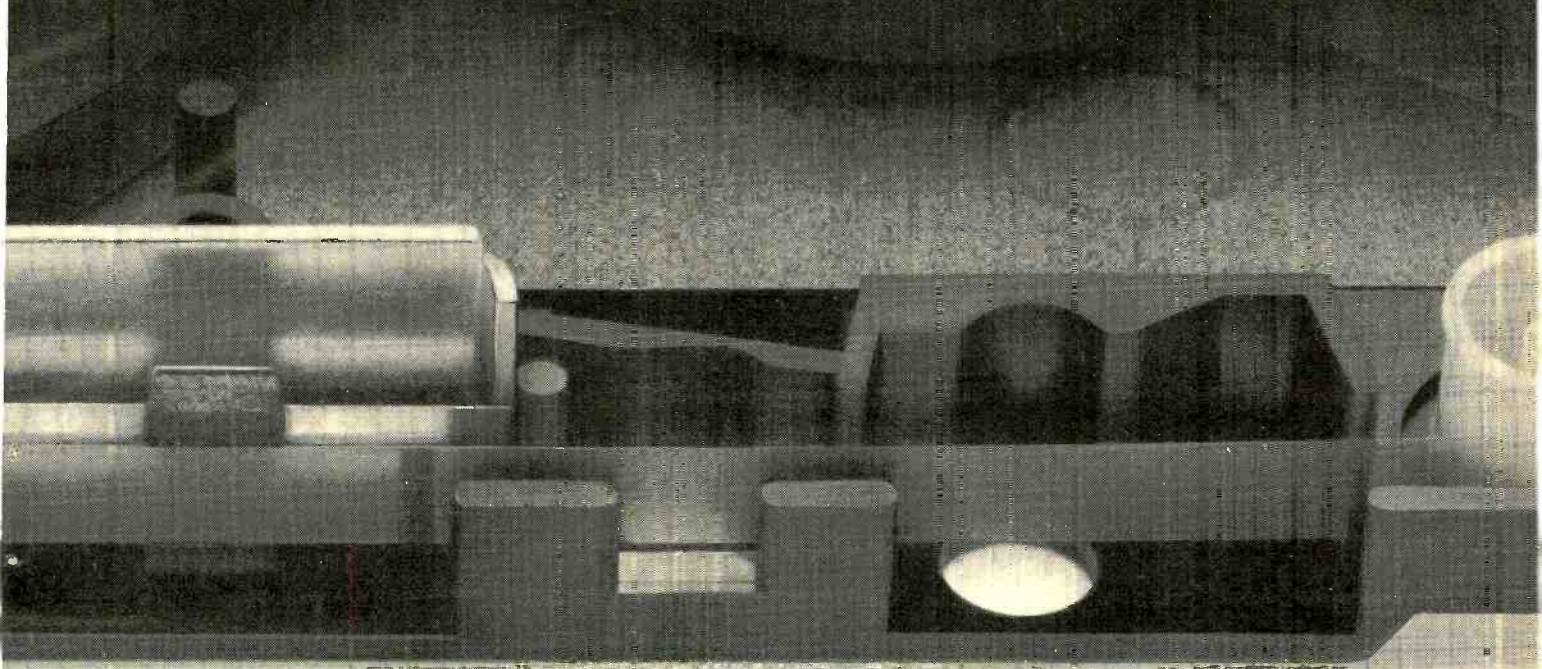


The Rollers Our Delrin rollers are tapered and flanged, so the tape won't move up and down on its path across the heads. This assures a smooth transport and prevents tape damage.

The Pins In every cassette we make, we use stainless steel roller pins to minimize friction and avert wow and flutter and channel loss. Some other manufacturers "cheat" by using plastic pins in some of their less expensive cassettes. We don't.

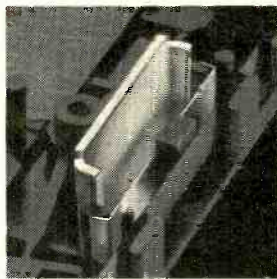


sounds better better.



The Pressure Pad

Our sophisticated pressure pad maintains tape contact at dead center on the head gap. Our interlocking pin system anchors the pad assembly to the shell and prevents lateral movement of the pad, which could affect sound quality.



The Shield

We use an expensive shield to protect your recordings from stray magnetism that could mar them. Some manufacturers try to "get by" with a thinner, less expensive shield. We don't.

The Window Our tape checking window is designed to be large enough for you to see all the tape, so you can keep track of your recordings.

The Label We've even put a lot of thought into the label we put on our cassettes. Ours is made from a special non-blur quality paper. You can write on it with a felt-tip pen, a ballpoint, whatever. Its size, thickness and placement are carefully designed and executed so as not to upset the cassette's azimuth alignment.


The Inspections When it comes to quality control, TDK goes to extremes. Each cassette is subject to thousands of separate inspections. If it doesn't measure up on every one of these, we discard it. Our zeal may seem extreme, but it is this commitment

to quality which allowed us to offer the first full lifetime warranty in the cassette business—more than 10 years ago: In the unlikely event that any TDK cassette ever fails to perform due to a defect in materials or workmanship, simply return it to your local dealer or to TDK for a free replacement. It took guts to pioneer that warranty, but our cassettes have the guts—and the reliability—to back it up.

A Machine for All Your Machines

Now that we've told you how we move our tape, let us remind you about our tape. SA, the first non-chrome high bias cassette, is the reference tape most quality manufacturers use to align their decks before they leave the factory. It's also the number one-selling high bias cassette in America. For critical music recording, it is unsurpassed. AD is the normal bias tape with the "hot high end." It requires no special bias setting, which is why it is the best cassette for use in your car, where highs are hard to come by, as well as at home. Whatever your recording needs, TDK makes a tape that offers the ultimate in sound quality. But it's our super precision shell and mechanism that make sure all that sound gets from our tape to your ears, year after year. TDK Electronics Corp., Garden City, NY 11530



 **TDK**
The machine for your machine.



Fisher CR-4025 Stereo Cassette Deck

THE Fisher CR-4025 is a moderately priced front-loading cassette deck that uses a single d.c. governor-controlled motor and a permalloy record/playback head. Unusual for decks in this price class, its features include a wireless ultrasonic remote-control box (about the size of a package of 100-millimeter cigarettes) that can operate the pause function from anywhere within even a large-size room.

Six sturdy mechanical levers immediately below the cassette well on the left side of the recorder control the transport modes. The REWIND, FAST FORWARD, and PLAY keys can be pressed in any order without going through the stop function. When the end of the tape is reached in either the play or record mode, the control levers disengage automatically, returning the transport to neutral, but end-of-tape shutdown is not automatic from the fast-wind modes. Pressing the STOP key once halts tape motion; releasing it and pressing it a second time operates the eject function, which tilts the cassette well door open at the top.

Cassettes are inserted into slides on the rear of the cassette-well door, which has a large transparent plastic window that permits the label to be seen with the cassette in place. Since the rear of the cassette well is not illuminated, however, fairly good room lighting is required to view the tape. For routine cleaning and demagnetizing of the heads, two small Phillips-head screws securing the cassette-well door must be removed.

Three two-position lever switches in the center of the front panel select either line or microphone inputs, turn the Dolby noise-reduction system on or off, and set the proper bias and equalization for either chromium-dioxide (CrO₂) or ferric (NORM) cassette types. Below these are the standard 1/4-inch jacks for a pair of microphones and a set of stereo headphones. Above the switches is the customary three-digit tape counter along with the sensor for the ultrasonic remote-control feature. When the pause function is engaged, either manually or by remote control, a bright red pilot light comes on, though no comparable indicator is provided to show whether the deck is in record or playback mode.

The twin recording-level meters are calibrated from -20 to +5 dB (the Dolby-calibra-

tion mark is at +3 dB) and are brightly illuminated from the rear, with the scale below 0 dB in blue and from 0 dB upward in red. Below the meters are the separate left- and right-channel input-level controls. The output levels from the CR-4025 are internally fixed.

The rear panel of the Fisher CR-4025 contains phono jacks for connection to an amplifier or receiver, along with a sensitivity adjustment for the remote-control device. Measuring 15 inches wide, 6 inches high, and 10 1/2 inches deep, the CR-4025 weighs approximately 13 pounds. Price: \$249.95.

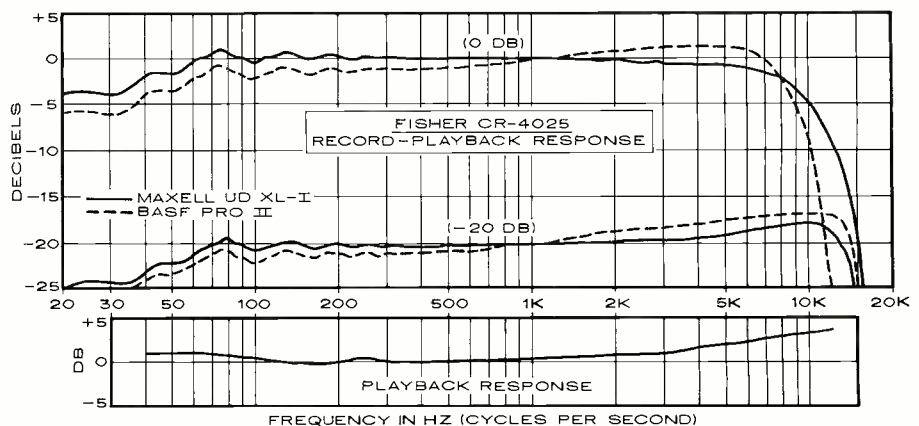
● **Laboratory Measurements.** We checked the playback frequency response of the CR-4025 with our TDK AC-337 test tape, reading the results for the ferric (120-microsecond) equalization directly and applying the standard correction factors when the tape was played in the CrO₂ (70 microsecond) switch position. In both cases the response was exceedingly flat (within ±0.5 dB) from 40 to 1,000 Hz, above which it rose very smoothly to a maximum of approximately +3.5 dB at the 12,500-Hz upper limit of the tape. This same gradually rising high-frequency characteristic was also observed with most of the standard cassettes we used to make record-playback measurements.

Lacking any specific recommendations from the manufacturer, we checked the overall record-playback frequency response with Maxell UD XL-I, TDK AD, Memorex MRX₃, and Scotch Master I. At the customary -20-dB level all the curves matched very closely, the UD XL-I being the closest to overall flat response by a small margin. Response with the UD XL-I was down by 3 dB at 40 Hz and at about 15,000 Hz. The TDK AD and Scotch Master I tapes had a very slightly more exaggerated high end, and the Memorex MRX₃ had perhaps 0.5 dB less high-end response, but none of these differences could be considered audibly significant. At the 0-dB level the slightly "hotter" TDK AD extended the response by about 1,000 Hz.

Fisher recommended that we use BASF Professional II as our CrO₂ reference tape, though we also tested the performance of another new chromium-dioxide formulation (Realistic Chrome) and three "chrome substitute" tapes: TDK SA, Memorex High-Bias, and Maxell UD XL-II. The BASF and the Memorex curves were quite similar, the former extending frequency response at the -3-dB point to approximately 14,500 Hz (vs. 14,000 for the Memorex), while the latter exhibited about 1 dB more headroom throughout most of the upper frequencies when recorded at a 0-dB input level. The three other tapes designed to use the chrome (CrO₂) switch position appeared to be slightly overbiased by the CR-4025, as evidenced by a falloff in their frequency response above about 11,000 Hz. As with the 120-microsecond ferric tapes, the graph shows that, using the recommended BASF cassette, overall record-playback response gradually rises to a peak about 2.5 dB above its output at 1,000 Hz, rather closely approximating our playback-only test-tape measurement.

Playback of a Dolby-level test tape indicated that the calibration markings on the CR-4025's meters were accurate. As might be expected, however, the gradual rise in high-frequency response was augmented when the Dolby system was switched in. At an input level of -20 dB the Dolby tracking error was within the 2-dB Dolby tolerance in the 2,000- to 12,000-Hz range, though this increased to as much as +3.5 dB between 5,000 and 12,000 Hz when the input level was reduced to -30 dB.

At a 0-dB recording level the distortion on playback was 0.7 per cent with the Maxell UD XL-I tape and 1.7 per cent with the BASF
(Continued on page 56)





Quartz-Lock by Realistic.

$\pm 0.0005\%$ Speed Accuracy.

Don't buy any turntable before you see the new direct-drive Realistic® LAB-500. It's already switched many an audiophile to Radio Shack's 22-year-old Realistic brand. The specs tell you why.

Speed accuracy of $\pm 0.0005\%$ just 1.5 seconds after start-up, wow and flutter of 0.025%, rumble of

only -70 dB (DIN B). This kind of performance is superior to some broadcast and disco equipment, and is made possible by a massive 12-5/8", 3.1-lb. platter resting directly atop a 12-pole brushless DC servomotor controlled by a quartz oscillator and PLL circuitry. But there's still more to recommend the LAB-500. Like all

Realistic turntables, the price includes dust cover and cartridge. And the cartridge is our best, made by Shure, factory mounted in an integrated headshell for minimum mass and precision tracking even at 3/4 gram. Audio response is a linear 20-20,000 Hz. The automatic arm-return is tripped optoelectronically — assuring no change in record speed even at the end of the disc. Out-front controls, including electronically actuated cueing, make operation easy. There are single-play/repeat and anti-skate controls, too.

All this, including the \$49.95 value cartridge and hinged cover and low-profile walnut vinyl base, for 259.95*
By Realistic. Sold only at Radio Shack!

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Professional II chromium-dioxide formulation. The 3 per cent distortion level was reached at inputs of +7 and +3 dB, respectively, for the two tapes. Referred to the 3 per cent distortion point, both tapes achieved a signal-to-noise ratio (unweighted, without Dolby noise reduction) of 53.5 dB. Switching in the Dolby system and using the customary A-weighting curve, the S/N improved to 66 dB for the UD XL-I and 67 dB for the Professional II, which is fine performance for a deck in this price class.

Wow and flutter of the CR-4025 measured 0.08 per cent (wrms) and 0.13 per cent with the DIN peak-reading method. The ballistic characteristics of the meters, checked with the prescribed 0.3-second pulses, corresponded exactly with VU characteristics. A 0-dB record level required an input signal of 65 millivolts (mV) at the line-input jacks and 0.14 mV at the microphone inputs. Microphone

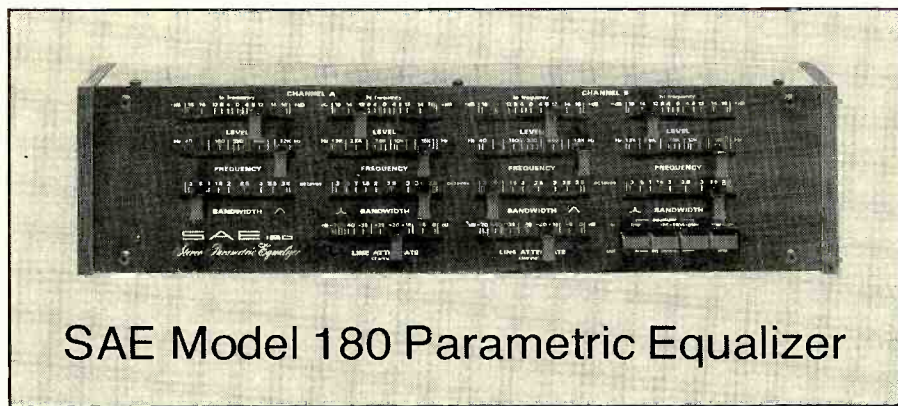
overload occurred with an input level of 25 mV which, while not overly generous, should be sufficient to handle all but high-output microphones. While the playback level of the CR-4025 is not adjustable, adequate volume was achieved using both 600-ohm and (nominally) 8-ohm impedance headphones. Fast-forward and rewind times (for a C-60 cassette) were 78 and 81 seconds, respectively, considerably bettering the 120-second wind/rewind specification.

● **Comment.** The Fisher CR-4025 cassette deck is certainly easy to use, and both its specifications and measured performance are entirely competitive with other units in its price class. The wireless remote-control feature functioned flawlessly, enabling us to eliminate commercials, station breaks, and the like from our armchair while dubbing desired selections from FM broadcasts. The

quality of the recordings we obtained in this manner was certainly more than adequate for our purpose, and the remote control eliminated the standard mad dash to the pause lever.

The CR-4025 has its limitations, of course. On very demanding source material (for example, direct-to-disc recordings) the slightly elevated treble response within its range cannot fully compensate for the loss of the extreme high frequencies that much more expensive recorders can capture. We missed the reassurance of a LED indicator reminding us when the machine was in its RECORD mode, and we would have liked to have memory rewind and automatic stop from the high-speed modes. But for the market in which it is intended to compete, we can certainly recommend the Fisher CR-4025 as worthy of serious consideration.

Circle 134 on reader service card



SAE Model 180 Parametric Equalizer

THE parametric equalizer, originally conceived as a tool for the professional recording engineer, has become one of the signal-processing accessories available to the home music listener and amateur recordist as well. SAE, one of the first companies to offer parametric equalizers to the consumer market, has recently introduced the Model 180, a lower-cost version of its Model 1800 parametric equalizer.

Although a parametric equalizer resembles a multiband graphic equalizer in many of its capabilities, there are some basic differences. An octave-band equalizer consists of a number of parallel filters (usually ten), each one octave wide, with means for adjusting the gain of the signal channel through each filter. With this arrangement, it is possible to make substantial corrections in the response of a speaker, a room, or the program material. However, a one-octave bandwidth limits a unit's ability to compensate for sharp, narrow-band response peaks or dips. A 1/3-octave equalizer is better equipped for this, but it is very expensive and has perhaps three times as many controls to adjust. It is almost impossible to equalize in 1/3-octave bands without the aid of instruments such as a pink-noise generator and a spectrum analyzer.

The answer, in many cases, is the parametric equalizer. It has a limited number of frequency bands (usually two to four), but the center frequency of each filter can be set to any of a wide range of frequencies. In addition, the bandwidth of each filter is adjustable over a wide range, varying the width of the peak or dip in response it produces. Like a conventional multiband equalizer, a parametric equalizer is capable of providing a near-infinite variety of response curves. Since one does not have the visual aid of a row of slider control levers whose positions outline an approximate response curve, a parametric equalizer must be adjusted by ear, and the end result is established by the hearing judgment, patience, and skill of the user.

SAE's new Model 180 appears to be a slightly simplified version of their Model 1800 parametric equalizer. It is almost the same size and has virtually identical specifications. The rated output is 2.5 volts, with no more than 0.02 per cent distortion from 20 to 20,000 Hz and a noise level at least 90 dB below that output. The basic frequency response of the unit (controls centered) is within ± 0.25 dB from 20 to 20,000 Hz.

The Model 180 has two frequency bands per channel, identified as "lo" and "hi." The

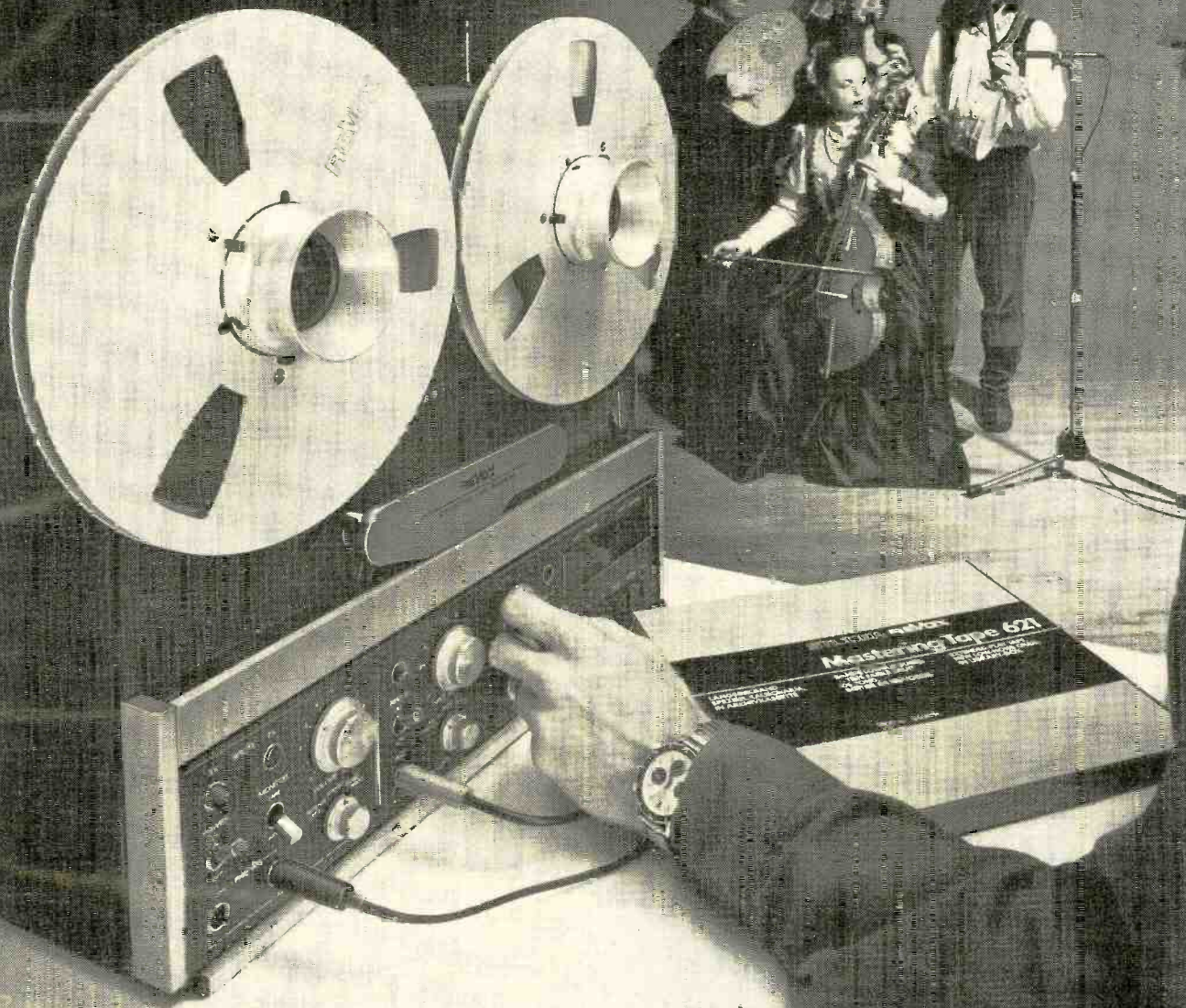
low band covers from 40 to 1,200 Hz, and the high band from 1,200 to 16,000 Hz. Horizontal sliders adjust the center frequencies of the filters, and calibrated scales show the approximate frequency settings. Another slider varies the bandwidth of each filter from 0.3 octave to 3.6 octaves. A gain control above each group of equalizer controls changes the response from boost to cut (as its setting is varied from +16 dB to -16 dB). At the center (0 dB) position the response is flat. Each stereo channel also has a master level control, normally operated at its 0-dB (minimum attenuation) setting and capable of as much as 70 dB of attenuation.

The only other operating controls of the SAE Model 180 are four pushbutton switches. The Model 180 is normally connected to an amplifier through its tape-recording and monitoring jacks, and these jacks are duplicated in the rear of the Model 180. A TAPE MONITOR button on the panel duplicates the function of the system's main tape-monitoring switch, which must be set to MONITOR in order to use the equalizer. A LINE button inserts the equalizer in the signal path when it is engaged and bypasses it when out. The other two buttons provide the option of equalizing the signal either before it is fed to the tape recorder or at the recorder's monitor output.

The SAE Model 180 is finished in black, matching the appearance of other SAE audio components. The clearly legible panel markings are in contrasting white. It has no power switch, and so is normally operated from a switched outlet on the amplifier or receiver. A pilot light on the Model 180 shows when it is on, and it has an internal 5- or 6-second turn-on delay to prevent starting transients from reaching the amplifiers or speakers. The SAE Model 180 is 18 1/4 inches wide, 4 3/8 inches high, and 3 1/2 inches deep with its walnut side panels and weighs 16 pounds. Price: \$250.

● **Laboratory Measurements.** With the standard IHF load of 10,000 ohms in parallel with 1,000 picofarads, the Model 180's output
(Continued on page 58)

real to reel...



sounds best on ReVox B77

Real to reel means live performance recording, and that's where the ReVox B77 dramatically demonstrates its superiority over other tape recorders. Only the B77 has the wide dynamic range and generous record headroom you need to capture without compromise the full detail and dimension of live music.

Only the B77 delivers the "ruler-flat" frequency response you get from Willi Studer's legendary head design. Only the B77 combines the convenience of push-button digital logic control of tape motion, professional VU meters with built-in peak level indicators, and a self-contained tape cutter/splicer.

If you're thinking of upgrading your real to reel performance, try the ReVox B77. It's available in half or quarter track, $3\frac{3}{4}$ - $7\frac{1}{2}$ or $7\frac{1}{2}$ -15 IPS. For complete information and list of demonstrating dealers, circle reader service number or contact us at the address shown below.

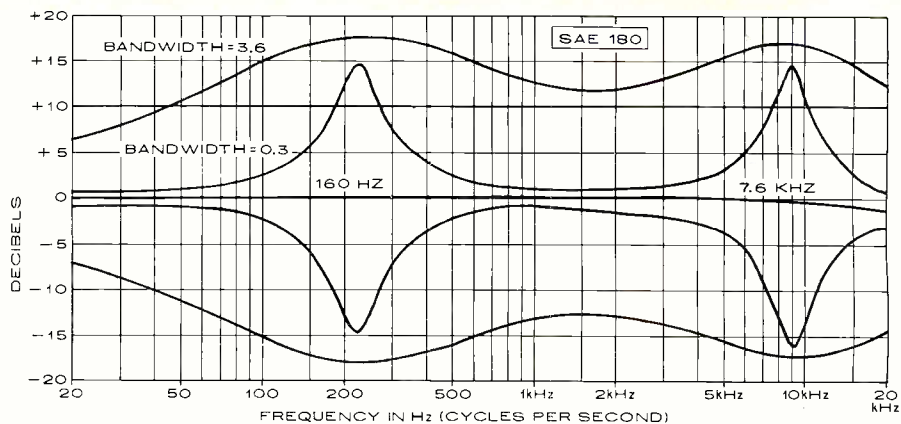
REVOX

clipped at 8.8 volts. The harmonic distortion at 1,000 Hz was equal to that of our signal generator—between 0.0015 and 0.003 per cent from 1 to more than 8 volts output. At 20,000 Hz it was slightly higher, ranging from 0.002 per cent at 1 volt to 0.007 per cent at 8 volts. At 20 Hz the distortion was between 0.02 and 0.05 per cent from 1 to 8 volts output.

The insertion loss of the equalizer was 1.2 dB with all level controls set at 0. When the equalizer is bypassed it becomes a unity-gain device. The output noise was below our measurement limit of 100 microvolts with no weighting, which means that it was more than 88 dB below rated output. The basic frequency response of the Model 180, with the controls set to 0, was perfectly flat from 50 to 10,000 Hz, down 0.1 dB at 20,000 Hz, and down 0.3 dB at 20 Hz.

The representative frequency-response curves we made with different center frequencies and bandwidths indicate only a little of the capability of the Model 180. We noted that there was often a discrepancy between the panel's indicated center frequency and the actual measured center frequency, but this is of no practical importance since one can hardly adjust a device such as this by trying to match a previously selected response curve. It *must* be done by ear or with instruments, and the frequency calibrations on the panel are only for general guidance.

● **Comment.** There is little we can say about the operation and performance of the SAE

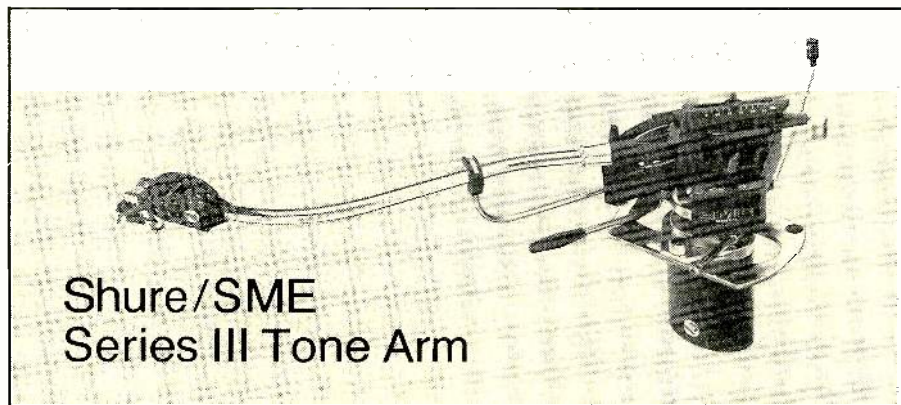


Model 180 except to point out the obvious: it does exactly what is claimed for it, usually with a very large safety margin. It is without question a "distortionless," "noiseless" accessory in every audible sense of those terms. It is completely without switching transients and there is no possibility of damaging anything by incorrect operation of its push-button controls (an error either cuts off the sound or produces no change at all).

Being lucky enough not to have any system-response problems that could benefit from equalization, we had to content ourselves with experimenting with the controls to hear the range of effects they produced. It

was surprising to discover how many types of frequency-response shapes can be created by a two-band equalizer when those bands are continuously adjustable in frequency and width as well as in amplitude. Recalling our feeling of being slightly overwhelmed by the four-band SAE Model 2800 equalizer a few years ago, we found the relative simplicity of the Model 180 to be especially appealing. Even though the Model 2800 may do "more," we suspect that most consumers will find the simpler and less expensive Model 180 completely adequate for most equalization tasks.

Circle 135 on reader service card



**Shure/SME
Series III Tone Arm**

WHEN the original SME tone arms made their appearance nearly a quarter of a century ago, they were unique. High fidelity was in its infancy, and most tone arms of the time were crude, clumsy-looking affairs at best, even if they were reasonably satisfactory for the low-compliance cartridges of the period.

The fundamental soundness of the original SME design is underscored by the fact that the same basic approach has been carried over into today's much more sophisticated market. The vertical pivot is a knife edge resting in a hardened V-groove trough that in-

troduces practically no friction in the vertical motion of the tone arm. The horizontal pivot uses precision ball bearings, and its friction is comparable to that of the vertical pivot.

The mounting base of the SME incorporated—and still does—the easiest-to-use arrangement of any arm for adjusting stylus overhang for minimum tracking error during the initial setup. The price one pays for this is the need for an elongated hole in a motorboard, but most high-quality turntables are available with their motorboards (or with inserts fitting the boards) precut for mounting an SME arm. When the arm is installed, one

has merely to shift the entire arm in the elongated slot in the base plate until the tracking error at an inner record radius is zero, as indicated on a supplied protractor.

Now SME has developed the Series III version of their tone arm, supplementing (but not replacing) Series II. Despite a strong family resemblance to its predecessors, the Series III is a totally new arm. It does, however, share certain design features with the previous models, including the distinctive mounting base (which fits the former cutouts), the hanging-thread antiskating compensator, and the knife-edge vertical pivot.

The S-shaped arm is a very thin titanium tube with a fixed head that is little more than a means for holding the two cartridge-mounting screws and the finger lift. The entire arm tube plugs into a socket near the arm pivots so as to concentrate the mass of the arm near the pivot where it contributes least to the *effective* mass at the stylus position.

Since the mass is located near the pivot, the counterweight is also placed very close to the pivots. In fact, it is part of a rather complex carbon-fiber-reinforced molded-plastic structure that almost completely hides the pivot section from view. The counterweight consists of a number of small lead weights that can be installed in a receptacle near the pivots. The smallest mass that will counterbalance the cartridge is used, and the weights

(Continued on page 62)

discover . . .



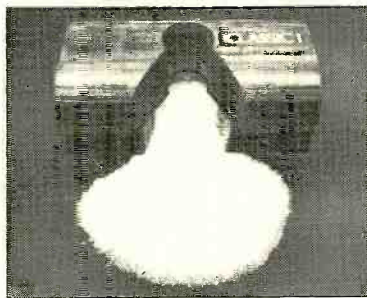
The inside story of a classic.

Introducing a new type of record cleaner. Meet the CLASSIC 1, the only cleaner of its kind. Developed to satisfy you, the discriminating audiophile.

Neutralizing the static charges that attract and hold destructive micro-particles of dust and dirt on your record's surface is one of the major problems in record care.

Ordinary cleaners attempt to reduce static charges by applying fluid directly to the surface of the record or cleaning unit. Direct application of fluid involves an inherent risk of harmful residue build-up and should be avoided except in the case of abnormally dirty or greasy records. In fact, normal maintenance should not involve wetting the record.

At last, the CLASSIC 1 has the answer to safe and effective cleaning. Not only are static charges reduced, but the problem of residue formation is eliminated. Cleaning is safe and effective because inside the CLASSIC 1 is



the exclusive MICRO STOR SYSTEM which utilizes a humidification/cleaning process rather than a 'wet' technique.

The secret to the MICRO STOR SYSTEM is a permeable matrix of many thousands of tiny glass beads which retain the cleaning fluid. Through capillary action, a vapor penetrates the velvet surface creating a field of humidity sufficient to reduce static charges. Disc contaminants can now be removed safely and easily without wetting the record and risking residue build-up.

Discover the ultimate in record care. The CLASSIC 1, a Sound Saver product.

Available at finer audio dealers . . .



Power!

That's the Jensen Car Stereo Triax® II.
That's the thrill of being there.

Power is right! 100 watts! Now, all the energy and intensity that went into the original performance comes through the Jensen Triax II 3-way speaker.

This incredible 100 watt capability gives the Triax II an unparalleled clarity of sound throughout the entire spectrum.

What gives the Triax II its great power handling and sound reproduction? For starters, the piezoelectric solid state tweeter with low mass and incredible power handling capabilities. It starts reproducing crystal clear high frequency signals at 6,000 Hz...and keeps going well past the range of human audibility.

The 6" x 9" woofer of the Triax II boasts a new large diameter barium ferrite 20 oz. magnet. Which means better heat dissipation and more efficiency for clearer, truer sound at higher listening levels.

A new high power 1½" voice coil on the Triax II translates into less distortion and the ability to achieve higher sound pressure levels.

The midrange unit of this remarkable speaker produces smoother sound with better transient response, less distortion and higher power handling... thanks to its large 2.3 magnet structure.

And the Triax II is fully compatible with the advanced bi-amplified power sources for outstanding clarity and separation.

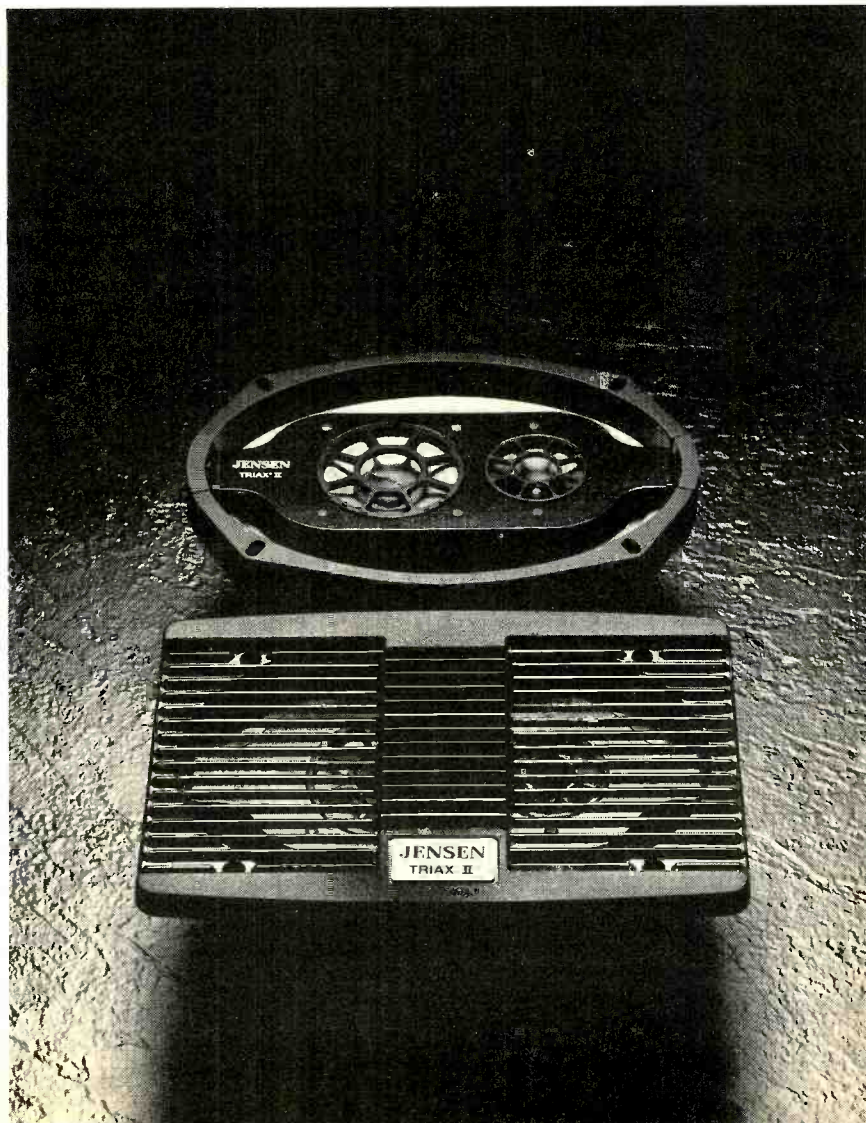
So go to the concert. Hear the Jensen Triax II. That's the thrill of being there.

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The thrill of being there.

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CIRCLE NO. 36 ON READER SERVICE CARD

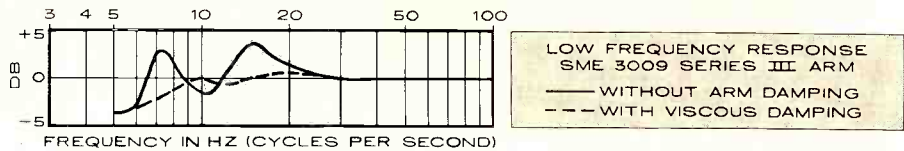


supplied in the arm will balance cartridges having masses between 6 and 10.5 grams (into which group most popular cartridges fall). With other combinations of weights, cartridge masses from 0.1 to 13 grams can be balanced.

A knurled knob moves the entire counterweight assembly to balance the arm. Another knob moves a secondary weight on the side of the structure to add vertical force, which is read on a scale calibrated from 0 to 1.5 grams at intervals of 0.25 gram. (For forces between 1.5 and 2.5 grams, a small weight on the opposite side of the structure is slid forward to a stop, which adds exactly one gram to the indicated value.) Then another knurled knob shifts the entire system laterally to place its center of gravity directly over the center of the knife-edge pivot (the procedure for checking this is explained clearly in the instruction manual). Finally, there is another adjustment screw that moves the application point of the antiskating thread along a calibrated scale to match the tracking force.

In the base of the arm are the arm rest, with a locking clip, the cueing lever, and adjustments for shifting the entire arm for lateral-tracking adjustment and for setting arm height relative to the record for correct vertical tracking angle. A small plastic trough clips onto the base, and a small plastic paddle attaches to the arm in such a way that it extends into the trough as the arm moves laterally. To apply viscous damping to the low-frequency arm resonance, the trough is filled with a supplied silicone fluid and one of the paddles is installed. Three different paddle sizes are furnished to match cartridges of different compliance ratings, and one can use less than the full amount of damping fluid if desired. The price of the SME Series III tone arm is \$294. Additional arm tubes cost \$39.60 each.

● **Laboratory Measurements.** We installed



the SME Series III arm on the motorboard of a Sony TTS-3000 turntable, replacing the older SME arm that had occupied that position for many years. The base of the new arm fit the original cutout exactly, greatly simplifying the installation.

Nevertheless, the complete installation of an SME Series III arm is a rather formidable process, although it is rendered fairly painless by one of the best instruction manuals we have ever seen. Each of the fifty-seven installation steps is completely explained and illustrated with a photograph or drawing. However, it required about two hours for us to install and set up a Shure V15 Type IV cartridge in the SME arm, plus more than an hour's wait for the silicone to flow from the tube into the damping trough.

When we had set the arm for tangency at a 2 $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch playing radius, the lateral tracking error was less than 0.7 degree per inch over the entire record surface. The tracking-force calibrations were exact in a comparison with an external balance gauge. The SME Series III arm is furnished with a high-quality signal cable fitted with gold-plated plugs at both ends (it plugs into sockets underneath the arm). We measured a capacitance to ground of 280 picofarads (pF) in each channel, with a very low interchannel capacitance of 2 pF. Each output plug had a 220-pF capacitor wired into it to provide the relatively high total load capacitance required for some cartridges. Since the Type IV is meant to operate with a lower load

capacitance, we removed the added capacitance from the cables.

The effective arm mass, after the 6.5-gram cartridge mass was subtracted, was a mere 5 grams—by far the lowest we have ever measured on a tone arm. Most modern arms have a mass between 12 and 25 grams.

We checked the effect of the arm's viscous-damping system by measuring the low-frequency arm/cartridge resonance with and without the grey paddle lowered into the silicone (for this test the built-in damping of the Type IV cartridge was not used). With no damping, there were two resonance peaks, at 9 and 15 Hz, with amplitudes of 3 to 3.5 dB, and a dip in output of about 1.5 dB at 10 Hz. The damping left us with a barely measurable rise of 0.5 dB at 20 Hz and a dip of 0.5 dB at 12 Hz. Overall, the response variation without damping was +3.5, -2.5 dB from 6 to 30 Hz, and with damping it was +0.5, -3 dB over the same range. Within the audio range, the undamped rise of 1.5 dB at 20 Hz was reduced to 0.5 dB by the damping action.

The Shure cartridge has its own damping system, which in our tests did very nearly the same thing for it as the SME damping did. We checked to see what happened when we used both damping systems; the results were very similar to what we found with either one alone. However, for our evaluation of the SME arm we continued to keep the cartridge damping inactive.

Frankly, the audible effects of removing the low-frequency response variation caused by arm/cartridge resonance were not significant (that does not mean inaudible, just not significant). If one's records (and speakers) do not supply audible material at frequencies under 30 Hz (and almost none do), one can hardly expect to hear any dramatic differences in the low bass.

There was, however, a tremendous change in the response of the record-player system to vibration, jarring, and the effects of warped records. Not only was the system less susceptible to acoustic feedback, but it became almost totally immune to jarring of the most severe kind. Hard blows to the turntable base or to the rack in which it was installed (on casters) had no effect on the tracking of records. Pushing the rack across a carpeted floor while records were being played at a 1-gram force did not bounce the pickup from the record or cause it to skip grooves. Warped records, normally playable only by a few radial-tracking arms, presented no problems to the SME/Shure combination. It behaved much as though the stylus were somehow fixed in relation to the groove instead of being held in contact with it by a mere gram of downward force.

● **Comment.** On the objective level, the SME Series III arm has the lowest mass, by far, that we have ever measured on a tone arm. Even with the most compliant cartridges, the low-frequency resonance should be above 10 Hz and well away from excitation

(Continued on page 64)



YOU SHOULD EXPECT MORE FROM THE PHASE 4000 SERIES TWO.

Even if you're made out of money, you'd be hard pressed to buy more preamp.

The Phase 4000 Series Two goes way beyond the boundaries of conventional preamps. First, the 4000 processes and amplifies your music without introducing any significant noise or distortion. Then it actually compensates for losses in dynamic range and signal-to-noise ratios that occurred way back in the recording process!

To prevent overloads, studios "peak limit" the high-level attacks common in today's music. The 4000 Series Two has highly advanced circuits to read peak limiting, and immediately restore the dynamic range. The combined overall dynamic range is increased by 17.5dB. So when Charlie Watts hits a cymbal, it sounds like a cymbal!

The 4000 Series Two also spots low level gain riding, where the recording engineer adds volume to a low signal to overcome noise on the master tape. The

Downward Expander immediately expands the dynamics, so you hear the bass as the conductor called for it, not as the engineer delivered it.

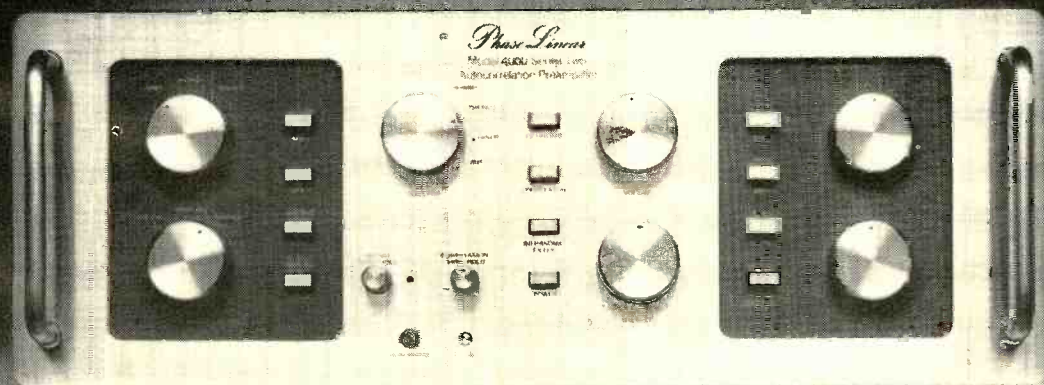
The 4000 Series Two second generation Autocorrelator reduces record hiss, tape hiss, and FM broadcast noise. Weighted overall noise reduction is -10dB from 20Hz to 20kHz. So your music comes clean, and the background is silent.

The 4000 has two new RIAA phono stages which eliminate low level switching and reduce hum and CB interference to a minimum.

Tape monitor and dubbing circuits allow copying between decks, while listening to a third program source. There's a separate direct coupled (OCL) Headphone Amplifier. An infrasonic filter eliminates audible effects caused by rumble. We could go on forever, but you get the point.

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by record warps. Its damping system produces the most stable record player we have yet seen (for those who enjoy shocking their fellow audiophiles, one can drop the arm from any height above the record and watch it float gently to the disc surface).

The Series III arm is very easy to handle, and its damping eliminates any tendency for the arm to "get away" from the user's fingers—a trait we have encountered in some

arms. The only criticism of its handling that we can make is concerned with the arm's outward drift under the influence of the antiskating torque. The calibration of the antiskating system is accurate, but there is not enough friction between the arm and the cueing lift bar, and the outward drift is sufficient to be annoying.

If that is the only flaw in the SME Series III arm, it must be accounted a remarkable suc-

cess, and that is the way we view it. To be sure, anyone who wishes to mount several cartridges for interchangeable use must be prepared to invest a sizable sum in the plug-in arm tubes, but it seems to us that anyone with roughly \$300 invested in a tone arm should be able to afford this added luxury. If there is a better arm to be had, we do not know of it.

Circle 136 on reader service card



Sherwood S-7650 Stereo Receiver

SHERWOOD's Model S-7650 is a compact, moderate-price stereo receiver whose actual performance far exceeds its printed specifications. Believing that the ultra-low distortion ratings presently in vogue do not provide proportionate benefits to the listener, Sherwood has rated the audio amplifiers in the S-7650 at 45 watts per channel into 8-ohm loads from 20 to 20,000 Hz with no more than 0.2 per cent total harmonic distortion. The other amplifier ratings, like the power and distortion figures, are all good enough that in Sherwood's view (and ours) improvement would not result in any actual benefit to the user. The FM tuner ratings, like those of the amplifier, are also very good, even if not "state-of-the-art" in a purely numerical sense.

The silver-colored front panel of the S-7650

is uncluttered and simple, with a large glass-covered cutout for the dial scales and a large tuning knob to its right. Above the dial scales are two meters for relative signal strength and FM channel-center tuning. Three LED's indicate whether the AM or FM tuner is being used and when a stereo FM signal is tuned in.

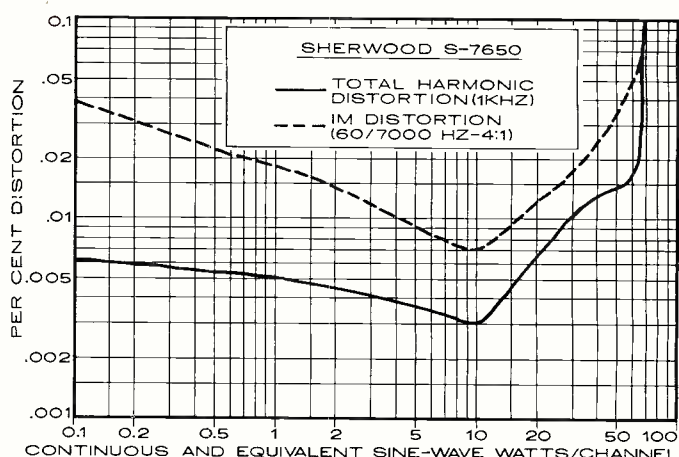
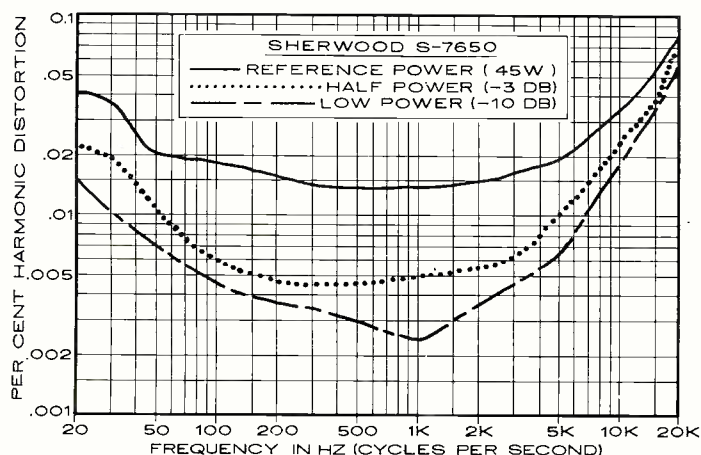
Several identical knobs across the bottom of the panel operate the speaker-selector switch, bass and treble tone controls, balance, volume, and input-selector switch. Each tone control has eleven detented positions. The volume control has a large number of detented steps, and the balance control has a center detent. The available input sources include AM, FM, phono, and auxiliary (plus two tape decks controlled by another switch). The speaker switch activates either, both, or neither of two pairs of speaker outputs. To its

left are a headphone jack and the power switch.

Other lever switches operate the loudness compensation, noise filter, interstation-noise muting (for FM reception), mode (mono or stereo), and tape-monitor functions. The last connects the playback output from either of two tape decks (or the selected input program) to the receiver's amplifiers. On the rear apron of the receiver are insulated spring-loaded speaker connectors, binding posts for the antenna inputs, and a hinged AM ferrite-rod antenna. A DIN socket duplicates the functions of one set of phono jacks. A three-position slide switch selects FM de-emphasis time constants of 25, 50, or 75 microseconds. There are accessible fuse holders for the speaker and a.c. line. One of the two a.c. outlets is switched.

The schematic diagram of the S-7650 shows that discrete transistors are used throughout the audio section. In the FM tuner, an integrated circuit provides i.f. gain, limiting, and quadrature detection, while another is the stereo-multiplex demodulator. A third IC provides all AM-tuner functions. The Sherwood S-7650 is housed in an attractive wood-grain-vinyl-clad plywood cabinet. It is 18 inches wide, 5¾ inches high, and 14 inches deep, and it weighs 24 pounds. Price: \$400.

● **Laboratory Measurements.** During the one-hour preconditioning period at one-third power output the ventilating grille on top of the cabinet (over the power supply and output transistors) became quite hot, but elsewhere
(Continued on page 66)



Never has one speaker system incorporated so many aspects of the state of the art.

The Infinity Reference Standard 4.5



This is a system of breathtaking clarity and detail, yet capable of the awesome punch and power demanded by the finest contemporary digital and direct-to-disc recordings.

The Reference Standard 4.5 frees the intimate warmth of the human voice, the robust sheen of the strings, the fiery attack of the brass, the stab and snap of the bass. The speakers seem to disappear, revealing a concert stage breathing life, delicacy and fury. You hear the musicians, not the speakers.

How does the 4.5 work its musical miracles? The profoundly accurate bass and midbass are partly the result of a remarkable new cone material, polypropylene. It has dramatically less mass, yet significantly greater internal damping than paper cones or other exotic materials. Our polypropylene piston, combined with our exclusive Infinity/Watkins dual-voice-coil woofer principle creates bass frequencies with the snap and definition of the finest dipoles, yet retains the ultra-low frequency response (flat to 23 Hz) that has made Infinity famous.

The transparent crystalline treble issues from our world-acclaimed EMIT™ tweeters in dipole array. Midrange warmth, smoothness and unprecedented definition are the progeny of our lustrous new dipole EMIM™ Electromagnetic Induction Midranges. Like the EMITs, they employ powerful magnets of rare-earth samarium cobalt and etched voice-coils on low-mass diaphragms.



A separate electronic crossover/equalization unit allows you control over variable source material and room anomalies, either in single or bi-amp mode.

A remarkable technological story. And like all great stories, this one ends where it began: with the music. Which is the real reason you should spend \$3000* on the Infinity state-of-the-art Reference Standard 4.5.

 **Infinity™**

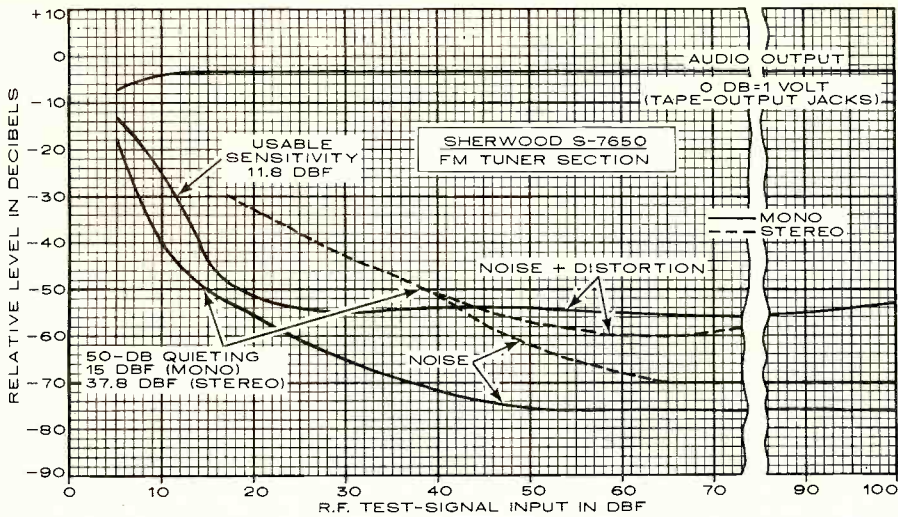
We get you back to what it's all about. Music.

For the nearest dealer's name and address, phone toll-free 800-423-5244, or, from California, 800-382-3372.

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the receiver remained cool. The outputs clipped at 70 watts per channel into 8-ohm loads at 1,000 Hz, for an IHF clipping-headroom rating of 1.92 dB. The IHF dynamic headroom was a rather high 2.72 dB (referenced to 45 watts), corresponding to about 84 watts of unclipped output during a short tone burst.

The input sensitivity of the amplifier was quite high, and it required only 23 millivolts (mV) at the AUX input and 0.3 mV at the phono input for a reference output of 1 watt. The A-weighted signal-to-noise ratios, referred to 1 watt, were 81 and 79 dB, respectively, for the two inputs.

At 1,000 Hz, the harmonic distortion was between 0.003 and 0.006 per cent at power outputs between 0.1 and 20 watts, rising to 0.014 per cent at the rated 45 watts output and 0.02 per cent at 65 watts. The intermodulation distortion decreased from 0.037 per cent at 0.1 watt to 0.007 per cent at 10 watts before rising to 0.028 per cent at 45 watts and 0.064 per cent at 70 watts. At rated power, the distortion was typically under 0.02 per cent over most of the audio frequency range, reaching 0.04 per cent at 20 Hz and 0.075 per cent at 20,000 Hz. It was even lower at reduced power outputs, so that the typical distortion at listenable levels and audible frequencies was between 0.003 and 0.01 per cent.

The tone controls had conventional characteristics, with a sliding bass-turnover frequency and a treble response hinged between 2,000 and 3,000 Hz. The loudness compensation boosted both low and high frequencies, but only to a moderate degree that did not create unnatural heaviness in the sound. The high-frequency filter had a 12-dB-per-octave slope and a -3-dB response frequency of 6,000 Hz. The RIAA phono equalization was accurate within ± 0.25 dB from 20 to 20,000 Hz. When it was measured through the inductance of a typical phono cartridge, there was a broad but slight rise of about 1 dB in the 8,000- to 15,000-Hz range. The phono-preamplifier stage overloaded at a 210-mV input at 1,000 Hz and at equivalent levels at 20 and 20,000 Hz. The measured phono-input impedance was 50,000 ohms in parallel with 220 picofarads.

The FM-tuner section had a usable sensitivity of 11.8 dBf (2.1 microvolts) in mono. The stereo sensitivity was set by the switching threshold of 17 dBf (4 μ V). The 50-dB quiet-

ing sensitivity was 15 dBf (3 μ V) in mono, with 0.63 per cent THD. In stereo it was 37.8 dBf (40 μ V) with 0.32 per cent THD. The ultimate signal-to-noise ratios (with 65 dBf input) were 76 dB in mono and 70 dB in stereo, and distortion at this input level was 0.17 per cent in mono and 0.1 per cent in stereo.

The frequency response of the S-7650 FM-tuner section, in stereo, was flat within ± 0.5 , -1 dB from 30 to 15,000 Hz. The channel separation was substantial and uniform with frequency, in general measuring between 45 and 50 dB and over 43 dB from 30 to 15,000 Hz.

The FM capture ratio was approximately 1.1 to 1.2 dB, and the AM rejection was 50 to 51 dB with input-signal levels in the 45- to 65-dBf range. The image rejection was a very high 95 dB. Alternate-channel selectivity was 69.5 dB, and adjacent-channel selectivity was 3.5 dB. The muting threshold was 14.8 dBf (3 μ V). The 19-kHz pilot carrier component in the audio output was a low -73 dB, and the tuner hum was -74 dB. The AM-tuner frequency response was down 2.5 dB at 20 Hz and 6 dB at 2,000 Hz relative to the 1,000-Hz level.

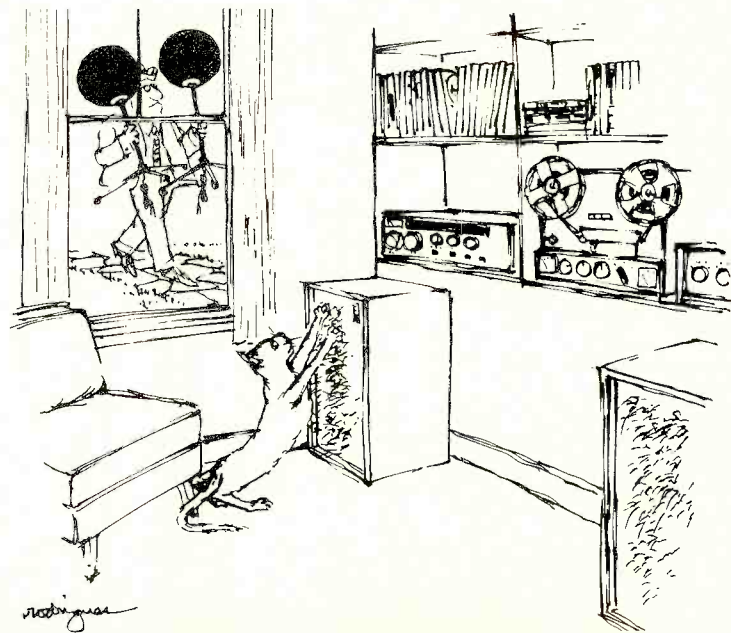
● **Comment.** When we examined the total performance of the Sherwood S-7650, two things stood out. First was the extraordinarily conservative ratings that Sherwood has chosen to apply. The S-7650 could have been rated at 65 watts (with the same low distortion level and wide frequency-response range) with a more than adequate safety margin. The 45-watt rating seems entirely *too* conservative—it might even discourage a prospective buyer who felt, rightly or wrongly, that he needed more power. It might also give the false impression that the S-7650 is somewhat overpriced compared with other receivers whose advertised power-output ratings are quite similar.

Second, we were impressed by its overall excellent performance, quite apart from its published ratings. The audio and FM distortion and noise levels, tuner image rejection, and selectivity measurements are all characteristic of a top-quality receiver, and most of them are considerably better than the receiver's ratings. In fact, the only significant measurement we made that did not exceed Sherwood's ultraconservative ratings was AM rejection, which was rated at 60 dB but measured about 50 dB.

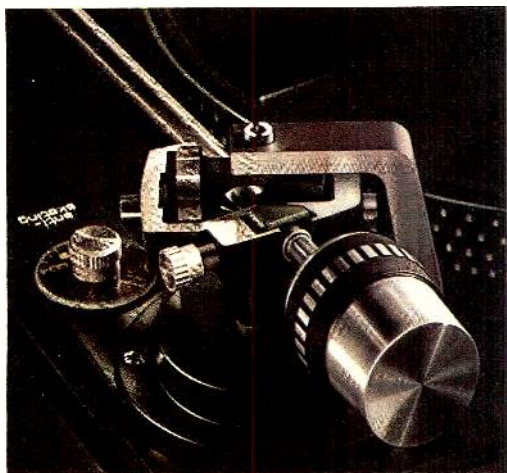
The general handling characteristics of the receiver were equally satisfactory. However, be sure to check the position of the rear-panel FM de-emphasis switch before placing the receiver into service, since it can easily be displaced from its correct setting during unpacking and installation. The FM interstation-noise muting action was good, although we could hear a slight "thump" when turning off a signal. The audio filter was one of the better ones we have used, thanks to its 12-dB-per-octave slope and well-chosen cutoff frequency.

All in all, the Sherwood S-7650 delivered performance that is typical of the best one can hope for (or will need) in a stereo receiver in an attractive, moderately priced, and ultraconservatively rated package. It is an excellent value, especially if it is judged by what it *actually* does and not by its modest advertised specifications.

Circle 137 on reader service card



We'll match the tonearm on our lowest-priced turntable against the tonearm on their highest-priced turntable.



We'd like to be very clear about what we have in mind. By "their" we mean everyone else's. And, our lowest-priced turntable is the new CS1237.

The CS1237's tonearm is mounted in a four-point gyroscopic gimbal—widely acknowledged as the finest suspension system available. The tonearm is centered, balanced and pivoted exactly where the vertical and horizontal axes intersect.

From pivot to tonearm head, the shape is a straight line, the shortest distance between those two important points. (Curved tonearms may look sexier, but at the cost of extra mass, less rigidity and lateral imbalance—none of which is consistent with good engineering practice.)

Tracking force is applied by a flat-wound spring coiled around the vertical pivot, and this force is maintained equally on each groove wall whether or not the turntable is level. The tonearm's perfect balance is maintained throughout play.

By contrast, tonearms which apply tracking force by shifting the counterweight forward are actually unbalanced during play and prone to mistracking. For example, on warped records the stylus tends to dig in on the uphill side of the warp and to lose contact on the way down.

Vertical-bearing friction in the CS1237 tonearm is astonishingly low—less than 8 milligrams. It can track as low as 0.25 gram—which means it will allow *any* cartridge to operate at its own optimum tracking force.

There's still more. The counterweight is carefully damped to attenuate tonearm resonances. Anti-skating is separately calibrated for all stylus types. Cueing is damped in both directions to prevent bounce. And because the CS1237 can play up to six records in sequence, the stylus angle can be set for optimum vertical tracking in either single-play or multiple-play.

To find any other tonearm that seriously matches the CS1237's, you have two choices.

You can consider one of the more exotic separates. But you'll find they cost as much as the entire CS1237. (Price: less than \$180, complete with base and cover.)

Or you might compare it with one of the higher-priced Dual turntables. You'll find a few additional refinements, but no difference in design integrity or manufacturing quality. Which is why no other turntable quite matches a Dual. Any Dual.



For the life of your records

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

Dual[®]

The Pop Beat

By Paulette Weiss



AMATEUR NIGHT

DESPITE the advice of friends, relatives, and "how to" articles (including STEREO REVIEW's own in March 1978), it's still pretty tough to get started in the music business, especially as a performer. The competition, always stiff, is getting stiffer. Among the thousands of Americans dreaming of stardom are surely some twelve-year-old practicing Linda Ronstadt pouts in a bathroom mirror in Sheboygan and a guy three times her age still polishing his act on the dreary bar and bar-mitzvah circuit in Hackensack. The talent, the drive, and the time they devote to it may vary, but the dream is always the same: SUCCESS, spelled out in ever smaller numbers on the charts and ever larger ones on the recording contracts.

Aspiring musical amateurs in Manhattan were recently given an opportunity the Sheboygan-Hackensack hopefuls might sell their souls for: the first annual Manhattan Music Playoffs offered as its grand prize to non-professional musicians not only a recording contract (compliments of Infinity Records) but a week's engagement at a New York club and an appearance on the popular King Biscuit Flower Hour radio program.

The Playoffs is the first project to be launched by a music task force created last fall under the aegis of Manhattan Borough President Andrew Stein. Made up of a committee of volunteers from the entertainment industry, the group aims to "revitalize the city's appeal to the music and recording industries . . . to stem the flow of entertainment talents from the city to the west coast." If that sounds rather less like artistic altruism

than chamber-of-commerce boosterism, the committee makes up for it with real benefits to the young artists it discovers. For example, besides that lovely first prize just mentioned, second and third prizes were also awarded: engagements at two other popular Manhattan clubs. With a little bit of luck, the runners-up have a good chance of running down their own recording contracts.

I first heard about the Playoffs in October of 1978 when I received an invitation to assist in the judging. Amateur musicians began finding out about it at about the same time from large signs posted on buses and subway trains as well as from a discreetly understated classified ad in the *Village Voice*. Word soon spread, and the result was the appearance of some two hundred groups at the preliminary auditions on December 2 and 9.

Eligibility requirements were few. The Playoffs were limited to groups of three to seven members playing only what the music industry is pleased to call "contemporary" material. (Later competitions are planned for classical, jazz, and other music categories, although the fuzzy "contemporary" label drew jazz and gospel groups as well as rock, r-&-b, and disco performers to this first outing.) Group members had to be Manhattan residents and nonprofessional musicians ("non-professional" in this case meaning without a recording contract, not that the group had never earned money with their music). Auditions were held in four locations on each of the two slated Saturdays. Each group performed once before a panel of five judges, all members of the music industry.

There were more mini than maxi talents, but the general performance level was gratifyingly high. Despite (because of?) their rehearsal-room pallor, some of those sunlight-starved kids were damned good. But rock wasn't the half of it: my favorite group, Taksim, played a cross between jazz and Mid-eastern belly-dance music, with vocals in the style of Lambert, Hendricks & Ross weaving through the instrumentals. There were hot Latin groups, liver-thumping disco bands, folk acts, and glitter-sprinkled soul groups whose choreography would have shamed the Rockettes. I had such a marvelous time at the audition I was asked to judge that I volunteered to do it again the following Saturday.

EVER the fan, I quickly became very partisan about my favorites. When three of the groups I had given high scores to—Taksim, Vienna, and Innervisions—showed up among the eleven finalists, I cheered them on from the bottom of my biases. The finals, held in January at the Hunter College Auditorium, took the form of a long concert. Group after group performed for a shamelessly enthusiastic audience of 2,000, mostly friends and relatives of the finalists. Alison Steele of WNEW-FM and Hal Jackson of WBLS-FM served as MC's, Borough President Stein was on hand to sop up the political gravy, and Ron Alexenburg, president of Infinity Records, appeared to present the Big Award.

All eleven performances were good, but I was rooting for Taksim, whose sound really soared above the rest. But after speaking with one of the celebrity judges, Billy Alessi of the Alessi Brothers vocal duo, I knew Taksim didn't stand a chance. "I'm looking for what a record company could use, something commercial," he said. His fellow judges obviously agreed, for they chose to fly with Roc, a tight, hard-rock outfit as commercial as they come, right down to the trendy King Tut T-shirt on the lead guitarist. Led by Hedda Goodrich, a powerful female vocalist, the group tore up the stage with two original numbers, *Big City Rocker* and *All I Wanna Do*. The songs were well crafted, and their set, particularly the exchanges between Goodrich and lead guitarist/vocalist Gary Mazlumian, crackled with energy. Roc has since performed at New York's Other End and Trax to critical raves. At this writing, they are still negotiating their singles contract with Infinity.

The second-prize winner, Seville, an eight-man r-&-b group with polished moves and costumes reminiscent of the Temptations, is performing this month at a Manhattan club called the Riverboat (it's located, if you please, on the ground floor of the Empire State Building). The seven-man Innervisions copped third prize (an engagement at the MCL club) with their fusion of jazz, rock, and Latin rhythms.

ALTHOUGH this competition is limited to Manhattanites only, it may turn out to be a productive little talent source. Several record companies have already volunteered contracts as prizes for next year's Playoffs: it's good publicity, and the labels may wind up with a hot new group or two on their rosters. I suspect that when full realization of how all this works sinks in, similar events will start springing up all over the country, perhaps sponsored by the record companies themselves. It's a great idea, and if anybody needs a judge in Sheboygan, I'm willin'. □

Manhattan Borough President Andrew Stein with members of the winning group, Roc: left to right, Sal Colossi, Joe Montalto, Gary Mazlumian, Hedda Goodrich, and Henry Bennett.





THE SMALL CAR JUST GREW UP.

Do you want to own a small car with Oldsmobile looks, comfort and room? You're gonna like our new Omega a lot. A whole lot.

TRANSVERSE ENGINE.

Omega's inside size will startle you. We got the room inside by turning the engine sideways and moving it forward. Your legs will appreciate the difference.

Omega's engine is a transverse-mounted 4-cylinder, or you have the option of the world's first transverse V6. Both are GM-built by various divisions, and your Olds dealer has details on sources and availability.

There are other nice surprises.

FRONT-WHEEL DRIVE.

Whichever engine you choose sits above the drive wheels, which is what gives Omega the impressive traction of front-wheel drive.

RACK-AND-PINION STEERING.

Omega is quick and agile, with rack-and-pinion steering.

If the name MacPherson doesn't

mean anything to you in strut suspension, Omega's ride will. It is smooth.

GOOD GAS MILEAGE.

With the transverse 4-cylinder, Omega's EPA estimate is 24 mpg. The highway estimate is 38 mpg. Very good indeed, for a car this size.

Remember, the circled EPA estimate is for comparison to other cars. Your mileage depends on speed, weather and trip length; your actual highway mileage will probably be lower than the highway estimate. California estimates are lower.

Are you starting to believe this is an amazing small car? You should.

The 1980 Omega is the Oldsmobile of small cars.

You can buy it or lease it. But you gotta drive it.

You're gonna love it.

The small car just grew up. 🚗

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Have one built for you.

THE 1980 OMEGA

THE OLDSMOBILE OF SMALL CARS.



Going on Record

By James Goodfriend



A NEW "ASPEKTE"

OBVIOUSLY, the idea of a mid-price (\$6.98 list) record, as exemplified by the Festivo line from Philips and the Privilege line from Deutsche Grammophon, is proving to be commercially sound, for here comes another mid-price label aimed at classical turntables. The name is Aspekte and it comes from Telefunken via London Records, which is the American outlet for Decca/Telefunken/Teldec product. The first release, comprising twenty records, is certainly interesting enough, for it carries still further the repertorial adventurousness that has characterized some of the discs in the Festivo and Privilege releases. But it also raises a couple of questions about London Records' approach to the classical market here.

For example, why would London—which has an enormous backlog of recorded material itself, and the L'Oiseau-Lyre and Argo as well as the Telefunken catalogs to draw on—base its mid-price line exclusively on a German source? London does issue material on the budget Stereo Treasury and Richmond labels, but there is so much more on which to draw that London has even licensed some of its records to companies that have no affiliation with it. Second, assuming that the launching of a new record line is a matter of some importance—no matter where the material comes from—isn't it surprising that the whole thing seems to have been whipped up in Germany without even consulting the American record catalogs? I ask this because, for example, one can buy right now excellent performances of Bach's "Coffee Cantata" and "Peasant Cantata" by Nikolaus Harnoncourt's *Concentus Musicus* of Vienna on Telefunken 6.41079 for \$8.98; and one can buy equally excellent performances of them—in fact, the *same* performances—on Telefunken/Aspekte 6.41359 for \$6.98. True, the cover is different on the Aspekte and no text is included (at least it wasn't in my "direct import factory sealed" copy), but still, this duplication does not strike me as particularly thoughtful marketing.

Actually, a fair amount of this first Aspekte release duplicates material currently in the catalog at full price. It has merely been reshuffled and recoupled to produce new discs of greater variety in repertoire, making them perhaps more attractive to less academic-

minded collectors. A point of absurdity is reached, though, in the otherwise exceedingly fine series of Baroque recorder music by Frans Brünnen. Volume 2 here contains a lovely and interesting Concerto in F Major for Recorder and Strings by Vivaldi (no Pincherle or other number given) in a fine performance by Brünnen and the Concerto Amsterdam (still available at full price on Telefunken 6.41217). Volume 3 contains the *same* Vivaldi concerto in the *same* performance. I suppose such decision-making quandaries are the origin of the old saw "you pays your money and you takes your choice."

Well, to get down to brass tacks (one cliché deserves another), my choice would be Volume 2 (Aspekte 6.41360), for it also contains Bach's superb Sonata for Two Recorders and Basso Continuo, BWV 1039, a Naudot concerto, and a Telemann sonata from *Der Getreue Musikmeister*—all of which are available as parts of other full-price records. I would also opt for Volume 1 (Aspekte 6.41357), containing another Vivaldi concerto (in C Minor; again no number given, though it appears to be P. 440), the Corelli *La Follia* variations,



works by Loeillet and Van Eyck, and the delectable Anthony Holborne *Dances and Airs*. All of these, again, are available . . .

ONE could infer from the preceding citations that this first Aspekte release contains a lot of Baroque music, and one would be right. More than any reissue label seen thus far (and these are all reissues of material recorded mostly in the Sixties, even if some have not appeared in *American* catalogs before), Aspekte gets away from standard repertoire and offers us a lot of interesting unusual music.

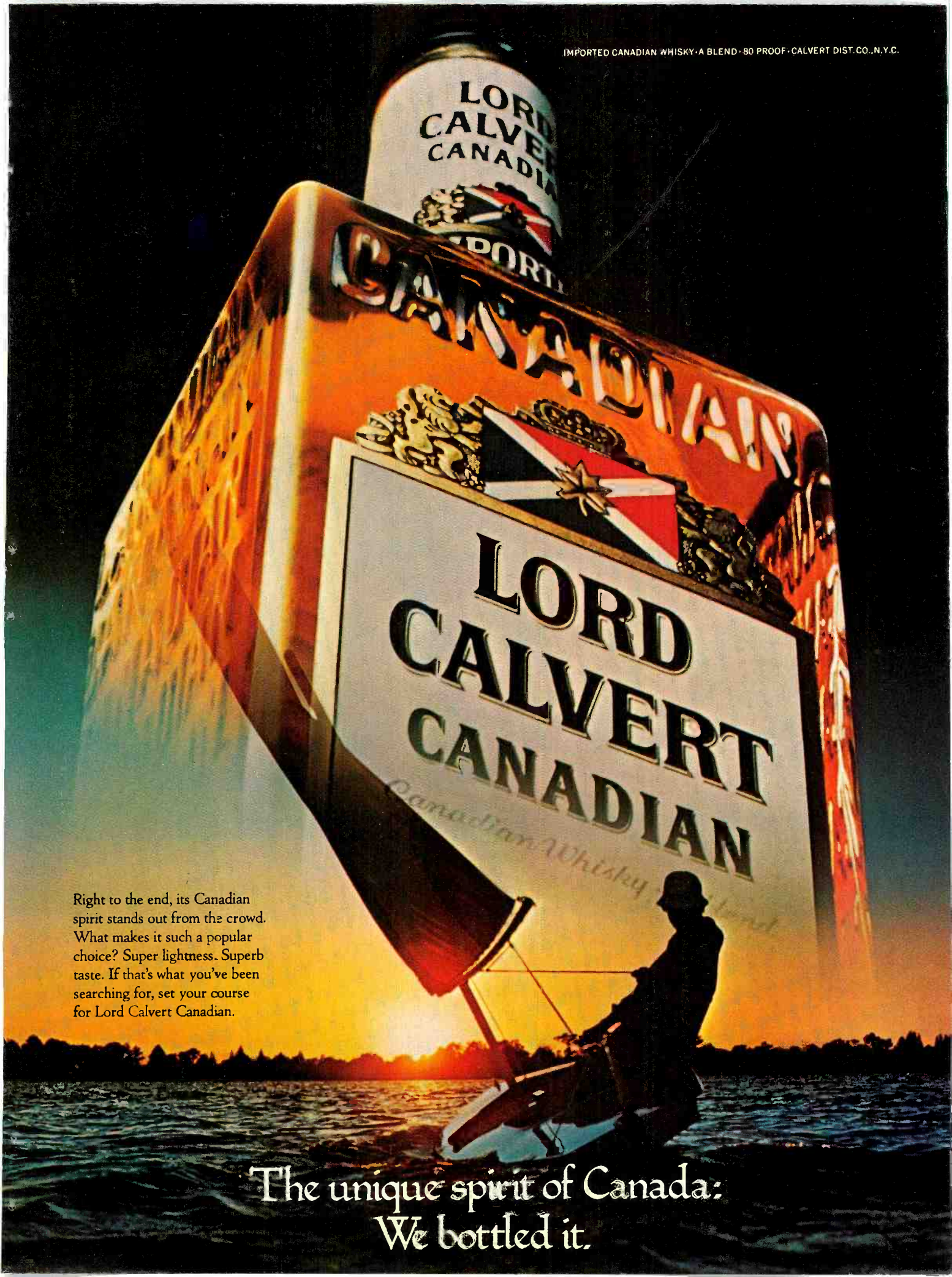
There are two excellent organ recitals, one by Karl Richter (6.41350) of Bach's *Chorale Variations on Sei Gegrüßet* and the "Dorian" Toccata and Fugue, BWV 538; and the other by Michel Chapuis, offering an excellent brief survey of works by Bach, Buxtehude, Daquin, Dandrieu, and Clerambault (6.41872). The latter seems to have been put together from three different records, but it makes a first-rate introduction to the genre. There is a disc by Peter Schreier of Dvořák's *Zigeunermelodien* and fifteen of Brahms' *Deutsche Volkslieder* in which the tenor, though a bit monochromatic in sound, is unfailingly musical. German texts only are included with the record (6.42214).

Equally promising, but ultimately less interesting, are records of early Classical music by the Amsterdam Chamber Orchestra (6.41344), comprising a flute concerto by Quantz, the Concerto for Violin, Piano, and Strings by Haydn, and Dittersdorf's *Sinfonia Concertante* for Viola, Contrabass, and Orchestra; and a disc by the hornist Hermann Baumann (6.42326) with the Haydn Concerto No. 1, a Rosetti Concerto in D Minor, and a most peculiar arrangement, for horn and organ, of a Handel concerto grosso. The music is, for the most part, pleasant enough on the ears, but in these performances it goes by without leaving a trace of anything in the memory.

Among the relatively standard items in the release are recordings of the Brahms Second Symphony and the Beethoven Seventh by the Berlin Philharmonic under Joseph Keilberth (6.42323 and 6.42150, respectively). Keilberth, who died in 1968, was not terribly well-known in America, but he was a solid, traditional conductor, and these performances have much to recommend them. Also recommendable is a disc by the Alban Berg Quartet (6.42283) of Mozart's Quartet No. 14, in G Major, K. 387, and Haydn's Op. 74, No. 3. Both performances, incidentally, are available with different couplings etc. etc.

Not all the discs advertised as making up the first release were submitted for review, but among those that were, two remain to be mentioned. There is a recital by the pianist Rudolf Buchbinder—Haydn's big Sonata No. 62 and a group of smaller Beethoven pieces—about which I just cannot really make up my mind (6.42265). And there is a performance of Bach's *Goldberg Variations* by Karl Richter (6.41337) about which I have made up my mind and the answer is "no."

ALL the Aspekte material is very decently recorded, and the pressings have been uniformly first-rate. The covers are pleasant enough, but the notes are definitely inadequate, sometimes dealing with the artist alone and sometimes not present at all. That there are musical bargains to be had in the series is unquestionable, but what an offhand way to launch a new label! □



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The unique spirit of Canada:
We bottled it.



Chuck Berry, in a new classic-Fifties pose, gets down with his trademark "duck walk." Some say that if he'd been white he would have been bigger than Elvis.

Phyl Garland's

BASIC LIBRARY OF RHYTHM-AND-BLUES

BACK during the early Fifties, when I was a teenager growing up in a Western Pennsylvania industrial town near Pittsburgh, the most exciting sounds to be heard were transmitted daily by a small, independently owned radio station that featured a form of black popular music called rhythm-and-blues. Each afternoon, shortly after the Gospel Hour, an inviting dark-brown voice (it belonged to a woman DJ named Mary Dee) would introduce to an eager pubescent audience all the latest hits just in from New York, Chicago, Cincinnati, Houston, Los Angeles, and other r-&-b recording centers of the day. Her listeners would devour these offerings, memorizing every fragment of melody and snatch of lyric, so that the song could be retained in the mind just the way it had been sung by the Drifters, the Orioles, the Clovers, Joe Turner, or Ruth Brown.

Less intellectually demanding than jazz and toned down considerably from the intense emotional entreaties of the blues, r-&-b was still far more spirited and realistic in its treatment of familiar subjects than a benignly crooning Perry Como or Patti Page singing about doggies in the window. To black teenagers, and even our parents, it was "our" music, a sound sufficiently fundamental in its musical and thematic essence for mass appeal. Though some considered it new, r-&-b was only the latest transmutation of basic black musical styles that had been around for ages. Restricted as it was in that era of racial separation (r-&-b discs were then called "race" records), it seemed destined to remain within the boundaries of the subculture that had produced it.

THEN something happened.

As early as 1952, tradesmen began to report that white teenagers in the South were beginning to pick up on rhythm-and-blues as good dance music. As the demand became more apparent, previously conservative radio stations in that part of the country began to move into r-&-b programming. The new

sound grew stronger, setting up a national reverberation; popular white artists began to record songs that had been hits in the black underground. Peggy Lee, who had managed to straddle the worlds of jazz and pop, came out with a hit rendition of *Fever*, long a favorite among blacks in its original version by Little Willie John. Similarly, Georgia Gibbs did a cover of LaVern Baker's hits *Tweedle Dee* and *Jim Dandy*. Though it is now common for artists to dip into various musical genres for good tunes, it was then unusual for white popular singers to borrow directly from black artists, and even odder when at times they emulated the black style of performance. The wave of the future began to be apparent when a white group, Bill Haley and the Comets, climbed to the top of the charts with their version of Joe Turner's hit *Shake, Rattle and Roll*, a song quite familiar to me and those of my peers who used to tune in to that radio station near Pittsburgh. Yet the wave did not achieve tidal proportions until a handsome, dark-haired, former truck driver from Memphis, Tennessee, revolutionized mainstream popular music with a blockbuster version of "Big Mama" Willie Mae Thornton's earthy ditty, *You Ain't Nothin' but a Hound Dog*. The young man was, of course, Elvis Presley. From that hit on, there was no looking back.

Presley hadn't, as it may have seemed, come out of nowhere. He drew on the rich streams of black music that flowed into Memphis, especially the blues, which had reached one of its higher levels of development just to

the south in Mississippi. These inspirations have been well documented, as has Presley's own influence on those who shaped the rock explosion of the Sixties: the Beatles, the Rolling Stones, and Bob Dylan, to mention only some of the giants. And these artists have openly credited not only Presley but also such black r-&-b stars as Chuck Berry and "Little Richard" Penniman as major sources of inspiration.

There are, nonetheless, those who feel that the seminal role of black music is still too frequently overlooked by contemporary music lovers familiar only with its current fruits. Without the blues—a searingly honest music derived from field hollers and work songs, among the earliest forms of black music in this country—there could have been no rhythm-and-blues and thus no rock-and-roll or rock. Without jazz, another unique product of cultural fusion, the complex instrumental textures of current popular music would not have emerged. And without gospel music—still commonly neglected in surveys of the roots of popular music—the soul-scorching awe and wonder, the uninhibited "shouting" quality, and the close, antiphonal ensemble singing found in much of today's pop/rock might be missing.

In sum, rhythm-and-blues and the previous styles that contributed to it constitute a taproot of American popular music. Both some of the best and some of the worst of today's sounds (such as the tediously repetitious and calculated stuff that now passes for "soul" music and the rhythmically monotonous disco staples) stem from this greater source. Readers who wish to acquaint themselves with the historical details of these developments should consult the box on page 76 for some recommended books on the subject. But our main concern is with the *aural* evidence, and what follows should provide at least a starting point in tracking down the recordings typical of each stage of r-&-b's growth and continuing transformation. (Continued overleaf)

"Rhythm-and-blues and the previous styles that contributed to it constitute a taproot of American popular music."

The Roots

● **BESSIE SMITH: *The Empress***. COLUMBIA CG 30818 two discs. Any one of the five superb double albums compiled by STEREO REVIEW's Chris Albertson to document the work of Bessie Smith, the greatest blues singer of all time, should create a fresh appreciation of the blues as a major source of musical developments in America, but "The Empress" is particularly notable in that it also features the young cornetist Louis Armstrong. Other remarkable musicians such as James P. Johnson, Buster Bailey, Coleman Hawkins, and Fletcher Henderson appear merely as sidemen, though they helped shape the course of jazz as a whole. While Bessie Smith is considered emblematic of the classic blues period of "race" recordings, she is presented here in a context that makes clear the close developmental relationship between jazz and modern blues.

● **McKINLEY MORGANFIELD: *A.K.A. Muddy Waters***. CHESS CH 60006 two discs. Muddy Waters was and is one of the greatest interpreters of urban blues, a music that grew out of the massive black migration to northern cities from the agricultural South, where men were rapidly being replaced by machines, particularly during the Forties. It is said that the Rolling Stones named their group after Waters' song of that title, which is included in this album. Waters' singing and playing are wonders in themselves, but no less remarkable is the work of Little Walter on harmonica and of Otis Spann, one of the greatest blues pianists who ever lived.

● **B. B. KING: *Live at the Regal***. PICKWICK SPC-3593. As I have said several times throughout the years, this recording most effectively captures the special relationship that exists between a blues or r-&-b performer and his or her audience. It dates from 1964, when King was still playing the "chitt'lin' circuit." He was in his prime then, and in this recording he sets up an interplay between his voice and his guitar, Lucille, that is still one of the crowning achievements of urban blues. After King gained a broader popularity in the Seventies, he lost much of the spontaneity that highlights this album.

● **MAHALIA JACKSON: *Bless This House***. COLUMBIA CS 8761. No examination of the roots of r-&-b can exclude gospel music. An overwhelming number of black popular artists started out singing in church and freely adapted gospel styles to secular fare. As the queen of gospel music, Mahalia Jackson was probably the single most powerful influence on an entire generation of singers, although she held firmly to a religious course, refusing to sing the blues and touching jazz only once, in a historic recording of Duke Ellington's *Black, Brown and Beige*. This album captures some of Jackson's majesty. The only artist with whom one might dare compare her is Bessie Smith; the

blues might never have been the same had Mahalia sung them!

● **THE RAVENS: *The Greatest Group of Them All***. SAVOY SJL 2227 two discs. The army of male singing groups that emerged starting in the Fifties drew inspiration from a long tradition of vocal quartets and other ensembles. Some of these groups had been associated with black religious music in the Forties, and others—such as the Delta Rhythm Boys, the Mills Brothers, and the Charioteers—seem to have derived their styles from the barbershop quartet. The Ravens were the first of the famed "bird" groups. Their version of *Ol' Man River*, released by National Records in 1947, is said to have sold more than a million copies in Harlem alone, and it had great crossover appeal to white audiences (it is included in "The Roots of Rock 'n Roll," Savoy SJL 221, which also features choice early recordings by members of the old Johnny Otis road show, among them Little Esther, Big Maybelle, and Mel Walker). This album



Empress Bessie

doesn't contain the best of the Ravens' work, since it features sides they cut for Savoy during a later, somewhat watered-down period. But it does give a good sense of their style, which was to be so influential, and it displays one of their hallmarks, the resounding bass voice of Jimmy Ricks.

The Golden Age

● **CHUCK BERRY: *Golden Decade***. CHESS 1514. The Fifties may well be called the Golden Age of rhythm-and-blues, since the period saw both a proliferation of popular genre groups and several individuals pioneering crossovers to the mainstream. As r-&-b based rock-and-roll became dominant among young white audiences, cover recordings of black r-&-b hits by white artists became rarer and many black artists acquired considerable white followings of their own. Chuck Berry, whose hip-wiggling performing style was emulated by Elvis and many latter-day rockers, won a *Billboard* Triple Award for his 1955 recording of *Maybellene*, and his *School Days* from the same period is considered by many to be a fore-

runner of the pop protest song (both are included in this anthology album).

● **LITTLE RICHARD: *Greatest Hits***. TRIP 8013 two discs. **FATS DOMINO. UNITED ARTISTS UAS-9958** two discs. The outrageously flamboyant "Little Richard" Penniman sold thirty million records in two years, his outstanding hits being *Tutti-Frutti* and *Good Golly Miss Molly*. Fats Domino, a piano-plunker from New Orleans who sang in such a relaxed manner that it sometimes seemed he was about to fall asleep, also produced a string of top-sellers, among them *Ain't That a Shame* and the memorable *Blueberry Hill*. His piano style somewhat resembled the "rent party" genre associated with Harlem jazz.

● **SAM COOKE: *This Is Sam Cooke***. RCA VPS-6027(e) two discs. Sam Cooke, a minister's son from Chicago, was an acclaimed gospel singer with a group called the Soul Stirrers. He was later lead singer with another gospel group, the Pilgrim Travelers, which was also to serve as an incubator for the young Lou Rawls. Cooke was an immediate hit when he crossed over (with his father's approval) into the popular field in the late Fifties. He had a silken voice and polished manner that enabled him to become a major night-club attraction singing some of his best sellers, such as *You Send Me*, *Everybody Likes to Cha-Cha-Cha*, and, later, *Chain Gang*. Though he died in 1964 at the age of twenty-nine, reissues of his most notable songs still sell.

● **DINAH WASHINGTON: *Greatest Hits***. PICKWICK SPC-3536. Dinah Washington, called the Queen of the Blues, was a musical and personal force almost bigger than life. She was married seven times before she died of an overdose of barbiturates in 1963. Gifted with a salty-edged voice that had a rare penetrating quality, she was a profound influence on Aretha Franklin (who once told me, "There is only one queen—Dinah Washington"). Esther Philips also credits Washington with shaping her style. Queen Dinah was versatile, as at home in jazz as in popular music, and she was heard to fine advantage on some of the blues recordings she made during the Forties and Fifties. Several of these, including *Blow Top Blues*, *Salty Papa Blues*, and *Evil Gal Blues*, have been reissued on this Pickwick disc. It is not an outstanding collection, however, for the mass audience is likely to be more familiar with her best-selling ballads, such as *Unforgettable* and *This Bitter Earth*.

Any recordings by these artists dating from the Fifties are treasurable, and if you can find the originals, hold onto them. They're collectors' items.

The Age of Soul

This is the period extending from the Sixties to the present, an era that brought sophisticated recording techniques and electronic effects to bear on what is basically the same music as before. The tempos have become quick-



B. B. King



The Ravens



Dinah Washington



Little Richard



Mahalia Jackson

Muddy Waters



Sam Cooke



BASIC R-&-B

er, the rhythms are more pronounced, and there has been more homogenization of styles. But certain individuals and groups still tower above the rest, and many of them did their finest work during the Sixties, when the quest for social change that swept through black America was reflected in its music. Moreover, the Sixties saw the swift rise of Motown Records, a black-owned firm that specialized in urban r-&-b with mainstream offshoots.

● **THE SOUL YEARS.** ATLANTIC SD2-504 two discs. Before Motown there was Atlantic Records, probably the greatest producer of r-&-b hits during the Fifties and early Sixties. This set is said to cover Atlantic's top soul hits from 1948 to 1973, and as a compact sampling of soul-side developments during this period it's well worth hunting for. It is especially notable for its several classic tracks from the company's excellent eight-disc "History of Rhythm & Blues" issued in 1968 (later deleted). The real oldies here sound just as good today as when they were first released, and the set is worth it for them even though some of the more recent selections are duplicated on other recommended albums. Some of the standouts are *Tweedle Dee* by LaVern Baker, *One Mint Julep* by the Clovers, *Money Honey* and *There Goes My Baby* by the Drifters, *Shake, Rattle and Roll* by Joe Turner, *Mama, He Treats Your Daughter Mean* in an unusual up-tempo performance by Ruth Brown, and the early hits *I Got a Woman* and *What'd I Say* by Ray Charles.

● **THE GENIUS OF RAY CHARLES.** ATLANTIC 1312. Ray Charles, whose vocal style is heavily laced with gospel intonations, was the vital bridge between Fifties r-&-b and the instrumentally more sophisticated soul music of the Sixties (indeed, it was he who popularized the term "soul music"). Though he is best represented on the now-deleted "Ray Charles in Person" (Atlantic 8039), which captures the full fire of his performances, this album from a later period shows his effectiveness in funking up standard popular songs.

● **JAMES BROWN: *Sex Machine Live.*** POLYDOR PD2-9004 two discs. Brown always had great appeal for the black mass audience, particularly the young during the late Sixties, when he was considered by many the king of r-&-b. His dancing and theatrics are as much a part of his act as the music, but this album is representative of his vocal style.

● **ARETHA FRANKLIN: *I Never Loved a Man the Way I Love You.*** ATLANTIC SD 8139. *Amazing Grace.* ATLANTIC SD2-906 two discs. The first album noted here represented Aretha Franklin's emergence as the most influential female singer of the soul

era. Her recording of Otis Redding's *Respect* was the anthem of the black revolution of the Sixties, and her impact was felt by nearly every female soul artist who followed her. Her beginnings as a gospel singer are apparent in just about every note she sings, and the second album captures her journey back toward her roots together with gospel star James Cleveland.

● **THE BEST OF OTIS REDDING.** ATCO SD2-801 two discs. Redding died in a plane crash in 1967 at the age of twenty-six, but he recorded an exceptional amount of first-rate material during his short career. He was capable of moving from cool tenderness to passionate fury without becoming strident, in a style generously flavored with Memphis blues. Though several fine artists were produced by Stax Records back in the Sixties, Otis Redding is the one who most deserves immortality.

RECOMMENDED READING

- *Blues from the Delta*, by William Ferris (Garden City, New York: Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1978).
- *Blues People: The Negro Experience in White America and the Music That Developed from It*, by LeRoi Jones (New York: Morrow, 1963).
- *The Sound of Soul*, by Phyl Garland (Chicago: Regnery/Contemporary Books, 1969).
- *The Sound of the City: The Rise of Rock and Roll*, by Charlie Gillett (New York: Outerbridge and Dienstfrey, 1970).
- *Urban Blues*, by Charles Keil (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966).

● **NINA SIMONE: *It Is Finished.*** RCA APL1-0241. Nina Simone cannot be conveniently placed in any one musical category. Her approach is a composite of blues, gospel, folk, and jazz as well as r-&-b. Above all, she has been the leading creator of black protest songs. Some of the latter, such as *Four Women* and *Mississippi Goddam*, were recorded during the Sixties on the Philips label and are now hard to find, but this record dating from 1974 is still an accurate summation of her art.

● **SLY AND THE FAMILY STONE: *Greatest Hits.*** EPIC KE 30325. While the Sixties saw the tempestuous emergence of hard rock, black soul music continued to follow a separate course. A few artists tried to build a bridge between the two camps by combining the styles of both. Guitar virtuoso Jimi Hendrix finally crossed over completely to become one of the leading heavy rockers, but Sylvester Stewart, known as Sly, managed to retain the lightness and melodic intent of r-&-b in his music while emulating the rockers in his flamboyant mode of presentation.

● **DIANA ROSS AND THE SUPREMES: *Anthology.*** MOTOWN M9-794A3 three discs.

SMOKEY ROBINSON AND THE MIRACLES: *Anthology.* MOTOWN M7-793R3 three discs. **THE TEMPTATIONS: *Anthology.*** MOTOWN M9-782A3 three discs. Here are three jewels that Motown released during the Sixties and early Seventies when its pop-music crown shone brightest. These three ensembles were, quite simply, among the best popular singing groups ever, anywhere. The Supremes never recovered from losing Diana Ross, whose teasingly sensual lead highlights their three-record anthology. William "Smokey" Robinson, whose distinctive high tenor is still a joy to hear, is one of the best popular lyricists around. And in their early days the Temptations were the Rolls Royce of male singing groups.

● **MARVIN GAYE: *What's Goin' On.*** TAMLA TS310. A reconstructed gospel singer whose voice sometimes sounds like Sam Cooke's, Marvin Gaye was a member of the early Motown crew, though overshadowed by some of the other luminaries in that constellation of talent. With the release of this brilliant concept album in 1971, Gaye emerged as a popular artist of the first order. The set combines a sort of free-flowing spirituality with social protest, and it's a tour de force of the singer's art, with music and lyrics still capable of generating waves of aesthetic excitement.

● **STEVIE WONDER: *Talking Book.*** TAMLA T6-319. *Innervisions.* TAMLA T7-326. *Fulfillingness' First Finale.* TAMLA T6-332. What can one say about Stevie Wonder except that he is the most gifted artist to reach maturity in the Seventies? His influence extends beyond soul to the whole of popular music. He has listened well to the electronic innovations of the rock movement and applied them to his own work with staggering effectiveness.

● **EARTH, WIND & FIRE. *That's the Way of the World.*** COLUMBIA PC 33280. Led by the versatile Maurice White, Earth, Wind & Fire has been the leading exponent of progressive soul, which incorporates complex singing patterns with instrumental techniques borrowed from jazz.

ALL the albums listed are in the current catalog and should be readily available in stores or on order through your local dealer. In addition, the Oldies But Goodies label (distributed by mail through the Original Sound Sales Corp., 7120 Sunset Blvd., Los Angeles, Calif. 90046, and carried by some stores) has issued several volumes of way-back hits by such artists as the Penguins, the Flamingos, the Dominos, Little Anthony and the Imperials, Jesse Belvin, Etta James, and many others. However, half the fun of collecting lies in going on the prowl for out-of-print discs. Bargain bins frequently yield rare items, and most cities and quite a few smaller towns now have "oldie" record shops. You'll find that the deeper you dig, the more you'll discover. □



Atlantic

Aretha Franklin



ABC-Paramount

Ray Charles



Polydor

James Brown



Stevie Wonder



Sly Stone



Atco

Otis Redding



Motown

Marvin Gaye

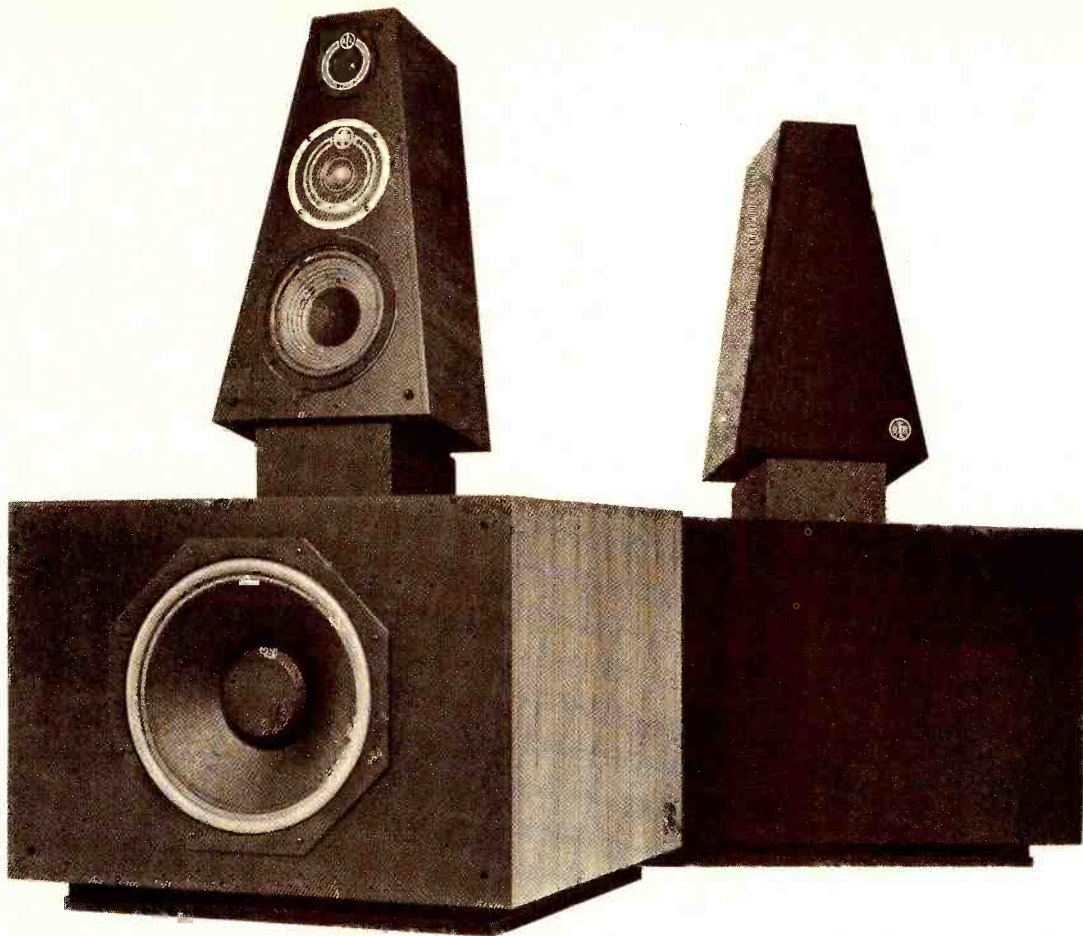


The Supremes



RCA

Nina Simone



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RALPH HODGES REPORTS ON THE LAS VEGAS AUDIO SHOW

An audio trade show is, logically enough, an event put on by manufacturers and distributors of audio equipment. It is attended not by the general public but by retailers who might be interested in selling that equipment to consumers, plus sundry others (such as advertising and public-relations people who have audio clients), including interested members of the press (such as *STEREO REVIEW*).

There are two major shows in the U.S. annually: one at midyear in Chicago and the other (the one under consideration here) in January in Las Vegas. Designated the Summer and Winter Consumer Electronics Shows (SCES and WCES), they display a great variety of consumer goods other than audio equipment, but recently hi-fi hardware and software companies have

dominated these affairs, and they continue to do so.

For the exhibiting manufacturers, the shows' major business is to persuade retailers to buy (or at least become interested in) the new products they have developed. For the press, on the other hand, the shows are giant previews of what the coming year in audio will bring. For these products are genuinely new—too new for ordinary folk to buy, in fact, until the *dealers* buy them and offer them for sale in their stores. If and when this happens, the outside world will get its first good look at them. But until then, we privileged show attendees are the only ones holding what amounts to a lot of quasi-classified information—until we let the secrets out, that is, which is what we mean to do in the following pages.

—R.H.

Preamplifiers

The preamplifier is the heart of a system of component "separates," and the heart was beating strongly in Las Vegas in January (see this month's cover). Of late, preamplifier designers have been espousing two distinct philosophies. One leans toward complexity, outfitting the unit with features such as elaborate tone-control and equalization facilities, built-in test oscillators, digital readouts, computer-accessible control features, and switching facilities more than adequate for any array of associated components. The other philosophy, called the "less is more" school in a previous show report, stresses simplicity and purity of the signal path, and in some of these preamplifiers controls and switches are deliberately kept to a minimum.

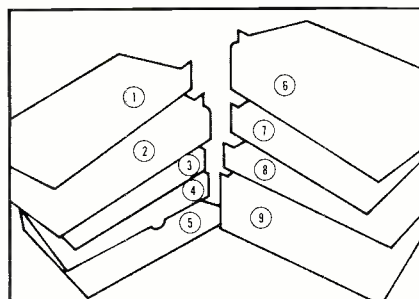
At Las Vegas there were signs of a third approach, a fusion of these two positions. The new Yamaha C-2a preamplifier permits the user to switch-select the signal path to pass through all the front-panel controls or to bypass most of them and take the most direct possible route from phono inputs to main outputs. This feature made its debut on an integrated amplifier introduced by the company last year. The not-quite-so-new C-4 Yamaha preamp shown on the cover in-

clines somewhat to the "more is more" philosophy, having not only tone controls but tone controls with continuously variable hinge points.

Marantz is not particularly known for a

less-is-more outlook, and the new SC-7 preamplifier (\$835) predictably has a full complement of tone controls (including a midrange control), elaborate filters, and perhaps the most flexible tape-dubbing facilities available. Here too, however, a front-panel switch provides the option of removing the entire high-level gain section from the signal path and connecting the phono inputs to the outputs as directly as possible. Like many of the new preamplifiers presented at the show, the SC-7 has an extra gain stage to accommodate moving-coil phono cartridges. Another "new" Marantz preamplifier, intended to sell for about \$1,000 in kit form, is actually a revival of the classic vacuum-tube Model Seven that dates from the late Fifties, now costing somewhat more than its \$250 price back then (but so does everything). A kit of the vacuum-tube Model Nine mono power amplifier is also scheduled for introduction—at \$1,600.

The first products of the newly founded Carver Corporation made their debuts at the show. A standout among them, the Model C-4000 (\$850), is probably the most feature-laden preamplifier available at present, containing all the special circuits of one of Carver's previous designs *plus* an analog time-delay system *and* a "Sonic Hologram Generator." This last is said to process nor-



THIS MONTH'S COVER

As befits our story on the Las Vegas CES, here are several blue-chip preamplifiers: (1) Threshold SL-10, (2) Phase Linear 2000, (3) Sansui CAF-1, (4) Series 20 Model 21, (5) Yamaha C-4, (6) Carver C-4000, (7) Lux 5C50, (8) Sony TA-E88B, and (9) Crown DL-2.

LAS VEGAS AUDIO SHOW

mal stereo signals in such a way as to enhance the dimensionality and apparent accuracy of the stereo image. (A report on this provocative new product, which practically forms a category all its own, appears on page 46.)

Quatre, a company that has recently specialized in power amplifiers, now brings us the GC-10 preamplifier (\$775; \$875 with preamplifier for moving-coil cartridges), which automatically adapts itself to any line voltage in the world and can handle the currents necessary to turn on and power any power amplifier by means of a solid-state switching device. The RTR firm, which formerly sold only speakers, has taken on the English Monogram line, including the stoutly constructed and handsomely turned out Model 3000 preamplifier. (Other Monogram products are three power amplifiers ascending to 205 watts per channel and operating in class A up to 17.5 watts per channel.) And the Mitchell A. Cotter Company will soon introduce a preamplifier system that will have a separate phono preamplifier, control section, and power supply. The ensemble will be novel in employing primarily current rather than voltage gain.

The new minicomponents from Japan also include at least one preamplifier per manufacturer's line. As reported in last month's issue, these ultracompact little editions of audio separates have inundated the Japanese marketplace, but to date their appearance in the U.S. has been slower. Mitsubishi's minis were the first to arrive, and in cosmetics and front-panel design they are certainly among the most elegant. The three new "Micro Series" units from Technics, the SU-CO1 preamplifier (\$260), the SE-CO1 power amplifier (\$360), and the ST-CO1 AM/FM tuner (also \$260), are among the lowest in silhouette, permitting a handsome front-panel integration of an extended tuning dial on the tuner and LED output-level scales on the power amplifier. The preamplifier has an input for moving-coil cartridges. Toshiba's equivalent ensemble is available with black or pale-gold front panels and consists of the C15 preamplifier with dual-FET inputs (\$300), the F15 frequency-synthesizing FM tuner with a ten-station memory and digital frequency readout (\$360), and the M15 power amplifier providing 40 watts per channel (\$340). (The latest full-size separates from Toshiba—the SY-665 preamplifier, the ST-665 AM/FM tuner, and the SC-665 power amplifier—recapitulate many of the circuit and operating features of the minis at prices from \$200 to \$350.) Randix, a recently emergent company, featured quite a variety of minis: the LX-52A integrated amplifier (about 15 watts per channel), the LX-52T tuner, and the LX-52GE equalizer, plus an equalizer and a cassette deck in a vertical format. These were the only four companies exhibiting minicomponents prominently, but if their offerings should catch on with buyers, watch out!

Power Amplifiers

In power amplifiers, one of the most technically startling revelations of the show was the latest Carver creation, the M-400. A 7-inch cube weighing a bit over 12 pounds, it provides a continuous 200 watts per channel into 8 ohms and costs a little more than \$300! Obviously, something out of the ordinary is happening here, but that something has not been fully described awaiting patent protection. In brief, it appears to be a highly efficient switching power supply that is amplitude-modulated by the audio signal. Details will be revealed when the patents come through, but, in any case, this is certainly an amplifier that works like no other ever used in high-fidelity reproduction.

Another interesting power amplifier comes from Sheiber Sonics, a unit whose novel design is said to make it virtually unclippable. But comparatively conventional power amplifiers still hold sway, and some of them are even becoming more austere on the outside as they become more ingenious on the inside. The Infinity "Class A Hybrid" power amplifier has an almost featureless front panel that conceals transistorized output stages and vacuum-tube driver stages. It is rated at 150 watts per channel, and it costs a bit more or less than \$4,000, depending on how far from its California birthplace it has to be shipped.

Totally-vacuum-tube power amplifiers continue to appear as well, some of the latest being the Michaelson & Austin TVA series from England. For \$1,890 you can have 90 watts per channel, \$1,290 will give you 50 watts, and a preamplifier sells for \$750, all units with essentially class-A operation.

As a companion to its new preamplifier, Yamaha introduced the Model M-2 power amplifier. And Marantz also presented a new power amplifier, the SM-7, which has dual power supplies and input stages that combine FET's and bipolar transistors. A 150-watt power amplifier, said to operate exclusively in class A, was previewed by JVC.

It is so new that it doesn't yet have a model number, much less a price.

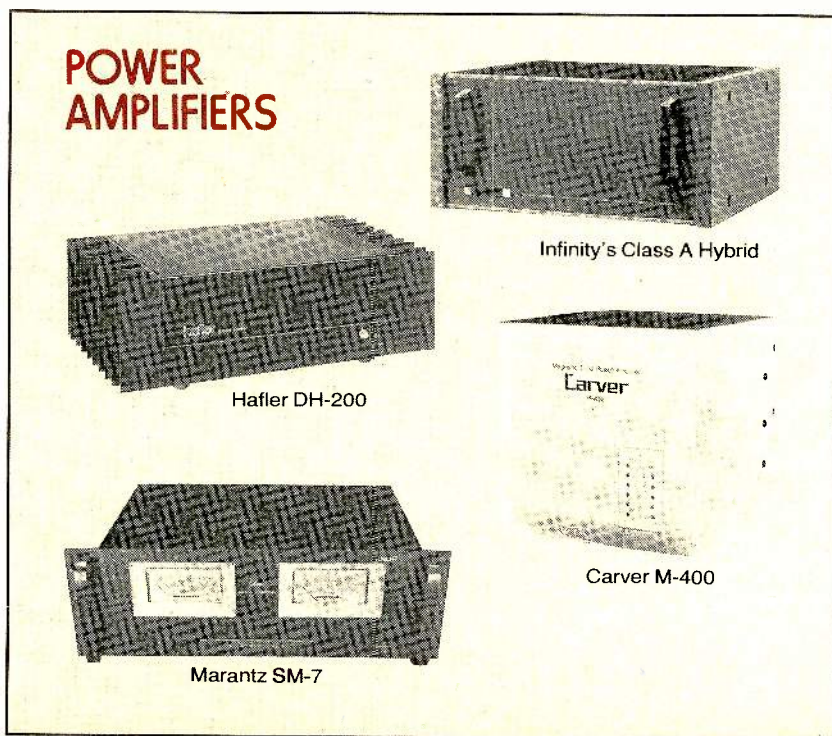
Crown, whose front panels were once rather lean and spare but are now becoming enlivened with LED's and other features, has been studying protective circuits used in high-power amplifiers. The result is the 220-watt SA2, containing proprietary logic circuitry that more realistically monitors the operation of the output transistors before activating the protective circuits. In prototype form, the SA2 has delivered 900 watts per channel into 4-ohm loads.

Uni-Sync, a BSR subsidiary, intends to serve the home and recording studio with three stereo power amplifiers, the Models 50, 100, and 350, the numbers giving approximate rated continuous power into 8-ohm loads. The David Hafler Company, known for its preamplifier, now has the DH-200 power-amplifier kit (under \$300) to go with it. Conservatively rated at 100 watts per channel, the amplifier is sold in kit form (one evening will suffice for assembly), and is said to have been designed with due consideration given to alleviating every distortion-producing circuit problem known.

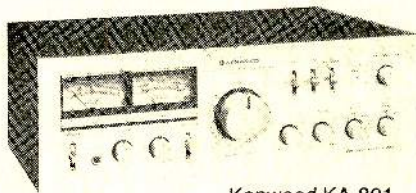
The Metron division of Cerwin-Vega has enlarged its line of separates considerably, and now offers a 125-watt-per-channel power amplifier employing FET output devices along with a frequency-synthesizing tuner for both FM and AM functions. Superex, long known as a headphone manufacturer, has announced that a new division, Audio Scientific, is in the making, with a high-quality power amplifier soon to come.

Integrated Amplifiers

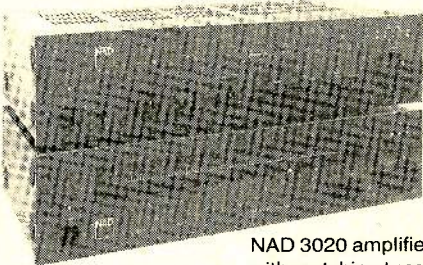
Much of the rest of the "separates" story belongs to the new integrated amplifiers, which appeared at Las Vegas in considerable numbers. The most conspicuous trend in this product category is the "high-speed" race: the competition to achieve the fastest "slewing" (rate of change of an amplifier's output signal for an input with a theoretical-



INTEGRATED AMPLIFIERS

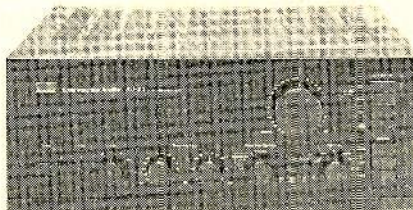
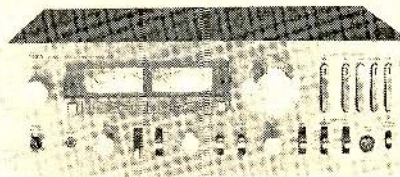


Kenwood KA-801



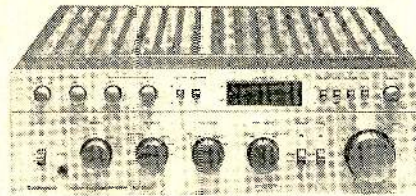
NAD 3020 amplifier with matching tuner

Aiwa
AA-8700 U



Sansui
AU-X1

Technics
SU-8099



ly infinite rate of change) in a given price and power category. Sansui seems to lead the field at the moment, with 260 volts per microsecond for 160 watts per channel in the new AU-X1 (\$1,450), edging out the recently introduced \$1,000 Kenwood KA-907, with its 230 volts per microsecond and 150 watts per channel of power. The KA-907 heads a roster of three new high-speed models from this company, descending in power to 80 watts per channel and in price to \$450.

Marantz does not emphasize slew rate in its literature on the new PM-7 integrated amplifier, an uncompromising combination of the SC-7 power amplifier and SM-7 preamplifier for a power output of 150 watts per channel. Technics takes another tack by explaining that its five new integrated amplifiers have been evaluated by an instrument that directly compares the input and the output waveforms on music signals and were not found wanting. The amplifiers are the SU-8099, 8088, 8077, 8055, and 8044; their power outputs range from 115 to 38 watts and their prices from \$1,000 to \$260.

Pioneer has adopted the terminology "nonswitching" to refer to a circuit design said to reduce notch distortion greatly in its three latest integrated amplifiers, the 100-watt SA-9800 (\$750), 80-watt SA-8800 (\$550), and 65-watt SA-7800 (\$450). And Rotel states that its new RA-2040 (120 watts) and RA-2030 (80 watts) offer the greatest amount of performance available from integrated amplifiers at their respective prices of \$880 and \$680. NAD's new Model 3020 (under \$200) is rated at 20 watts per channel, but a switch-selectable "soft-clipping" operational mode minimizes audible distortion problems when it is operated close to the clipping point. A companion FM tuner, the 4020, is similarly priced.

Lux has one of the few integrated ampli-

ers, the 100-watt L-11, to lack tone controls in the familiar configuration, although there is a knob to tilt treble response up or down and a pushbutton to introduce a bass boost. Sherwood says that the 60-watt S-702 (\$320) and the 35-watt S-402 (\$225) are the only integrated amplifiers in their price class that can surpass the performance of the company's receivers. Aiwa's 75-watt AA-8700 U integrated amplifier is brand new, as is the 22-watt Sharp SM-1144. Both have companion tuners, the Aiwa AT-9700 U and the Sharp ST-1144.

Receivers

Receivers are the infancy of the high-fidelity industry, the components that have, during the last decade or so, consistently managed to capture and hold the greatest amount of ground in the market, although separates have recently challenged their primacy. The fact that not many new receivers were introduced in Las Vegas undoubtedly means not that receivers are falling from favor, but that this year's hordes are being held back for the major onslaught on Chicago in June.

The highlight of this show's receivers was certainly the Bose "Spatial Control" receiver, which has been specifically designed with the latest versions of the Bose 901 speaker systems in mind. It contains two amplifiers for each of the speaker systems, which, of course, have terminals to match. With the control facilities of the Bose receiver it is possible to either broaden or narrow the stereo "stage" at the user's option. The Spatial Control receiver can also be used to drive conventional stereo speaker installations when the two pairs of power amplifiers are bridged, giving a maximum output of 100 watts per channel. A smaller

Bose receiver, the 40-watt-per-channel Model 550, was also introduced at the show.

A truly handsome receiver, with clean lines of rectangular pushbuttons below an understated digital readout for tuning frequency, was introduced by Toshiba. The tuner section is frequency-synthesizing for both FM and AM, continuing the trend toward high-performance AM that has recently emerged, perhaps in anticipation of stereo AM. The Toshiba SA-850 is expected to cost about \$520.

Sansui's G-4500 and G-3500 are continuations of the established G series; they are priced at \$320 and \$270, respectively, and rated at 40 and 26 watts per channel. Rotel has brought a digital frequency readout, a tuning dial, and vast numbers of LED's into the Model RX-2002 (\$800) at 90 watts per channel, and it is backed up by the \$720 RX-2001 (75 watts). This manufacturer also showed a well-integrated minisystem (vertical-format receiver plus two small speakers of equivalent size) that attracted much attention both for its attractiveness and its price of \$310.

To Nikko goes the honor of introducing the greatest number of new receivers: five in all, and all with complex yet tastefully styled front panels. Power outputs range from 20 to 100 watts per channel; prices were not disclosed at press time. Optonica's price for its new 125-watt receiver is \$800, which is certainly reasonable for a unit with conspicuously good specifications and a front panel that will astonish you with its diversity. The panel is especially representative of what is being called "aircraft-type styling"—controls and indicators mounted at various "human-engineering" angles so they can be reached and observed conveniently by an operator sitting in a single fixed position.

(Continued overleaf)

LAS VEGAS AUDIO SHOW

Signal Sources

A few of the latest tuners were mentioned in previous sections, but there are others that merit closer examination. The most innovative designs to appear recently are probably three Kenwood models, well represented by the top-of-the-line KT-917 we reported on in March. Rotel also has a "super tuner," the RT-2100, with a conventional tuning dial, a digital frequency read-out, and superb specifications, for \$640. The Model ST-7 from Marantz is in the tradition of that company's no-holds-barred tuner design, having a 2-inch oscilloscope for a tuning indicator and, like the Rotel, built-in Dolby noise reduction. Price: \$835.

Pioneer's newest AM/FM tuners, at \$450 and \$350, offer, at lower prices, features similar to those found in the company's finest tuner. An automatic circuit activated when the tuning knob is released seeks and locks onto the precise channel center of the tuned station. Model numbers are TX-9800 and TX-7800. The Technics AM/FM Model ST-8077 (\$300) also locks onto the channel center; it is exceptionally low and wide, with an extended dial scale. The \$200 ST-8044 has several similar features.

Las Vegas was a big show for moving-coil phono-cartridge designs. Audio-Technica came with its AT 30 (\$100), which has a user-replaceable stylus, plus the moving-magnet AT 25 (\$275), which is integrated with a head shell that incorporates a calibrated sty-

lus-overhang adjustment. Ortofon was showing its "Concorde" series of variable-reluctance cartridges, which also use the integral-head-shell design approach. JVC has decided to introduce its MC-1 cartridge officially; it has coils printed (by IC-manufacturing techniques) on a tiny wafer mounted quite close to the stylus tip. It is joined by the newer MC-2E, a similar design employing a specially contoured elliptical stylus instead of a Shibata tip. Ortofon's \$600 MC 30 is claimed to be the first moving-coil design with genuinely high compliance, achieved by paring moving mass, redesigning the damping system, and raising efficiency. Osawa continues to expand its Satin moving-coil line with the 117S and 117G, with user-replaceable styli and respective prices of \$225 and \$175.

Onkyo has entered the cartridge business with the MC-100, a moving-coil design that has cast magnesium-alloy elements in its body structure and a stylus cantilever fashioned of duralumin and carbon fiber. And NAD also turned up with a surprise cartridge entry, the moving-coil Model 9000 (under \$200), which has sufficient output to drive conventional phono inputs directly.

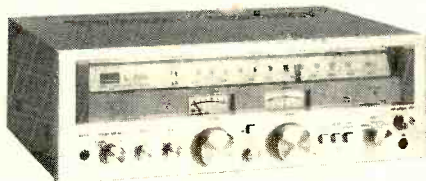
As for more conventional "moving-field" designs, Empire made a major introduction with its EDR.9, a handsome black-bodied unit with a tuned damping system and a new "large-area-contact" stylus shape. Shure's latest cartridge, at about \$90, is the M95HE, which makes use of the company's hyperelliptical stylus shape developed for the V 15 Type IV. Pickering's XSV/3000 (\$100) has all that manufacturer's latest features at a price that is getting to be the mid-point rather than the high-water mark for phono cartridges. And Nagatronics, expanding its line downward, has added the \$70 344DE. Finally, Sumiko, U.S. distributor of much phono

exotica, has announced the availability of a new stylus shape in the premier series of Grace models. Viewed from the point of the stylus, the contour resembles a sharpened figure-eight—a shape that is said to improve tracing and reduce effective mass.

New turntables were plentiful at the Las Vegas show but, as anticipated, most of the highly esoteric record players noted by Peter Mitchell in his review of the Japan Audio Fair last month were absent (with the exception of a striking brass-and-glass creation by Marantz). Technics has built its quartz-locked direct-drive scheme into a four-model line priced from \$240 to \$340, the last being a multiplay model, the 5350. Garrard's new direct-drive motor is said to be free of any variations in torque and therefore of speed irregularities; it is available in the Models DD131 and DD132, both of which cost less than \$200. Onkyo's CP-1010A is a belt-drive machine; the CP-1020F employs direct drive. There are numerous new direct-drive machines from Sony, the top model of which, the PS-X70, has a separate motor to cycle the tone arm and special wire for the cartridge leads.

Last year ADC brought out several belt- and direct-drive record players, all using a unique antiresonant base. This year a new direct-drive model, the 1750 DD, has been added that comes without a tone arm. It will accept arms from Shure/SME, Infinity, and Grace, among others, as well as the ADC tone arm. The latest from Thorens are the TD-104 and TC-105, both having the Thorens TP-22 tone arm with plug-in arm shafts along with belt drive. Of Kenwood's new record players, the belt-drive KD-1500 costs \$120, while two new quartz-lock direct-drive machines come with tone arms (KD-650, \$400) and without (KD-600, \$335). Visonik has a new "straight" tone arm

RECEIVERS

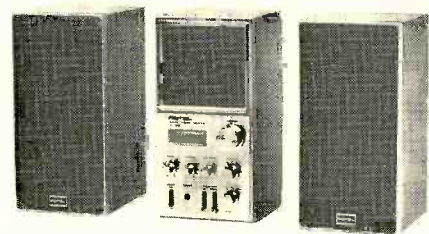


Sansui
G-3500

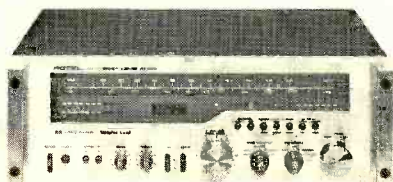


Nikko NR-1219

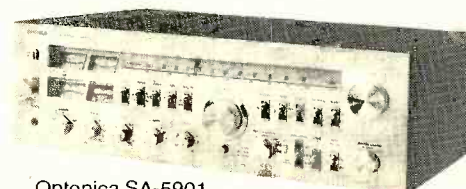
Bose
Model 550



Rotel RV-555 mini receiver
with matching speakers



Rotel RX-2002



Optonica SA-5901

available on five models, and Mitsubishi has a new arm that comes with machines priced at \$400 and \$520. Osawa now offers the Ultracraft 3000MkII tone arm, constructed of anodized brass, and the Ariston turntable.

Tape Machines

As anticipated, the Winter CES brought significant new introductions of cassette hardware capable of handling pure-metal-particle tape, together with appearances of such tapes from Fuji, TDK, and of course 3M. Many of the pure-metal-ready cassette decks are still being held in Japan, either for further development or to await the emergence of pure-metal standards. But an ample number of machines joined the previously announced models from Nakamichi and Tandberg to make the metal revolution seem imminent.

B.I.C. displayed its most elaborate two-speed (1 $\frac{1}{8}$ and 3 $\frac{3}{4}$ ips) model to date, the T-4. It has three heads, dual capstans, and pure-metal-tape capability. B.I.C. also augmented its two-speed offerings with an automobile cassette player, the C1, which will play pure-metal-particle tapes (although it will not record, of course).

Eumig's FL-1000, besides being pure-metal-capable, is a technological tour de force with three heads, a multifunction fluorescent metering system, oscillators to test head azimuth, bias, and sensitivity for all tape types, microprocessor-controlled tape-search functions, and the Eumig optoelectronic capstan drive. Price was not available, but it is likely to be rather high.

Technics' pure-metal machine is the RS-M95 (again, price pending), and it is as elaborate in its special way as the Eumig, providing comparable metering facilities, three heads, two direct-drive motors for the cap-

stans, and variable bias for all tape types. There were also three other new Technics decks priced from \$300 to \$400. Luxman was among those showing two pure-metal decks, the K-12 and the de luxe three-head, dual-capstan 5K50. Luxman also introduced something of a novelty: a new cassette shell with integral skew adjustment, an improved tape-guidance system, and an optical device that permits precise tape-motion sensing when used with either of the aforementioned cassette decks. It can be purchased loaded with a variety of tape types.

For an additional expenditure of \$150, your Teac C-1 cassette deck can become a pure-metal-compatible machine. The necessary modifications will be made by any Teac service station, and the retrofit program should have been put into effect by the time you read this.

The KD-A8 (\$750) is JVC's pure-metal machine, and it incorporates the automatic bias, equalization, and sensitivity-setting circuits the company has recently introduced. Similar facilities are offered on the pure-metal-capable Onkyo TA-2080 and the less elaborate TA-2010. An Aiwa pure-metal-tape cassette deck, the AD-6700, joined three other new models on display in Las Vegas. And Sanyo presented two pure-metal models, the RD5372 and RD5370, both with two motors and three heads plus numerous other features, at the surprising prices of \$500 and \$400, respectively. There were also two lesser Sanyo models costing \$230 and \$130. And at least one other manufacturer had a metal-tape deck on hand but said it was too early to disclose details.

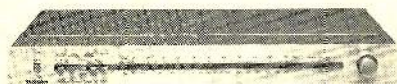
Other new cassette decks included the Pioneer CT-F800 (\$450), a step-down model from the CT-F900 brought out last year, with a three-head transport and fluorescent metering system, three popular Sansui mod-

els that have been restyled to blend with the appearance of that company's "G" series of receivers; and the \$325 front-loading KX-650 from Kenwood. Teac has a new three-head model, the A-300 (\$429) with double Dolby circuits for off-the-tape monitoring, as well as what is called the Model 124 Syncaset (\$449), which can record on its two channels independently for sound-on-sound functions and even synchronize a recording with a track that has already been laid down. Rotel came to the show with two new models, the RD-2000 (\$430) and RD-25 F (\$340), with very similar styling and continuously variable bias adjustments.

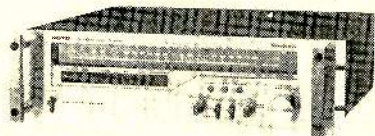
Fisher has again introduced a combination cassette and eight-track recorder, the ER8155, this one with a wireless remote-control accessory to switch the pause function. Simultaneous recording on both transports is possible, as is dubbing between the two. Akai continues to stress automatic reverse in cassette decks, adding two models, the GXC-735D and CS-732D, that record and play in either direction. Prices are \$550 and \$400, respectively. Sharp has a new low-price model, the \$190 RT-1144, that will rack-mount. And Mitsubishi has announced the \$630 DT-30, with three heads and dual capstans, plus a less elaborate two-head machine, the \$370 DT-10.

As for open-reel, the Teac/Tascam series has been enlarged by the 35-2, which takes reels of up to 10 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches, has a separate electronics module, speeds of up to 15 ips, capability for half-track record and play plus quarter-track playback, optional plug-in dbx noise reduction, and a price of \$1,000. Akai's GX-635D has six heads grouped around a centrally located capstan for recording and playback in both tape directions, three motors, and solenoid switching (\$995). With double Dolby noise reduc-

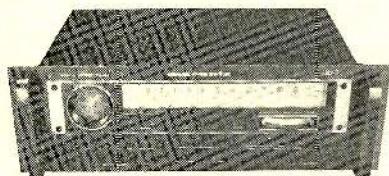
SIGNAL SOURCES



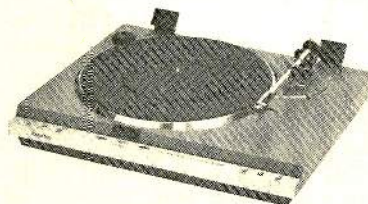
Technics ST-8077 tuner



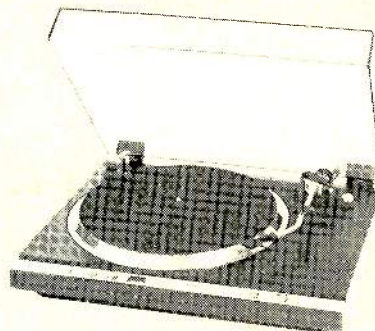
Rotel RT-2100 tuner



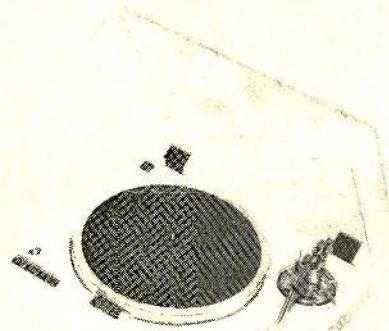
Marantz ST-7 tuner



Onkyo CP-1020F



Mitsubishi DP-EC10



Kenwood KD-650



Sony PS-X70

LAS VEGAS AUDIO SHOW

tion, the same basic machine, designated the GX-635DB, will sell for \$1,095.

Marantz's de luxe open-reel machine (noted in last month's Japan Audio Fair summary) was reportedly on display in Las Vegas but actually seen by few. Price is said to be \$2,500. Philips' N4520, the first 10½-inch-reel deck from this manufacturer, was also on display.

Speakers

Speaker systems, the basic sound sources of an audio system, are introduced in huge numbers at every electronics show, and as usual we have space only for the highlights. First billing at Las Vegas should probably go to the latest of the British imports. B & W has created its most ambitious design yet, the Model 801, a largish floor-standing unit intended to be capable of uncompromised performance at sound-pressure levels exceeding 106 dB. Few details are available except for the price, which is expected to be approximately \$1,200.

Celestion, another English company vigorously wooing the U.S. market, has a trio of new three-way systems using three enclosure types: passive-radiator (in the top-of-the-line Ditton 662), ported, and sealed. All systems are sold in mirror-image pairs for optimum stereo imaging.

Infinity has developed a film-diaphragm midrange driver to complement their "EMIT" tweeter and has also introduced a polypropylene-film woofer cone. Put together in an enclosure about 5½ feet high and combined with a control unit that permits biamping and adjustment of all drivers' output levels, the result is the Reference Standard 4.5, expected to cost \$3,000 per stereo pair. Another large system, the Altec Lansing Model 14, offers high-efficiency, exceptionally wide dispersion for a design with a large midrange/tweeter horn, and what is called the most sophisticated driver-protection circuit available, which acts to limit the power going to the drivers when there is danger of overload instead of interrupting it completely. A third large new system, the Jensen B (\$490), is basically a four-way design that can tilt backward within its oak-veneered, U-shaped support bracket and has front- and rear-firing tweeters.

The original Technics "Linear Phase" speaker systems have been superseded by a new line. Like their predecessors, the new SB-7070 and SB-6060 have stepped-back upper-frequency drivers in sub-enclosures to promote equal arrival times at the ear for all drivers' outputs. Prices are \$450 and \$350. Advent has also replaced a popular existing model, the Smaller Advent Loudspeaker, with the Advent/1; its drivers are identical to those in the New Advent Loudspeaker.

Several speaker systems seen only as prototypes last year are now becoming available, among them the Marantz Series 7 Model F²7 and the Ohm I. The Marantz sys-

tem has a built-in 150-watt amplifier to power its 12-inch woofer (\$2,500 the pair). The Ohm I (about \$600), employing front- and upward-firing drivers in a narrow truncated-pyramid enclosure, is designed for high sensitivity and power-handling ability. And RTR has developed the backward-canted Model 800D as a state-of-the-art four-way design, plus the two-way Models G-200 and G-10 as back-up designs in more conventional columnar and box-type enclosures. Meanwhile, ESS has established five complete lines of speaker systems with models too numerous to mention. The latest line, called "Targa," is said to utilize some of the principles of the automotive turbo-charged gasoline engine!

Leak is highly enthusiastic about the \$870 Model 3090, a four-way design with a swiveling upper sub-enclosure that houses the three higher-frequency drivers. Kenwood's LS-1200 and LS-404B are three- and two-way systems at prices of \$350 and \$135. The Design Acoustics D-4A is probably one of the handsomest columnar designs available, with five drivers installed in a multidirectional configuration. Audioanalyst is as yet offering little information on its new "XL" speaker series except to say that improved power-handling ability has been the goal and that prices of the three models range from \$100 to \$300. Sheiber Sonics was showing the prototype Dan Queen speaker system whose performance is said to approach the theoretically preferred pulsating-sphere sound source.

Ultralinear is one of the companies assembling three-piece speaker systems around a common-bass subwoofer, in this case the Model S-1. A second is Chartwell, which has recently introduced the SW-135 (\$400), and a third is Mesa, whose Environ-Mesa subwoofer is disguised as a coffee table. All of these models can be mated with minispeakers from their respective manufacturers for full-range reproduction. Visonik has also begun to specialize in such systems and has four newly introduced minispeakers priced from \$115 to \$300. Burhoe and Jennings also showed satellite/subwoofer systems, and Onkyo revealed the SL-1, an interesting variation on the subwoofer scheme, with a built-in 60-watt amplifier.

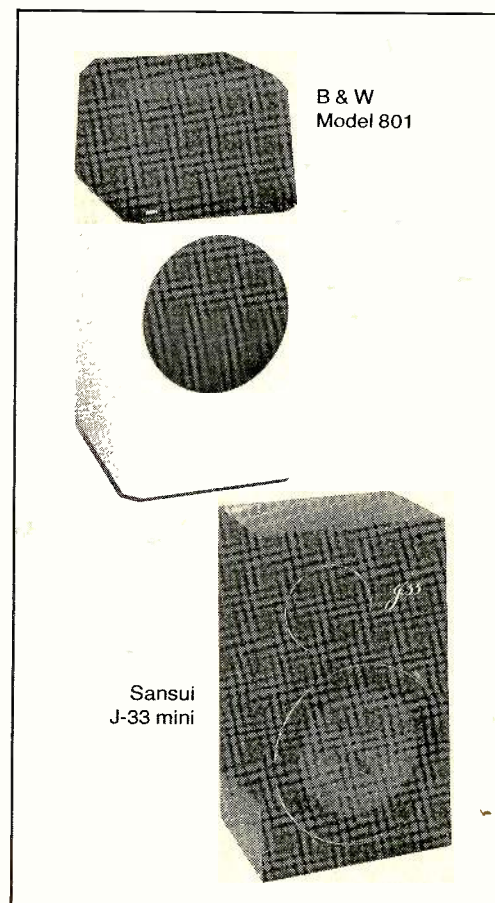
Minispeakers are available for other applications as well. Sansui's J-33's (with ebony piano-lacquer finish) are recommended as full-range systems and sell for \$450 the pair. Audio Pulse now has a smallish floor-standing system, the AP52, intended to work as rear/side systems with time-delay devices. An Arizona firm, General Sound, introduced three minispeakers, all available in a variety of stylish wood finishes. H. H. Scott unveiled the Model 166, a small two-way design in a sealed cabinet. And Genesis showed the Model 1+, somewhat larger than a true minispeaker; at \$109 and with compact dimensions, it is a useful alternative in many installations.

In the realm of the esoteric, there was the first Strathearn Audio speaker system. The original design, first seen in the form of an artist's rendering some years ago, called for mid- and high-frequency film-diaphragm radiators that faced the listener *edge-on!* From latest reports it appears this configuration has been altered somewhat, but the results

still seem quite interesting. No less interesting is the Hill Type-1 Plasma system from Plasmatronics, first seen at this show last year and now significantly—and audibly—improved. At \$7,000 the pair it is not for everyone, and since each system requires replacement of a tank of helium about every 300 hours of listening time, it is certainly not the most convenient approach to high fidelity. If you've wondered how good high fidelity can be, though, a listen to these may answer some of your questions. But don't look: visually they are downright ugly.

Manufacturers of esoteric goods can also make a downscale move when it suits them. For example, both Dahlquist and Pyramid are now offering *automobile* speaker systems. The Dahlquist ALS 3 is a two-way system in a black aluminum cabinet selling for \$250 per pair. No details on the Pyramid system could be obtained at the show.

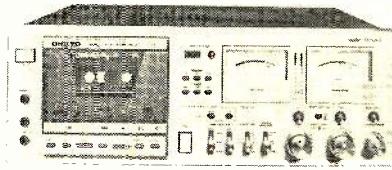
Friedl's latest are the Super Monitor, a four-piece system with a subwoofer and pyramidal "satellite" system for each channel, and the Model W, which is a relatively small three-way system. BES has created the Sound Module II series, consisting of six models incorporating that manufacturer's planar drivers in attractive new enclosures. BTM, a new California company, demonstrated a line of four hybrid dynamic-electrostatic speakers ranging in price from \$139 to \$499. Polk's \$350 R.T.A. 12 stands on a tall pedestal and reproduces recognizable square waves. And Superex has come out with an add-on tweeter array employing two 1-inch dome drivers. (Continued on page 86)



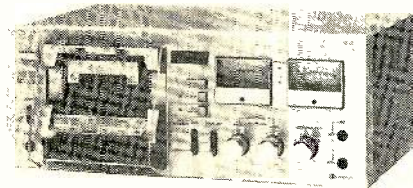
B & W
Model 801

Sansui
J-33 mini

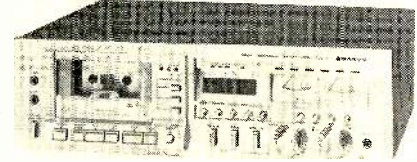
CASSETTE DECKS



Onkyo TA-2080



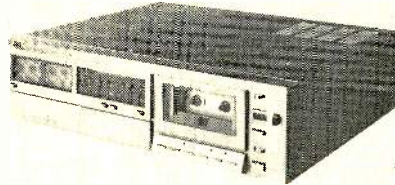
Sansui SG-3100G



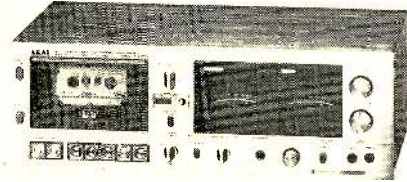
Sanyo RD5372



Fisher ER-8155 with remote unit



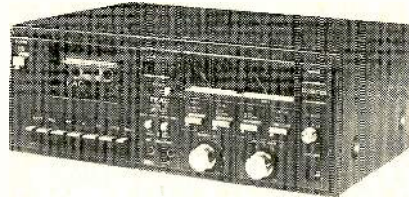
JVC KD-A8



Akai GXC-735D

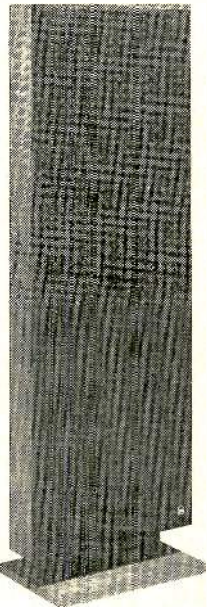


Mitsubishi DT-30

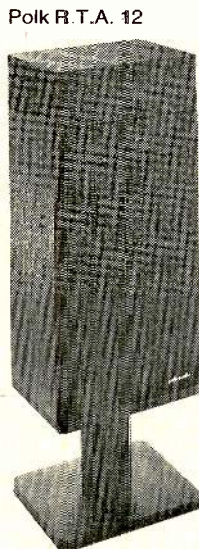


Teac
Model 124

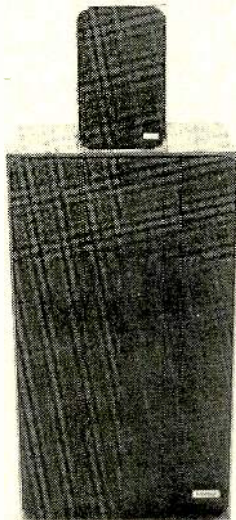
SPEAKERS



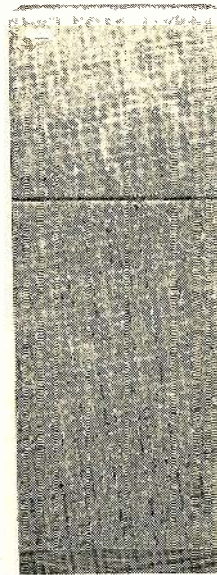
BES SM600



Polk R.T.A. 12

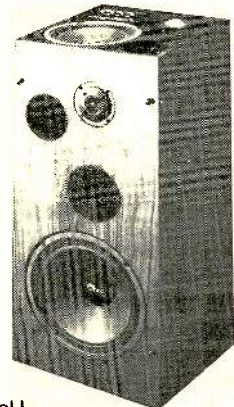
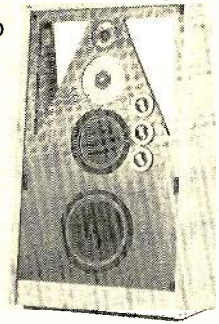


Audioanalyst BassMatrix
subwoofer and matching
bookshelf high-range unit



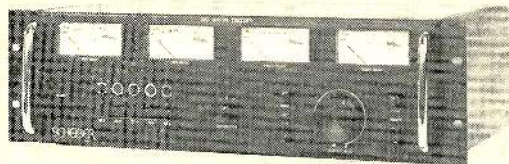
Celestion Ditton 662

RTR 800D



Ohm Model I

LAS VEGAS AUDIO SHOW



Scheiber 360° Spatial Decoder

Accessories

The ways in which you can accessorize your music system are expanding in every conceivable direction. Since we do not have infinite space and you lack infinite patience, this section will have to be rather limited in scope.

The ultimate audio accessory is certainly a complete new system, custom selected and assembled. You can negotiate for such a thing with the principals of Cizek and DB Systems. The Cizek Centurri-Mark 1 consists of a Denon record-playing system, DB Systems electronics, and a pair of large Cizek two-piece (two-driver subwoofers and satellite upper-frequency sections) loudspeakers. At this time the price is not fixed, but \$8,500 is the estimate.

Last month's story on the Japan Audio Fair noted a new type of accessory, the "equanalyzer," a combination multiband equalizer and LED real-time analyzer. It was expected that Japan would introduce at least one such device in Las Vegas, but the state of Washington beat them to it. The Audio Control Spectrum Analyzer/Equalizer reads out levels in ten bands on a ninety-nine-LED display and lets you adjust those levels independently. The company also makes a variety of other equalizers. Crown was showing their latest—a rack-mount ensemble that includes a separate scope (not LED) analyzer and equalizer.

Japan showed its first time-delay synthe-

sizer, the ATD-1 from Nikko. It has controls generally equivalent to those found on units developed in the U.S., and it is reportedly an analog unit. Price was not available at press time.

Sansui has formed a professional division to market specialized preamplifiers, power amplifiers, and accessories. The Model P-1 is their four-band-per-channel parametric equalizer that will fit right into a rack-mounted installation. The Sansui E-1 is what is called a "phono equalizer," with inputs for no less than six phono cartridges (three moving-coil, three moving-magnet) and every conceivable adjustment for optimizing their performance. Among other equalizers, Superex now has a five-band graphic model, the GEM-1, with an external power supply to keep noise at a minimum.

Encouraged by the success of its Model 3BX, dbx is expanding its playback-only dynamic-range expanders with a single-band model (the 1BX, \$245) and a two-bander (the 2BX, \$450). Meanwhile, the three-band 3BX gets a remote controller, the 3BX-R.

You didn't really think four-channel sound was dead, did you? Phoenix-like, it is rising again in the form of various improved decoders from the fertile mind of Peter Scheiber (who was showing his limited-production \$3,000 spatial decoder) and from the manufacturing facilities of Fosgate, a car-stereo company that is going to ride the fabulous and elusive Tate SQ decoder right into your living room. At this show Fosgate

introduced "Tetrasound," based on the Tate system, in a form suitable for use in automobiles, and promised to present a decoder/preamplifier for home use in the near future. Another Tate licensee, Audionics, is readying a decoder/synthesizer for the home that will give state-of-the-art performance and cost between \$500 and \$600.

A lapel button widely seen around the show read "The only good turntable is a dead turntable." It was being distributed by the Mitchell A. Cotter Company, and it reflected the irrepressible Mr. Cotter's belief that record players should have *no* resonances. The final production version of the company's B-1 turntable base, which can be factory-fitted with a variety of turntables and arms, very probably *is* dead. So might you be if you have a heart condition and try to wrestle one of these things upstairs; it weighs 130 pounds.

Record-care products have become among the most popular of accessories. The \$20 "Hands-Free" Lencomatic cleaning and destaticizing system is one of the most elaborate, employing a straight-line-tracking conductive brush assembly that attaches to the underside of the dust cover, a metallic leaf spring that comes down to contact the spindle and conduct charges away from the brush, and a conductive foil pad to go between the record and the turntable platter. Discwasher has four new products, including a special pad to clean Discwasher cleaners, a record sleeve intended to give maximum protection to valued recordings, a new record-storage rack, and an ingenious little lighting system for illumination of rear-panel connectors, tape heads, record surfaces, and what have you. RNS/Metrosound is the latest on the market with an adhesive roller for cleaning record surfaces, the \$17 "Supercling." And Elpa Marketing now distributes the AudioMate line of record accessories, including an antistatic pistol, an arm-mounted record brush, and a weight to flatten warped records as they are played.

Elpa also offers another accessory that will be treasured by anyone who has eagerly sought such a thing. It's a little thirty-two-page book called *Tape Editing*, written by Joel Tall, who practically invented the art, and it is the finest text on the subject I have ever seen. Only \$2 buys it from Elpa Marketing, Thorens and Atlantic Avenues, New Hyde Park, N.Y. 11040.

Closing

The curtain falls, and behind it you can hear the stagehands trundling the goodies off to their next destination. Car stereo, one of the fastest-growing areas in the audio industry, has been barely touched on, but it will be the subject of an in-depth treatment in the July issue, after we've all had a chance to sit down and collect our breaths. A new, even bigger show, the Summer CES, is coming up (it will be covered in the September issue), at which the products discussed above (or such of

them as survive the passage from prototype to production version) will be seen again, together with many new ones.

Until then, the usual caveats apply. The products described in this article have projected delivery dates—delivery to your local dealer, that is—ranging from about the time you read this to midsummer. And some will never be delivered at all. As much as we would like to answer your letters requesting further information on specific models, we have neither the time nor the necessary detailed information to do so. The

manufacturer involved will prove a much better source.

For those of you who have read this article seeking information on digital audio (PCM discs and the like), we can only note that these various systems, which will ultimately make a significant—perhaps revolutionary—impact on the high-fidelity industry, were not much in evidence at this show aside from a laser-disc player from Teac and a new PCM exhibition by Sony. We suspect that things will be much different in this respect at the summer show in Chicago—a tantalizing prospect. □

Your choice between these new LUX turntables depends on how you feel about bearing arms.

Although these two turntables are being introduced simultaneously, the PD-272 (with integrated tonearm) was actually designed and produced first. Its operation is purely manual—no automatic assist whatever. So if you believe that any amount of automation implies compromise, the PD-272 should appeal to you.

The performance will certainly appeal to purists. The servo-controlled direct-drive brushless DC motor with its gapless pole design is totally free of the cogging (pulsing) that plagues many other direct-drive motors.

The straight, statically-balanced tonearm has several important design

features. For example, the vertical pivots extend through the arm rather than simply suspending it from the outside. This minimizes lateral play and assures that the stylus will always remain perpendicular to the record. Also, the arm's nested tube construction and internal damping deal very effectively with resonance.

Then for those audiophiles who like to go their separate ways, we produced the PD-270 (like the PD-272 but less tonearm) and the TA-1 (separate tonearm). With TA-1, you change cartridges by changing the entire tonearm tube. This system is much better than changing headshells since

it minimizes mass at the critical point of the tonearm. The TA-1 also has a built-in stabilizer below the arm base which damps out vibration.

This additional flexibility has its price. The PD-270 drive system is \$285; the TA-1 tonearm \$125. The complete PD-272 is \$345. (Add for either tonearm, the new 115-C moving coil cartridge, \$195.)

As you can see, you do have to decide how likely you are to want interchangeable tonearms in the future. Think about it on your way to your LUX dealer. If it's still a problem when you get there, he'll help you bear up under it.

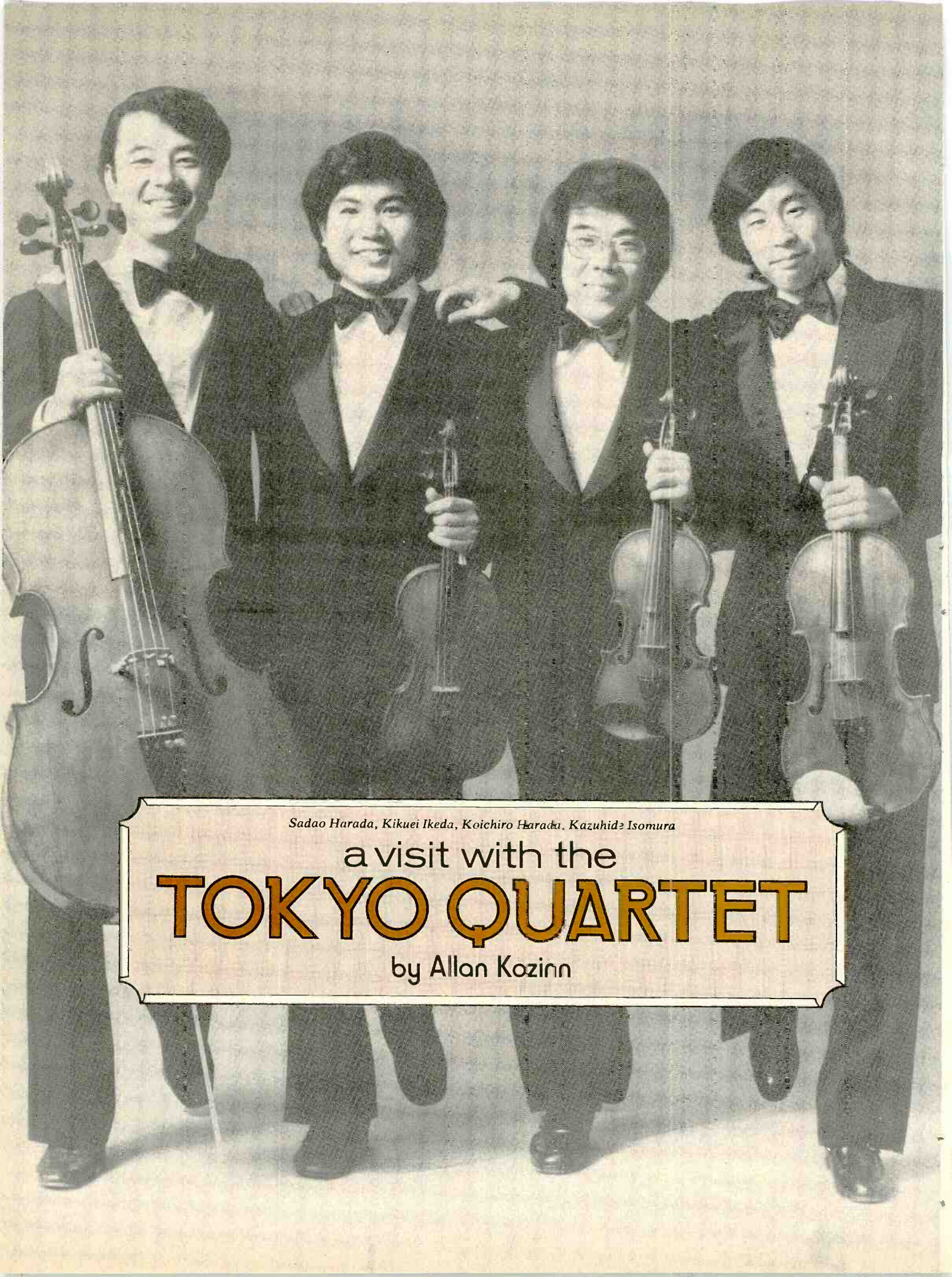
LUX Audio of America, Ltd.

160 DuPont Street, Flainview, New York 11803 • In Canada: White Electronics Development Corp., Ontario



PD-272. Effective tonearm length: 240mm. Tracking force calibrated 1-3 grams. Accepts cartridges from 4-11 grams. Anti-skating, viscous-damped cueing, adjustable height. Illuminated strobe, pitch variable $\pm 3\%$. Wow and flutter less than 0.03% (NRMS). Rumble more than 60 dB. Same drive system specifications apply to PD-270. Both include removable dust cover.

TA-1. Straight, tubular, static-balanced. Interchangeable tube. Stabilizer. Otherwise similar to tonearm of PD-272.



Sadao Harada, Kikuei Ikeda, Koichiro Harada, Kazuhide Isomura

a visit with the
TOKYO QUARTET

by Allan Kozinn

IF you have any doubts about how small this world has become in the last century or so, consider this: when Haydn entertained his aristocratic patrons in 1755 with the works we now think of as the first string quartets, Japan was still a mysterious, isolationist country ruled by a dynasty of warlords who dealt with the West only at a distance. Such was still the case in 1790, when Mozart made the last of his personal modifications to Haydn's quartet form, and so it remained as Beethoven revolutionized the medium. Brahms composed his first quartets in 1873—just twenty years after Commodore Perry steamed into Uraga.

In 1970, barely more than a century after the West established a foothold in Japan, the first performing string quartet to be born, raised, and, for the most part, trained there came to international prominence by outplaying its European and American counterparts in two major chamber-music competitions. Since then, that ensemble—the Tokyo Quartet—has come to be regarded as one of the finest young chamber groups around, particularly in the music of Haydn and Mozart.

Of course, you might argue that a century is plenty of time for a country to develop one good string quartet, and if you can think of a European or American ensemble that performs Japanese traditional music to as great acclaim in Japan as the Tokyo Quartet receives here, then you're so entitled. But if you keep in mind that until the late nineteenth century the greatest Western influence on Japan was the odd translation of a Dutch book; that Western music was entirely alien to the thriving culture Japan had developed in her isolation; and that Japan's first major music conservatory, the Toho Gakuen, was not established until after World War II, then that century shrinks considerably.

THE Toho Gakuen (Seiji Ozawa was in its first graduating class) is an important focal point in the development of the Tokyo Quartet. The four players met there as teenagers, played in several levels of string orchestra together, and went through the same rigid training in the fundamentals of musicianship at the school. Their first contact with Western classical music, however, was not at Toho but at home.

"We had a good phonograph and many records," recalls first violinist Koichiro Harada, now thirty-three. "I used to listen to a lot of opera—I still do. My favorite, back then, was *Car-men*." Harada's mother was a pianist, and it was at her insistence that he took up the violin at age six. Why violin?

"Because," he says, "she thought violins were cheaper than pianos."

Koichiro Harada is the only member of the quartet who is not actually a native of Tokyo. Because his home town, Fukuoka, was comparatively rural, he was not able to attend many concerts. Cellist Sadao Harada (no relation), now thirty-four, was given a wider perspective on the musical world. The son of a cellist in the NHK Symphony, Sadao Harada was taken to orchestra and opera performances regularly from the time he was five years old.

Second violinist Kikuei Ikeda, at thirty-one the youngest member of the quartet (and also the most recent: he replaced Yoshiko Nakura in 1974), was also taken to concerts as a child. His father was especially fond of the violin, having heard the great violinists of the era during their frequent post-war recital tours of Japan. The Ikeda family record collection consisted primarily of discs by Fritz Kreisler, Jascha Heifetz, Mischa Elman, and Joseph Szigeti, all formidable influences on young Kikuei.

"When we lived in Japan we were not very interested in Japanese music. . . . Now that we live in the States, we're beginning to realize that there are some beautiful Japanese pieces."

Of the four members of the quartet, only thirty-two-year-old violist Kazuhide Isomura had any grounding in traditional Japanese music. But from the time he was six years old, Isomura (who is also said to be a judo expert) had a divided musical life: in school, he studied the violin and listened to Western music; at home, he heard the sounds of the koto, the samisen, and the shakuhachi.

"It's funny," cellist Harada explains, "but when we lived in Japan we were not very interested in Japanese music. I used to hear it when I was young because I had a neighbor who taught samisen. But I didn't care for it. I was much more interested in Mozart and Brahms. Now that we live in the States, though, we're beginning to realize that there are some beautiful Japanese pieces. We try to see the Kabuki when it comes here."

At the Toho school, the four musicians came under the influence of cellist Hideo Saito, who was, until his death a few years ago, the guiding light of Western music in Japan. Saito man-

aged almost singlehandedly to oversee the training of Toho's entire student body, giving courses in everything from instrumental technique and basic musicianship to chamber music and conducting. Possibly an even greater influence than Saito, though, was the Juilliard Quartet. In 1966, Harada, Isomura, and Harada attended a series of chamber-music workshops given by the Juilliard Quartet at Nikko. The two Haradas had been working together at that time, and Isomura was a member of another quartet.

"At the end of the seminar," Koichiro Harada recalls, "the Juilliard people suggested that, since there were so many good string players but no permanent quartet in Japan, we think seriously about forming one. In those days, we all wanted to be soloists, which is only natural. But the Juilliard Quartet showed us the best side of quartet playing, and we found it very exciting."

Sadao Harada had just graduated from Toho and was already a member of the Tokyo Symphony when he went to Nikko. "For me," says the cellist, "the decision to play chamber music had a lot to do with the literature. There are only a handful of major concertos for solo cello. The quartet repertoire, however, consists of hundreds of fantastic works—the Beethoven quartets, the Haydn, the Bartók. There was no comparison."

Ikeda did not attend the Nikko seminar, but he caught the chamber-music bug nonetheless. "There are basically three things you can do in music," he points out. "You can play in an orchestra—but then anything of an interpretive nature must come from the conductor. Even if the orchestra sounds good, it's not really *your* sound. If you're a soloist, you can lead the orchestra and do whatever you want. Chamber playing is between those two extremes, and for me it's more satisfying than either. Those moments where the four of us share the same musical ideas and feel the same excitement just don't happen in orchestral playing."

After Nikko, the future Tokyo Quartet's enthusiasm about chamber music was matched only by the Juilliard Quartet's enthusiasm about *them*. So when Harada, Isomura, and Harada told Raphael Hillyer (then violist with the Juilliard) of their desire to continue their studies in the United States and eventually to form a quartet of their own, the barriers between them and their dream began to fall. In 1967, Isomura and Sadao Harada were granted scholarships for a summer at Aspen, where they again studied with the Juilliard players. (Overleaf)

TOKYO QUARTET

“... people expect music by Japanese composers to sound ‘Japanesey,’ but it usually doesn’t.”

“Probably the most important things we learned from the Juilliard Quartet,” says Isomura, “were a clean, controlled technique and a strict, tight ensemble. They taught us a lot about bowing together, for instance. We would have to play the same line in unison, making it sound like one instrument, not four. In orchestral playing, people don’t worry about that so much. But in a quartet, everything is exposed. It must be more precise.”

“We aren’t quite as strict as the Juilliard,” adds Sadao Harada. “We try to go to the manuscripts, and of course we always try to find the best scores. But we find that sometimes the directions in the original don’t work for us. So we examine the scores, then we make our own decisions.”

By the time they left Tokyo for Aspen, Isomura and Harada had decided that after Aspen they would try to land jobs in American orchestras, where they could save enough money for tuition at Juilliard. As it turned out, Harada and Isomura found themselves at Aspen in a quartet with the concertmaster of the Nashville Symphony, who informed them of two openings in his orchestra. They weren’t just any positions, either: Isomura, who was still a violinist, became assistant concertmaster; Sadao Harada signed on as solo cellist.

After one season in Nashville, Isomura enrolled at Juilliard. He was reunited there with Koichiro Harada, and those two formed a quartet with violinist Yoshiko Nakura—it was then that Isomura switched to viola—and another Japanese cellist. In 1969, Sadao Harada joined his compatriots, and the original Tokyo Quartet was thus assembled.

Kikuei Ikeda essentially followed in the footsteps of his old Toho friends. He spent two years at Juilliard and another year performing in Japan before he was invited to join the Tokyo Quartet in 1974 to replace Yoshiko Nakura. According to cellist Harada, Miss Nakura always considered herself a temporary member, as she had solo ambitions which she is currently pursuing in Europe. (However, in a 1975 interview with the Associated Press, Juilliard Quartet violinist Robert Mann

was quoted as saying, “They always had it in mind to get rid of their girl player. I told them it would be immoral to use her to establish themselves and get rid of her, but they eventually did.”)

Until 1970, the group considered itself only a “study quartet.” But that year things changed rather quickly. In April, the Tokyo String Quartet won First Prize at the Coleman String Quartet Competition in Pasadena, California. The judges were the members of the Amadeus Quartet. That summer, after an intensive eight-week practice period during which they worked eight to ten hours a day, the quartet entered

THE TOKYO QUARTET ON RECORDS

- **BARTÓK:** *Quartet No. 2, Op. 17. Quartet No. 6 (1939).* DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2530 658.
- **HAYDN:** *String Quartets, Op. 50, Nos. 1-6 (“Prussian”).* DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2709 060.
- **MENDELSSOHN:** *Octet in E-flat Major for Strings, Op. 20.* With Cleveland Quartet. RCA ARL1-2532.
- **MOZART:** *Quartet No. 19, in C Major (K. 465, “Dissonant”); Quartet No. 22, in B-flat Major (K. 589).* DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2530 468.
- **MOZART:** *Quartets for Flute and Strings (K. 285, 285a, 285b, 298).* Harada, Isomura, and Harada, with Paula Robison (flute). VANGUARD 71228.

the Munich International Chamber Music Competition.

Munich was the turning point. The quartet walked off with first prize, a guarantee of a hundred concerts, and a Deutsche Grammophon recording contract. The first product of the group’s relationship with DG was a disc containing Haydn’s Op. 76, No. 1, and Brahms’ Op. 51, No. 2, which, despite its having won a Grand Prix du Disque at Montreux, has never been released in the U.S. The Haydn, however, has been rerecorded for Columbia and will be issued this year as part of an integral Op. 76 set. The quartet is reluctant to say which version they prefer.

“I noticed some differences between the two recordings,” Sadao Harada claims, “but it’s hard to tell exactly what the differences are. Recording is a funny thing: when you record in different studios, with different microphone placings, the sound is different. It could be that this time we knew the work better than we did the first time. Also, on

the new recording we are using much better instruments. Of course, sometimes a great instrument will sound terrible on a recording, and sometimes a bad instrument will sound good. You can never tell.”

On record, the Tokyo Quartet has gotten off to a fairly slow start. With the exception of the hard-to-find Brahms quartet mentioned above, a pair of Bartók quartets (Nos. 2 and 6), the Mendelssohn Octet (which they recorded, as guests of the Cleveland Quartet, for RCA), and a Debussy/Ravel set for 1979 release on Columbia, the group’s entire discography is Haydn and Mozart. They have no plans to neglect that part of the repertoire in the near future—and considering the critical success they’ve had with Haydn and Mozart so far, there’s no reason they should.

“People tend to think of us as Haydn specialists,” Isomura complains, “but that’s not really true. It’s just that after we won first prize in Munich, we began to concertize widely in Europe, especially in Germany. Apparently, a lot of German people thought we did well with Haydn and Mozart, so when they asked us to give more concerts there, they also asked us to do more Haydn and Mozart. What else could we do? We couldn’t refuse. Besides, we like the music. But we didn’t mean to specialize in anything.”

“For the past few years,” Sadao Harada says, “we’ve been so busy working on Haydn, Mozart, Bartók, Beethoven, and all the standard literature that we haven’t had time to do as much contemporary music as we’d like. We do play Schoenberg and Webern a lot, and we enjoy them. More recent music, though, requires special techniques which take time to learn.

PEOPLE often ask us why we don’t play much contemporary Japanese music,” he adds. “The problem is that in the U.S. and in Europe, people expect music by Japanese composers to sound very ‘Japanesey,’ but it usually doesn’t. We used to play a piece by Akira Miyoshi, written in a very Western, contemporary idiom. And the audiences were nearly always disappointed—not because the piece was bad, but because they expected it to sound Oriental. Maybe now people don’t expect that any more. It would be nice to be able to play some Japanese quartet music for our anniversary. It would be nice to start recording some, too.” □

Allan Kozinn is a New York-based free-lance writer and observer of the musical scene. He is also a composer and classical guitarist.



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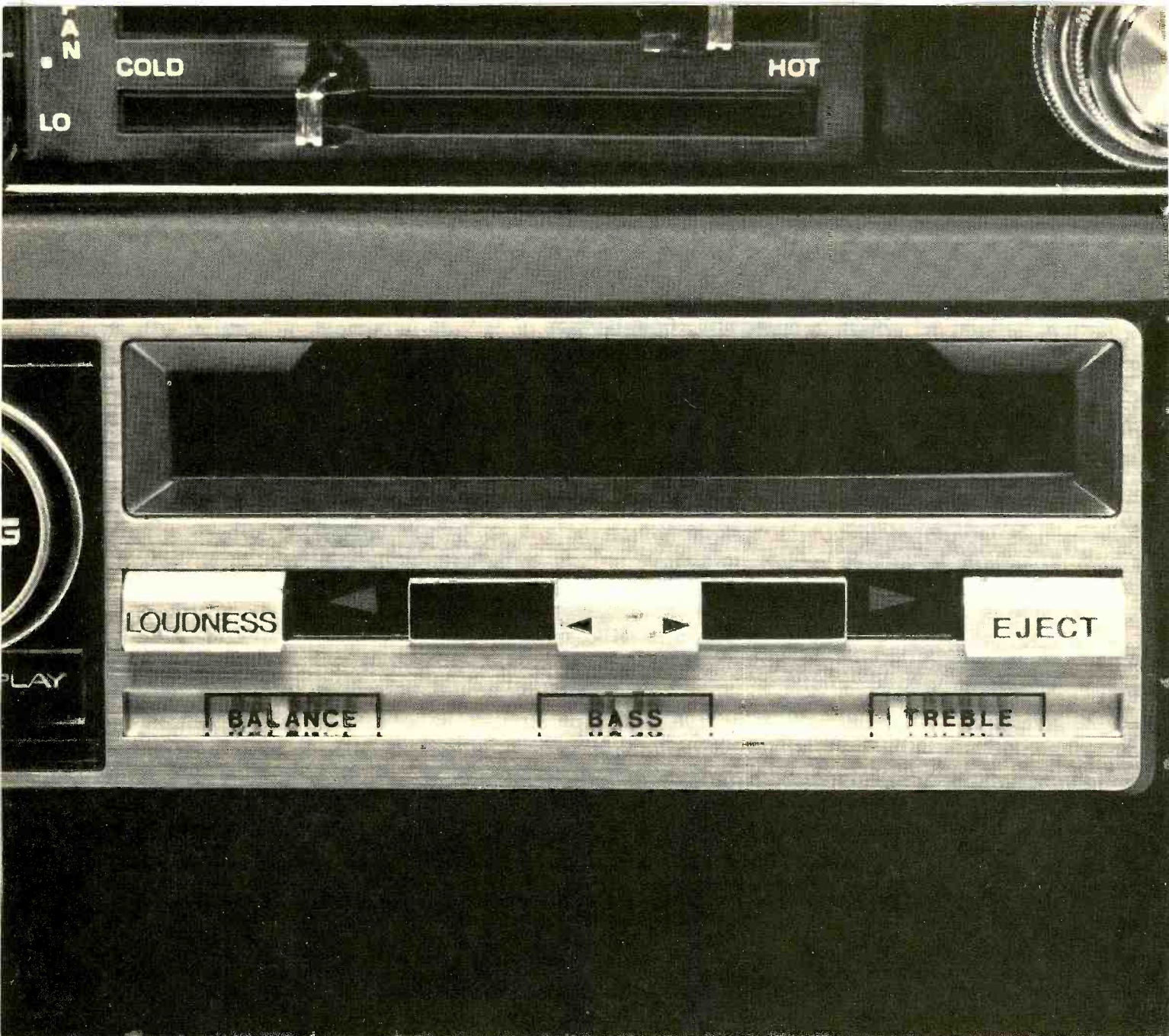
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CIRCLE NO. 42 ON READER SERVICE CARD

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



Youri Egorov's Recording Debut: the Most Exciting Solo Piano Record of the Year?

WHEN twenty-three-year-old Youri Egorov played in New York for the first time (January of last year) he simply, according to *New York Times* critic Harold Schonberg, "ate up the piano." The young Russian had fallen out of the running in the finals of the Van Cliburn International Piano Competition in Fort Worth, but a number of enthusiasts who felt he should have won a prize got together and funded his New York debut, which was something of a sensation.

Egorov has yet to be represented on records here, but a disc he made last year for EMI in Holland, where he now lives, has turned up on the import lists, and it gives a very good idea of what all the shouting was about. The music is by Schumann: a large-scale, expansive performance of the *Kreisleriana*, which spills over to side two, and similarly framed ones of the first and last of the eight *Noveletten* of Op. 21.

I must say straightaway that Egorov's is the most compelling performance of the *Kreisleriana* I have ever heard, on records or otherwise. His approach is a very personal one—but what other way, after all, to approach Schumann, of all composers? The slow sections are extremely slow and dreamy, with what may strike some listeners (but not this one) as an overgenerous use of pedal; the fast ones are very energetic—by which I don't mean especially fast (tempos tend to be rather broad), but simply bursting with a vitality that does not depend on speed to make itself felt. His sound is enormous—and gorgeous. The sweep and



Christian Steiner

spontaneity are breathtaking, the articulation incredible. Nowhere is there a hint of hysteria or the slightest lapse in taste; everywhere deep conviction and no little poetry. Musically and emotionally, this performance yields up more of the visionary feeling Schumann put into the music than any other presentation I can recall. Comparisons may be odious, but after living with this record for some time I felt that Arrau, Kempff, and even Ashkenazy had left a bit unsaid on the subject of the *Kreisleriana*; Egorov, though, with great subtlety as well as great flair, makes us feel an exceptional commitment, nothing less than a total identification with the music, and a relationship to it in terms of the vessel through which it passes rather than the virtuoso exhibiting his own personality. But Egorov does show plenty of that, too—and, contradictory as it may seem, it is just that quality that brings this fantastic work to life so fully and irresistibly.

If my remarks appear too inflamed, too generalized and/or lacking in objectivity, I can only urge the reader to hear the record and see if he can avoid complete surrender within the first few bars. The two *Noveletten* are invested with the same sort of magic, leading, on reflection, to the frustrating thought that Egorov might have given us a shorter work in full as filler to his *Kreisleriana* so that the complete *Noveletten* might be offered on a subsequent disc. If that is a valid complaint, it is surely the only one I can think of. The sound is wide open, with plenty of unexaggerated presence, and the surfaces are exemplary. It is only the end of January as I write this, but I don't expect to hear a more exciting piano release this year.

—Richard Freed

SCHUMANN: *Kreisleriana*, Op. 16; *Noveletten*, Op. 21, No. 1, in F Major, and No. 8, in F-sharp Minor. Yuri Egorov (piano). PETERS INTERNATIONAL PLE 113 \$7.98.

Renata Scotto and Placido Domingo: Imaginative Programming Plus Vocal Radiance

"RENATA SCOTTO and Placido Domingo Sing Romantic Opera Duets"—and for once we are spared another program of utter predictability. The love scenes from Massenet's *Manon* and Gounod's *Roméo et Juliette* are well known but seldom show up on records; Giordano's *Fedora* is something of a rarity, and Mascagni's *I Rantzau* is a first recording.

Not surprisingly, the singers sound more idiomatic in the Italian scenes, but they seem to shine with a brighter vocal radiance in the Gounod and Massenet excerpts, which is of course where they find the better music. Their well-blended voices exchange tender vows in the Gounod and soar passionately in the Massenet under Kurt Herbert Adler's sensitive and knowing (if a shade unassertive) direction.

Giordano's high-tension declamation results in some harshness on Miss Scotto's part, but she makes the most of such lyrical moments as the scene allows. As for Mascagni's *I Rantzau* (1892), which followed *Cavalleria Rus-*

ticana and *L'Amico Fritz* almost immediately and sounds somewhat reminiscent of both, we must be thankful that the first recording of the opera's duet has reached us through the artistry of these expert, attractive, and congenial singers.

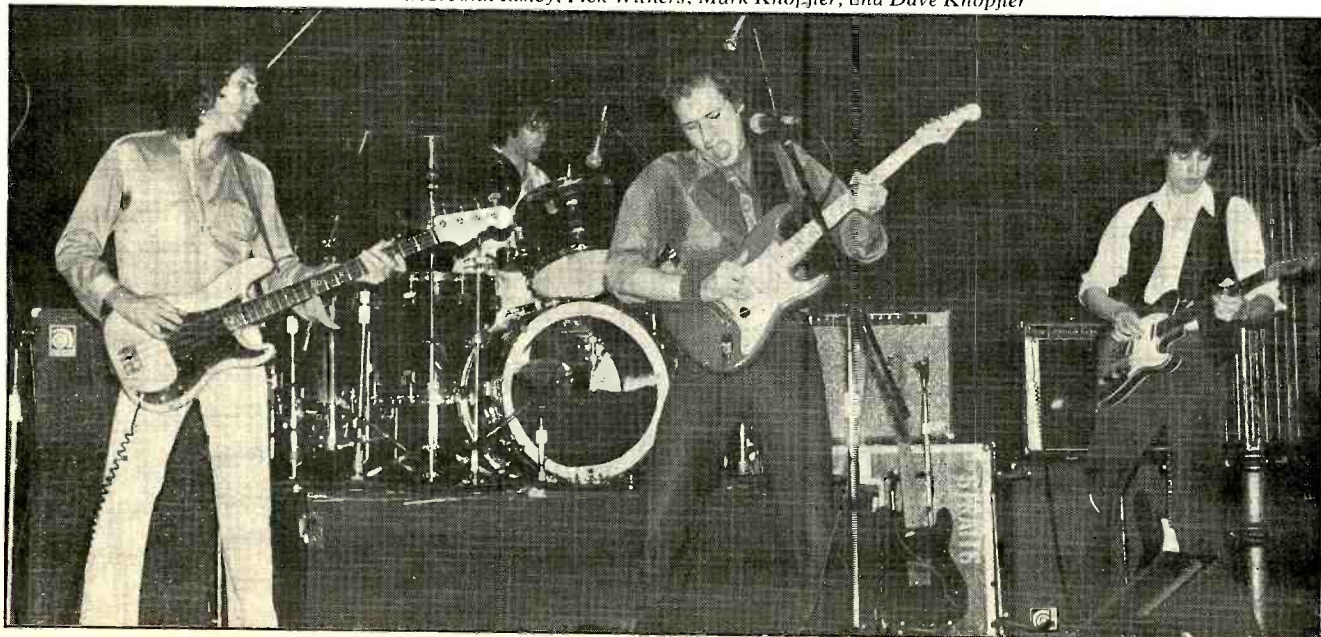
—George Jellinek

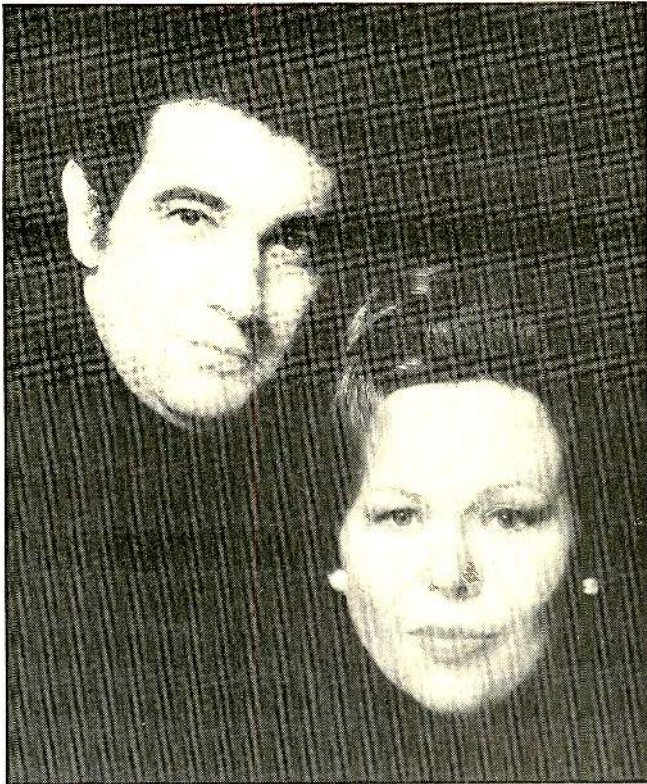
RENATA SCOTTO AND PLACIDO DOMINGO: *Romantic Opera Duets*. Massenet: *Manon: Toi! Vous!* Gounod: *Roméo et Juliette: Va, je t'ai pardonné*. Giordano: *Fedora: È lui! È lui!* Mascagni: *I Rantzau: Giorgio si batte*. Renata Scotto (soprano); Placido Domingo (tenor); National Philharmonic Orchestra, Kurt Herbert Adler cond. COLUMBIA M 35135 \$7.98, © MT 35135 \$7.98.

Dire Straits' Irresistible Music: Intelligent and Subtly Original

DIRE STRAITS was the only non-New Wave band in England to debut to across-the-board raves in 1978, and it's not hard to figure out why: they're so good it's scary. But the speed with which they've caught on in this country (as of this writing, *Sultans of Swing*, the single, looks to be headed for the Top 10, which in this era of terminal disco approaches the miraculous) has me a little worried. Granted, the Straits are quite subtly original (if not totally innovative), and for sheer musicality, in the every-note-is-there-for-a-reason

DIRE STRAITS: John Illsley, Pick Withers, Mark Knopfler, and Dave Knopfler





SCOTTO AND DOMINGO: expert artistry



JUNE CHRISTY: communicative performance

sense, there isn't a New Wave band in the world that can touch them. Still, they are not likely to offend the sensibilities of anybody who thinks that, say, Kenny Loggins is God, and I am a little uncomfortable right now about endorsing the music of any group that will go down so easily amidst the utter pap that FM radio revels in. But I'd be the first to admit that that's unfair, and I should add that in live performance the band has turned out to be pleasingly rawer than the recorded model, so I'll stop complaining.

The Straits' music, an understated, gorgeous amalgam of Southern r-&b styles tempered with a Dylanesque lyrical bent, amazingly atmospheric playing, and a near architectural grasp of song structure, is by and large irresistible. Leader Mark Knopfler has got to be the most quietly riveting guitar stylist to have emerged in the Seventies, and the band as a whole plays with such loose-limbed precision and soul that one overlooks the occasional pettiness of some of the lyrics (*In the Gallery*, which is one of the strongest cuts musically, is a rather simplistic attack on the Art Establishment). The intelligence involved is what will ultimately win you over—at least, it's what's won me over. Hey, wait a minute, maybe Dire Straits is more subversive than I thought: how many bands have you heard on the radio lately to which the

word "intelligent" could accurately be applied?

—Steve Simels

DIRE STRAITS. Mark Knopfler (guitar, vocals); Dave Knopfler (guitar); John Illsley (bass); Pick Withers (drums). *Down to the Waterline*; *Water of Love*; *Setting Me Up*; *Six Blade Knife*; *Southbound Again*; *Sultans of Swing*; *In the Gallery*; *Wild West End*; *Lions*. WARNER BROS. BSK 3266 \$7.98, © M8 3266 \$7.98, © M5 3266 \$7.98.

June Christy: She Can Make Musical History With a Phrase

WHAT becomes a legend most? Not klieg-lighted premières, gossip-column items, and talk-show gigs, but performance. And performance—in glorious vocal technicolor and on the grand scale you would expect from a legend in her own time—is exactly what you get from June Christy in her new album "Impromptu" on Interplay Records. Surrounded by some of the finest instrumentalists now working in

pop or jazz, she lives up to every nice thing ever said about her in the thirty or so years she's been illuminating the American music scene.

Who else could brush so lightly against *My Shining Hour*, almost absent-mindedly murmuring the lyrics, and yet total you out with her utter sincerity? Who else could take *Show Me*, Eliza's temper tantrum from *My Fair Lady*, and turn it into a little gem of near-perfect jazz singing as she does here? And who but the unique artist she is could lay down three absolutely drop-dead, classic tracks in one album? If you hear, now or in the foreseeable future, anything more perfectly wrought than her performances of *Angel Eyes*, *I'll Remember April*, and *The Trouble with Hello Is Goodbye*, let me know and I'll take you to lunch at the Palace.

Christy put down her roots in a time when there was a lot of pretentious guff being written about a lot of jazz and jazz artists. But the fads and the fashions have been swept away, and she has persevered. She does not, in other words, sing out of any particular time frame; you do not need to know who she was to enjoy her now, for excellence knows no time limit. She's what honest, affective, real singing has always been about, a more effective means of communication—for certain messages—than talking or writing can ever be. Let her show you how a mar-

velous singer, working with first-rate material, can make musical history with a phrase. —Peter Reilly

JUNE CHRISTY: *Impromptu*. June Christy (vocals); Lou Levy (piano); Bob Daugherty (bass); Shelly Manne (drums); Bob Cooper (tenor saxophone, flute); Frank Rosolino (trombone); Jack Sheldon (trumpet). *My Shining Hour; Once Upon a Summertime; Show Me; Everything Must Change; Willow Weep for Me; I'll Remember April; The Trouble with Hello Is Goodbye; Autumn Serenade; Sometime Ago; Angel Eyes.* INTERPLAY IP-7710 \$7.98 (from Interplay Records, P.O. Box 93, Calabasas, Calif. 91302).

Chef Tchaikovsky's Best Musical Pancakes, with Syrup and Without

A St. Petersburg magazine called *Nuv-elist* wrote to Tchaikovsky in 1875 asking him if he'd like to write a piano piece for every month in the year, which they would publish, one per issue. He agreed, but he had a terrible time filling the assignment. His servant Sofranov had to remind him every month, "Peter Ilyich, it's about time to send something off to St. Petersburg," and he complained in a letter to a friend, "I am engaged in making musical pancakes." Pancakes they may be, but they most certainly are among the most exquisite of his short works.

The set of twelve pieces was subsequently published under the (Russian-equivalent) title *The Months*, which somehow got translated into English as *The Seasons*, thus permitting absent minds to confuse it in later years with Haydn's and Glazounov's and Vivaldi's ditto. If these Tchaikovsky miniatures are salon music, as they used disparagingly to be called, they are some of the loveliest salon pieces ever penned. The barcarolle called *June*, for example, is unforgettably haunting; April's *Snowdrop* would be completely at home amid the lovely divertissement music of the *Nutcracker*; the irresistibly melancholy *Autumn Song* that limpingly mourns the end of summer (October) is a three-part andante suggestive of a vocalise; and the *Sleigh Ride* troika that marks November is like a musical etching out of Currier and Ivanovich. The suite is affecting enough as played in its original serene

piano version by Alexei Cherkassov in a new Columbia/Melodiya release, but one longs to hear it eloquently scored for orchestra in the Russian manner—and, in this bargain two-record set, that is precisely what we get. For a time Columbia made available an interesting kind of concerto-for-piano-and-orchestra treatment of these works by Morton Gould, but the orchestral transcription here (by Vassilyevitch Gauk), especially as conducted by Yevgeny Svetlanov (one wishes they would release his recording of Glazounov's *The Seasons* too on this side of the Atlantic) is a real dazzler. Tchaikovsky himself, who was seldom pleased with anything, would perhaps not have minded having his pancakes served up with so delicious a syrup. —Paul Kresh

TCHAIKOVSKY: *The Seasons*. Orchestral version: U.S.S.R. Symphony Orchestra, Yevgeny Svetlanov cond. Original piano version: Alexei Cherkassov (piano). COLUMBIA/MELODIYA MG 35184 two discs \$17.96.

Milestone Jazzstars: They Don't Have to Cross Over To Get Over

WITH Sonny Rollins, McCoy Tyner, and Ron Carter—three major leaders, not a follower in the bunch—involved, the Milestone Jazzstars had a short life expectancy from the time it was born, on the White House lawn, at last summer's successful celebration of the Newport Jazz Festival's twenty-fifth anniversary. A good two months after that event, the Jazzstars spent a month and a half on the road, giving twenty successful concerts from coast to coast and proving that jazz need not be souped-up or in any way bastardized to attract crowds. In New York the quartet's appearance at the Beacon Theatre was not only sold out in advance, but there were people outside trying to buy tickets at the kind of prices that are usually reserved for rock supergroups.

The quartet—completed by drummer Al Foster—was disbanded at the end of October, as planned, but its music is well represented for posterity in a double album of performances recorded during concerts in California, Wisconsin, and Connecticut. It is the distilla-

tion of a tour that may well have helped shape the future of jazz by introducing the beauty and excitement of high-proof acoustic interplay to a generation raised on diluted derivatives. The earlier tours of V.S.O.P. drew crowds who came to hear such fusion stars as Herbie Hancock, Wayne Shorter, and Tony Williams; many heard these men as they had never heard them before, playing straightforward bop without electronic frills. Though some fans undoubtedly found this disappointing, others greeted the music with genuine enthusiasm. "I was a Hancock fan," a fellow dinner guest once told me, "but until I went to the V.S.O.P. concert I never knew he could really play the piano—now I look for his old records in the stores." The impact V.S.O.P. had on fusion fans could account for some



Young Tchaikovsky

of the success experienced by the Jazzstars, but it is also possible that the promoters who hesitate to stage concerts by Messrs. Rollins, Tyner, and Carter as individual leaders are underestimating the public's taste for unadulterated jazz.

Let's hope the V.S.O.P. and Jazzstars tours turned some budding musicians down the jazz path and showed them that you don't have to cross over to get over, and if those concerts eluded them, there is always this album of close to an hour and a half skimmed off the top. When performers of the stature of Rollins, Tyner, and Carter are brought together on an equal footing in a leaderless group, one might reasonably expect egos to clash, but mutual respect and admiration permeate the Jazzstars' music. The program, as well

balanced on the record as it was when I caught the group in concert, affords each star ample opportunity to shine: *Continuum*, *A Little Pianissimo*, and *Willow Weep for Me* are unaccompanied solos by Rollins, Tyner, and Carter, respectively, wonderful solos that reflect three quite different approaches to the music. Disparate though their styles are, however, the three giants of contemporary jazz have no difficulty communicating as a unit or in various combinations with each other, as they are presented here. Rollins and Tyner engage in outstanding interplay on the Ellington favorite *In a Sentimental Mood*; Tyner and Carter offer a memorable version of *Alone Together*; and when drummer Al Foster joins Rollins and Carter for a trio rendition of *Don't Stop the Carnival*, it becomes obvious why he was chosen to complete and complement the star-studded quartet. There is not a bad moment on either disc. "In Concert" ought to stay in the catalog permanently.

—Chris Albertson

MILESTONE JAZZSTARS: In Concert. Sonny Rollins (soprano and tenor saxophones); McCoy Tyner (piano); Ron Carter (bass); Al Foster (drums). *The Cutting Edge*; *N.O. Blues*; *Nubia*; *Don't Stop the Carnival*; *In a Sentimental Mood*; *Alone Together*; *Continuum*; *Willow Weep for Me*; *A Little Pianissimo*. MILESTONE M-55006 two discs \$9.98, © 8161-55006T \$9.98, © 5161-55006T \$9.98.

David Bromberg: Your Front Porch Never Had It So Good

SIMPLIFY, SIMPLIFY, Thoreau said. David Bromberg has done it and made "My Own House," his best album in years. As the title suggests, it sounds handmade; it is one of the rare albums that sound truly "organic" while showing off excellent musicianship. The program is folk, black and white, and the instrumentation is acoustic and basic, but enough. The music, as David says in his notes about the melody of the title song, takes a proud stance. Sometimes accompanied only by his guitar, Bromberg takes you back to music as fresh now as when Blind Blake wrote it or when Alan Lomax collected it (or, in the case of



TYNER, CARTER, AND ROLLINS: mutual respect and admiration

Spanish Johnny, when Paul Siebel rewrote it). To keep things in perspective, he throws in a quiet version of Phil Spector's *To Know Her Is to Love Her* and an instrumental (lifted off a Mike Auldridge album) of *Georgia on My Mind*. There are eerie two- and three-part fiddle tunes, gutsy old blues numbers you may not have heard yet, tasty finger-picking, and, in *Don't Let Your Deal Go Down*, some excellent flat-picking.

Mostly, though, there's this front-porch atmosphere. It is a break from the eclectic jumble of styles and sounds Bromberg's full band attends to

nowadays, and it is just as well played as it is straightforward and direct. We should all have front porches that sound so good.

—Noel Coppage

DAVID BROMBERG: My Own House. David Bromberg (vocals, guitar, fiddle); George Kindler (fiddle, mandolin); Dick Fegy (fiddle, mandolin, banjo). *My Own House*; *Don't Let Your Deal Go Down* (*Roanoke/Possum Up a Gum Stump/Mississippi Sawyer*); *Early This Morning*; *Sheebeg and Sheemore*; *Cocaine Blues*; *To Know Her Is to Love Her*; *Georgia on My Mind*; *Chump Man Blues*; *Kitchen Girl*; *Spanish Johnny*; *Black and Tan*; *Lower Left Hand Corner of the Night*. FANTASY F-9572 \$7.98.

DAVID BROMBERG: his hands never leave his wrists



Russell Elliot Peir



CLASSICAL DISCS AND TAPES

Reviewed by RICHARD FREED • DAVID HALL • GEORGE JELLINEK • PAUL KRESH
STODDARD LINCOLN • ERIC SALZMAN

BELLINI: *Opera Arias* (see Collections—Maria Callas)

BRAHMS: *Violin Sonata No. 1, in G Major, Op. 78; Violin Sonata No. 2, in A Major, Op. 100.* Leonard Sorkin (violin); James Tocco (piano). AUDIO FIDELITY FCS 50082 \$2.98, © 8-FCS 50082 \$3.98, © C-FCS 50082 \$3.98.

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

Leonard Sorkin, long the first violinist of the Fine Arts Quartet, has evidently embarked on a series of duo-sonata recordings. Both the works here are lyrical expressions strongly rooted in Brahms' lieder. Sorkin and his keyboard partner, James Tocco, play with fine musicianship and great feeling—for my taste, a little too *much* feeling in the violin, underlined, moreover, by a rather heavy vibrato. My own preference is still for the somewhat leaner, sharper lines of the Szeryng/Rubinstein recording on RCA. D.H.

BRUCKNER: *Symphony No. 4, in E-flat Major ("Romantic").* Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, Kurt Masur cond. VANGUARD VSD 7128 \$7.98.

Performance: **Capable**
Recording: **Lacks body**

In comparison with Karajan, Haitink, and Walter, Kurt Masur takes a rather brisk and

light-handed view of the Bruckner Fourth, generating an atmosphere somewhat akin to Beethoven's *Pastoral*. That impression is reinforced by what appears to be a back-of-the-hall microphone placement, which tends to deprive the sonic texture of the body needed to do justice to the massive climaxes in the end movements, not to mention the coloristic subtleties in the many quieter episodes. The orchestral playing, particularly by the woodwinds and horns, is splendid. With better recording this disc would have been a good choice for those preferring Bruckner's Fourth to his more cyclopean works. D.H.

DELLO JOIO: *Fantasies on a Theme by Haydn; From Every Horizon; Concertante; Colonial Ballads; Satiric Dances.* West Texas State University Symphonic Band, Gary Garner cond. GOLDEN CREST ATH 5054 \$7.98.

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

Norman Dello Joio has always taken a strong interest in the training of young musicians; he has involved himself in a number of educational projects, he has been for several years dean of Boston University's School for the Arts, and he has composed a number of works especially for various school ensembles—among them the first and third of the those listed above. According to the liner information, these five works were recorded under his supervision, so one infers that the performances have his blessing. Having long been accustomed to the standards set on records by the Eastman Wind Ensemble, I have to admit that the level of execution here struck me as earnest and competent rather than highly polished, but (and this is said without sarcasm) there is a certain charm in the awareness that the players are not seasoned professionals and are compensating with enthusiasm for what they lack in finesse. In any event, the playing is tidy enough and always allows the music to make its point.

The *Fantasies on a Theme by Haydn* would appear to be the original version of the orchestral *Homage to Haydn* (recorded by the Louisville Orchestra under Leonard Slatkin

on Louisville LS-742), though there is no information on this in the pithy annotation; it is somewhat shorter than the orchestral work, but contains more or less the same material. The *Satiric Dances*, commissioned by the town of Concord, Massachusetts, for its bicentenary, were taken from an orchestral score, the incidental music Dello Joio wrote in 1974 for an unidentified comedy by Aristophanes. I would like to hear the original version, which I suspect would make an effective concert piece. *Colonial Ballads*, again, would appear to be a band version of the orchestral *Colonial Variants* (on the theme *In Dulci Jubilo*) introduced by Eugene Ormandy and the Philadelphia Orchestra in 1976. *From Every Horizon* is a brief mood picture of New York, drawn from music for a film shown at the World's Fair in that city in 1965, and the *Concertante* is a bright two-movement piece commissioned by a high-school band. I do wish the notes offered more information, but all the music is engaging, and the performance is well recorded. R.F.

FALLA: *Nights in the Gardens of Spain; Harpsichord Concerto; Harpsichord Concerto, Piano Version.* Joaquín Achúcarro (piano, harpsichord); London Symphony Orchestra, Eduardo Mata cond. RCA ARL1-3004 \$7.98.

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

Anyone who has ever listened to a recording of Manuel de Falla's *Nights in the Gardens of Spain* outdoors on a balmy, starry night knows how overpowering that perfumed music can be. Much of its sensuousness was borrowed by its Andalusian-born composer from the palette of the French impressionists, for he was in Paris in 1909 when he began work on it. He didn't finish it until 1915, after the success of his opera *La Vida Breve* and the curious failure of his ballet *El Amor Brujo*. All three works are now beloved throughout the world. *Nights in the Gardens* in particular has been given such affectionate performances on records by pianists of the stature of Arthur Rubenstein, Gonzalo Soriano, and Alicia de Larrocha that it must take a self-

Explanation of symbols:

- Ⓜ = reel-to-reel stereo tape
- Ⓢ = eight-track stereo cartridge
- ⓐ = stereo cassette
- = quadraphonic disc
- ① = digital-master recording
- Ⓛ = direct-to-disc recording

Monophonic recordings are indicated by the symbol Ⓜ

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

confident soloist indeed to tackle it. Joaquín Achúcarro has the advantage of a precise idiomatic understanding of the work's musical language, and he couldn't ask for more impassioned accompaniment than he gets from Eduardo Mata with the London Symphony.

The Harpsichord Concerto, inspired by Wanda Landowska (who stopped playing it when she heard the composer was concertizing with it himself), is a more cerebral work, with a crystalline transparency of structure satisfying to the ear in an entirely different way. Here Achúcarro's collaboration with Mata is properly brisk and stinging—if scarcely a match for that of Igor Kipnis on Columbia with Boulez. The “bonus” piano version, however, is a flaccid affair, all wrong in its mushy sonorities. P.K.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

GIULIANI: *Variations on a Theme of Handel, Op. 107; Gran Sonata Eroica in A Major, Op. 150; Variations on “I Bin a Kohlbaurn Bub,” Op. 49; La Melanconia, Op. 147, No. 7; Grande Overture, Op. 61.* Pepe Romero (guitar). PHILIPS 9500 513 \$8.98, © 7300 442 \$8.98.

Performance: **Excellent**
Recording: **Just about perfect**

Mauro Giuliani's Guitar Concerto in A Major, Op. 30, is represented by at least a half-dozen current recordings; two of his other concertos and several of his solo works have been recorded too, many of them by Pepe Romero, who now offers this very attractive program of solo pieces. The subject of the Handel Variations is *The Harmonious Blacksmith* (which Giuliani's contemporary Spohr gave a more intriguing workout in one of his octets), and the Op. 49 set is based on an Austrian folk song about a young cabbage farmer. *La Melanconia* is the penultimate one of eight pieces in an apparently valedictory collection called *La Giuliante*. The *Gran Sonata Eroica* is in a single expansive movement, and the *Grande Overture* is more or less in the style of an orchestral piece. All five works show considerable imagination in their treatment of the thematic material, especially in their coloring, and Pepe Romero does them all to a turn. Not memorable stuff, perhaps, but certainly highly enjoyable—as well as illuminating about the guitar and its music in the early part of the nineteenth century. Hardly less illuminating than the music itself are Igor Kipnis' concise but comprehensive notes. The recorded sound is just about perfect in its vividness and warmth. R.F.

GRIEG: *Piano Concerto in A Minor, Op. 16.*
SCHUMANN: *Piano Concerto in A Minor, Op. 54.* Horacio Gutiérrez (piano); London Philharmonic Orchestra, Klaus Tennstedt cond. ANGEL □ S-37510 \$7.98, © 4XS-37510 \$7.98.

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

Perhaps my expectations were too high. After hearing Klaus Tennstedt's Mahler First (see February's “Best of the Month”), I expected similar revelations in the Grieg and Schumann concertos, and I counted on Horacio Gutiérrez to provide the sort of stimulating freshness found in his Tchaikovsky and Liszt performances with André Previn. But neither revelation nor any particular freshness is to be found on either side of this well-recorded

disc. The slow movements of both concertos drag unconsciously, and that of the Grieg loses all momentum. In many episodes the Schumann concerto really seems to have more of a chamber-music than a symphonic character, calling for intimate dialogue between the piano and the cello or the piano and various winds, but none of this give-and-take is suggested here. The final movements of both concertos come off best, but neither performance is in any way competitive with what is already in the field. R.F.

HUMPERDINCK: *Hansel and Gretel.* Brigitte Fassbaender (mezzo-soprano), Hansel; Lucia Popp (soprano), Gretel; Walter Berry (baritone), Peter; Julia Hamari (mezzo-soprano), Gertrud; Anny Schlemm (mezzo-soprano), the Witch; Norma Burrowes (soprano), the Sandman; Edita Gruberova (soprano), the Dew Fairy. Vienna Choir Boys; Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, Sir Georg Solti cond. LONDON OSA 12112 two discs \$15.96.

Performance: **Good**
Recording: **Over-reverberant**

Hansel and Gretel ranks among the highest achievements of German operatic art. The ex-

quisite beauty of this opera seldom emerges from staged performances, often routinely cast, but there have been some excellent recordings of it. The long-deleted Angel 3506 (mono, Karajan-directed, newly reissued in England) was such a performance some twenty-five years ago; more recently RCA ARL2-0637 gathered well-deserved praise in these pages from James Goodfriend (November 1974).

Though it is a distinguished achievement, the new London set falls somewhat short of these exalted standards. The Vienna Philharmonic plays glowingly, but I think Sir Georg Solti makes rather too much of Humperdinck's evident indebtedness to Wagner. The opera unfolds here in a manner that is splendidly but somewhat rigidly Wagnerian, without the enlivening elements of humor and charm that may have eluded the master but not the disciple.

The singing is variable but never less than competent. It reaches excellence in Lucia Popp's outstanding Gretel, Edita Gruberova's charming and secure Dew Fairy, and the work of the Vienna Choir Boys. Brigitte Fassbaender's Hansel is expertly sung but in rich mezzo tones that convey no suggestion of “boy-



First Crusader Tancred

Stunning Monteverdi

MONTEVERDI'S *Combattimento di Tancredi e Clorinda* is perhaps the most dramatic Italian monody ever written, a *verismo* scene contrasting brutality and tenderness so starkly that its first hearers are said to have been “moved to tears.” The new recording of it by the Clemencic Consort on the HNH

label exploits every nuance of emotion in this remarkable work and leaves one all but stunned.

Tenor-countertenor Zeger Vandersteene is superb as the narrator. His diction is impeccable, his sense of pacing is thrilling, and his talent for word coloring vividly projects the wide range of rapidly changing emotions. In the comparatively short title parts, soprano Ana Higuera Aragón as Clorinda and tenor Kurt Spanier as Tancredi perfectly sustain the drama.

This is a hard act to follow, and I turned rather gingerly to the madrigal *Lettera Amoroza* that opens the second side of the record. But bass-baritone Pedro Liendo does not let us down one whit. His passionate adoration of his mistress' golden hair and lovely breasts (“paths of snow to a heart of fire”) projects the image of a physical act as nearly as seems decent on records.

The concluding *Ballo*, a five-voice madrigal that was a stylized tribute to the Emperor Ferdinand III, is all elegance and grace, and the Clemencic Consort's performance strikes a delicate balance between ceremonial gesture and lilting dance. The final chorus is a miracle of virtuoso ensemble ornamentation; each voice indulges in elaborate melisma, but all blend in a sparkling metallic texture. Nor should the instrumental work be overlooked. The continuo playing is tasteful and imaginative, the sound of the antique stringed instruments is effective, and ornamentation is furnished where appropriate. In short, the album is a complete success that will please listeners of many musical tastes and is a must for collectors interested in the period.

—Stoddard Lincoln

MONTEVERDI: *Il Combattimento di Tancredi e Clorinda; Lettera Amoroza; Introduzione al Ballo; Ballo.* Clemencic Consort, René Clemencic cond. HNH 4006 \$7.98.



Krystian Zimerman, Vladimir Ashkenazy, Nelson Freire, and Ruth Slenczynska

A Quartet of Chopinists

WERE Chopin's waltzes meant to be danced to? Probably not, but the question is not entirely academic. Dance music needs a steady pulse; if you change tempo every other bar, someone is going to break a leg. Krystian Zimerman is a brilliant young Polish pianist with all the right credentials (including a Chopin Competition first prize in 1975), but in his new Deutsche Grammophon recording of the waltzes he does change tempo every other measure—sometimes even in the middle of a bar.

But isn't that rubato? You're supposed to play Chopin with rubato, right? The truth is that there are two kinds of rubato. In the original sense of the term, the pulse was kept even and the time was "stolen" (the literal meaning of "rubato" in Italian) from one bar and added to another. This kind of rubato—which, by the way, is quite similar to that used in American popular music—was still very much in use in Chopin's time. The free rubato we generally hear today, on the other hand, came into vogue much later in the nineteenth century. Anyway, whether or not anyone is going to get out on the dance floor, a waltz should dance.

Vladimir Ashkenazy does not really hold a completely firm tempo either in the ninth volume of his Chopin cycle for London (there are many great classical performers who would never get hired as session musicians), but his version of the *Grande Valse Brillante* in A-flat Major dances up a storm. In fact, ev-

erything on the album—which includes the wonderful Second Ballade and all twenty-four Op. 28 preludes—whirls, dances, pulses, sings, and generally tugs at the heart. This is very exciting, emotional playing, but always under superb control. Ashkenazy's is still just about the best Chopin around.

Nelson Freire's Chopin—on a Telefunken release of the four scherzos, three *écossaises*, and a later prelude—is something else again. The opening here of the First Scherzo is one of the most extraordinary virtuoso blast-offs in the history of recording, and the remainder is not far behind. Freire really has it all in hand, and even at the elevated tempos he uses you can actually hear all the notes, not in any smudge of flying fingers but as a veritable crystalline rain—or, perhaps, hailstorm. Spectacular as it is, however, nuances are lost; the speed is just too fast for even Freire to make all the articulations. But he is an artist as well as a super technician, and the rest of the album belies the impression left by the First Scherzo of a pianist carried away by his own prowess. It is all highly poetic, with the other three scherzos full of fantasy and the three *écossaises* and one prelude a charming bonus.

As a pianist, Ruth Slenczynska was a child prodigy of Mozartian dimensions. When she grew up she disappeared from public view for a time, but, unlike many prodigies whose promise goes unfulfilled, she was later able to resume her career. In recent years she has

concerted and recorded a fair bit, and in her third Chopin recording for the Musical Heritage Society—as in her second—she features a set of the études. Unfortunately, the playing lacks subtlety. In spite of their force and difficulty, Chopin's études are full of details of dynamics, articulation, phrasing, and so on that are missed, glossed over, or contradicted in this recording.

—Eric Salzman

CHOPIN: Fourteen Waltzes. Krystian Zimerman (piano). DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2530 965 \$8.98, © 3300 965 \$8.98.

CHOPIN: Twenty-four Preludes, Op. 28; Ballade No. 2, in F Major, Op. 38; Grande Valse Brillante No. 2, in A-flat Major, Op. 34, No. 1. Vladimir Ashkenazy (piano). LONDON CS 7101 \$7.98.

CHOPIN: Four Scherzos: No. 1, in B Minor, Op. 20; No. 2, in B-flat Minor, Op. 31; No. 3, in C-sharp Minor, Op. 39; No. 4, in E Major, Op. 54. Three Écossaises, Op. 72; Prelude in C-sharp Minor, Op. 45. Nelson Freire (piano). TELEFUNKEN 6.42034 \$8.98, © 4.42034 \$8.98.

CHOPIN: Twelve Études, Op. 25; Barcarolle, Op. 60; Tarantelle, Op. 43. Ruth Slenczynska (piano). MUSICAL HERITAGE SOCIETY MHS 3798 \$5.20 (plus \$1.25 postage and handling from the Musical Heritage Society, Inc., 14 Park Road, Tinton Falls, N.J. 07724).

ishness." The ideal combination for this role is not easy to achieve, yet Anna Moffo did succeed at it in the RCA set. Walter Berry is more rustic in character but vocally less suave than RCA's Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau. In Julia Hamari's *Mother*, however, London scores a point of clear superiority. And that leaves the *Witch*, a part Anny Schlemm interprets with a fierce gusto and considerable skill. It should not matter that her top notes are shrill—why should a wicked witch emit perfect tones? And yet, in a manner nothing short of miraculous, Christa Ludwig seems to do just that in the RCA set. Hers is an unparalleled achievement.

I am also not altogether happy with London's recorded sound. It is opulent but some-

what opaque and frequently allows the orchestra to cover the voices. Miss Hamari's contribution in particular suffers in this regard. In short, then, though the London set is good, I still prefer the RCA set. G.J.

KABALEVSKY: Twenty-two Pieces for Children, Op. 27 (see PROKOFIEV)

LEONCAVALLO: Pagliacci (see MASCAGNI)

LISZT: Hungarian Fantasia for Piano and Orchestra (see TCHAIKOVSKY)

LOCKE: Incidental Music to "The Tempest"; Music for His Majesty's Sackbuts and Cornetts. Academy of Ancient Music, Christo-

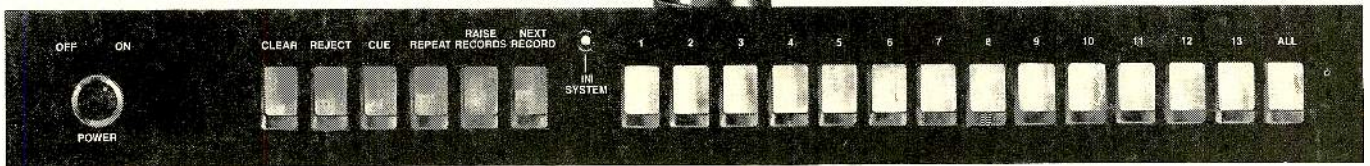
pher Hogwood cond. L'OISEAU-LYRE DSLO 507 \$8.98.

Performance: **Charming**
Recording: **Vivid**

The so-called operas of the Restoration period in England were really grand, hodgepodge stage spectacles rather than the *dramma per musica* that we associate with the word. For example, Shakespeare's *The Tempest* was produced in 1674 in a tarted-up version by one Thomas Shadwell, who himself expanded a revision by Sir William Davenant and John Dryden. Not only were entirely new characters introduced, but major song-and-dance scenes with music by several composers were

(Continued on page 102)

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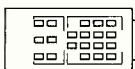
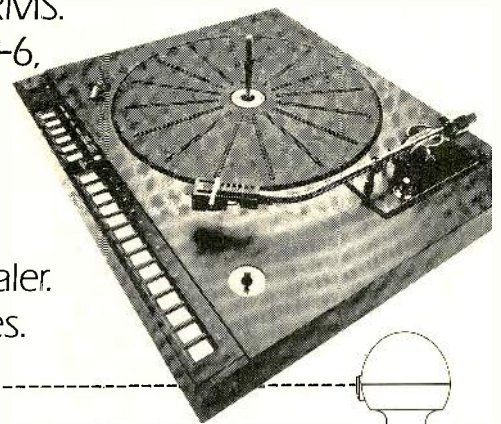
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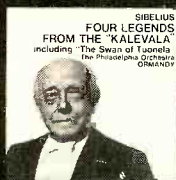
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S-37537



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added. The front of this record reads, "Matthew Locke—Incidental Music to *The Tempest*." In fact, Locke's contributions are only the instrumentals. The vocal numbers, scenes, and songs—in the style we associate with Purcell—are by Locke's contemporaries Pelham Humfrey, Pietro Reggion, John Banister, and James Hart.

Locke's music—including a reconstruction of some sonorous brass pieces he wrote for King Charles II (possibly even for his coronation procession in 1661)—makes by far the deepest impression here. Judging by the beauties captured on this disc, Locke was a composer in Purcell's class; listen to the Curtain Tune from side one for a sample of the healthy state of English music before Handel. What a pity that Locke wasn't given a chance to compose the whole score for *The Tempest*! The vocal music recorded here is much lighter and less unified in effect, although there are many pleasures to be found. I particularly like James Hart's very traditional English version of *Adieu to the Pleasures* and Pelham Humfrey's *Where the Bee Sucks*.

The Academy of Ancient Music performs, as might be expected, on ancient, authentic instruments, and very well, too, under the direction of harpsichordist Christopher Hogwood. However, there is something of a discrepancy between the very vigorous and warm instrumental playing and the quality of the singing, which is quite charming but a bit wan—delicate and tasteful pre-Raphaelite rather than lusty, robust Restoration. E.S.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

MASCAGNI: *Cavalleria Rusticana*. Julia Varady (soprano), Santuzza; Luciano Pavarotti (tenor), Turiddu; Ida Bormida (contralto), Lucia; Piero Cappuccilli (baritone), Alfio; Carmen Gonzales (mezzo-soprano), Lola. London Voices; National Philharmonic Orchestra, Gianandrea Gavazzeni cond. **LEONCAVALLO: *Pagliacci*.** Luciano Pavarotti (tenor), Canio; Mirella Freni (soprano), Nedda; Lorenzo Saccomano (baritone), Silvio; Ingvar Wixell (baritone), Tonio; Vincenzo Bello (tenor), Beppe; others. London Voices; National Philharmonic Orchestra, Giuseppe Patané cond. LONDON OSAD 13125 three discs \$23.94.

Performance: **Outstanding Pagliacci**
Recording: **Excellent**

It is a safe bet that by the time this review appears, this album—the first combined release of the familiar verismo twins to appear in about a dozen years—will be riding high among the bestsellers. Pavarotti is, of course, the main drawing card here, and I imagine that there will be some debate about whether such roles as Turiddu and Canio are good for the popular tenor's essentially lyric voice. Such discussions, however, are rather pointless since, first, Pavarotti evidently *wants* to sing these roles, and, second, his public can hardly wait to hear his interpretations. Furthermore, such predecessors as Gigli, Bjorling, and Bergonzi—all lyric tenors—mastered the very same roles at an even earlier stage of their careers. What matters now is that Pavarotti sings both parts magnificently, combining passion with generous and always beautiful tone and musical phrasing. There are urgency and commitment in his singing, and he projects his lines with admirably pointed articulation. There are other praiseworthy

elements in the set, but Pavarotti alone amply justifies its acquisition.

Giuseppe Patané's superior conducting makes *Pagliacci* the more attractive of the two. In a very few instances he favors broader tempos than is customary, but he never fails to get effective results. He supports his singers admirably in this intense and vividly theatrical performance. And the *Pagliacci* cast is excellent. Mirella Freni departs from the overtly sluttish characterization of Nedda that is currently in vogue to emphasize the girl's vulnerability and tragic helplessness. Vocally she is exquisite, absolutely radiant in the "*Tutto scordiam*" ending of her duet with Silvio. That latter role is impeccably sung by Lorenzo Saccomani, who is little known here but quite eminent in Italy. Vincenzo Bello's Beppe is also first-rate, as is the Tonio of Ingvar Wixell—vocally solid, forceful and vibrant in character. If only his tones were more purely focused!

In comparison with this outstanding *Pagliacci*, the *Cavalleria* suffers from conductor Gianandrea Gavazzeni's rather prosaic direction, which permits some unrefined orchestral playing and rough choral work as well. In an opera that tempts many conductors to dawdle, Gavazzeni's brisk approach is welcome, and he does propel the music excitingly to its conclusion, but he does not match the sustained momentum and theatrical intensity of Patané's *Pagliacci*. Nor is Gavazzeni's cast on the same level. Piero Cappuccilli is a good/average Alfio, not entirely comfortable with the tricky rhythms of his "*Il cavallo scalpita*." Julia Varady seems a surprising choice for Santuzza, adhering neither to the Simonato/Cossotto mezzo prototype nor to the Milanov/Tebaldi "luscious soprano" one. This Santuzza has a limpid tone, phrases tastefully and expressively, and radiates contained passion. I enjoyed her musicality and pure intonation but missed a certain element of earthiness in her singing. The Lola and Lucia, artists heretofore unknown to me, are good. The recorded sound in both operas is above reproach. G.J.

MENOTTI: *The Unicorn, the Gorgon, and the Manticore*. Paul Hill Chorale and Orchestra, Paul Hill cond. GOLDEN CREST CRS 4180 \$7.98.

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

This "madrigal fable" by Gian Carlo Menotti centers about a poet, known to the people of his town as "the Man in the Castle," who doesn't take part in any community or social functions but is seen one Sunday afternoon with a pet unicorn. Immediately the townspeople, prompted by the countess who serves as social arbiter, get unicorns for themselves. But the next Sunday the poet is seen with a gorgon; so the townspeople kill their unicorns and get themselves gorgons. The next Sunday the poet appears with a manticore, a beast which "often as if in jest inadvertently . . . kills the people he loves best." and the process is repeated. Finally there comes a Sunday on which the poet fails to appear at all. Urged on by the countess, the people rush to his castle to punish him for what he has evidently done to his own pets and "made" them do to theirs—but they find him on his deathbed, in the company of all three grieving pets. "Oh foolish people who feign to feel what other men have suffered," he tells them.

"You, not I, are the indifferent killers of the poet's dreams. How could I destroy the pain-wrought children of my fancy?"

The work, which calls for a small chorus, ten dancers, and an "orchestra" of nine, was an immediate success when it was introduced at the Library of Congress in the fall of 1956, and it was recorded not long after that under Thomas Schippers. I have hoped for years that the deleted Schippers recording would be reissued, and I still hope so, but this stereo version under Paul Hill (whose forces are based in the city in which the work's première was given) is attractive in its own right, and the appearance of so satisfying a second recording serves to underscore the accessibility of the work—to performers as well as audiences. Some may have felt that the abrupt transition from the vignettes of social ambition to the unexpected deathbed scene was more of a jolt than so lightly constructed a work could sustain, but I don't feel that it is jarring enough in this new version, which in general lacks some of the wit and refinement of its predecessor. Hill's group does have the spirit of the piece, though, and this disc is a very pleasant way to get to know it. The recorded sound is quite good, and the documentation includes the full text.

R.F.

MOZART: Flute Concerto No. 1, in G Major (K. 313); Flute Concerto No. 2, in D Major (K. 314); Concerto for Flute, Harp, and Orchestra in C Major (K. 299); Andante for Flute in C Major (K. 315); Rondo in D Major (K. Anh. 184, K. 373). Frans Vester (flute); Edward Witsenburg (harp in K. 299); Mozart Ensemble Amsterdam, Frans Brüggem cond. ABC/SEON AX-67040/2 two discs \$15.96.

Performance: **On the sleepy side**
Recording: **Generally good**

MOZART: Quartets for Flute and Strings in D Major (K. 285), G Major (K. 285a), C Major (K. 285b), and A Major (K. 298). Paul Meisen (flute); members of the Kreuzberg String Quartet. TELEFUNKEN 6.42172AW \$8.98, © 4.42172 \$8.98.

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

Mozart is said to have hated the flute, but flutists certainly love their Mozart. Each of his concertos and quartets for the instrument may be sampled in a dozen or more recordings at present, and not one of them is really less than pleasing. Because there are so many to choose from, though, one can afford to be very selective, and I'm afraid the appeal of ABC's two-disc concerto collection rests almost entirely in the use of "original instruments" and the convenience of having all these works together in one package—neither of which consideration counts for very much in my opinion. The two concertos (the second, of course, being a transcription of the Oboe Concerto) and the Flute Andante are even more conveniently packaged on numerous single LP's on which they are performed by the likes of Jean-Pierre Rampal and James Galway, among others. The Flute and Harp Concerto, here gratuitously spread over a side and a half, fits snugly on a single side in a dozen other instances, in most of which the companion material is such substantial fare as the Clarinet Concerto or the *Sinfonia Concertante* for wind quartet. And the Rondo in D Major (actually Anton Hoffmeister's transcription of Mozart's Rondo in C Major for violin and

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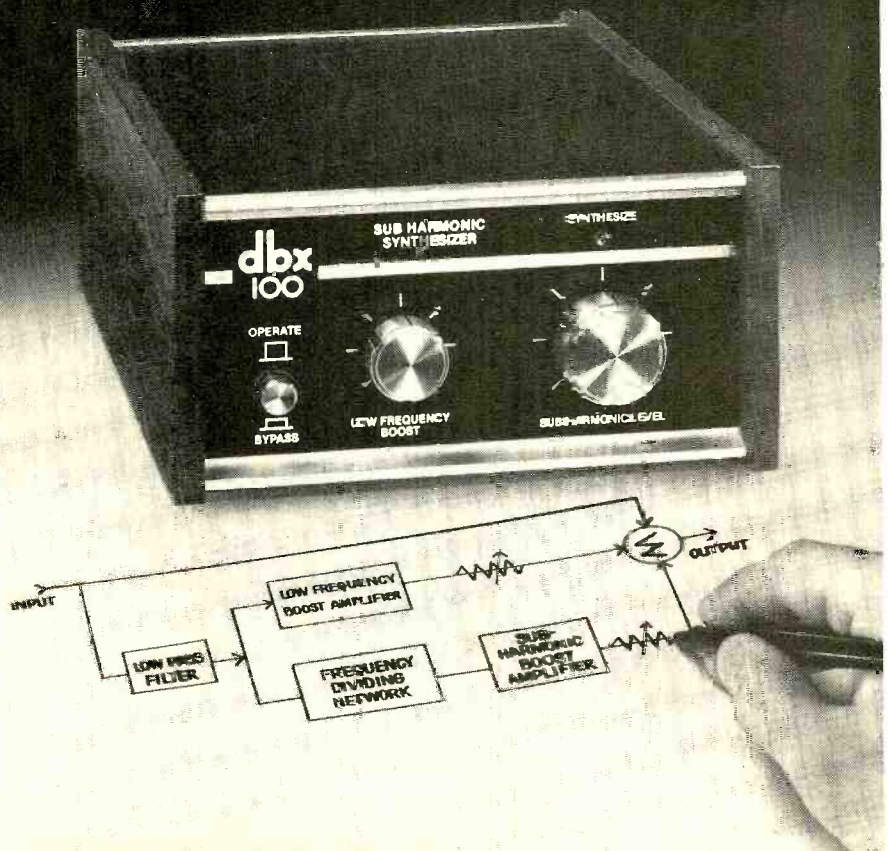
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orchestra, K. 373) should be heard, if at all, as Rampal plays it (MHS 900 or RCA ARL1-2091). All the genuine flute pieces in this set get more lively performances in nearly all the respective alternative recordings; the timbre of the "original instruments" is not in itself that intriguing and does not offset the rather sleepy quality of the playing. The sound is generally good, but the horns in the finale of K. 299 are muffled.

It is curious that a performing quartet would make its recording debut in music calling for only three of its members, but the Kreuzberg String Quartet players, with flutist Paul Meisen instead of their second-violin colleague, make a fine showing in the four quartets for flute and strings. Their way with the music may strike some listeners as brisk and unloving, but I find it agreeably lithe, with sensible tempos, unfussy phrasing, and always extremely good balance. This is a most enjoyable release, and I can't imagine anyone's being unhappy with it. I have to add, though, that William Bennett and the Grumiaux Trio exhibit a ripeness of tone and an elegance of style that set their similar package (Philips 6500 034) apart from all others; if I were investing anything like \$8.98 it is the Philips disc I would choose. R.F.

PAGANINI: *Twenty-four Caprices for Solo Violin, Op. 1; Introduction and Variations on "Nel cor più non mi sento" (from Paisiello's "La Molinara"); Duo Merveille in C Major; Introduction and Variations on "God Save the King," Op. 9.* Salvatore Accardo (violin). DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2707 107 two discs \$17.96, © 3370 027 \$17.96.

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

It takes a consummate technician to come to terms with Paganini's Caprices, and Salvatore Accardo has technique to spare—his *staccato*, especially, is phenomenal. But he is also a suave violinist who is unwilling to compromise tone quality for showmanship and responds to the charm and lyricism inherent in some of these dazzling inspirations. The result is an admirably musical and expressive account of these supercharged (high-strung?) pieces, taken at sensible tempos which satisfy the virtuosic demand without impairing articulation or intonation.

Violinists are naturally drawn to this monumental compendium of fiendish challenges. But for the benefit of listeners who may flinch before the prospect of sitting through the entire sequence, I will point out that side three is

the one to savor. This contains Caprices Nos. 13-22, all brief, varied, and marvelously imaginative. Others in the set (such as Nos. 4, 6, and 7) go on much too long for their musical substance, particularly since Accardo is quite generous with his repeats.

Of the three bonus pieces on side four, outstanding is the brief *Duo Merveille*, which calls for simultaneous bowing and left-hand pizzicato. I find the Paisiello Variations very long and wearisome. As for *God Save the King*, I heretofore felt that if a violinist could coax sounds that were 50 per cent musical from Paganini's virtually unplayable writing, he was ahead. Salvatore Accardo does much better than that. It's worth noting the deplorable absence of separating bands; listeners cannot find a particular piece without time-consuming trial and error. The record surfaces, however, are immaculate. G.J.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

PALESTRINA: *Missa Hodie Christus Natus Est; Hodie Christus Natus Est; Canita Tuba; Ave Maria; Tui Sunt Caeli; Jubilate Deo; O Magnum Mysterium.* Choir of King's College, Cambridge, Philip Ledger cond. ANGEL S-37514 \$7.98.

Performance: **Luminous**
Recording: **Vibrant**

Like Raphael and Botticelli, Palestrina projected his most profound thoughts in clear forms and luminous colors. Today, when profundity is most often represented by ambiguous forms and murky coloration, we are all too apt to dismiss Palestrina as a mere technician with little content. Indeed, on first listening to this record one may be so struck by the voluptuous triadic sound, the opulent contrasts of upper and lower ranges, the exquisitely contoured melodies, and the tantalizing mixture of modal and functional harmonic progression as to forget the content and think only of the technique. But follow the texts and think of Raphael and Botticelli.

The Choir of King's College, Cambridge, does full justice to Palestrina's music. The sound of the boy singers and the rich reverberation of the chapel, caught perfectly in this recording, re-create the Palestrinan ideal at its highest. At the same time, moreover, clarity of line is preserved through careful diction and articulation. This disc embodies a delicate Renaissance balance of neo-pagan voluptuousness and Christian purity. S.L.

PROKOFIEV: *The Love for Three Oranges, Suite, Op. 35a* (see STRAVINSKY)

PROKOFIEV: *Music for Children, Op. 65.*
KABALEVSKY: *Twenty-two Pieces for Children, Op. 27.* Richard Gresko (piano). LONDON STS 15470 \$3.98.

Performance: **Light-fingered**
Recording: **Very good**

Sergei Prokofiev's *Music for Children* is eminently simple and four-square but never patronizes the children for whom it was intended. Many of these pieces can be heard to good advantage on records as transcribed for orchestra in the *Summer Day Suite*, but on the piano—and Canadian pianist Richard Gresko is just the sort of light-fingered interpreter they need—each of the cameos, some lasting only a minute or so, stands out with even
(Continued on page 106)

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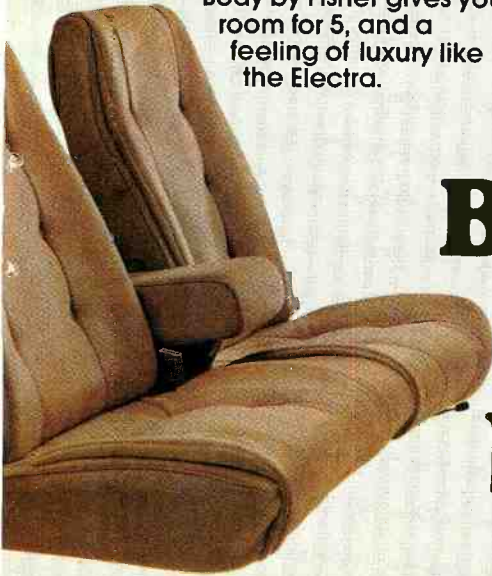
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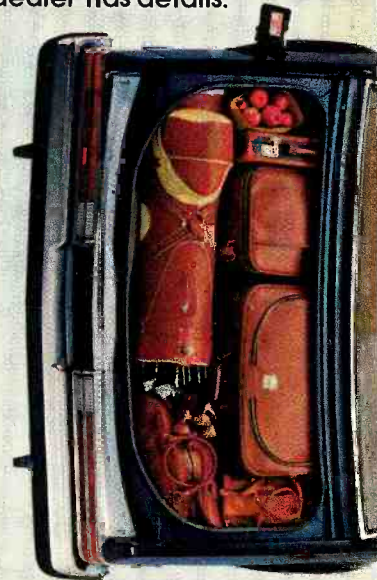
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greater clarity and charm. Particularly intriguing are the jumpy parade of grasshoppers, the energy of the tarantella, the tonal color of the episode called "Rain and Rainbow," and the lively propulsion of "Tag" and the march that follows it, which is much like the famous one from the opera *The Love for Three Oranges*.

Prokofiev wrote a dozen such pieces. Dmitri Kabalevsky wrote twenty-two, and while few of them exhibit the mastery of his countryman's efforts, all are tuneful fun, and a few, such as *Dark Forest*, *Moonlight on the River*, and *Dancing on the Lawn*, are exceptional in their ability to evoke an atmosphere with the briefest of strokes. Children with a modicum of taste for music should enjoy both composers' pieces for them, and none should

be beyond the range of youngsters with some pianistic talent who might like to try them out on the keyboard. P.K.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

PROKOFIEV: *Symphony No. 5, in B-flat Major, Op. 100.* Cleveland Orchestra, Lorin Maazel cond. LONDON CS 7099 \$7.98.

Performance: **Fiery**
Recording: **Splendid, but . . .**

Despite certain reservations about both the sound and the interpretation, as a whole this reading of the "Russian Eroica" strikes me as an outstanding one. The great scherzo comes off with dazzling effect, the slow movement is

movingly eloquent, and I don't remember when I've heard the finale done with such felicitous attention to detail, especially in bringing out the wealth of birdcall-like echo effects. Only in his choice of tempo for the slow movement do I part company with Maazel—as I have also with Ormandy, Bernstein, and some others. The slow pacing makes the whole business altogether too ponderous and results in loss of the big line; Prokofiev is not Bruckner, after all. Comparison with the recordings by Koussevitzky, Rodzinski, Stokowski, Oistrakh, and Rozhdestvensky, all of whom use a more urgent pacing, confirms to my satisfaction the need to keep this music flowing steadily at all costs—as does the suggested timing in the published score (forty to forty-two minutes for the entire work).

Except for somewhat overweighted bass, which can be corrected with minor tone-control or equalizer adjustment, the London sonics are most impressive, with the scherzo and finale faring best. As an interpretation of the Prokofiev Fifth, the Rozhdestvensky version on Melodiya Angel, muzzy sound and all, is my choice. But if one wants something approaching the best available combination of sound and interpretation, Maazel has the edge, even with the reservations noted. D.H.

PUCCHINI: *Turandot.* Montserrat Caballé (soprano), Turandot; Mirella Freni (soprano), Liù; José Carreras (tenor), Calaf; Paul Plishka (bass), Timur; Michel Sénéchal (tenor), the Emperor; Vicente Sardinero (baritone), Ping; Remy Corazza (tenor), Pang; Ricardo Cassinelli (tenor), Pong; Eduard Tumegeanin (baritone), the Mandarin; others. Chorus of the Opéra du Rhin; Strasbourg Philharmonic Orchestra, Alain Lombard cond. ANGEL SCLX-3857 three discs \$24.98, © 4X3X-3875 \$24.98.

Performance: **Good, in part**
Recording: **Good**

This is not the *Turandot* of one's dreams. Fortunately, there are enough excellent versions available to be consoled with, among them a previous Angel set (SC-3671) with Birgit Nilsson and Franco Corelli. The problems with this new version begin with the orchestral playing. The orchestra is simply not first-class, and conductor Alain Lombard is unable to make the kind of impact others (particularly Zubin Mehta on London 13108) have achieved with Puccini's massive sonorities and sharp rhythms. Certain scenes in Act I in particular fall flat without the required pomp and emphasis, and the Riddle Scene in Act II lacks excitement. Moreover, the chorus sounds neither savage nor very precise and the children's chorus is downright inferior.

The assumption of the title role by Montserrat Caballé is another problem. All the great Turandots of the past (Raisa, Cigna, Nemeth, Nilsson) were dramatic sopranos with powerful voices. On records, Joan Sutherland has proved to be their equal because the timbre of her voice is right and because she commands sufficient power without committing all her reserves. But Caballé, who was perfectly cast as Liù in the London set, cannot supply the iciness the role explicitly calls for. She softens the character with sensitive phrasing and delicate (at times unwritten) pianissimos, and she thereby falsifies the image. From time to time she allows an imperious or severe inflection to invade her honeyed phrases, but for the most part she does what

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she does best: sing with warmth, lyric expression, and delicacy: Alas, all that is misplaced here.

Everybody at least sings well. It may be too early in José Carreras' career for him to take on Calaf, and there are some signs of strain, yet his singing is ardent, sensuous, constantly appealing. Mirella Freni is an outstanding Liù and Paul Plishka, despite some woolly tendencies, a sonorous and effective Timur. Spearheaded by the excellent Vicente Sardinero, the three Ministers acquit themselves well, but their scene does not emerge with the sparkle and vitality Mehta captured in the rival London set. *G.J.*

RACHMANINOFF: Études-Tableaux. Karen Shaw (piano). MUSICAL HERITAGE SOCIETY MHS 3671 \$4.95 (plus \$1.25 handling charge from Musical Heritage Society, 14 Park Road, Tinton Falls, N.J. 07724).

Performance: **Good**

Recording: **Needs more presence**

Not the least of the many merits of the Musical Heritage Society recording program has been the willingness to provide exposure for talented younger performers not necessarily headed for big-time international careers. This disc of sensitive, intelligent performances by Connecticut-born Karen Shaw, now chairing the piano department at the Indiana University School of Music, is a fine example. Sergei Rachmaninoff's seventeen *Études-Tableaux* are probably the most digitally and interpretively demanding of all Rachmaninoff's piano works other than the Third Concerto and the Second Sonata, and they contain marvelous things: the sternly granitic F Minor piece that opens the Op. 33 set; the tender modal-melodic A Minor work from the set of two discovered after the composer's death; the wonderful No. 2 from Op. 39, with its *Dies irae* figuration; the scary "Red Riding Hood and the Wolf" piece, No. 6 of Op. 39, which anticipates the cinematic manner of Prokofiev and Shostakovich; and the movingly evocative funeral scene of Op. 39, No. 7.

I had high praise some two years ago for Jean-Philippe Collard's beautifully played and recorded traversal of the complete *Études-Tableaux* on Connoisseur Society, and I would still put that recording at the top of my list. Though Ms. Shaw's readings measure up to Collard's, the Musical Heritage Society recording misses, apparently through overdistant microphone placement that deprives some of the bigger pieces of their proper impact. The fierceness of Shaw's Op. 39, No. 3, for example, seems sadly diluted when heard next to Collard's. Conceivably, a remastering could remedy the matter somewhat, but for the present the overall verdict is E for effort. *D.H.*

SCHUBERT: Impromptus, Op. 90 (D. 899) and Op. 142 (D. 935). Agustín Anievas (piano). SERAPHIM □ S-60312 \$3.98.

Performance: **Superficial**

Recording: **Good**

Having enjoyed Agustín Anievas' recordings of Brahms, Chopin, and Rachmaninoff, I would have thought him well suited to realizing the poetry, charm, and pathos of Schubert's extraordinary impromptus. While his love for the three other composers is apparent, however, he seems curiously uninvolved

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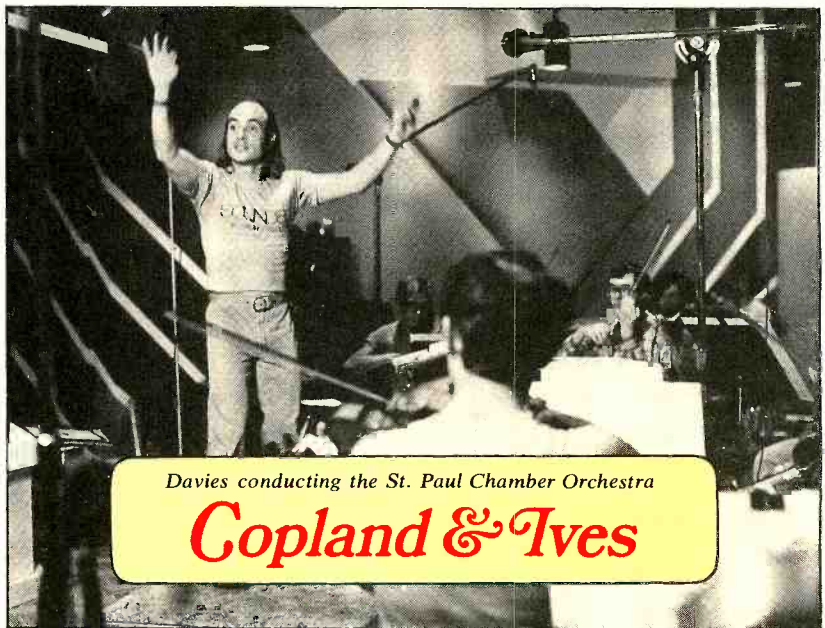
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Davies conducting the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra

Copland & Ives

A NEW coupling of Aaron Copland's *Appalachian Spring* and Charles Ives' *Three Places in New England* might not seem to be the most necessary release right now, but the recording of the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra from Sound 80 in Minneapolis, mastered using the 3M digital recording system, is a real zinger!

The Copland music is done with its original instrumentation, for thirteen players, but it is the concert suite rather than the complete ballet score (the latter is conducted by Copland himself with similar forces on a Columbia disc). The Ives triptych is done in the chamber version the composer prepared in 1930 for Nicolas Slonimsky's ensemble, which took the piece on tour to astonished audiences in Los Angeles, Havana, and Paris.

Appalachian Spring comes off here as wonderfully lean and lithe, although some of the solo instruments, the flute especially, sound a bit larger than life. It is the Ives *Three Places* that is the real prize, not only because of conductor Dennis Russell Davies' intensely poetic and rhythmically vital interpretation, but even more by virtue of the textural details that are brought out by the superbly clean recording, which was done in acoustic surroundings ideal for the music. The middle "Putnam's Camp" episode is the most spectacular-sounding, but the finale, "The Housatonic at Stockbridge," achieves a special ec-

static poignancy. Davies' pulse is sure and steady for the opening "Black March," as Ives sometimes called the movement known as "Boston Common" (inspired by the statue there commemorating "Colonel Shaw and his colored regiment"). As always when listening to this music, I was moved to have at hand for reading Ives' own prefatory poem and Robert Lowell's *For the Union Dead* on the same subject.

James Sinclair, commenting on his restoration of the large-orchestra score of *Three Places* (recorded by Ormandy for RCA), notes the amazing feat of textural compression that Ives achieved in his chamber scoring, particularly in the use of a piano. Well, this Sound 80 disc enables us for the first time to experience that achievement with full impact, and, with all due appreciation for the larger Ivesian canvas, it seems to me that the real hard, flinty essence of this music is to be found in the chamber scoring as recorded and most remarkably performed here.

—David Hall

COPLAND: *Appalachian Spring, Suite.* IVES: *Three Places in New England.* St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, Dennis Russell Davies cond. SOUND 80 S80-DLR-101 \$10.95 (plus \$1.50 postage and handling from Sound 80, Inc., 2709 East 25th Street, Minneapolis, Minn. 55812).

with these eminently lovable pieces; whether he conceived the performances by way of reaction against interpretive excess or he has simply not yet digested the music, his approach is disappointingly superficial. What is most conspicuously missing is a sense of expansiveness, but so is any real tension. The No. 4 Impromptu (in A-flat) of Op. 90, my personal favorite among the eight pieces, is taken so fast that any thought of repose or reflection is out of the question; the music skitters along the surface, and the middle section

(in C-sharp Minor), robbed of its poignancy, seems just so much padding until the opening material returns. The second of the same set, in E-flat, seems willfully undemonstrative—a pointless scamper through the notes. Anievas is more successful in the Op. 142 set, but here again he seems too impatient to concern himself with such niceties as dynamic shading or rhythmic flexibility and reluctant to settle into the mood of the music. The overall impression is not one of knowing restraint, but simply of blandness, and too often of breathless-

ness as well. I would be interested in hearing Anievas play this music five or ten years from now. R.F.

SCHUMANN: *Kreisleriana, Op. 16; Two Novellen, Op. 21* (see Best of the Month, page 93)

SCHUMANN: *Piano Concerto in A Minor, Op. 54* (see GRIEG)

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

SCHUMANN: *Piano Concerto in A Minor, Op. 54; Introduction and Allegro in G Major, Op. 92; Introduction and Allegro in D Minor, Op. 134.* Vladimir Ashkenazy (piano); London Symphony Orchestra, Uri Segal cond. (in Op. 54 and 134), Vladimir Ashkenazy cond. (in Op. 92). LONDON CS 7082 \$7.98.

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

SCHUMANN: *Piano Concerto in A Minor, Op. 54; Introduction and Allegro in G Major, Op. 92; Novellente in F Major, Op. 21, No. 1; Toccata in C Major, Op. 7.* Sviatoslav Richter (piano); National Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra of Warsaw, Witold Rowicki cond. (Op. 54), Stanislaw Wislocki cond. (Op. 92). PRIVILEGE 2535 181-10 \$6.98, © 3335 181 \$6.98.

Performance: **Solo pieces superb**
Recording: **Variable**

Vladimir Ashkenazy's recording of the Schumann piano concerto is a strong competitor for the classic 1971 Stephen Bishop/Colin Davis collaboration. Just a touch more rhythmic lift in the finale added to the already richer recorded sound would definitely have made the Ashkenazy/Segal version my first choice. On side two Ashkenazy as pianist-conductor gives us Schumann's relatively little-known Op. 92 Introduction and Allegro, followed by the even less-known Op. 134 piece of the same title, this time with Segal conducting. Both pieces are primarily lyrical, and Op. 134 is dominated by an oddly haunting sequence that remains in the mind long after hearing it.

The Sviatoslav Richter reissue, of 1959 vintage, is a mixed bag on all counts. Only in the finale of the concerto does Richter really show his mettle, but even there he is hampered by indifferent orchestral collaboration and cramped sonics. The upside is better. If the recorded sound is a bit too bright and resonant, it at least does justice to the performances, and the orchestral back-up for Op. 92 is much more effective than for the concerto. Richter and Wislocki bring a lot more impetuosity and drive to the Allegro of Op. 92 than Ashkenazy does, but the real prize of the disc is Richter's pianism in the *Novellente*—a superb study in Schumannian contrast—and the devilishly demanding *Toccata in C Major*. D.H.

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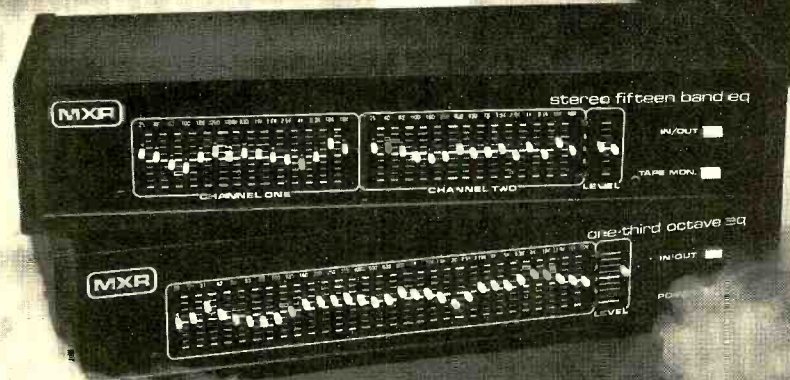
SHOSTAKOVICH: *String Quartet No. 5, in B-flat Major, Op. 92; String Quartet No. 6, in G Major, Op. 101.* Fitzwilliam String Quartet. L'OISEAU-LYRE DSLO 29 \$7.98.

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

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ment, and there are now only two more discs to come, bearing Quartets Nos. 1, 2, 9, and 10. Personally, I'm glad these records are being issued seriatim instead of all at once, because this enables me to get to know the individual works a little better (there is no good reason I could not get to know them just as well from a complete set, but somehow it seems to work out better this way). Quartets Nos. 5 and 6 make an especially interesting pair, not only because they happen to be consecutive but because of the striking contrasts between the two. The Fifth, composed in 1952, is described by the Fitzwilliam's violist Alan George, in his characteristically pertinent annotation, as "one of the toughest and most uncompromising of all [Shostakovich's] quartets." It is brooding, profound, and directly related—thematically as well as spiritually—to the Tenth Symphony, which shared the same period of gestation (the years between Zhdanov's denunciation of Shostakovich and the death of Stalin) and came out the following year. The Sixth, produced in the relative comfort of the "thaw" in 1956, is a less intense, more outgoing work, characterized by an appealing lyricism. The Fitzwilliam players are as attuned to Shostakovich's essence in both these quartets as they have shown themselves to be in the nine others they have given us previously. Their senior colleagues in the Borodin Quartet, in their survey of the first eleven of Shostakovich's fifteen quartets (Seraphim sets SIC-6034 and 6035), also make a strong case for the music, and those economical sets are enhanced by unusually detailed analytical material. But the

radiant performances by the Fitzwilliam are still more urgently communicative and benefit further from well-balanced, richly detailed, altogether superior sound. (The only fault I can find in this production is the mislabeling of Quartet No. 6 as Op. 107, which number belongs to the First Cello Concerto.) This is a very distinguished addition to a very distinguished series.

R.F.

STRAVINSKY: *Petrouchka*. Concertgebouw Orchestra, Amsterdam, Colin Davis cond. PHILIPS 9500 447 \$8.98, © 7300 653 \$8.98.

Performance: **Rich-hued**
Recording: **Good**

STRAVINSKY: *Petrouchka*. PROKOVIEV: *The Love for Three Oranges, Suite, Op. 35a*. Minnesota Orchestra, Stanislaw Skrowaczewski cond. CANDIDE □ QCE 31103 \$4.98.

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

Both conductors here use Stravinsky's 1947 revised instrumentation of *Petrouchka*, and both offer performances of high excellence in their respective fashions. The distinctive element of Colin Davis' reading is the richness of color and nuance he manages to bring out with the 1947 scoring, which more often than not sounds thin and stripped down next to the sumptuous original of 1911. I was particularly impressed by the lovely woodwind textural detail in the opening and the absolutely uncanny atmosphere that permeates Davis' treatment of the episode where the showman brings the puppets to life.

In comparison, Stanislaw Skrowaczewski's *Petrouchka* conveys the feeling of strong woodcuts. The very forward sound of the new music hall in Minneapolis contributes to this, and the strings in particular have much more bite than one hears in the Concertgebouw disc. The scene in *Petrouchka*'s room seems a little slow to my ear, but Skrowaczewski superbly underlines the pathos and irony of the closing pages. His version of the delightful Prokofiev *Love for Three Oranges* is something of a disappointment, however. The pacing is painfully deliberate in the second and third movements, although Skrowaczewski and the orchestra do a beautiful job on the "Prince and the Princess" episode. The recording is just fine in both four- and two-channel playback.

D.H.

TCHAIKOVSKY: *1812 Overture, Op. 49; Capriccio Italien, Op. 45; Marche Slave, Op. 31*. Detroit Symphony Orchestra, Antal Dorati cond. LONDON CS 7118 \$7.98, © CS 5 7118 \$7.98.

Performance: **Good to excellent**
Recording: **Splendid**

There is a remarkable sense of *déjà vu* about this disc for me, since I was the producer, editor, mixer, and mastering supervisor for Antal Dorati's 1954-1955 recording of *1812*, the first recording of the work to bring cannon and church bells into the sonic picture. Then, too, the 1953 LP debut of the Detroit Symphony was also a product of my tenure at Mercury.

So what of this debut recording for London
(Continued on page 116)



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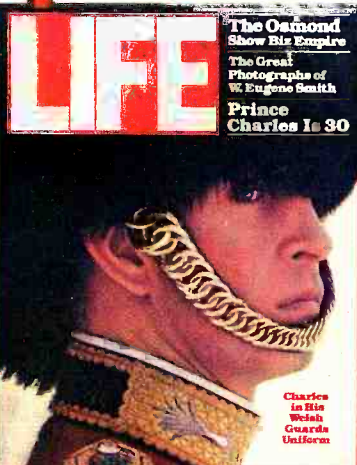
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JUST as it used to be assumed that Carl Nielsen's music could not be performed by anyone but the Danes, it is even now largely assumed that American music is to be performed only by Americans—or, at least, only in America. American music has been recorded all over the world, of course, but this has been more a reflection of the expense of recording the material at home than of any abundance of actual concert performances abroad. Except for Gershwin's big numbers, the one American piece that has really taken

has recorded on two new Unicorn releases.

Barber's powerful one-movement First Symphony has never received a more compelling performance on records, and even more surely it has never received so lifelike a recording. Measham's brilliant version with the London Symphony must make us wonder anew why the work is so little heard in our concert halls. The *Essay for Orchestra No. 2* (there are three of them now) has been getting a good deal of exposure in the last few seasons, but the more concise and forceful First

tones. In the other two works, however, the competition is formidable. Ronald Thomas is an accomplished and tasteful violinist, but in the Barber Violin Concerto he is up against Isaac Stern, who is a great violinist and makes us feel that he really loves the work (Columbia MS 6713). Similarly, Molly McGurk has a most agreeable voice and a convincingly innocent approach in *Knoxville: Summer of 1915*, but she lacks the assurance—the firmness at both the high and low ends of her range—to present a serious challenge to the classic version recorded by Eleanor Steber (Odyssey 32 16 0230) or the affecting one by Leontyne Price (RCA LSC-3062). Those interested in the *Music for a Scene from Shelley* alone will probably opt for the older recording under Vladimir Golschmann, which brings with it three otherwise unavailable Barber titles (Vanguard VSD-2083), but Measham is so extraordinarily effective in this piece that I would take all the duplications involved in order to have his version.

CELLISTS who lament the scarcity of concertos for their instrument somehow seem to overlook the fine one Barber composed in 1945, in which his expressive lyricism and his sense of color are both at their most directly appealing. It was one of the works he recorded as conductor for London nearly thirty years ago; Zara Nelsova was soloist in that long-deleted version, but it was Raya Garbousova who introduced the concerto in 1946, and the performance she recorded with Frederic Waldman twenty years later is a most eloquent one. This is one of the most praiseworthy of Varèse Sarabande's reissues from the archives of American Decca, and it has been remastered with loving care, yielding a sound quality possibly superior to that of the original release. The overside Britten *Serenade for Tenor, Horn, and Strings* is also done very beautifully by Charles Bressler and Ralph Froelich. If their fine performance does not quite match the uniquely authoritative one by Peter Pears and Barry Tuckwell with Britten conducting (London OS 26161), it comes close enough to demonstrate that this work should not remain in the exclusive domain of English performers any more than those of Barber are to be entrusted exclusively to Americans.

—Richard Freed



G. Schumier

A Little Barber Festival

hold in the international repertoire is Samuel Barber's *Adagio for Strings*, and now it appears that Barber has found a dedicated champion in the person of conductor David Measham. One of those versatile young musicians active on many fronts, Measham conducted the second recording of the Who's rock opera *Tommy*, has been involved in rock and pop for years, and played violin in the London Symphony Orchestra before conducting it. Since 1974 he has been conductor of the West Australian Symphony Orchestra in Perth—a fine ensemble, to judge from the recorded evidence. His understanding of Barber's idiom seems complete, and he is certainly a persuasive spokesman for the works he

Essay hasn't been heard in years. Measham's is its first stereo recording, and the first as well for *Night Flight*, which was originally the slow movement of the Second Symphony and the only portion of the work Barber cared to salvage after withdrawing the score some twenty years ago. The disc on which these four titles are collected must be regarded as basic for any serious collection of American music—or, for that matter, of music of our century.

The second Unicorn disc, recorded in Australia, is a good one too, and it is especially valuable for the remarkably sympathetic performance of Barber's *Music for a Scene from Shelley*, with its brooding Sibelian under-

BARBER: *Symphony No. 1, Op. 9; Essay for Orchestra No. 1, Op. 12; Essay for Orchestra No. 2, Op. 17; Night Flight, Op. 19a.* London Symphony Orchestra, David Measham cond. UNICORN UN1-72010 \$4.98.

BARBER: *Concerto for Violin and Orchestra, Op. 14; Music for a Scene from Shelley, Op. 7; Knoxville: Summer of 1915, Op. 24.* Ronald Thomas (violin, in concerto); Molly McGurk (soprano, in *Knoxville*); West Australian Symphony Orchestra, David Measham cond. UNICORN UN1-72016 \$4.98.

BARBER: *Concerto for Cello and Orchestra, Op. 22.* BRITTEN: *Serenade for Tenor, Horn, and Strings, Op. 31.* Raya Garbousova (cello, in Barber); Charles Bressler (tenor, in Britten); Ralph Froelich (horn, in Britten); Musica Aeterna Orchestra, Frederic Waldman cond. VARÈSE SARABANDE VC 81057 \$7.98.

Records by the new music director of the Detroit Symphony? The excellence of the Civil War cannon (placement of shots and all) and of the carillon (National Cathedral, Washington, D.C.) notwithstanding, what really impresses me here is the musicality that Dorati brings to pieces that have been vulgarized to the point of inanity both on and off records. If the performances of *1812* and *Capriccio Italiano* lack something of the raw energy of the 1954 session (or, for that matter, of the later stereo remakes), this may be because the splendidly live and spacious acoustics of the Detroit recording locale (an erstwhile movie theater) do not require the amount of muscle and lung power necessary in the dead-sounding Minnesota auditorium we had to use. This

Detroit recording presents a very deep stereo perspective, and the microphones seem to have been placed to capture the sonority of the orchestra as a whole. In fact, I'm not sure it wouldn't have been better to focus in just a shade *more* closely. Anyway, it's a good, warm sound that brings out the mellifluousness of the orchestra's string body. Further acoustic judgments on the new London/Detroit Symphony affiliation will have to await additional recordings, but this is certainly an auspicious beginning. *D.H.*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

TCHAIKOVSKY: Piano Concerto No. 1, in B-flat Minor, Op. 23. LISZT: Hungarian Fan-

tasia for Piano and Orchestra. Solomon (piano); Philharmonia Orchestra, Issay Dobrowen cond. (in Tchaikovsky), Walter Susskind cond. (in Liszt). **TURNABOUT** Ⓜ THS 65108 \$4.98.

Performance: **Of highest distinction**
Recording: **Good late-Forties mono**

Solomon was one of the finest musician-virtuosos in the pianistic world, and the abrupt ending of his career at its peak by a stroke was a tragic loss for us all. Fortunately, most of his recordings seem to have been reissued over the past decade, and in this instance it is by no means too much of a good thing.

Thanks to the ministrations of EMI's transfer engineer Anthony Griffith, this Turnabout disc of the Tchaikovsky B-flat Minor Concerto and the Liszt Hungarian Fantasia is a thoroughgoing success. The Liszt recording was something of a spectacular in 1948 not only because of Solomon's razzle-dazzle performance, but also for a quality of solo piano recording far in advance of its time. The still-excellent sound of the original 78's has been retained almost entirely in the microgroove transfer. In partnership with one of the best Russian conductors of his generation, Issay Dobrowen, Solomon brings off a reading of the Tchaikovsky concerto that strikes an ideal balance between the virtuosic and musically substantial elements of the score. The studio ambience and the multiple miking of the orchestra (the solo woodwinds are unnaturally prominent) are quite evident, but these flaws are not enough to take the edge off the pleasure of listening to such a richly satisfying performance. *D.H.*

TCHAIKOVSKY: The Seasons (see *Best of the Month*, page 96)

VERDI: Arias (see *Collections—Maria Callas*)

COLLECTIONS

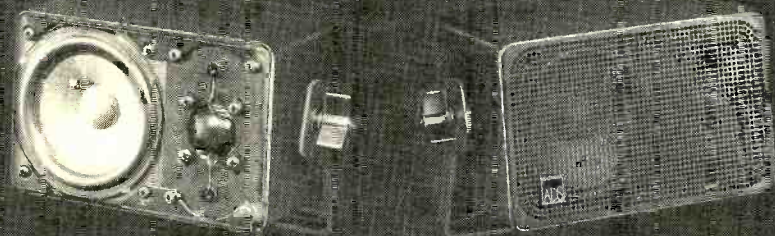
MARIA CALLAS: The Legend—The Unreleased Recordings. *Verdi: Il Corsaro: Non so le tette immagini (Romanza di Medora); Vola talor dal carcere (Cavatina di Gulnara). Il Trovatore: Tacea la notte . . . Di tal amor. Un Ballo in Maschera: Morro, ma prima in grazia. Bellini: La Sonnambula: Come per me sereno; Oh, se una volta sola . . . Ah, non credea mirarti.* Maria Callas (soprano); Orchestra of Teatro alla Scala, Milan, Tullio Serafin cond.; Paris Opera and Concerts du Conservatoire Orchestras, Nicola Rescigno cond. **ANGEL S-37557** \$7.98.

Performance: **Variable, but never dull**
Recording: **Good**

These are recordings Maria Callas did not approve for release during her lifetime. Circulating them now for obvious commercial advantage raises an issue that is at the very least debatable. On the other hand, rarities of this kind would eventually emerge via pirate routes anyway, so perhaps it is better to receive them "legitimately."

The two scenes from *La Sonnambula* capture the vintage Callas of 1955. She is in sovereign control over the range up to a flawless E-flat; the dynamics are beautifully shaded; chromatic runs, trills, and embellishments are all they should be. But the lengthy final scene is not fully effective without the tenor and chorus, and, after all, Callas did record the complete opera soon thereafter.

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*ADS 200C review quote from *Van & Truck Magazine*.



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The *Ballo* and *Trovatore* arias date from 1964, a vocally less fortunate period. Yet the former is excellent by any standards, and the latter, without quite matching the form Callas displayed in the complete recording (1956), is certainly acceptable. The two arias from *Il Corsaro*, however, are more like run-throughs for a Callas performance than the real thing. These date from 1969 and reveal tones that lack fullness, too much "covering" at the expense of verbal clarity, and some tentative attacks. Even here she is never "bad," and certainly never uninteresting, but our memory of her is ill-served by adding these imperfect takes to her recorded legacy.

Callas is ably backed by her longtime mentor Tullio Serafin and her frequent, gifted collaborator Nicola Rescigno, and the recorded sound is fine. For the Callas collector, the disc is obviously a must. G.J.

ANGEL ROMERO: Virtuoso Works for Guitar. Rodrigo: *Elogio de la Guitarra*. Albéniz (arr. A. Romero): *Sevillanas*; *Leyenda*. Moreno Torroba: *Piezas Características*; *Burgalesa*; *Fandanguillo*. C. Romero: *Two Preludes*. ANGEL S-37312 \$7.98, © 8XS-37312 \$7.98.

Performance: **Excellent**
Recording: **Sounds good**

Angel on Angel. The Romeros are a famous guitar family, and father Celedonio and his three sons play together as the Romero Quartet. Angel is the youngest and is rapidly becoming the best-known of all. His playing has security and sensitivity and, on records at least, a big sense of scale.

Much of the music here has family associations. The Rodrigo work was written in 1971 for Celedonio, who is also represented here as a composer. And the two Albéniz transcriptions are by Angel himself. How much one likes this flavorful music is really a question of taste; I do like it, but I grow tired of it after a while. There is no question, however, about the delivery. Angel Romero is a virtuoso, with a nice, poetic precision and elegance in the expression of feeling. E.S.

RENATA SCOTTO, PLACIDO DOMINGO: Romantic Opera Duets (see Best of the Month, page 94)

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

WAVERLY CONSORT: Welcome Sweet Pleasure—Music of England's Golden Age. Weelkes: *Welcome Sweet Pleasure*; *Alleluia, I Heard a Voice*; *O Care, Thou Wilt Despatch Me*; *Hence Care, Thou Art Too Cruel*; *Hark All Ye Lovely Saints Above*. Tomkins: *When David Heard That Absalom Was Slain*. Holborne: *Almaine, The Night Watch*; *Pavan, The Funeralles*; *Almaine, The Honie Suckle, or Hartes Ease*. Dowland: *Now, Oh Now I Needs Must Part*. Dering: *O Vos Omnes*. Byrd: *Bow Thine Ear, Oh Lord*. Anon. (arr. Morley): *La Coranto*. Trad.: *Lord Zouche's Maske*; *Dargason/Waltham Cross*; *Nancie, or Sir Edward Nouwel's Delight, or All You That Love Good Fellows*. Waverly Consort, Michael Jaffee cond. COLUMBIA M 35143 \$7.98, © MT 35143 \$7.98.

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

Because of its wide variety of genres, sonorities, and moods, this is one of the best collec-

tions of Elizabethan music available. The full emotional range of the madrigal is displayed in the contagious rhythms of *Welcome Sweet Pleasure* and the poignant dissonances of *When David Heard That Absalom Was Slain*. The English anthems and Latin motets run the gamut of church-music styles, and there is dance music from both the art and folk traditions. The Waverly Consort is equally at home in each of these styles. The *a cappella* singing stresses clarity of line, and when more rhythmic definition is needed various instruments are used to double the voices. The instrumental complement of authentic strings, winds, and percussion provides an engaging sound, and with these players one never has to worry about such technical details as en-

semble and pitch. The ornamentation is very effective, especially that devised for the lute by Kay Jaffee.

It is too bad that Columbia did not take more care in packaging such a fine anthology. The text insert was missing in my copy, and since the performance credits consist only of a run-on list of names in minuscule type, I had no idea what the instruments were or who was playing them. But we should be thankful to Columbia for bringing us one of the finest early-music ensembles in America. S.L.

For a discussion of several recordings that have been released on Aspetto, a new mid-price label, see "Going on Record," page 70.

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Ebet Roberts

□ No one—but *no* one—laughed when he sat down at the piano. That's because the pianist was the indefatigable **EUBIE BLAKE**, and the audi-

ence consisted of cast members of the Broadway revue *Eubie*, united to celebrate the release of the original-cast album (Warner Bros. HS

3267). Rumors that the ninety-six-year-old Blake performed *I'm Just Wild About Jerry Wexler* have not been confirmed.

POP ROTOGRAVURE

By Steve Simels

□ A vision of hell, perhaps, as chronicled in **ALICE COOPER's** latest album, "From the Inside" (Warner Bros. BSK 3263)? No, merely

the Goop surrounded by some of his co-stars during a recent appearance on *The Muppet Show*. It's enough to drive a girl to drink.



Sellers & Roskin



The Howard Bloom Organization

□ Ever wonder where the next generation of rock stars is coming from? Well, joining Peppi Marchello of the **GOOD RATS** during the recording of their new album, "Birth Comes to Us All" (Passport 9830), is none other than Peppi's ten-year-old son Gene. Little Gene may not turn out to be the Next Big Thing, but at least no one can call him a Boring Old Fart—yet.

□ No, that's not Cleavon Little in an outtake from *Blazing Water Skis*, but rather George Clinton, mastermind of the **PARLIAMENT/FUNKADELIC** empire (Parliament's latest is "Motor Booty Affair," Casablanca NBLP 7125), answering a burning show-biz trivia question: whatever happened to Flipper?

Casablanca Records



RCA

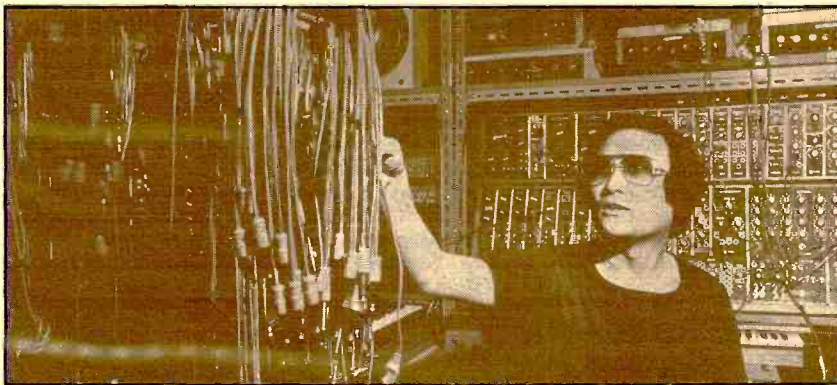
□ New Wave Hep Cats Wow Good Old Boys! Yes, that's **ROBERT GORDON** and band, backstage at New York's hard-core c-&-w honky-tonk, the Lone Star Café, where they knocked the audience for a loop with a performance also

broadcast live on country station WHN. (Note bassist Tony "Last of the Beatniks" Garnier stage center.) Robert's latest, of course, is "Rock Billy Boogie" (RCA AFL1-3294), reviewed in this issue.

□ Give 'em enough rope department: synthesizer wizard **ISAO TOMITA** contemplates the beauty of the common patch cord during the

recording of his latest electronic epic, "The Bermuda Triangle" (RCA ARL1-2885), in his Tokyo studio.

RCA



The Howard Bloom Organization



□ What the well-dressed recording artist will (sometimes) wear: A&M's **DAVID SPINOZZA** ("Spinozza," 4677) shows RCA's **FRANK WEBER** ("As the Time Flies," AFL1-2963) the proper use of stereophones during a germ-warfare attack.



Synchro

□ He may be a whiz in the studio, but **BOSTON**'s Tom Scholz is a trifle butterfingered on the court. Still, he led his band to a 35-29 victory over a team from Washington, D.C.'s FM station WWDC in a contest that raised over \$7,000 for the District of Columbia's Special Olympics Fund. Boston's "Don't Look Back" (Epic FE 35050), however, had at last report earned somewhat more.

□ What Becomes a Rock Legend Most? Why, a tour with an up-and-coming legend. Seen backstage after their New York City debut are English Punk standard bearers the **CLASH** in the

company of founding-father **BO DIDDLEY**, all of whom seem to share the same tailor. Bo's between labels, but the Clash can be heard on "Give 'Em Enough Rope" (Epic JE 35543).

Bob Gruen





POPULAR DISCS AND TAPES

Reviewed by CHRIS ALBERTSON • EDWARD BUXBAUM • NOEL COPPAGE • PHYL GARLAND
PAUL KRESH • PETER REILLY • STEVE SIMELS • JOEL VANCE

ALLEY & THE SOUL SNEEKERS. Alley & the Soul Sneekers (vocals and instrumentals). *Love Breakdown*; *I'm Coming Down with a Thrill*; *Cheater's Honeymoon*; *Understand Your Man*; *Over the Airwaves*; and five others. CAPITOL SW-11913 \$7.98, © 8XW-11913 \$7.98, © 4XW-11913 \$7.98.

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

Alan Gordon ("Alley") made his mark as a craftsman songwriter during the late Sixties with *Happy Together* and *She'd Rather Be with Me*, both recorded by the Turtles, and more recently wrote *My Heart Belongs to Me*, recorded by La Streisand. Gordon and Carl Hall, the current leading man in the New York stage production of *The Wiz*, originally teamed up so that Hall could sing demonstration versions of Gordon's songs. Then someone suggested that they form a group, and . . . Alas, the songs, the delivery, and the arrangements (by Jack Nitzsche, a fine pro who also produced this album) amount to little more than a Sixties retrospective that just doesn't work. The album comes off sounding like an expensive demonstration record made about ten years ago. J.V.

THE BABYS: Head First. The Babys (vocals and instrumentals). *Love Don't Prove I'm Right*; *Every Time I Think of You*; *I Was One*;

and six others. CHRYSALIS CHR 1195 \$7.98, © 8CH 1195 \$7.98, © CCH 1195 \$7.98.

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

Last album out I didn't like the Babys, finding them too cute and gooeey. This time they come out harder. Although the lyrics won't ever be inscribed on bronze, the group—which is down to a trio from a quartet—attempts to deal with real emotions instead of smug commercial sugar and whine. This is a surprisingly cohesive and frank album. Other groups might complain about or denounce a confusing world, but the Babys have the honesty to say they're merely bewildered. They deserve an honorable mention for admitting it. J.V.

SHIRLEY BASSEY: The Magic Is You. Shirley Bassey (vocals); orchestra. *This Is My Life*; *Night Moves*; *The Magic Is You*; and eight others. UNITED ARTISTS UA-LA926-H \$7.98, © EA926-H \$7.98, © CA926-H \$7.98.

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

Shirley Bassey's pace here is considerably less fevered than her usual knock-'em-dead wont. Even her disco track, *This Is My Life*, has an uncharacteristic reticence. *How Insensitive* jogs instead of runs, and the title song is almost crooned. High drama is represented by *Don't Cry for Me Argentina*, from the musical *Evita*, in which Bassey sounds a lot more like Mexicali Rose leaning against the door of the cantina than like Eva Peron explaining herself to her countrymen. All very small beer indeed, and to me a far cry from Bassey's sobbing, belting, classic performance several years ago of *It Must Be Him*. Well, age mellows us all. P.R.

DAVID BROMBERG: My Own House (see Best of the Month, page 97)

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

JOHN DENVER. John Denver (vocals, guitar); Hal Blaine (drums); James Burton (gui-

tar); Emory Gordy (bass); Glen D. Hardin (keyboards); Jim Horn (reeds); other musicians. *Downhill Stuff*; *Sweet Melinda*; *What's on Your Mind*; *Joseph & Joe*; *Life Is So Good*; and six others. RCA AQL1-3075 \$8.98, © AQS1-3075 \$8.98, © AQK1-3075 \$8.98.

Performance: **JD goes electric**
Recording: **Good**

When he was almost as dear to the mass heart as the Bee Gees are now, John Denver lacked credence with some people who are naturally suspicious of apparent sweetness and naïveté and with some who are naturally suspicious of apparent nice guys. And his lyrics, at least, did tend to cloy. In the album just before this he toughened up his act considerably, and now here he is with electric backing from Memphis—and I swear when I saw him on the tube the other night his face looked less rounded and almost, almost lined. Aging becomes him. He has written some rather neat songs for this album, and the lyrics don't cloy; some of the songs rock and some are downright jazzy. I think he's trying for credence with some of those people who've been turned off—trying a little too hard at times. Including a raucous version of *Johnny B. Goode* is going a little overboard, and the sound behind him is a little too insistently hard, with a harmonica used here and there to no apparent purpose other than to add to the volume. But a brand-new model is expected to have a few bugs in it, and the album is surprisingly good despite those. Transition albums aren't supposed to be this good to listen to. I think the sound Denver wants will just naturally evolve if he keeps working with these kinds of musicians. The only thing I would consciously make a point of, if I were him, is replacing those granny glasses with the restrained assertiveness of wire-rimmed aviator specs. N.C.

DESMOND CHILD & ROUGE. Desmond Child and Rouge (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *Westside Pow Wow*; *Our Love Is Insane*; *Lovin' Your Love*; *The Fight*; *Main Man*; and four others. CAPITOL ST-11908

Explanation of symbols:

- Ⓜ = reel-to-reel stereo tape
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- Ⓛ = quadrasonic disc
- Ⓛ = digital-master recording
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The first listing is the one reviewed; other formats, if available, follow it.

\$7.98, © 8XT-11908 \$7.98, © 4XT-11908 \$7.98.

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

Desmond Child (male lead singer) and Rouge (three sprightly ladies) are basically a New York night-club act, which means they are less a pop recording group than stage performers putting over their material with a theatrical razzmatazz designed to entertain a jaded, credit-card audience. Whether their energy—and, it should be mentioned, their interesting, cosmopolitan lyrics—will translate to future successful pop albums is disputable. The production on this one is smooth and clean, and the performances have a sharp, cynical verve. The musical format is supposedly rhythm-and-blues, but the group is far too worldly to make anyone but an urban hick believe it's real "black" music, or even commercial black music. Desmond Child & Rouge are cabaret artists, and cabaret music has simply never found a large audience in this country. But if you are a member of that small audience that appreciates the bitter carols of broken dreams and lost belief typical of cabaret, you can listen to Desmond Child and Rouge and admire their sass. J.V.

DIRE STRAITS (see *Best of the Month*, page 94)

FABULOUS POODLES: *Mirror Stars*. Fabulous Poodles (vocals and instrumentals). *Mirror Star*; *Work Shy*; *Chicago Boxcars*; *Oh Cheryl*; and six others. EPIC JE 35666 \$7.98, © JEA 35666 \$7.98, © JET 35666 \$7.98.

Performance: **Bent straight rock**
Recording: **Harsh**

It's been done before, of course, but it ain't wotcha do, etc. The Fabulous Poodles, here released in America for the first time, synthesize several hard-rock sounds and attitudes from the past. They play like the rock groups of the golden era—Epic is fond of likening them to the early Who—and they write like... well, a little like Frank Zappa, whence cometh their name, or like a childish styling of the Kinks. There's a kind of "us dumb kids" attitude about the music, however satirical it purports to be. They are what would once have been mainstream but is now cultish in post-punk England. But no matter; they're on their way up anyway. Four of these tracks appeared earlier in England in an album produced by John Entwistle, but the sound of all of it is the main thing that bothers me. I don't like mixes that have the drums this much louder than the bass (not to mention everything else), and when your thing is clever lyrics, I don't see any sense in mixing the vocals softer than the instrumentals. This time out it's got something punk about it, maybe for a reason, and that's the way it's recorded. The band itself, though, just might be able to make its own category. N.C.

GOOD RATS: *Birth Comes to Us All*. Good Rats (vocals and instrumentals). *You're Still Doing It*; *City Liners*; *Cherry River*; *School Days*; *Birth Comes to Us All*; *Bed and a Bottle*; and four others. PASSPORT PB 9830 \$7.98.

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

The Good Rats sound here as though they've mellowed out some. *You're Still Doing It* and

the title tune are unabashedly sentimental, and *City Liners* is a nostalgic look at that old gang of theirs. Other items, such as *School Days* and *Ordinary Man*, are more typical of the Rats, an iconoclastic group with a cynical bent, but there's little of the nihilism of their previous Passport album or ditties like *Boardwalk Slasher* from their very hard-to-get "Rat City in Blue" LP. The band has been out in the cold for a long time, and now that things are warming up for them professionally, they seem a bit less tense. J.V.

HOT CHOCOLATE: *Every 1's a Winner*. Hot Chocolate (vocals and instrumentals). *Every 1's a Winner*; *Confetti Day*; *Love Is the Answer One More Time*; *So You Win Again*; and five others. INFINITY INF-9002 \$7.98.

Performance: **Confusing**
Recording: **Okay**

I'm not sure how to describe Hot Chocolate's music. It's not reggae, for the beat is too straight, devoid of that easygoing boom-da-
(Continued on page 124)

Columbia Records



Roberts, Cott, Crow, Fingers, Briquette, Geldof

The Boomtown Rats

WHATEVER the collective musical accomplishments of the English New Wavers, any thinking person must admit that we owe them a tremendous debt of gratitude for restoring to currency a truth that has been almost totally neglected and out of fashion since the halcyon days of Haight Ashbury. To wit: the major record companies are, as Lester Bangs put it, "the most crucial enemy of music and the people who try to perform it honestly."

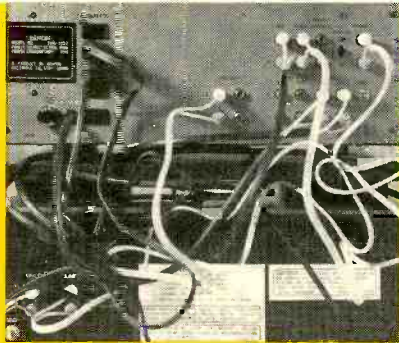
Now the Boomtown Rats, an Irish band marginally associated with the New Wave, have their second album out. It's somewhat different from their debut opus, which was an exhilarating r-&-b raunch-out in the tradition of the early Stones/Kinks. It's less angry and more of a "pop" record, if your definition of pop includes the likes of Elvis Costello. It's also shamelessly trendy (with songs about Eva Braun, Howard Hughes, and some utterly transparent Bruce Springsteen street-romance pastiches), but you won't mind that because the Rats have more for-the-hell-of-it flair than just about any mainstream rock act now working. The songs, with their infectious little choruses and deft production touches (I defy anyone to resist the bass guitar and finger snapping that opens *Rat Trap*), are put together like charms, and carping about "influences" or "lack of commitment" is beside the point. Rock-and-roll, as they practice it, is about immediacy, and "A Tonic for the Troops," for all its pop shallowness, is the grabbiest grabber of an album I've heard so

far this year. It has HIT written all over it.

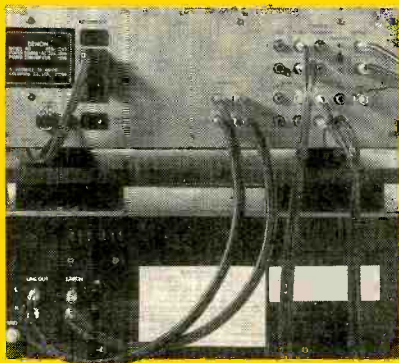
Which is really kind of amazing, for the Rats share the same healthy contempt for the Music Biz that their punkier New Wave colleagues display. So, by way of closing, let me quote from lead singer Bob Geldof's address to the CBS National Convention (a function, you should understand, at which the assembled execs decide the depth of their commitment to new acts in direct proportion to the amount of derrière-kissing the acts are willing to engage in). Saith Geldof, as reported by *Melody Maker*: "You've been told over the last three days that CBS is a real family, full of warm and wonderful human beings. Frankly, I didn't know there were that many warm and wonderful human beings in the entire world, let alone in one record company. I think you all know you're really just a bunch of bastards. But as long as you're selling the album it doesn't matter."

I think you'll have to agree that, even forgetting their delightful music, a band with an attitude like that must be encouraged at all costs. —Steve Simels

THE BOOMTOWN RATS: *A Tonic for the Troops*. The Boomtown Rats (vocals and instrumentals). *Rat Trap*; *Me and Howard Hughes*; *(I Never Loved) Eva Braun*; *Living in an Island*; *Like Clockwork*; *Blind Date*; *Mary of the 4th Form*; *Don't Believe What You Read*; *She's So Modern*; *Joey's on the Street Again*. COLUMBIA JC 35750 \$7.98, © JCA 35750 \$7.98, © JCT 35750 \$7.98.



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Shen Lynn Behr

MARVIN GAYE: *diminishing returns*

Marvin Gaye

ON the inside cover of Marvin Gaye's new double-disc Tamla album "Here, My Dear," there are some notes apparently designed to nudge the prospective listener into an attitude of awe. They state that Gaye, "a creative genius," produced "this masterpiece," which is "most assuredly a collector's item." These extravagant claims serve no purpose, for although the album certainly cuts through the wads of aural chewing gum abounding these days, it is hardly on the same level as his real masterpiece, "What's Going On." That record is the sort of milestone work any artist should be proud to produce—if only once in a lifetime. Its searing social comments were shaped in the climate of 1971; the times have changed, and Gaye, in a parallel move, has shifted his work from social commentary to a celebration of sensuality. The raptures of intimacy have been woven with mesmeric insistence into all his subsequent albums, and this latest set compares favorably with his last two concept albums, "Let's Get It On" and "I Want You."

For this go-round, Gaye uses a personal monologue to explore the making and breaking of a marriage. Crooning and talking almost as much to himself as to others, he dissects the initial enchantment, the decision to become "permanently" involved, efforts to make the relationship work, and the culminating anger and disillusionment leading to divorce ("Why do I have to pay attorney's fees?" he cries out in anguish). It is rather like a soap opera set to music, but with limited action based on a predictable plot.

Given the slenderness of the content, the

album makes it only by virtue of the music and Gaye's lean emotional presentation. There is a comfortable familiarity to the rhythmic patterns, and some of the melodies trigger a sense of *déjà vu* seeming to harken back to the towering moments of "What's Going On." Yet there is nothing here to haunt the mind as the earlier album did: the material embraces and cajoles, but it does not grip.

Though the peaks aren't especially high, there are many moments of both dancing and listening pleasure to be found on this set, all of which Gaye wrote, arranged, and produced. (The back-up musicians are not credited individually, but the liner notes assure us that they are "all superstars.") If there is one besetting flaw, it is excessive length. Rambling over four sides, "Here, My Dear" seems to last longer than many marriages (the third side is particularly weak). The song *When Did You Stop Loving Me, When Did I Stop Loving You* is repeated three times, for a total of thirteen minutes, but rather than building to a climax, it seems to diminish in impact each time it returns. —Phyl Garland

MARVIN GAYE: *Here, My Dear.* Marvin Gaye (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *Here, My Dear; I Met a Little Girl; When Did You Stop Loving Me, When Did I Stop Loving You; Anger; Is That Enough; Everybody Needs Love; Time to Get It Together; Sparrow; Anna's Song; A Funky Space Reincarnation; You Can Leave, but It's Going to Cost You; Falling in Love Again.* TAMLA T 364 LP2 two discs \$13.98, © T8 364 \$13.98, © T75 364 \$13.98.

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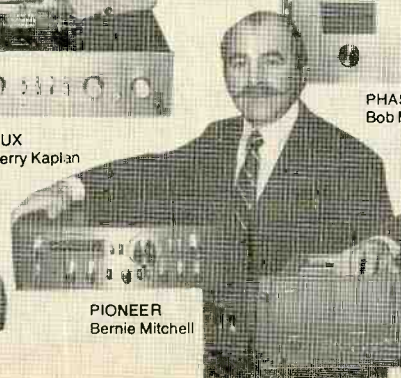
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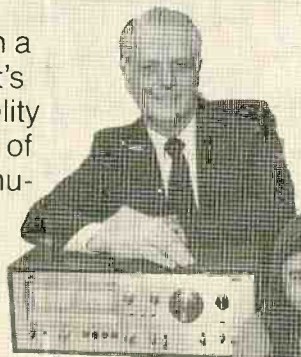
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Chuck Pullin

Jake and Elwood Blues *The Blues Brothers*

"BRIEFCASE Full of Blues" is an album whose impact will far exceed any intrinsic aesthetic worth. John Belushi and Dan Ackroyd (a.k.a. Jake and Elwood Blues) obviously love this music as much as, say, Paul Butterfield, and their stage characterizations are inspired, but as a singer and a harp player they are at best inept to amateur. Fortunately for them, their band is brilliant, and the overall effect, if you're listening to the record in a room full of good-humored drunks, is listenable party music. I agree it's sad that this affectionate tribute is commercially successful while Sam and Dave, for example, can't get arrested, but it's hardly the Brothers' fault, and anyway Muddy Waters loves the thing, so let's not hear any of that "Can White Men Sing the Blues?" business.

So this isn't a particularly good record, but it's an important one just the same. I've been saying for several years now that a massive rediscovery of Sixties blues and r-&-b was inevitable as a reaction against FM-oriented rock mush on the one hand and disco on the other; there was a need for something recognizably human that reggae and punk have only partially filled. This album, which by all indications will go multi-platinum by the time you read this, proves I was right: the only surprising thing to me is that two comedians should have provided the impetus.

Still, all those bright middle-class teenagers who are buying the record because they love *Saturday Night Live* are getting an education from it, as they are to a lesser degree from Southside Johnny, Robert Gordon, Eddie Money, George Thorogood, and Mink DeVille, to name just a few, and it's going to lead somewhere. The last time a generation got hooked on this kind of music the result was a rock-and-roll explosion that brought us at least two groups you might just remember: the Beatles and the Rolling Stones. Want to venture a guess as to what the pop cataclysm of the next decade is going to sound like? If you do, I suggest you buy a copy of "Briefcase Full of Blues" and keep it safely shrink-wrapped; it just may turn out to be the most influential record of the late Eighties.

—Steve Simels

THE BLUES BROTHERS: Briefcase Full of Blues. John Belushi (vocals); Dan Ackroyd (harp, vocals); Steve Cropper (guitar); Duck Dunn (bass); other musicians. *I Can't Turn You Loose*; *Hey Bartender*; *Messin' with the Kid*; *(I Got Everything I Need) Almost*; *Rubber Biscuit*; *Shot Gun Blues*; *Groove Me*; *I Don't Know*; *Soul Man*; *'B' Movie Box Car Blues*; *Flip, Flop and Fly*; *I Can't Turn You Loose*. ATLANTIC SD 19217 \$7.98, © TP 19217 \$7.98, © CS 19217 \$7.98.

da-boom-whup, but some of the melodies would fit well into that style. If it is any sort of r-&-b, it would have to be related to some of the less complicated things that were done about twenty years ago, except that it lacks the essential oomph and drive, most notably in the style of the solo singer, whose nonchalance occasionally borders on indifference. It certainly isn't disco, and it's too restrained to be rock, though the accompaniment on the title track has a rousing rock flavor. *Sometimes It Hurts to Be a Friend* might well find a home in the repertoire of a country-and-western artist, and *I'll Put You Together Again* sounds

like church music. The only slim clue to what all this might add up to is that the album was recorded in England. It does seem to be coming from somewhere else, but just *where* is the question. With neither a cohesive style nor overall excellence, this 1's hardly a "winner"—more like a dud. P.G.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

PHYLLIS HYMAN: Somewhere in My Lifetime. Phyllis Hyman (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *Kiss You All Over*; *Somewhere in My Lifetime*; *The Answer Is You*; *So*

Strange; Soon Come Again; and five others. ARISTA AB 4202 \$7.98, © 8T 4202 \$7.98, © CT 4202 \$7.98.

Performance: **Moving on up**
Recording: **Good**

Long before she released her first album last year, Phyllis Hyman had become something of an underground legend. She had a following among well-known jazz and pop artists, and it was even rumored that she belonged to that rarest of breeds, the true jazz singer. Furthermore, she was as lovely to see as to hear. Unfortunately, her debut album on Buddah was a somewhat misbegotten affair. Not only did it carefully skirt anything that might be even vaguely construed as jazz, but it was lumberingly commercial in conception, full of songs with only meager possibilities for development. Its only attractions were Hyman's enormous voice and exuberant delivery.

Hyman's new album places her on much firmer ground. While this set is certainly not jazz, it is high-quality popular fare. Her rendition of the title song (co-produced by Barry Manilow) might by itself do more to further her career than her years of playing the bistro circuit. It's the sort of song that should still delight a year or more from now. Yet this is not a one-song album. There are heavy doses of disco, too, and one item, *So Strange*, has enough bounce and appeal to charm even disco haters.

The range of tempos is admirable. Hyman is unusually adept with slow numbers, and her own composition, *Gonna Make Changes*, indicates that she has creative talent. But the real bonus here is the final selection, which is presented in naked beauty after all the fancy percussion back-up has been set aside. Accompanied only by Monty Alexander on piano, Hyman sings the evergreen *Here's That Rainy Day* with a thrilling tone and sensitive expression. This must be the Phyllis Hyman that Roberta Flack and George Benson were raving about. I'd rave too. P.G.

THE JAM: All Mod Cons. The Jam (vocals and instrumentals). *All Mod Cons; To Be Someone (Didn't We Have a Nice Time); Mr. Clean; David Watts; English Rose*; and seven others. POLYDOR PD-1-6188 \$7.98, © 8T-1-6188 \$7.98, © CT-1-6188 \$7.98.

Performance: **Second-rate nostalgia**
Recording: **Clean**

The nicest thing you can say about the Jam after this, their third album, is that they're the Raspberries of the New Wave. Or, to put it bluntly, they haven't an original musical idea in their collective heads and seem more than content to blithely ape the raunchier mid-Sixties English bands. Unfortunately, the Jam lacks even an iota of the Raspberries' melodic flair (Carmen may not have been particularly original, but God knows he had the tunes), and Jam leader Paul Weller's vocals are barely serviceable at best. The group tips their hand most blatantly this time out with a remake of *David Watts*, one of the Kinks' most infectious pieces of social criticism, a note-for-note copy lacking only the quirky poignance of Ray Davies' singing on the original (which, of course, was 90 per cent of what made it great). As for their own material, even on the relatively insightful *Down in the Tube Station at Midnight*, the Jam come across as nothing more than a reasonably slick garage

(Continued on page 127)

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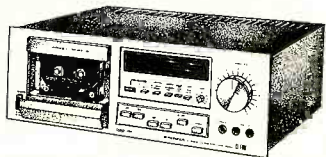
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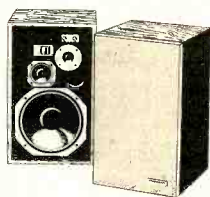
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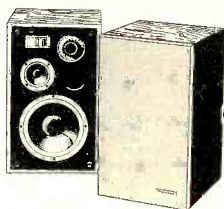
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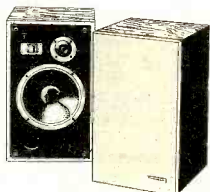
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Voyage: "Fly Away"

ONLY rarely does a record come along that is as impressive all around as Voyage's new "Fly Away" on Marlin. Everything about it is right: the music, the engineering, the performances, and, especially, the timing. In popular music, timing is a key factor in success; you make an impression by doing what's in fashion, but doing it just enough better than anyone else that you become a leader instead of a follower. A little less and you're ordinary, *too* much better and nobody knows what you're talking about.

"Fly Away" rides the disco wave right at its crest. Consider, for instance, the nonstop structure of the disc, with no breaks between tracks. Unlike many other disco groups, who often turn their best dance numbers into watered-down disco "style" songs when they reissue them on LP's, Voyage has made this record for their true fans: the dancers. But at the same time, the group knows that making a record for disco dancing does not necessarily mean that musical values have to be sacrificed. Every number here is a successful musical evocation of a mood or a place. Voyage wants us to fly away, all right, but they don't expect us to leave taste and discrimination behind.

Eastern Trip and *Tahiti, Tahiti*, with their exotic instrumentals and South Sea Islands chanting, are good examples of what I mean. But the group's super hit, *Souvenirs*, is also a perfect match of song and sound: romantic, but with just the right touch of sad remembrance. *Let's Fly Away* evokes entirely different feelings and images: adventure, billowing clouds, roaring, soaring jets—like the best air-

line commercial ever. And when the drumming, strumming guitars of *Golden Eldorado* come pouring out of the speakers, every dancer in the room feels like a conquistador.

Good material and good musicianship are, however, only part of the story. Impressive disco must be impressively engineered as well, and here too Voyage scores a bull's eye. The sound is heavily layered, with long, slow melodies in the strings mixed with driving dance beats in the guitars and bass (this is especially exciting in the last few minutes of *Golden Eldorado*) or a straight rock sound thrillingly shifting into a spacy electronic trip. The album's last number, *Gone with the Music*, slips at its close into a heavily chorded repeat of the "let's keep on movin'" rideout from the opener, *Souvenirs*, and it's quite simply the most effective disco maneuver I've ever heard.

In *Gone with the Music* Voyage tells us that there are "no more strangers in the night when there's music," and the group clearly believes in the erotic power of disco. More important, they know that disco dancers also believe in it. That conviction, I think, is at the root of Voyage's enormous success, and it may be the ultimate reason why I find "Fly Away" so very, very impressive.

—Edward Buxbaum

VOYAGE: Fly Away. Voyage (vocals and instrumentals). *Souvenirs*; *Kechak Fantasy*; *Eastern Trip*; *Tahiti, Tahiti*; *Let's Fly Away*; *Golden Eldorado*; *Gone with the Music*. MARLIN MA 2225 \$7.98, 8T 2225 \$7.98, © CT 2225 \$7.98.

band without the zotz to stake out a style of their own. S.S.

KRIS AND RITA: *Natural Act.* Kris Kristoferson and Rita Coolidge (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *Blue as I Do; Not Everyone Knows; I Fought the Law; Number One; Love Don't Live Here Anymore;* and six others. A&M SP-4690 \$7.98.

Performance: **Up and around**
Recording: **Good**

Kris and Rita usually sound like they're singing those duets while lying flat on their backs. This time they sound like they're sitting up, maybe even standing occasionally. It's a bit more of a rocker, in spots, than previous ones, has more of an edge on its sound and—although this is not saying much—gets more energy out of its principal performers. Still, the songs range from slightly above average pleasantries to congenial junk, and Kris still is a relatively horrendous harmony singer. They still seem to be avoiding what they do best, singing a pretty song in Rita's case and writing one in Kris'. He's represented here by three of his fairly early pieces, and if he would take a little time off from the movies, I think he could still write like that—indeed, the writing in his last solo album, while different, was interesting. But what we have here is a matter of priorities, and albums like this aren't at the top of his list. And they sound like it. This one (I hope the exertion didn't exhaust them) sounds a little less like it than most, but it still sounds like it. N.C.

LULU: *Don't Take Love for Granted.* Lulu (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *Nice and Slow; You Are Still a Part of Me; I Don't Care; Fool, Fool; He's So in Love;* and five others. ROCKET BXL1-3073 \$7.98, © BXS1-3073 \$7.98, © BXK1-3073 \$7.98.

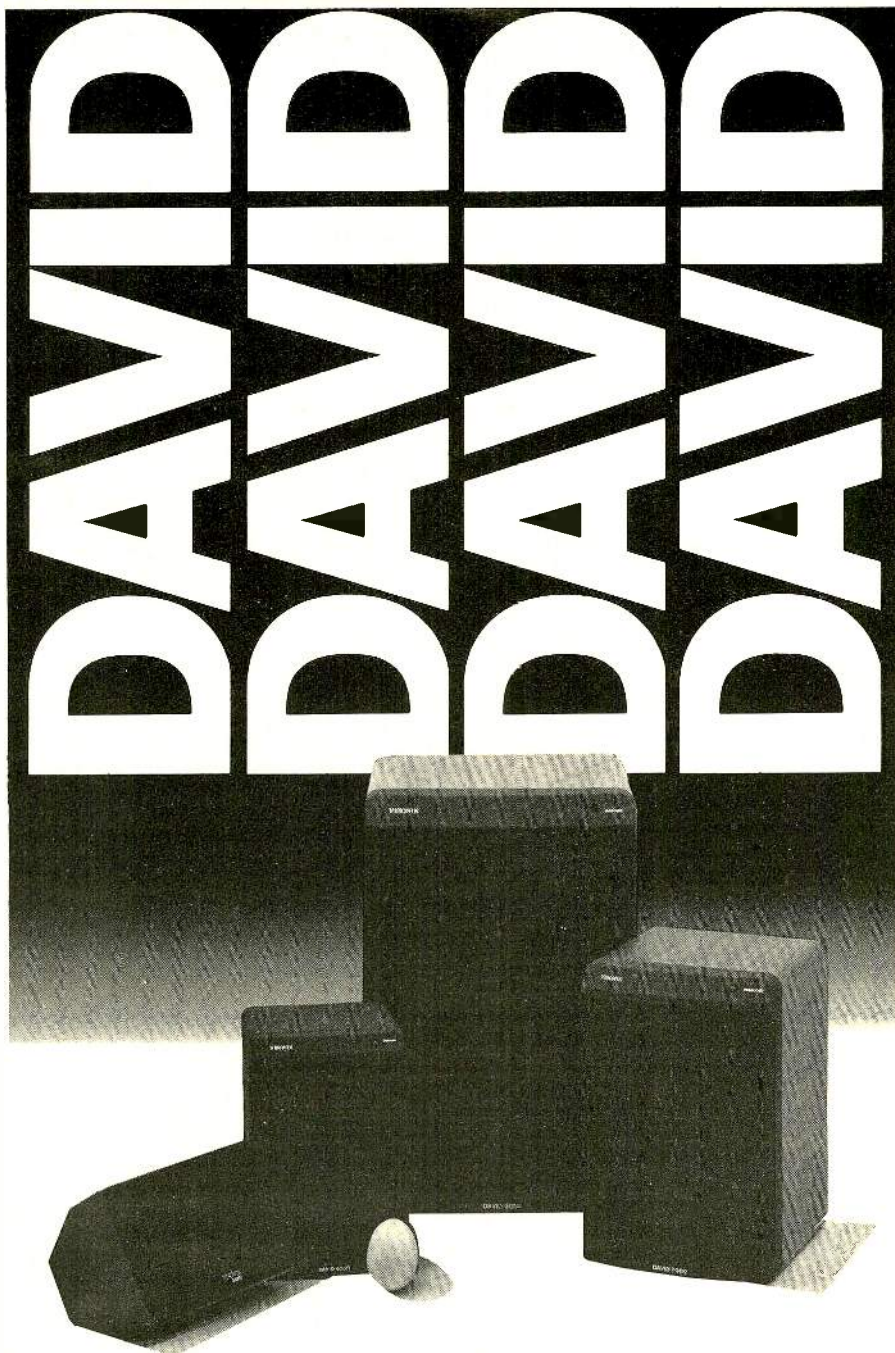
Performance: **Nice MOR**
Recording: **Good**

Lulu is still a relatively big deal in England, probably more because of her TV work there than her recent albums, which are as safely MOR as a Piccadilly traffic island. Over here she never really hit (although her version of the title song from *To Sir with Love* was pretty popular), but—who knows?—she might make it yet. Certainly she's an ingratiating performer with a lot of warmth and vitality, and her singing emphasizes the small gesture, the intimate phrasing, and the seemingly minimal effort that picks up on camera. On recordings she seems pleasant and tremendously professional. She's especially good here in *Bye Bye Now My Sweet Love*, and she demurely works over Elton John's *Nice and Slow* exactly the way the title suggests. Lulu's future probably lies on the tube, where, in time, she could become the British Dinah Shore. P.R.

EDDIE MONEY: *Life for the Taking.* Eddie Money (vocals, piano, harmonica); instrumental accompaniment. *Life for the Taking; Maybe I'm a Fool; Love the Way You Love Me; Maureen; Nobody;* and five others. COLUMBIA JC 35598 \$7.98, © JCA 35598 \$7.98, © JCT 35598 \$7.98.

Performance: **Half good**
Recording: **Okay**

Eddie Money is an average white pop-soul shouter who's had a couple of hits and, with



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careful management, should have a couple more—but not if he continues to make the mistakes made on this album. Like a lot of successful average performers in the music business, Money takes his popularity as a sign that he is a Serious Artist, with spiritual crises that his audience would—nay, *should*—want to hear about. As a result, side one of this album contains five self-conscious crash-boom cuts dealing with Money's attitude toward life, which isn't particularly interesting. Side two, however, comprises five cuts with strictly commercial material, arrangements, and performances—that is, after all, how Money makes his money. This should have been side one; it's an elementary mistake in programming that his label should not have allowed him to make. Money should stick to what he knows—commercial pop with a growl—and stop trying to be a philosopher. J. V.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

ANNE MURRAY: *New Kind of Feeling.* Anne Murray (vocals); instrumental and vocal accompaniment. *Shadows in the Moonlight; For No Reason At All; That's Why I Love You; (He Can't Help It) He's Not You; Heaven Is Here;* and four others. CAPITOL SW-11849 \$7.98, © 8XW-11849 \$7.98, © 4XW-11849 \$7.98.

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

For my money, Anne Murray's the best female singer around; she sings like a mature woman who can handle any situation. Where-



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as Linda Ronstadt is an expert at portraying lost waifs, Murray always sounds as though she has the patience to bear and defeat sorrow—and the wisdom to recognize and accept love. Ronstadt may be the songstress of losers, but Murray, with her cool, purring middle register, is the balladeer of winners.

As is usual with Murray albums, the selections here are by a variety of writers, and the material is carefully selected to fit her style. The arrangements are light and tasteful, the

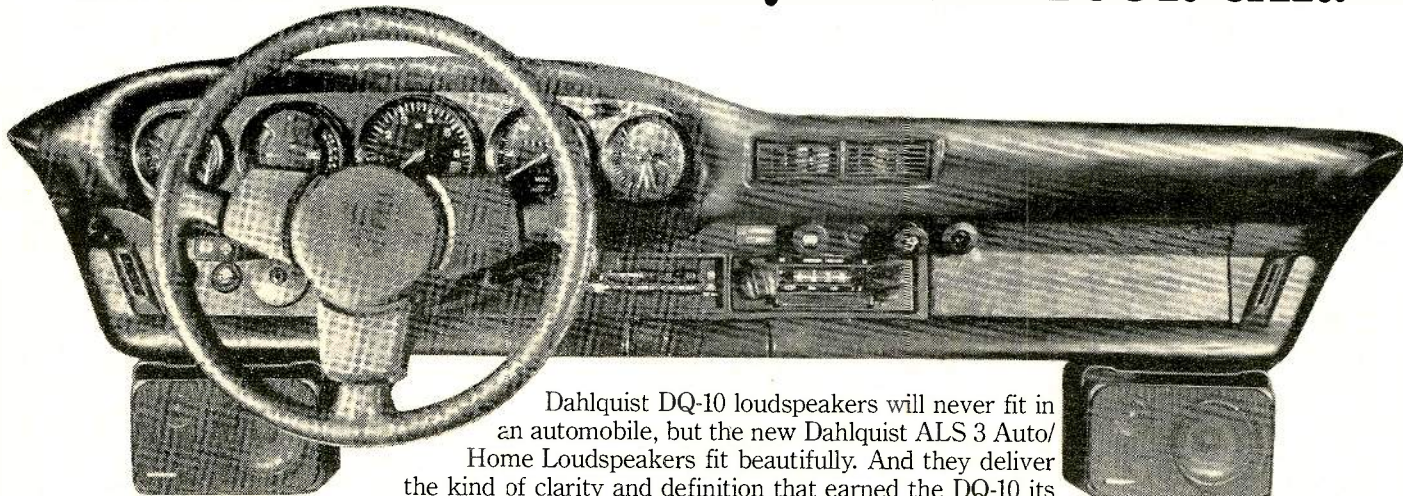
vocals calm and authoritative. My favorites are *Shadows in the Moonlight*, *Yucatan Café*, the Motown oldie *You've Got What It Takes* (which Murray sings with a delicious rasp on the chorus), *Heaven Is Here* by Gene McClellan (who also wrote *Snowbird*, one of Murray's earlier hits), and the Boudleaux and Felice Bryant ballad *Rainin' in My Heart*. This last is especially interesting if you imagine Ronstadt singing it. She'd do a fine job, of course, but the overall effect would be of someone who accepts defeat permanently; with Murray, you know the heartbreak is only a temporary setback. 'Atta girl, Annie! J. V.

TRACY NELSON: *Homemade Songs.* Tracy Nelson (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *God's Song; I've Been There Before; Ice Man; The Summer of the Silver Comet; Tight-rope; Suddenly;* and four others. FLYING FISH FF-052 \$7.98, © FLF-8359-052(H) \$7.95, © FLF-5359-052(H) \$7.95.

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

I like style a little more, usually, than the next person, but I'm beginning to think Tracy Nelson takes it too far. It bothers me most here in the first song, Randy Newman's *God's Song*, where one needs to hear clearly and cogitate upon the words. It isn't that Tracy slurs them too much but that she puts her blues-gospel vibrato between you and them; you have to listen to the singer so much you don't get to listen to the *song*. The same thing happens in the rest of the album, although most of the other songs don't have that much to offer

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themselves. An exception is *You Don't Need to Move a Mountain*, by Jim Rushing and Wayland Holyfield, which seems *designed* for a highly stylized singing job. The most remarkable thing about this particular album is the engineering of it, fine stereo separation and a clean, quiet background, and it reminds me that Flying Fish albums *usually* sound good. And I still think the most remarkable thing Tracy Nelson has done is the *writing* of *Down So Low*, which is best appreciated as sung by the comparatively straightforward Linda Ronstadt. This album isn't offensively stylized, but it could use more emphasis on what music there is in it. N.C.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

THE POLICE: *Outlandos d'Amour*. Andy Summers (guitar); Stewart Copeland (drums); Sting (bass, vocals). *Next to You; So Lonely; Roxanne; Hole in My Life; Peanuts; Can't Stand Losing You*; and four others. A&M SP 4753 \$7.98, © AAM 4753 \$7.98, © AAM 4753 \$7.98.

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

They say ya gotta have a gimmick. Well, the Police have one, and it's so good that it's sort of a shock no one thought of it before. What they do is to construct (most of) their songs with intros and verses in modified white-kid reggae rhythm, then abruptly shift gears into a standard rock beat mated with the harmonic feel of the mid-Sixties pop groups, complete with the captivating vocal harmonies of the period. "Hooks," as they say, abound, as do some interesting lyrical variations on some otherwise mundane New Wave themes such as teen romance and suicide.

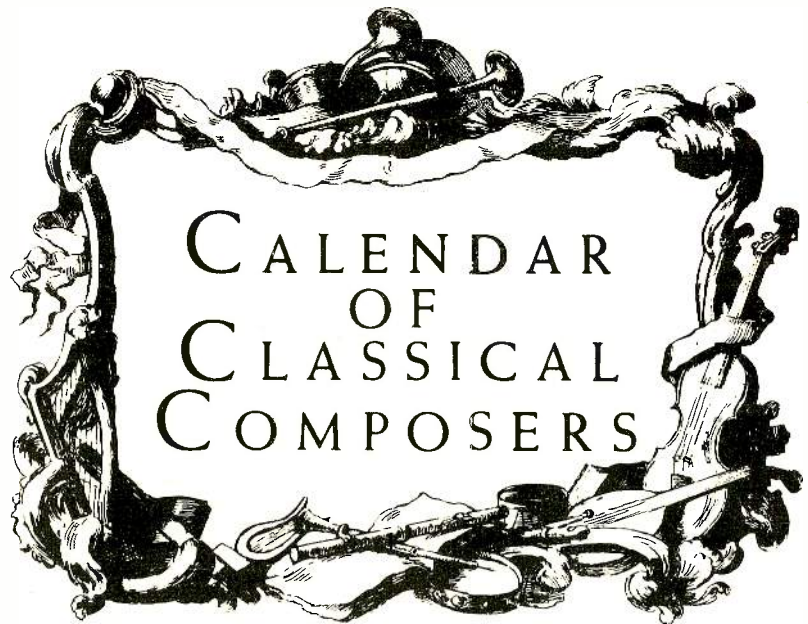
They also have another gimmick, which is that they're the freshest, toughest young rock-and-roll (not punk, not pop) band I've heard in ages. They have first-rate singing, a sense of structural sophistication well beyond their years, and rock (!) solid instrumental work that manages to accomplish something I'd thought well-nigh impossible: making the concept of the power trio viable and interesting again. Add to this a splendid production job that maintains a basically "live" feel, and you have an exciting mix.

Although I'm not drawing any actual musical parallel, this album somehow suggests what it must have been like to hear the fledgling Who thrash out the beginnings of their style in some divey London pub fifteen years ago; it has *that* palpable an aura of history in the making. Needless to say, I suggest you be the first on your block to see if I'm not onto something. S.S.

CHARLIE RICH: *The Fool Strikes Again*. Charlie Rich (vocals, piano); Jerry Carrigan (drums); Jerry Shook (guitar); Pig Robbins (piano); Bob Moore (bass); other musicians. *The Fool Strikes Again; I'd Even Let You Go; I Lost My Head; Born to Love Me; Lady; Life Goes On*; and four others. UNITED ARTISTS UA-LA925-H \$7.98, © UA-EA925-H \$7.98, © UA-CA925-H \$7.98.

Performance: **So much product**
Recording: **Good**

How come someone as talented as Charlie Rich can't make a good album, or at least an interesting one? After his single with Janie Fricke, *On My Knees*, I met this one with re-



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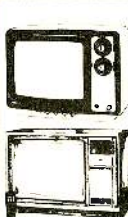


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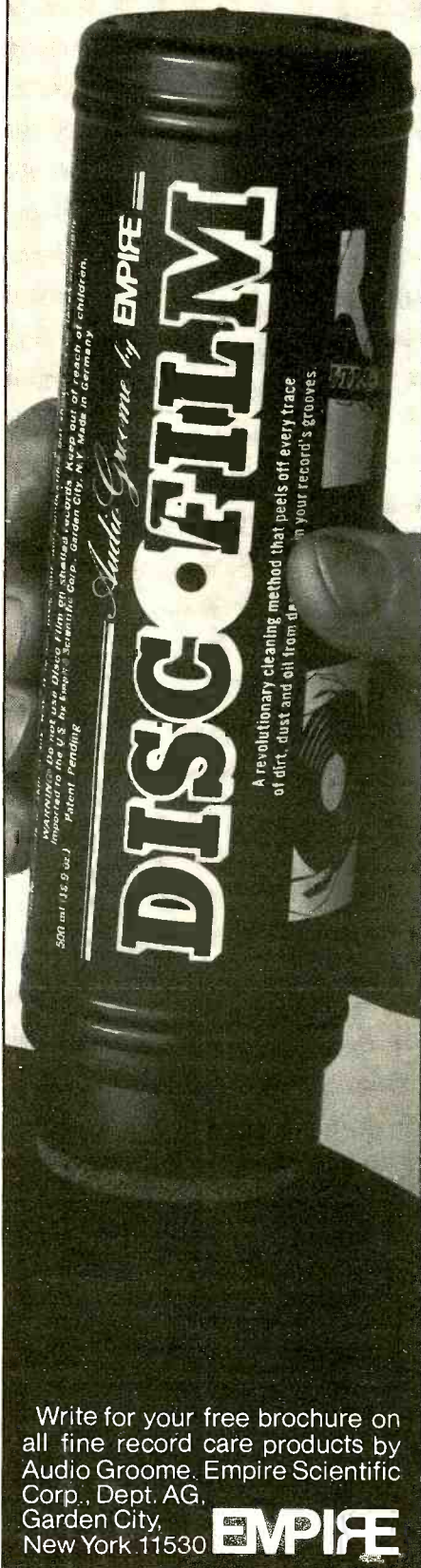
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newed hope, but here I sit, bored as hell again, knee-deep in mushy orchestration and lifeless songs. It is, of course, the nature of the songs and the approach taken rather than the singer that's the problem. For a while, even after Nashville embraced him, Rich liked to think of himself as a blues singer, and maybe we'd all be better off if he'd acted accordingly. At least the blues are real. This stuff, more nearly country technically, is mostly patently artificial. Somebody presumably went through the motions of songwriting to grind them out, and they satisfy the dictionary definition of songs, but they aren't songs. *I Loved You All the Way* may be a song under all the instrumental glop, but the presentation drags it down near the level of the others. I suppose Charlie Rich could coast on like this forever, but what a waste. N.C.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

TOM ROBINSON BAND: *TRB Two*. Tom Robinson (vocals and bass); Danny Kustow (guitars); other musicians. *Alright All Night; Why Should I Mind; Black Angel; Let My People Be; Blue Murder; Bully for You;* and five others. CAPITOL ST-11930 \$7.98, ⑧ 8XT-11930, ⑨ 4XT-11930 \$7.98.

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

There are no real surprises on Tom Robinson's second album, unless you're surprised that Todd Rundgren resisted the temptation to do a Meat Loaf and overproduce the thing out of recognition, or that nothing here is as instantly memorable and incisive (in the hit-single sense) as the last album's *Motorway* or *Glad to Be Gay*. Rather, we get the usual synthesis of infectious hard rock and English music-hall styles Robinson shares with his mentor Ray Davies, this time with a lot less of what Bob Dylan once called "finger-pointing songs." Robinson has apparently taken to heart the criticisms of those who called his earlier numbers too direct in their approaches to social outrage, and while he hasn't exactly pulled his punches here (*Sorry, Mr. Harris* and *Blue Murder* are pretty specific in their indictments of the English system of justice), he's more inclined to let you read between the lines, which seems a sensible approach.

But this is still dangerous, incendiary stuff, mainly because musically it's so gut-level compelling; the band sounds, to these ears, more and more like a politicized, amped-up version of the old Spencer Davis Group, and Robinson's vocals remain as gutsy and theatrically effective as ever. Perhaps there's just less to rail about in England since he first came to prominence on the crest of the New Wave, but if this is indeed just a marking-time effort, it's an extraordinarily effective and entertaining one. Recommended. S.S.

DUSTY SPRINGFIELD: *Living Without Your Love*. Dusty Springfield (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *You Can Do It; Be Somebody; Dream On; Save Me, Save Me; Get Yourself to Love;* and five others. UNITED ARTISTS UA-LA936-H \$7.98, ⑧ EA936-H \$7.98, ⑨ CA936-H \$7.98.

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

Dusty Springfield is a very, very good singer. Technically, at least, she's among the best.

(Continued on page 133)

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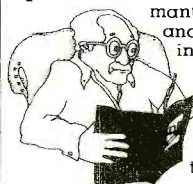
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This newest album is another almost perfect job of dotting the musical i's and crossing the lyrical t's, and nowhere on it are her performances ever less than sleekly stylish and clear-voiced and appealing. So why don't I urge you to run right out and get it? Because Springfield still seems content to loll around making pretty sounds. By scrupulously avoiding emotion, she blocks herself from full communication with her listeners. Now, by emotion I don't mean hysteria or gross overacting or frenetic little tricks—Springfield is far too good and intelligent a singer to indulge in any of that nonsense. But perhaps in her efforts to avoid grandstand plays she's forgotten that audiences really do respond to genuine, active attempts to engage their feelings. She also denies emotion on another level by refusing to share any strong, personal views that she may have about her material. No matter how good she sounds—and she sounds very good, even in such clinkers as Melissa Manchester's *Be Somebody* or Barry Gibb's livelier *Save Me, Save Me*—listening to Dusty Springfield is like talking to someone whose eyes, you gradually realize, have no pupils. . . . P.R.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

THE YANKEES: High 'n' Inside. The Yankees (vocals and instrumentals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Take It Like a Man; Everyday I Have to Cry; Bad Boy; Lovesick; (Can't Stop) Talkin' 'bout My Baby;* and seven others. BIG SOUND BSLP-037 \$7.98.

Performance: **World Series caliber**
Recording: **Excellent**

Now here's an album that's a triumphant exception to an old rule: rock critics are lousy musicians, and their records are generally the pits. The Yankees, you see, are the brainchild of Jon Tiven, a former critic and now head honcho of the feisty, independent Big Sound label. Surprise, surprise: his band is terrific, and so is their debut album.

As might have been surmised, "High 'n' Inside" is sort of a pop revival effort: Jon has soaked up all the Sixties influences one would expect from an avowed Small Faces freak, and his choice of cover material—a midperiod Motown classic, Larry Williams' *Bad Boy* (more familiar from the Beatles version), and an unfamiliar, excellent tune by r-&-b cult figure Arthur Alexander—is indicative of his excellent taste. But this is not a revivalist nostalgia piece; in fact, there's real originality and freshness here. The production, in particular, is in an extremely modern-sounding neopsychedelic vein rather than the Rundgrenesque purist Power Pop style one might anticipate. Further, Jon's singing is disarmingly unaffected, his guitar work combines flash with substance, and his songs, especially *Take It Like a Man* and *Boys' Night Out*, have fully as much sass and melodic winsomeness as anything churned out by his idols—plus some unidentifiable something of their own that I find irresistible.

The wrap-up is that the Yankees make Dwight Twilley, say, or Pezband sound positively effete in comparison. This is an extraordinarily auspicious left-field (to borrow a baseball metaphor) debut, and, as they used to say back in the Bronx, just wait till next year. S.S.

(Continued on page 135)

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In dear old show-biz, the word "incredible" is flung about with regrettable abandon. Depending on the situation, it can mean either the zenith or the nadir of the performing arts. In the happy case of Dick Haymes' new album, "As Time Goes By," what is "incredible" is the level of achievement in performance reached by a man whose career has had more ups and downs, more zigs and zags to it than a biorhythm chart redrawn by Jackson Pollock. And there are several other remarkable things about this disc.

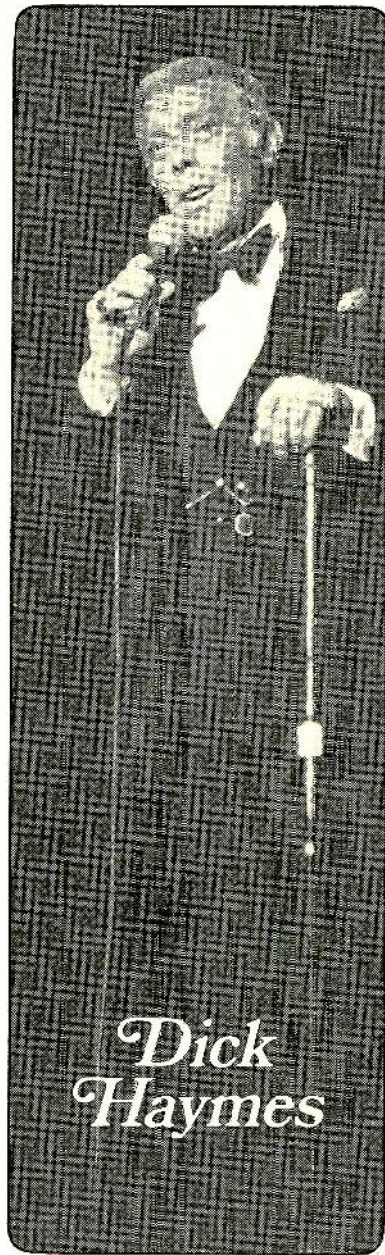
For instance, the recording was underwritten by the Friends of Haymes Society, a collection of fans from both the States and England, to my knowledge the first pop equivalent of the old Delius, Mahler, or Hugo Wolf societies—and devoted to a performer, yet. It's also remarkable to hear classic ballads sung in 1979 as if the whole genre hadn't been packed off to the attic years ago. Haymes is now singing so assuredly, with such poignant beauty, and with such individuality that *The Way We Were* fits alongside *I'm Glad There Is You* as snugly as if they were born in the same year instead of generations apart.

At the age of sixty-three, Haymes' voice has darkened, deepening into the richest, steadiest baritone that can be heard these days. There isn't a trace of wobble, but there is all of his famous ability to elide a word or phrase so as to capture the whole emotional point of a song at a stroke. A beautiful example of this occurs here in his performance of Cole Porter's *I Love You Samantha*. Haymes takes the word "remember," which returns several times, always before the name of the heroine, and into those three syllables pours enough variety, color, and apparently offhand (but dead-serious) sentiment to make your toes curl in delight. It is an object lesson in the art of popular singing that ought to be drilled into any performer who means to be really serious about this serious art.

Ballad singing has declined in this country about as fast as its best-known practitioners have dried up vocally or simply disappeared (as Haymes did for a while), and we are left with the likes of Neil Diamond and Englebert Humperdinck. It's no wonder that ballad singing has gotten a bad name, but the pop media seem unable to realize that we have Old Masters in pop music whose recordings ought to be treasured. What Dick Haymes is doing today needs no nostalgia to excuse its enjoyment, and any kindly patronization is as out of place for this man (who miraculously sounds on his latest records like he's still in his thirties) as it would have been for Leonard Warren or Jan Peerce or Maurice Chevalier in their later careers.

HAYMES' work on *Last Night When We Were Young* is the kind of revelatory, perceptive interpretation that, at least for me, makes this poetic, mood-drenched Harold Arlen song his property forever. There's no teary, lip-biting sentimentality à la Judy Garland, and even less of Sinatra's tough-guy-with-a-broken-heart approach—nothing but the austere, elegant lyrics sung with such unpretentiously intense, deep feeling and gently wistful regret that they will knock you off your roller skates.

So long out of practice with this level of artistry, and therefore not completely trusting what I heard with my own ears, I played "As Time Goes By" for a young couple, just into their thirties, with tastes formed by rock but now trying mightily to get their heads around to "advanced" c-&-w. She, after a few guilty



glances at him, slowly assumed the dreamy, abstracted look that indicates someone has left the room and joined the singer on the recording. He, trendiest of the trendies, with a pop record collection that threatens to buckle the wall, looked by turns sullen, defiant, and abashed. When the last lovely phrase of *But Beautiful* had died away, she murmured a few words about how rarely she'd heard such a virile baritone and then wandered dreamily into the next room. He was puzzled. All very good, he mumbled, but he . . . um

. . . really preferred songs he could accept as personal statements by the artists themselves—like . . . um . . . the ones by Lennon or Dylan. Finally, with a burst of anger, he said, "Look, what do you expect from me? Nobody ever told me about Dick Haymes. All I ever heard was Sinatra—and my parents liked him!" I suppose exposure to real excellence just might trigger that kind of frustration if you suddenly discover you've been swimming for years in a sea of mediocrity.

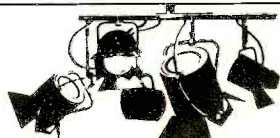
ONE of the cruelest, and perhaps truest, comments made about America lately is that we passed from barbarism to decadence without any significant pause for civilization. But not quite true. We did have a "golden age" of pop music as civilized and sophisticated as anything ever produced by any Western country, and for about forty years it was probably the most popular and universally identifiable American cultural export. One sign of decadence throughout history has been that people are no longer able to repair and maintain their own monuments because they've lost the skills to do the work. At the moment the most popular singing group in America is Kiss, which is an interesting comment on a generation that no longer pants after even the "personal statements" of the early-Seventies troubadours. There is no way to tell one member of Kiss from another except by their makeup, so no one is sure who precisely is who. Being that anonymous they'll be, like their music, that much easier to forget. And no one, I'm sure, is ever going to lament the passing of the musical "skills" that created them.

For probably one-tenth the amount of money that will be spent on promotion and publicity for, say, the Boomtown Rats, this album could have been recorded and released by a major company (although it probably could not have been done any better; the Loonis McGlohon Trio and the production fit Haymes like a second, glistening skin). Another thought: Sinatra recently scheduled a recording session and then backed out, leading one to believe that he's finally faced what everyone else has known for some time, that his voice has become a very worn and ragged instrument. Yet his diehard fans are probably not even aware that Dick Haymes is recording, and recording superbly, much of the repertoire that Sinatra is no longer able to handle.

So, if you miss Dick Haymes' "As Time Goes By," don't say nobody ever told you about him, because I just did. And don't ever pass up anything merely because your parents liked it: hell, they probably liked you too.

—Peter Reilly

DICK HAYMES: *As Time Goes By*. Dick Haymes (vocals); Loonis McGlohon (piano); Jim Lackey (drums); Rusty Gilder (bass). *That's All; As Time Goes By; I'm Glad There Is You; While We're Young; Emily; This Masquerade; Somewhere in the Night; Last Night When We Were Young; I Love You Samantha; Here's That Rainy Day; The Way We Were; But Beautiful.* BALLAD DHS-6 \$7.95 (from Ballad Records, c/o Roger L. Dooner, 2951 Tyler Street, N.E., Minneapolis, Minn. 55418).



THEATER • FILMS

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

GEORGE AND IRA GERSHWIN: *Songs.* Joan Morris (mezzo-soprano); William Bolcom (piano). *I'll Build a Stairway to Paradise; Love Walked In; How Long Has This Been Going On?; My Cousin in Milwaukee; Nice Work If You Can Get It; The Man I Love;* and eight others. NONESUCH H-71358 \$6.98.

Performance: **Winsome and witty**
Recording: **Very good**

As those of us who have been enjoying William Bolcom's Nonesuch record of George Gershwin's piano music already know, there isn't a pianist alive today who understands that idiom better or interprets it with more contagious verve. Meanwhile, Bolcom's wife, Joan Morris, has been gaining an ever-widening public with her arch, subtly mocking treatments of turn-of-the-century popular songs. And how have they fared in pooling their talents for a go at the songs of the Gershwin brothers? It couldn't have worked out better.

Morris, who sings all the introductory verses as well as the refrains, applies her crystal-clear mezzo voice with humor and intelligence to Ira Gershwin's lyrics. She is at her best when there's some wit to be projected (*By Strauss, The Lorelei, They All Laughed, My Cousin in Milwaukee*), but she also has a way of seizing hold of a serious number such as *The Man I Love* or *Love Walked In*, or even the helpless-little-girl sentiments of *Someone to Watch Over Me*, and making it seem moving without ever working herself up into an interpretive frenzy. Bolcom is right in there with her all the time, giving precisely the necessary lift to the rhythm of *Just Another Rhumba*, the sparkle of *Fascinating Rhythm*, and the bluesy lilt of *How Long Has This Been Going On?* It's a paradox: by singing and playing these songs just as they were written, with no attempt to change the beats or bring the lyrics up to date, Morris and Bolcom make every one of these old favorites sound brand new. To add to the fun, a text of the lyrics is enclosed. P.K.

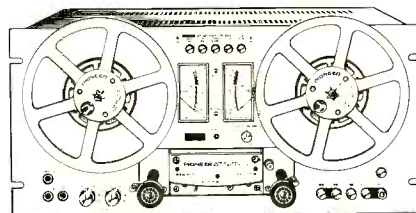
GENE KELLY: *Song and Dance Man.* Gene Kelly (vocals); various orchestras. *Ida, Sweet As Apple Cider; Moonlight Bay; Doin' the New Low-Down; The Daughter of Rosie O'Grady;* and six others. DRG/STET DS 15010 \$8.98, © DS-C 15010 \$8.98 (plus \$1.25 postage and handling from DRG Records, 200 West 57th Street, New York, N.Y. 10019).

Performance: **For old-movie fans**
Recording: **Okay**

Gene Kelly and Fred Astaire were the only men to rise to star rank as dancers in an era when any man who lifted his leg higher than stirrup level was considered effeminate. (Continued overleaf)

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While Astaire had snake-like speed and throwaway elegance, Kelly always made sure to hit the floor *hard*. His balletic movements had a macho, muscular flex and perspiring quality to them that seemed as at home in a gymnasium as on a sound stage.

"Song and Dance Man" is a collection of Kelly's vocal performances from various films, though not from the most memorable ones like *On the Town*, *An American in Paris*, and his masterpiece, *Singin' in the Rain*. It makes a nice enough souvenir, but it won't seem like much unless you've seen the man dance. In contrast to Astaire, who makes lyrics dance for him and whose feather-light voice can do small miracles with anything he touches, Kelly brings overwhelming intensity and gritting concentration to bear even on such lighthearted songs as *My Baby Just Cares for Me* and *Ida, Sweet as Apple Cider*, with the result that they cry uncle long before the end of the first chorus. The best track here is *Long Ago and Far Away* from *Cover Girl*, a film Kelly did with Rita Hayworth. His raspy, whispery attack and his intensity mate beautifully with this lovely Jerome Kern/Ira Gershwin ballad. This album is worth having if you're an old-movie freak like me. P.R.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

LEAVE IT TO JANE (Jerome Kern-Guy Bolton-P. G. Wodehouse). Kathleen Murray, Dorothy Greener, George Segal, Jeanne Allen, Art Matthews, Angelo Mango, Ray Tudor (vocals); chorus and orchestra, Joseph Stecko cond. DRG/STER DS 15002 \$8.98 (plus

\$1.25 postage and handling from DRG Records, 200 West 57th Street, New York, N.Y. 10019).

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

Jerome Kern wrote the score of *Leave It to Jane* (book by Guy Bolton and lyrics by P. G. Wodehouse) back in 1917. It was based on *The College Widow*, a play by George Ade. In 1958 I was one of those lucky people who caught the revival of it—here recorded—at the minuscule Sheridan Square Playhouse in Greenwich Village. *Leave It to Jane* was the great grandfather of all those musicals about college football teams. For the revival George Segal, in his first stage appearance, played the inordinately enthusiastic sophomore Ollie Mitchell; Kathleen Murray was the president's daughter, Jane Witherspoon (the one things can be safely left to); Art Matthews was Billy Bolton, who eventually wins for Atwater; and Dorothy Greener of blessed memory was Flora Wiggins, who helps her mother run a boarding house.

Kern wrote such an exuberant score for *Leave It to Jane* and the revival cast was so talented that the evening was a pure delight, and DRG Records deserves a hug for deciding to rerelease the album. Just hearing Dorothy Greener sing *Cleopatterer* makes the whole thing worth owning, and her *Poor Prune* in Act II is a close runner-up. Then there's *Just You Watch My Step*, *The Siren's Song*, the title song, *The Crickets Are Calling*, *I'm Going to Find a Girl*, and *Sir Galahad*. It's all as marvelous as it was twenty years ago. P.K.

DISCO



KEITH BARROW: Physical Attraction. Keith Barrow (vocals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Turn Me Up; Physical Attraction; Joyful Music; Garden of Love*; and four others. COLUMBIA JC 35597 \$7.98, © JCA 35597 \$7.98, © JCT 35597 \$7.98.

Performance: **Merely pleasant**
Recording: **Fine**

There's no denying Keith Barrow's musicality. He can float his falsetto on top of gliding strings, whisper his way through the sound of a full orchestra, effortlessly sing through even the most complex rhythms. Furthermore, the disco-flavored arrangements here give him all the help a vocalist could ask for.

But Barrow's voice just doesn't have enough range and variety to carry a whole LP. I found myself more involved, for example, with the long orchestral conclusion to *Turn Me Up* and the crisp background vocals (credited to someone called Brandy) in *You Know That You Want to Be Loved* than with the

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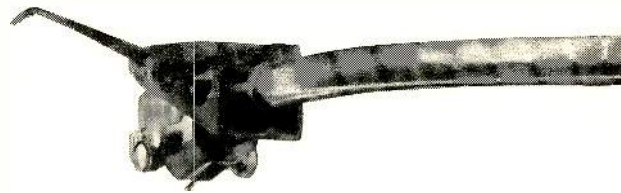
Notable among these is an exotic nitrogen-hardened titanium tubing arm (with wall thickness only twice the diameter of the average human hair) providing a previously unattainable strength-to-weight ratio. The arm has a soft core annular cross-section with an internal fibrous lining which results in an efficient, natural damping of the vibration fed into the arm by the cartridge.

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star. Only in two songs did I get even part-way involved with Barrow's vocal performance: the definitely mainstream pop song *Overnight Success* and the lovely ballad *If It's Love That You're Looking For*, where his voice nestles beautifully in a very warm, string-drenched arrangement. "Physical Attraction" is pleasant, but it's just not *physical* enough. E.B.

THE BLACKBYRDS: *Night Grooves*. The Blackbyrds (vocals and instrumentals). *Happy Music; Gut Level; Walking in Rhythm*; and four others. FANTASY F-9570 \$7.98, © 8160-9570H \$7.95, © 5160-9570H \$7.95.

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

The selections here are, as the advertisements proclaim, not just "greatest hits" but disco versions of popular Blackbyrds material. The disco variants fall into two categories: either they never get off the ground or they have no beginning, start from the middle, and seem like they'll never end. This is thin disco and a poor excuse for an album. J.V.

CHARO: *Olé, Olé*. Charo (vocals, guitar); instrumental and vocal accompaniment. *Olé, Olé; Stay with Me; Love Boat Theme*; and two others. SALSOL SA 8515 \$7.98, © S8 8515 \$7.98, © SC 8515 \$7.98.

Performance: **Too elegant**
Recording: **Ditto**

Surprisingly, the "Cuchi-Cuchi" girl's second disco effort (pressed in pink vinyl and pack-

aged in a pink album cover) is elegantly understated. Charo's breathy voice practically whispers its way through these typically solid Tom Moulton mixes. She's so sweet, pink, and unobtrusive—even when she's crooning, in the title song, "When you're lying next to me/You make the music sing"—that the vo-

icals seem almost like afterthoughts. The album's musical high point is the wonderful interplay in *Olé, Olé* between acoustic guitar and what sounds like either an electric guitar or a synthesizer, culminating in an excitingly virtuosic guitar solo backed by the disco beat. My other favorite track is the purely instru-



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In George Lucas' *American Graffiti* there's a scene in which the coolest greaser in town is cruising the strip in the company, much to his dismay, of a fourteen-year-old bobby-soxer he has accidentally been saddled with. The radio is on, and suddenly there're the Beach Boys doing one of their early hits. The greaser

missed as hopelessly old-fashioned (think, for example, of earnest, academic old John Mayall, who for twenty years has been churning out earnest, academic imitations of black urban blues), but he is certainly the most committed revivalist currently working any style you could name. Next to him, in fact, the Forties-swing pastiches of even as skillful an outfit as the Widespread Depression Orchestra sound like the work of studio cats on a busman's holiday. For Gordon, rockabilly is not merely a minor, obscure, sub-genre of early rock-and-roll; it is, for all intents and purposes, a religion, and his career is nothing less than missionary work.

I know that sounds, at least on paper, positively deadly, and, in truth, a lot of Gordon's recorded output up till now has been just that. Sure, he knows the stuff cold and obviously loves it, but so does Sha Na Na, and nobody in his right mind has ever accused them of being more than a pale carbon of the Fifties masters they emulate. Gordon's problem was actually a lot bigger since, unlike Sha Na Na, he maintained not the slightest ironic camp distance from the music. Which means, as Billy Altman has observed, that whereas the rockabilly rebels who created this stuff spent most of their careers unconsciously trying to work the rawness out of their material, Gordon, with his note-for-note remakes, was consciously struggling to work it back in.

But not any more, because "Rock Billy Boogie" is the first of his albums to strike these ears as totally natural and convincing. Why now? Maybe it's simply a question of focus; guitar whiz Chris Spedding seems finally to have whipped the band into shape in a way the departed Link Wray, for all his First Generation credentials, never did. Maybe it's simply that the initial shock of hearing Gordon re-create this stuff so singlemindedly has worn off enough that we can listen to it on its own terms without the ghosts of Billy Lee Riley and Charlie Feathers hovering over our shoulders. Or maybe it's just that he's inspired (need I tell you why?) by being on the RCA label. Who knows? I do know, though, that this album raves ferociously from start to finish and that it positively jumps out of the radio, which is the acid test for really vital rock-and-roll.

PERHAPS it's a fluke, a one-shot, secondhand masterpiece comparable to the single brilliant blues album John Mayall did with Eric Clapton years ago. Or perhaps it's the beginning of a new rock-and-roll legend that will ultimately outstrip those of Gordon's influences. Frankly, I don't care either way, and neither should you. Rather, you should grab a copy of "Rock Billy Boogie" immediately, and, in the words of Elvis' *Milkcow Blues*, "get real, real gone for a change." You'll be a better person for it.

—Steve Simels

ROBERT GORDON: *Rock Billy Boogie*. Robert Gordon (vocals); Chris Spedding (guitar); Rob Stoner (bass); other musicians. *Rock Billy Boogie*; *Love My Baby*; *I Just Found Out*; *All By Myself*; *Black Slacks*; *The Catman*; *It's Only Make Believe*; *Wheel of Fortune*; *Am I Blue*; *Walk On By*; *I Just Met a Memory*; *Blue Christmas*. RCA AFL1-3294 \$7.98, © AFS1-3294 \$7.98, © AFK1-3294 \$7.98.

mental disco version of Rodrigo's classical *Concierto de Aranjuez* with Charo herself on guitar. It's beautiful, and you feel that you should dance to it in a tuxedo—which suggests the album's critical flaw: it's *too* elegant. I found myself liking Charo and the music a lot, but dismissing them as disco material. "Olé, Olé" is just too weak, too . . . pink for me. E.B.

INSTANT FUNK: *I Got My Mind Made Up*. Instant Funk (vocals and instrumentals); instrumental accompaniment. *Crying*; *Don't You Wanna Party*; *Dark Vader*; *I'll Be Doggone*; and three others. SALSOU SA 8513 \$7.98, © S8 8513 \$7.98, © SC 8513 \$7.98.

Performance: **Could be funkier**
Recording: **Fine**

Village People, move over! Instant Funk is an all-male group with more talent, put to the service of more musically music, than you could ever hope to muster. Lead singer James Carmichael has a wonderful sound, especially on the ballad *Never Let It Go Away*. The rest of the nine-man group show themselves to be true musicians, both vocally and in occasional turns on piano, guitar, and horns that are almost jazz-like in their complexity. Listen, for example, to the piano and saxophone work in the all-instrumental *Wide World of Sports*.

Still, for disco fans, there's something missing, and it has to be in the arrangements. Compare the LP's five-and-a-half-minute version of the group's super-hit *I Got My Mind Made Up* (better known to the dancing crowd as "You can get it . . . get it . . . get it, girl") with the original 12-inch disco disc: what was a sensational dance number has become simply a disco song; gone are all the build-up and the bridges (some very imaginative ones) that made dancing to it so all-consuming. What's left is not bad; in fact, it's a damn good song that will probably cross over to Top-40 FM and make a mint. But it's not the same. And except for a (too) short number called *Don't You Wanna Party*, the rest of the album is even more subdued. I can't see why Salsoul didn't devote more time to fewer songs for this debut LP; the disco dancers among us would have been grateful. But it's nice to have this bigger piece of Instant Funk around, even with their considerable energies muted. E.B.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

LEMON. Lemon (vocals and instrumentals). *A-Freak-A*; *Hot Bodies*; *Chance to Dance*; *Inside My Heart*; and two others. PRELUDE PRL 12162 \$7.98, © PRL8 12162 \$7.98, © PRL9 12162 \$7.98.

Performance: **Topflight MOR disco**
Recording: **Fine**

At first this sounded like it was going to be the record of the year. *A-Freak-A* and the first half of *Hot Bodies* are very upbeat and lots of fun. Too soon, however, a sameness settles into the sound and Lemon commands attention only at moments. But those moments are important, for they are uncommonly musical for disco. The vocal whoops in *Freak-On*, the almost-Dixieland cantina-band sound in *Hot Hands*, and, especially, the intricate rippling vocals that lead into Lemon's big hit, *Chance to Dance*, are simply wonderful. In a way, this album could be educational for serious pop-music fans who still believe that disco



turns it off in disgust, the nymphet turns it back on, and they begin to argue. She thinks the Beach Boys are "bitchin'." Our hero, however, does not. "I can't stand that surfing shit," he tells her. "Rock-and-roll's been going downhill since Buddy Holly died." That greaser is clearly Robert Gordon's spiritual cousin.

Now, Gordon is hardly the first musician to attempt to resurrect, singlehandedly, a musical idiom that almost everyone else had dis-

cannot be musically rich. Lemon's six members all sing, and they play a variety of instruments (flute, tuba, banjo, conga, vibes, and lots more) in ambitious, even innovative ways. This is middle-of-the-road disco of the highest order. *E.B.*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

MIDNIGHT RHYTHM. Midnight Rhythm (vocals and instrumentals). *Workin' & Slavin' (I Need Love); Midnight Rhythm; Climb/Rushin' to Meet You.* ATLANTIC SD 19214 \$7.98, © TP 19214 \$7.98, © CS 19214 \$7.98.

Performance: **Heavy disco**
Recording: **Fine**

This is the album to play when you want Aunt Tillie from Philly to hear what it's like in the top discos at 3:30 in the morning. *Workin' & Slavin'*, which pits male voices and a piledriving beat against a female chorus repeating "I need love," sets up the album's dynamics. This is very heavy, unrelenting disco music, designed for the kind of dancing that comes from the gut. The same dynamic tension carries through all of *Workin' & Slavin's* nine mostly instrumental minutes. Sometimes it's carried by a picked-guitar brightness against the bass, or a smooth violin line against the driving beat, or, finally, a crashing piano competing with the stomping tempo. When all of this dissolves back into the vocal at the end, the release is powerful.

Side two is an unbroken fifteen-minute medley. Again, the tempo is back-breakingly fast. I'm sure that Richie Rivera, the disc-jockey who is credited with the mix, has to introduce some other material in the middle when he plays it at Flamingo, or else the patrons would collapse from exhaustion. There's a limit to how much reaching for the ultimate you can do, even with voices constantly exhorting you to "climb . . . climb . . . climb." Midnight Rhythm makes excellent manic disco, and they have used virtually every trick of the disco art for this debut album. Don't start an evening with it, but by all means work it in when your party is at white heat. *E.B.*

PHREEK. Phreek (vocals and instrumentals). *Weekend; May My Love Be with You; Much Too Much;* and three others. ATLANTIC SD 19213 \$7.98, © TP 19213 \$7.98, © CS 19213 \$7.98.

Performance: **Music A, dance C**
Recording: **The best**

I like disco recorded like this: shiny bright, with every quiver of the violins, every brush on the cymbals, every background piano chord, and even the words up front all as sharp as a tack. Wait for the end of *Weekend* ("This time it's party time") to see how much music can be gotten onto one LP . . . and how much fun the result can be for listening. Atlantic's engineers have done themselves proud.

But high as Phreek's debut album's musical and engineering values are, as dance music it loses some points. I loved listening to the solo vocalizing of Leroy Burgess and Venus Dodson and to the dynamite synthesized piano work in *Everybody Loves a Good Thing*, but the complexities make it hard to concentrate on dancing. Similarly, the monologue in *May My Love Be with You* would leave a lot of dancers shuffling from foot to foot. The best

dance numbers in the album are *Much Too Much*, the bouncy, happy *Have a Good Time* ("keep on dancin'"), and the very bawdy *I'm a Big Freak* (although here I could have done with less of the lascivious moaning). A little more along these lines and Phreek could entertain at my parties any time. *E.B.*

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(List compiled by John Harrison.)

(Continued overleaf)

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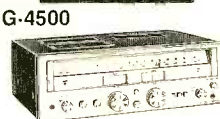
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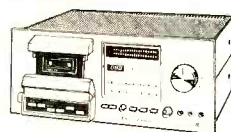
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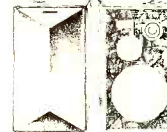
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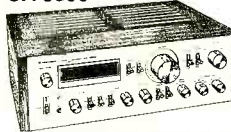
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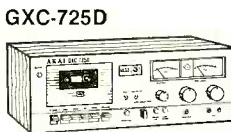
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JAZZ



ART ENSEMBLE OF CHICAGO: Live at Mandel Hall. Lester Bowie (trumpet, flugelhorn, kelp horn, percussion); Malachi Favors

(bass, zither, banjo, percussion); Joseph Jarman (vocals, saxophones, bassoon, oboe); Roscoe Mitchell (vocals, saxophones, flute, piccolo, percussion); Don Moye (vocals, marimba, percussion). *Duffwipels; Checkmate/ Daultaly/Mata Kimasu (We'll Come Again)*. DELMARK DS-432/3 two discs \$15.96.

Performance: **Slice of an era**
Recording: **Good**

This is a reissue of the album documenting this innovative group's performance at the University of Chicago's Mandel Hall on January 15, 1972. In the past seven years, the jazz spectrum has been extended enough to accommodate comfortably these once avant-garde sounds; they no longer seem revolution-

ary, since the Art Ensemble of Chicago's approach to free improvisation is by now well established.

Founded back in 1968 by a group of Midwesterners who happened to be in France at the time, the Art Ensemble of Chicago took their inspiration from such experimenters as Ornette Coleman, Albert Ayler, and John Coltrane. Wearing African tribal markings on stage and playing an enormous assortment of instruments, the five members of the AEC also shaped their music to reflect African elements, often altering the emphasis to highlight layered percussive rhythms, occluding melody and harmony, although these were present in modified forms. "Live at Mandel Hall" represents the sum of the AEC's musical philosophy. The titles of the selections are deliberately enigmatic, as is the music. Though there are constant references to recognizable styles (portions of *Checkmate* reflect the polyphony of early jazz, and Lester Bowie's flugelhorn solo on *Mata Kimasu* derives from Miles Davis' middle period), surreal distortion prevails. The album cover announces that this is "Great Black Music." It is not necessarily that, but it is an imaginative piece of work. P.G.

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CIRCLE NO. 6 ON READER SERVICE CARD

RAN BLAKE: Third Stream—Take One. Ran Blake (piano). *Sirod; Stoneciphering; Silent Night; You've Changed; Biko; Until Dawn*; and five others. GOLDEN CREST CRS 4176 \$7.98.

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

RAN BLAKE: Third Stream—Take Two. Ran Blake (piano). *Vradiasi; Ol' Man River; Moonlight on the Ganges; Sontagism; Just a Closer Walk with Thee*; and six others. GOLDEN CREST CRS 4177 \$7.98.

Performance: **Further reflections**
Recording: **Very good**

Ran Blake has always been a highly original composer and pianist, so it is not surprising to find him also pioneering a totally new album concept: two simultaneous releases containing different interpretations of the same program. In other words, "Take Two" features second takes of the eleven selections heard on "Take One"; since they're on separate discs, the two versions of each can be enjoyed without having to hear one right after the other. This concept would not work for everyone, but Blake's fertile musical mind has here created what amounts to two quite diverse albums. Typically for Blake, the repertoire covers a broad spectrum: from *Silent Night* (yes, that one) to Sherman Myers' 1926 hit *Moonlight on the Ganges*, Kern's *Ol' Man River*, and some less familiar themes, including four Blake originals. Originals? Well, even the tritest warhorse takes on new meaning as Ran Blake, in his slightly Thelonious Monkish way, gives it a surrealistic touch. Of course I am recommending both releases, though I do find the total of thirty minutes of music per disc rather low considering the \$7.98 list price. C.A.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

CARLA BLEY: Musique Mécanique. Carla Bley (organ, piano); the Carla Bley Band. 440; *Jesus Maria and Other Spanish Strains; Musique Mécanique I; Musique Mécanique II (At Midnight); Musique Mécanique III.* WATT

WATT/9 \$7.98 (from New Music Distribution Service, 6 West 95th Street, New York, N.Y. 10025).

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

So eclectic is Carla Bley's music that it really defies classification. She is generally associated with jazz, as are a number of musicians who regularly work with her, but her palette holds a veritable rainbow of colors that she mixes freely and, at times, boldly. Thus this newest offering, "Musique Mécanique," contains shades of Kurt Weill's Berlin, Chuck Berry's Memphis, and Stan Kenton's Hermosa Beach applied to a broad canvas to form—with sardonic wit—what I suppose is ultimately a portrait of Carla Bley. Except for trombonist Roswell Rudd's vocal on *Musique Mécanique II (At Midnight)*, I love the way this album moves body and soul, and if you have liked Carla Bley's previous Watt releases, it's a safe bet that this, too, will appeal to you. C.A.

JUNE CHRISTY: Impromptu (see Best of the Month, page 95)

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

JIMMY GIUFFRE/LEE KONITZ/BILL CONNORS/PAUL BLEY: IAI Festival. Jimmy Giuffre (flutes, clarinet, soprano and tenor saxophones); Lee Konitz (alto saxophone); Bill Connors (guitar); Paul Bley (piano). *Blues in the Closet; Spanish Flames; The Sad Time;* and two others. IMPROVISING ARTISTS IAI 37.38.59 \$7.98.

Performance: **Fine**
Recording: **Good remote**

Given the players involved, it is not surprising to find that this is an album of studied casualness, the kind of free-form music that tends to become chaotic non-music in the hands of undisciplined, technically deficient musicians. Messrs. Giuffre, Konitz, Connors, and Bley being the fine musicians they are, this set of five selections—actually Giuffre duets—recorded at a San Francisco concert in May of last year stays well within the borders of excellence and taste. That's a roundabout way of saying that Paul Bley's Improving Artists label has come up with yet another exquisite album of modern music at a time when too many of their colleagues aim only for what record-industry people call "product." C.A.

MILESTONE JAZZSTARS: In Concert (see Best of the Month, page 96)

THELONIOUS MONK: Piano Solos. Thelonious Monk (piano). *Well, You Needn't; Off Minor; Manganese; Smoke Gets in Your Eyes;* and four others. EVEREST ® FS 336 \$4.98.

Performance: **Vintage Monk**
Recording: **Fair**

Thelonious Monk was one of the most innovative artists in modern jazz, a visionary who contributed substantially to the development of bop. He grew to legendary status during the late Fifties and remained a top figure through most of the Sixties, but then something happened to his creativity. He worked sporadically between 1970 and 1974, then all but disappeared.

These recordings were made for the French Swing label in Paris on June 7, 1954. Monk

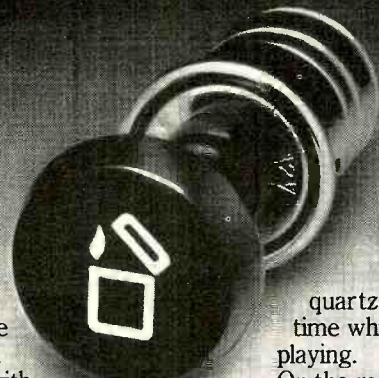
had already made numerous recordings on his own (for Blue Note and Prestige), but this was his first solo effort, an interesting, revealing study of a piano style about which controversy raged at the time. What sounded eccentric in 1954 has long since become extremely accessible, however, and Monk was later to make more successful solo excursions on Riverside and Columbia. This is nevertheless a worthy addition to anyone's Monk collection, though the packaging and poor technical quality does not do the music justice.

First there is the disc itself, which is thick and unnecessarily noisy. The sleeve—which, like the label, misspells Monk's name and two of the titles—has notes that not only are pasted up crookedly, but also seem to have been

acquired that way. They refer to numerous Monk albums, but avoid any mention of this one. Why? Because they (the notes) have been photographed and lifted directly from a recently published book, *The Illustrated Encyclopedia of Jazz* by Brian Case and Stan Britt (Harmony Books, New York, 1978), with no source credits. It's a shame that Monk's fine music should come in such a shoddy package. C.A.

DAVID "FATHEAD" NEWMAN: Keep the Dream Alive. David "Fathead" Newman (flute, saxophone); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Keep the Dream Alive; Destiny; Silver Morning; Freaky Beat; As Good As* (Continued on page 144)

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CIRCLE NO. 24 ON READER SERVICE CARD



Louis Armstrong

It's disturbing to realize that a generation of people now in their twenties have only vaguely heard of Louis "Satchmo" Armstrong (1900-1971). His titanic contributions to jazz and the warmth of his personality as an entertainer made him a national institution during most of his lifetime. Whether his reputation will survive and his memory be revered by others besides jazz aficionados depends on how extensively this new generation is exposed to his recordings.

Two important retrospective albums were issued after his death: "The Genius of Louis Armstrong: 1923-1933" (Columbia G 30416) and "Young Louis Armstrong: 1932-1933" (RCA Bluebird AXM2-5519), both covering his peak period as a trumpeter, the years when he almost singlehandedly determined how jazz would develop. But there was no collection giving a longer view of his career, from his earliest recordings with King Oliver and Fletcher Henderson through the superb Hot Five and Hot Seven sessions, his big-band solo-frontman period, and, finally, his return to small groups in the late Forties, when he moved comfortably into middle age, concentrated on his vocals as much as his horn, and retired his genius in favor of his immense charm and bonhomie.

That lack is now remedied by Time-Life Records' first entry in their new "Giants of

Jazz" series. Drawing from Armstrong's many Columbia, Victor, and Decca sessions, as well as odd-label sides, the collection is handsomely packaged, and the transfer from old 78's has been excellently done. The illustrated accompanying booklet contains a biographical profile by STEREO REVIEW's Chris Albertson and notes on individual performances by John S. Wilson—two gentlemen who write well and know what they're writing about. The selections were made by a committee of jazz scholars, and, as is usual in

*the single greatest
instrumentalist in
the history of jazz*

such cases, individual listeners may differ with some of their choices (with Armstrong what you leave out is almost as important as what you put in, especially with the Hot Five sides). Overall, though, the package is most impressive, and I earnestly hope it will have substantial school and library sales so future

generations can hear who Armstrong was.

If any youngsters happen to be reading this and are wondering what all the fuss is about, it should be stated unequivocally that *Louis Armstrong was the single greatest instrumentalist in the history of jazz, bar none*, and he is so recognized by jazz musicians of all generations. If a "genius" is someone who creates something so original that all subsequent efforts in the same field by anyone else must be judged against it, then Armstrong was surely a genius. Miles Davis said it simpler and better: "You can't play anything on a horn that Louis hasn't played."

LOUIS ARMSTRONG was born in New Orleans on July 4, 1900, and by 1923 he was in Chicago playing second cornet in the Creole Jazz Band led by his idol and surrogate father Joe "King" Oliver. Within three years every jazz musician of the day recognized him as the greatest musical talent the genre had produced or was likely to produce.

Armstrong had enormous lung and lip power, immense stamina, and the ability to casually toss off F's and G's just for the hell of it, though he thought the "prettiest notes" were in the middle register. His imagination was limitless and astonishing, and the combination of his sensitivity and technique was overwhelming. His artistic judgment on what a tune needed—or deserved—was infallible. Give him a so-so number, and he would transform it with his virtuosity—and his generosity; he had a lot to give, and he always gave it. Of course, he relished superior melodies, especially ballads, which he stroked and embellished with his horn and his voice. And while it was his artistic business to take liberties with a tune, he never betrayed one, for he had a conscience. He was a gentleman.

He was also a revolutionary. By the time of the Hot Five sessions (1925-1928) Armstrong had destroyed the old concept of ensemble playing by creating a new and commanding role for the soloist; in doing so he liberated all future generations of jazz musicians, not only trumpeters. His only real artistic competition came from Bix Beiderbecke, whose classical tone and romantic, introspective ideas contrasted with Armstrong's bravura approach. But they respected, even adored each other. In his reminiscences, Armstrong spoke at length about only two other horn players: Joe Oliver, whom he surpassed, and "my boy Bix." (At a rehearsal of the Paul Whiteman orchestra, which featured him, a joyful Bix told arranger Bill Challis: "I was at this club last night and Louis saw me and said, 'Hello, King.'")

ARMSTRONG's career lasted until he died. He was a furious worker, unhappy when he wasn't on the road and playing for people, and he remained popular until the very end. In 1965, at the age when most men retire, he knocked the Beatles out of the number-one spot on the charts with his vocal rendition of *Hello, Dolly!* That was typical of "Satchmo." He was a genius, and what could one do but accept him, marvel at him, and—most of all—enjoy him?

But, institution that he was, he was also very much a down-to-earth, honest man who led a rather adventurous life. His first wife

was a razor-slitting whore, and he once spent ten days in a Los Angeles lock-up for possession of marijuana (in later years he opposed the U.S.'s stiff anti-pot laws, though his own smoking days were long past and he never played while high). He took off on a quick tour of the South in the Thirties, after Dixie gangsters pulled guns on him and told him to take his band to New York. He canceled a 1954 State Department-sponsored goodwill tour overseas to protest the Little Rock school-desegregation fracas, saying, "If the government won't back up my people, the government can go to hell." He scandalized the jazz world by announcing that he admired Guy Lombardo's sax section, and he used—and recommended—a laxative powerful enough to make lesser souls and alimentary canals shudder.

Man and genius, his life was music. For both the new and the already familiar listener there are dozens of treats in the "Giants of Jazz" collection, some of them rare, such as the 1925 *Cake Walking Babies from Home* and two examples of the furtive 1934 Paris session, *On the Sunny Side of the Street* and *Song of the Vipers*. And I would wager that no one, young or old, could be unexcited or unmoved by the many Armstrong classics included here: *Willie the Weeper*, *West End Blues*, *Tight Like This*, *Potato Head Blues*, *Mahogany Hall Stomp*, *Some Sweet Day*, *Pennies from Heaven*, . . . well, enough talking. It's time to listen.

BUYERS of this set, by the way, also receive a copy of *Who's Who of Jazz* by the British trumpeter and historian John Chilton, in a new edition that does not contain the splendid photograph section of the 1972 original. This "Time-Life Records Special Edition," dated 1978, does contain new material, but it's set in small type that may give the reader squint-eye. However, it's great fun to check the entries on the many brilliant musicians who played with Armstrong on the recordings in this set. Louis himself would have had a good time looking up old friends and bandstand mates, reading and chuckling, "Yeah, man."
—Joel Vance

GIANTS OF JAZZ: *Louis Armstrong*, Louis Armstrong (cornet, trumpet, vocals); other musicians. *Dippermouth Blues*; *Copenhagen*; *Cake Walking Babies from Home*; *Cold in Hand Blues*; *My Heart*; *Gut Bucket Blues*; *Heebie Jeebies*; *Cornet Chop Suey*; *Static Strut*; *Georgia Bo Bo*; *Willie the Weeper*; *Wild Man Blues*; *Potato Head Blues*; *Ory's Creole Trombone*; *I'm Not Rough*; *Savoy Blues*; *West End Blues*; *Muggles*; *Tight Like This*; *Knockin' a Jug*; *Mahogany Hall Stomp*; *Ain't Misbehavin'*; *Black and Blue*; *That Rhythm Man*; *Some of These Days*; *Dallas Blues*; *My Sweet*; *Sweethearts on Parade*; *When It's Sleepy-Time Down South*; *Blue Again*; *Star Dust*; *Some Sweet Day*; *On the Sunny Side of the Street*; *Song of the Vipers*; *Jubilee*; *When the Saints Go Marching In*; *Marie*; *2:19 Blues*; *Pennies from Heaven*; *That's for Me*. TIME-LIFE STL-J01 three discs \$19.95, © RUAQA7 \$21.95, © RVAAQ6 \$21.95 (plus \$2.06 shipping and handling charge from Time-Life Records, Time & Life Building, Chicago, Ill. 60611).

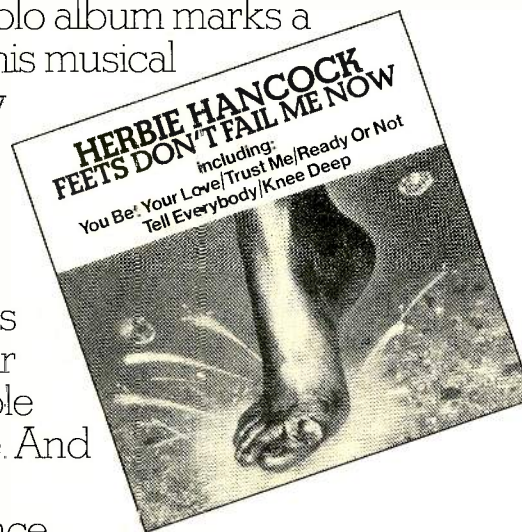
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CIRCLE NO. 32 ON READER SERVICE CARD

You Are; and two others. **PRESTIGE P-10106** \$7.98.

Performance: **Faking it**
Recording: **Good**

David "Fathead" Newman walks through this pop-jazz session playing safe solos, but every once in a while he slips in the kind of masterly phrase that says, "That's what I'd do all the time if I didn't have to earn a living." The album opens with the drummer playing a disco beat, and Newman's flute solo is indistinguishable from Herbie Mann's comfortable mediocrity. On sax, however, Newman sometimes fleetingly declares his independence from the dull proceedings, and those are moments worth hearing. Too bad there are so few of them. **J.V.**

DAVE PELL: Dave Pell's Prez Conference. Dave Pell, Bob Cooper, Gordon Brisker (tenor saxophones); Harry "Sweets" Edison (trumpet); Bill Hood (baritone saxophone); Arnold Ross (piano); Al Henrickson (guitar); Frank De La Rosa (bass); Will Bradley Jr. (drums). *I Never Knew; One O'Clock Jump; Taxi War Dance; Lester Leaps In; Just You, Just Me*; and five others. **GNP/CRESCENDO GNPS 2122 \$7.98.**

Performance: **Son of Supersax**
Recording: **Very good**

This is an album of Lester Young solos multiplied by four. Turning improvised individual statements into ensemble charts is not a new idea; well-known solos have crept into orchestral arrangements from time to time over the years, and Supersax—the group that emerged on Capitol in 1972—was based entirely on the concept of harmonizing Charlie Parker solos. It is a technique that can work beautifully when used in moderation as part of an otherwise fresh arrangement, but it quickly wears thin as a main ingredient.

Here Dave Pell takes some familiar Lester Young solos, combines them with lesser-known ones, and with his colleagues turns them all into smooth ensemble exercises with every note in its proper order but without the tone and character that lent such distinction to Young's originals. This is not the fault of arranger Bill Holman but simply the nature of the beast. A solid Basie-ish rhythm section and occasional comments by trumpeter Harry "Sweets" Edison (who served in Basie's band with Young) make this a very pleasant set to listen and tap one's toes to, but food for the musical mind it is not. **C.A.**

DIZZY REECE/TED CURSON: Blowin' Away. Dizzy Reece, Ted Curson (trumpets); Claude Williamson (piano); Sam Jones (bass); Roy Haynes (drums). *Moose the Mooche; Marjo; All the Things You Are*; and three others. **INTERPLAY IP-7716 \$7.98** (from Interplay Records, P.O. Box 93, Calabasas, Calif. 91302).

Performance: **Rough romp**
Recording: **Good**

You would think the liner notes for this album had been translated from the Bulgarian by a monoglot. Okay, so who reads the things anyway? Even the most horrendous notes can't spoil the pleasure of an album if the music inside is good. I'm sorry to say that is not the case here: trumpeters Dizzy Reece and Ted Curson are a terrible mismatch.

(Continued on page 147)

STEREO REVIEW

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MAY 1979

Reece came to the U.S. in 1959 from Jamaica by way of Europe; that same year, Curson left Charles Mingus to join Eric Dolphy. Though both men were favorably received by critics and fans in the early Sixties, they seemed all but forgotten by the end of the decade. I don't know what Reece has been doing lately, although the notes say he "has written & arranged for a 12 piece Big Band, of which, will be recorded." Judging by this album, Dizzy Reece does not seem to have advanced musically since I first heard him twenty years ago. His playing is extremely unpolished throughout, and he is responsible for some of the sloppiest ensemble work I have heard in a long time.

Curson spent much of his time in Europe during the late Sixties and early Seventies. He has been quite active on the New York jazz scene in the past couple of years, and it looks as if a new generation of Americans is discovering his talent. Unfortunately, we get only glimpses of that talent in this sloppily produced, ill-conceived set of recordings made last summer. C.A.

ARCHIE SHEPP: Archie Shepp in Europe, Volume 1. Archie Shepp (tenor saxophone); Don Cherry (cornet); John Tchicai (alto saxophone); Don Moore (bass); J. C. Moses (drums). *Cisum; Crepuscule with Nellie; When Will the Blues Leave*; and three others. DELMARK DL 409 \$7.98.

Performance: **Import of little import**
Recording: **Good remote**

In the early Sixties, some of New York's avant-garde jazz musicians tried to set up a united front. Their efforts to organize against what was seen (with some justification) as a tone-deaf, racially prejudiced musical establishment never went beyond a series of tempestuous meetings. On the scene at that time, and caught up in the movement's unproductive political discord, was alto saxophonist John Tchicai, a Dane of African descent, whose outré musical ideas had caused a great deal of controversy in his homeland. In December 1962, Tchicai left Denmark for the U.S., and after a few months on the New York scene he was able to secure a booking for himself and four American musicians at Copenhagen's Jazzhus Montmartre club in the early fall of 1963. It was this booking that led to the formation of the New York Contemporary Five, the group heard in this rerelease of an album Delmark originally introduced to American catalogs in 1967.

By 1967, Archie Shepp's had become the quintet's most salable name—which explains why this is presented as a Shepp album—but Don Cherry had the most bankable name in November 1963 when these performances at the Montmartre club all but constituted the NYCF's swan song. Indeed, of the three horn players, only Cherry, playing a dented century-old cornet, demonstrates command of his instrument. While Shepp and Tchicai stumble over the free-form fence at its lowest point, Cherry, who helped Ornette Coleman usher in the style, more or less straddles it, and when he does cross over, he never oversteps the boundaries of music. The rhythm section—bassist Don Moore and drummer J. C. Moses—is in Cherry's league, but this is still not the important record that annotator Terry Martin would have us believe it is. C.A.

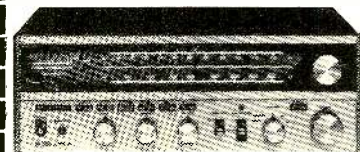
(Continued on page 148)

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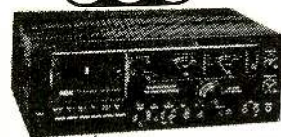
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READER SERVICE NO.	ADVERTISER	PAGE NUMBER
	ADS	116
	Advent Corporation	19
	Akai America, Ltd.	47
1	Allison Acoustics	107
2	Angel/EMI Records	102
3	Audio Discount Warehouse Sales	147
4	Audio-Technica U.S., Inc.	7
5	Audiovox	21
6	Bali Corporation	140
7	B & F Enterprises	144
8	Bib Hi-Fi	36
9	Bib Hi-Fi	38
	Bose Corporation	15, 106
10	BSR (USA), Ltd.-Accutrac	101
11	CBS Records	143
12	Component Warehouse	126
13	Dahlquist	128
14	Datsun	13
15	dbx, Inc.	103
16	Discount Music Club	17
17	Discount Sound	139
18	Discwasher	4
19	Discwasher	22
20	Discwasher	122
21	District Sound, Inc.	135
	Dual	67
22	Electro-Voice, Inc.	24
	Empire Scientific Corp.	2
	Empire Scientific Corp.	130
	Fisher Corp.	9
23	Fosgate Electronics	23
24	Fugitsu	141
25	Fuji Photo Film, USA	117
26	General Motors Corp./Buick Motor Div.	105
27	Harmon Kardon, Inc.	16
28	Harvey's Sound	144
29	Hi-Fi Buys	124
30	Illinois Audio	26
31	Infinity Systems, Inc.	65
32	Institute of Audio Research	144
33	Institute of High Fidelity	123
34	International Hi-Fi Dist.	133
35	J & R Music World	42
	JBL	34, 35
36	Jensen Sound Laboratories	60, 61
37	JVC of America	48
	Kenwood Electronics	Cover 3
38	Kirsch	91
39	Koss Corporation	Cover 4
	Lord Calvert Canadian	71
	Lux Audio of America, Ltd.	87
40	3M Company	125
42	Maxell Corp. of America	92
43	Maxell Corp. of America	110
44	McIntosh Laboratory, Inc.	32
45	Mitsubishi	28, 29
46	MXR Innovations, Inc.	109
47	Nakamichi Research (USA), Inc.	25
	Nikko Electronic Corp. of America	43
48	Oldsmobile	69
49	Oreic Records	108
50	Onkyo	37
51	J. C. Penney	39
52	Phase Linear	63
41	Pickering & Company	31
	Radio Shack	55
53	RTR Speakers	78
54	Sansui Electronics Corp.	41
55	Sharp Electronics	27
56	Shure Brothers	12
57	Shure Brothers	136, 137
58	Sonit Speaker Specialists	129
59	Sony Corporation of America	44
61	Soundcraftsmen	14
62	Sound Machine	129
21	Sound Reproduction, Inc.	135
63	Sparkomatic	111
	Speakerlab	130
64	Stereo Corporation of America	130
	Stereo Discounters	133
65	Studer/Revox America	57
66	TDK Electronics	52, 53
67	TDK Electronics	125
68	Technics by Panasonic	10, 11
69	Top Discount Audio	124
70	Transcriber Co.	59
	United Audio	67
85	U.S. Pioneer	Cover 2, 1
	Viceroy	33
71	Visonik of America	127
	Watts, Cecil E.	20
72	Wisconsin Discount Stereo	135
73	Worldway Inc.	133
	Yamaha International Corp.	51
74	Yashica, Inc.	107

MAY 1979

Simels Contemplates The Grammys



1. What can you say about a twenty-one-year-old music-awards presentation that refuses to die? Here are some phrases that spring immediately to mind: Incurably lame. Unblushingly crass. Leisure-suited. Spectacularly corrupt. Totally irrelevant.

2. Q: Why are the Grammys named after the archaic gramophone? A: Because it would be too embarrassingly appropriate to name them after the contemporary phonograph.

3. 1978 was the year album sales of more than ten million units became commonplace, and yet fewer records cracked the weekly top ten than ever before. It was the year in which it dawned on people that 80 per cent of all the recording artists in the world were signed to either Warner Bros. (and its affiliates) or CBS, the year that any rock musician with even a modicum of sensitivity realized that having a hit record on the charts was suddenly, for the first time in pop-music history, a less-than-honorable ambition (what doth it profit a man, after all, to go multi-platinum and yet lose his soul?). It was also the year that disco, Bee Gees style, swept the Grammy awards.

4. For ages, the thing that has confused me most about the Grammys is that although sales, by and large, seemed to be the only criterion that counted, rock-and-roll was invariably snubbed. Strange, since whatever you think of rock as music, it does *sell*; in fact, the first albums to shatter the multi-platinum barrier ("Frampton Comes Alive" and "Fleetwood Mac") were *rock* records, if relatively "safe" ones. This year, however, the reason has become clear to me: after sales, the next factor that means anything to most voting members of the Recording Academy is "recognizability." (*Translation*: any music that is on TV a lot or gets played at said members' sons' bar mitzvahs.) This explains the triumph of the Brothers Gibb (five awards) and why the only non-disco smasher to win in 1978 was Billy Joel's *Just the Way You Are*, a mushy ballad that has replaced (woe, woe) *Feelings* in the repertoires of the Merv Griffins of this world. It also explains why a classical record that did not receive a single favorable review from a serious critic—Horowitz's

Rachmaninoff Third Concerto—cleaned up: Vladimir, thanks to the Jimmy Carter Live from the White House show, was a Public Broadcasting celebrity.

But where the truth of this theory really becomes apparent is in the Best New Artist competition. In 1976 the nod went to the Starland Vocal Band (remember them?), because they'd had one big single and their own TV show, rather than to Boston, whose album sales at last count were in the neighborhood of twelve million copies. In 1977 Debby Boone, who has yet to duplicate the fluke success of *You Light Up My Life*, beat out Foreigner (who have now had two multi-platinum albums and five consecutive hit singles) simply because she sang the damned song on every prime-time TV variety special over a six-month period. This year, similarly, *Boogie Oogie Oogie*, guaranteed to be the only non-Australian disco song recognizable to middle-aged matrons from Scarsdale, enabled its creators, A Taste of Honey (gimme their real names, quick!), to triumph over both the Cars and Elvis Costello. This is ludicrous on the face of it—except when you consider that there isn't a bar-mitzvah band in the land that has yet learned *Moving in Stereo* and that, despite Linda Ronstadt, Mike Douglas has yet to essay *Alison*.

5. Rona Barrett, who is, granted, hardly a critic to be mentioned in the same breath as, say, James Agee, took notice of this year's Academy Award nominations, marveled that the three top money-making pictures (*Grease*, *Animal House*, and *Superman*) were up for relatively few honors, and announced with some satisfaction that this proved that "Oscar has finally come of age." Assuming that's true (which is doubtful, given the nine nominations for *Heaven Can Wait*), one must remember that Oscar is, after all, *fifty-one*. What are the odds against anyone's making a similar claim for the Grammy thirty years hence?

6. Woody Allen to Diane Keaton in award-winning *Annie Hall*: "All they do in Los Angeles is give awards. Best Fascist Dictator: Adolph Hitler."
—Steve Simels

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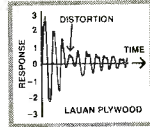
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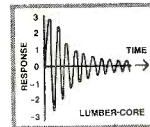
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