

Stereo Review®

• SPECIAL SPEAKER ISSUE •

THE \$100 SPEAKER:

Eight experts rank fifteen of them

LOUDSPEAKER DESIGN:

How the laws of physics get in the way

Julian Hirsch on

COMPUTERIZED SPEAKER TESTING

EQUIPMENT TEST REPORTS

- Aiwa AD-M800U Cassette Deck
- Audio Control "Richter Scale" Equalizer
- Dahlquist DQM-9 Speaker System
- Onkyo CP-1130F Turntable
- Stanton 980LZS Phono Cartridge

DISC SPECIALS

- Carole Bayer Sager • Leo Kottke
- Gary U.S. Bonds • Fats Waller
- Southside Johnny and the Asbury Jukes
- Grateful Dead • Eno, Byrne, and Public Image

WAGNER: *Parsifal*
 JANACEK: *Glagolitic Mass*
 Jessye Norman Sings Berlioz
 The Orpheus Trio Plays French Music



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This year to a list of audible innovations and incredible specifications we have added human engineering features that give the owner of our equipment a new ability to control it and the quality of the sound it produces.

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Our new Quartz Synthesized F-9 Tuner has a Multipath Indicator that goes so far as to tell you when a signal is being reflected off nearby objects or buildings. So you can adjust

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Pioneer's new components bring tangible as well as audible advances to high fidelity.



due to front end overload. And Quartz-PLL Synthesized tuning makes drift impossible.

Unique features on the new Pioneer A-9 Integrated Amp include a Subsonic Indicator. It lights up only when you need to use the Subsonic Filter to get rid of very low frequency interference caused by record warps and such. Inside, a new DC Servo circuit eliminates all capacitors from the signal path so they can't muddy up the signal.

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Our new top-of-the-line turntable, the Linear Tracking PL-L800 is another feat of human engineering. It features a linear motor that drives the tonearm across the track by electromagnetic repulsion—another Pioneer innovation. So it's extraordinarily quiet with no noisy belts, worm gears or pulleys and tracking error is virtually non-existent. The tonearm

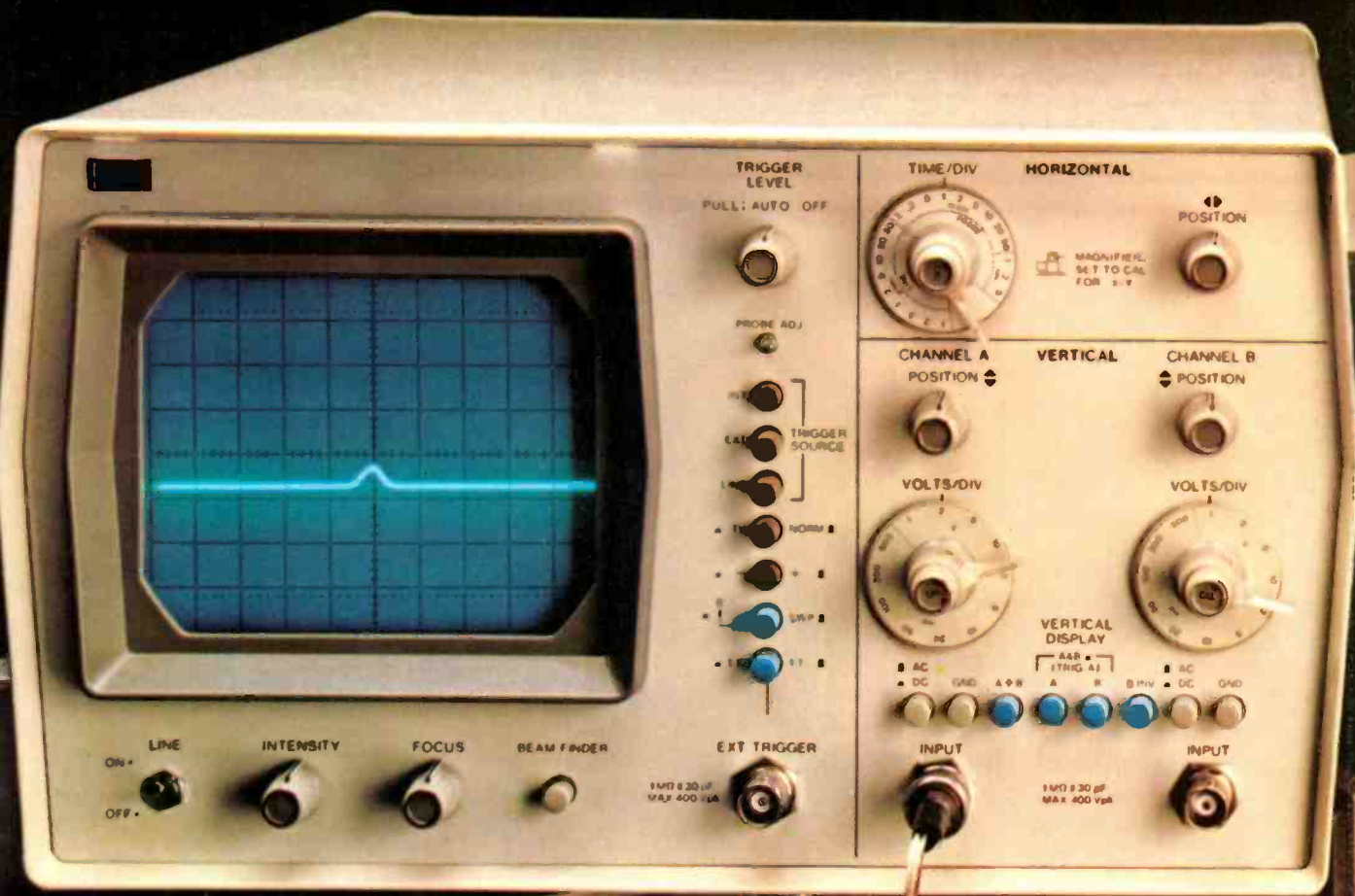
itself is made of Polymer Graphite—an amazing material that dampens resonance. And there's a coaxial suspension system that isolates the platter and tonearm assembly. These features combine to keep what's going on in the room around the turntable from becoming part of the music.

And all this is just the beginning. While the Pioneer concept of human engineering makes our components a pleasure to live with, Pioneer's innovative electronics and technology make them a pleasure to listen to. If you'd like to hear more, visit your nearby Pioneer dealer. You'll see and hear why Pioneer components are #1 with humans who care about music.

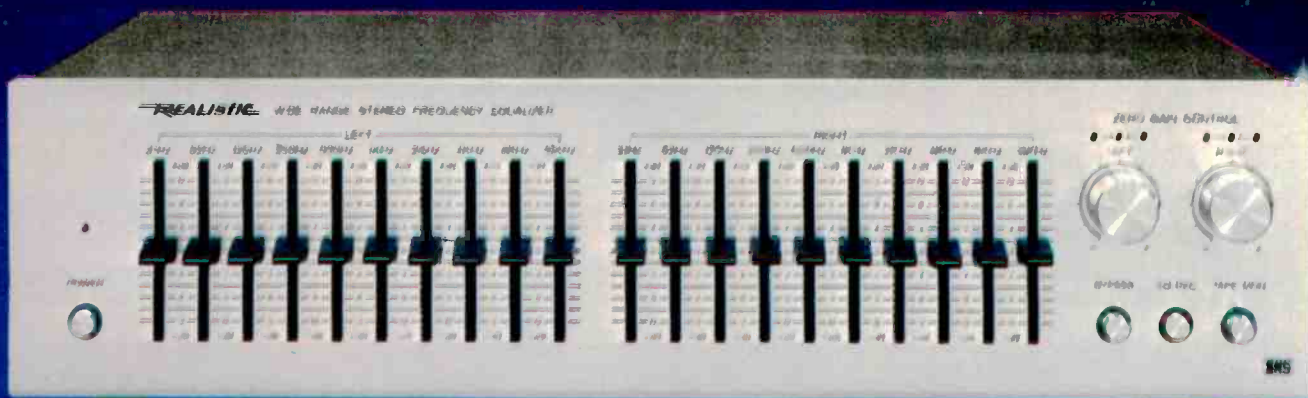
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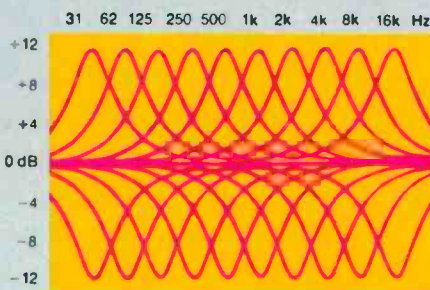
hance the sound of the best speakers even when they're perfectly placed. Electronic equalization is the only way you can extend the response of a speaker.

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AUGUST 1981 • VOLUME 46 • NUMBER 8

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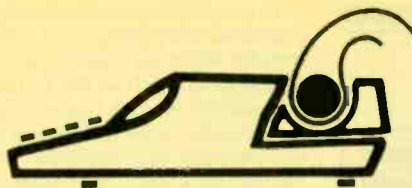
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Edited by William Livingstone

● CBS HAS ABOLISHED LIST PRICES of its products, claiming that ever-rising inflation and thin profit margins make recommended retail prices unrealistic and unnecessary. So far, other U.S. companies have not followed suit, but when PolyGram made a similar move in Great Britain last year, almost all other labels quickly joined in, and there are now no list prices in most European record markets. In reviews this magazine will continue to give prices for companies that supply them; reviews of records on Masterworks, Epic, and the other CBS labels will contain the phrase "no list price."

● U.S. PIANIST ANDRÉ-MICHEL SCHUB, winner of the Sixth Van Cliburn Piano Competition, counts among his winnings a recording contract with the Moss Music Group. Schub's recording debut will be a digitally recorded recital album on MMG's Vox Cum Laude label. Scheduled for fall release, the record will include Brahms' Handel Variations, Liszt's Dante Sonata, and the two Liszt-Paganini Etudes Schub performed on national TV when it was announced that he was the grand prize winner.

● AWARDS: The Gold Baton Award of the American Symphony Orchestra League for 1981 was given to conductor Maurice Abravanel, music director laureate of the Utah Symphony, for distinguished service to music....The 1981 Naumburg International Violin Competition was won by Nadja Salerno-Sonnenberg, a twenty-year-old Italian-American who studies at the Juilliard School in New York....The Memphis State University Distinguished Achievement Award, set up in memory of Elvis Presley, will be given this year to Charlie Rich on August 16, the fourth anniversary of Presley's death.

● WEA LABELS WILL ADOPT THE CX SYSTEM of noise reduction developed by CBS to reduce surface noise on records and extend their dynamic range. Described in Stereo Review in July, the system requires a CX decoder to realize its full benefits, but CBS claims that encoded discs played on regular hi-fi

equipment sound the same as ordinary records. The first CX decoders should be on the market this summer, and CBS has already released two recordings in CX-encoded form: Korngold's Violanta on CBS Masterworks 35909, reviewed here in July, and "Sanctuary" by New Music on Epic NFE 37314. WEA is the first record company other than CBS to adopt the CX system. Records affected will be those on Warner Brothers, Elektra, Asylum, Nonesuch, Atlantic, and the labels WEA distributes.

● A NEW FM-TUNER DESIGN BY BOB CARVER of the Carver Corporation is claimed to break through the sensitivity limit of conventional FM circuitry and also to suppress multipath interference. According to Stereo Review's Technical Director Larry Klein, A-B listening tests of the Carver prototype against Julian Hirsch's best tested tuner (the \$2,000 Micro CPU) showed that most stations were brought in equally well by both, but on at least eight distant stations the Carver unit provided a clean full-stereo signal against the CPU's hissy, raspy mono signal. The tuner has a projected price of \$450 and may be available by late fall.

● FRENCH JAZZ PIANIST CLAUDE BOLLING, who records for both CBS Masterworks and Angel, is touring summer music festivals across the U.S. in August with flutist Jean-Pierre Rampal and guitarist Alexandre Lagoya, who were his collaborators on the best-selling CBS album "Picnic Suite" (M 35864). Bolling's latest album is "Toot Suite" (CBS FM 36731), music for piano, bass, drums, and trumpet, released in July. The trumpet tooter on "Toot Suite" is Bolling's compatriot Maurice André.

● EXXON'S GREAT PERFORMANCES TV SERIES, which is on reruns this summer, offers second chances to see two acclaimed musical programs. Airing on August 17 is When Hell Freezes Over, I'll Skate, a show based on the works of black poets, and Frank Loesser's Broadway musical The Most Happy Fella with bass Giorgio Tozzi will be shown on August 24. Check PBS stations for time.

Speaking of Music...

By William Anderson



GERIATRIC ROCK

An image from a TV drama found a home in my mind some years back and won't move out. The story is set in the future in an underground city beneath greater Los Angeles. A nuclear holocaust has turned the earth above into a nightmare of radioactive gases swirling over a landscape of blasted concrete. A few survivors have managed to create a mean existence for themselves deep in a cramped rabbit warren of air-locked bunkers interlaced with old communication tunnels. Not so cramped, however, that there isn't room to feed the spirit in a tiny sardine can of a "night club" (it is, of course, *always* night down there). A rock band, outfitted with electric guitars and full Woodstockery, is playing, and as the camera moves in closer we discover that its members—and the audience as well—are all... decrepit octogenarians! Shocking, of course, but also, when you come to think

about it, wrongheaded: it assumes that people will cling to their teenage appetites into their dotage, and that there will still be someone around to satisfy them.

The fallacy is not an uncommon one, and it seems to be shared by at least a few members of the American recording industry. For close to twenty years now record producers have flattered themselves that they could not only predict but control the public's taste in pop music. But business has been bad lately, it may be getting worse, and punk rock has done little to shake the money tree. What to do? Press the replay button. Bring back early r-&-b with Gary U. S. Bonds and the folkie ethos with Glenn Yarbrough, revisit psychedelia with Brian Eno, David Byrne, and Public Image, have another go at hippietude with the perdurable Grateful Dead—all, by the way, reviewed in this issue.

These releases may be of some interest to precocious nostalgists, a few curious youngsters for whom the days of the Sixties are as dear (and as dead) as the Twenties were to their parents, but the larger target is what it has been for close to a couple of decades: that demographic imperative known as the Population Bulge. The target has shifted and spread, however; the once predictable Rock Generation, now over thirty, can't be trusted to respond as it used to—has evidently, amazingly, developed a mind of its own. It has decided, for one thing, that records are too expensive (they aren't, in actuality: if disc prices had kept up with inflation they'd be \$20 to \$25 each by now), which is an indirect way of saying that people have found other, better things to do with their money: marriage, home, and family, other preemptive hobby interests, even (horrors!) other music. Further, they no longer need rock for non-musical reasons—as a weapon in the generational battle against their parents and their parents' music, or as a rude noise calculated to maximally offend the ears of the rest of the Establishment, for they are themselves (or shortly will be) the Establishment.

MOSTLY, however, it is a matter of maturing tastes. The simplicisms of rock no longer satisfy; crudity, ineptitude, and downright amateurism are no longer seen as necessarily the only proofs of Honesty, Sincerity, and Commitment (they may, in fact, be no more than quite ordinary expressions of the lust for loot). Music that is highly crafted, lyrics that make a minimum of sense are not therefore automatically phony, and they may even command a little respect for the work and craft that have gone into creating them. We are, in short, moving slowly but inexorably in the direction of a more sophisticated musical rhetoric in American popular music, one addressed to a more discriminating audience—but no jazz is not coming back. □

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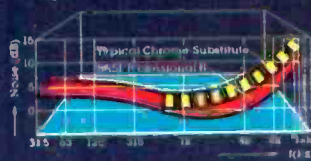
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Julian Hirsch of Hirsch-Houck Labs: "The effect strains credibility—had I not experienced it, I probably would not believe it... the 'miracle' is that it uses only the two normal front speakers."

Larry Klein, Technical Director of Stereo Review: "... it brings the listener substantially closer to that elusive sonic illusion of being in the presence of a live performance."

High Fidelity put it this way: "... seems to open a curtain and reveal a deployment of musical forces extending behind, between and beyond the speakers... terrific."

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Marilyn Horne

● *Bravo* to William Anderson's "Fame" editorial in June! I had the pleasure recently of seeing Marilyn Horne in concert in Pasadena and enthusiastically agree with Mr. Anderson's praise of her. However, after the concert I heard the woman seated in front of me criticize Miss Horne for not being more lively or ebullient on stage (perhaps she was expecting cartwheels or a comedy monologue between songs?). This woman apparently missed the subtle but intense excitement that Marilyn Horne conveys by her total command of the music she performs and by her obvious concentration on and dedication to her art.

KATHY M. CARR
Pismo Beach, Calif.

Juice Newton

● Noel Coppage's June review of the latest effort by Juice Newton refers to it as her "second album." In fact, "Juice" is only her second (at least) album for *Capitol*. She had several previous, relatively obscure releases on RCA teamed with her back-up band Silver Spur (which included some of her current accompanists, such as Otha Young). Also, regarding Mr. Coppage's statement that "... Newton does do some exciting new things with *Angel* [of the *Morning*]"—which is welcome back in my house in any case...—the original "monster pop hit" by Merilee Rush (on Bell Records) is *still* my pick, and it never left my house.

AL PETERS
Terre Haute, Ind.

Redpath Sings Burns

● Thank you for the June "Best of the Month" review of "Jean Redpath Sings Robert Burns." I am fully in accord with Paul Kresh's impressions of Jean Redpath. Having had the privilege of meeting her recently, I can assure you that she is a most vital and talented lady.

Readers may be further interested to know that Serge Hovey of Pacific Palisades,

California, played an essential role in the research that made Miss Redpath's two Burns albums possible. Mr. Hovey has collected all 323 of Robert Burns' songs and matched them with the original Scottish folk tunes (for which Burns either wrote new lyrics or emended the original versions). He then composed arrangements for each song. The songs are organized in twelve volumes, still in manuscript form, entitled *The Robert Burns Song Book*.

Hamish Henderson, of Edinburgh's School of Scottish Studies, reviewed the work of Hovey with these words: "Having listened to a number of his arrangements, as interpreted by Jean Redpath, it seems to me... that we have here an out-of-the-ordinary artist[ic] phenomenon, an amalgam of creative flair and scholarly exactitude which makes these settings a really formidable achievement."

LYNN SHEVITZ
Pacific Palisades, Calif.

Small-car Stereo

● I love the illustration for the car-stereo article on page 58 of the June issue, but I can't find the artist's name. Who dunnit?

CHARLES BEAR
Seattle, Wash.

Contributing Editor Lincoln Perry's name appears in Lilliputian type at the lower righthand corner of his drawing.

Bang & Olufsen

● Kudos, twice, for the June STEREO REVIEW. Once is for the test report on the Bang & Olufsen Beogram 8000 record player. Already owning one, I have, of course, arrived at the same very positive conclusions as Julian Hirsch.

Kudos also for Joel Vance's review of Rick Springfield's "Working Class Dog." Springfield is an artist deserving of far more recognition than he has received in the past. Each of the four albums he has released since 1972 has been on a different label; I only hope that RCA will finally give

(Continued on page 10)



How to go straight without losing your balance.

Pure engineering logic tells you a straight tonearm has lower effective mass than a curved one. But a straight arm isn't necessarily a better arm. Nor is a turntable better just because it has one.

When JVC engineers design a turntable like the L-A31 shown here, they design every part with care and imagination. That's why JVC's tonearm has the extra advantage of Tracing Hold.

Tracing Hold places the arm's pivot point above its center of gravity. Now, gravity is an ally. It maintains equilibrium constantly as the stylus tracks your record. This means better tracking and longer stylus life.

Our engineers didn't stop there. Recognizing that a straight arm needs protection against resonance, they fashioned a rigid, low-mass carbon fiber headshell that's resistant to vibration. So your stylus responds to signals in the groove and nothing else.

An arm like this needs a great turntable to go with it. And the L-A31 measures up: wow and flutter 0.03% WRMS. Rumble -75 dB DIN B or better. Plus a non-cogging DC direct-drive motor that applies torque in a smooth, linear transfer of power. There's also front-

panel controls, $\pm 6\%$ pitch control, strobe and tonearm lift-off and return.

So before you jump at just any straight-armed turntable, check out a JVC. Because there's more to turntable performance than the shape of the arm.



Front-panel controls for convenience.



Low-mass, non-resonant headshell.

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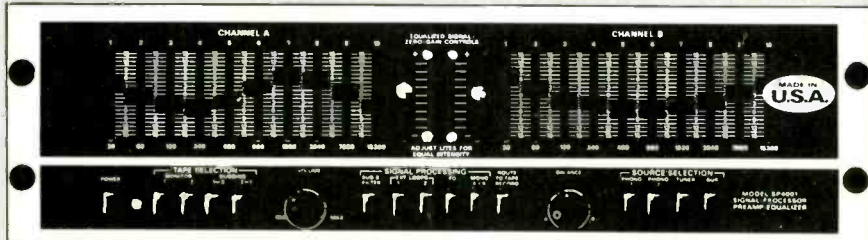
Soundcraftsmen

"Guaranteed to improve and enhance any fine component sound system"

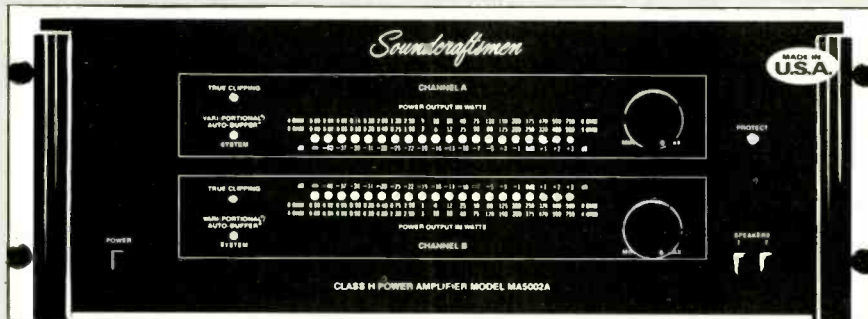
Knowledgeable Audio Critics always specify separate Power Amps, Preamps and EQ's for the finest sound available... Soundcraftsmen builds, in the finest American Tradition, coordinated separates for a superbly matched stereo system... or, as individual components to upgrade your existing system...



Digital Quartz PLL 5-digit readout, for all present and future station spacing requirements... 14-station pre-set... Exclusive Memory-Retention circuits for years of program storage, no external power required... 3-way Automatic/Manual scanning/tuning selection... Variable output level controls... 19" rack-mount... Walnut side panels... \$449.00



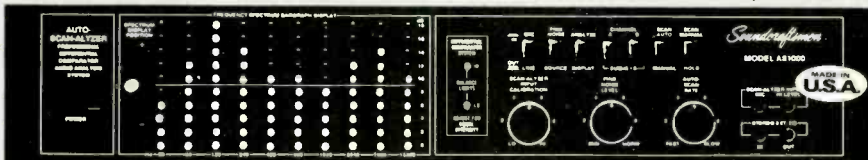
Dual stereo/mono (4 separate) phono preamps enable phenomenal -97dB S/N ratio... Our new Signal Processor preamps act as a complete control center, with push-button patching and switching capabilities similar to a mixing board... features 16 front-panel control functions... 3 models, from \$399.00



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This is the world's only low-cost PRO Real-Time Analyzer... no other High Fidelity analyzer is accurate enough (0.1dB) for demanding professional applications... Our revolutionary Patent-Pending Differential-Comparator circuitry provides 0.1dB readout accuracy. Automatic-sweep individual octave Bar-Graph display is variable from .1 to 10 second intervals... \$499.00

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him the promotion he so richly deserves. (By the way, Springfield spells the name in *Inside Silvia* with an *i*, not a *y*, so "the point is prob'ly moot" whether it refers to Shakespeare's "Who Is Sylvia?")

MARTIN TANKENSON
Hollywood, Calif.

Yes/No

● I'm writing to comment on Joel Vance's review of the Yes album "Yesshows" in the May issue. I regret to say that my opinion is not favorable. Basically, the only message the reviewer sent was his apparent dislike of the group, nothing about the merits and/or faults of the recording.

To Mr. Vance's statement that the album's opening "Las Vegas-type fanfare" should invoke laughter, all I can offer is my own amusement that he seems unaware the "fanfare" is from one of the most majestic pieces of classical music ever written, the finale of Stravinsky's *The Firebird*. Most people who know anything about classical music consider the composition nothing less than extraordinary. I must also add that the recording of "Yesshows" is very poor indeed, about the equivalent of an excellent "bootleg" tape made from somewhere in the first tier of the auditorium.

PETER GRAVINA
Teaneck, N.J.

Music Editor James Goodfriend replies: *The music reader Gravina refers to may once have been from Stravinsky's Firebird, but I cannot bring myself to believe that he or any other listener exposed to it as it sounds on this record would ever dub it "extraordinary," "majestic," or even, for that matter, "classical." I think it is aptly described in this incarnation (even without mention of its previous one) as a "Las Vegas-type fanfare." The context allows virtually nothing else.*

By the way, compositional credit for this selection on the record is given to Chris Squire, not Stravinsky, even in hyphenated form. Why? Because, presumably, Firebird is out of copyright. The excerpt is looked upon by the artists, producer, and record company as no more than a bit of public-domain material. So much for the respect afforded to this music by those who are using it.

I would, however, agree with Mr. Gravina that the word "good" should never have been used to describe the technical recording job; it's documentarily passable at best—if you happen to want this particular document.

Another Rodrigues Fan

● The audio field is made up of dedicated professionals who in many cases are willing to gamble hundreds of thousands of dollars to back a theory. Though for many of us audio is a hobby as well as a profession, we take our work very seriously! I think it's fantastic that through Charles Rodrigues' cartoons in STEREO REVIEW we are allowed the opportunity to laugh at ourselves.

RONALD E. WILCOX
Sonic Research, Inc.
Danbury, Conn.

When you're ready to "face" the music we have a tip for reduced distortion



Whether you are seeking to reproduce the full dynamic range in the grooves of today's new superdiscs, or simply to obtain maximum listening pleasure from treasured "oldies" in your record collection, you need a phono cartridge that will deliver optimum trackability with minimum distortion.

Because the phono cartridge is the only point of direct contact between the record and your entire stereo system, its role is critical to faithful sound re-creation. That's why upgrading your phono cartridge is the single most significant (and generally least costly) improvement you can make to your stereo system.

To that end Shure now offers the Hyperelliptical Stylus Tip configuration—first introduced on the critically acclaimed V15 Type IV—in a full line of cartridges with a broad range of prices.

The Hyperelliptical Stylus Tip has been called the most significant advance in decades in tip geometry. It has a narrower and more uniform elongated contact area that results in significantly reduced intermodulation and harmonic distortion.

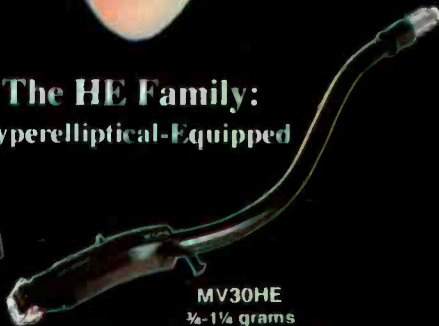
Look over the list at left to see which Shure HE cartridge best matches your tracking force requirements.

Shure has been the top-selling cartridge manufacturer for the past 23 years. For full details on this remarkable line of cartridges write for AL667.

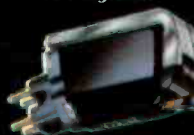
The HE Family: Hyperelliptical-Equipped



V15 Type IV
¾-1¼ grams



MV30HE
¾-1¼ grams



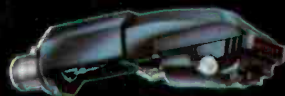
V15 LT
1¼ grams



V15 Type III-HE
¾-1¼ grams



M97HE
¾-1½ grams



M97HE-AH
(with attached headshell)
¾-1½ grams



M97 LT
1¼ grams



M95HE
¾-1½ grams



M75HE Type 2
¾-1½ grams



M75HE-J Type 2
1¼-2½ grams

Go with the leader—Shure.



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In Canada: A. C. Simmonds & Sons Limited
Manufacturers of high fidelity components, microphones,
sound systems and related circuitry.



Lower-price Infinity Reference Standard Speaker System

□ Infinity's \$650 Reference Standard II speaker incorporates much of the basic design technology used in the \$20,000 Infinity Reference Standard. The Reference Standard II has two 10-inch woofers, three 5-inch dipole midrange units, and two EMIT flat-diaphragm tweeters. Both woofers and midrange drivers have polypropylene cones. One woofer has a crossover frequency of 60 Hz and operates only in the sub-bass; the other has a crossover frequency of 125 Hz. Stated frequency response is 38 to 32,000 Hz ± 2 dB. The recommended amplifier-power range is from 38 to 250 watts per channel. The main baffle is a precisely curved solid oak wing designed to minimize undesirable diffraction effects. The speaker system is finished in golden-oak veneer; the grille cloth is dark brown. Dimensions are 48 x 22 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 18 inches.

Circle 120 on reader service card



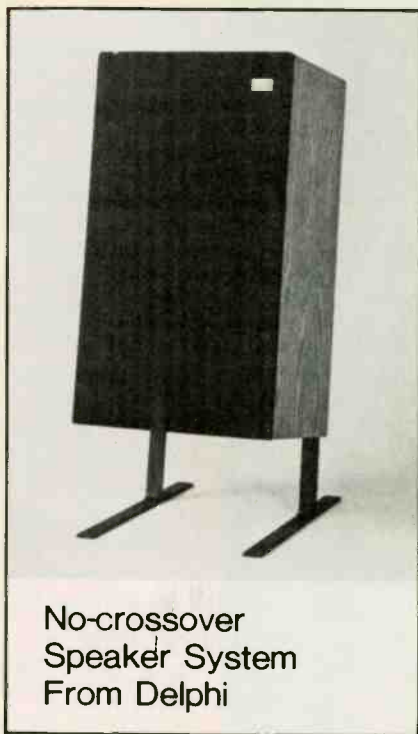
KM Labs' Speaker Accessory Tightens Bass Response

□ The SSO 300 "Servo Sub-Octavator" from KM Laboratories is said to tighten and extend the bass response of any conventional speaker/amplifier system by up to an octave, to improve low-frequency transient response, and to reduce distortion. The device is based on motional-feedback princi-

ples: it measures the input signal, compares it through a servo circuit with the actual motion of the speaker cone, detects the differences, and applies a corrective signal. The effect is to "clean up" the bass response and to regulate the normally uncontrolled over-excursion of the woofer; it also produces additional low-frequency output.

The unit's controls include a speaker-matching function and a knob for adding bass compensation in 1.5-dB steps. A test button operates a 128-Hz oscillator for setting up the system; the correct settings are indicated by LEDs. The device connects between the preamplifier and power-amp sections of a system and also requires connections to the speakers. General specifications include an input impedance of 20,000 ohms and total harmonic distortion of 0.01 per cent. The action of the bass-processing system is from 0.7 to 200 Hz. Price: \$399. KM Laboratories, Inc., Dept. SR, 342 Madison Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10017.

Circle 121 on reader service card

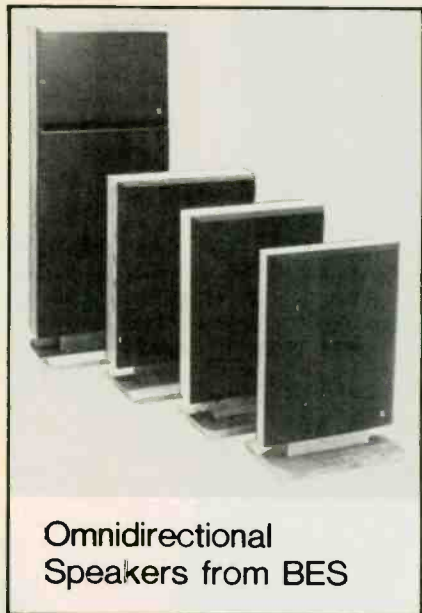


No-crossover Speaker System From Delphi

□ The new Delphi Speaker "utilizes two 8-inch drivers to cover almost the entire frequency range" with high frequencies "augmented by a single soft-dome tweeter." System frequency response is given as 40 to 20,000 Hz. Nominal impedance is 4 ohms; sensitivity is a 93-dB sound-pressure level at 1 meter with a 1-watt input. Recommended amplifier power is 10 to 300 watts. Dimensions are 25 x 14 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 11 $\frac{1}{4}$ inches; weight is 47 pounds. Walnut- or oak-veneer finishes are available; the stand shown is optional. Price: \$325. Delphi Speaker Systems, Inc.,

Dept. SR, 9826 West Pico Boulevard, Los Angeles, Calif. 90035.

Circle 122 on reader service card



Omnidirectional Speakers from BES

□ The BES line of four high-fidelity loudspeakers is said to offer omnidirectional dispersion from molded-polymer diaphragms. Some models use a piezoelectric driver that energizes a corner section of the diaphragm through a parabolically contoured fiber coupling cone. Specifications for the largest model, the four-driver SM 300, include a frequency response of 30 to 22,000 Hz and sensitivity of 93 dB sound-pressure level. Minimum recommended amplifier power is 25 watts, nominal impedance is 8 ohms, and minimum impedance is 6 ohms. Dimensions are 53 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 22 x 6 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches; weight is 75 pounds. Price: \$640. BES, Inc., Dept. SR, 345 Fischer Street, Costa Mesa, Calif. 92626.

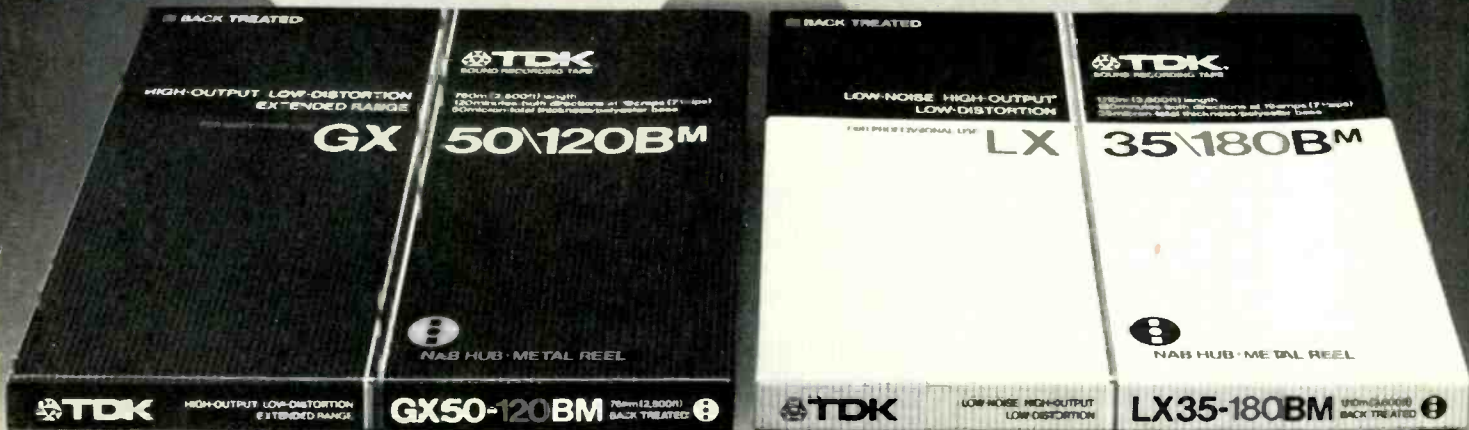
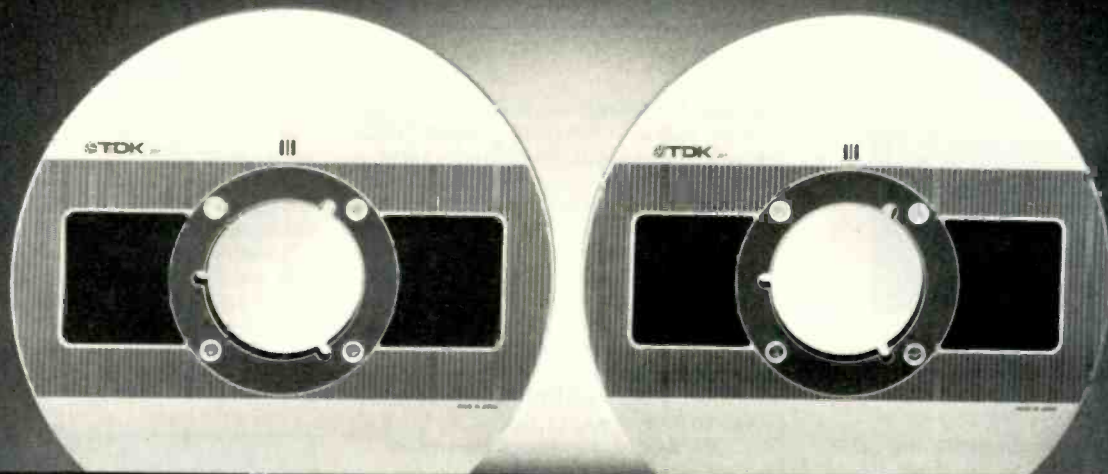
Circle 123 on reader service card



Soundcraftsmen Power Amp with Spectrum Display

□ The octave-band spectrum display in Soundcraftsmen's RA7503 power amplifier

(Continued on page 14)



TDK brings two new standards to open reel.

Raising sound standards is nothing new to TDK. For years, TDK cassettes have set reference standards in metal and high bias. Now TDK announces two breakthroughs in open reel — GX and LX. Both are formulated to be fully compatible with your present system. You don't have to rebias to appreciate them.

TDK GX Studio Mastering tape handles the most critical demands of live music mastering beautifully. TDK's new ultra refined ferric oxide particle gives GX superior MOL, low distortion and a wide dynamic range. Equally impressive is TDK LX. Its super refined particle gives it high performance with low noise and low distortion throughout an extended frequency range. LX is ideal for both professional and audiophile use.

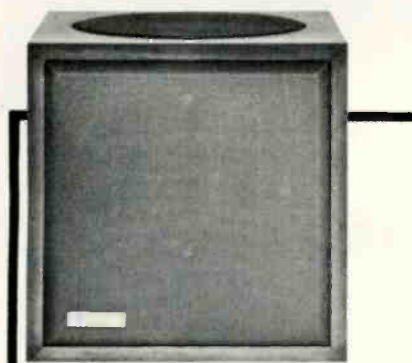
The refinements don't stop with the

formulations. A unique calendering and binding process rivets the particles to the tape surface, making dropouts practically a thing of the past. A special graphite and carbon backcoating, found on all GX and most LX tapes, reduces friction for the smoothest possible winding. At the same time, it prevents static discharge and reduces wow and flutter.

These high standards are carried through to the newly designed 10" metal and 7" plastic reels. Each has a separately molded hub and flange to ensure circularity and high strength. If you think open reel has gone as far as it can go, listen to the finest. TDK GX and LX. They could open up a whole new standard of recording excellence.

 **TDK**

Le Cube.



The **ALLISON:SIX™** is our smallest loudspeaker system. It is an 11-inch cube incorporating the Allison® Room-Matched® design principle.

While compact, the model Six is not a "mini" system in any sense. Its low-frequency output is flat to below 50 Hz with reasonable system efficiency. The highest audible frequencies are reproduced smoothly and dispersed uniformly by the same convex-diaphragm tweeter used in the most expensive Allison models. Allison Sixes are accurate, full-range loudspeaker systems, without allowance for size or price.

Revue du Son, in a feature review* said "La 'petite' Allison Six est une grande enceinte [loudspeaker]."

Full-range performance is possible from loudspeakers that can be used as bookends on an open shelf. The Allison Six costs \$160 with walnut grained vinyl cabinet and \$172 in black or white lacquer.

Descriptive literature, including complete specifications, is available on request.

For literature and information call (800) 225-4791 [in MA (617) 237-2670] or send coupon.

*Revue du Son, No. 32 (November, 1979).



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permits continuous monitoring of the amplifier output's frequency content. Additional monitoring facilities are provided by two twenty-LED output-level indicators. A "true clipping" indicator for each channel is triggered by a clipped waveform. The amplifier section is rated at 250 watts per channel into 8 ohms with total harmonic distortion of 0.09 per cent. Class H circuitry enables the unit to put out 375 watts per channel into 4-ohm loads. Transient intermodulation distortion (TIM) is less than 0.02 per cent, signal-to-noise ratio better than 105 dB. Price: \$1,149.

Circle 124 on reader service card



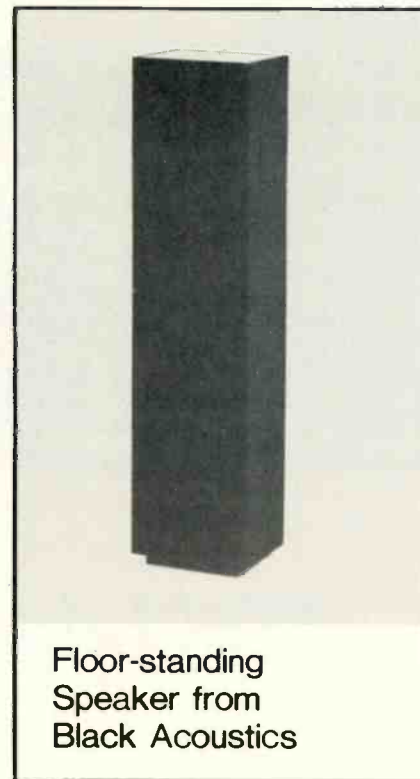
All-in-One System
From Pioneer

□ Pioneer's "Syscom" series of component systems includes the Syscom 5000 (shown), which contains a direct-coupled integrated amplifier, an AM/FM stereo tuner, a fully automatic direct-drive turntable, a metal-capable cassette deck, two "oversized" three-way bookshelf speaker systems, and a highboy cabinet with glass doors and easy-rolling casters.

Specifications for the SA-710 amplifier include continuous output power of 65 watts per channel into 8-ohm loads and an RIAA-equalization accuracy of ± 0.2 dB. The unit has Fluroscan output-level meters. The CT-F615 deck also has Fluroscan meters along with an electronically controlled d.c. servomotor. Wow-and-flutter is rated at 0.05 per cent (wrms), frequency response as 20 to 20,000 Hz (with metal tape), and signal-to-noise ratio as more than 68 dB (Dolby-B circuits on). The PL-260 turntable has a wow-and-flutter rating of 0.025 per cent (wrms), an S-shape static-balanced tone arm, and an induced-magnet-type cartridge. The TX-610 tuner has a mono sensitivity of 1.8 microvolts and an 82-dB stereo signal-to-noise ratio (with an 85-dBf signal at the antenna terminals). Frequency

response is 20 to 15,000 Hz ± 0.2 , -0.1 dB. The CS-710 speakers are bass-reflex designs with 12-inch woofers, 4-inch midranges, and 2 $\frac{3}{8}$ -inch cone tweeters. Frequency range is given as 32 to 20,000 Hz, sensitivity as 91 dB sound-pressure level at 1 meter with a 1-watt input. The cabinet that houses the system includes space for record storage and measures 20 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 51 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 17 $\frac{1}{4}$ inches. Price: \$1,499.95.

Circle 125 on reader service card



Floor-standing
Speaker from
Black Acoustics

□ Black Acoustics' "Night" loudspeaker is a three-way system with thermoplastic coatings on its drivers that are said to aid in damping cone ringing. Magnetic-fluid damping and aluminum voice-coil bobbins enhance power handling. Frequency response is given as 41 to 19,500 Hz ± 3 dB. Impedance is nominally 6 ohms with a minimum of 4.5 ohms. Sensitivity is 87 dB sound-pressure level at 1 meter with a 1-watt input. Dimensions are 40 x 10 x 8 inches; weight is 35 pounds. The speakers are finished in black or camel grille cloth with rosewood trim or in brown or beige cloth with oak. The Night is sold in pairs matched for improved stereo acoustic imaging. Price: \$750 per pair. Black Acoustics, Dept. SR, 1760 Monrovia, Suite A-22, Costa Mesa, Calif. 92627.

Circle 126 on reader service card

(Continued on page 16)

Free details on a different kind of record club

offering... BACH, BEETHOVEN, BRAHMS, FLEETWOOD MAC, LINDA RONSTADT, CHICAGO, KANSAS BARRY MANILOW, BOSTON, ELTON JOHN, JAMES TAYLOR, JEAN-LUC PONTY, CROSBY, STILLS & NASH, STEVE MILLER BAND, PETER FRAMPTON, BARBRA STREISAND, EAGLES, CHUCK MANGIONE and every other composer and artist in print.

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New Car Stereo Products

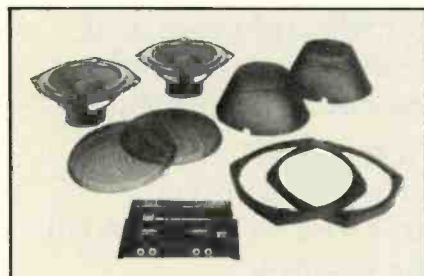
latest automotive audio equipment and accessories



**AM/FM/Cassette
Player from Mitsubishi**

□ The Mitsubishi CZ-725 is an in-dash AM/FM/cassette player intended for use with an external power amplifier. DIN connectors are used to attach its low-level outputs to the amplifier. Features include auto-reverse, Dolby noise reduction, an EQ switch for metal and chrome tapes, locking fast-forward/rewind, tape-program selector, fader and balance controls for a four-speaker system, separate bass and treble controls, loudness control, powered antenna lead, and different-color dial illumination for AM (amber) and FM (green). Tape frequency response is specified as 50 to 12,000 Hz, wow-and-flutter is rated at 0.15 per cent wrms, and signal-to-noise ratio (with Dolby) is 57 dB. The CZ-725 is approximately 6¼ x 2 x 4¾ inches. Price: \$269.95.

Circle 127 on reader service card

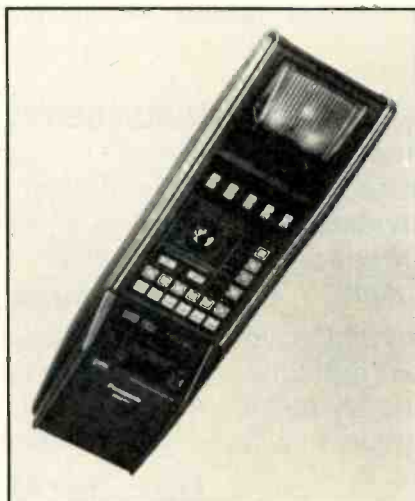


**ADS Subwoofers with
Electronic Crossover**

□ The two-channel ADS CS400 Automotive Subwoofer System consists of a pair of extra-long-throw 7-inch bass drivers using the proprietary ADS "Stiffite" cones and the AX-1 Active Crossover Network, a 12-dB-per-octave unit designed to be powered by 12 volts d.c. The crossover may be set at either 75 or 150 Hz for proper matching of the subwoofers with the main speakers; a separate power amplifier is required. The response of the speakers is -3 dB at 38 Hz with a resonant frequency of 43 Hz, and a 1-watt input will produce a sound-pressure level of 92 dB at 1 meter (these are lab figures and may vary in use depending on the installation). The drivers will handle a nominal 60 watts of power, are 3 inches deep,

and weigh 3¼ pounds each. The AX-1's total harmonic distortion is 0.05 per cent, its signal-to-noise ratio 82 dB. It measures 3¼ x 6¼ x 1½ inches and weighs 1 pound. The system comes with grilles for both standard and inverted driver mounting, hardware, and cables. Price: \$250.

Circle 128 on reader service card



**Panasonic's
Overhead-mounted
Autosound System**

□ The newest and most elaborate model in Panasonic's line of "Cockpit" overhead-mounted car-stereo consoles is the RM-710, which incorporates a stereo cassette deck, five-band graphic equalizer, FM/AM tuner, digital clock, and dome light. The tuner features electronic soft-touch tuning with presets for six FM and six AM stations as well as a variety of seek-and-scan functions. The equalizer allows 12 dB of boost or cut at 60, 250, 1,000, 3,500, and 10,000 Hz. The preamplifier section has up and down volume-control buttons with LED level indicators, a muting switch that drops the volume 20 dB, a loudness switch, and a joystick balance/fader control for left/right channels and front/rear speakers. Control settings are shown by ten LED indicators.

The total output of the RM-710's power amplifier is 60 watts (10 watts each for two front speakers, 20 watts each for two rear ones) from 20 to 20,000 Hz with 0.5 per cent total harmonic distortion. The digital clock can also serve as a frequency display for the tuner, and an automatic distant/local selector and engine-noise quieting circuits are built into the system. The cassette deck includes Dolby noise reduction as well as a sensor for automatic program selection. It also has auto-reverse/auto-replay, lock-

ing fast-forward and rewind, a bias/EQ selector for metal and chrome tapes, and ignition-key-off soft eject. Price: \$1,399.

Circle 129 on reader service card

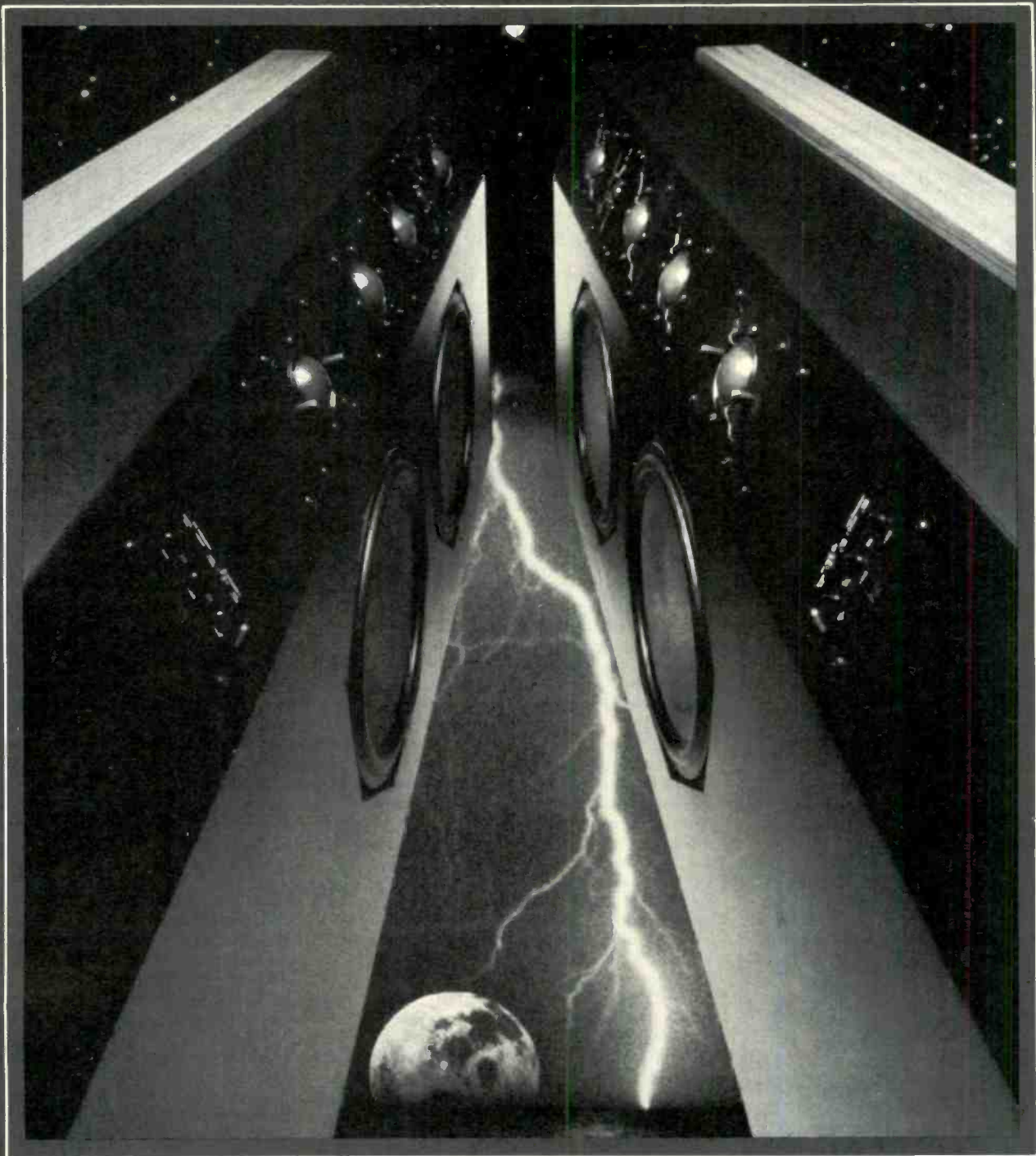


**Hannover's New
"Hole Solution" for
Speaker Mounting**

□ The "Hole Solution" from Hannover Products is a 1-inch-deep ring of nonresonant polycarbonate that is intended to make it possible to mount car speakers with large magnets in shallow spaces. The Hole Solution fits between the mounting surface and the rear of the speaker and is claimed not to alter the speaker's sound. Different sizes are available to accommodate round speakers from 5¼ to 6½ inches in diameter (with either three- or four-hole mounting arrangements), and a larger, oval version is available for 6 x 9-inch speakers. Prices: \$4.75 to \$5.95 per pair for the round units, \$8.95 each for the ovals. Hannover Products, Dept. SR, 815 East El Camino Real, Sunnyvale, Calif. 94087.

NOTE: All product descriptions and specifications quoted in these columns are based on materials supplied by the manufacturers, who will respond directly to reader requests for further information.

Domestic inflation and fluctuations in the value of the dollar overseas affect the price of merchandise imported into this country. Please be aware that prices quoted in this issue are therefore subject to change.



A Monitor Standard for the Eighties and Beyond

The ADS L2030 is a professional-standard speaker system which literally sets new industry standards for dynamic realism in sonic reproduction.

A "monitor", by simple definition, is a speaker system chosen for use in recording and broadcast studios to enable producers and engineers to evaluate the sound being put on tape, disc or the air waves. A true monitor speaker must thus possess certain basic qualities. These include a useful frequency range spanning the entire audible spectrum, a wide dynamic range, predictable and reliable performance. Although these requirements seem straightforward, modern sound recording is undergoing a technological revolution—better, quieter electronic components,

advanced noise reduction systems, digital recording and processing, and highly sophisticated disc cutting/production techniques—which tests the frequency and dynamic range of monitor speakers as never before.

For more information write ADS, Department SR 25 or call 1-800-824-7883 (California 1-300-852-7777) toll free and ask for operator 483



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The wave of the future

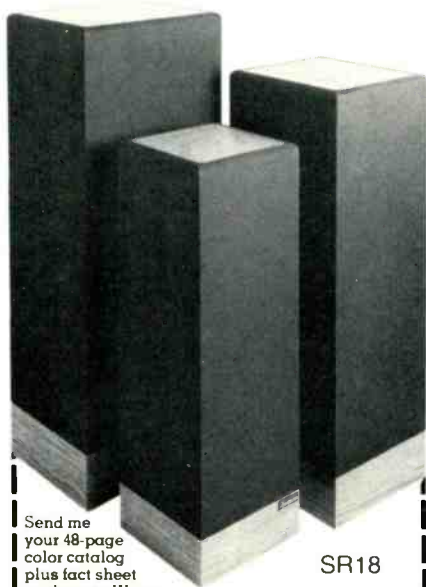
It's time you discovered a new generation of speakers called Wave Aperture™ Speakers from Speakerlab—the S100, S300 and S500.

They work on the principle that if the sound source is small compared to the wavelength, the sound field will be broad and uniform. The result: incredibly accurate reproduction anywhere in the room.

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They're all so good you should know we're not kidding when we say they're the wave of the future.

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Car Stereo

By Ivan Berger



Larry Klein

INSTALLING IT YOURSELF

SHOULD you install your car's sound system yourself or have it done for you? Unless you always order your new cars with factory-installed sound systems, that question is bound to arise someday.

If you shudder at the thought of doing it yourself, you're probably quite right; it's a wise man who knows his own limitations. Find yourself a good installer, sit back, and relax. If you're confident that you can do it all yourself, you may well be right too—though if you've done no installations before, read on and make sure you understand what's involved. And if you're simply undecided on the subject, perhaps I can help you make up your mind.

I have done it myself—several times. So far, I've installed a Panasonic, a Philco, and two Clarion systems in two Fiats and a Saab. That's even more experience than it may sound like, since I installed the Philco twice, transferring it from one car to another. And because of all that experience, I hope I never have to do it again.

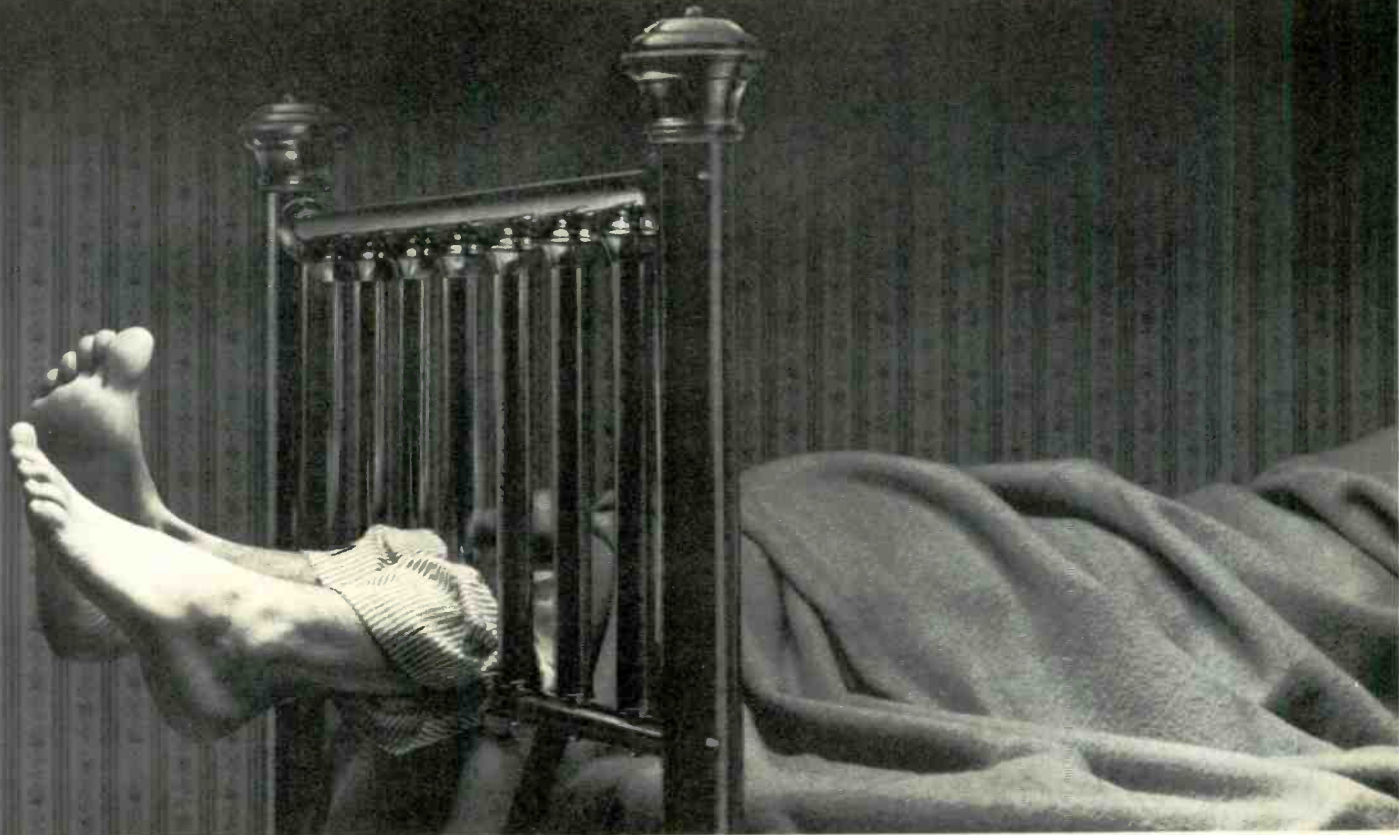
One major reason is discomfort. To install a new amplifier in my home system, I can roll my equipment rack into the middle of the floor and kneel on a flat surface in a good light while I work. In the car, I'm lying on my back on a floor that's hardly flat, my legs sticking out the door at a funny angle, my eyes blinking from the falling dust and stinging from the sweat that runs down into them. There's also the problem of finding a day when I have the free time *and* it's neither raining, freezing, nor burning hot outdoors—since, living in the city, I have to do all this at curbside, which leads to other complications. If I forget a tool, I have to lock everything up while I run upstairs for it. If I have to work outside the car, there's a 50/50 chance I'll have to stand in traffic. The professional installer has the same discomforts, but at least he has a weatherproof garage with room to work, good lighting (also uncommon in home garages), and a permanent place for his tools.

Those tools are quite important too. The one I envy the professional most is the hole saw, a ring-like saw blade attached to an electric drill that makes neat, rapid circular cuts for speaker-mounting holes. I don't do enough installations to justify buying the

blades in sizes big enough for speakers. You don't *have* to have a hole saw, of course—but have you ever tried to cut or file a neat, round 5/16-inch hole? I have most of the other tools I need: a wide assortment of screws and screwdrivers, several different pliers and wire cutters, a crimping tool and crimp-on terminals, a cordless electric drill, a good flash lantern, and even a 12-volt soldering iron. But my tool box may be better stocked than most.

A good installer has more going for him than just tools and a garage, though: he has expertise. I've spent a lot of time watching the installers at Wally's Tape City in New York, and I've picked up a few tricks of the trade. (For example, when wires pass through holes in body sheet metal, those holes should be lined with rubber grommets to make sure the metal edges won't cut through the wires' insulation.) I've also gotten a better idea of the problems that have to be solved on an individual-car basis. When it comes to speaker installations, for example, those smooth door-trim panels provide all kinds of traps for the unwary: solid-steel panels difficult to cut speaker holes in (and gaps in the underlying sheet metal that leave the speaker nothing but flimsy fiberboard trim for support); window-lifter mechanisms that clear the back of the speaker nicely... until you try to raise or lower the glass; and so on. An installer may not know all the possible booby traps and pitfalls in *your* car; considering the variety of cars on the road, frequent model changes, and design changes in the middle of production runs, how could he? (I've even seen cars whose left- and right-hand doors were constructed differently!) But he's more likely than you are to be aware of them and far more likely to have encountered—and solved—some similarly tricky installation problem.

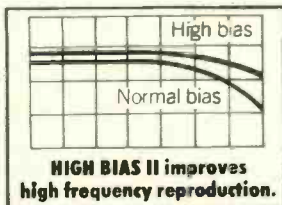
THAT'S not to say that you can't do a good job yourself; many people have. The odds are good, however, that a professional installer will do a better job than you will, besides saving you a good deal of effort and a few barked knuckles... provided, of course, that you get yourself a good installer. But that's another story. □



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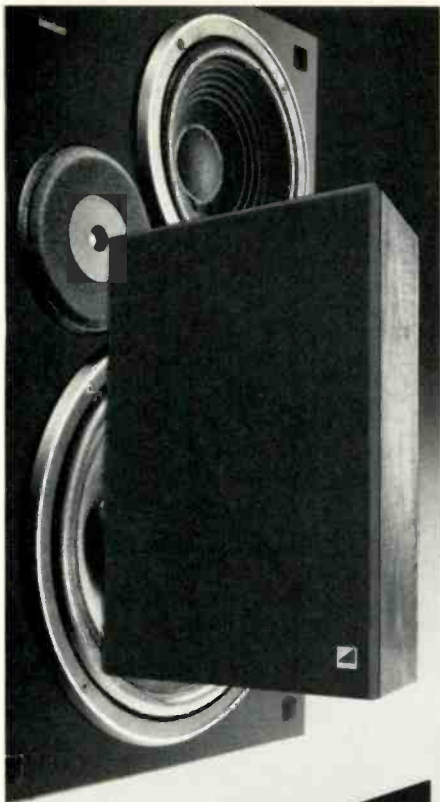
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Audio Q. and A.

By Larry Klein



Jim Long

Speaker Damage

Q. *What are the criteria for determining speaker damage? I suspect problems because there is an audible hiss from my midrange and tweeter when they are adjusted at other than minimum level.*

DONALD MCLEOD
Alexandria, Va.

A. There are various ills, defects, and damages that speakers are prone to, some of which are a little tricky to discover and most of which are impossible to fix. These days most problems seem to break down into either buzzes and rattles or no sound at all. Interstation FM noise can serve as a good troubleshooting signal to determine if a tweeter or midrange voice coil is rubbing, has loose windings, or is simply open.

Since woofer problems usually appear only during loud, low bass passages, disconnecting the ground lead to your record player can produce a hum signal suitable for testing your woofer. Your input selector should, of course, be set to phono and your bass, treble, and volume controls turned down. Bring the bass and volume controls up slowly until the desired hum level is heard. The warble tones on any of the STEREO REVIEW test records can also serve as low- and high-frequency speaker-defect test signals. (The SRT14-A test record is available for \$8.95—\$10.95 outside the U.S.—from Test Record, Department 30013, P.O. Box 278, Pratt Station, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11205.)

In regard to the hiss problem, I would first make sure that the fault is really in your speakers rather than in your amplifier. The best way to do that is to substitute for your amplifier another one that you know is good. If the hiss disappears when a different amplifier is driving your speakers, your amplifier is the hisser, not your speakers.

If the problem appears to be within the speakers, I still find it unlikely that speaker damage was the cause. For this to happen, the speaker would have to suffer a defect that results in its being peaky or at least oversensitive in the 5,000- to 10,000-Hz hiss region. In short, I suspect that any excessive hiss sensitivity of your speakers is a built-in defect rather than a problem

caused by damage. In that case, it might be worthwhile to try some homemade acoustic absorbers. Try stapling a small pad of cloth, toweling, or closed-cell foam on the baffle board so as to lap over the tweeter and midrange. Alternatively, you could rubber-cement the pads to the inside of the grille-cloth frame facing the offending units. The thickness and porosity of the acoustic absorbers should be chosen to achieve the desired result—reducing the offending hiss without excessive attenuation of the adjacent frequencies.

Power and Performance

Q. *Can a powerful amplifier—say, 100 or more watts per channel—be damaged by driving a high-efficiency speaker that requires only a few watts? Also, when a speaker's minimum power requirement is, say, 20 watts and its maximum 100, what changes take place audibly and technically as the power level is increased, assuming that the amplifier's distortion remains low?*

CHARLES GESSNER
Miami, Fla.

A. To answer the first part of the question, I cannot conceive of a situation wherein damage to a high-power amplifier could result from using a high-efficiency speaker. Of course, the speaker could be damaged if it is driven harder than it was designed to be. In regard to a speaker's minimum and maximum power ratings, we are confronted with distortion at both extremes: in one case, that of the amplifier; in the other, that of the speaker. If an amplifier does not have enough power to drive a given speaker to the desired volume level, the amplifier will be forced into clipping, producing a raspy distortion on loud program peaks that sounds something like that caused by a mistracking phono stylus. At the low-frequency end, an overdriven amplifier is likely to produce a "mushy" bass quality because of the intrusion of spurious higher harmonics (see below).

A low-power amplifier overdriven into "hard" clipping is more likely to damage speaker systems than a high-power ampli-

(Continued on page 22)

Dual Capstans— The answer or the problem?

Nakamichi Spoken Here.

The advantages of two capstans are obvious; the problems are not! Capturing the tape between supply and takeup capstans isolates the “active” portion from the reels. Thus, sticky cassette hubs, grabbing clutches, and surging reel motors have less effect on tape motion.

Great, but let's not miss the forest for the trees! While dual capstans do help isolate the tape from the reels, they generate problems of their own—problems that often go unrecognized. Bodies that rotate at the same rate are in resonance; thus they magnify vibration which, when it enters the tape path, increases flutter and modulation noise. The overall performance of a dual-capstan transport often is worse than that of a single-capstan drive!

Nakamichi faced this problem years ago and developed an Asymmetrical, Diffused-Resonance Transport that is unique in the industry. When you purchase a Nakamichi—any Nakamichi—you will find supply and takeup capstans of different diameters rotating at different rates. You'll find flywheels of different moments of inertia—machined from solid stock for perfect balance. This “Asymmetry” eliminates common-mode resonance. And, Nakamichi transports are fabricated from materials that have been especially selected and treated to absorb motor vibration and prevent its transference to the tape.

The piece de resistance is our unique pressure-pad lifter. In a Nakamichi transport, tension is controlled so accurately, and heads are contoured so precisely that pressure pads are not required to maintain head-to-tape contact. Since the pad creates more problems than it solves—scrape flutter, modulation noise, and tape skew—it's better off out of the way!

The proof of Nakamichi technology is in the listening. Specifications, while important, do not tell the whole story. Scrape flutter occurs at a very rapid rate; it is not included in “weighted” flutter measurements—even those made in accordance with DIN specifications. Modulation noise goes unspecified entirely! But compare the sound of a Nakamichi recorder with any other. You'll hear clarity of reproduction that is unique—music with detail! Experience Nakamichi sound today—at your Nakamichi dealer.



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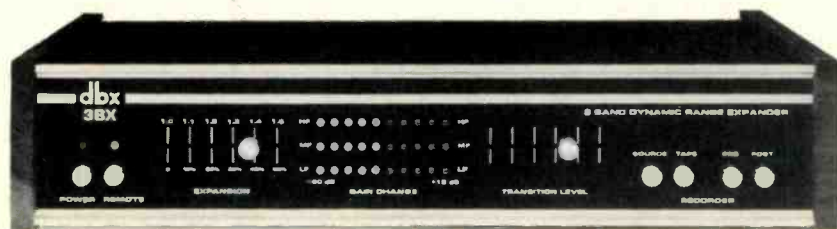
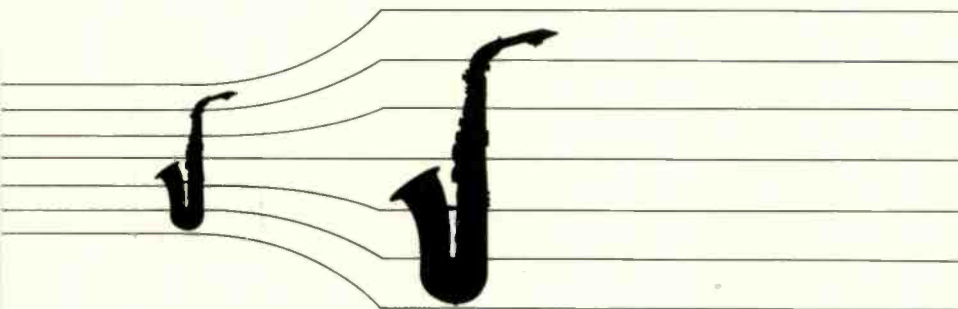
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fier that has sufficient power to avoid clipping at the same volume level. Whether the damage results because "hard" clipping produces large amounts of spurious high-frequency energy or because the clipping triggers the amplifier into instability is open to dispute. In any case, it is likely that more tweeters have been destroyed by overdriven 40-watt amplifiers than by any of the 150-watt-plus superamps.

In general, the harder any hi-fi component, electronic or mechanical, is driven, the more it will distort. But the distortion is usually insignificant until the component approaches its maximum rating. The drivers in overdriven speaker systems react in different ways. In a three-way system, an overdriven woofer will "double" or "triple"—that is, it will turn a pure 50-Hz tone, for example, into a mixture of 50-, 100-, and 150-Hz tones (hence the "mushiness") because of the large amount of second- and third-harmonic distortion generated. Also, a rattling or snapping sound may be produced by the voice coil as it strikes the back of the magnet structure during large cone excursions. Overdrive of the midrange usually adds a raspy quality to the sound as an early warning sign, but an overdriven tweeter will probably not make any nasty noises; it will just quietly and unobtrusively burn out.

Midrange Distortion

Q. *Just recently I had my ear close to the cone of the midrange driver in my speaker system and heard a very nasal and hollow sound quality. And the tweeter seemed to be putting out hardly any sound at all when I had my ear close to it. What would you say the problem is?*

TERRY SHEA
Gardena, Calif.

A. There may not be one. The "problem" you are hearing with your ear close to the drivers has to do with frequency balance. Judging from my mail, frequency balance is one of the most conceptually difficult-to-understand areas in hi-fi. Most complaints about coloration, harshness, shrillness, dullness, openness, etc. are traceable to the audible effect of emphasis or de-emphasis of certain parts of the audible frequency range and *not* to some separate mysterious phenomenon.

When you put your ear close to the midrange driver and heard a distorted, nasal quality, what you were hearing was simply a preponderance of midrange energy centered around 1,000 Hz or so. If you hear only part of a frequency range—or hear part of the range boosted—when familiar full-range material is involved, it will inevitably sound distorted in some way. As for the tweeter, it probably sounded weak because the treble energy in normal program material is at a much lower level than the midrange energy. □

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

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Stereo Review

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Tape Talk

By Craig Stark



Print-through

Q. I get print-through on high-level passages of classical music (it shows up immediately before a fortissimo passage) even though I keep my record levels at or below 0 VU. Changing cassette brands doesn't help. Any suggestions?

BRUCE SILBERG
Weehawken, N.J.

A. For readers unfamiliar with the term "print-through," I should explain that it describes unwanted transference of a strong recorded signal to the physically adjacent tape layers. It is always present to some degree, though rarely is it loud enough on cassette recordings to be audible. As reader Silberberg finds, however, when print-through is heard it is likely to appear as a "pre-echo" just before the actual musical passage. This is because the "post-echo" will usually be masked by the music's own reverberation.

My first suggestion to minimize print-through difficulties is to avoid storing tapes either near a magnetic field or where they are subject to high temperatures (for example, in a closed automobile in summer) since such conditions encourage print-through. The second suggestion is to use C-60 cassettes whenever possible, since most of them have a thicker backing material and this will reduce print-through. Third, it is possible that the meters on a given deck might have a sufficiently slow response to sudden, loud transients that what *seems* to be a sufficiently low record level is actually much higher than what the meters indicate. (This last would not be a problem with peak-indicating meters or with electronic peak indicators.) And, finally, one should always check to be sure that the "print-through" being heard isn't in the original program material. Pre- and post-echo are audible in many of today's mass-market records.

Tape Bootlegging

Q. I tape live concerts and then trade tapes with people around the country. The taping is usually done with portable decks, and the quality varies greatly.

Could you give me suggestions for making better-quality dubs from the master tapes? These tapes are for personal enjoyment only, so I hope you'll take my word for it when I say that they are not sold or bootlegged in any way.

PAUL FROLIA
Bayonne, N.J.

A. The only answer I can give you is that I cannot aid and abet what is almost certainly a violation of state and/or federal law. I discussed the matter with an attorney for the antipiracy division of the RIAA, and he indicated that taping live performances without the explicit permission of the artist/performer(s) is specifically prohibited by law in about one third of the states; the federal copyright law may also be violated by such behavior.

You say that the tapes "are for personal enjoyment only," but that does not, as you seem to think, excuse unauthorized taping, duplicating, and swapping. Your ticket to a concert entitles only you—not your nonpaying friends across the country—to enjoy the concert *once*. Under the current interpretation of the law, you may dub your *own* discs or tape record FM broadcasts for personal enjoyment, but you may not send the dubs to friends, whether or not any money changes hands.

Noncounting Counters

Q. Why don't tape "counters" count anything? They all run at different speeds, but if they were standardized you'd be able to know where you were when playing a tape on different machines.

EVAN L. LEHMAN
Indianapolis, Ind.

A. I share your frustration! While a few machines are equipped with electronic counters that read out directly in minutes and seconds, the typical mechanical counters register only some fraction of the rotation of the supply or take-up hubs, which varies with the amount of tape on the hub.

The reason why is painfully simple: it's cheaper that way. Bear in mind that even a
(Continued on page 26)

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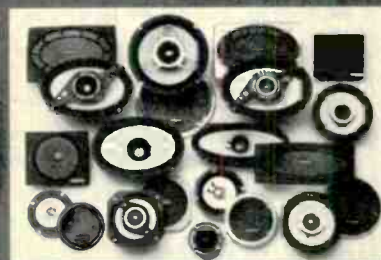
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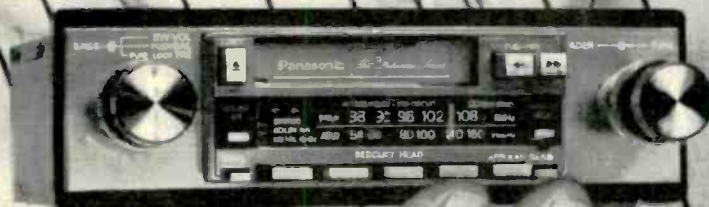
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standardized "revolution counter" would give different readings with different tape lengths, as well as different rates of advance as the size of the tape pack varied, but it would still be an improvement on today's chaos. I wouldn't count on seeing that improvement, however.

Stopped-tape Problem?

Q Frequently when playing an open-reel or cassette tape I don't have time to listen to it to the end. Will the tape be damaged by the magnetic heads if the machine is shut off and the tape left in position for several hours or as much as a day?

JOE E. COVINGTON
Columbia, Mo.

A You have nothing to worry about here, for several reasons. First, the "magnetic heads" are not *magnets* (which would erase recorded sections they contacted); they are *electromagnets* and operate only when the machine is on. A playback head emits no field of its own, but rather picks up the changes in the magnetic pattern already recorded on the tape. Record and erase heads do emit magnetic fields, but only during recording. Second, when a tape is stopped in mid-play, it no longer contacts the heads at all! On a few machines it might still be possible to turn the machine off while the play mechanism remains engaged, but in this case any possible danger would come from the squeezing of the tape between the capstan and the rubber pinch-roller, and there the principal danger is to the pinch-roller. In any case, you can avoid that problem simply by pressing the "stop" button on the machine before you turn it off.

I would not, however, recommend leaving tapes—particularly open-reel ones—exposed for days at a time because they will accumulate dust which might affect subsequent playback.

Fuzzy Mono

Q While I was playing a cassette recently, I switched my preamplifier to mono and the sound suddenly became much weaker and distorted. When I tried it on FM and phono this didn't happen. Can you tell me what's wrong?

TOM BETHUNE
Paoli, Pa.

A If this happens with more than one prerecorded cassette, the two channels of your deck's playback head are wired out of phase. Thus, when you switch your preamp to mono the combined left and right signals tend to cancel (with a mono cassette the cancellation would be almost total), leaving only the *difference* between the two channels to be heard. Out-of-phase channels can also occur in prerecorded cassettes, but this is very rare.

Resoldering the wires on a tape head to correct the phase is no job for an amateur, and the problem is obviously a factory fault, so get it fixed under warranty. When you get it back you'll find it sounds better in stereo as well. □



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WHY ONLY SONY TAPE HEARS FULL COLOR SOUND.

There are some good and sound reasons Sony audio tape is second to none. Why Sony tape has such a sensitive, full frequency response all along the sound spectrum that it is actually capable of recording sounds that go beyond the range of human hearing. That incredible range, sensitivity and balance is what Full Color Sound is all about.

A history of milestones

When you get a Sony tape you get a lot more than tape. You get the entire history of tape recording.

Sony has been a pioneer in tape manufacturing since it began over 30 years ago. In fact, we made the first audio tape ever in Japan. Sony technology was in the forefront then... and it still is! (Who else could bring you the amazing Walkman?)

Besides a history of spirited determination to be the very first in technology, there's the knowledge that comes from also being pioneers in high fidelity audio equipment. (After all, you'd better know all there is to know about tape decks before you make a tape. Sony does.)

Another reason for Sony's unmatched excellence is our unmatched — almost fanatic — insistence on the highest quality material and manufacturing methods. Sometimes our standards are so high we can't find machinery that meets them, so we have to invent the machinery ourselves!

Then there's Sony's unique balance system. The fine-tuning of all the elements that go into making a tape, so that each complements the other, and together deliver the finest recording that is humanly and technically possible.

The new tape standard: State-of-the-Sony

Fact: Everyone uses magnetic particles for tape. But not everyone insists on buying super-fine grade particles, and then carefully examining and mixing each and every lot to be absolutely positive that the quality is consistently pure and homogenous. Sony does.

Fact: Sony has a unique formula for binding the particles to the tape. Binding determines the life

of the tape and the heads. Because of the high standards we demand, Sony had to invent its own binder.

Fact: Another example of Sony high technology is in the coating process. The coating of magnetic particles must be *absolutely, uniformly even* all along the tape. Any variation at all, and the consistency and quality of the tape are compromised. Not only did Sony perfect the process for its regular tapes, but Sony outdid itself with its dual-coated tapes, where it was necessary to produce a top coating that was *super-thin*. We actually managed to create a perfect coating that's only 1 micronmeter thick! (Especially impressive when you realize some other tape makers have trouble producing an even coating 4-5 micronmeters thick, much less 1 micronmeter thick!)

Hearing is believing

Sony tape comes by its extraordinary quality honestly. It has a heritage of breakthrough innovation. And a history of being famous throughout the world for leading technology, quality and dependability.

And that is why only Sony tape has Full Color Sound. But you don't have to take our word for it. Listen to Sony tape as fanatically as you wish. As they say, hearing is believing. **SONY**

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Technical Talk

By Julian D. Hirsch



• Computerizing Speaker-response Measurements •

UNLIKE the case with most other audio components, speaker performance cannot be described meaningfully by means of a few measurements. In fact, I know of no measurement or even combination of measurements capable of defining the sound quality of a speaker in sufficient detail to distinguish it from other, similar speaker systems. Even the frequency-response specification, which is a basic rating for every other audio component, is so difficult to apply to speakers that the proposed IHF Standard on Speaker Measurement (now in preliminary-draft form) relegates frequency response and dispersion to secondary status, behind the more easily defined primary ratings of sensitivity, bandwidth, impedance, and power handling.

The problem is that a speaker does not have a single "frequency response." Depending on the size and acoustic properties of the room, the locations of the speaker and measurement microphone (or listener), and the specific characteristics of the test signal, it is possible to obtain a variety of "frequency-response" curves from a speaker. And most of them would have little relation to what a person might hear in the same acoustic environment.

Over the years Hirsch-Houck Labs has developed a measurement technique that has at least a rough correlation with the sound quality of a speaker. Our frequency-response curve is a hybrid, a composite of several curves made in different frequency ranges and under different test conditions. Unfortunately, although we are able to interpret these curves fairly well, they have

only a coincidental correlation with the speaker-response curves developed by manufacturers or other laboratories. Because of their non-standard nature, we do not publish these curves in our speaker test reports; without extensive explanation they could produce more confusion than light.

Our measurements are based on the assumption that most of the sound one hears has been reflected from one or more room surfaces and that the typical listener is far enough from the speakers that the sound field is largely diffused (semi-reverberant). A distance of 10 to 15 feet in most rooms is sufficient to satisfy this requirement. Under this condition, the apparent volume changes little or not at all over a fairly wide listening area. Closer to the speakers (say, within 3 feet) the volume changes very rapidly with quite small changes in the distance of the listening position.

Our room measurement is an approximation of the total acoustic-power output of the speaker integrated in the forward hemisphere. Ideally, this measurement should be made in a totally reverberant environment. A normally furnished room absorbs high-frequency energy in its boundaries and furnishings, producing some high-frequency rolloff even with a "flat" speaker. We have compensated for this factor by "calibrating" our room with speakers whose power output into a hemisphere has been measured separately in two ways: in a reverberant chamber, and by a large number of measurements made at different angles to the speaker out of doors. Plotting the response of these calibrated speakers in our

room gives us a "room curve" from which we derive a correction curve that is added to the measured output of any other speaker to approximate its power response.

In a "live" room, reflections and standing-wave patterns produce a highly irregular response curve from *any* speaker. Since we are looking for a broad, octave-to-octave response rather than fine detail, we use a "warble-tone" signal that varies over a ± 50 -Hz range as it sweeps slowly from 100 to 20,000 Hz. This is done with a GenRad response-plotting system whose graphic-level recorder is synchronized with an audio oscillator to plot frequency response on a paper chart automatically.

WITH the two speakers positioned normally at one end of the room, the microphone (a Bruel & Kjaer 4133 condenser microphone whose response is essentially flat to 40,000 Hz) is placed on the axis of the left speaker and about 12 feet from it, making an angle of about 30 degrees with the main axis of the right speaker. We make a response curve for each of the speakers on the same chart, averaging the two curves to further suppress the effects of room resonances. Also, any divergence between the two curves at high frequencies is an indication of the directivity (beaming) of the speakers.

Because the wavelength of sound at low frequencies is large compared with the woofer-cone diameter, it is possible to make an "anechoic" measurement of a woofer's response by placing the microphone very close to its cone. The resulting curve is free

Tested This Month

Onkyo CP-1130F Turntable • Stanton 980LZS Phono Cartridge
Dahlquist DQM-9 Speaker System • Aiwa AD-M800U Cassette Deck
Audio Control "Richter Scale" Equalizer

of room-resonance effects and is essentially what one would measure in a very large anechoic chamber. With a vented speaker, another low-frequency response measurement is made at the port opening. This curve is shifted on the amplitude scale in accordance with the relative areas of the cone and port, and the two curves are added to form a bass-response curve. The bass distortion is measured with the same microphone placement.

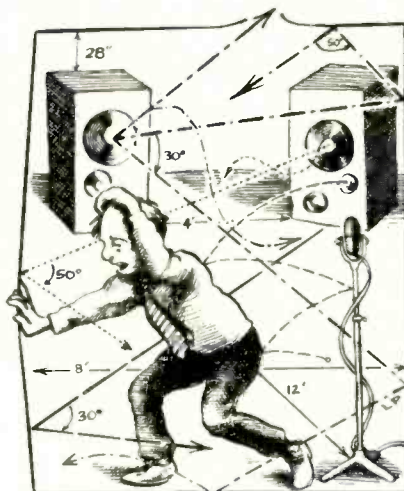
The bass frequency-response curve from 20 to 1,000 Hz is "spliced" to the mid/high-frequency curve. This is the only part of the process that requires some subjective judgment—because of the possible ambiguity of the correct splice frequency. The resulting composite curve, though "neither fish nor fowl," is a reasonable indication of a speaker's overall frequency response, smoothness, and dispersion. It represents the closest approach we could devise to making speaker-response measurements in a normal listening room with available test equipment.

Most speaker manufacturers' frequency-response ratings are based on *anechoic* measurements unless otherwise specified. These are usually quite revealing of narrow-band aberrations in the speaker's response, but they may be less indicative of its sound quality than a total power measurement would be. Ideally, we prefer to make both types of measurement to obtain the maximum amount of information on the speaker's performance (interpreting the additional data, as well as judging the relative importance of each type of information, is likely to complicate a reviewer's life, but I suspect that the benefits far outweigh the problems). Reasonably large anechoic chambers, as well as reverberant chambers, are very expensive, and many smaller speaker companies therefore use outdoor measurements or some variation of our indoor technique in their testing.

In recent years, computers have emerged as powerful tools for making acoustic measurements (I have commented in previous "Technical Talk" columns on the kind of sophisticated measurements being made in this way by such companies as AR, B & W,

Celestion, and KEF). Hirsch-Houck Labs has recently acquired an FFT (Fast Fourier Transform) analysis system created by the INDAC group for use with an Apple II computer, and our future speaker tests will use it as well as the methods we have employed in the past.

An FFT measurement is based on the mathematical relationship between a loud-speaker system's frequency response and its reaction to a very brief electrical pulse (to the ear it sounds like a "click"). Any very brief pulse contains a broad spectrum of frequency components whose amplitude remains nearly constant over a wide range of frequencies. By driving a speaker with a single brief pulse (our system uses a pulse only 18 microseconds long) and picking up its



acoustic output with the microphone, it is possible to derive the frequency response of the speaker. This involves a great deal of mathematical computation (namely, the Fast Fourier Transform) which is practicable only with a computer. After processing the pulse waveform picked up from the speaker, the computer generates the corresponding frequency-response curve on its video monitor or paper printer. The entire

process can take as little as a few seconds, even with a small personal computer such as the Apple II (in which we have installed special interface cards from INDAC that generate the pulse and process the speaker signal picked up by the microphone).

Except for its speed, what is the advantage of this method over the older and slower technique? Perhaps most important is its ability to make what are in effect anechoic measurements in a "live" room. The sample of the speaker output that is processed by the computer can be adjusted both in length and timing relative to the electrical pulse that drives the speaker so as to exclude room reflections (by making a measurement before the reflections reach the microphone). And by driving the speaker under test with a *series* of pulses (up to 128 of them), the computer can average the results to practically eliminate the effects of random ambient noise on the measurement.

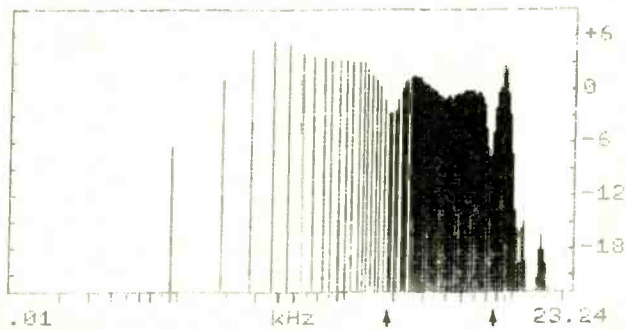
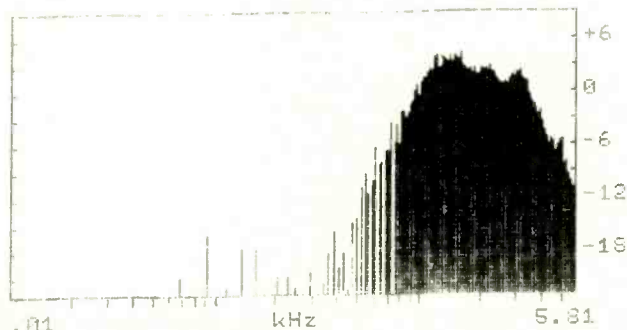
Other speaker-test operations are possible with this system, but just to list all of them would take more space than is available for this column. They include, for example, the use of the system in a low-frequency analysis mode with extremely sharp resolution down to the lowest audio frequencies. Although its upper frequency limit is 23,000 Hz, a built-in filter (required by the computer's digital processing) restricts the useful measurement range to about 17,000 Hz (this is really not a limitation insofar as human-listening applications are concerned).

It is too early for us to hazard a guess as to the many other ways this powerful measurement tool will be used in our testing, but it seems certain that the unique capabilities of the FFT system will be useful in studying the operation of other components also as well as giving us a deeper insight into speaker performance. Beginning with this issue, we will be using both computer-derived anechoic and semi-reverberant measurements as a regular part of our speaker-evaluation process. □

Test Reports start overleaf

INDAC FFT (FAST-FOURIER-TRANSFORM) PRINTOUTS: Left, a close-miked woofer-response graph from 10 Hz to 5.81 kHz. Right, overall on-axis frequency response of a different speaker from 10 Hz to 23.24 kHz. The vertical scale is in decibels, and the height of a line is proportional to the speaker's output at that frequency. Gaps between vertical lines represent gaps in the mathematical process, not gaps in the speaker's impulse or frequency responses. At the right of each printout, the lines are so closely spaced that they merge into a solid area. For a normal-looking "fre-

quency-response" graph, one need only connect the tops of the lines. The on-axis response at right is an example of the INDAC system's ability to make the equivalent of anechoic measurements in an ordinary room. Only the first few milliseconds of the speaker's output response to a very short electrical impulse are processed so as to avoid the effects of subsequent room reflections and resonances. Note that the on-axis "anechoic" response of the speaker in the right-hand readout has dips at the crossover frequencies of 2 and 7.5 kHz (see arrows). Such dips may or may not be audible.



Equipment Test Reports

By Hirsch-Houck Laboratories



Photos by Roy Schneider

Onkyo CP-1130F Turntable

THE Onkyo CP-1130F is a direct-drive, fully automatic turntable whose tone-arm position is fully adjustable from the front of the unit even with its clear plastic cover lowered. The black molded base of the CP-1130F, supported on four soft isolating feet, contrasts visually with its silver-colored motorboard.

The full-size (12½-inch) cast-aluminum platter is driven by a direct-drive brushless d.c. servomotor at either 33⅓ or 45 rpm, the speed being selected by a pushbutton on the control panel. The finely finished top surface of the platter can be seen through its soft, transparent ⅛-inch-thick plastic cover sheet or mat. The combined weight of the platter and mat is 2.6 pounds.

The control buttons form a single line across the upper front portion of the motor board: POWER, SPEED, and SIZE (for indexing the arm to either 7- or 12-inch records) are controlled by mechanically latching pushbuttons; the others are momentary-contact buttons. In the center of the panel is a small window behind which a green light appears when the speed is exact. When the

speed is changed slightly by the nearby knurled PITCH CONTROL wheel, the green light goes out and is replaced by flanking red lights that show whether the speed is higher or lower than normal.

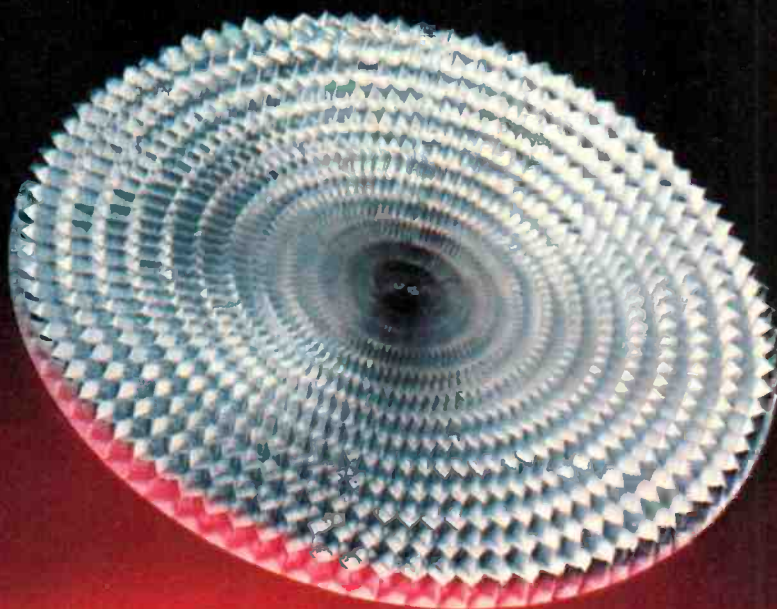
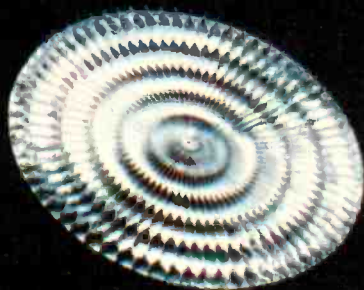
The rest of the control lineup consists of a REPEAT button that causes a record to be replayed indefinitely (a red light next to the button shows that it is engaged), a PLAY/REJECT button that initiates the automatic record-playing cycle or terminates it (it also has a red signal light), and the two arm-control buttons marked SEARCH and CUING. The CUING button raises and lowers the arm on alternate operations with a smooth and damped action. Pressing SEARCH causes the arm to lift from the record surface and move toward the center; it stops when the button is released. A second touch causes the arm to move toward the outside of the record. By alternately pressing and releasing the SEARCH button, it is possible to place the pickup over any desired part of the record. A touch on the CUING button then lowers it to begin play.

In normal automatic operation, the arm

moves from its rest to the selected diameter, plays the record, and returns to its rest, shutting off the motor. In addition to the usual REPEAT mode for playing a record over and over automatically, the CP-1130F has a MEMORY REPEAT feature. By initially cueing the arm to a specific part of a record with the SEARCH control, then pressing REPEAT and START, the record will be played from that point to the end, and it will repeat indefinitely from that same starting point. Full manual operation is also possible, since lifting the arm from its rest automatically starts the monitor.

The tone arm of the Onkyo CP-1130F is a straight black aluminum tube with a lightweight plug-in headshell (not the standard four-pin shell used on many record-player tone arms). The counterweight is designed to balance cartridges weighing between 5 and 9 grams, and its tracking-force scale is calibrated from 0 to 3 grams at 0.1-gram intervals. A sliding antiskating adjustment is located beside the tone arm, firmly attached to its base so that it can be

(Continued on page 32)



The anatomy of a breakthrough in sound reproduction. Technics Honeycomb Disc speaker system.

You're looking at the heart of a revolutionary new speaker system—the flat honeycomb drivers of Technics new Honeycomb Disc speakers. A new shape that takes sound beyond the range of traditional cone-shaped speakers to capture the full energy and dynamic range of today's new recording technologies. It's the essence of a true sonic breakthrough.

All conventional cone-shaped drivers have inherent distortion problems due to uneven sound dispersion in the cone cavity. But Technics new axially symmetric Honeycomb Disc drivers are flat. So "cavity effect" is automatically eliminated. And just as important, phase linearity occurs naturally in Honeycomb Disc speakers because the acoustic centers are

now perfectly aligned across the flat driver surfaces.

Technics also added a unique nodal drive system designed to vibrate the speakers in more accurate piston-like motion to reduce distortion even further. The result is an incredibly wide, flat frequency response, broad dynamic range, and amazingly low distortion.

To complete the system, Technics Honeycomb Disc tweeter with special front-mounted acoustic equalizer extends frequency response to a remarkable 35 kHz.

Technics offers a complete new line of Honeycomb Disc speakers, all enclosed in a rich rosewood-grain cabinet.

Now that you've seen what a sonic breakthrough looks like, listen to Technics—and hear what one sounds like.

Technics
The science of sound

CIRCLE NO. 36 ON READER SERVICE CARD

adjusted while a record is playing. Its scale is calibrated from 1 to 4 grams; it also has a fully off position.

The Onkyo CP-1130F is 16½ inches wide, 15 inches deep, and 5½ inches high. It weighs about 12¼ pounds. Price: \$249.95.

● **Laboratory Measurements.** An Audio-Technica AT155LC cartridge was installed in the tone arm of the Onkyo CP-1130F for our tests. Although the cartridge-installation instructions indicate a 30-mm spacing from the stylus to the end of the arm tube (and the supplied cardboard overhang gauge conforms to this dimension), the correct stylus-to-arm distance is actually 36 mm. This made a considerable improvement, reducing the maximum tracking error from 1 degree per inch near the inner grooves to only 0.4 degree per inch at the outer grooves (and near zero at the inner grooves).

The actual tracking force was typically within 0.05 gram of the setting of the scale on the counterweight. The antiskating had to be set higher than the force (by 1 to 2 grams) to give equal tracking ability on both stereo channels.

The tone arm's effective mass (less the cartridge) was a low 11 grams, which resonated with the highly compliant cartridge stylus at about 8.5 Hz. The capacitance to ground in the tone-arm and signal-cable wiring was 112 picofarads (pF) per channel, with an interchannel capacitance of 4 pF.

The automatic start time was about 9 seconds, and 5.5 seconds was required for the player to turn off after play. The slew time across the surface of a 12-inch record was about 9 seconds. The cueing mechanism lifted the arm almost instantly, but it took about 5 seconds to descend. With the higher values of antiskating compensation we were using, the arm drifted outward during its descent, repeating several seconds of the record for each up/down cycle.

The turntable speeds could be varied about ±3.8 per cent at 33 ⅓ rpm and ±4.6 per cent at 45 rpm. There was a slight ambiguity in the green (exact speed) indication, which remained lit through a speed shift of 0.2 per cent, but this is negligible from a listening standpoint. The turntable rumble was a low -35 dB unweighted and -60 dB with ARL weighting. It was principally in the 6- to 10-Hz range, with a

small peak at 20 Hz. The flutter was 0.06 per cent weighted rms, ±0.08 per cent weighted peak (CCIR), and was mostly between 5 and 10 Hz.

● **Comment.** The "fully automatic" designation of the Onkyo CP-1130F would seem to be completely justified by its operation. There are still relatively few record players that can be operated with their covers in place, and the CP-1130F now joins that select group.

Aside from the error in the cartridge-mounting instructions, we found the setup and operation of the CP-1130F to be easy and trouble free. Its soft feet gave it exceptional isolation from base-conducted vibration (in that respect it was among the best of the direct-drive turntables we have tested, and it was better than most belt-driven models). Since the low-mass arm is compatible with almost any high-quality cartridge one might choose to install, the addition of an appropriate cartridge to the Onkyo CP-1130F will provide you with a first-class record player.

Circle 140 on reader service card



Stanton 980LZS Phono Cartridge

STANTON calls its new 980LZS phono cartridge "the moving-coil replacement," and with good reason. Using any normal external measurements (frequency response, output, crosstalk, inductance, resistance, etc.) it would be difficult or impossible to distinguish the 980LZS from a good moving-coil cartridge (even its considerable price would fit that product category nicely). Nevertheless, the 980LZS is a moving-magnet cartridge.

In designing the 980LZS, Stanton set out to produce a low-impedance pickup that, like moving-coil types, would be essentially independent of external load conditions and have the very low effective tip mass needed to reproduce frequencies far above the audio range with uniformity and good channel

separation. These qualities have generally been associated with the better moving-coil cartridges, and they may be responsible in great measure for the clarity and openness of sound that are widely attributed to that type of transducer. Implicit in these properties is a truly flat "mechanical" frequency response, since the low impedance of a moving-coil cartridge does not permit electrical equalization of its mechanical resonance by use of specific load capacitance and resistance (the usual practice with moving-iron and moving-magnet cartridges).

Any cartridge that is to be a direct functional replacement for a moving-coil cartridge must have a low output voltage suitable for high-gain preamplifier inputs. Not too long ago this would have called for an

expensive step-up transformer or pre-preamplifier in order to use such a cartridge with a conventional preamplifier. Fortunately, an increasing number of integrated amplifiers and even some receivers now include moving-coil preamplifiers.

Beyond the basic Stanton goals, the design offers certain significant advantages over a true moving-coil cartridge. For one thing, the stylus assembly is readily replaceable by the user, a feature found on a few moving-coil cartridges but generally not in the most refined and costly models. Also, most moving-coil cartridges have relatively heavy fixed magnets that contribute appreciably to their total weight and thus to the effective mass of the arm/cartridge system.

(Continued on page 36)

The Onkyo TX-4000.

It will tame you, thrill you,
tantalize and transport you.



The Onkyo TX-4000 Quartz Synthesized Tuner/Amplifier is one of the most perfect stereo receivers we've ever designed. Nothing else in its price range provides the brilliant purity, dynamic headroom, and full excitement of its sound.

The Onkyo TX-4000 brings tuning accuracy to a new level of precision . . . with an advanced approach to quartz-synthesized digital tuning. And the amplifier section provides all the dynamic headroom demanded

by today's audiophile recording techniques. Onkyo's exclusive Dual-Super-Servo system makes it possible, by allowing the power supply to perform as if it were 50-times larger. And there's more . . . LED power metering, memory to pre-set 6 AM and 6 FM stations . . . and elegant styling with a flip-down control panel.

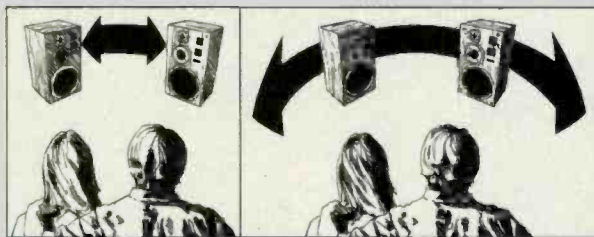
All combine to make The Onkyo TX-4000 a tuner/amplifier you will definitely want to audition . . . and then own. Hear it now at your Onkyo dealer.



The R-2000 receiver featuring

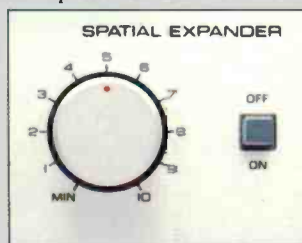
Now Yamaha takes you a giant step closer to the excitement of live music. The new R-2000 receiver goes beyond ordinary stereo to re-create the full depth, presence and excitement of actually being at a live performance. It's the top of the line of our new R-Series receivers; each designed to bring you pure, accurate musical reproduction. Sound to please the most discriminating audiophile—and features to please the most sophisticated music lover.

The Spatial Expander recreates the feel of a live performance.



Normal stereo sound field. Stereo sound field with Spatial Expander.

Normal stereo is limited to the space between two speakers. Yamaha's Spatial Expander extends the sound field out beyond the speakers. This wider sound stage re-creates the ambience and spaciousness of a live performance. There is more space between musicians, more depth and richness to the overall sound. You get the feeling of live sound without the expense of adding extra speakers or amplifiers. The Spatial Expander works with any good stereo source material. Phono, FM or tape. For the first time you can enjoy the feeling of sitting front row center at your favorite concert.



X-Amplifier for more power and cleaner sound.

The R-2000 with our new X-Amplifier is more efficient and

more faithful to music than any receiver we've ever built. The circuit design evolved from the nature of music itself. We discovered that true musical crescendos, which require full amplifier power, occur only about 2% of the time. Conventional amplifier designs operate at full power *all* of the time in anticipation of those loud musical passages. The remaining 98% of the time, full power isn't required. That means conventional designs waste electricity and produce huge amounts of heat—which shortens component life.

The new Yamaha X-Amplifier works at low power most of the time. A unique (patent pending) comparator circuit switches the amplifier to high power when a loud passage is detected, and back to low power when the peak has passed.

As a result, the amp runs significantly cooler than conventional designs, which measurably increases component life.

And the X-Amplifier of the new R-2000 is the most powerful we've ever built into a receiver. It delivers 150 watts RMS per channel with 0.015% THD, at 8 ohms from 20 to 20,000 Hz. So the new X-Amplifier will easily handle the wide dynamic range of the newest digital and direct-to-disc recordings.

Yamaha's R-Receivers bring you sophisticated features and unparalleled convenience.

Continuously variable loudness control.

At low levels, music sounds like it's missing something. That's because at low volume your ear loses its ability to hear high and low frequencies.

Most "loudness" controls compensate for this by boosting the high and low frequencies. This can lead to increased distortion. Yamaha found a smoother way. By suppressing the mid-range. And unlike everybody else, we let you adjust the *amount* of loudness compensation to suit your taste. So at low listening levels you get full, balanced sound without distortion.

Auto phono.

Now you can have continuous music without getting up to switch sound sources. For example, you can set the R-2000 to a favorite FM station. Then, you can put on a record and the receiver will automatically switch to the phono mode. Once the record is over, the receiver automatically switches back to your



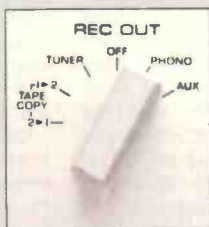


Yamaha's new Spatial Expander.

favorite station. You're never without sound.

The Record Out function.

With Yamaha's independent Record Out, you can record from any source (tuner, tape, phono) while listening to any other. You can also feed a separate, different signal to a second amplifier and speakers in another part of your home. So you can have two complete home music systems for just the price of an extra amplifier and speakers.



Station-locking tuning.

Quartz-locked tuning is accurate. But quartz tuning circuits have an internal frequency oscillator which generates RF signals. These signals can be picked up by the



tuner and be mixed with the regular audio signal to cause distortion. To solve this problem, Yamaha engineers developed a unique microprocessor chip with a memory. It stores the exact tuning location of every AM and FM station. When you tune a Yamaha receiver, the microprocessor produces exactly the frequency you're looking for instantly...from its memory. Tuning is 100% accurate. All you get is clean music.

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For more information, write to: Yamaha Audio, P.O. Box 6600, Buena Park, CA 90622.



R-1000



R-900



R-700



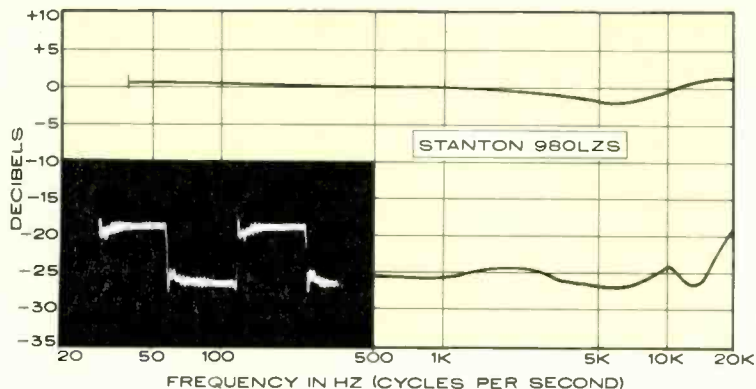
R-500



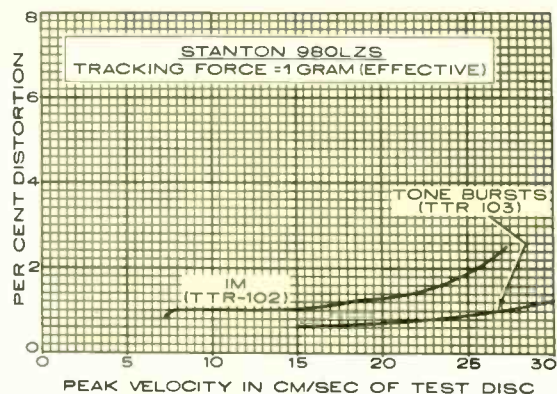
R-300



CIRCLE NO. 40 ON READER SERVICE CARD



In the graph at left, the upper curve represents the frequency response of the cartridge. The distance (measured in decibels) between it and the lower curve represents the separation between the two channels (anything above 15 dB is adequate). The inset oscilloscope photo shows the cartridge's response to a recorded 1,000-Hz square wave, which indicates resonances and overall frequency response (see text). At right is the cartridge's response to the intermodulation-distortion (IM) and 10.8-kHz tone-burst test bands of the TTR-102 and TTR-103 test records. These high veloc-



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

Stanton's cartridge weighs only 5.5 grams, less than many moving-magnet cartridges, to say nothing of the 8 grams or so of a typical moving-coil cartridge.

The Stanton 980LZS is fitted with a Stereohedron stylus tip (Stanton's proprietary extended-contact shape) having radii of 0.3 and 2.8 mils and a dynamic tip mass of 0.2 milligram. It is rated to track at forces from 0.75 to 1.5 grams. Like other Stanton cartridges, the 980LZS has an integral "longhair" brush that removes surface dust from the record and requires an additional gram of downward force to compensate for its presence. Thus the total vertical tracking force should be set between 1.75 and 2.5 grams.

The frequency response is specified as 10 to 50,000 Hz, with channel separation (presumably in the midrange) rated at 35 dB. The output voltage is 0.06 millivolt per cm/sec of recorded velocity, or about 0.21 millivolt from a standard test-record velocity of 3.54 cm/sec. The cartridge load can be any resistance higher than 100 ohms and any capacitance up to 1,000 picofarads. The coil resistance is 3 ohms per channel and the inductance only 1 millihenry.

The price of the Stanton 980LZS is \$250. For use with conventional magnetic phono preamplifiers, the Stanton BA-26 pre-amplifier is available for \$189. It is battery-operated and has a voltage gain of 20 (26 dB).

● **Laboratory Measurements.** We tested the Stanton 980LZS in the tone arm of a Mitsubishi LT-5V vertical turntable, which required a slightly modified balancing procedure to accommodate the brush of the Stanton cartridge. Although the cartridge's output voltage was measured directly, our other tests were made through Stanton's BA-26 pre-amplifier to provide a sufficient level for the measurements. Most tests were made at a 1-gram tracking force, which was sufficient for correct tracking of the high-level low- and middle-frequency

test records we used for tracking tests, as well as the 80-micrometer level of the German Hi Fi Record #2. This is normally considered very good tracking ability, but increasing the force to the rated maximum of 1.5 grams allowed the cartridge to track this record's maximum level of 100 micrometers (something only a few cartridges are able to do).

The vertical-tracking angle of the stylus measured slightly higher than the 20-degree standard. Cartridge output was about 0.21 millivolt (mV) and the channel levels balanced within 0.33 dB. Output was about 3.7 millivolts through the BA-26, ideal for driving any magnetic phono-preamplifier input. The tracking distortions (at a 1-gram force) were measured with the 10.8-kHz tone bursts of the TTR-103 test record and the 400/4,000-Hz IM bands of the TTR-102 record. Both gave very low distortion readings that increased only slightly at the highest levels on the records, suggesting that most of what we were reading was the residual distortions of the records and test setup. The IM distortion at 27 cm/sec was only 2.5 per cent, and the tone-burst distortion at 30 cm/sec was 1.2 cm/sec.

The frequency response of the 980LZS, playing the CBS STR 100 test record, was flat within ± 2 dB from 40 to 20,000 Hz. The output decreased slightly from 1,000 to 5,000 Hz and rose above that frequency. The channel separation was more than 25 dB up to 15,000 Hz and about 15 dB at 20,000 Hz. Since there was no sign of a decreasing output at 20,000 Hz, we also measured the response with the JVC 1005 test record, which sweeps from 1,000 to 50,000 Hz. The result was one of the widest and most uniform responses we have ever measured from a phono cartridge, with one channel reading ± 1 dB over the full range up to 50,000 Hz and the other within ± 2 dB over that range. It was equally impressive to find that there was still no sign of a falling output at the record's upper limit; obviously the cartridge's response extended well

beyond 50,000 Hz. The channel separation was at least 20 dB over the full frequency range.

The square-wave response from the CBS STR 112 record showed the high-frequency (over 40,000 Hz) ringing that is cut into the record but which is normally visible only in the output of a moving-coil cartridge or a very-low-inductance moving-magnet cartridge. There was a single small overshoot at the leading edge of the square wave, probably due to the high-frequency stylus resonance (which was not evident in the frequency response but could be inferred from a slight peak in the crosstalk response at about 35,000 Hz).

Subjective tracking was judged with the aid of the Shure ERA III and ERA IV "Audio Obstacle Course" records. The older (ERA III) record could be played in its entirety without mistracking. On the ERA IV record, we heard the hardness that indicates the imminence of mistracking on the highest level of several sections, but never the shattering or raspiness that accompanies an actual loss of contact between the stylus tip and the groove wall.

● **Comment.** We are satisfied that nothing in the performance or measurements we made on the Stanton 980LZS would enable us (or anyone else) to conclude that this moving-magnet unit was anything but a top-quality moving-coil cartridge. In fact, few moving-coil cartridges we have tested could match the tracking ability of this one, especially at tracking forces under 1.5 grams.

The sound of the 980LZS, as one would expect from the uniformity of its frequency response and crosstalk characteristics, was completely neutral. The lack of response peaks, either in the audio range or for an octave or more above it, means that the 980LZS does not accentuate record hiss. The background silence, which can be impressive, is purely a function of the record quality. (Continued on page 38)

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test reports

We listened to the cartridge briefly through the BA-26 pre-amplifier, which worked well (although we made no measurements on it). For the most part, we preferred to use the 980LZS as a "straight" moving-coil-cartridge substitute through the MC input of a Sansui AU-D11 amplifier. The combination was a happy one, and even at *maximum* gain (which was much too high for comfortable listening) there was no hum and only a faintly audible hiss.

We have long felt that the special quali-

ties attributed to moving-coil cartridges really reflected their insensitivity to external-load conditions, their lack of sufficient inductance to affect preamplifier equalization, and perhaps a slight noise reduction at the preamplifier input produced by their very low coil resistance. The Stanton 980LZS meets these requirements totally. It is no wonder, then, that it really does behave in every way like the finest moving-coil cartridges (and better than most we have tested) but without their high weight and usually limited tracking ability.

If one has to invest in a separate pre-amplifier, it might be difficult to justify (economically) the purchase of this cartridge over a top-grade conventional moving-magnet cartridge such as Stanton's very similar 881S. However, if one's amplifier already has the gain for a MC cartridge, the 980LZS becomes a highly attractive choice, combining as it does the best qualities of both the moving-coil *and* the moving-magnet designs.

Circle 141 on reader service card



Dahlquist DQM-9 Speaker System

THE Dahlquist DQM-9 is a three-way, vented-enclosure system constructed in a conventional box format (unlike the well-known Dahlquist DQM-10). Since the woofer-compartment ports open to the rear of the cabinet, the speaker should not be placed closer than about 6 inches from the back wall, and the installation instructions also suggest floor placement on low stands.

The DQM-9 uses three matched drivers made by the West German firm of Magnat, by whom Dahlquist is licensed. The drivers are vertically aligned, and all visible metal surfaces are finely finished. The 11-inch woofer has an edge-wound ribbon voice coil and operates up to 450 Hz. The midrange employs a 5-inch cone, also with an edge-wound ribbon voice coil. The tweeter, which takes over above 3,500 Hz, is a 1-inch dome radiator.

The enclosure of the DQM-9 is made of a special particle board (also apparently of German origin) whose several layers of wood particles increase in density toward the outer layers of the board. The side walls are formed of a combination of 3/4- and 5/8-inch boards coated with a damping material on their inner surfaces. The entire exterior of the enclosure is covered with 3M "Nextel," a grey material resembling flocking that is said to damp surface resonances and lower the "Q" of the cabinet. The front baffle is covered with a black flocking material to control diffraction effects. The black, acoustically transparent grille cloth is held in place with magnetic fasteners at the corners of its wooden frame. According to Dahlquist, the special cabinet construction and surface treatment of the DQM-9 are responsible for reducing mid-band reso-

nances which could otherwise impart a "boxy" quality to the sound.

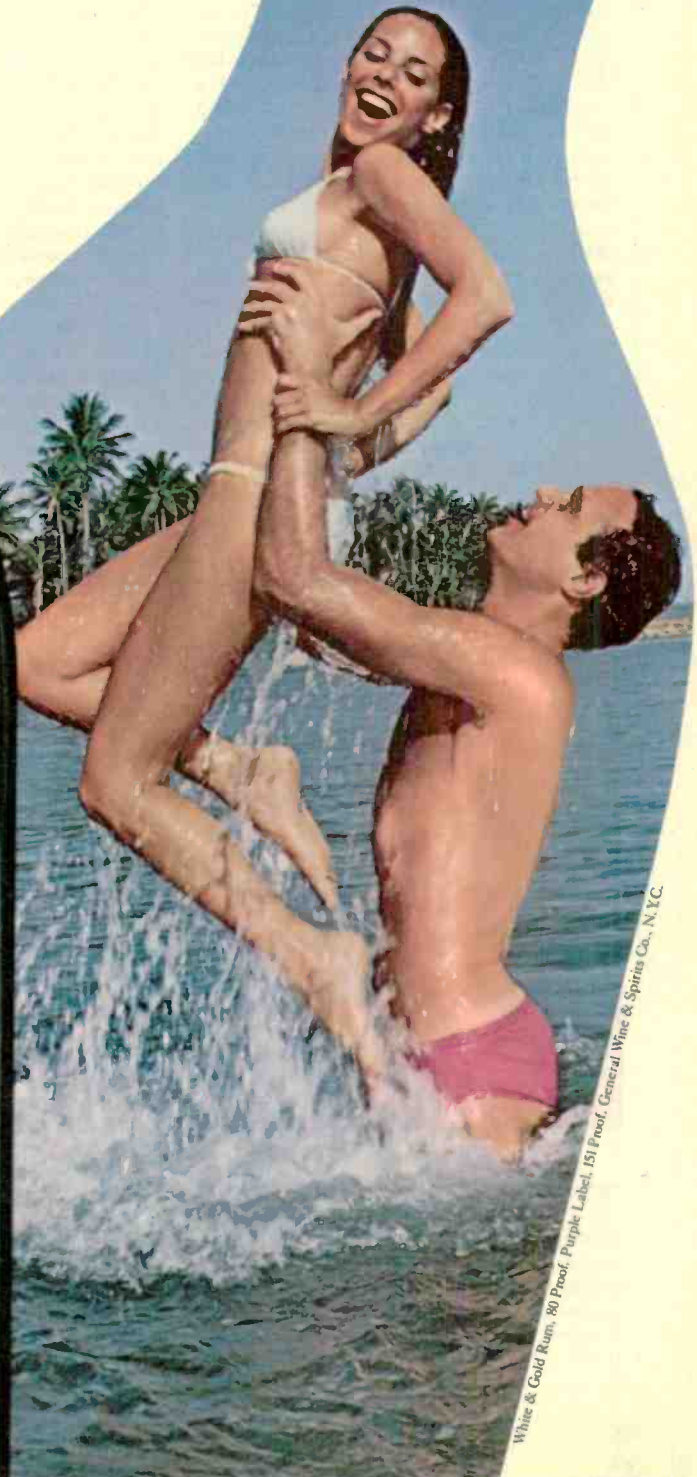
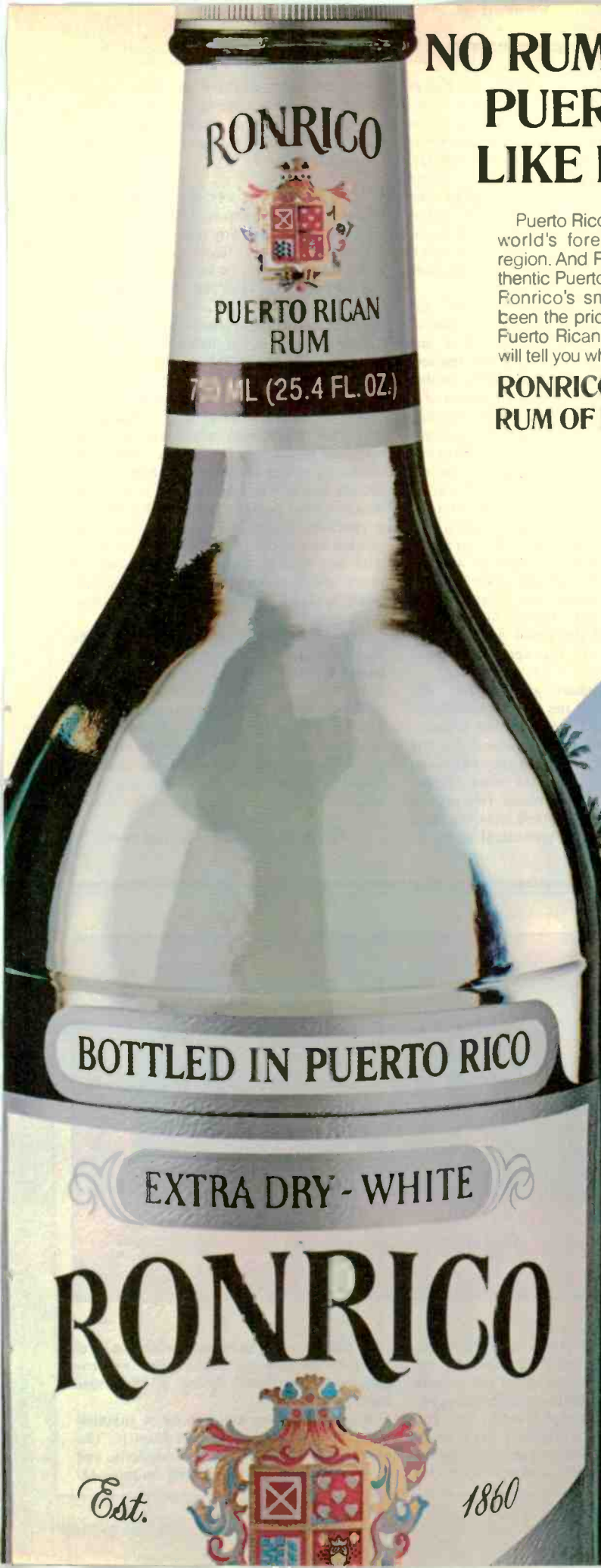
The Dahlquist DQM-9 is nominally an 8-ohm system with a minimum-impedance rating of 6 ohms. It is recommended for use with amplifiers delivering from 25 to 200 watts. The drivers are protected by a 8/10-ampere fuse which is mounted in the rear near the input binding posts (they are spaced on 3/4-inch centers to accept standard dual banana plugs). The DQM-9 is 25 inches high, 14 1/2 inches wide, and 13 inches deep. It weighs approximately 65 pounds. Price: \$600.

● **Laboratory Measurements.** Our reverberant-field measurements showed the Dahlquist DQM-9 to have a smooth, well-dispersed output with a slightly rising high-
(Continued on page 40)

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frequency characteristic. The response curves from the left and right speakers were very similar over the full audio range, confirming the good dispersion qualities of the dome tweeter. The bass response was measured with the microphone close to the woofer cone and also at one of the two identical port openings in the rear of the cabinet. After correcting for the relative areas of the cone and port openings, the curves were combined and spliced to the mid- and high-frequency curve. There was a broad peak in the upper bass (around 100 Hz), but, even so, the overall response was a very good ± 4 dB from 55 to 20,000 Hz. The output in the low bass remained strong (typically about 5 dB below the average midrange output) down to 30 Hz or below.

Having installed our new computer test facility shortly before receiving the DQM-9 (see this month's "Technical Talk"), we also measured the speaker's anechoic response under various conditions. Mounting the speaker on the floor produced a sharp "suck-out" in the response at about 8,000 Hz (this did not appear in our regular measurements, which average the acoustic output of the speaker over a wide angle and include any absorption by the room surfaces and furnishings). Moving the speaker to shelf height eliminated this effect and resulted in an impressively flat response, ± 3 dB from about 200 to 18,000 Hz.

The system impedance measured between 5 and 16 ohms from 20 to 20,000 Hz, with the minima occurring at 40, 120, and 10,000 Hz. The sensitivity was high, so an input of 1 watt of noise in the midrange produced a sound-pressure level of 90 dB measured 1 meter from the speaker grille. The only unexpected (and difficult to explain) test result was in the upper bass range,

where the distortion was somewhat higher than we would have expected, but it increased only moderately at lower frequencies. With a 1-watt input, the distortion was under 2 per cent between 50 and 100 Hz, rising to about 4 per cent at 35 Hz. These numbers apply to measurements at the cone for frequencies of 60 Hz and above, and at the port for lower frequencies, where its radiation is predominant. At 10 watts input, the distortion ranged from 3 to 8 per cent between 100 and 35 Hz.

The distortion characteristic of the DQM-9 was quite different from that of most speakers we have tested. For one thing, the principal component was the second harmonic, and the third-harmonic distortion was very low (a small fraction of 1 per cent above 70 Hz or so). Also, the distortion did not increase suddenly at some low frequency as happens when a speaker's available cone excursion has been reached. Instead, it rose gently and smoothly. Since the DQM-9 is rather more efficient than most speakers we have tested recently, it is delivering a higher acoustic output at the 1- and 10-watt drive levels than an average acoustic-suspension speaker (two to four times as much). These facts, among others, helped reconcile the slightly higher-than-normal measured distortion with the obvious excellence of the speaker's sound quality.

Dahlquist engineers agreed with our findings, stating that the speaker was deliberately designed to have a very low percentage of higher harmonics (especially the third and fifth) since the auditory offensiveness of harmonic distortion rises rapidly with the order of the harmonic (the second harmonic is generally agreed to be the least offensive and the least unmusical in its ef-

fects). Since the DQM-9 was designed specifically for minimum odd-order distortion, the trade-off was an inevitable—but certainly acceptable—increase in the second-harmonic level.

● **Comment.** As is our usual practice, we listened to the Dahlquist DQM-9 for some time before making any measurements (our instruments are less likely to be swayed by what we hear than vice versa). Our immediate reaction was that the DQM-9 was an uncommonly smooth and easy-sounding speaker. It was quite comparable to the best we have heard in its balance and overall musicality. If the DQM-9 could be said to have any special characteristic, it is that its sound is soft, almost velvety (by coincidence, an acoustic analog of its exterior finish). This might seem inconsistent with our response measurements, which indicate an unusually strong and extended high-end response, but in our opinion there is no single measurement that can describe the sound of a speaker. From the first, we were impressed by the effortless quality of its sound with any type of program. This is one of those speakers we could listen to indefinitely without the urge to switch to something else.

The appearance (and literature) of the Dahlquist DQM-9 indicates that it was meant for studio monitoring rather than for home use, although its sound certainly would do justice to the finest home system. The DQM-9 may have its aesthetic limitations as a piece of furniture, but as a high-quality reproducer we would say that the Dahlquist (and Magnat) design does very well.

Circle 142 on reader service card



Audio Control "Richter Scale" Equalizer

THE Audio Control "Richter Scale" (henceforth referred to as the RS) is a special-purpose five-band graphic equalizer and wave analyzer that operates only at frequencies below about 200 Hz. Its filters, spaced at half-octave intervals, have center frequencies of 31.5, 45, 63, 90, and 125 Hz. Each slider control adjusts the gain in its

own frequency band over a ± 12 -dB range.

Adjusting any graphic equalizer by ear can be difficult, and to simplify the process the RS contains a tunable warble-tone generator covering the range from 31.5 to 250 Hz. Its frequency is adjusted by a small front-panel knob whose calibration points correspond to the filter center frequencies

(the 250-Hz point serves as a reference level to which the response at the other frequencies can be matched by use of the slider controls).

A small electret microphone is supplied with the RS and is powered from it. The microphone is only about 2 inches long, and

(Continued on page 42)

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B-77 LINEAR-A DC Servo Power Amplifier with Spectrum Analyzer and Peak Power Meter. Sensibly rated at 60 watts/channel, min. RMS, both channels into 8 ohms from 20-20,000Hz, with no more than 0.03% THD. Direct-coupled throughout, it features Sansui's exclusive new "Linear A" circuitry for low distortion with high efficiency, along with separate 10-bar/d spectrum analyzer and peak power displays that show just what your system is doing.

T-77 Quartz-PLL Digital Synthesizer FM/AM Tuner with 8 Preset FM/AM Stations and Auto Search Digital Quartz-PLL Synthesizer design, which guarantees the most accurate tuning possible, is the highlight of this extraordinary tuner. Stores up to 8 stations in memory circuits for instant recall.

This system also has a direct/



drive automatic-return FR-D45 turntable with its low 0.025% wow/flutter and 72dB S/N ratio.

The attractive audio rack that contains the 900's components has additional space for an optional Sansui metal-tape compatible cassette deck.

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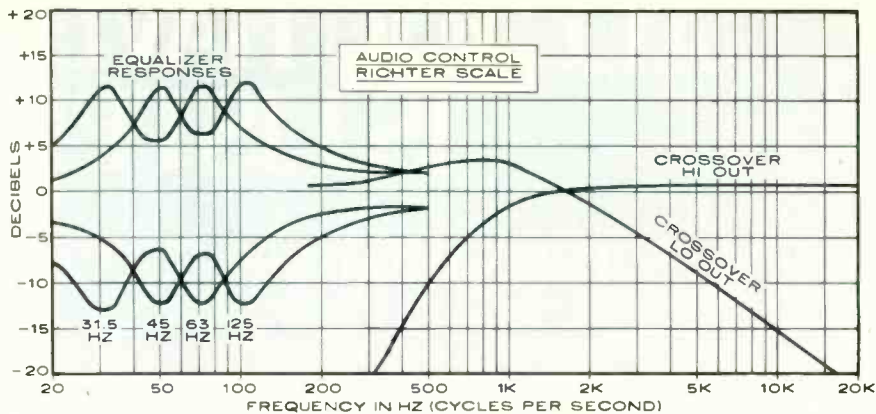
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CIRCLE NO. 24 ON READER SERVICE CARD

it is the same type used with the Audio Control Model C-101 real-time spectrum analyzer and equalizer (see review in STEREO REVIEW, May 1980). The level indication, instead of using a bar-graph LED display like the C-101, is a single meter calibrated to read relative acoustic levels from -20 to +3 dB. It is very heavily damped to give steady readings during the rapid level fluctuations that can occur in low-frequency warble-tone measurements.

The Audio Control RS is normally connected to the tape-monitoring circuit of an amplifier, and the amplifier's tape-recording inputs and outputs are duplicated on its rear panel. A front-panel pushbutton switch connects either the SOURCE or the TAPE signal to the equalizer inputs. Another button (EQUALIZE PROGRAM) connects or bypasses the equalizer circuits themselves. The five center-detented equalizer sliders are calibrated over their ± 12 -dB range. To use the warble-tone signal source, a small ANALYZE button at the right side of the panel is pressed. This supplies the tone to the left and right-channel warble-tone jacks in the rear of the unit and illuminates the front-panel meter. There is a single microphone jack in the rear, and the microphone has a 22-foot cable that allows it to be placed almost anywhere in the room (normally close to the listening position).

Although no instructions were supplied with the early production sample we tested, the operation of the RS was straightforward. With all equalizer controls at 0, the warble-tone frequency at its maximum of 250 Hz, and the microphone placed near the normal listening position, the system level was set to produce a 0-dB reading on the analyzer meter. The frequency was then moved successively to each of the other fre-



The dual functions of the Richter Scale: shown at left is the 12-dB maximum boost (top) and cut (bottom) from the four bass controls, at right the electronic crossover's bandsplitting.

quencies, the corresponding sliders being adjusted for a 0-dB meter reading as well. Since there is considerable interaction between adjacent (and even alternate) controls, it is necessary to repeat this procedure several times until no further improvement is possible. The final result may not be a truly "flat" response, but it is certain to be much flatter than the unequalized response (we were usually able to reduce the level variations to no more than ± 2 or 3 dB).

There are several independent, but somewhat related, pushbutton controls that also affect low-frequency performance. The SUBSONIC FILTER introduces a steep (18 dB per octave) rolloff below 20 Hz. To impart the last bit of low-bass "feel" to the sound, the ULTRA LO BOOST raises the output by 15 dB at 34 Hz. The RUMBLE REDUCER sums low-frequency signals in the two channels (be-

low about 200 Hz) to reduce out-of-phase rumble without significant loss of audible bass response.

The Audio Control RS has yet another function that, to some people, could be worth a good part of its price. It contains an electronic crossover network, with the crossover frequency switchable to either 100 or 800 Hz (it can be set to other frequencies by an internal modification). A front-panel knob adjusts the low-frequency output level from the crossover circuit over a ± 20 -dB range, sufficient to match almost any conceivable combination of drivers. The crossover input and output jacks for left and right channels and both frequency ranges are in the rear of the unit.

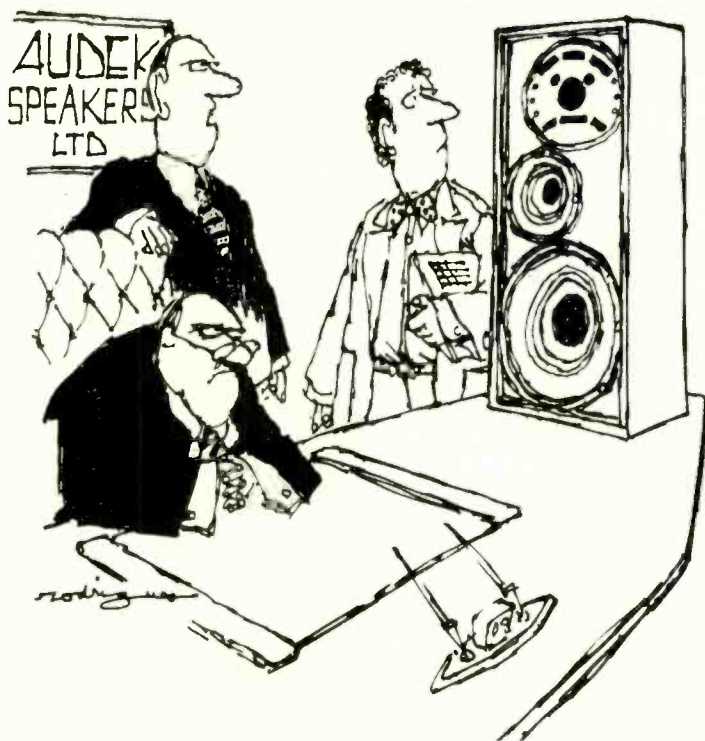
The Audio Control "Richter Scale" is a compact unit, measuring only 14½ inches wide, 5⅞ inches deep, and 2½ inches high. It weighs 5 pounds. The exterior is finished in black, with solid oak end plates. Price: \$249.

● **Laboratory Measurements.** The equalizer response curves of the Audio Control RS were approximately at the stated frequencies and showed the rated control range of ± 12 dB. With all controls centered, the response was flat within ± 0.5 dB from 20 to 20,000 Hz. The SUBSONIC FILTER began to affect the response at about 30 Hz, and it was down about 2.5 dB at 20 Hz. The ULTRA LO BOOST raised the output by the rated 15 dB at about 35 to 40 Hz. Its effect was reduced to about 7 dB at 20 and 70 Hz.

The RS had a gain of exactly 1.0 when driving an IHF standard load. Depending on the equalizer settings, the output clipped at 6.5 to 7 volts. The unweighted output noise was unmeasurable, being less than 100 microvolts. The level of the warble output was 70 millivolts, and the warble rate was about 6 Hz. The frequency deviation appeared to be about ± 30 per cent of the center frequency.

Although we did not use the RS as an electronic crossover (this function is completely independent of its equalizer circuits), we did measure the frequency response of its low- and high-frequency channels. The manufacturer claims to have an asymmetrical crossover design, with phase shift controlled to produce a constant-volt-

(Continued on page 44)



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Record absolutely nothing on each one. If you hear something like a snake hissing in the background, that recorder is filled with ten-year-old technology. But if you hear exactly what you recorded—silence—then the recorder reflects the technology of the 80's. And it does, if it's the TC-FX6C from Sony.

Sony designed the FX6C to incorporate the newest, most advanced noise reduction system—Dolby C* Dolby C doubles the noise reduction without producing the unwanted side effects caused by similar systems. So when you record music you hear only the music and not an extraneous hiss.

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RECORDING
SILENCE.

And, instead of the conventional tape counter, the FX6C features the most useful guide to tape time ever invented—a computerized Linear Counter. Now you no longer have to guess how much time remains on a tape, or if you'll run out of tape in the middle of a selection.

There's no fumbling around to find, play and replay a cut you want to hear either, because the FX6C incorporates an Automatic Music Sensor. This allows you to skip forward or backward to the selection of your choice. You can even pre-set the deck to repeat any portion of the tape you want to hear up to nine times.

Other innovations range from Sony's exclusive Sendust and Ferrite head formulation to advanced remote-control capability.

But what's really innovative is the price. A price that, we assure you, will generate a lot of hissing from our competitors.

FEATURES AND SPECIFICATIONS: 2-motor tape drive/Solenoid-logic, feather-touch controls/16-segment LED meters/Optional: RM-50 remote control, RM-80 wireless remote control, RM-65 synchronizer/S/N ratio 59dB (metal, Dolby off), improved up to 20dB @ 2kHz with Dolby C/Wow and flutter 0.04% (WRMS)/Frequency response 30Hz—17kHz ± 3dB (metal). *Dolby is a trademark of Dolby Lab. ©1981 Sony Corporation of America. 9 West 57th St., N.Y. NY 10019. Sony is a registered trademark of Sony Corp.

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CIRCLE NO. 27 ON READER SERVICE CARD

age total output when the two channels are summed. To this end, the upper end of the woofer range is rolled off at a 6-dB-per-octave rate, while the lower end of the tweeter range is rolled off at an 18-dB-per-octave rate. Our measurements confirmed this characteristic and in addition showed a broadly raised output (about +3 dB) near the upper end of the woofer's range. When we combined the two outputs resistively, however, the sum was absolutely uniform with frequency. Not a trace of the crossover could be found in the summed signals, which had a response of ± 0.25 dB from 20 to 20,000 Hz.

The distortion rating of the RS is 0.015 per cent, with no level stated. Our measurements showed the distortion to be less than 0.003 per cent up to about 0.3 volt output and between 0.04 and 0.1 per cent from 1 to 6 volts output. These values are completely negligible.

● **Comment.** We used the Audio Control "Richter Scale" in a couple of different mu-

sic systems in different rooms. The equalization adjustment took only a minute or two, and the results were most gratifying.

Unlike the usual room-equalization procedure, which attempts to obtain a "flat" response over the audio range in the search for greater accuracy of reproduction (an ambiguous target at best), the bass equalization of the RS makes little claim to greater "accuracy," whatever that might be. It is, quite frankly, a means of restoring the "feel" of low bass in systems in which that part of the spectrum is missing or severely attenuated; at the same time it removes much of the upper-bass heaviness that normally mars the sound of many speakers. That, at least, is our interpretation of its purpose and the basis for our evaluation here.

The RS did both jobs very well. Together with a more natural overall bass balance, it managed to give some speakers a skin-tingling low-bass output that we had never before experienced from them in the same room. It won't get more from a speaker than

it is capable of giving, but it will surely exploit any speaker's capabilities to the utmost. The ULTRA LO BOOST was responsible in good measure for this performance, even without using the half-octave equalizer. It could give a remarkably solid deep bass with no danger of overdriving either the speaker or the amplifier in the infrasonic range.

The Audio Control "Richter Scale" is not inexpensive, but its specialized design makes it more effective as a bass equalizer than any of the full-range octave-band equalizers we have used. It is worth its price for that function alone if, for one reason or another, you are not presently realizing your full share of bass from your speakers. The RS is an equally good value as a very fine electronic-crossover accessory for bi-amplified systems. If both capabilities can be used, the "Richter Scale" will prove itself a worthwhile addition to almost any music system.

Circle 143 on reader service card



Aiwa AD-M800U Cassette Deck

THE Aiwa AD-M800U is a two-motor, three-head cassette deck with a microprocessor-controlled "DATA" system (Digital Automatic Tape Adaptation) that optimizes the recorder for any tape formulation in about 30 seconds.

The deck's record and playback heads have separate gaps but are in a single shielded housing. The heads are faced with Sendust and the playback head is contoured to minimize the low-frequency "head bumps" that show up in the frequency response of most cassette recorders. The AD-M800U contains dual Dolby circuits so that a recording can be monitored with the proper decoding as it is being made.

The capstan is driven by a frequency-generator-controlled servomotor, and the recorder has a very low flutter specification of 0.04 per cent (weighted rms). A separate d.c. motor drives the tape hubs. The transport is controlled by solenoids which are actuated by feather-touch buttons on the panel. The REC and PLAY buttons must be held in simultaneously to engage the recording

mode, and there is the customary PAUSE button. The AD-M800U also has a REC MUTE button that removes the signals from the recording head while it is held down without affecting the level indicators or the signals at the line-out jacks (if they are from the source, rather than the tape). Small pushbuttons connect either the source or the tape playback signal to the line-out jacks, activate the Dolby system, and connect the MPX FILTER to remove any 19-kHz pilot carrier from the program when recording stereo FM broadcasts.

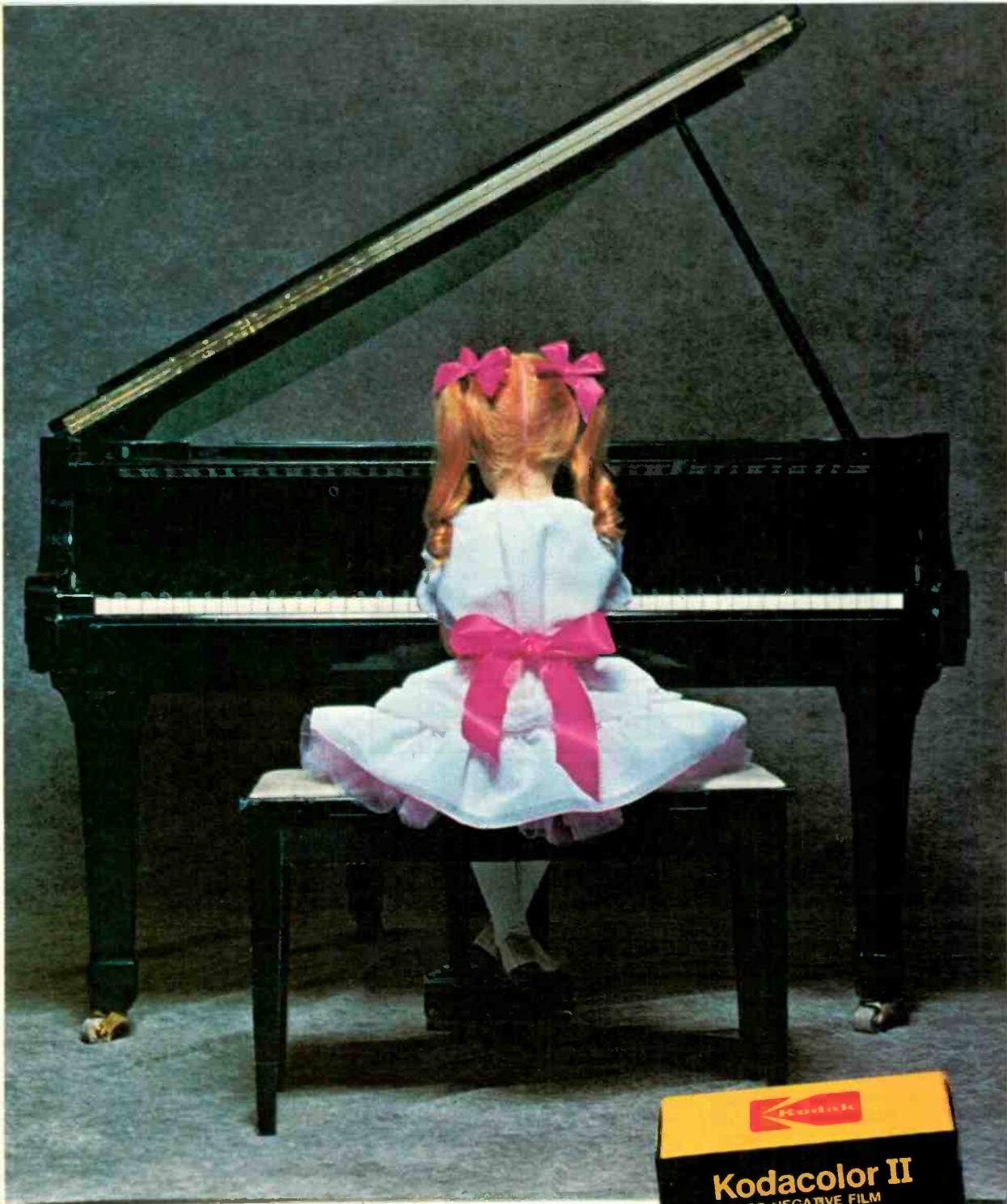
The cassette opening is flanked by the EJECT button and a POWER button, plus an infrared sensor for the remote-control accessory. Nearby are a phone jack and a small TIMER/REPEAT knob that sets up the machine for unattended timer-controlled operation in either the playback or recording mode, or for repeating a cassette playback indefinitely. The index counter and the MEMORY switch can be set either to stop the tape when the counter returns to 000 in rewind mode or to go into its PLAY mode at

that point. Other front-panel controls include a pair of concentric RECORD LEVEL knobs and two MIC input jacks for medium- to high-impedance mikes.

The level indicators are meters calibrated from -20 to +6 dB. Between them are LEDs that show instantaneous peak levels. These are marked to show the maximum permissible recording level for each of the basic types of tape for which the machine is designed: +4 dB for CrO₂, +7 dB for FeCr and LH, and +10 dB for metal tape (there are also lights at 0 dB and -6 dB).

Across the center of the panel are the controls and indicators for the DATA system. Although it is basically designed to do the same things other microprocessor-controlled recorder-optimizing systems are intended to do, DATA has some distinctive characteristics. One unique property is its ability to determine the type of tape being used without the need for preprogramming by slots in the cassette housing or by the operator. To do this, it records and plays

(Continued on page 46)



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back a 10-kHz test signal, measuring the playback level as the recording level is increased in steps over a wide range of amplitudes. From the maximum-output level (MOL) indicated by this test, the computer decides whether the tape is LH (or standard-bias ferric-oxide tape), FeCr (ferrichrome), CrO₂ (chromium dioxide or an equivalent high-bias ferric-oxide tape), or a metal-particle tape.

There are also four TAPE SELECTOR buttons on the panel, and although any of them can be used to preset the recorder adjustments manually, this is not necessary. The first step in the fully automatic DATA process makes this choice and lights a LED

not necessary to repeat the entire process for every recording, since the machine has memories for all the data covering four tapes. After the DATA cycle has been completed, touching a MEMORY IN button followed by one of the four numbered memory buttons stores the data in that location, from which it can be recalled at any time by pressing the same button.

Another alternative is to use one of the basic tape-selector buttons, which are equivalent to the tape selectors of most conventional recorders. The bias can be trimmed slightly about each nominal setting with a small BIAS FINE ADJUST knob that has a range of about ± 10 per cent. By

per cent, we had to record at +7 to +7.5 dB with the two TDK tapes, +6 dB with Sony Duad, and +5 dB with the Memorex Metal IV.

The unweighted signal-to-noise ratio (S/N) referred to the 3 per cent distortion output level was about 52 dB with all the tapes except Sony Duad, which gave a 54-dB reading. Using the Dolby system and CCIR weighting, the S/N ranged from 63.5 to 64.5 dB with all the tapes, except for a 66-dB reading with Sony Duad. The noise increased by 9.5 dB through the MIC inputs at maximum gain but did not increase at all with the gain at more normal settings. Plugging a microphone into either channel input automatically disconnected the line input for that channel. The erasure of a 0-dB, 1,000-Hz recorded signal (with any of the tapes) was essentially perfect. The residual signal was lower than -75 dB and not detectable in the noise background even with high-resolution spectrum analysis.

The playback frequency response with standard test tapes was exceptionally flat; it measured ±0.5 dB from 31 to 10,000 Hz with a BASF (DIN) 120-microsecond tape and +1, -0.5 dB from 40 to 10,000 Hz with a Teac 116SP 70-microsecond tape. The record-playback frequency response at a -20-dB level was virtually identical for all tapes. There was 2-dB overall variation from 40 to 17,000 Hz with the two TDK tapes. The extreme highs fell off slightly with the Sony Duad ferrichrome tape, which had a response of ± 1 dB from 45 to 13,000 Hz. The response with Memorex Metal IV was within 1 dB overall from 50 to 17,000 Hz.

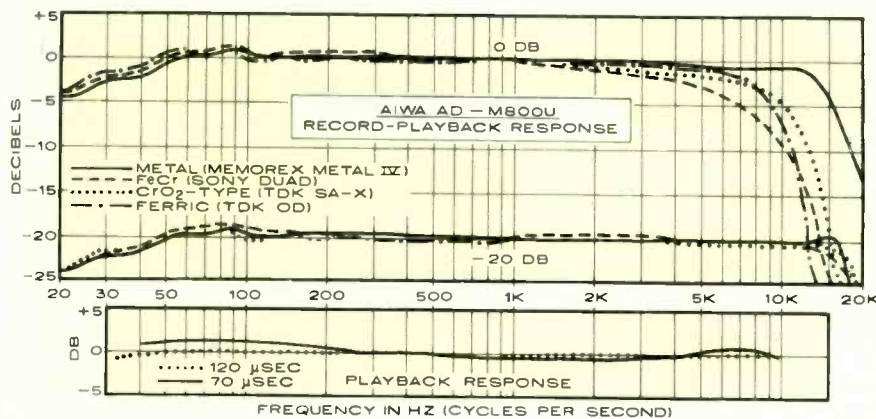
The real differences between the tapes showed up in their 0-dB frequency response, which reflected their high-frequency headroom. Here there were no surprises; the TDK SA-X was only slightly better than OD at a 0-dB level, Duad rolled off gently above 2,000 Hz, and the metal tape was by far the best, with essentially flat response up to 13,000 Hz.

The MPX filter cut off the response sharply above 15,000 Hz instead of allowing it to fall off naturally. Its response was down 20 dB and still falling very rapidly at 18,000 Hz, where it ran off the bottom of the chart (it had a negligible effect at 15,000 Hz and lower frequencies).

The Dolby circuits tracked acceptably at all levels from 0 to -30 dB, and the difference between the response with and without Dolby was in every case just what would have been expected given the measured frequency response of the recorder. The Dolby system doubles any deviation in flatness of response due to the recorder or the tape. A standard Dolby-level test tape (200 nW/m) gave a reading of +2.5 dB on the recorder's meters. The peak-responding LEDs lit at levels within 0.5 dB of the corresponding meter readings, and they flashed on 0.8-millisecond tone bursts with no loss of accuracy. The meters themselves read about 60 per cent of their steady-state values on 0.3-second tone bursts (slower than a standard VU meter response) and decayed to -20 dB in 0.3 second after signal removal.

The tape speed was 0.15 per cent fast, and the flutter was a very low 0.03 per cent

(Continued on page 48)



in the appropriate button. Next, a 6-kHz signal is recorded and played back while the bias is varied in steps to determine the maximum output level at that frequency. With the bias established, the machine sets its recording sensitivity by recording a 400-Hz signal at a -20-dB level, playing it back and adjusting the recording gain until the input and output are at the same level. Then the midrange equalization is optimized by a similar procedure with an 8-kHz signal recorded in 128 steps and the equalization adjusted to match its playback to the low-frequency reference level. Finally, the same equalization is performed at a high frequency, which is automatically set at 12 kHz for LH tape and 14 kHz for all the others.

While the DATA process is going on, green lights below the meters are flashing, and as each parameter is optimized its light remains on steadily. At the end of the process, an OK light comes on at the right of the display. If the tape response has not been successfully optimized for any reason, the ERROR indicator lights up, and if every step except the high-frequency equalization has been accomplished the OK light comes on but flashes. When an OK status has been achieved, the tape rewinds to the beginning of the test section. The user always has the option of moving the tape forward and initiating a new calibration process if the first has not been successful.

To start the DATA cycle, a DATA SYSTEM RESET button is pressed, lighting a green signal in the start button above it. Pressing START begins the sequence, which finishes about 30 seconds later when the tape rewinds to the starting point and stops. It is

recording interstation FM tuner hiss at a low level (such as -20 dB) and varying this control as the monitor button is switched from source to tape, it is easy to find a bias that gives the most accurate high-frequency response.

The infrared remote control included with the Aiwa AD-M800U is a compact unit on which all the transport-control functions are duplicated. It can operate the recorder over a distance of 25 feet or more at angles up to 45 degrees from the front panel. On the rear of the recorder the only features are the line-in and line-out jacks and a playback-level knob. The Aiwa AD-M800U is 18¾ inches wide, 11⅞ inches deep, and 4¾ inches high. It weighs 17½ pounds. Price: \$770.

● **Laboratory Measurements.** We tested the Aiwa AD-M800U with TDK OD tape for LH, TDK SA-X for CrO₂, Sony Duad for FeCr, and Memorex Metal IV for metal tape. The frequency response and other performance data we obtained with these tapes left no doubt that essentially similar results can be expected from any comparable competitive tapes.

At 1,000 Hz the input for a 0-dB recording level was 56 millivolts (mV) at the line inputs and 0.55 mV at the MIC inputs (the latter overloaded at a very high level of 260 mV). The playback output from a 0-dB recording was about 290 mV for all the tapes except Sony Duad, which gave a 190-mV output. The playback distortion (third-harmonic) at 0 dB was 0.5 per cent with TDK OD and 0.7 to 0.8 per cent with the others. To obtain a reference distortion level of 3

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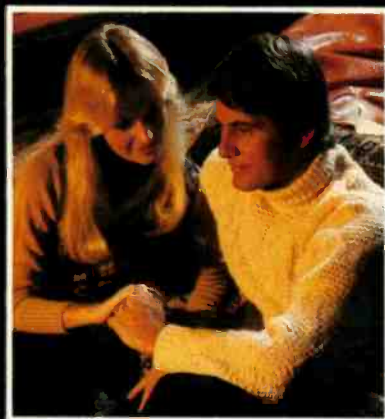
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test reports

Aiwa AD-M800V Cassette Deck

(Continued from page 46)

weighted rms or ± 0.05 per cent weighted peak (DIN) with a TDK AC-342 flutter test tape. The flutter spectrum was broad and generally random, with a small peak at about 25 Hz. In fast forward and rewind, a C-60 cassette was moved from end to end in 67 and 80 seconds, respectively. All the operating functions of the AD-M800U, such as the timer and memory features and the remote control, worked perfectly.

● **Comment.** The DATA system of the Aiwa AD-M800U virtually eliminates any audible differences between tapes, especially as far as frequency response is concerned, and for all practical purposes it does the same for their distortion and S/N performance. In view of that, it seemed strange to find that the instruction manual lists the recommended tape-selector settings for a large number of tape formulations. The DATA system makes that information, normally so important and so infrequently included in other cassette-deck manuals, quite redundant for this machine. Of course, tapes are not all equal. There are certainly differences in coating uniformity and high-frequency saturation properties, as well as in mechanical construction, that may make one tape preferable to another. Still, by and large they will all tend to sound pretty much alike when used in this recorder (with the possible, and occasional, exception of metal tape, whose high-frequency response at high levels is inherently better than that of the other tapes).

The machine worked flawlessly, leaving us with little to criticize. Its electrical performance has apparently been designed for the "real world" of cassette recording, with no attempt to extend its frequency response beyond 20 kHz or to compete with open-reel recording in dynamic range. These goals are possible in cassette machines, to be sure, but only at considerable cost. On the other hand, if we restrict ourselves to things that *can* be heard, it is worth mentioning that the flutter we measured was as low as we have ever encountered in a cassette recorder (or, for that matter, in consumer tape recorders of any type), and the figures we obtained may well be the residual levels on the test tapes (a combined record-playback measurement yielded very similar results).

In all the ways that count, the Aiwa AD-M800U is a superior product. It is extremely versatile, has excellent frequency response, distortion, and noise characteristics, a foolproof automatic tape-adjustment system, and is compact and easy to use. The remote control is a nicety that not everyone will use, but it works very well indeed. Even the price is right, especially when one recalls the prices of the first cassette decks with microprocessor controls a few years ago. This one does more for less money, and to us that spells progress.

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Going on Record

By James Goodfriend



MUSIC AND WATER

ASSOCIATIONS of music and water are legion. Debussy's *La Mer* and Vaughan Williams' *Sea Symphony* are only two of many works that evoke the ocean (not even to mention that famous phonetic misunderstanding, "Beethoven's Symphony No. 5, 'Sea Miner'"). Ives evoked the Housatonic, Smetana the Moldau, Villa-Lobos the Amazon, and Tell Taylor the Old Mill Stream. Liszt and Respighi gave us Roman fountains, Debussy a garden in the rain, and Britten a fludde (flood). Handel's *Water Music* was written to be played on the water, and the fabled hydraulis (water organ) and Benjamin Franklin's harmonica were instruments that depended on water for their performance functions. Truly, water comes into music in a lot of different ways.

But one of those ways not often talked about relates to water's quality of neutrality, its function as a dilutant. In this sense, Scotch and water is a lot less potent than Scotch, applesauce and water is a lot less appetizing than applesauce, and music and water is a lot less flavorful than music.

Some of the latest recorded examples of music and water to flow through the market are all these recent interchanges and admixtures of Eastern (far) and Western (near) musical art. No one questions that Isaac Stern and Jean-Pierre Rampal are superb instrumentalists no matter what they play. But give them a Japanese melody to play and their art functions—as far as I can see—a mere dilutant. What their performances sound like to Japanese ears I would not venture to guess, but to Western ears they can sound only more familiar, more Western, less Japanese than performances by those in the Japanese tradition. Is this necessary? There is no reason in the world why one *has* to like Japanese melodies, but water their thin down would seem only to spoil them for those who do.

Equally reprehensible, though perhaps a bit more understandable, is the sort of watering at the source one finds in the recent CBS record of Chinese music made in China ("Phases of the Moon," M 36705). There is some pure-sounding stuff on the disc, but most of it reveals a careful study of some of the worst Western commercial mu-

sic and the decision to abandon a tradition in the search for a possibly larger audience. Performances by "The Central Broadcasting Traditional Instruments Orchestra" reek of third-rate Western movie music and cocktail-lounge exotica and are about as redolent of the great Chinese cultural heritage as chop suey. Again, I would not presume to say what such performances sound like to educated Chinese ears, but I venture to guess that they would find them even funnier than I do.

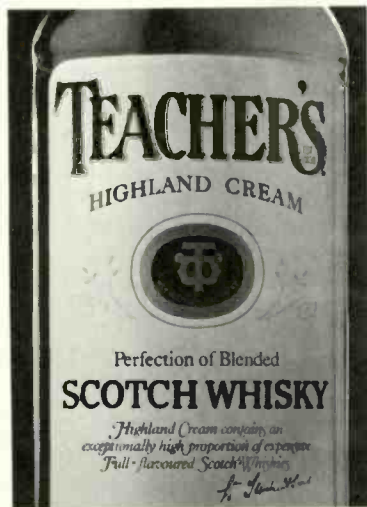
To produce watery results, water itself need not always be added, nor is it always the exotic substance that gets weakened. Vivaldi's *Seasons* is a pretty strong piece of music, and an ensemble of Japanese kotos (*koto*: a kind of zither and, since the early seventeenth century, the national instrument of Japan) is a formidable performing group. Putting the two together, however (Angel S-37450-Q), is like mixing hydrochloric acid and sodium bicarbonate: after the initial fizz all one is left with is salt, water, and a lot of carbon-dioxide gas.

THE point of these examples is to illustrate one of the damaging aspects (to conclude the aqueous analogy) of the musical mainstream. The mainstream is the history and development of music as we in the West know it (doubtless there are Eastern main-streams as well) and the carrier of tradition. Virtually everything worthwhile flows into it at one time or another, nurturing it, adding new life and new characteristics. These tributary streams gain extended life and broader exposure by being absorbed, but they also lose their concentration and individuality. Ethnic musics join the mainstream and ethnic musics come out of it again, but the confluence has watered down the original product (witness American country music based on commercial radio and television). Sooner or later everything gets to sound very much alike. And that's why I wish they'd leave a few walls in place, make "cultural exchange" a little less an everyday matter, demand more of those who explore beyond their own cultural lines. Everyone has been making things so *easy*. Perhaps there is a need, as Kierkegaard said, to make things more difficult. □

David R. Wilson
President & Treasurer
Personal Economics Securities, Corp.
New York, N.Y.



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A panel of eight expert listeners discover
their personal preferences among
FIFTEEN
\$100 SPEAKERS

By David Ranada



Acoustic Research
AR18s

Jensen System
Series 200

Sony SS-U45

Sansui S-37

American Acoustics
Labs 3600

Technics
SB-L50

Genesis 1

CHOOSING a speaker has always been the most time-consuming, exasperating, and ego-stressing part of selecting a high-fidelity system, and it is never more so than when you are shopping for inexpensive speakers or if you are a first-time buyer. As a service to readers, as an experiment in listening, and as a vehicle for advice on how to choose speakers in general, STEREO REVIEW has conducted a listening test of fifteen speakers in the \$100 price range. The test was designed to simulate certain aspects of listening in a hi-fi showroom, but in a controlled manner meant to be fair to all the speakers tested.

This article will *not* choose your speakers for you; that is not our purpose. Only *you* can solve the complex purchasing equation that includes the variables of speaker price, sound, size, and appearance. What this article will do is describe how we arrived at our results and how our methods can be applied in the "real world." Forearmed with this information, you can walk into any listening comparison aware of what needs to be done in order to reach a fair conclusion. Then you can compare your opinions with our listening panel's. The result should be very instructive.

There are two reasons why the \$100 price category was chosen for this speaker-listening test. One is logistical, the other technological. If you've ever wondered why you don't see more such listening tests in major audio publications, it is because they are *extremely* difficult to do in a scientifically controlled manner. We chose \$100 speakers because speakers in this category are generally small enough to be moved by hand. A reasonably large number (fifteen) could then be tested without the aid of a fork lift and without using a listening room the size of an aircraft hangar. As you will see, the ability to move speakers easily was essential to the proper execution of the listening test.

TECHNOLOGICALLY, the \$100 price point is one of the most interesting ones, a level at which the demands of physics and economics meet head on. The laws of physics say that it is physically possible to build an extremely good-sounding speaker these days for \$100, and our listening panel agreed. But the panel also agreed that they all sounded different, and this is where economics comes in. At the \$100 level, the speaker designer is restricted in making the



KLH 170

Avid 80b

Boston Acoustics
A60

Wharfedale
Laser 40

Burhoe
Crimson

EPI 70c

Acvent 2002

Realistic
Optimus-23



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inevitable tradeoffs between extended low-frequency response, low distortion, high power-handling capability, and high sensitivity to manipulating the factors of cabinet size, driver comple-

ment and placement, and crossover complexity. On the whole, in fact, it's easier to design a good \$300 speaker than a good \$100 speaker.

If you are operating on a low budget in your search for a stereo system, you have very little choice as to speaker price. The \$100 bracket is possibly the lowest that will give you 90 per cent or more of what high fidelity is all about. If you never play music at ear-splitting levels or demand reproduction of the lowest organ-pedal notes, that percentage approaches 100. By and large, the speakers in this report have much more extended bass response and are able to

play at louder levels with less distortion than the minispeakers in STEREO REVIEW's last listening test (see August 1979 issue); they also sometimes cost less than minispeakers.

The speakers in the present test have a less "technological" appearance than most minispeakers: all have "walnut-grain veneer" finishes and removable cloth grilles, not punched-metal screens. Our listeners, however, didn't know that. That's because this listening test was designed to be as controlled as possible to protect the subject speakers from biased listeners and to protect the listeners from their own biases.

MANUFACTURERS' SPECIFICATIONS FOR THE FIFTEEN LOUDSPEAKERS

Circle Number on Reader Service Card	Manufacturer	Model	Price	Dimensions (Inches)	Weight (pounds)	Grille Color	Terminals	System Type (V = vented-bass reflex; AS = acoustic suspension)	Driver Complement			Crossover Frequencies (Hz)	Sensitivity (sound-pressure level at 1 meter with 1-watt input, dB)
									Woofer	Midrange	Tweeter		
146	Acoustic Research 10 American Dr. Norwood, Mass. 02062	AR18s	\$180 pr.	16 1/2 x 9 5/8 x 6 5/8	13	brown	push	AS	8"	—	1 1/4" cone	2,000	88
147	Advent Corp. 195 Albany St. Cambridge, Mass. 02139	2002	\$219.90 pr.	18 1/2 x 11 x 8	16 1/2	grey	twist	AS	8"	—	1 1/2" cone	3,200	88
148	American Acoustics Labs (AAL) 629 West Cermak Rd. Chicago, Ill. 60616	3600	\$99 ea.	27 x 16 x 11	36	black	push	V	12"	5 1/4" cone	2" cone	1,000 & 5,000	96
149	Avid Corp. 10 Tripps Lane East Providence, R.I. 02914	80b	\$99 ea.	12 x 8 1/2 x 19	18	brown	push	AS	8"	—	13/4" cone	3,000	88
150	Boston Acoustics 130 Condor St. Boston, Mass. 02128	A60	\$200 pr.	18 x 11 1/2 x 7 1/2	16	black	push	AS	8"	—	1 1/2" cone	3,000	90
151	Burhoe Acoustics 78 Stone Place Melrose, Mass. 02176	Crimson	under \$200 pr.	13 1/2 x 8 3/4 x 6 1/2	12	brown foam	push	V	4"	—	1" cone	2,500	90
152	Epicure Products Inc. 25 Hale St. Newburyport, Mass. 01950	EPI 70C	\$180 pr.	16 x 10 1/2 x 7 1/4	17 1/2	black	push	AS	6"	—	1" inverted dome	1,800	86.5
153	Genesis Physics Corp. Newington Park Newington, N.H. 03801	Genesis 1	\$198 pr.	19 x 10 1/2 x 7 1/2	20	black	push	AS	8"	—	1" inverted dome	1,800	89
154	Jensen Sound Laboratories 4136 North United Parkway Schiller Park, Ill. 60176	System Series 200	\$100 ea.	18 3/4 x 11 x 9 3/8	16	brown	push	AS	8"	—	1" dome	3,100	88
155	KLH Research & Development Corp. 7945 Deering Ave. Canoga Park, Calif. 91304	KLH 170	\$198 pr.	18 x 10 1/2 x 8	14	black	twist	AS	8"	—	1 1/2" cone	3,000	90
156	Radio Shack Tandy Corp. Fort Worth, Tex. 76102	Realistic Optimus-23	\$99.95 ea.	22 1/4 x 12 1/4 x 11 3/4	24	brown	screw	V	10"	—	2" cone	3,500	91.5
157	Sansui Electronics Corp. 1250 Valley Brook Ave. Lyndhurst, N.J. 07071	S-37	\$180 pr.	23 x 12 x 10 3/8	20	black	push	AS	10"	—	2" cone	4,500	91
158	Sony Corp. 9 West 57th St. New York, N.Y. 10019	SS-U45	\$170 pr.	25 1/2 x 14 1/2 x 10 3/4	24 1/2	brown	screw	V	8"	2 1/2" cone	1" cone	6,000 & 9,000	91
159	Technics One Panasonic Way Secaucus, N.J. 07094	SB-L50	\$200 pr.	23 1/2 x 13 3/4 x 9 1/4	19 1/4	brown	twist	V	9"	4" cone	2 1/2" cone	4,000 & 9,000	94
160	Wharfedale America 10323 Rush St. South El Monte, Calif. 91733	Laser 40	\$250 pr.	14 x 9 3/4 x 9 1/2	12	black	push	AS	6"	—	2" cone	3,500	88

THE specifications tabulated above from manufacturers' data are largely self-explanatory. Prices listed are those current at the time of publication (speakers sold in pairs have the per-pair price listed). For those on a tight system budget, the most im-

portant specification listed, aside from price, is sensitivity (or efficiency). This is a measure of how loud the speaker can play with a given power amplifier, or, conversely, how much amplifier power is needed for the speaker to play at a given loudness level. A

speaker with a 3-dB higher sensitivity than another will play just as loud on half the amplifier power; a 2-dB higher rating indicates that only two-thirds the power is required. Selecting a higher-sensitivity speaker means you can make do with a smaller amplifier.

Playing Fair

As in a typical showroom, each listener switched between two pairs of speakers and decided which of the pairs he preferred for whatever reason. Rankings were derived from an extended series of such comparisons. Unlike the case in a dealer showroom, we were able to take certain measures to ensure that the listener's judgments were unbiased and made only on the basis of *sonic* characteristics.

The primary assurance of unbiased judgments was the "single-blind" nature of the test: all the speakers were at

all times hidden behind an acoustically transparent screen (actually several yards of black grille cloth hung from tall microphone stands). This simple step at once eliminated all preferences based, however subliminally, on a speaker's size, shape, driver complement, finish, grille cloth, and manufacturer's reputation.

Concealing the speakers also helped make each evaluation an independent act, since one or both pairs of speakers could have been changed from one comparison to the next; the listeners were not told whether they were or not. Thus they could not keep track of which speaker was which even if they wanted to.

Another condition intended to make the listeners' comparisons fair was that each listened *alone* except for the person running the test. Group-listening sessions always run the risk that one person's opinion will dominate the results, sometimes even through such seemingly innocent things as posture and gesture, not to mention grunts, sighs, groans, and other more verbal communications. (You might keep this in mind the next time a speaker salesman describes what he likes or doesn't like about a speaker you may be auditioning.) For this test, the tester (the author) tried to keep visual and verbal contact between himself and the listeners to an absolute minimum and confined himself to positioning the speakers and to matching their levels.

Ideally, of course, the test should have been "double-blind." This would have meant that neither the listeners nor the person running the test would know what speakers were being used. Lack of man- or computer-power prevented us from doing this.

So far, we've covered only those steps taken to eliminate listener bias. Further measures were taken to make sure that the sounds heard were fair representations of the speakers making them. Primary among these measures was the matching of the loudness of each speaker pair to the other within 0.5 dB using a pink-noise generator and a C-weighted sound-pressure-level meter. Unless something is terribly wrong with one pair of speakers, listeners *naturally* prefer the louder system, regardless of its other characteristics. Unless steps have been taken to compensate for this tendency, judgments derived from listening tests should *always* be held suspect. (This requirement for matched levels holds for most audio listening tests, including those for headphones, cartridges, analog vs. digital, dbx vs. Dolby, etc.) In a showroom you should always make an attempt to match perceived loudness levels by ear *before* you

start listening to music. Try to use a steady, standardized signal source such as FM interstation hiss.

Speaker placement was also meant to be fair to each unit. The contending pairs were immediately adjacent to each other, left speaker about 6½ feet from the right, vertically oriented, on a wall-mounted shelf 2¾ feet above the floor in STEREO REVIEW's New York listening room (*not* where Julian Hirsch conducts his speaker tests). Only two speaker pairs were on the shelf at any time, thus the requirement for small, easily moved units. When the listeners operated the comparator switch, they heard only a very slight horizontal shift of the stereo image, and this could be compensated for with a slight movement of the head. Not only did adjacent speaker placement equalize the effects of the room on each speaker, but it also equalized the distance and the angle to each pair of speakers, all of which could have an effect on the sound. (Beware of showroom comparisons where one pair of bookshelf speakers is, for instance, in the corners near the ceiling and the other is in the middle of the floor.)

The last major feature of the test methodology is probably the most controversial: switching between speakers was instantaneous and each comparison lasted only long enough for a preference to develop with each listener's program material. Long-term listening tests, as advocated by several underground audiophile publications, do have one major advantage over instantaneous matched comparisons, however. They allow enough time for the playing of a wide selection of program material. On the other hand, a long-term listening test gives a listener just as much time to get *used* to a speaker's defects as it gives him to find them. Quick, level-matched comparisons immediately bring sonic differences to the foreground, enabling listeners to concentrate on how those differences color program material. (When switching speakers in a showroom, always throw the switch *during* a relatively continuous musical passage, *not* between phrases.) Long-term listening tests are extremely difficult to control scientifically, and they are very difficult to reconstruct, should that be necessary. Besides, a long-term listening test of fifteen loudspeakers would probably last longer than the sales life of the speakers in the marketplace!

Program Material

Our test-panel listeners were asked to bring whatever recordings of their own they thought would be useful in the

Impedance (ohms)		Minimum Amplifier Power (watts)	Power Handling (continuous watts)	Comments/Features
Nominal	Minimum			
8	5.5	see manual	100	Ferrofluid-cooled tweeter
8	6	10	50	Mirror-image pairs
8	5	5	100	Ten-year limited warranty
8	7	8	60	Minimum-diffraction grille
8	6	10	60	Ferrofluid-cooled tweeter, thin grille panel
8	5.5	15	35	
8	4.7	10	60	Ferrofluid-cooled tweeter
8	4	12	50	Ferrofluid-cooled tweeter
8	5	10	120 peak	Minimum-diffraction grille; high-temperature voice coils
8	6	10	n.a.	Polypropylene-cone woofer
8	7	5	75	High-temperature voice coils
8	n.a.	n.a.	55	
8	6	10	55	
8	n.a.	n.a.	75	
6	n.a.	15	65	Woofer has four-layer voice coil

(For more detailed information on this subject, see "Loudspeaker Power Requirements" by Roy Allison in the August 1980 issue of STEREO REVIEW. The article is available as Reprint Series #50153—see Reader Service card, page 94.)



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evaluation of \$100 speakers. As it turned out, the material ranged from audience applause to thunderclaps, from spoken voice to large chorus and orchestra, from bluegrass to jazz to pop to rock to classical. The wide variety and quality of the recordings used in the test has important implications for the interpretation of the test results, but more on this later.

What recommendations can be given for program material to take to a show-room? First of all, don't think it necessary to take only top-quality "demo" recordings (digital, half-speed mastered, or otherwise). A badly made recording with extensive midrange voice equalization can also tell you much about a speaker. In particular, when an over-equalized pop vocalist is heard through a speaker that also has an elevated presence region (about 1 to 5 kHz), the result is particularly irritating and harsh. On a more "flat"-sounding speaker, however, the same recording will just sound too closely miked and over-equalized.

Vocal recordings, of either solo singers or of choruses, have long been used as test material for smooth mid-frequency response, and they were chosen by every listener in our test. The sound of the female voice is particularly useful for finding peaks and dips in the presence region, while male voices can help stimulate undesirable lower-midrange/upper-bass boominess. For broadband frequency balance, string ensembles and full orchestra should be played since they make a rising high-frequency response sound shrill and steely. And for bass frequencies, there's still nothing like a well-recorded pipe organ or a bass-drum *roll* (not a "thwack," which isn't very low in frequency).

All this means that for listening tests you should make a good cassette recording of many different, short selections so that you can hear as wide a variety of favorite program material as possible in a rather short period. In addition, a tape won't wear out or get noisier with the repeated playings necessary to narrow down your choice of speaker. With just a little practice you can become quite proficient in at least *picking out* the subtle but important differences between speakers, although

you still may not be able to tell which you *prefer*. But finding *that* out can be—dare we say it?—a lot of fun.

The Results

Charted on the facing page are the complete results of the listening test, and there are several important points to remember if you are to avoid misinterpreting the data. The results are rankings that reflect speaker *preferences* expressed by experienced listeners; they do not necessarily reflect speaker "quality." The results also give no indication, of course, as to the quality of a given manufacturer's *other* speakers. Remember also that the speakers tested are only a small selection from the many models available in this price range. There are, in fact, probably many speakers available in the price range which might be more preferred than the ones tested here, as there are certainly those that would be less preferred, some of them costing considerably more. Finally, the rank-

ings give no indication of the sonic characteristics of each speaker, of how different speakers of similar rank actually sound, or of how well each speaker would do on test instruments.

The accompanying data chart shows a mark for each time a speaker received a given ranking. Also shown is an "uncertainty region" (technically, an area around the arithmetic mean of the rankings that is two standard deviations wide). If the uncertainty regions of any two similarly ranked speakers overlap considerably, there is no statistical way of distinguishing the speakers' exact ranking with any degree of certainty. The width of the uncertainty region gives some indication as to how varied the opinion on a particular speaker was; the wider the region, the more "controversial" its sound. We've arbitrarily broken up the speakers into three groups based on the averages of the rankings: most preferred, sometimes preferred, least preferred.

Of the many generalizations that can be made about the results, the most im-

THE ASSOCIATED EQUIPMENT

THE equipment used in any speaker-listening test must be of such quality that the reaction of the listeners depends only on the interaction of the speakers with the program material and the listening room. We took steps to ensure that the components we used had a negligible effect, if any, on each listener's preferences.

As the primary disc signal source we used a Shure V-15 Type IV cartridge mounted in the Biotracer tone arm of a Sony PS-X75 turntable. A half-track Revox A77 Mk III was used for playback of some live-recording master tapes. For those tapes and discs that required dbx-II decoding, a dbx Model 21 decoder was used. Our preamplifier was an Apt/Holman unit with the tone controls switched out.

Program material chosen by each listener was recorded for reference and convenience on one of two digital-audio recording systems. Only the digital tape was played during the test itself. The first system used a Sony PCM-10 digital-audio adaptor with a Sony SL-5400 Beta-format videocassette recorder. The second digital system was a Technics SH-P1 digital-audio adaptor and a Panasonic NV-8200 VHS-format VCR. Both digital-audio adaptors conformed to the EIAJ standard for such devices (see "Audio News" in the March 1980 issue).

The power amplifier was an SAE 2401 (rated at 250 watts per channel into 8-ohm loads) which fed its output into an Audio Authority Model One speaker switchbox. This unit incorporated the facilities used for matching speaker loudness levels. It also short-circuited the speakers not being played so that they could not change (through resonance effects) the sound of the speakers switched on. Levels were monitored by an Ivie IE-10A octave-band spectrum analyzer switched to its sound-level-meter mode.

DON'T think that you have to assemble a system of equivalent specifications (and price) to evaluate \$100 speakers correctly or to enjoy them at home. Some components, like the power amplifier and the digital-audio recorders, offered performance far exceeding that possible with systems appropriate for these \$100 speakers. Then again, a well-chosen system of inexpensive components would probably *sound* identical to the one we assembled. In short, we believe the results of this test would have come out the same had we used an inexpensive system (low-power receiver, inexpensive turntable, cartridge, and cassette deck) *provided* each component were operating properly (no amplifier clipping, no cartridge mistracking, no tape saturation) *and* the other safeguards against listener bias were observed (single-listener sessions, hidden speakers, matched levels, etc.).

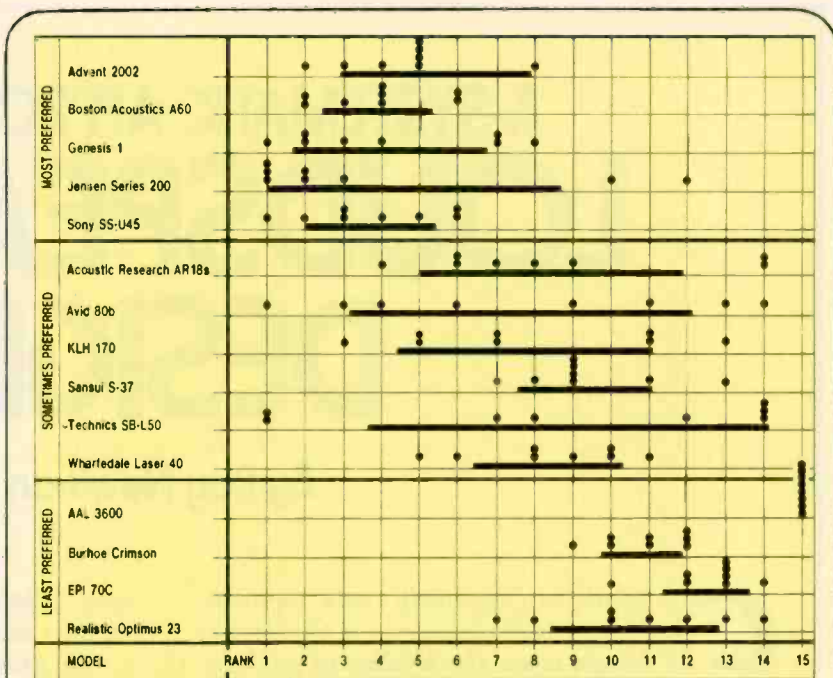
portant is that there seems to be some consensus as to speaker preference. If this were not the case, the rankings for some speakers would not be clustered so closely together and the uncertainty regions in every case would be extremely wide.

But there are speakers that seem to be exceptions to this generalization, and one of them is in the "most preferred" group. What does this non-clustered data mean? To me (and this is only speculation on my part) it seems that those speakers with widely scattered rankings had some distinctive sonic characteristic that happened to coincide either very well or not at all with a particular combination of listener taste and program material (don't forget that each listener brought his own program material). In other words, the rankings for the "non-clustered" speakers depend more on the program material and the listeners' sonic tastes than do the rankings for the other speakers.

Using the Results

To repeat, the ranking data in the accompanying chart are *not* to be taken as an indication of speaker "quality," but only perhaps as an indication of how likely you will be, as an experienced listener, to prefer one system to another in the group. If you're not an experienced audiophile, you might possibly use the rankings to "calibrate" your ears to those of our listening panel. In any case, the chart, in conjunction with some showroom listening, will help you utilize the combined experience of our listening panel to educate your ears. (Remember only that no one can account for vagaries in the acoustics of the showroom or how the speakers are set up within it.)

Eventually the time will come to put your money where your ears are. We do *not* recommend shopping on the basis of price alone. Even with the widely varying discounts available, the maximum price differential between any two pairs of speakers in the chart will probably be less than \$40—not too significant a figure for those in search of good sound at low cost. Furthermore, each of the speakers in the chart sounds *different*, even the five "most preferred" models. Since all the models tested can be expected to give *decades* of listening use, scrimping at this low price level seems a bit absurd in contrast to paying a little more for something you prefer. You'll be repaid a thousand times over in sonic and psychological satisfaction if you take the time, trouble, energy, and thought to train your ears *before* you purchase. □



THIS chart presents all the data derived from the listening tests. Each dot represents one listener's ranking of one particular speaker. For example, it can be seen that one listener ranked the KLH Model 170 third out of fifteen, two listeners placed the Acoustic Research AR18s sixth, and one listener put the Jensen Series 200 in twelfth place.

Also shown is an "uncertainty region" which gives an indication of how diverse the opinions regarding each speaker were. The longer the line, regardless of its placement, the less agreement there was on a speaker's ranking. The shorter the line, the greater the agreement. It is possible that a wide uncertainty region means that the speaker's sound interacted strongly with the listeners' taste and program material (see text). If one line

completely or nearly completely overlaps another, a precise statement about the two speakers' relative ranking cannot be made.

We have divided the chart into three sections (Most Preferred, Sometimes Preferred, Least Preferred) based on the arithmetical average of each speaker's rankings. The systems are listed *alphabetically* within each group because we feel that no meaningful distinctions of rank can be made *between* speakers within each group. In general, the small differences within each group that result from calculations of the average rankings are not statistically significant (except in the Least Preferred group). There are, however, significant differences in *sound* between speakers in each group and between groups, so audition before buying.

THE LISTENERS

THE "golden ears" selected to undergo the daylong ordeal of making speaker comparisons were chosen for their varying backgrounds, catholic musical tastes, and particularly their combined wide experience in listening to all grades of audio equipment.

Bob Ajaye is a sound and speaker technician who has been a participant in previous STEREO REVIEW listening tests, including the mini-speaker report in August 1979.

Howard Alexander is general manager of Shadow Electronic Labs and has worked as an electronics engineer and technician.

Arnis Balgalvis, a data communi-

cations consultant, has also participated in past STEREO REVIEW listening tests.

Mark F. Davis, an MIT-trained psychoacoustician, now works for dbx.

E. Brad Meyer is editor of the newsletter of the Boston Audio Society. He also makes live on-location recordings and used some of them as program material in the test.

Thomas Perazella is general manager of a product group for Berkey Marketing, a photographic marketing concern.

David Weinberg also makes live recordings. Otherwise he is employed by the government.

Mark Wilder is an audio-engineering student at the Institute of Audio Research in Greenwich Village, New York City.

A SYSTEMATIC APPROACH TO LOUDSPEAKER DESIGN

By Ray Newman

CONTRARY to popularly held opinion, good bass performance in a loudspeaker system is not the product of any special arcane knowledge, nor is it arrived at only through endless cut-and-try experimentation in a garage workshop. The rules for good bass-reproducer design are certainly complex, but they are accessible to good speaker-system designers and even to interested audiophiles. In fact, an understanding of the physical and acoustical laws that govern system design can serve to immunize buyers against the more improbable fads

and fallacies that are endemic to the speaker-system marketplace.

To provide some insight into the complex world of the speaker designer, we've asked Electro-Voice's Ray Newman to go just a bit more than diaphragm deep into the process of designing a speaker for today's marketplace. A careful reading of what follows should illuminate some previously mysterious matters and show how they affect the size, shape, and sound of the speakers that finally make it into our living rooms. —Larry Klein, Technical Director

THE basic problem faced by any loudspeaker manufacturer is how to attract the attention of buyers in a vastly overcrowded speaker marketplace. It is possible to make an impact through heavy advertising and promotion, but any success is difficult to sustain without the backup of adequate performance from the product itself. On the other hand, some manufacturers have found that a well-designed, good-sounding product is not selling because it has been inadequately promoted. In any case, it is clear that before a speaker system (or line of systems) is put into production the sales and design people (sometimes they are only one person) must consider all the interrelating factors that affect production, marketing, and sales. Decisions must be made on size, cost, and desired level of performance, and these should be arrived at through knowledge rather than through intuition or chance.

Design Choices

In most cases, the earliest design considerations involve the interrelation-

ship between a system's size, its low-frequency capabilities, its efficiency, and the basic speaker type (usually either vented or acoustic suspension). The physical elements involved in these decisions are (1) the enclosure and (2) the largest loudspeaker (woofer) within it; together they usually determine half to three-quarters of the system cost. The fascinating thing about these four factors (size, bass, efficiency, and type) is that they are related mathematically in such a way that specifying any of the three (within certain practical limits) will determine the fourth. This means that there is a fixed, though large, framework of limitations imposed on the designer.

The actual interrelationships that need to be dealt with can be put in the following form for most loudspeaker systems: efficiency is proportional to (size) \times (bass)³ \times (system type). In the actual mathematical equation, *efficiency* is a number that shows how much of the electrical power from the amplifier is converted to the acoustic power your ears will hear. When expressed as a percentage, efficiency is

usually between 0.1 and 10 per cent. (Note how little of an amplifier's output power is actually converted into audible acoustic power. Most of the amplifier power fed to a speaker system gets turned into heat.) *Size* is the interior volume of the enclosure. *Bass* is the frequency at which the low-frequency output has dropped to one-half (–3 dB) its higher-frequency value. Finally, the *system type* number depends on the type of system being designed (ported, acoustic suspension, etc.). A more detailed description of the system-interrelationship equation (which we will refer to henceforth as SIRE for acronym fans) is given in the accompanying box.

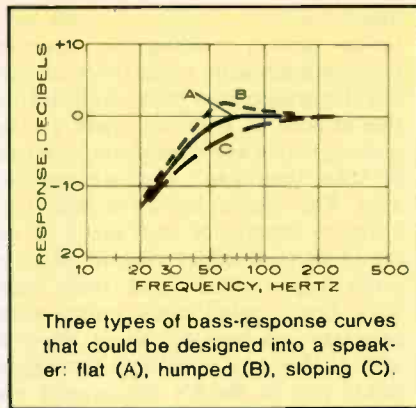
In a way, the SIRE may be viewed simply as a way of choosing between efficiency, bass response, and size—once a choice has been made as to the type of system. Putting the system type aside for a while, the choices left involve picking two of the three remaining characteristics and letting the other be determined by the equation. Needless to say, some choices are not compatible. For example, small size and high effi-

ciency preclude extended bass. Let us use the SIRE for some examples.

A sealed system with a volume of 200 cubic inches (a minispeaker system of six-pack size) designed for 0.5 per cent efficiency (a moderately low value) intended for operation near a wall would be expected to lose bass output below about 100 Hz if it were well designed (if it were not well designed, the bass rolloff would start at some higher frequency). Designing for an octave-lower bass (such as moving the -3-dB point from 100 to 50 Hz) imposes large penalties in other areas. For example, an octave more bass from a given-size box would mean *one-eighth* the efficiency, thus indicating the need for an amplifier of eight times the former power. Alternatively, if the same efficiency were to be maintained, the extra octave of bass would require a box *eight times* as large. (It is to the advantage of a designer to communicate these natural laws as best he can to his company's marketing people, because no amount of wishful thinking or puttering around in the lab can circumvent them.)

System Type

Speaker systems are usually divided into the categories of sealed boxes (acoustic suspension), vented boxes



(bass reflex or ported), and acoustic labyrinths (transmission lines). In actuality, there is great variety possible within these broad classifications. For instance, a number of specific sealed-system designs could be devised, the variables being the different sizes of the boxes and the specific characteristics of the woofers used within them. Simply by trying different combinations, one could come up with a variety of bass curves (and efficiencies). Some curves would be humpy, others would slope off, and some might be relatively smooth and flat. The system-type number at the end of the SIRE is basically

keyed to these various shapes out of all possible response shapes. For instance, a "flat" response curve in a conventional sealed system is called a second-order Butterworth response, a name derived from electrical-filter design. Curve A in the accompanying figure illustrates this type of response. Also shown are two alternative curves—humped (B) and sloping (C)—that might result.

When you're dealing with a specific system type, you pick two parameters (size and efficiency) and get "stuck" with the third. However, changing the system type so as to raise the system-type number provides interesting possibilities as long as the change does not have unwanted side effects (such as requiring a very complex enclosure or an impossible-to-build woofer mechanism). A properly designed *vented* box can provide smooth response with two to three times the efficiency of a sealed box of the same size and bass response. And some vented systems that use equalizing circuits as an integral part of their design can have efficiency increases of five or six times without sacrificing bass performance. Alternatively, the system-type advantage can be turned to profit in extended bass or reduced enclosure size (see the box just below). *(Continued overleaf)*

SYSTEM-INTERRELATIONSHIP EQUATION (SIRE)

THE equation—it looks more formidable than it actually is—for optimizing the variables of efficiency, bass response, and size in a speaker system can be written in the following form for lossless systems (most actual systems are quite close to being lossless):

$$\eta = 16 \times 10^{-12} f_3^3 V_B K$$

where

η = efficiency, assuming radiation into a half-space (as, for example, close to a wall)

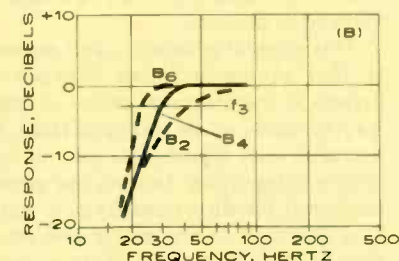
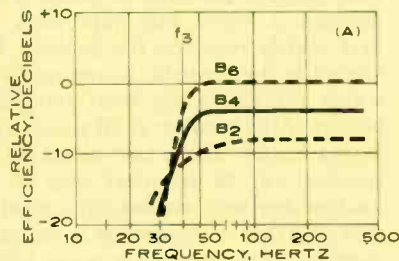
f_3 = the frequency at which response has fallen to half its higher-frequency value (the 3-dB-down point)

V_B = the internal volume of the enclosure in cubic inches

K = the system-type number (sealed, vented, etc.). The value of K varies over a wide range (between about 0.25 and 20) and therefore has a profound effect on system performance; K is also related to the shape of the response curve around the bass-rolloff point.

The effects of various system manipulations can be understood by

changing the quantities in the SIRE. As an example, lowering f_3 by an octave but keeping efficiency (η) and the system design (K) unchanged implies an eightfold increase in enclosure volume (V). However, it should



be recognized that a change such as this involves more than just increasing box volume by a factor of eight. It would also require basic redesign of the low-frequency driver used in the enlarged box in respect to its moving masses, compliance, and magnetic system. (There is a systematic way of going about such redesign, but that is beyond the scope of this article.)

In Figure A, response curves for several systems are plotted under the assumption of equal enclosure size (V) and the same 3-dB-down frequency (f_3) of 40 Hz. In this case the systems differ in design and therefore have different K values. The systems shown are a second-order Butterworth sealed system (abbreviated B_2), a fourth-order Butterworth vented system (B_4), and a sixth-order Butterworth vented system (B_6). These systems have respective K s of 1.4, 3.7, and 9, which causes them to have different levels of efficiency for the conditions chosen. Figure B shows what would happen to the bass-rolloff frequency if the system designs had the same efficiency level and the same box volume.

SPEAKER DESIGN...

"... what is really meant by 'flat response,' and is it really something desirable?"

Loudspeaker Diameter

In the discussion so far there has been no mention of the size of the woofer cone. This is because the SIRE is not concerned with this point. However, as with most problems, there tends to be a range of better solutions for a given set of conditions. For example, an 18-inch woofer housed in a 2-cubic-foot box might be very appealing to a marketing man or advertising copywriter, but if a woofer really appropriate for this system could be made, it would require an excessively large and hence very expensive magnetic system. (A 3-inch unit would have a reasonable-size magnet, but even modest loudness would demand excessive cone excursion.) Put in more general terms, and considering only the lower frequencies, the question of woofer-cone size involves (1) the acoustic-output level desired, (2) system type (vented, sealed, etc.), (3) low-frequency performance, and (4) cone-excursion capability, some of these being independent of the SIRE.

Putting It Together

Let's say that at this point we have come up with a desired cabinet size, bass capability, and efficiency, and that we have worked these out for a system of an appropriate type. But since a full-range system needs more than a woofer, we are obviously not quite ready to go to market. The speaker needs to be completed, usually as a two- or three-way design, with the upper-frequency drivers selected and integrated with each other and with the woofer by an appropriate crossover network.

In general, the upper-range drivers will be very small relative to the lower-frequency section and therefore will add little to the bulk or the general appearance of the whole system. But their sonic contribution is extremely significant, and the design and integration of the high-frequency units is a matter of substantial complexity and often considerable art.

● **Bass Bumps and Balance.** The subject of system integration—the electroacoustic blending of the various ele-

ments—gets into some relatively mysterious areas, involving, for example, the psychoacoustic importance of various distortions and phase and diffraction effects. In addition, there are the more concrete and agreed-upon matters of bass "bumping" and spectral balance. The visceral impact of bass is exciting to experience, and many (if not most) musical styles depend on it to some degree. Disco and rock music come first to mind, but classical works certainly use bass to telling effect as well. (Listen to a thirty-two-foot organ-pedal stop in Bach's Passacaglia and Fugue in C Minor, for example.) Almost every speaker designer has struggled with the dilemma of how to handle the bass question. A purist approach would suggest flatness, but it is very tempting to design in a *mild* bass bump—perhaps only a few decibels high—spread over a half-octave or so. Some designers have bumped up the response much more than those few tempting decibels (especially in the 50- to 100-Hz region) in an effort to provide "good bass" for naïve ears.

Achieving balance between the upper and lower part of the frequency range seems a simple problem, but in reality it is quite complex. Although it is possible to provide reasonably flat response for four to five octaves at the lower end of the audio spectrum (with the help of SIRE), it is very hard to do so at high frequencies (especially with systems designed for medium to high efficiency). Furthermore, there are the dual questions of what is really meant by "flat response," and is it really something desirable?

It is fairly well known, at least among engineers, that there are two basic approaches to measuring frequency response. One of these is the commonly cited *on-axis anechoic response*, which provides a curve that represents the first sounds reaching the listener. The second is the *acoustic-power response*, which represents the total integrated output of the speaker at all possible listening angles. These two measured responses will be identical only if the loudspeaker has constant directionality, meaning that its dispersion is the same throughout the frequency range tested; this is a condition very difficult to achieve in practice.

This general problem—and especially that of the balances between the drivers at the crossover points in multi-way systems—is an unappreciated, but sonically very significant, part of total system integration. Indeed, the general subject of the directionality of a system as a function of frequency and its influence on such matters as stereo imaging (including left-to-right and front-

to-back localization) is just beginning to be examined. So it seems that the significant marketing-design decisions are rooted in three not generally well-known basics: (1) the effective utilization of the decided-upon and necessarily limited size of a system, (2) carefully worked-out frequency balance across the audio spectrum, and (3) appropriate control over the directional characteristics of the system.

● **Appearance.** Some thought must be given to the visual appearance of a speaker system since its effect in the marketplace cannot be denied. However, it is rare that "cosmetic" elegance—real rosewood rather than vinyl veneer—is achieved without an appropriate price tag, and the manufacturer has to decide how much he wants to spend on the visual rather than the sonic aspects of his system.

Source Material

As has been frequently pointed out in these pages of late, we are in a period of rapid improvement in the quality of recorded source material. True digital recordings promise such wonders as dead-quiet backgrounds, virtually no cutting or playback tracking problems, 80- to 90-dB dynamic range, and nearly unlimited bass extension. Many of these characteristics are even now available in various sophisticated conventional recordings—digitally mastered analog, direct-cut, and "CX"- and dbx-encoded discs—and at least three of them should concern loudspeaker manufacturers. These are increased bass capabilities, freedom from cutting and tracking distortion, and expanded dynamic range.

● **Increased Bass Capabilities.** This is a by-product of not having to cut or track large groove excursions, a problem that often results in limited or reduced bass below 50 Hz (and almost certainly below 30 Hz) on most current discs. Very low frequencies converted into digital form are no more difficult to cut or track than mid frequencies, so digital techniques should therefore permit the recording of extended and powerful bass which will be remarkable to experience *if it can be effectively reproduced*. This problem falls on the shoulders of the speaker-system designer to a greater degree than previously. The implications of the SIRE approach to low-frequency system design are therefore likely to become more important than ever. The matter of loudspeaker-cone size (really tied into the topic of cone excursion) briefly touched on earlier should also come to the fore.

The reproduction of high-intensity, very-low-frequency signals implies carefully designed, suitable-size woofers in system types that minimize the excursion required for a given bass output. Even the momentary delivery of 1 acoustic watt (a very high output level in a living room) at frequencies at and below 40 Hz with a speaker of reasonable size is a difficult task indeed. As an example, consider a 12-inch driver in a sealed box installed near one wall attempting to radiate 1 watt of acoustic power at 25 Hz. A total cone excursion of almost 4 inches would be required—

a more general question involving possible increases in the average and instantaneous peak levels of reproduced music. The new disc formats promise dynamic ranges of 80 to 90 dB instead of the 55 to 65 dB of most current analog recordings. If much of the 15- to 35-dB increase were to find its way into increased peak levels, amplifier and loudspeaker manufacturers (and owners) could find that life has become very difficult. However, most of the increased dynamic range will probably go into reducing background noise, which in turn may be an inducement to increase aver-

ing "soft" material and larger amplifiers (200 to 400 watts) are to be used for higher-intensity music. And, obviously, designers must pay careful attention to keeping the required woofer-cone excursions at reasonable values by using cones of adequate size in system designs that have lower cone excursions for given outputs.

In a sense, hi-fi history is coming full circle in respect to speaker-system efficiency and output levels. The digital revolution may cause the loudspeaker industry to become more aware of the need for higher-output systems. In the

SOUND PRESSURE LEVEL: AVERAGE AND PEAK



SOUND-PRESSURE LEVELS (SPL) can vary over an enormous range that extends from about the threshold of sound at 0 dB (representing a pressure level of 0.0002 dyne per square centimeter) to perhaps 130 dB—where, if sustained, the sound pressure can cause pain and inner-ear damage. This range represents an acoustic-power change (from lowest to highest level) of 10^{13} , or 10,000,000,000,000—ample testimony to the ear's sensitivity range!

In musical situations, it is important to distinguish between long- and short-term sound-pressure levels. During a sustained passage of, say, several seconds, the *average* SPL may stay at a relatively constant value. However, short peaks of a few milliseconds' duration may occur during this time with levels of 10 to 15 dB (factors of ten to thirty) above the average levels. These are caused by sharp attack transients such as result from the hammer of a piano

striking a string, the initial sounds of brass instruments, and the impact on a drum head. If the information in these short-duration sounds is to be preserved without being clipped or blurred, sufficient momentary (as opposed to continuous or "rms") amplifier power *and* loudspeaker output capabilities must be available.

The average levels for loud (live) classical music appear to be on the order of 90 to 100 dB, with peak levels of 105 to 115 dB. Levels for rock and disco music are higher—perhaps 5 to 10 dB (three to ten times) higher. If these SPLs are translated into acoustic watts in the reverberant field of a "typical" living room (a situation akin to listening at 10- to 20-foot distances with wide-dispersion loudspeakers), approximately 1 acoustic watt is required to produce 115 dB. Although this amount of power may seem small, it presents a difficult challenge to any loudspeaker system.

an impossible demand given the current state of the art.

● Cutting and Playback Distortion.

The second matter, involving cutting and tracking distortion, may have some interesting implications with respect to higher-frequency system output. It has been suggested that one reason many listeners prefer their highs rolled off is that a system with a flat power response reveals the high-frequency distortion of most program sources. If high-frequency distortion is reduced at the source, the challenge for speaker designers of obtaining both a flat axial response *and* flat acoustic-power response takes on a new significance.

Expanded Dynamic Range

Aside from the low-frequency-excursion problem discussed earlier, there is

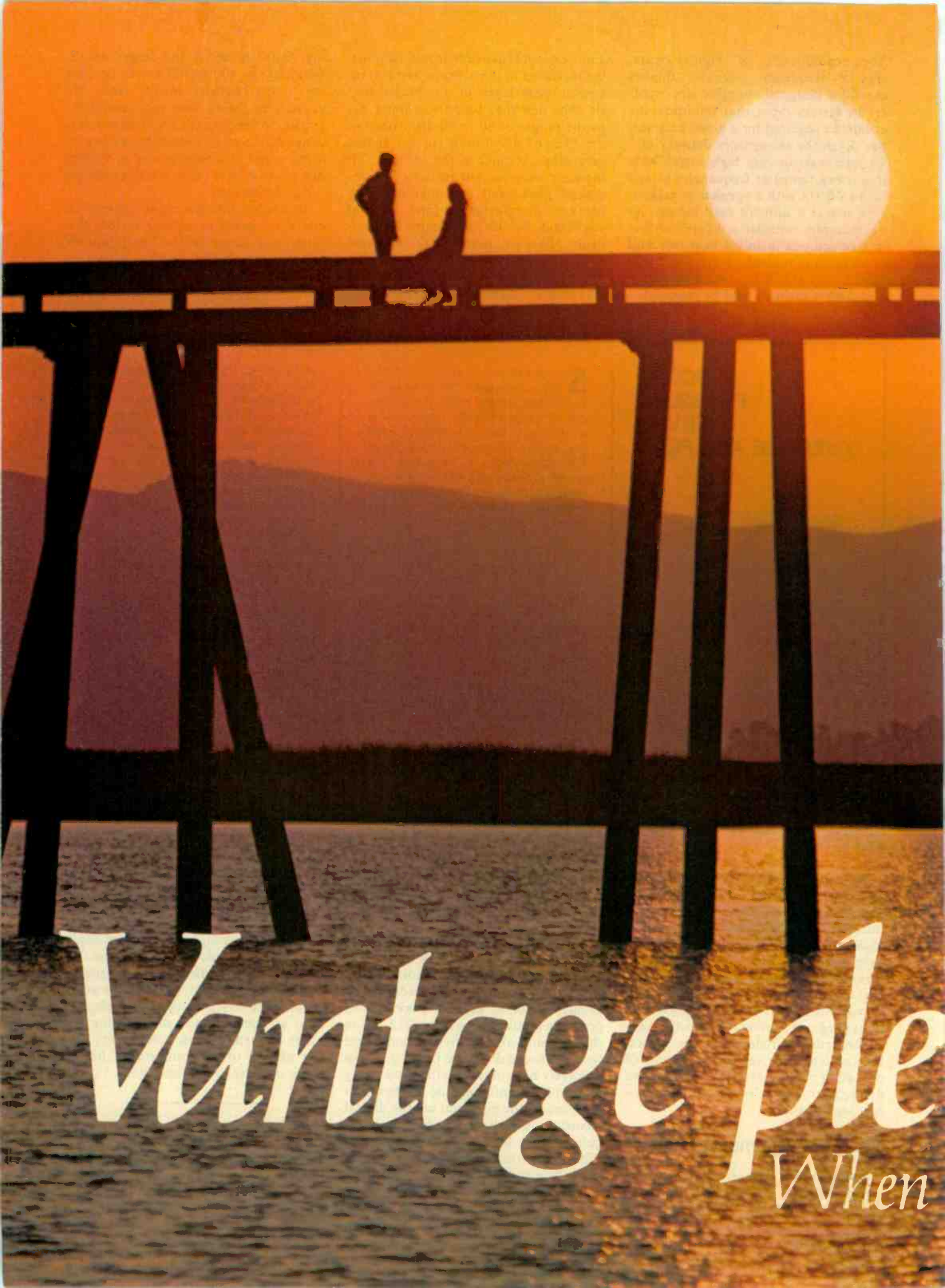
age playing levels by perhaps a modest 3 to 5 dB. (This is not quite the 15 to 35 dB that is implied by the *available* dynamic-range increase.)

Future Possibilities

It is possible that the reproduction of classical music from a clean source will require the ability to radiate momentary outputs on the order of 1 acoustic watt to achieve peak sound-pressure levels approaching 115 dB in the listening area of living rooms (see box on "Sound-Pressure Level"). These relatively high outputs will increasingly need to be maintained into the bass frequencies as the potential of true digital recording is realized. Such outputs require fairly high loudspeaker-system efficiencies (perhaps 1 to 3 per cent) if small to medium amplifiers (50 to 100 total watts) are to be used in reproduc-

1950s, efficiency was needed to make up for the low-power amplifiers of the day (50 watts was considered enormous at that time). The big difference is that tomorrow's speaker systems, given the improvements in program material, not only have to be relatively efficient but must also have high peak-output capability that extends to the very low frequencies. It will take everything speaker designers have learned over the years to produce systems that will play as loud as needed while maintaining the other important aspects of fidelity *and* the ability to fit comfortably into a room of reasonable dimensions. □

Ray Newman, chief engineer of loudspeakers and systems at Electro-Voice, Inc., has extensive experience in the design of both speaker systems and individual drivers for domestic and commercial applications.



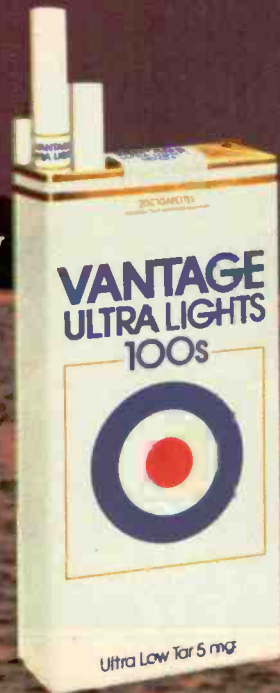
Vantage ple

When

Warning: The Surgeon General Has Determined
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ULTRA LIGHTS 100's: 5 mg. "tar", 0.5 mg. nicotine,
100's: 9 mg. "tar", 0.6 mg. nicotine, av. per cigarette by FTC method.

5mg



9mg



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Carole Bayer Sager
Photo: Harry Langdon/Boardwalk

BEST OF THE MONTH

STEREO REVIEW'S SELECTION OF RECORDINGS OF SPECIAL MERIT



• Carole Bayer Sager: the View from the Top •

THE lyrics Carole Bayer Sager provided for Marvin Hamlisch's music in the delightful *They're Playing Our Song* (still a smash after two years on Broadway) showed that she could do it; "Sometimes Late at Night," her new solo performing album on the Boardwalk label, proves that she has indeed done it. Done what? Among other things, that she's become the best female American lyricist since Dorothy Fields; that she can perform her own work as well as—and often better than—anyone else; that she has mastered the tricky genre of the autobiographical song (there's always a finely judged aesthetic distance in hers, and no breathy, sweaty-palm narcissism). Perhaps most of all, it proves that she has come into the high noon of her creative maturity at a remarkably early age.

The leading female character in *They're Playing Our Song* was supposedly modeled on Ms. Sager by playwright Neil Simon (the leading male character was presumed to be Marvin Hamlisch). Whether or not that character actually represented Sager isn't important; what is important is that she created through her lyrics a funny, talented, vulnerable girl who was still sufficiently green and unsure of herself that she could see romantic relationships from one side only—hers. She was, in short, a girl who had yet to get it all together, and that is probably why theater audiences have continued to find her so enchantingly real, so believably contemporary.

"Sometimes Late at Night" tunes in on that same girl several years later. She is now a grown woman, and oh boy, has she ever gotten it all together! What is startlingly apparent in this collection of Sager's songs is that she has not only discovered her own identity, personally and artistically, but in the process has arrived at what amounts to a summation of the attitudes of the young women of her generation, a kind of rulebook for making life in the Eighties congenial. And so she frankly enjoys her talent, her looks, and her ability to live independently. She's a career woman, but

CAROLE BAYER SAGER:

Sometimes Late at Night. Carole Bayer Sager (vocals); Burt Bacharach (keyboards); orchestral accompaniment. *I Won't Break*; *Just Friends*; *Tell Her*; *Somebody's Been Lying*; *On the Way to the Sky*; *You and Me (We Wanted It All)*; *Sometimes Late at Night*; *Wild Again*; *Easy to Love Again*; *Stronger Than Before*; *You Don't Know Me*. BOARDWALK FW 37069 \$8.98, © FWT 37069 \$8.98, © FWA 37069 \$8.98.

with none of those old "career-woman" doubts or regrets about her sexuality—she accepts and, at times, even revels in it. She isn't married, doesn't have children, and has no guilt about that either.

But the crucial self-definition here, the one that probably best reflects the times, is that Carole Bayer Sager is not at all uneasy about the choices she has made. Along with many other women of today, she has shaken off the Seventies' queasy self-consciousness. It simply doesn't occur to her to ask dumb questions: "Am I doing the right thing?" "Am I posing, or do I really mean it?"

Now, before visions of Joan Crawford marching up Fifth Avenue to the strains of *Evita* start popping into your head, let me assure you that none of this is specified, avowed, or preached in any of the songs. It is simply that, like any artist honestly plugged into life as it goes on around her, Ms. Sager can't help but distill and crystallize changes in popular attitudes (if she didn't, she wouldn't really be a *popular* song writer, now would she?), and she delivers the results with the softest sell imaginable, in a package as lush, plush, and perfumed as one of Mae West's marabou "hostessin' gowns."

On the jacket cover Ms. Sager looks terrific enough that it is hard to imagine her ever having to write or even do anything except possibly be this month's Playmate. On the record she has surrounded herself with about as swellegant a group of colleagues as it is possible to assemble in today's glossiest pop circles. Melissa Manchester, Franne Golde, Richard Page, and Bruce Roberts, among others, sing background vocals. Peter Allen and Bruce Roberts collaborated with her on

“. . . what amounts to a summation of the attitudes of the women of her generation.”



BEST OF THE MONTH RECENT SELECTIONS YOU MAY HAVE MISSED

CLASSICAL

- J. S. Bach: *Goldberg Variations*. ARCHIV 2533 425. "A thoroughly seasoned and mature reading by Trevor Pincock." (July)
- J. S. Bach: *The Six Partitas*. ARABESQUE 6501-3. "A sensational comeback recording by João Carlos Martins." (June)
- Bartók: *Piano Concertos Nos. 2 and 3*. LONDON CS 7167. "The partnership of Vladimir Ashkenazy and Sir Georg Solti is complete and electrifying." (July)
- Corigliano: *Clarinet Concerto*. Barber: *Third Essay for Orchestra*. NEW WORLD NW 309. "New creations that magnificently celebrate the New York Philharmonic." (May)
- Dvořák: *Piano Quartets, Opp. 23 and 87*. CBS MG 35913. "Superb chamber music in splendid performances and immaculate recording." (May)
- Rossini: *L'italiana in Algeri*. RCA ARL3-3855. "A delightful comic totality springs to triumphant life." (July)
- Stravinsky: *The Firebird*. LONDON LDR 10012. "A must for the Stravinsky fan." (June)
- Verdi: *Falstaff*. PHILIPS 6769 060. "Karajan's control is absolute: the ensembles are polished to perfection, the orchestral tone is luxuriant." (May)
- Weber: *Der Freischütz*. LONDON OSA 13136. "A lovingly conducted realization of a glorious score." (June)

POPULAR

- Stanley Clarke and George Duke: *The Clarke/Duke Project*. EPIC FE 36918. "A wonderful musical splash in some deep pop waters." (July)
- Fleetwood Mac: *Live*. WARNER BROS. 2WB 3500. "All in all . . . a first-class way to go." (May)
- Ellen Foley: *Spirit of St. Louis*. EPIC/CLEVELAND INTERNATIONAL JE 36984. "A most impressive album in the difficult cabaret genre." (July)
- Emmylou Harris: *Evangelina*. WARNER BROS. BSK 3508. "Awesome music making." (June)
- Jean Redpath: *The Songs of Robert Burns*. PHLO PH 1048. "Mostly sweet, sometimes salty, simply wonderful." (June)
- Phoebe Snow: *Rock Away*. MIRAGE WTG 19297. "This album is a real charmer." (July)
- Tantra: *The Double Album*. IMPORTE/12 MP-310. "Fiendishly designed to get you on your feet." (May)
- Toots and the Maytals: *Live at Hammersmith Palais*. ISLAND MLP5-9647. "Reggae of a very special kind for people who like blues, soul, and r-&b." (May)
- Leon Ware: *Rockin' You Eternally*. ELEKTRA 6E-332. "A fine showcase for a fine songwriter." (June)

a couple of songs. Neil Diamond dropped by to arrange, produce, and play the guitar on *On the Way to the Sky*, a song he wrote with Carole. Marvin Hamlisch (no sore loser he) is on hand to provide a lovely arrangement for *You and Me (We Wanted It All)*. And if you've been anywhere near a newspaper, TV set, or magazine for the past year you will already know that composer Burt Bacharach is now Carole's major collaborator (he had a hand in all but two of the songs here), her arranger, her pianist, and, more than likely, her sometime Inspiration.

But whatever the contributions of Bacharach and others, the album remains a vehicle for its star. When you hear Sager's hesitant, rather mannered voice curl around such gut-simple lines as "So you don't have to worry/'Cause I know what I can take/Too much has been taken/And I won't break," you know she means it. All of her performances carry the same strong emotional conviction. That silly cigarette-commercial line "You've come a long way, baby" finally has the resonance of reality for me, and in Sager's case I'd have to add "and in such a short time!"

—Peter Reilly

Outstanding Singers and The Grand Line in a Luminous, Transparent *Parsifal* by Karajan

IT was Richard Wagner's expressed wish that his *Parsifal* should be presented only in Bayreuth, and this stricture has unquestionably helped to sustain the notion that this at once very solemn and very festive opera would somehow be compromised if produced anywhere else. Eventually, despite Cosima Wagner's considerable efforts, it proved impossible to keep *Parsifal* out of other houses, but the myth found expression in other ways: the first three complete recordings of the opera took place at Bayreuth Festivals—in 1951 and 1962 under Hans Knappertsbusch, in 1970 under Pierre Boulez. It was not, indeed, until 1972 that *Parsifal* received its first studio recording, under Georg Solti (London 1510). Now we have a second studio *Parsifal*, under Herbert von Karajan, and it too is a bona fide "festival" product, created just prior to the 1980 Salzburg Festival

with a hand-picked cast thoroughly prepared in Karajan's customary stringent and dedicated manner.

It is a beautiful performance, luminous in sound, transparent in texture, and firmly committed to the conductor's aesthetic principles, one that sustains the grand line from beginning to end. However absurd it may seem to apply the phrase "chamber-music approach" to a score as large and as lavish as that of *Parsifal*, those familiar with Karajan's recorded *Ring* cycle will detect a similar striving here for rich but subtly shaded orchestral sounds in which shattering climaxes are avoided and dynamics sensitively graduated to support the singers. There is no room in such an approach for spontaneity, of course—this is not a live performance, nor does it sound like one. But it will, I think, leave the listener with a yearning to experience such a perfectionist performance in the theater at least once in his lifetime.

Since I accept Karajan's approach as a valid one, my occasional reservations about this recording should not be taken to diminish the conductor's splendid accomplishment here. The massive dignity Knappertsbusch brought to *Parsifal* remains unique, and there is much to be said for Solti's decidedly more intense sonorities, but all three masters pace the music deliberately and spaciouly—in overall timing, the differences among the three versions are negligible.

Kurt Moll, with his exceptionally tender and compassionate Gurnemanz, stands out even among the outstanding singers Karajan has assembled around him. His purely focused tone requires no audible effort throughout the range, and he enunciates the text with superb clarity, as lightly on the breath as if he were singing Bellini. No doubt he would have played the character with greater earthiness and shown more anger and impatience with *Parsifal*'s first-act incomprehension had Karajan's view not demanded an attitude of almost unremitting saintliness.

It would appear also that Karajan did not want his Kundry, Dunja Vejzovic, to be remembered mainly for her shrieks and moans (they are in any case discreetly covered by the orchestra). She is apparently the latest in Karajan's remarkable series of vocal discoveries, a mezzo with a rather light timbre and an impressive range. Obviously well prepared for the role, she offers a memorable yet unexaggerated portrayal and is particularly striking in her dialogue with *Parsifal* following her monologue "*Ich sah das Kind*."

The *Parsifal*, Peter Hofmann, is very musical and youthful in sound, but

though his voice is quite agreeable and steady at low dynamic levels, it becomes wavy under pressure. He is, however, more than adequate in the role—which is, alas, the best I can say about any of the Parsifals in the complete recordings, except perhaps for Jess Thomas, who outdid himself in the 1962 Philips recording.

José van Dam sings Amfortas' tortured lines with heart-rending conviction, never allowing the music's cruel demands to compromise the beauty of his voice. Siegmund Nimgern's firm-toned and sinister Klingsor is not given sufficient prominence in the recorded sound. The same goes for the Titurel—but that unfortunate king is not *supposed* to sound too healthy in a realistic production.

The care with which this cast was chosen deserves all praise. There is no "barking" here in the bad old Wagnerian tradition, and the art of *legato* is everywhere sustained. The vocal ensembles are sparked by the presence of such eminent singers as Hanna Schwarz, Barbara Hendricks, and Claes H. Ahnsjö in small roles, and the digital engineering (with the slight exceptions noted) is excellent.

Casting one more glance at the complete recordings, the first Bayreuth production (Richmond), in good mono sound and rich in memorable vocal interpretations, must be regarded as an important historical document. Deutsche Grammophon's previous version under Boulez is entirely outclassed by the present release, but the Philips

(Knappertsbusch) and London (Solti) versions remain vital contenders.

—George Jellinek

WAGNER: Parsifal. José van Dam (baritone), Amfortas; Victor von Halem (bass), Titurel; Kurt Moll (bass), Gurnemanz; Peter Hofmann (tenor), Parsifal; Siegmund Nimgern (baritone), Klingsor; Dunja Vejzovic (mezzo-soprano), Kundry; Claes H. Ahnsjö (tenor), First Knight; Kurt Rydl (bass), Second Knight; Barbara Hendricks, Janet Perry, Doris Soffel, Inga Nielsen, Audrey Michael, and Rohangiz Yachmi, Flower Maidens; Hanna Schwarz (mezzo-soprano), a Voice. Chorus of the German Opera, Berlin; Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, Herbert von Karajan cond. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON ● 2741 002 five discs \$54.90, © 3382 002 \$54.90.

From the Source: Leoš Janáček's Personal, National, and Indispensable *Glagolitic Mass*

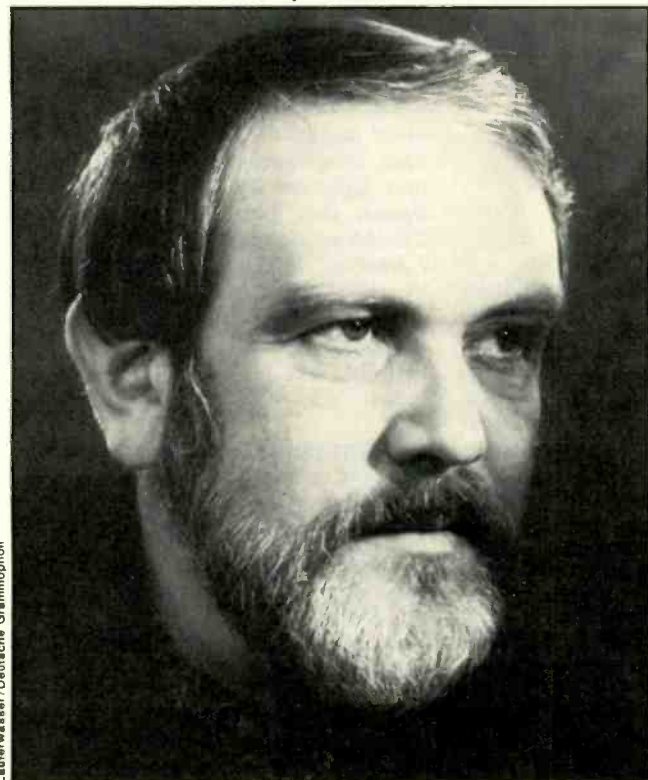
LEOŠ JANÁČEK died in August 1928 at the age of seventy-four, having composed several of his greatest works in his final decade. One of the last was the *Glagolitic Mass*, composed in 1926. When the work was first heard the following year someone wrote that it "might have been composed by a very

aged Slav of bygone times," but Janáček replied: "It was composed, and could have been composed, only by the musician Janáček." Another writer, aware of Janáček's reference to himself as "no believer, till I can see for myself," suggested that the liturgical work indicated the composer had "turned pious in his old age," and in this case the response came on a postcard reading simply: "Neither pious nor old, young man!"

Janáček had little use for traditional religion; he regarded churches as symbols of death, with their "graves under the flagstones, bones on the altar, all kinds of torture and death in the paintings. The rituals, the prayers, the chants—death and death again! I won't have anything to do with it!" In his pantheistic outlook the only cathedral was the great Luhačovice Forest, in or near which the *Glagolitic Mass* was composed. While the work is liturgically acceptable, he conceived it as a concert work pure and simple, one in which he could "express faith in the certainty (that is, the sure survival) of the nation, not on a religious basis but on moral foundations, which call upon God as witness."

The term "Glagolitic" refers to an early alphabet used for the language in which the Mass is sung, known now as "Old Church Slavonic." The *Mša Glagolskaja* may therefore be called (and often is) a "Slavonic Mass." The prominence of Gogol, Ostrovsky, and Dostoyevsky among the literary inspirations for Janáček's works is cited as in-

KURT MOLL: *tender and compassionate*



LEOŠ JANÁČEK: *neither pious nor old*



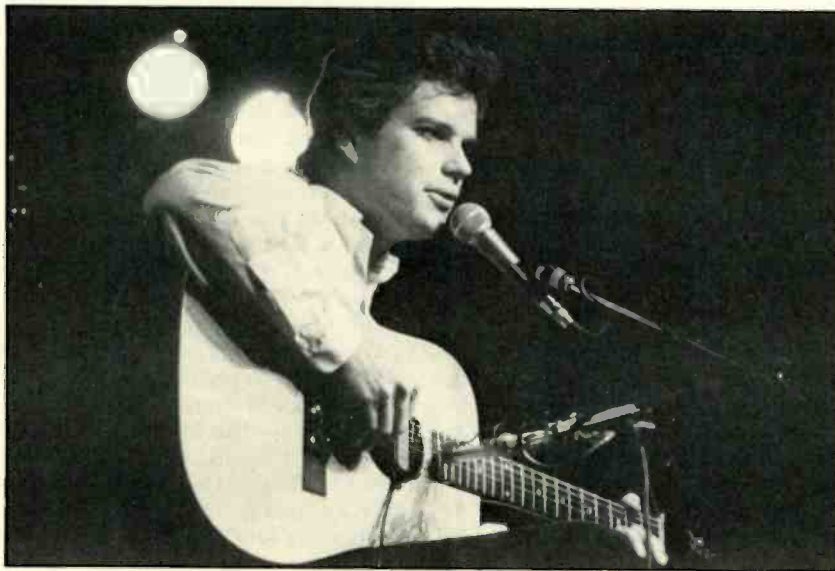
dicative of his "pan-Slavonic" outlook, and the Slavonic Mass might be seen as the most exalted celebration of it. Dvořák, whom Janáček so admired, showed a similar approach in his Slavonic Dances, which, in contradistinction to Smetana's specifically Czech Dances, included forms from Serbia, Poland, and the Ukraine; in the Slavonic Mass this pan-Slavonic gesture does not in any way take away from, but rather serves to enhance, the composer's nationalist concept. There is, moreover, a personal element in the music even stronger than its national feeling.

There have been several powerful recordings of the Slavonic Mass, among them one conducted by Rafael Kubelik

Mass on disc. Nor has this important, exciting, and uniquely inspiring work ever made so grand an effect as it does in this newest recording—not in the delimiting context of either Czech music or choral music, but in the broadest sense. It is simply indispensable.

—Richard Freed

JANÁČEK: *Mša Glagolskaja (Slavonic Mass)*. Gabriela Beňačková-Čápková (soprano); Eva Randová (contralto); Vilém Přibyl (tenor); Sergěj Kopčák (bass); Czech Philharmonic Chorus; Jan Hora (organ); Brno State Philharmonic Orchestra, František Jílek cond. SUPRAPHON 1112 2698 G \$9.98 (from Qualiton Records, Ltd., 39-28 Crescent Street, Long Island City, N.Y. 11101).



Gary Gershoff/Reina Ltd

LEO KOTTKE: *hear him, and fall on the floor*

(in which the organ solos are played by one Bedřich Janáček) and one from Prague under the late Karel Ančerl which, regrettably, had little circulation in this country. Appealing as the various stereo versions were, though, they were all inevitably compared with the old mono recording (conducted by Břetislav Bakala in the composer's own city of Brno) which circulated here on Urania three decades ago. The fervor of that performance triumphed over its somewhat primitive sound, and it remained unmatched until Supraphon brought out a new and splendidly recorded version, again from Brno, under the direction of František Jílek, who shows perhaps even more of that proprietary fervor. His solo quartet is made up of some of the finest singers in Czechoslovakia today, the chorus is Josef Veselka's splendid Czech Philharmonic (it also recorded the work earlier with Ančerl), and the sound is the richest and most vivid yet achieved with the

Leo Kottke's New "Guitar Music" Finds Him at the Top of His Form

IN 1972 I heard my first Leo Kottke album and nearly fell on the floor. He was playing what I had always wanted to play on both the mighty twelve-string and the standard acoustic guitar—except, of course, his musical ideas were much better than mine and his technical skills were exceptional.

From the early Seventies until 1976, Kottke recorded for Capitol, always using the Sound 80 studio in Minneapolis near his home. He turned out a series of topflight albums, all produced by Denny Bruce. His uptempo instrumentals, with their abrupt changes and sudden injections of syncopation, were delight-

filled surprises; his slower compositions were poignant, brooding, and prodigal in their exploration of tonality.

But in 1976 something changed: Kottke seemed to be running out of ideas or was perhaps becoming bored. His uptempo and "ballad" material seemed forced in both conception and execution. He moved to Chrysalis Records, where his first album included orchestral backing, a prop he had never used before. The albums that followed, "Burnt Lips" and "Balance," were plodding and morose, although "Balance," produced by Kenneth Buttrey, showed a few signs of life. In addition, Kottke's composing talents were in limbo, and he tended to sing more to fill the gap. Unfortunately, his singing doesn't begin to approach the quality of his instrumental work (his baritone is more resolute than flexible, but it doesn't deserve quite the critical pounding it has received).

But now for the good news. Kottke's term of trial has passed, and the all-instrumental "Guitar Music" reveals him as once again confident, assured, and at the top of his form as both artist and producer. The startling rhythms in such uptempo pieces as *Part Two* are played with a happy mastery, while *Strange* is a beguiling mixture of rhythms complete with fiery swoops, delicate harmonics, and those quirky, lovely, teasingly incomplete melodies of his. Then there is *A Song for "The Night of the Hunter."* It is based on the eerily brilliant 1947 film (directed by Charles Laughton) about two children fleeing a homicidal backwoods preacher (Robert Mitchum). Superbly photographed, the film packs a real emotional wallop, and even if you've never seen it, I think you'll find a good deal of its chill evoked in Kottke's musical gloss.

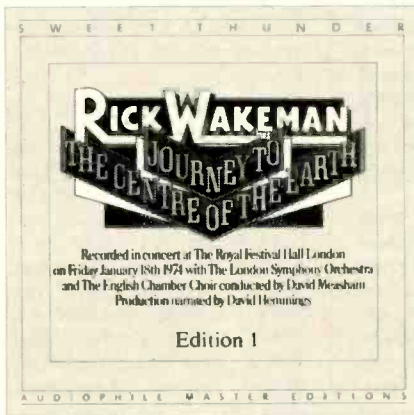
His altered-perspective versions of other musicians' material have always been interesting, and here he throws new light on Ry Cooder's *Available Space*, that old chestnut *Tumbling Tumbleweeds*, Boudleaux Bryant's *All I Have to Do Is Dream* (made famous by the Everly Brothers), and *Sleep Walk*, a 1950s instrumental hit by Santo & Johnny. Kottke's treatments of them are like his own music: rich and robust.

—Joel Vance

LEO KOTTKE: *Guitar Music*. Leo Kottke (six- and twelve-string acoustic guitars). *Part Two; Available Space; Side One Suite—Some Birds/Sounds Like . . . Slang/My Double/Three Walls and Bars/Reprise; Some Birds; Perforated Sleep; Strange; Little Shoes; Jib's Hat; Tumbling Tumbleweeds; Agile N.; A Song for "The Night of the Hunter"; All I Have to Do Is Dream; Sleep Walk.* CHRYSALIS CHR 1328 \$8.98, © ECH 1328 \$8.98.

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Popular Music Briefs



Edward Castaneda

In the Beginning there was *Cosmos—the TV Series*, with **Dr. Carl Sagan** in the role of God. A joint project of Carl Sagan Productions and KCET, Los Angeles, it is said to be the most expensive series ever seen on the Public Broadcasting Service. Then came *Cosmos—the Book* (Random House, \$19.95), which was on the best-seller list for many weeks. Now *Cosmos—the Record* has appeared in the form of RCA album "The Music of Cosmos" (ABL1-4003). In addition to the main theme from Vangelis' *Heaven and Hell, Part I*, the disc contains traditional music from Japan and Bulgaria, bits from works by Shostakovich, Vivaldi, Pachelbel, Roy Buchanan, and Toru Takemitsu,

and excerpts from the *Russian Easter Festival Overture* (Rimsky-Korsakov) and *The Sea Named Solaris* (Bach-Tomita).

The risibly unctuous voice of Dr. Sagan ("Bi-ullions and bi-ullions of stahzzz..."), which ruined the series for many viewers, is absent from the record. The jacket contains an endorsement from **Gideon Waldrop**, Dean of the Juilliard School of Music, who says the "choice of music and musical sequences is superb," and a dedication from Dr. Sagan, who says, "Human music is an expression of our thoughts and feelings, a combination that is the distinction of our species. We dedicate this record to the musicians of the planet Earth." **Price: \$9.98** —W.L.

Music makes a better gift than the traditional perfume, candy, and flowers, according to the National Association of Recording Merchandisers (NARM). For the last year and a half NARM has been promoting records and tapes as gifts with an aggressive marketing program. Increasingly,

record ads have featured the campaign's logo (a gift box with a musical note in each of its four loops) and the slogan "Give the Gift of Music."

NARM practices what it preaches. When the Americans held hostage in Iran returned home earlier this year, NARM presented each of them with a

gift package of the best records released in this country during the time they were held prisoner. The recordings were chosen by the same panel of experts who picked the records added to the Presidential collection at the White House (see March STEREO REVIEW, page 82).

And, speaking of the White House, President Ronald Reagan is also giving the gift of music. When Reagan was visited by Chun Doo Hwan of Korea, the President gave the Korean leader a musical gift chosen to please his three teenage children. It was a collection of records including albums by Earth, Wind, and Fire, Billy Joel, Queen, Blondie, Chicago, and the Bee Gees. □

Tina Turner's recent solo comeback concert at the Ritz in Manhattan attracted a fair share of celebrities along with the paying customers. Pictured backstage with Tina is none other than Tiny (*Tiptoe Through the Tulips*) Tim, whom you may recall was the house



Gary Gerbasi

joke of the Sixties. Mr. Tim seems to be affecting the Urban Cowboy look, which may or may not be a sign of the times. □

It is generally agreed in the music biz that if **Jerry Lee Lewis** had had the benefit of a managerial wizard like Col. Tom Parker, he could have been as big as Elvis, if not bigger; certainly the talent was there, and an ego to match. It's rather a shame, then, that *Whole Lotta Shakin' Goin' On*, Robert Cain's just-published biography of the singer (Dial Press, \$9.95), is such a disappointment. The book is obviously padded (an interview with Tom Jones, lots of old *Variety* reviews reprinted in their entirety) and written in a style only slightly more elegant than a press release. Worse, author Cain seems to be overawed by his subject, incapable of using the phrase "living legend" less than once every page. Still, there are some spectacular photos (particularly those from the Fifties), and the discography is useful.

A more interesting effort is *The Day the Music Died*, a *roman à clef* by Joseph C. Smith (Grove Press, \$12.95) about the music business in the early rock era (from 1956 to 1963 and the dawn of the British Invasion). There's plenty of sex, violence, and juicy industry gossip, and one can have a bit of in-group fun figuring out which of the characters is patterned after which famous person. (Is black record mogul Monroe Wilcox really Motown's Berry Gordy? Is obnoxious teenage producer Paulie Schulz really

Phil "Wall of Sound" Spector?) The book's main concern, however, appears to be a polemical one: Smith, an old-time r-&-b songwriter, is pushing the thesis that white rock was from its inception a cultural ripoff, that even at its best it was no more than a pale dilution of superior black models. The claim can be debated endlessly, but without profit, rather like the question of whether whites can really play jazz; maybe they can't—but they do. One comes away with the impression that Smith believes a bunch of white record executives sat around in a smoke-filled room and came up with a fifteen-year master plan to co-opt rock—certainly an epic conspiracy, if hardly a credible one. —S.S.

COLLECTORS' ALERT: CBS Records, with an eye to the brisk import sales of their English division's recent compilation "The Byrds/The Original Singles 1965-67/Volume 1," has taken the plunge and issued the album in America. The record contains the still-influential outfit's first eight single hits (A and B sides) in chronological order and pristine, punchy mono mixes, including two brilliant tracks (*She Don't Care About Time* and *Why*) never before available in American LP form. Tom Petty fans unfamiliar with the Byrd-roots of their

hero's music are advised to check out this history lesson. Also just out on CBS: "Seductive Reasoning," the overlooked first effort by STEREO REVIEW Record of the Year award winners Maggie and Terre Roche. Originally released in the mid-Seventies (before younger sister Suzzy was a Roche full-time), the album has become something of a collector's item. Producer of this marvelous piece of music? None other than Paul Simon. —S.S.

THE Teenage Filmstars, an English New Wave band, have just recorded a long-overdue tribute to *The Prisoner*, the surreal, cult-favorite 1967 TV series which was the first commercial-television production ever rebroadcast on PBS. Available on the Fab Listening label, the tune is titled *I Helped Patrick McGoohan Escape*, after the show's creator and star. The sun has not yet set on the Empire. □

THE Patti Smith Group, contrary to what you may have heard, has *not* broken up, according to Arista Records, to whom they are still very much under contract. An Arista spokesperson confirmed that the PSG live album, reportedly scrapped by the label, in fact never got past the planning



NEW YORK has no Grauman's Chinese Theater where stars can leave their footprints in concrete, but a Broadway performer knows he has made it when the management of Sardi's adds his caricature to the collection on the restaurant's walls. The latest addition is **Lee Roy Reams**, who is currently playing the juvenile lead in the hit musical *42nd Street*. With

Reams at Sardi's for the unveiling of the caricature by Richard Baratz were, left to right, Carol Cook (also of *42nd Street*), Ann Miller (*Sugar Babies*), the indomitable Ethel Merman, and Carol Channing, all of them responsible for their share of the glitter on the Great White Way. For a review of the RCA original-cast album of *42nd Street*, see the April issue. □

stages. Patti herself is at home in Detroit and hard at work—on a new book—and raising her baby by husband Fred (ex-MC5) Smith. Other PSG mem-

bers are biding their time in New York City; Lenny Kaye has a single out under his name, and JayDee Daugherty is drumming for Willie Nile. □

Disc and Tape Reviews

By CHRIS ALBERTSON • IRV COHN • NOEL COPPAGE • PHYL GARLAND
PAUL KRESH • PETER REILLY • STEVE SIMELS • JOEL VANCE

Ⓢ = stereo cassette

Ⓢ = eight-track stereo cartridge

Ⓢ = digital-master recording

Ⓢ = direct-to-disc

Ⓢ = quadraphonic disc

Ⓢ = monophonic recording

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

PAUL ANKA: *Both Sides of Love*. Paul Anka (vocals); orchestral accompaniment. *Think I'm in Love Again; Roses Ain't Red; We Love Each Other; Lady Lay Down; Look What You've Done; Why Don't We Sleep on It Tonight; I've Been Waiting for You All of My Life*; and three others. RCA AQL1-3926 \$8.98, © AQK1-3926 \$8.98, © AQS1-3926 \$8.98.

Performance: **Facile**
Recording: **Sumptuous**

Busy, busy Paul Anka. He announced only the other day that he's hard at work "updating" the lyrics of his first hit, *Diana*, to honor Lady Diana Spencer, soon to become the bride of Prince Charles. (It's always nice to have a signature tune, even at a royal wed-

ding.) But before finishing that job, Anka released this album. Only two of his own songs are on it—*You're Still a Part of Me*, a little number he wrote with Bobby Goldsboro, and *Think I'm in Love Again*, which he wrote with Bob McDill and which is something of a hit. Anka performs the latter very well indeed, in a hoarse, frenzied, contemporary whine that belies his image of the last quarter-century or so as the Glitter Pasha of Vegas. But Anka's facility at changing performing styles is as formidable as his talent for staying just that one step ahead of mass-market musical tastes. I understand that his next project is a reworking of the lyrics of *My Way* for Brooke Shields to sing at her official coming-out party next spring. P.R.

JIMMIE AND VELLA CAMERON: *Song Painters*. Jimmie and Vella Cameron (vocals); orchestra. *You're Gonna Need My Love Someday; Here Is Where You Belong; We Share the Meaning of Love; Someone Loves You*; and four others. UNLIMITED GOLD BL 36132 \$8.98, © JZT 36132 \$8.98.

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

According to the short blurb that accompanies this album, Jimmie Cameron and his sister Vella have shared a recording career since 1964. Somewhere along the line there were two other albums; I must have blinked and missed them. I wish I had those earlier efforts for reference, because I have the

WE used to hear a lot of loose talk about rock-and-roll as a corrupter of youth (and may yet again if the Plasmatics sell a few records), but in my case it was absolutely true. It was one Gary U.S. Bonds, in particular, who warped my childhood. That was back in 1961, when I first encountered his hit *Quarter to Three*, a great wall-of-sound dance single that sounded as if it had been recorded at the maddest drunken debauch since the days of Nero. The rumor at my grade school was that when you slowed the record down to 33 1/3 you could hear *actual dirty words*. My friends and I must have listened to the thing hundreds of times,

mode of Bonds' demented Sixties numbers, and they are equally delightful. His *Your Love*, on which soul giants Ben E. King and Chuck Jackson do back-up vocals, is a classic ballad in the old style. So is Miami Steve Van Zandt's *Daddy's Come Home*, as achingly poignant as anything Van Zandt wrote for the early Jukes records. And the cover material, produced by Van Zandt, is flat-out great: Bonds gets to take on the Beatles, Jackson Browne, and Bob Dylan, and he is thoroughly convincing and idiomatic throughout. John Lennon's *It's Only Love*, in particular, gets as deeply felt a treatment as we are ever likely to hear.

feeling that "Song Painters" derives a great deal of its strength from the involvement of arranger Gene Page and producer Barry White. This is not to minimize the input of the Camerons; after all, Jimmie and/or Vella wrote all eight songs, and they sing them with undeniable charm. But seventeen years is a long time to have been on the creative end of this business without gaining some measure of fame. The Camerons (especially Vella) do write interesting material and sing pleasantly. On the basis of this release, I hope we are offered more of their work. C.A.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

TERRI GIBBS: *Somebody's Knockin'*. Terri Gibbs (vocals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Somebody's Knockin'*; *Plans*; *Wasted Love*; *Magic Time*; *It's True*; *Rich Man*; and five others. MCA MCA-5173 \$8.98, © MCAC-5173 \$8.98, © MCAT-5173 \$8.98.

Performance: **Interesting**

Recording: **Good**

Terri Gibbs has a "personality" voice; that is, above and beyond its intrinsic musical worth—and that is a great deal—it makes an immediate impression. It is a dramatically deep, rich alto, powerful from top to bottom, and she projects it with a smooth directness. Nothing else in this debut album matches the title song, *Somebody's Knockin'* (already a hit), in quality or performance, but all the tracks indicate an interesting performer with innate style. I'm not sure she should be confined to the quasi-country repertoire she's into here, but I am sure she has a talent that's going to need some special care and handling if she's ever to be more than a one-shot fluke like, say, Bonnie (*It's a Heartache*) Tyler or Morris (*Feelings*) Albert. I hope she gets it. P.R.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

DAN HARTMAN: *It Hurts to Be in Love*. Dan Hartman (vocals, keyboards); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *All I Need*; *Pick It Up*; *My Desire*; *Hello Again*; *Letter in a Song*; and four others. BLUESKY JZ 37045 \$7.98, © JZT 37045 \$7.98, © JZA 37045 \$7.98.

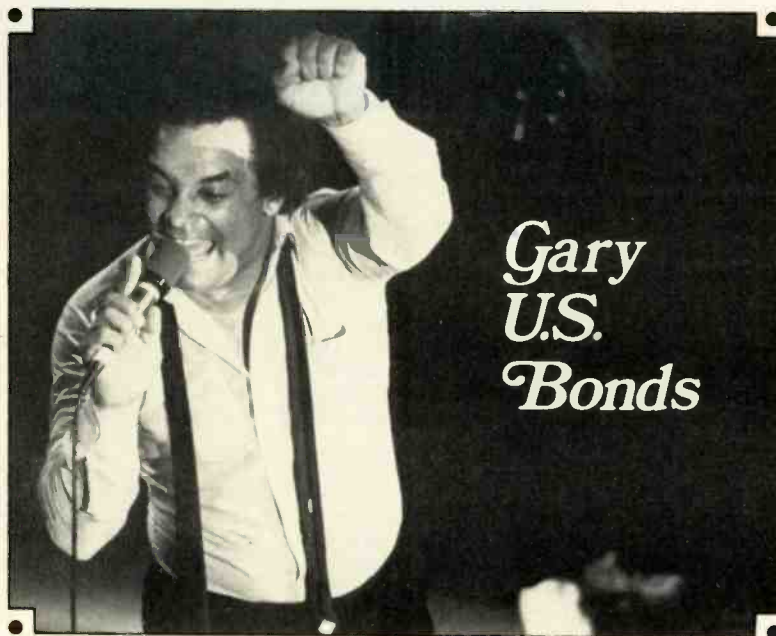
Performance: **A balladeer revealed**

Recording: **Lush**

As he sings in one of his new songs here, Dan Hartman "still remembers yesterday/ Getting high on flashing lights." But Hartman's new album is no disco replay. Unexpectedly mainstream pop, it reveals him as a balladeer in the Sixties tradition but with musical energy that's definitely of today.

Listen, for example, to *Heaven in Your Arms* and *Letter in a Song*, big soft-rock arrangements of pretty, standard ballads—uncomplicated, romantic, filled with autobiographical details. They are very well sung; with feeling and honesty, and thoroughly engaging. The rock-and-roll energy of *My Desire* is enhanced with just the right amount of electronic shimmer, and *Forever in a Moment*, with its doo-wop back-ups, fuses such diverse influences as Paul Simon, Dr. Buzzard's Original Savannah Band, and Dion and the Belmonts. But the al-

(Continued on page 76)



and though to this day all I can make out for sure is "Grnn%@\$FXSphmph!!!" I have no doubt that, at least on the subliminal level, permanent damage was done.

In this I did not suffer alone. Another Jersey kid who has since made good—Bruce Springsteen—had his life changed by *Quarter to Three* and Bonds' subsequent hits and has manfully never tried to hide it; the song has, in fact, long been one of the fixtures of his live act. And so when Springsteen finally met The Man Himself (toiling in sad obscurity at a suburban Holiday Inn) he decided there was a debt to be repaid. The result is "Dedication," Bonds' new album on EMI/America. Produced by Springsteen, along with his partners in crime from the E Street Band and the Asbury Jukes, the record casts Bonds as a classic Sixties soul singer, but it has a thoroughly modern feeling; it's the kind of music you hope Otis Redding would have made in 1981 if only he had lived to do so. It is, in short, an unmixed delight, a nifty blend of the heartwrenching, the danceable, and the sublimely silly.

Springsteen, with his usual magnanimity, himself contributed three new songs; two of them, including *This Little Girl*, which looks to be a hit as of this writing, are in the

You may have noticed that there's something of an r-&-b revival going on at the moment, with lots of newly revitalized soul stars taking to the boards again. "Dedication" is the first recorded product of this trend to hit the stores, and I wouldn't be surprised if it even turns out to be the best of them. Its music is as heartfelt and spontaneous-sounding as you remember it from the first go-around, but it is also wise and knowing in a way it could not have been in 1961. It is, in fact, basically timeless stuff, more an evocation of a feeling than a music-history lesson. Somewhere, I hope, there is a seventh grader listening to this album, playing it over and over again until the stylus wears it out, hoping vainly to hear . . . well, you get the idea. Let's have a sequel in short order.

—Steve Simels

GARY U.S. BONDS: *Dedication*. Gary U.S. Bonds (vocals); Bruce Springsteen (guitar, vocals); the E Street Band (vocals and instrumentals); other musicians. *Jole Blon*; *This Little Girl*; *Your Love*; *Dedication*; *Daddy's Come Home*; *It's Only Love*; *The Pretender*; *Way Back When*; *From a Buick 6*; *Just Like a Child*. EMI/AMERICA SO-17051 \$8.98, © 4XO-17051 \$8.98, © 8XO-17051 \$8.98.

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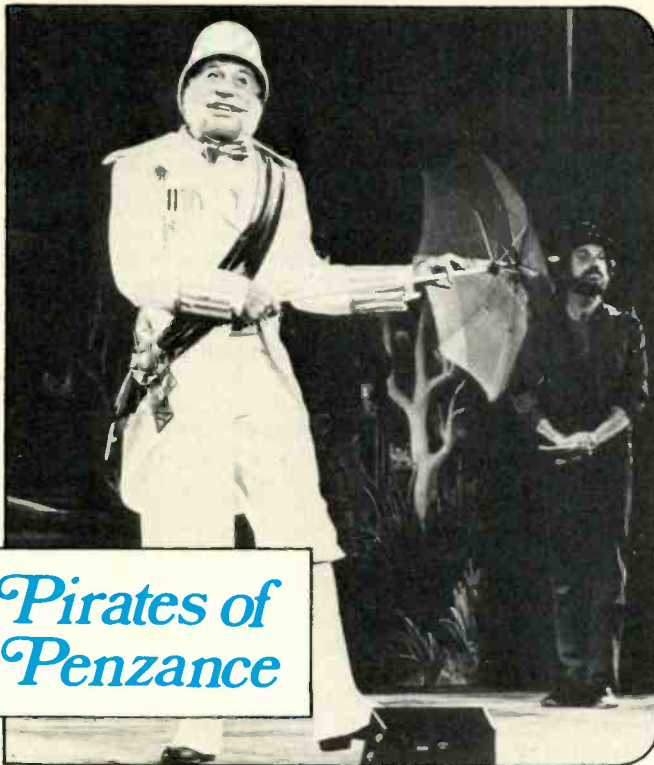
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Martha Swoppe, N.Y. Shakespeare Festival

The Pirates of Penzance

GEORGE ROSE, previously best known in the U.S. for his Tony award-winning performance as Liza's tipsy father Alfred P. Doolittle in the 1976 Broadway revival of *My Fair Lady* and then as Captain Hook in the 1979 revival of *Peter Pan*, sat in his dressing room at the Uris Theater in New York preparing to make a Wednesday matinee appearance as Major-General Stanley in Joseph Papp's immensely successful New York Shakespeare Festival production of *The Pirates of Penzance*. This rambunctiously irreverent yet strangely faithful version of the Gilbert and Sullivan operetta was first presented—free to those stalwart enough to wait in long lines for tickets—in Central Park in the summer of 1980, and besides Rose it features Kevin Kline as the Pirate King, Estelle Parsons as Ruth, and pop stars Linda Ronstadt (Mabel) and Rex Smith (Frederic).

Elektra/Asylum recorded the recently released Broadway-cast album a few days before I spoke with Rose. "Usually show records are done in one day," he pointed out, "but there were many problems with this one, and we all wanted it to be perfect." I'm happy to report that those problems seem to have been neatly solved, and even though all the fun of the energetic and inventive staging doesn't come through on discs, the show *sounds* better on the album than it ever did in Central Park or does at the Uris. The dreadful amplification system used to project the singers' voices into those huge spaces is here replaced by careful studio miking and multitracking (the recording session was extended into three eight-hour ordeals, Rose told me). The resulting sound is arrestingly three-dimensional and

alive (though my review copy was blemished by rather more than the usual quota of ticks and clicks).

Just before my conversation with Rose, the *New York Times* published an article about the D'Oyly Carte Opera Company's being refused a grant by the British Arts Council because its Gilbert and Sullivan productions have become "wooden or tired." Since the New York Shakespeare Festival production of *Pirates* is anything but that, however "outrageous" its departures from the letter of G&S tradition, we talked about the issue of traditionalism.

"I *have* felt," this very model of a modern Major-General Stanley said, "that the vocal standards of the [D'Oyly Carte] company were not as high as they could be. There are too many lower-middle-class sounds in the singing—as there are, indeed, in British acting generally at the moment. A performer playing an aristocrat should not sound like a farm laborer. On the other hand, I do feel sorry that the traditional approach to Gilbert and Sullivan should be in danger."

With regard to his own characterization of Major-General Stanley, which may be the most remarkable ever, Rose thanks his traditional speech training for the flawless enunciation he exhibits on stage and in the recording. He also disclosed that he found a rare recording—he is an avid record collector—of the legendary C. H. Workman in the part (Workman performed all the so-called "buffo" roles in the Savoy repertory many years ago) and played it over and over, studying the pace and inflection that characterized Workman's style. His theory is that there should be a "period sound" to a period portrayal. "I am probably the only

Major-General in stage history," he said by way of example, "who accords all three syllables to the word 'theorem'" ("About binomial theorem I'm teeming with a lot o' news . . .").

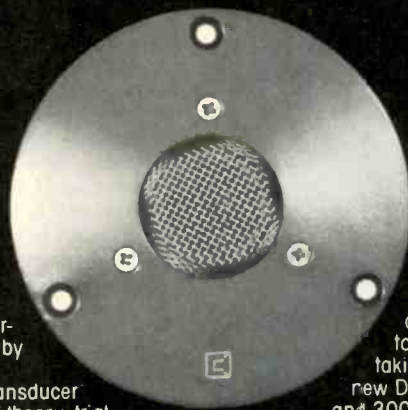
THE man in the Major-General's costume grew up in England as the son of a country butcher and originally aspired to be a cathedral organist. He sang off-stage in *Peer Gynt* at the Old Vic while getting a musical education at the Guildhall School in London. Later he won a scholarship to the Central School of Speech and Drama and went on to become a full-time actor and singer. For eight years he performed in or understudied classical roles with the Old Vic and Royal Shakespeare companies, appearing with such luminaries as Sir John Gielgud, Noël Coward, the Lunts, and Dame Edith Evans. He also starred in cabaret revues and such musicals as *She Loves Me*, *Walking Happy*, *The Canterbury Tales*, and (opposite Katherine Hepburn) *Coco*.

But Rose had never played a single role in Gilbert and Sullivan until Joseph Papp hired him for this one. He had never even seen a "professional production" of any of the operettas, though he had heard them on records. "I was raised in the 1920s when there was a great discard of all things Victorian," he explained, so he came early to hate the G&S music, "which was played by every seaside orchestra. It was the kind of thing you had to listen to on a wet day when you would have liked to be swimming."

IFIRST saw the current production on a showery summer evening in Central Park a few days after it had opened. Despite the rain (it fell right through "How beautifully blue the sky"), the excruciating amplification (I could see a pair of young sound engineers at the side of the stage quarreling over the controls), and some terrible singing (Linda Ronstadt seemed barely able to carry one of Sullivan's simple tunes, let alone do justice to the elaborate coloratura passages he provided for Mabel), the stands in the packed Delacorte Theater resounded again and again with laughter and applause that gave way to cheers. The exhilarating staging and outdoorsy musical arrangements (no strings) carried all before it. Never had there been such bold and acrobatically adroit pirates, such comically coy maidens daring to remove their shoes and stockings to wade blushing into the sea, such a heroically inept constabulary—all presented on a set meant to suggest a tacky rural G&S road show during the administration of Rutherford B. Hayes.

The production was transplanted to the Uris essentially intact, and the recording preserves the show's feeling of spontaneity and unconventional fidelity to the G&S spirit. It offers (happy surprise!) almost all the dialogue (the occasional cuts or alterations spoil nothing). Ronstadt took some voice lessons after the summer run in the park, and when I heard her at the Uris she seemed, despite a bit of throat trouble, in better command of her role. For the recording, her struggles with the high-register

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riffs and trills were eased by astute miking, and she sounds fetching enough to make one almost forget her limitations as a rock star turned soubrette. She is especially touching in a ballad transplanted, for reasons I fail to fathom, from *Pinafore* (there's also a patter song from *Ruddigore*).

Also, in the recording Rex Smith is less the uneasily transplanted pop personality and more of an authentically Victorian-sounding Frederic, the "slave of duty" who, until he meets the beautiful Mabel, has never seen a woman other than his homely, hard-of-hearing nurse Ruth—who was told in his boyhood to apprentice him to a *pilot* but misheard and farmed him out to a *pirate* instead. Kevin Kline is in glorious form, as virile and assertive a Pirate King as ever led a band of brigands into matrimony. Estelle Parsons is a livelier, funnier Ruth than most others who have undertaken this usually thankless role, and Tony Azito here performs the well-nigh impossible feat of suggesting the Buster Keatonish lineaments of his Sergeant of Police with nothing but his droll voice. Major-General Stanley's gaggle of silly daughters, the spry brigade of incompetent cops, and the shipful of preposterous pirates all sound even more riotously funny than they do on stage. And music director William Elliott's adaptation and conducting give the still-delightful score its full due.

As for George Rose, he is as impeccable on records as ever he was on the stage, even managing to give plausibility to his breath-taking double-time encore of *I Am the Very Model of a Modern Major-General* despite the absence of an audience to demand it. There really has never been a Major-General Stanley as skillfully spurious as his. The performance would seem as at home in a standard version of *The Pirates of Penzance* as in Papp's impious (but respectful) one. (And how admirably, paradoxically traditional to have restored the delightful finale of the first New York production from 'way back in 1879!) Major-Generals of the future would do well to study and learn from Rose on these records even as he learned from that disc by C. H. Workman.

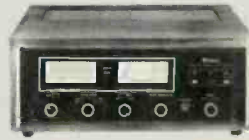
Most highhanded "revisions" and adaptations of G&S simply turn off loyal Savoyards, among whom I count myself, but this one is different. It may even help prolong the life of the whole endangered species. No wonder it was nominated for seven Tony awards, including one for George Rose, one for Kevin Kline (he won), and—I could hardly believe it—even one for Linda Ronstadt.

—Paul Kresh

GILBERT AND SULLIVAN: *The Pirates of Penzance*. New York Shakespeare Festival production, Broadway-cast album. Kevin Kline (bass), Pirate King; Rex Smith (tenor), Frederic; Estelle Parsons (contralto), Ruth; Linda Ronstadt (soprano), Mabel; George Rose (baritone), Major-General Stanley; Tony Azito (bass-baritone), the Sergeant; others. Chorus and orchestra, William Elliott cond. ELEKTRA VE-601 two discs \$19.98, © VC-601 \$19.98.

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Lynn Goldsmith

Southside and the Jukes

THE Asbury Jukes, bless 'em, are the ultimate bar band. For proof, listen to their new two-disc Mercury album with Southside Johnny, "Reach Up and Touch

the Sky," recorded live at a bunch of wower shows they did on tour in Ohio, Maryland, Michigan, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey. Some old favorites are included (*I Don't Want to Go Home, The Fever*), but the new delights include an extended, passionate medley of tunes by Sam Cooke plus the world's hottest rendition of Chuck Berry's *Back in the U.S.A.* (it makes Linda Ronstadt's version sound like a deodorant jingle). Also of special interest is *Stagger Lee*, the old folk song that Lloyd Price smoothed out in 1958, sung here with some additional verses from one of the many alternative versions.

SOUTHSIDE JOHNNY is exuberant but beautifully controlled throughout in a near-perfect combination of sincerity and showmanship, and the Jukes play gloriously. This is one of those rare live albums that justify the genre: there's something here that could never have been captured in the studio. The release is a certifiable Event.

—Joel Vance

SOUTHSIDE JOHNNY AND THE ASBURY JUKES: *Reach Up and Touch the Sky*. Southside Johnny and the Asbury Jukes (vocals and instrumentals). *I'm So Anxious; Talk to Me; All I Want Is Everything; Hearts of Stone; Take It Easy; Trapped Again; Why Is Love Such a Sacrifice; Restless Heart; Vertigo; I Don't Want to Go Home; The Fever; Stagger Lee; Only Sixteen/(What a) Wonderful World/You Send Me/A Change Is Gonna Come; Bring It On Home to Me; Having a Party; Back in the U.S.A.; Roll Out the Barrel*. MERCURY SRM-2-8602 two discs \$11.98, © MCR4-2-8602 \$13.98, © MC8-2-8602 \$13.98.

bum's master stroke is *Positive Forces*, which packs a great deal of uptempo, uplifting music into its few minutes, with an ebb and flow of mood that's perfectly suited to the simple, direct lyric.

Hartman is still a creature of the recording studio. These songs are elaborate productions, and the vocals have been heavily reverbed and manipulated. Through all that, though, something extraordinarily likable shines. Maybe it's Hartman's talent.

I.C.

THELMA HOUSTON: *Never Gonna Be Another One*. Thelma Houston (vocals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Never Give You Up; Too Many Teardrops; 96 Tears; Never Gonna Be Another One; Don't Make Me Over*; and three others. RCA AFL1-3842 \$8.98, © AFK1-3842 \$8.98, © AFS1-3842 \$8.98.

Performance: **A classy lady**
Recording: **Good**

Thelma Houston has indomitably maintained the passion that infuses her work despite many frustrating years of hovering at the edge of spectacular success. Her albums are always a pleasure to hear even when the songs have been ground out by uninspired tunesmiths and produced by those with a

keener ear for commercial predictability than musical invention. Such is unfortunately the case with "Never Gonna Be Another One," her second album for RCA. It's full of engaging but hardly adventurous r-&-b. The tunes are far from memorable and the lyrics are pedestrian, yet the resourceful Houston takes this flimsy stuff and works it as far as it can go.

The standout track here is the Dionne Warwick oldie *Don't Make Me Over*, probably the only song in the batch worth all the energy and concentration Houston invests in it. She gives the song a gospel fervor and quality of vocal sound that raise her version above the original. Maybe Thelma Houston's endurance will pay off some day and she'll get a chance to record songs that are as good as she is.

P.G.

JEFFERSON STARSHIP: *Modern Times*. Jefferson Starship (vocals and instrumentals). *Find Your Way Back; Stranger; Wild Eyes; Save Your Love; Mary*; and four others. GRUNT BZL1-3848 \$8.98, © BZK1-3848 \$8.98, © BZS1-3848 \$8.98.

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

The present Starship is a far cry from the classic *Airplane*. This Starship isn't bad by

today's standards. Despite being a bit ponderous, it does the basic rock-and-roll things well, but it just isn't special. Grace Slick is back on this outing, mostly doing background vocals and receiving minimal jacket credit. Most of the vocal emphasis nowadays is on the UHF voice of Mickey Thomas, which is both less stylized and less stylish than the old Slick/Marty Balin/Paul Kantner interplay. Kantner makes various comments on the situation—"got a new band, new sound... *Rolling Stone, Village Voice, picky picky picky*"—in *Stairway to Cleveland*, the recorded-live final cut. It is childishly defensive in tone, but also childlike in its unfettered tumble of words and therefore rather effective. Otherwise, the material is trivial, but only *Free* is really boring.

The "new sound" echoes little of the psychedelic Jorma-and-Jack days and not much of Kantner's attempt at science-fictionish effects—except, ironically, for a hint of the latter in the title song. This is modern go-with-the-flow rock in search of a hit. The first one to emerge, *Find Your Way Back*, is gimmicky, not unpleasant, but by no means special. It does no good to overrate the past, but if this album is a reflection of what the years have done to us—and it probably is—we really should be in a hurry to get on to more interesting times.

N.C.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

JUNIE: *Junie 5*. Junie (vocals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *I Love You Madly; Cry Me a River; 5; Last One to Know*; and four others. ARC/COLUMBIA JC 37133 \$8.98, © JCT 37133 \$8.98, © JCA 37133 \$8.98.

Performance: **Something different**
Recording: **Very good**

The work of Walter "Junie" Morrison, who has now abbreviated his identity all the way down to "Junie," shows heavy traces of the years he spent with the Ohio Players and even more of his time with the Parliament-Funkadelic gang. Echoes of the latter association are particularly apparent in his use of "critter" voices and weird mumbblings, as when a Donald Duck voice barks marching orders to the band. But Morrison has far surpassed the George Clinton crowd by emphasizing music over gimmicks and taste over raunch.

The opener, *Rappin About Rappin (Uh-Uh-Uh)*, taps the pop-funk trend to build a rhythmically enticing hybrid that is partly talked, partly sung. Several of the selections here are standard stomp-down funk fare, but *Cry Me a River* (not the old Julie London classic) fuses r-&-b with a modern country style, and 5, certainly the outstanding song here, is a cutie about a pre-school flirtation. Each track is just a bit different, each intriguing in its own right. While this might seem to be a hopscotch approach to making music, it all fits together because Junie imposes his personality on each item. It is good to hear an album in which the artist seems to be stretching some of the old formats to create fresh sounds.

P.G.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

BEN E. KING: *Street Tough*. Ben E. King (vocals); vocal and instrumental accom-

paniment. *Street Tough; Made for Each Other; Staying Power; Stay a While with Me; You Made the Difference to My Life*; and three others. ATLANTIC SD 19300 \$7.98, © CS 19300 \$7.98, © TP 19300 \$7.98.

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

One of the few veterans of r-&-b's golden age who is still recording regularly, Ben E. King deserves the deference accorded respected elders—even though he's only in his early forties. But popular-music history moves swiftly and fans are frequently fickle, which might explain why King has had few hits of late. He sounds as good today as he ever did; his voice is as rich and mellow as a fine cognac, and he handles phrasing like a master. There is no strained attempt here to sound young and hip. King just wends his way through easy-listening r-&-b numbers that may not knock you out with their brilliance but are smooth to the taste. The best track is *Stay a While with Me*, featuring King singing from the depths of his big ole soulful heart. The whole album goes down very well indeed. *P.G.*

LEO KOTTKE: Guitar Music (see *Best of the Month*, page 68)

ROBIN LANE & THE CHARTBUSTERS: Imitation Life. Robin Lane (vocals); the Chartbusters (vocals and instrumentals). *Say Goodbye; Idiot; Pretty Mala; No Control; Send Me an Angel; Rather Be Blind*; and four others. WARNER BROS. BSK 3537 \$8.98, © M5 3537 \$8.98.

Performance: **Good, but . . .**
Recording: **Good**

This Boston group straddles a generational line; being young, they have something of the New Wave about them, but Robin Lane's vocals come from Grace Slick, while the band's principal influences seem to be mid-period Jefferson Airplane and early Blondie. The material, introspective, somewhat arrogant, and a bit spaced out, also reminds me of those two groups. *Send Me an Angel*, the opening cut, smacks of *Somebody to Love*, and *Idiot*, with its catchy riff, sounds more like something Blondie would do. The Chartbusters are sturdy musicians and Lane has a good voice, but the band tends to play safe and Lane tends to lecture. There's too much "Imitation" here and not enough "Life." *J.V.*

LIVE WIRE CHOIR: Topsy. Live Wire Choir (vocals and instrumentals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Tried to Run Away; Well Alright; You Can Have the Blues; Topsy; It Ain't Necessarily So; Panhandle Rag*; and four others. MATCHBOX MB 1000 \$6.98 (plus \$1 postage and handling charge from Fitzgerald Distributing, 54717 Tamarack Road, Bend, Ore. 97701).

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

The Live Wire Choir is essentially a country-swing outfit, but horn players are added on several tracks here and the overall effect suggests that you can, indeed, use "jazz" and "Americana" in the same breath. It's been a long time since you could do that,

eh? The vocals don't do much for me—they seem overly mannered in an apparent attempt to sound super-sophisticated—but the instrumentals are zingy and well recorded, with a good feeling of space around each instrument. I don't think this band will knock Asleep at the Wheel off the throne, but with its smaller size and emphasis on agility and clarity—and, of course, with its feel for what a chunk of the American West sounds like—the Live Wire Choir should gain a decent foothold. *N.C.*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

MASS PRODUCTION: Turn Up the Music. Mass Production (vocals and instrumentals); instrumental accompaniment. *Turn Up the Music; Sunshine; Bopp; I Got to Have Your Love*; and four others. COTILLION SD 5226 \$7.98, © CS 5226 \$7.98, © TP 5226 \$7.98.

Performance: **Fun**
Recording: **Fine**

As the name implies, Mass Production's productions are *big*. They are also quirky, funky, and fun. Mass Production believes not just in production but in music as well. They explore a variety of styles within a basically contemporary black sound. The material is heavily rhythmic, with smooth vocal harmonies and highly individualized instrumental back-ups. *I Can't Believe You're Going Away* joins the group's multitracked, electronically enhanced energy with a genuine pop melody and a solid vocal by the group's only woman member, Agnes Kelly. In the same lyrical mode is *Diamond Chips*, in which Kelly's vocal rides perfectly on top of the ambitious arrangements. For variety, listen to the instrumental *Bopp*, with its jazz-like solos for guitar, trumpet, and electronic keyboard, and to the big, brassy treatment of *Saucey*. Then ride the album out on the punchy disco beat of *Clinch Quencher*. Excellent. *I.C.*

GUY MITCHELL: The Roving Kind. Guy Mitchell (vocals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *A Dime and a Dollar; The Day of Jubilo; You're Just in Love; My Heart Cries for You; The Roving Kind*; and seven others. ENCORE ® P 14356 \$8.98.

Performance: **Worth reviving**
Recording: **Good**

Guy Mitchell is one of those once-upon-a-time singers who return every now and then from the dim past to remind you of how things used to be. And sometimes it turns out, as is certainly the case with Mitchell, that maybe they weren't so bad after all. Mitchell was making hit records that were described as "country" and "Western" when the words didn't mean quite what they do now. In fact, he started out as a country singer with a Western band under his original name, Al Cernik. Then one day Mitch Miller heard his voice and launched him on a recording career. This reissue collection includes many of the hits that made Mitchell's reputation, sung in a pre-Presley voice vaguely reminiscent of Cliff Edwards—though much smoother. It brims over with good will, high spirits, and what used to be known as "personality." When Mitchell sings the title song or a duet with Rosemary Clooney on Irving Berlin's



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ANNE MURRAY: *Where Do You Go When You Dream*. Anne Murray (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *Blessed Are the Believers; It Should Have Been Easy; It's All I Can Do; Only Love*; and six others. CAPITOL SOO-12144 \$8.98, © 4XT-12144 \$8.98, © 8XT-12144 \$8.98.

Performance: **Crushed velours**
Recording: **Good**

Anne Murray's forte is singles. Few if any of her albums hang together very well for

me. This one doesn't either, but a fair percentage of it is a *nice* collection of potential singles. The backing is sometimes supperclubby lush and sometimes spartan, but there's not a hard sound in it anywhere. All but *Call Me with the News* are love songs, more of them downers than uppers, and most are catchy enough—and truthful enough—to engage the beguiling, low voice of Anne Murray. If you're experienced enough to expect a bumpy ride out of *Love*, this should be rather soothing. **N.C.**

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

RAY PARKER JR. AND RAYDIO: *A Woman Needs Love*. Ray Parker Jr. (vo-

als, guitar, bass, drums, keyboards); Raydio (vocals and instrumentals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *A Woman Needs Love (Just Like You Do); So Into You; That Old Song; Old Pro; You Can't Fight What You Feel*; and three others. ARISTA AL 9543 \$8.98, © ATC 9543 \$8.98, © AT8 9543 \$8.98.

Performance: **A good mix**
Recording: **Good**

Ray Parker Jr. is handsome enough—if his album covers aren't lying—to make it as just another pretty face. But, fortunately for us, he is talented as well. He plays several instruments, sings, and leads his group Raydio through albums of dance music that are usually as easy on the ears as they are appealing to the feet. On this outing, the tempo is frequently eased down to a sweet, slow drag, as on *So Into You*, a real embracer (though not as spectacularly lovely as Peabo Bryson's similarly titled *I'm So Into You*). The best track is *A Woman Needs Love (Just Like You Do)*, a moderately paced lilter that was a successful single. The careful mix of uptempo dance music with slower selections makes this an excellent party album. **P.G.**

TOM PETTY AND THE HEARTBREAKERS: *Hard Promises*. Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers (vocals and instrumentals); other musicians. *The Waiting; A Woman in Love (It's Not Me); Nightwatchman; Something Big; Kings Road; Letting You Go*; and four others. BACKSTREET BSR-5160 \$8.98, © BKSC-5160 \$8.98, © BKST-5160 \$8.98.

Performance: **Promises not kept**
Recording: **Gorgeous**

The Waiting, the hit single that opens Tom Petty's new album, is the finest record Petty has ever made, the first really transcendent, cruising-with-the-top-down tune of the Eighties, and in general the kind of song that tempts critics to get a little extravagant with the superlatives. From its ringing Rickenbacker opening through the heartfelt lyrics, soaring chorus, sly quotes from *We Gotta Get Out of This Place*, and best-ever Mike Campbell guitar solo, the song establishes itself as a classic on first hearing. And it simply blows away everything else on the radio.

That's a hard act to follow, and unfortunately the rest of the album is a big let-down. The production is splendid. This is the first Jimmy Iovine-produced record in quite a while that doesn't sound like a Springsteen album; it has a big, lush sound that can take your breath away. But the songs just don't cut it. They're all tuneless, overinflated, or halfhearted. *A Woman in Love* gets under your skin eventually, so it is almost an exception, but *Something Big* is an overly ambitious attempt at a Raymond Chandleresque crime narrative that is finally not very interesting, *Kings Road* is a joky, throwaway trifle, and the love songs, especially on side two, are far too swollen and ardent for their own good. A little humor would have helped; Petty seems to have lost one of his previously most endearing qualities, the sly wink concealed in many of his earlier songs.

This probably sounds a little sour, and I should emphasize that there's nothing of-

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fensive about this release, just nothing except *The Waiting* that's terribly involving. Petty is still one of the few mainstream rock acts I'd pay money to see, and though this is clearly his weakest album, at least it's an honest failure; he's not pandering to anyone. And while I'm waiting for his muse to return, *The Waiting* makes the job fairly easy. It, at least, is glorious. S.S.

RUFUS: *Party 'Til You're Broke.* Rufus (vocals and instrumentals); other musicians. *Tonight We Love; Hold On to a Friend; Love Is Taking Over; Secret Love; Party 'Til You're Broke; Can I Show You;* and four others. MCA MCA-5159 \$8.98. © MCAC-5159 \$8.98.

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

Rufus without Chaka Khan is like Irish coffee without the whisky: a pleasantly stimulating brew without a kick. Khan's searing vocals seemed to challenge the sound barrier, and she exuded an energy and sensuality that elevated the group above others specializing in quality dance music. It will not be easy to replace her. But the five gents of Rufus are carrying on alone, compensating for her departure, at times, with an enormous expenditure of energy. They also seem to work harder at exploiting the full range of their own vocal and instrumental capabilities. This is a highly competent and even enjoyable record, but I miss Khan's sass.

P.G.

THE RUMOUR: *Purity of Essence.* The Rumour (vocals and instrumentals). *Tula; I Don't Want the Night to End; Writing in the Water; All Boys Lie; Have You Seen My Baby?; Rubber Band Man; Houston;* and five others. HANNIBAL/ANTILLES HNBL 1305 \$8.98.

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

To put this Rumour-without-Graham-Parker effort into perspective, I regard it as the second best of a weaker-than-average monthly bunch of records I have here (I'd rate this bunch about a four). Losing Graham Parker is not quite the same thing as getting a charisma-bypass operation—an example of that is Crazy Horse without Neil Young—yet a personality with some dash to it is the only important missing ingredient here. The album is workmanlike—admirable in places, since the workers sound like pros, but workmanlike. The instrumentals sound a little more worked out in advance than spontaneous, but they are crisp and intelligent. The vocals hover above the acceptable level; here is where a big difference could be made. The tunes are better than average, although the artistry of the best of them, Randy Newman's *Have You Seen My Baby?*, makes some others that try for the same ironic, wry tone seem a little like poseurs. But there are words worth catching and some good sounds here, just no captivating central motif. N.C.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

BRENDA RUSSELL: *Love Life.* Brenda Russell (vocals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Love Life; Rainbow; Something I Like to Do; Lucky;* and four others.

A&M SP-4811 \$7.98, © CS-4811 \$7.98, © 8T-4811 \$7.98.

Performance: **Full of life**
Recording: **Very good**

I like Brenda Russell's music even though she sometimes sounds like she's flirting with laryngitis. Her performance here is sweet and sassy, and the songs she wrote for "Love Life" are a fascinating amalgam of soul and rock with just enough barefoot-folk flavor from the Sixties to lend them an air of distinction. Russell is supported by excellent musicians who punch out the instrumentals with a precision and energy that nearly lift the disc from the turntable. Fresh, accessible, and delightful. P.G.

CAROLE BAYER SAGER: *Sometimes Late at Night* (see Best of the Month, page 64)

SANTANA: *Zebop!* Santana (vocals and instrumentals). *Changes; É Papa Ré; American Gypsy; The Sensitive Kind; Primera Invasion; Tales of Kilimanjaro; Brightest Star;* and five others. COLUMBIA FC 37158 \$8.98, © FCT 37158 \$8.98, © FCA 37158 \$8.98.

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

After a prolonged and tedious period of experimentation with jazz and "space music," (Continued on page 81)

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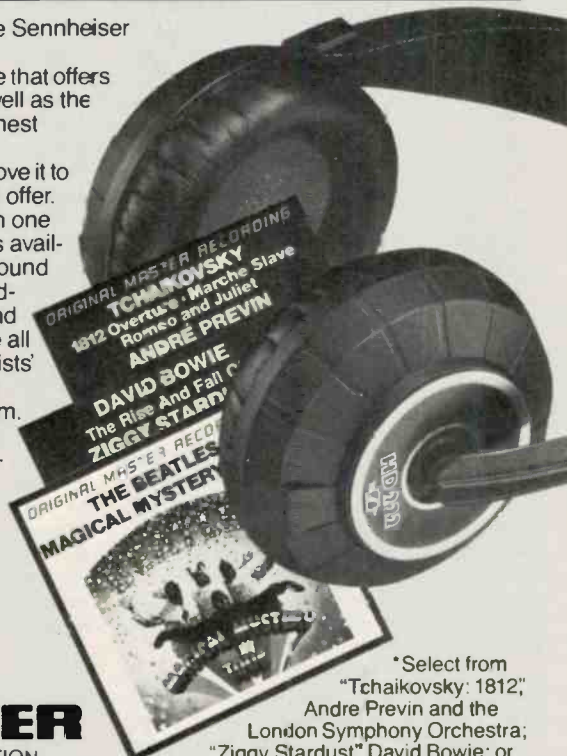
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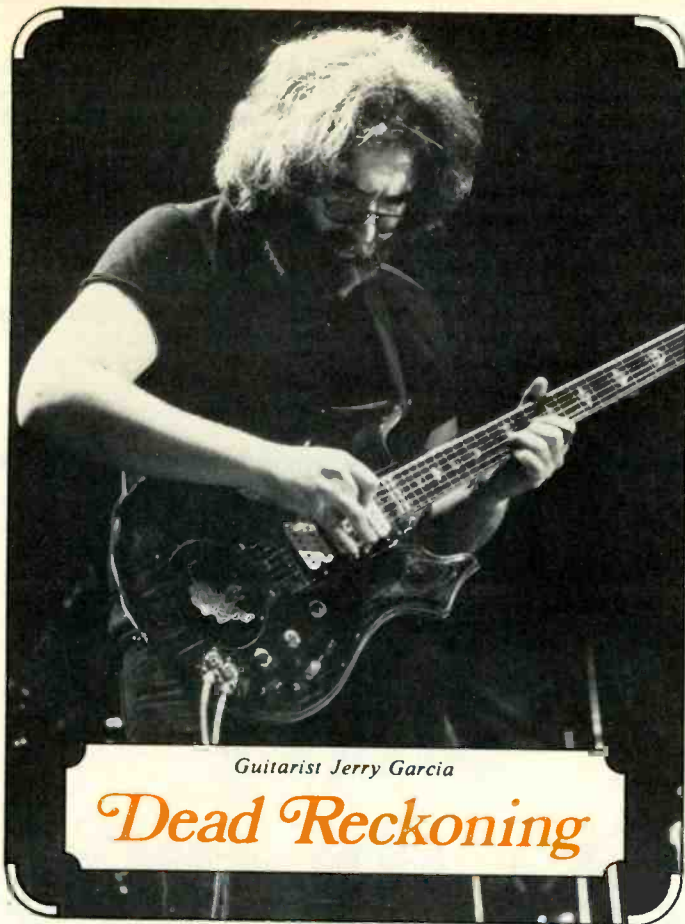


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ing that it's also rather stylized. Garcia, who accounts for so much of the overall sound, also gets a lot of skin in his own sound (on what appears in the pictures on the cover to be a Martin dreadnaught, miked), to the point of fretting softly enough to allow a little buzz in the bass strings. To subtleties of this sort, add the understated use of the piano and a laid-back combination of brushes and bongos and the eerie, strained sound of the Dead vocals—not forgetting Garcia's folksy tunes and Robert Hunter's dark, arcane lyrics in the original songs—and you begin to see how the band always had their eggs in a number of baskets.

I never classified myself as a Deadhead, but I've liked most of their albums and the overwhelming majority of the Deadheads I have known. The great thing about them, and about Deadism, is that a little bit of the flower child remains, and it seems obvious to me that the more flower children there are—even if they must stay, for a while, in the closet—the better off the world will be. "Reckoning" reminds me, first of all, of how *likable* so many Dead tunes are—fully half a dozen of these, maybe more, are careening around in my head right now—and, second, of how Deadism takes care of its own. Even if you have all the previous Grateful Dead albums, you don't have these same songs played this way. And there is not a real clinker in the whole batch, which is a consummation extremely rare in double-size live albums. It works better with headphones, though. What the mikes picked up is recorded well, but the mix is not the greatest, and a moderately noisy household can mask some of the mumbled vocals as well as some of the bass and much of Bob Weir's rhythm guitar.

THE benighted who have no connection with Deadism will probably go on wondering what all the fuss is about and exclaiming that the boys can't sing and so on and so forth. But Garcia and Weir do not so much sing as contribute a sound that's part of the larger sound. The Dead have, indeed, sounded lame at times on certain songs; here they sound like out-of-town visitors on *The Race Is On*, an old country-&-gimmick number made famous by George Jones. But the spirit of the Grateful Dead survives even when the band mangles the original spirit of a song. In "Reckoning" there are even a couple of nice redefinitions, notably the rhythmic drive given *Jack-a-Roe*. It will remind you of what the lovely old Joan Baez recording may have lulled you into forgetting: such songs can be played as well as sung.

—Noel Coppage

GRATEFUL DEAD: *Reckoning, Volume One*. Grateful Dead (vocals and instrumentals). *Dire Wolf; The Race Is On; Oh Babe It Ain't No Lie; It Must Have Been the Roses; Dark Hollow; China Doll; Been All Around This World; Monkey and the Engineer; Jack-a-Roe; Deep Elem Blues; Cassidy; To Lay Me Down; Rosalie McFall; On the Road Again; Bird Song; Ripple.* ARISTA A2L 8604 (two discs) \$13.98, © ACT2 8604 \$13.98, © A8T2 8604 \$13.98.

ONE of my greatest hits in "relationships"—as we used to call romantic entanglements in the halcyon days of 1976 when gasoline was a mere sixty cents a gallon—gave me an artificial connection to graduate-school days in San Francisco when the Grateful Dead owned the town, so don't tell *me* about Deadheads. My friend (another euphemism we used then) was one to the *n*th degree, and I learned that they are idealistic and somewhat romantic creatures, but complex enough to embrace a number of contradictions, including a fundamental toughness under that flowerlike, childlike exterior. That's probably why so many still survive—nay, flourish—in today's hostile settings.

Last October the Deadheads made a pilgrimage to Radio City Music Hall in the black and trendy heart of New York City, where punk rockers cut their hair with chain saws. They crammed themselves in until they hardly had room to smoke, and from that series of concerts and a similar one in Mecca (San Francisco) comes tangible proof of their survival in the form of the Dead's "Reckoning, Volume One," a double-size acoustic album on Arista. Coming soon: the electric Volume Two.

Unless you've been in the Peace Corps in Borneo, you know that acoustic guitars aren't exactly fashionable in pop music these days. I think it's part of the swing to an urban orientation in recent years. In the Haight-Ashbury heyday—when, by all so-

ciological indicators, the Dead should have peaked—there was a lust for country life. San Francisco was then the only city full of hippies, so it was the only city—period—to a lot of record buyers. Now, of course, the idea of a hippie band and its multitude of followers having survived the Seventies is preposterous in itself, let alone their trotting out ancient instruments some youthful Van Halen fans have never even seen before.

But here it is, and it had me humming first one and then another of its tunes in elevators and check-out lines. The acoustic "Reckoning" is not only a manifesto of survival, but a retrospective of the folk-oriented side of the Dead. That side is quite definite, but it is not simple. The Dead do not sound like any other folkie band any more than they sound like any other electric band. Along with such songs as Elizabeth Cotten's *Oh Babe It Ain't No Lie* (which has some of the same changes, incidentally, as her famous *Freight Train*), Charlie Monroe's *Rosalie McFall* (Charlie was Bill's older brother and one-time partner), the traditional *Deep Elem Blues* ("elem" is vernacular for "elm"), and the ancient, hard-core Anglo-Saxon folk song *Jack-a-Roe*, they give us Jerry Garcia playing fills that sound more like those of a jazz guitarist than of a country picker or a rock star or both.

Such is the eclecticism of the Grateful Dead; it is a broader-based and more adaptable band than seems reasonable, consider-

Carlos Santana began in the mid-1970s to return to the hybrid "Latin rock" sound that first made him popular in 1969. This album should be good news for those who felt he was swell in his first incarnation, even though it doesn't have the same easy, youthful confidence. Nothing here touches the relaxed funk of *Oye Como Va* or *Evil Ways*. To be fair, it is impossible to ask a musician to play the way he did a decade ago—the emotional difference between being twenty-one and thirty-one would in itself prohibit that. But the younger Santana was entertaining; the older one just seems to pound away trying to be ingratiating.

Some of these cuts, especially the instrumentals, are occasionally exciting thanks to the energetic Latin percussion. The lead vocals are essayed by Alexander J. Ligertwood, who tries hard to make the group sound like the Average White Band. And Carlos Santana still knows only one guitar solo, which he plays loudly and at length.

J.V.

GRACE SLICK: Welcome to the Wrecking Ball! Grace Slick (vocals); Scott Zito (guitar); other musicians. *Wrecking Ball; Mistreater; Shot in the Dark; Round & Round; Shooting Star*; and five others. RCA AQL1-3851 \$8.98, © AQK1-3851 \$8.98, © AQS1-3851 \$8.98.

Performance: **Godawful**
Recording: **Okay**

"Welcome to the Wrecking Ball" catches Grace Slick in what seems to be the throes of an identity crisis, and from the sound of it I can only hope she feels better soon. She spends most of her time here screeching over the din of a mediocre heavy-metal band in an apparent attempt to out-macho Pat Benatar in the Poodle Rock Sweepstakes; the effect is both ludicrous and sad. Grace can't compete vocally in that league, and even if she could the enterprise is pointless, since this is a rock genre that's been artistically played out for nearly a decade. *Right Kind*, which verges on Mott the Hoople territory musically, has moments that suggest the iconoclasm and humor of the old amazing Grace, but the rest is nothing but high-decibel posturing. A desperate, depressing album.

S.S.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

SPLIT ENZ. Split Enz (vocals and instrumentals). *Hard Act to Follow; One Step Ahead; Iris; History Never Repeats; Albert of India; Ghost Girl*; and five others. A&M SP-4848 \$7.98, © CS-4848 \$7.98, © 8T-4848 \$7.98.

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

There were some bright moments on Split Enz's last album, but this outing, though perhaps not as ambitious, is more cohesive. All of the vocal material deals with the ups and downs of courtship—specifically, the fear of not being wanted or of not trusting the beloved—and it is an impressive display of writing craftsmanship. It's accessible rock that never degenerates into mawkish pop.

History Never Repeats is what a frightened character who's been burned before keeps telling himself in a hoping-against-

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Shot in the Dark in the light: left to right, Bryan Savage, Robin Lamble, Peter White, Kryisia Kristianne, Adam Yurman

Shot in the Dark

SHOT IN THE DARK has functioned as Al Stewart's back-up band and opening act for the past five years. For the five-member group's new debut album on RSO, Stewart plays some keyboards and served as co-producer with Chris Desmond. The instrumentation sounds a little like Stewart's, but there is more to the album than that resemblance. I wouldn't think you frivolous if you called it an Anglo-American answer to ABBA; it has that kind of lightweight charm and zest for melody and harmony.

Robin Lamble sings well here, but things get much more interesting when Kryisia Kristianne is involved in the vocals. She gives them a high, unearthly quality that, for me, links the group's thoroughly modern soft-rock sound with that of Maddy Prior, Sandy Denny, and other folk-rock anteced-

ents. Every one of the songs is *about* something, in addition to being uncommonly melodic for our times, yet none has the kind of solemnity that might burden your step through the rest of the day. I can't decide whether I like it because it's less filling or because it tastes great, but I do like it.

—Noel Coppage

SHOT IN THE DARK. Shot in the Dark (vocals and instrumentals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Playing with Lightning; I Want the Moon; All My Life; Turn Around; Just As Well; Shot in the Dark; Make Up My Mind; Speak My Language; Angry Song; Some Towns.* RSO RS-1-3096 \$8.98, © CT-1-3096 \$8.98, © 8T-1-3096 \$8.98.

hope inversion of the truism. There are two pure instrumentals: *Whale*, full of electronic jabberwocky, and *Albert of India*, in a McCartney-like humoresque style. The grabber of the bunch, though, is *Iris* ("I feel desirous") with its cheerful expressions of lust behind Beatlesish instrumentals. A very tasty album. J.V.

SYLVIA: Drifter. Sylvia (vocals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Drifter; Tumbleweed; I'm Going with Him; It Don't Hurt to Dream; The Matador; Whippoorwill;* and four others. RCA AHL1-3986 \$8.98, © AHK1-3986 \$8.98, © AHS1-3986 \$8.98.

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

Sylvia is a striking-looking young singer who started with RCA as a secretary or something in the Nashville office. Her debut album seems to opt for a style somewhere between cowgirl and countrypolitian. It is a little overproduced, but the instrumentals do have a certain zing to them. Sylvia (no last name given) sounds a little like Crystal Gayle; she projects from the back of her throat the way Gayle does. Several of the songs here are catchy, and three have made the country charts. The best one—the only one that's interesting structurally—is *Missin' You*, and Sylvia will sing that better when she gets a little more experience. On the lighter things that make up most of the album, she's good enough now. Her voice is good enough to warrant careful handling. N.C.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

THREE DEGREES: Three D. Three Degrees (vocals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Jump the Gun; Red Light; Without You; Bodycheck;* and three others. ARIOLA AOL 1501 \$7.98, © AOC 1501 \$7.98, © AO8 1501 \$7.98.

Performance: **Power and grace**
Recording: **Excellent**

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happily, a lot of them are now working in Europe, and often their work is released here only after (or if) it succeeds abroad. "Three D" was produced and originally released in Europe; two hit singles—*Jump the Gun* for dancers and the very mainstream *My Simple Heart*—propelled it across the Atlantic for our delight.

The Three Degrees—Sheila Ferguson, Valerie Holiday, and Helen Scott—are in their second decade as a group. Veterans of the international performing/recording circuit, they began in Philadelphia, went to Europe, and just recently returned to the U.S. Co-producer Giorgio Moroder's name, of course, graces every Donna Summer LP, and a lot more besides. On "Three D" the trio sings with power and grace, and Moroder provides balanced, energetic support. The result is fine music, Eighties style.

The album's programming is nicely varied. The instrumental burden of *Jump the Gun* falls squarely on the rock-like shoulders of electric guitar and synthesized rhythm section, which back up the power-disco vocals with a fresh, sharply etched sound. *Starlight* slows things down to let the trio show their skill; even singing close harmony, their energy makes them impossible to ignore. The ballad *Without You*—the closest thing to pure pop in the album—is another good showcase. As a song it veers dangerously close to ABBA's assembly-line productions, but the performance is vigorous, solid, and straightforward. *I.C.*

JOE WALSH: *There Goes the Neighborhood*. Joe Walsh (vocals, guitar); instrumental accompaniment. *Things; Made Your Mind Up; Down on the Farm; Rivers (of the Hidden Funk)*; and four others. ASYLUM 5E-523 \$8.98, © 5C5-523 \$8.98, © 5T8-523 \$8.98.

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

Joe Walsh, the loosest Eagle, is widely suspected of having sharper than average wit, but when he made this album he must have had his mind on something else. The songs are fairly lifeless; the closest thing I could find to a good line was "the animals fell off the wagon, and a tractor or two" in *Down on the Farm*. *Rivers (of Hidden Funk)*, written with Don Felder, is the only one I'd care to hear again on my own time, and it—like several others—is hurt by a persistently ugly, oinking-pig bass line. The instrumentals in general, a few guitar licks aside, get the same low-energy, lick-and-promise treatment as the songwriting. Sounds like one of those contractual-obligation albums to me. *N.C.*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

MUDDY WATERS: *King Bee*. Muddy Waters (vocals, guitar); instrumental accompaniment. *I'm a King Bee; Champagne and Reefer; Mean Old Frisco Blues; I Feel Like Going Home; No Escape from the Blues*; and five others. BLUE SKY JZ 37064 \$7.98, © JZT 37064 \$7.98, © JZA 37064 \$7.98.

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

The continuing collaboration of Muddy Waters as artist and Johnny Winter as pro-

ducer/sideman has rejuvenated both of their careers. Waters is more appreciated now than ever before in his forty-year professional history, and Winter has found a respect that eluded him in the days of his hyped "superstardom." Winter is to Waters what Boswell was to Samuel Johnson, and the public gets the benefit.

Waters, now in his sixties, has a combination of calm authority and frisky charm that makes you believe almost anything he says in his songs. He is like a favorite grandfather who introduces his grandchildren to a nip of the corn and a lusty joke or two. *I'm a King Bee* is the great, sexy blues written and cut by Slim Harpo in the Fifties; Harpo died, alas, just as he was being introduced to a deserved wider renown in 1969. Both Arthur "Big Boy" Crudup's *Mean Old Frisco Blues* and Waters' own *I Feel Like Going Home* are given an almost primitive backwoods blues treatment with spare instrumentation, and Winter has an exceptional slide-guitar solo on the latter. *Champagne and Reefer*, another Waters original, makes the case for legalization of pot more effectively than all the anthems by white rockers and reggae salesmen put together. Muddy Waters is a king, all right. *J.V.*

DENIECE WILLIAMS: *My Melody*. Deniece Williams (vocals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *My Melody; It's Your Conscience; Silly; Strangers; What Two Can Do*; and three others. ARC/COLUMBIA FC 37048 \$8.98, © FCT 37048 \$8.98, © FCA 37048 \$8.98.

Performance: **Sweetly intimate**
Recording: **Very good**

Deniece Williams' ultra-high voice and special way of teasing a song always remind me of a sensual baby. That light and effervescently youthful voice might be her greatest asset; it sets her apart from other perennial ingenues of the crowded musical scene who do not sing nearly as well or as stylishly. This latest album, featuring several songs Williams wrote in collaboration with her co-producer Thom Bell, is carefully tailored to make the most of her vocal equipment while creating a mood of relaxed intimacy. The arrangements are tastefully uncluttered, leaving plenty of space for Ms. Williams to pluck away at all those wonderful high notes. Several of the songs have a comfortable, nestling-down quality that makes the album, if not one of her best, at least easy to enjoy. *P.G.*

JESSE WINCHESTER: *Talk Memphis*. Jesse Winchester (vocals, guitar); instrumental accompaniment. *Say What; Baby Blue; Leslie; Hoot and Holler; If Only; Sure Enough*; and four others. BEARSVILLE BRK 6989 \$7.98, © MS 6989 \$7.98.

Performance: **Too cheerful**
Recording: **Good**

I find I like Jesse Winchester's albums in inverse proportion to their cuteness, a quality that sets in when he writes a song in a good mood. The ones here don't show him at the most cheerful he can be, but their concerns are trivial and their language a string of banalities. Only *Leslie* aspires to scrap outside the flyweight class, and it isn't exactly a heavyweight. There is craftsmanship, of course, and an intelligence that

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First American

Glenn Yarbrough

GLENN YARBROUGH, once a member of the Limelights, has not made many outstanding records in the years since that folk trio broke up, but he has made one now.

can't be entirely hidden by this fluff, and there is a little kick to the instrumentals—though not much in comparison to what records out of Memphis used to sound like. But I can't see any of these songs becoming important to me the way some early Winchester songs have.

N.C.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

ROBERT WINTERS: *Magic Man*. Robert Winters (vocals, piano); orchestra. *Face the Music; Happiness; How Can Love Be Wrong; When Will My Love Be Right; Into My World*; and four others. BUDDAH BDS 5732 \$7.98, © BCT 5732 \$7.98, © B8T 5732 \$7.98.

Performance: **You bet**
Recording: **Good**

You may have heard Robert Winters sing the title song from "Magic Man," for it has enjoyed some success on the r-&-b charts, but that performance is only the tip of an iceberg. Winters is enormously talented not only as a performer but also as a songwriter; he had a hand in writing all but two of the nine tunes in this set, and not one should be overlooked. Winters' well-rounded talent is particularly refreshing at a time when originality is as rare in the pop-music business as efficiency at the post office.

Winters, who also plays the piano, delivers his songs in a voice that is at times reminiscent of both Ray Charles and Al Green but has a wider range than either. He can reach the higher falsetto registers without sounding the least bit strained, and he can pour on the resonance like silken cream. Now thirty-two, Winters has had to wait

You don't have to go much farther than the opening band of "Just a Little Love," featuring his limpid tenor in an ardent reading of Dik Darnell's *She Touched Me*, to realize that though time may have greyed his beard and thickened his waistline, Yarbrough can still yodel with the best of them.

He's at his finest here in exuberant numbers such as Christopher Cross' *Sailin'* (it's the one that won all those Grammys), an invitation to leave your cares behind and hoist the sails for adventure, and in pop-folksy ballads such as *Let the Light Shine in the Morning*. He's also moving in romantic songs (*Just a Little Love, Close to You*) and can even make a lyric as silly as that of *Just a Matter of Time* sound as if it makes sense—at least while he's singing it. When Glenn Yarbrough sings, every word comes through loud and clear, and every note glows with life.

—Paul Kresh

GLENN YARBROUGH: *Just a Little Love*. Glenn Yarbrough (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *She Touched Me; Just a Little Love; I'd Build a Bridge; Something About a Woman in Love; Close to You; Just a Matter of Time; Ball and Chain; Sailin'; Let the Light Shine in the Morning; Changing Force*. FIRST AMERICAN FA-7766 \$7.98, © 5-7766 \$7.98.

unusually long before making this revealing album, but that may be due in part to his having been confined to a wheelchair since the age of five. I hope that we'll be hearing a lot more of his work from now on.

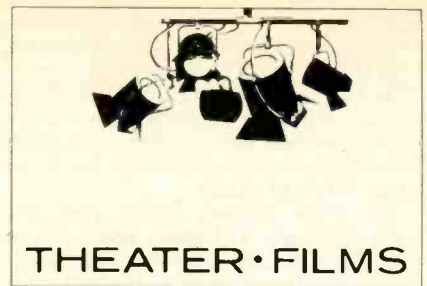
YELLOW MAGIC ORCHESTRA: *BGM*. Yellow Magic Orchestra (vocals and instrumentals). *Ballet; Music Plans; Rap Phenomena; Cue; Camouflage; Happy End*; and four others. A&M SP-4853 \$7.98, © CS-4853 \$7.98, © 8T-4853 \$7.98.

Performance: **The twain meet**
Recording: **Crystalline**

Moaning and droning the English lyrics like true sons of punk but backing them with the most ambitious collection of electronics this side of Kraftwerk, the remarkable three-man Japanese band that is the Yellow Magic Orchestra merges East and West. This new album is something of an extension of the YMO presented in "Multiplies" a year or so ago. Except for *Loom*, the spacy finale, these tracks are all jerky, staccato, disturbing explosions. Instrumental back-ups are kept to a narrow, repetitive, essentially rhythmic framework; despite the massive amount of equipment involved, YMO creates a spare, economical sound.

The album's most accessible cuts are also its least characteristic. *1,000 Knives* and *Mass*, with their heavy percussive rhythms and sonorous chords, and *Cue*, which beneath its thrumming surface is simply a pop ballad, all have catchy tunes. In the rest of the material YMO is too busy pushing at the frontiers of electronic rock to worry about accessibility. Their appeal is to the intellect, not the emotions.

I.C.



CAMELOT (Frederick Loewe—Alan Jay Lerner). London-cast recording. Laurence Harvey, Elizabeth Larner, Miles Malleon, Moyra Fraser, Barry Kent, Nicky Henson, Cardew Robinson (vocals); chorus and orchestra, Kenneth Alwyn cond. STET DS 15022 \$8.98, © DSC 15022 \$8.98.

Performance: **Second-string splendor**
Recording: **Excellent**

Camelot, Lerner and Loewe's musical adaptation of parts of T. H. White's novel *The Once and Future King*, was a landmark in the history of the American musical theater. Moss Hart's sumptuous 1960 Broadway production had everything: gorgeous sets and costumes, a tuneful score, a vivid tale of chivalrous knights, plenty of heraldic pageantry, and a glittering cast headed by Richard Burton, Julie Andrews, and Robert Goulet. The original-cast recording on Columbia was a truly distinguished one, and it was much in demand again when the show was revived a few years ago.

Four years after the New York premiere, Robert Helpmann's production of *Camelot* opened at the Drury Lane in London, also to considerable acclaim. Stet Records has now released the cast recording of that production, and while it is an impressive achievement—containing, among other marvels, the sounds of a joust complete with the clashing of knightly armor and the pounding of horses' hooves—it is no match for Columbia's version. As for the performers, the late Laurence Harvey chose virtually to duplicate Burton's definitive Arthur, and he did it eerily well. But why buy an imitation when you can still get the real thing? Elizabeth Larner is a little less sugary a Guenevere than Andrews, but also a little less charming. And though Barry Kent's strong baritone is quite equal to the demands of *If Ever I Would Leave You*, he doesn't come close to matching Goulet's interpretation.

However, the singers and the orchestra are stunningly recorded, and the overall sound of the show is perfectly splendid; if no album of the original Broadway production was available this one would certainly serve. As it is, this release seems superfluous.

P.K.

PROVIDENCE (Miklós Rózsa). Original-soundtrack recording. Orchestra, Miklós Rózsa cond. DRG SL 9502 \$7.98, © SLC 9502 \$7.98.

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

A good deal of the dark, chill footage of *Providence*, a murky Alain Resnais movie from the late Seventies, takes place in the night mind of a novelist played by John

Gielgud. Miklós Rózsa's music for this strange film is as spookily hypnotic as we have come to expect from the man who made his reputation with the score for Hitchcock's *Spellbound*. There is a haunting *Twilight Waltz* and lightly scored (for Rózsa) passages seasoned with hints of humor; the music is only rarely overblown in the way that makes even his Oscar-winning scores for *A Double Life* and *Ben Hur* rather hard to take. Describing the passages for horns and woodwinds heard during the daylight scenes in *Providence*, Pauline Kael in the *New Yorker* called them "Disney-Debussy" meant to suggest "happy thoughts." They are not as banal as all that, if not terribly memorable either. On the whole, *Providence* is a graceful, well-constructed movie score that stands up for listening on its own somewhat better than a lot of soundtracks I've heard.

P.K.

THIEF (Tangerine Dream). Original-soundtrack recording. Tangerine Dream (instrumentals). ELEKTRA 5E-521 \$7.98, © TC5-521 \$7.98.

Performance: **Rackety rock**
Recording: **Excellent**

Thief is a high-class, high-strung gangster movie in which James Caan plays a tough ex-convict named Frank who pulls off elaborate heists. The score composed and performed by Tangerine Dream is a machine-tooled, high-energy construction with an insistent beat. Moody and monotonously repetitive in the minimalist fashion of Steve Reich's relentless classical scores, the soundtrack succeeds mainly in pounding you over the head with numbing reiteration of synthesized sounds and rhythms. If you enjoy assaults on your eardrums, by all means add this album to your collection.

P.K.

THIS IS ELVIS. Selections from the original soundtrack. Elvis Presley (vocals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. RCA CPL2-4031 two discs \$13.98, © CPK2-4031 \$13.98, © CPS2-4031 \$13.98.

Performance: **Variable**
Recording: **Likewise**

It's another month, and you know what that means: another Elvis Presley album. Good thing *live* people don't put 'em out so fast; there wouldn't be anywhere to walk. What we're mostly getting, of course, is not "new" Presley music but memorabilia. This collection of out-takes, album cuts, Previously Unreleaseds, and excerpts from press conferences and interviews is from a pastiche movie in the same vein. Most of the previously unreleased stuff was unreleased for a good reason—another, better-sounding version already existed. Such is the case with these versions of *Hound Dog* (this one is from the 1956 Milton Berle TV show), *Heartbreak Hotel* (from a 1956 Tommy Dorsey TV show), and *Don't Be Cruel* (from Elvis' famous *Ed Sullivan Show* appearance). But collectors and archivists and speculators presumably don't buy these things to listen to anyway, and I'm told that such people as still hang on the front gates at Graceland will buy anything with the King's name on it, even if they already have the same material in two or three other packagings.

N.C.

JAZZ



RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

COUNT BASIE: *Kansas City Five.* Count Basie (piano); Milt Jackson (vibraphone); Joe Pass (guitar); John Heard (bass); Louis Bellson (drums). *Jive at Five; Memories of You; Blues for Joe Turner; Rabbit; One O'Clock Jump*; and five others. PABLO TODAY 2312-126 \$8.98, © K12-126 \$8.98.

Performance: **Subtle breeze**
Recording: **Very good**

The light, bouncy swing that one always associates with Count Basie is very much in evidence throughout "Kansas City 5," a quintet album that producer Norman Granz tells us is the beginning of a series of Basie small-group recordings. I assume—since this session took place in 1977—that at least a good part of the series is already "in the can," as we say in this business. I hope the session here is representative of what is to follow and that we can expect the addition of a sympatico horn now and then (Basie's piano has always been the perfect companion to an authoritative horn).

In the present company, the feathery support of Milt Jackson, Joe Pass, Louis (it was always "Louie" before) Bellson, and John Heard is exemplary and quite in character with the ever-tasteful, frugal expressions of their leader. We should be thankful to Mr. Granz for helping to preserve an important tradition so splendidly.

C.A.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

MILT JACKSON: *Night Mist.* Milt Jackson (vibraphone); Harry "Sweets" Edison (trumpet); Eddie "Lockjaw" Davis, Eddie "Cleanhead" Vinson (saxophone); Art Hillery (piano); Ray Brown (bass); Larence Marable (drums). *Blues in My Heart; A Matter of Adjustment; Blues for Clyde; Other Bag Blues*; and three others. PABLO TODAY ① D2312124 \$9.98, © K12124 \$9.98.

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

British writer Benny Green's notes for "Night Mist" read like a textbook, but the music on the record is far from dull. With trumpeter Harry "Sweets" Edison and saxophonists Eddie "Lockjaw" Davis and Eddie "Cleanhead" Vinson on the front line, Milt "Bags" Jackson stomps and shimmies through a bluesy program that Mr. Green ought to have swayed to rather than analyzed. The solos are good and plentiful, and my only reservation concerns Larence Marable's drums, which seem a bit intrusive. Art Hillery, a pianist of whom I had not previously heard, is a pleasant surprise.

(Continued on page 87)

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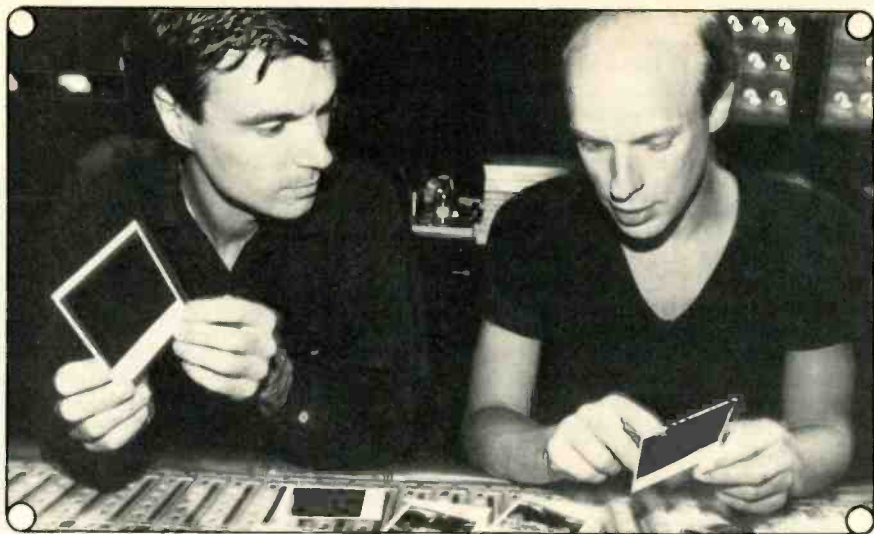
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The Sixties Revisited

Getting the picture:
David Byrne and Brian Eno



Lynn Goldsmith

OLD hippies never die, they just get recycled as punks and New Wavers. Hard to believe? Consider the following true stories. First: Talking Heads had two potential front-cover designs for their recent "Remain in Light" album, one a striking shot of some vintage World War II fighter planes against a mountain backdrop, the other a conventionally arty series of band portraits. Although the former is unquestionably the stronger image, the band decided to use it on the *back* cover because, given the mood of the country, they seriously worried that it might encourage militarism (all together, now—Give Us a Break!). Second: Keith Levene, original guitarist for the Clash and now Johnny Rotten's main collaborator in the self-proclaimed "anti-rock" band Public Image Ltd., admitted in a recent interview that his main musical influence is none other than Jerry Garcia (!), leader of the ultimate hippie band, the Grateful Dead (see review of their new album on page 80 of this issue).

It's interesting to me that both Talking Heads and PIL are currently such critical touchstones, because it confirms a theory I have long held: scratch a critic enamored of an experimental punk band and you'll find a closet Grateful Dead fan. So it's no surprise to me that both "Flowers of Romance," the new PIL album, and "My Life in the Bush of Ghosts," head Head David Byrne's latest collaboration with Brian Eno, are archetypal hippie albums, vintage Sixties psychedelia from start to finish, or that both have been received as avant-garde.

The Byrne/Eno album is by far the more successful of the two. There are, in fact, some reasonably compelling noises in it, but for me the album as a whole is compromised by muddle-headed art-school pretensions. What Byrne and Eno have done is a sort of stylized extension of their work on "Remain in Light," which is to say that the music is a collection of harmonically static funk grooves overlaid with elaborate sound effects and aural "found objects" ranging from radio talk-show snippets to Moslem religious chants. Technically, the album is a real tour de force; the integration of these disparate elements is painstakingly worked

out and largely seamless. It *sounds* astonishing: as *Mad* magazine used to say, it's "a fershlugginner stereo spectacular."

Where "My Life . . ." differs from "Remain in Light" is that nobody concerned with the Byrne/Eno album attempted to work all those sonic collages into anything resembling the framework of a traditional song. The underlying attitude is the old hippie we-are-all-one/everything-is-music notion, and despite the trendy Africanisms of the underpinning rhythms, the antecedents are fairly obvious: early Dead, Pink Floyd, and the Beatles' *Revolution Number Nine*—the kind of pointless rock *musique concrète* that anybody not thoroughly addled on drugs got tired of around 1970. This is not the work of amateurs or dilettantes; a lot of serious thought and effort, however misguided, seems to have gone into the project. But ultimately it produces the same random trance effects as hippie/psychedelia, and it is just as enervating to listen to. Chalk up "My Life in the Bush of Ghosts" as an interesting experiment.

THAT is more than can be said about Public Image Ltd.'s "Flowers of Romance." This record is so breathtakingly, determinedly horrendous that it inspires as much awe as ennui. It strikes me as the most transparent emperor's new clothes to have been paraded in public in a decade. As such it merits some kind of grudging respect, and that it should also be a throwback to 1967 is the cream of the jest.

It is no particular surprise either. With hindsight, Rotten's old band, the Sex Pistols, has to be seen as a thoroughly conventional hard-rock outfit differing from, say, Aerosmith only in their anti-establishment stance, and PIL's first two albums were as acid-tinged and apocalyptic as anything to have emanated from the heyday of Haight-Ashbury. And yet they were hailed as groundbreaking and revolutionary, which goes to show, I suppose, that in rock *nobody* learns from history.

Up until now Rotten has seemed at least an interesting character. No more. The new album sounds like the work of a gang of spoiled brats let loose in a twenty-four-track

playroom. Anyone who can listen to this stuff with a straight face—Rotten chanting like a fake muezzin in a Jon Hall Arabian Nights movie and pontificating on a variety of subjects he is unqualified to discuss while his accomplices bang and grunt portentously behind him—is the victim of a con of gargantuan proportions (not for nothing was one Sex Pistols album called "The Great Rock and Roll Swindle"). And the hippie connections are all here: pseudo-Orientalisms, doom and gloom, endless droning non-melodies, all just like scads of mercifully forgotten Sixties albums.

"I don't want to go to the hippies' graveyard," sang one Johnny G. on an overlooked punk single in 1978; "it smells of incense there." On the basis of these two albums (not to mention the *really* garbago neo-psychedelic stuff now happening in England), I'd say there are a lot of folks who don't agree, who are only too *eager* to wind up there. Byrne and Eno seem to have maintained a semblance of dignity and clear-headed sense despite their unfathomable obsession, but Johnny Rotten and company appear to have a retrograde lust for sandalwood. If they're not careful they're going to wind up as a comic footnote to history (or the answer to a trivia question) in the company of such as the Electric Prunes and the Strawberry Alarm Clock. —Steve Simels

BRIAN ENO AND DAVID BYRNE: *My Life in the Bush of Ghosts*. Brian Eno, David Byrne (guitar, bass, synthesizer, drums, percussion, found objects); other musicians. *America Is Waiting; Mea Culpa; Regiment; Help Me Somebody; The Jezebel Spirit; Qu'ran; Moonlight in Glory; The Carrier; A Secret Life; Come with Us; Mountain of Needles*. SIRE SRK 6093 \$7.98, © M5S 6093 \$7.98.

PUBLIC IMAGE LTD.: *The Flowers of Romance*. Public Image Ltd. (vocals and instrumentals). *Four Enclosed Walls; Track 8; Phenagen; Flowers of Romance; Under the House; Hymie's Him; Banging the Door; Go Back; Francis Massacre*. WARNER BROS. BSK 3536 \$7.98, © M5 3536 \$7.98.

however. Keep it up, Bags, Cleanhead, Lockjaw, and Sweets—you'll never be mistaken for a law firm. C.A.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

ELLIS LARKINS. Ellis Larkins (piano); Billy Popp (bass); Jackie Williams (drums). *Just Squeeze Me; Ellington Medley; Happiness Boy Chaser; Gershwin Medley;* and two others. DGTL/ISLAND ◉ DGTL 101 \$8.98.

Performance: **Light and lovely**
Recording: **Very good**

From Island Records, the very people who assault our ears and intelligence with the non-musical utterances of Grace Jones, comes this gem of an album by Ellis Larkins, whose musicality seems to know no bounds. In a program that includes two of his own compositions and a delicious Gershwin medley, Larkins provides lessons in subtlety, good taste, timing, and dynamics. Only the lady on the cover is inappropriate here—this album gets its beauty from within. C.A.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

JEFF LORBER FUSION: Galaxian. Jeff Lorber Fusion (vocals and instrumentals); instrumental accompaniment. *Seventh Mountain; Magic Lady; Night Love; Spur of the Moment;* and four others. ARISTA AL 9545 \$8.98, © ACT 9545 \$8.98, © A8T 9545 \$8.98.

Performance: **Virtuosic**
Recording: **Top-drawer**

Jeff Lorber is still busily fusing jazz and funk and a few other things into wonderfully happy music. His new album opens with a startling departure: *Monster Man* is straight funk, vocal and all, but much too tasteful to really get down. That aside, the rest of "Galaxian" is studded with gems. *Seventh Mountain* and *Magic Lady*, both on side one, practically sing themselves out of the grooves, with Lorber doing an especially fine job overdubbing himself at the piano and on a variety of electronic keyboards. On side two there's a second vocal track (a new idea for the Fusion) called *Turn Back and Remember*, a bluesy love song sung in an easy, smooth-as-silk falsetto by Donnie Gerard. There's also the Fusion's own Kenny Gorelick on sax fighting it out—but oh, so gently—with guest guitarist Marlon McClain on *Spur of the Moment*. And there's the thrilling pianism of the title cut.

For Lorber fans, the augmented orchestral sound of most of the album may take some getting used to, but this time more is simply more. I.C.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

MODERN JAZZ QUARTET: More from the Last Concert. Modern Jazz Quartet (instrumentals). *Really True Blues; In Memoriam;* and four others. ATLANTIC SD 8806 \$7.98, © CS 8806 \$7.98.

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

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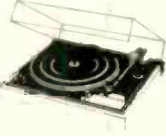


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Culver Pictures

Fats and friend in the 1943 20th Century-Fox film *Stormy Weather*

Fats Waller

OF the thirty-two selections on Volume II of RCA's "The Complete Fats Waller," you may be familiar with only a handful, but they are merely the icing on a scrumptious cake whipped up by this prolific recording artist and two early versions of his Rhythm group. All the tracks on this double album were recorded in 1935, and it is a measure of Waller's popularity that they amount to only half of that year's total output.

The idea of issuing a major artist's complete output—especially in chronological order—is a good one, and RCA comes close to being able to do that with Waller, who spent the better part of his career recording for Victor or Bluebird. Unfortunately, though, "complete" here is a misnomer, for even some Victor recordings are left out, including quite a few made prior to May 1934 (where Volume I begins) and an album's worth of 1935 solos that leave a gap in the chronology on Volume II. Thirty-three fine Waller solos recorded between 1929 and 1941 are available on Bluebird AXM2-5518, an album issued in 1977, but it too is far from complete.

Such irregularities and omissions notwithstanding, one must rejoice that so much of this rich material is making it to today's chart-oriented market. But why the snail's pace, RCA? Volume I was issued six years ago, and if this same pace is maintained, the final set won't be out until around 2040, to be annotated by some antiquarian who could not possibly have the insight and feeling for Waller that permeates guitarist Marty Grosz's notes, and to be reviewed by some critic as yet unborn.

How does one give a just review to the sumptuous sounds of Thomas W. Waller and His Rhythm? There is simply no way to convey adequately in writing the wit and musicianship that oozes out at every turn of these records. Anything I could say would not begin to exhaust the compelling reasons for acquiring this—or, for that matter, any other—Fats Waller album. So what are you waiting for?

—Chris Albertson

FATS WALLER: *The Complete Fats Waller, Volume II, 1935.* Fats Waller (piano, celeste, vocals); Herman Autrey (trumpet); Rudy Powell (clarinet, alto saxophone); Al Casey, Jimmy Smith (guitar); other musicians. *Rosetta* (two versions); *Pardon My Love; What's the Reason (I'm Not Pleasin' You)* (two versions); *Cinders; (Oh Suzanna) Dust Off That Old Pianna; Lulu's Back in Town; Sweet & Slow; You've Been Taking Lessons in Love (From Somebody New); You're the Cutest One; I'm Gonna Sit Right Down and Write Myself a Letter; Hate to Talk About Myself; Dinah; Take It Easy; You're the Picture (I'm the Frame); My Very Good Friend the Milkman; Blue Because of You; There's Going to Be the Devil to Pay; 12th Street Rag; There'll Be Some Changes Made; Somebody Stole My Gal; Sweet Sue—Just You; Truckin'; Sugar Blues; As Long As the World Goes Round and Round; Georgia Rockin' Chair; Brother Seek and Ye Shall Find; The Girl I Left Behind Me; You're So Darn Charming; Wo! Is Me; Rhythm and Romance.* BLUEBIRD Ⓜ AXM2-5575 two discs \$11.98, Ⓞ AXK2-5575 \$11.98.

ern Jazz Quartet gave its farewell performance at New York's Lincoln Center. Considering the unprecedented twenty-two-year life of the group, I expected the evening to be laced with nostalgia and teary parting speeches, but there was none of that; the MJQ performed as if it had a thousand tomorrows. If there was anything audibly separating that concert from their many previous ones, it was perhaps only that they surpassed themselves. I remember thinking as I left the hall that night how hard it was to believe that these extraordinary musicians—John Lewis, Milt Jackson, Percy Heath, and Connie Kay—would not soon come together again as a unit. It was very difficult to imagine the jazz scene without the MJQ.

There was no reunion, of course, and by now it seems best to let the group's many recordings speak for its greatness. If you somehow missed adding the MJQ to your library, a wealth of fine albums is still available, and now there is also this new release, which is as fine a representation of the group's artistry as you are likely to find. Add it to the original two-disc set of the farewell performance and you will have the complete record of a major musical event.

C.A.

JOE SAMPLE: *Voices in the Rain.* Joe Sample (electric and acoustic pianos, synthesizers); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Voices in the Rain; Burnin' Up the Carnival; Greener Grass; Shadows;* and three others. MCA MCA-5172 \$8.98, Ⓞ MCAC-5172 \$8.98, Ⓞ MCAT-5172 \$8.98.

Performance: **Abandoned**

Recording: **Good**

Joe Sample, performing with virtuoso abandon on a variety of keyboards, damn near knocks himself out in an effort to make this album entertaining. Unfortunately, the songs, all of which he wrote, are such a conglomeration of styles that almost everything tumbles down in confusion. The one success is his collaboration with Flora Purim, who does the lead vocal in *Shadows*. There are some moments of real loveliness on that track. Otherwise the album is only a flashy showcase for Sample's skill on the Steinway, the Moog, and the Fender Rhodes.

P.R.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

ART TATUM: *Solo Masterpieces, Vol. 10.* Art Tatum (piano). *After You've Gone; Please Be Kind; Would You Like to Take a Walk; I Surrender Dear; Blues in My Heart;* and four others. PABLO Ⓜ 2310 862 \$8.98, Ⓞ K10-862 \$8.98.

Performance: **Mastery**

Recording: **Good**

If you are not fortunate enough to have the boxed set of Art Tatum's "Solo Masterpieces" issued by Pablo a few years back (at a rather prohibitive price), piecemeal acquisition of these superb performances has been made possible by their release as single albums. Volume 10 in the series contains nine of the 120 or so titles recorded by Tatum during his marathon solo sessions in Los Angeles between December 1953 and March 1955. Whether you should select

this particular volume over some other depends largely on your preference in material; the performances are fairly consistent, all on the highest level of musical artistry. If you can afford more than one, you won't go wrong with any of these Tatum albums. I think Pablo's list price is a bit high for reissued material like this, which has probably already paid for itself many times over, but I would be hard put to recommend a better musical value. C.A.

SARAH VAUGHAN: Copacabana. Sarah Vaughan (vocals); Helio Delmiro (guitar); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Copacabana; Bonita; Double Rainbow; The Smiling Hour; Dindi*; and four others. PABLO TODAY 2312 125 \$8.98.

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

Listening to Sarah Vaughan sing this repertoire—post-bossa-nova Brazilian pop—is like eating Godiva chocolates dipped in hot butterscotch sauce: too much of a good thing. The wonderful Vaughan sound, butterscotch mellow already, overpowers the bittersweet, delicate moods of the songs. In the title number, which is *not* Barry Manilow's pop melodrama but a gentle ballad by two Brazilian writers with English lyrics by Johnny Burke, Sassy swoops down on the words and music like a flamingo trying to get comfortable in a sparrow's nest. She disregards the fragility of the five Antonio Carlos Jobim and Luis Bonfá songs (including Jobim's lovely *Double Rainbow*) and pours on the tropical passion. I declare a mismatch. P.R.

NANCY WILSON: At My Best. Nancy Wilson (vocals); the Nancy Wilson Trio (instrumentals). *A Sleepin' Bee; Never Will I Marry; Dinah Washington Medley; Teach Me Tonight*; and five others. ASI SLP 2300 \$8.98.

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

Nancy Wilson never really seems to get off the ground here, although her audience—the album was recorded at a concert at Ambassador College in Pasadena—seems wildly enthusiastic. The only time Ms. Wilson sounds truly relaxed and communicative is during her three-song (*This Bitter Earth, What a Difference a Day Makes, and Salty Papa Blues*) tribute to Dinah Washington, in which she swings out in her strongest, earthiest style. Everything else has a distant, detached sound and feel to it. Technically, she's still very fine indeed, but the album is a disappointment. P.R.

COLLECTION

ONE-NIGHT STAND—A KEYBOARD EVENT. Eubie Blake, Ramsey Lewis, Bob James, Kenny Barron, George Duke, Sir Roland Hanna, Rodney Franklin, Charles Earland, Herbie Hancock (keyboards); Noel Pointer (violin); Earl Klugh (guitar); Arthur Blythe (alto saxophone); Hubert Laws (flute); Bobby Hutcherson (vibraphone, marimba); Ron Carter, Stanley Clarke (bass); other musicians. *Calypso; Winding River; Charleston Rag; Sunshower; The Princess; Mirabella; When Johnny Comes Marching Home; Pentagonal*; and

six others. COLUMBIA KC2 37100 two discs \$13.98, © K2T 37100 \$13.98.

Performance: **Crowd-pleasing**
Recording: **Good**

Someone at CBS had an all-American idea: give the public an overdose—assemble on one stage some of today's most commercial jazz keyboard artists and present a veritable orgy of ebony and ivory. The idea grew to include other instruments, and the result has now been released on a double album recorded at concerts in New York and Los Angeles. Whether the idea worked depends on one's perspective. It certainly appears to be a commercial success, but it leaves much to be desired on the artistic end. These often showy, more often slow-moving, and sometimes downright somniferous four sides might well have been cut down to two fairly interesting ones.

It all begins with lovable, indefatigable Eubie Blake playing his *Charleston Rag* for the umpteenth time. His fingers are remarkably nimble for a man nearing his hundredth year, but let's face it: the magic is now more in Blake's presence than his performance, and only the latter comes through on the disc. Things look up somewhat with two uncommonly listenable duets featuring Ramsey Lewis with, respectively, cellist Linda Sanfilippo and fellow pianist Sir Roland Hanna. Better still are the two dissimilar duets by Kenny Barron and Bobby Hutcherson that follow.

The album goes awry again when Earl Klugh, Noel Pointer, and Rodney Franklin—three men of proven talent—are joined by percussionist Manolo Badrena for two selections that sound like European café music caught at a crossroads and not knowing in which direction to go; it steps this way, then that, but gets nowhere. The audience loved it, however. The dual-organ rendition of *When Johnny Comes Marching Home* by George Duke and Charles Earland fails to get off the ground. Both men should listen to Rose Murphy's spirited 1962 version on United Artists. Bob James meanders a bit on his three selections, but he is a far better musician than most of his recordings indicate; he gets solid support here from Ron Carter and (on two of the tracks) Hubert Laws. A highlight of the album is the teamwork of alto saxophonist Arthur Blythe and Roland Hanna, but their single duet is the last good track.

Half of side four is taken up by a perfectly inane crowd-pleaser called *D.C.H.*, which stands for (George) Duke, (Stanley) Clarke, and (Herbie) Hancock. The selection features these three only, and I need say no more than that Hancock plays a "drum machine." For the big finish, six—count 'em—six concert grands were on stage at the same time. Hancock, Hanna, Lewis, Franklin, Duke, and James, their pianos neatly arranged three deep on two levels, dwarf Ron Carter and drummer Buddy Williams in *Hexagon*, an alleged composition by Jay Chattaway. Jay who? Jay Chattaway, the producer of this album. Just so we'll remember his name, he is the only one who gets composer credit on the sleeve. Oh, to have such power! Chattaway could have saved Columbia a lot of money and discriminating listeners a lot of time by simply hiring Earl Hines. *That* should be enough of a "keyboard event" for anyone. C.A.

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Classical Music Briefs



Philips Records

A PHILIPS recording of two-piano versions of Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* and *Concerto in F* by the French duo pianists **Katia and Marielle Labèque** has been a runaway best-seller in France. Philips' American branch planned to delay release until the Labèque sisters had played in the United States more often, but when it was discovered that some American stores were not waiting but were importing the album directly, the company decided to release it here in June.

About that time Katia Labèque was in the United States for a short vacation with jazz guitarist John McLaughlin, and we managed a quick interview with her between planes. "My sister and I made our American debut two years ago playing Luciano Berio's *Concerto for Two Pianos* with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, and we were re-engaged to come back and play the Bartók *Concerto for Two Pianos* with Zubin Mehta. We did that in February and were invited to return next year to perform with Michael Tilson Thomas; which we want to do

because he is a good friend, involved in all kinds of music."

Young, beautiful, and musically sophisticated, the Labèque sisters are at home with music of all kinds. Though classically trained, they have always been interested in jazz, and at the Paris Jazz Festival last fall Katia played a piece by Keith Jarrett. "Gershwin was perfect for us because his work lies somewhere between the classics and jazz," Katia said. "We had visited the United States and liked it, and our friends include many American musicians—such as the soprano Barbara Hendricks, the cellist Lynn Harrell, and the clarinetist Richard Stoltzman, with whom we often play chamber music—and they encouraged us to record Gershwin. My sister and I have just made a record of Brahms' *Hungarian Dances* and with Barbara Hendricks we are going to record an album of Gershwin songs that will be released in Europe in September."

Before making their first Gershwin album they listened to recordings of Billie Holiday,

John Coltrane, and Miles Davis to see how they performed Gershwin. "And we listened to Gershwin's own piano rolls and records, which were very helpful, especially with the tempos. When symphony orchestras play his music, they usually make it slow and heavy. He played it much faster."

Katia, the older of the sisters, describes herself as the more talkative and extroverted of the two and Marielle as quieter and more classical. This summer, while Marielle is in Europe playing sonatas with the violinist Augustin Dumay, Katia will be back in the United States with McLaughlin and his new band, playing not just acoustic piano, but synthesizer as well.

Mozart, Brahms, and Schumann continue to be very important to the Labèques, but Katia says, "There is not much future for a piano duo that plays only the classical repertoire, and that's not the best way to grow musically. I would love for John McLaughlin or Chick Corea to write new repertoire for us. Most managers have closed their minds to such ideas, but audiences are more receptive. In France with Gershwin and Scott Joplin we have attracted an audience that was unaccustomed to going to concerts, and we'd like to open a few more doors." —W.L.

IF there is a doctor in the house at American opera theaters or concert halls these days, chances are it is one of the star musicians. This year violinist **Itzhak Perlman** was awarded an honorary doctorate by Yale University, and soprano **Leontyne Price** was giv-

ing one by Harvard. New York Philharmonic conductor **Zubin Mehta** received one from Colgate University (Hamilton, N.Y.), and **Leonard Slatkin** of the St. Louis Symphony received two—one from Washington University and the other from the University of Missouri, both in St. Louis.

Soprano **Beverly Sills**, general director of the New York City Opera Company, paused in her preparations for a trip to China, where she was to give master classes, long enough to accept an honorary doctorate (her sixth) from Columbia University. After receiving her fifth from Colby College (Waterville, Maine), soprano **Roberta Peters**, who had already toured China, addressed the Congressional Arts Caucus in Washington urging continued federal support for performing-arts institutions and music education.

Soprano **Martina Arroyo**, a Hunter College alumna, received an honorary doctorate from her alma mater and delivered the graduation address. She began her speech to the graduates by saying, "If you think the last four years were rough, WAIT!"

Dr. Martina Arroyo



Nancy Elliott

Baritone **Sherrill Milnes** received an honorary doctorate from Westminster Choir College (Princeton, N.J.). Addressing the graduating class there, Dr. Milnes spoke of "the most virulent of all artistic diseases: musical snobbishness, that invidious self-righteousness that forgets the dignity and power of a mother's lullaby, a folk chant, a native dance, a gospel hymn . . . that forgets *all* music has dignity and emotional strength."

Other honorary doctorates included one by Columbia to octogenarian composer **Otto Luening** and those awarded by the New England Conservatory of Music to soprano **Phyllis Curtin**, composer **William Schuman**, violinist **Louis Krasner**, and **Jordan White-law**, the radio and television producer for the Boston Symphony Orchestra. □

AUSTRALIA has become a hotbed of global culture and entertainment. This season the Public Broadcasting Service had a provocative series on contemporary art, *The Shock of the New*, with Australian critic Robert Hughes as writer-narrator. Movie fans around the world are enjoying the current flowering of the Australian film industry, which has produced such pictures as *Breaker Mo-*

rant, an Academy Award nominee. And London Records has just taped John Gay's *The Beggar's Opera* (1728) in a new version prepared by Richard Bonyng and Douglas Gamley for the Australian Opera, which introduced it in Sydney and has since performed it on tour in other cities in Australia.

According to the Australian Opera's new general manager Patrick Veitch (until recently of the Metropolitan), "*The Beggar's Opera* rounds out our repertoire, which this season includes everything from Meyerbeer's *The Huguenots* to Britten's *The Rape of Lucretia*. Bonyng and Gamley's version presents *The Beggar's Opera* as though it were a Hollywood movie of the late Thirties. A delightful, tuneful work with forty-nine numbers, it's a real star vehicle that comes as close to a Broadway show as you can get on the operatic stage today."

London's stellar cast represents both the world of opera and Hollywood. In the recording, Lucy Lockit is sung by Australian soprano Dame Joan Sutherland. New Zealand soprano Kiri Te Kanawa is Polly Peachum, and U.S. basso James Morris is Macheath. Mrs. Peachum is played by Angela Lansbury, of Broadway and Hollywood. London hopes to have the records in stores before Christmas. □



Renata Scott and friend

THE assisted autobiography *Pavarotti, My Own Story* with William Wright (Doubleday \$14.95) probably contains no more fiction than most books by or about singers. The Italian tenor's undeniable charm comes through along with the large ego, and to keep either from overwhelming the reader the chapters in which **Luciano Pavarotti** tells his story are placed among interviews with his associates, as if to say, "But enough about me; how did you like my performance?"

In these other chapters his wife talks about Luciano's "veneration of women," and the Metropolitan Opera's assistant manager Joan Ingpen says, ". . . he is a nice man with his colleagues." These remarks have a somewhat hollow

ring to anyone who witnessed Pavarotti's constant efforts to upstage soprano **Judith Blegen** in the Met's performances of *L'Elisir d'Amore* this year. Further evidence of lack of generosity to colleagues is his failure to include in the book any mention of soprano **Renata Scott**, with whom he has had some of his most conspicuous successes in opera houses and on the TV screen.

As a companion to the autobiography, London Records has brought out the album "*Pavarotti, My Own Story*" (PAV 2007), a two-disc collection of arias and songs at the special price of \$17.96. All the selections have been previously released, but for anyone who doesn't own the original albums this one is a good buy. —W.L.

Disc and Tape Reviews

By RICHARD FREED • DAVID HALL • GEORGE JELLINEK • PAUL KRESH
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Ⓢ = stereo cassette

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

J. S. BACH: *Piano Transcriptions* (see MOZART)

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

BARBER: Four Excursions, Op. 20; Nocturne (Homage to John Field), Op. 33; Ballade, Op. 46; Piano Sonata, Op. 26. Angela Brownridge (piano). HYPERION A66016 \$15.98 (from Brilly Imports, 155 North San Vicente Boulevard, Beverly Hills, Calif. 90211).

Performance: **Persuasive**
Recording: **Crystalline**

Kenneth Dommett's annotation for this disc points out that these four works constitute the entirety of Barber's output for piano solo. Since they fit so comfortably on a sin-

gle disc, it is surprising that an American company didn't come up with the idea of so presenting them before the enterprising English Hyperion label did. The *Excursions* and the sonata, both from the 1940s, have been recorded several times, but I haven't come across a previous recording of the *Nocturne* (composed in 1959 for John Browning) or the *Ballade* (written just four years ago for the Van Cliburn International Piano Competition). I had never come across Angela Brownridge before either, but on the evidence here submitted she is a highly skilled and sensitive performer, especially attuned to the Barber idiom. Horowitz's premiere recording of the sonata (RCA ARM1-2952) has a unique power, but all four of Brownridge's performances are extremely persuasive. **R.F.**

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

BEETHOVEN: String Quartets, Op. 18, Nos. 1-6. Smetana Quartet. SUPRAPHON 1411 2731/3 three discs \$29.94 (from Qualiton Records, Ltd., 39-28 Crescent Street, Long Island City, N.Y. 11101).

Performance: **Outstanding**
Recording: **Rich and warm**

During the last few years the Smetana Quartet, whose admired 1965 recording of Beethoven's Op. 130 (with its original finale, the *Grosse Fuge*) reappeared recently on Quintessence PMC-7176, has been redoing all the Beethoven quartets in numerical order in a cycle produced jointly by Supraphon and Denon. Although Denon's digital recordings have been circulating for some

time, with all the quartets from Op. 18 through Op. 74 available now on that label, Supraphon is just getting around to releasing its analog recordings from the same sessions. Numerous felicities in these splendid performances might be cited, but the short of it is that I simply do not know of any others on records that appeal to me quite so strongly, either of Op. 18 as a whole or of the six quartets individually. The Supraphon recordings (which, according to the dates supplied, may have involved more takes than the Denon ones) are rich, warm, and well focused; Denon's offer a greater degree of transparency and superior surfaces. On either label, this set strikes me as essential to a chamber-music collection.

R.F.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

BEETHOVEN: *String Trios: E-flat Major, Op. 3; G Major, Op. 9, No. 1; D Major, Op. 9, No. 2; C Minor, Op. 9, No. 3. Serenade in D Major for Violin, Viola, and Cello, Op. 8; Serenade in D Major for Flute, Violin, and Viola, Op. 25.* Arthur Grumiaux (violin); Georges Janzer (viola); Eva Czako (cello); Maxence Larrieu (flute). PHILIPS 6770 159 three discs \$20.94, © 7699 159 \$13.96.

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

The foundation of chamber music is the string quartet; when other combinations are assembled they are usually grouped around the piano. As a result, string trios are rarely performed, and that is especially unfortunate because it denies us the pleasure of hearing Beethoven's string trios and serenades. Beethoven's earliest essays in chamber music include four string trios and two serenades that are all works of the utmost charm and skilled craftsmanship, with occasional foreshadowings of what was to come in the later quartets. It is a pleasure, then, to have them available in a single set in gracious performances.

Continuing the tradition established by Mozart and Haydn, Beethoven wrote trios for three equal players: the melodies, countermelodies, and accompanying figurations

are tossed back and forth with the delight of a game of badminton, engaging the listener by a series of everchanging textures. Only skillful chamber players can play such a game with accuracy and ease. Arthur Grumiaux and his colleagues are such skilled players, and their approach has just the lightness and grace these pieces require. Flexible tempos permit a bit of lingering to turn a phrase or to savor a dissonance, as well as urgency to create a climax or drive home a sequence. The players generally know what to stress and what to throw away. Occasionally the wrong passage gets thrown away or relaxation comes a bit before the music calls for it, but their suppleness is so refreshing that to cite chapter and verse would do them a great disservice. Another rewarding feature of these performances is the constant beauty of tone and the elegant phrasing. Minutiae aside, one would have to go far to hear chamber music as fine as that in this album. S.L.

CHERUBINI: *Requiem in D Minor.* Chorale du Brassus; Choeurs de la Radio Suisse Romande; Pro Arte de Lausanne; L'Orchestre de la Suisse Romande. Horst Stein cond. LONDON ● LDR 10034 \$10.98.

Performance: **Impressive, heartfelt**
Recording: **Very good**

Cherubini wrote his D Minor Requiem in 1836 when he was seventy-six years of age. It was to be sung at his own funeral, and, so that it would be liturgically proper, he scored it for men's voices only. This is serious stuff—no women, no solos, no brilliant orchestral effects, everything cast in an uncompromising Empire Classicism without the smallest concession to Romantic modernity. Small wonder that this music and its stern composer—as head of the Paris Conservatoire his very glance struck terror into the hearts of a generation of music students—were buried and forgotten as quickly as possible after Cherubini's death. French musicians breathed sighs of relief and went on to their operatic frivolities or Romantic excesses without feeling that Monsieur le Directeur was looking disapprovingly over their shoulders.

We don't have to worry about such things, and, in fact, Cherubini's late Classicism has a contemporary appeal for us. If he had been Viennese instead of a Frenchified Italian he would still be famous. We have recently had his C Minor Requiem from Philips and a Deutsche Grammophon reissue of a Czech recording of this same D Minor. This heartfelt performance from Switzerland—a place where many estimable recordings were made in earlier days—should help acquaint people with the very considerable beauties of this music. It is greybeard music, but of the most monumental sort. It will never be hugely popular, but it deserves to remain alive. E.S.

HAIJEFF: *Sonata for Violincello and Piano* (see ORNSTEIN)

HAYDN: *Cello Concerto in C Major (Hob. VIIb:1); Cello Concerto in D Major (Hob. VIIb:2).* Yo-Yo Ma (cello); English Chamber Orchestra. CBS M 36674 \$9.98, © MT 36674 \$9.98.

Performance: **Exquisite C Major**
Recording: **Well balanced**

Who really conducts these performances? No conductor is mentioned on the front of the jacket. On the back liner we find "José-Luis García, Conductor," but on the disc labels García gets only a parenthetical listing as "Leader," the British term for concertmaster. Whoever may be responsible, the soloist and orchestra are beautifully integrated in these performances, and one of the happy features about the recording itself is the splendidly natural balancing of the two elements. In too many recordings of one or both of these concertos the cellist seems to be in our laps while the orchestra might be back in another room; here the aural picture is extremely realistic. If it does not actually enhance our enjoyment of this pair of exceptionally stylish performances, it never gets in the way. The C Major is especially successful, exquisitely set forth from first bar to last with an abundance of warmth and wit as well as elegant phrasing and a rich, pure tone from the soloist that is

(Continued on page 95)

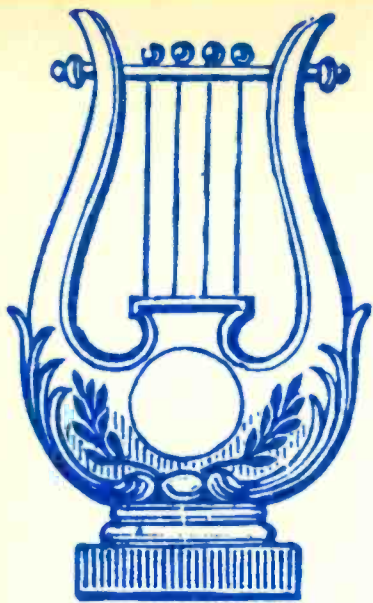
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a considerable pleasure in its own right. This half of the release deserves a "Special Merit" rating, but I'm a bit less persuaded by the performance of the D Major, which is again filled with beautiful playing but seems strangely underanimated—almost static in comparison with the enlivening and communicative presentation of the C Major. Yo-Yo Ma's beautiful tone and the handsome sonics may, however, tend to offset this effect for some listeners. In the same pairing, Rostropovich (Angel S-37193) shows more personality and the absurdly underrated László Varga, with Dorati conducting (Turnabout TV 34695), is as stylish as Ma, but neither is recorded as effectively. R.F.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

HAYDN: *The Seven Last Words of Christ; Salve Regina in G Minor.* Veronika Kincses (soprano); Klára Takács (contralto); György Korondy (tenor); József Gregor (bass); Budapest Chorus (in *Seven Last Words*); Hungarian State Orchestra, János Ferencsik cond. HUNGAROTON SLPX 12199-200 two discs \$19.98 (from Qualiton Records, Ltd., 39-28 Crescent Street, Long Island City, N.Y. 11101).

Performance: **Majestic**
Recording: **Thick**

Commissioned by the Cádiz Cathedral in Portugal for a three-hour Good Friday service, Haydn's *Seven Last Words* consists of an introduction, seven (!) adagios, and a final "earthquake" for orchestra. In 1787 the work was published in three versions: the original orchestral version, Haydn's own arrangement for string quartet, and a piano version that Haydn approved. On his way home from his last London sojourn, the composer heard a vocal version made by the local choirmaster of Passau and was so pleased with the idea that he obtained the score and reworked the vocal parts. It is this oratorio version that is recorded here. The *Salve Regina* was written in 1771; it is scored for four solo voices, string orchestra, and an obbligato organ (the organ part was supposedly played by Haydn himself).

The music in this album is somber to an extreme. The *Salve Regina*, dating from the early years of Haydn's *Sturm und Drang* period, is harmonically rich with an abundance of Neapolitan and augmented-sixth chords. The vocal lines are sinuous, and the organ's spun-out melodies add a special poignancy to the fabric. In *The Seven Last Words* we find a mature Haydn writing austere but with such formal and motivic inventiveness that the consecutive adagios sustain interest despite their uniform mood of lamentation. Haydn was justly proud of both works, and here is a rare opportunity to become familiar with them.

János Ferencsik's reading is appropriately sober and spacious. Confident of Haydn's ability to bring off such a long string of tragic gestures, he never once falls into the trap of trying to push a tempo or create a false climax. The orchestral playing is full and rich. The wind section is heard at its best in the incredible interlude between the oratorio's fourth and fifth "words," which is scored for flute, oboes, clarinets, bassoons, contrabassoons, horns, and trombones.

The choral singing is equally lush. The Budapest group's sound is not particularly apt for polyphony, but it is excellent for the solid homophony that dominates the oratorio. Although none of the soloists is outstanding, they make a strong quartet and provide a dramatic contrast to the larger orchestral and choral forces. Veronika Kincses' soprano voice is well focused and cuts through the web of sound impressively. The *Salve Regina* depends entirely on this solo quartet, and they acquit themselves very well. Though the recorded sound could be better, musically this is a fine album that is well worth acquiring. S.L.

RECORDINGS OF SPECIAL MERIT

HAYDN: *Symphony No. 82, in C Major ("The Bear"); Symphony No. 83, in G Minor ("The Hen").* Collegium Aureum, Franz Josef Maier concertmaster. PRO-ARTE PAL-1001 \$9.98, © PAC-1001 \$9.98.

HAYDN: *Symphony No. 94, in G Major ("Surprise"); Symphony No. 103, in E-flat*

Major ("Drumroll"). Collegium Aureum, Franz Josef Maier concertmaster. PRO-ARTE PAL-1005 \$9.98, © PAC-1005 \$9.98.

MOZART: *Symphony No. 41, in C Major (K. 551, "Jupiter"); Rondo in C Major for Violin and Orchestra (K. 373).* Collegium Aureum, Franz Josef Maier concertmaster. PRO-ARTE PAL-1009 \$9.98, © PAC-1009 \$9.98.

Performances: **Excellent**
Recordings: **Fine**

MOZART: *Symphony No. 36, in C Major (K. 425, "Linz"); Symphony No. 39, in E-flat Major (K. 543).* Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields, Neville Marriner cond. PHILIPS 9500 653 \$9.98, © 7300 756 \$9.98.

Performance: **Wonderful**
Recording: **Superb**

The Collegium Aureum has probably come as close as possible to reproducing the sound and make-up of the late-Classical orchestra that Mozart and Haydn used for grand occasions. The ensemble numbers thirty: twenty strings and ten winds. The instruments are all originals or faithful copies of those used at the time, and their sound is remarkable for its clarity and mellowness. The "white" sound of strings played with little or no vibrato allows the winds to penetrate without being overpowering. In contrast to the homogenized modern orchestral sound, each utterance of the winds is an important commentary that adds richness and inner verve to the overall sonority. And when winds double a string passage, a very characteristic technique in this period, the violins absorb the sound of an oboe or flute and create thereby a new color. Hearing the great symphonies of Mozart and Haydn played by this orchestra sheds new light on the music. Every note takes on meaning; nothing is thrown away.

The Collegium Aureum's performances here are solid and straightforward. The detailed articulation so essential to the Classical style comes naturally to them. The expression, too, is a result of the orchestration

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Jessye Norman's "Nuits d'Été"

A SPLENDID new Philips disc represents Sir Colin Davis' second time around with the beautiful Berlioz cycle *Les Nuits d'Été*. In his first recorded version (Philips 6500 009), the songs were distributed among several interpreters, male and female, in an effort to follow textual logic as

well as adhere to the composer's originally indicated tonalities. But sound musicological intentions do not necessarily produce ideal performances. As was proven before with such outstanding interpreters as Eleanor Steber, Victoria de los Angeles, and Régine Crespin, the music glows brighter when the same singer illuminates the entire text.

Now, with the same sensitivity to tonal coloring and again leading the London Symphony Orchestra with similarly leisurely pacing, Davis gives us a performance that benefits from soprano Jessye Norman's lustrous tones. Miss Norman's voice is a rare instrument blessed with extraordinary richness in the midrange. She produces some ravishing vocal effects here, such as her rise to the climax in the first stanza of *Le Spectre de la Rose* and the voluptuously warm realization of *Sur les Lagunes*.

THE disc follows the example of London OS 25821 (Crespin/Ansermet) and Angel 36505 (Baker/Barbirolli) in coupling the Berlioz cycle with Ravel's languidly oriental *Shéhérazade*. To the latter, Miss Norman lends an element of earthy sensuality I personally welcome, though others may favor a more ethereal approach. There are spots, particularly on the Berlioz side, where the singer's intonation is dubious, but I find that both cycles are idiomatically rendered, lushly vocalized, and captured in a luxuriant tonal ambiance.

—George Jellinek

BERLIOZ: *Les Nuits d'Été*. RAVEL: *Shéhérazade*. Jessye Norman (soprano); London Symphony Orchestra, Sir Colin Davis cond. PHILIPS 9500 783 \$9.98, © 7300 857 \$9.98.

and seems to happen by itself. Everything, in fact, sounds with an ease and simplicity that are of the essence of the Classical language. This is newly authentic Mozart and Haydn.

Neville Marriner's reading of two Mozart symphonies has all the excellence we have come to expect from his work with the Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields. I cannot help noticing, however, how fat and thick the modern orchestra sounds after hearing the lucid sonorities of the Collegium Aureum. The comparison is unfair, perhaps, but facts are facts. Music played on the instruments for which it was written simply sounds better, and given top performances on both period and modern instruments, those of the period will win out. These four discs all offer top performances and thus afford the listener the chance to judge for himself. S.L.

JANÁČEK: *Slavonic Mass* (see *Best of the Month*, page 67)

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

MOZART: *Fantasia in C Minor* (K. 396); *Sonata in C Major* (K. 545); *Rondo in A Minor* (K. 511). J. S. **BACH: *Jesu, Joy of***

Man's Desiring; Nun Komm der Heiden Heiland; Wachet Auf, Ruft Uns die Stimme; Komm, Süßter Tod. Thomas Richner (piano). TOWERHILL T-1011 \$8.98.

Performance: **Beautiful**
Recording: **Fine**

In days gone by, our piano teacher always gave an annual Saturday recital at New York's Town Hall. It was a wonderful affair attended by an admiring group of students and friends, and we heard all our favorite pieces played the way we had learned they should be played. Thomas Richner's annual recital was always eagerly anticipated, by his own students and others, because of his Mozart. Several times, in fact, Richner favored us with an all-Mozart program. It is a long-overdue pleasure, then, to have on records a side of this artist's Mozart. He plays the music modestly and delicately. The phrases are long and well molded in terms of both dynamics and time. The melodic embroidery of the A Minor Rondo is especially delicious, and Richner has managed to find a single tempo that fits the entire piece—a tough order.

With the current rage for historical authenticity, piano transcriptions of Bach organ works seem to have fallen by the way.

Richner proves their validity by his controlled balance on a magnificent Bösendorfer Imperial concert grand with extension bass notes. In all fairness to Richner's Mozart, he really ought to treat us to a full disc of Bach on this instrument. The transcriptions played here are by Myra Hess (*Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring*), Ferruccio Busoni (*Wachet Auf*), and Richner himself (*Komm, Süßter Tod*), the last of which actually uses those extension bass notes. The arrangement of *Nun Komm der Heiden Heiland* is uncredited. S.L.

MOZART: *Symphonies Nos. 36, 39, and 41; Rondo in C Major* (see HAYDN)

ORNSTEIN: *String Quartet No. 3*. New Boston Quartet. SERENUS SRS 12089 \$6.98.

ORNSTEIN: *Six Preludes for Violoncello and Piano*. HAIEFF: ***Sonata for Violoncello and Piano*.** Italo Babini (cello); Elizabeth Sawyer Parisot (piano). SERENUS SRS 12090 \$6.98.

Performances: **Good**
Recordings: **Good**

Brownsville, Texas, is a place best known to ornithologists and birders who go there to find Mexican species that manage to elude the border patrol and slip across the Rio Grande. Leo Ornstein, a stray bird of a different feather, was also rediscovered there not too long ago. A specimen of a type of wild life long presumed extinct, Ornstein was born in Russia in 1892, emigrated with his family to the Lower East Side of New York in 1907, and made his debut as a pianist in 1911 and as a futurist composer in 1913. Armed with such items as *Danse Sauvage* and *Suicide in an Airplane*, he quickly became known as the "Wild Man of Music." Although his avant-garde performance career hardly outlasted World War I (he became a teacher and founded a school of music in Philadelphia), his wild-man reputation stuck and his later, more conservative music was all but ignored. Eventually Ornstein disappeared from view altogether—until the recent revival of early American avant-gardism prompted another look at his early work. And then came the astonishing news that the man was alive and well and composing amid the green jays and chachalacas of southernmost Texas!

The String Quartet No. 3 was written in 1976 when Ornstein was eighty-four. It is neither an avant-garde piece in his early style nor a neo-Romantic work in the mood of his later compositions, but something of a synthesis of the two. It is a striking, intense work, difficult to perform and not easy to listen to, but it has its rewards, and it is capably performed by the New Boston Quartet. Ornstein's Six Preludes for Cello and Piano apparently date from the late Twenties or early Thirties. Their profile, quite neo-Romantic, is sharply defined and original; this colorful music ought to appeal to cellists looking for fresh repertoire.

Alexei Haieff, another Russian-American composer of note, was never regarded as a wild man; his music is, in fact, witty and urbane. His Cello Sonata, written in 1963 for Zara Nelsova, is dedicated to the memory of Francis Poulenc—with whose music it shares qualities of sophisticated

simplicity. It is a delight. The cello works are well played by the Brazilian cellist Italo Babini with pianist Elizabeth Sawyer Parisot (wife of another Brazilian cellist, Aldo Parisot). The recorded sound on both discs is acceptable. The editing and production leave something to be desired, but the usual contemporary-music-recording handicapping should be applied. E.S.

SCHUBERT: *Variations for Flute and Piano* (see SCHUMANN)

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

SCHUMAN: *In Sweet Music*. Rosalind Rees (soprano); Orpheus Trio. *The Young Dead Soldiers*. Rosalind Rees (soprano); Robin Graham (horn); White Mountains Festival Orchestra, Gerard Schwarz cond. *Time to the Old*. Rosalind Rees (soprano); Thomas Muraco (piano). COMPOSERS RECORDINGS, INC. SD 439 \$7.98.

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

William Schuman, now seventy, has an impressive catalog of big works behind him as well as a distinguished career as a musical administrator (he is president emeritus of both the Juilliard School and the Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts). Through the years, though, he has not written many songs for solo voice, which he attributes to the difficulty of finding appropriate texts that appealed to him. He has certainly found some now, and while his writing for the voice is never as felicitous as Ned Rorem's or Samuel Barber's, the recent pieces assembled for this unusual album recorded under his supervision do, somehow, sound more inspired than many of his major symphonic and choral works, which are always impressively crafted but only occasionally take fire.

In Sweet Music, a "serenade on a setting of Shakespeare" based on the poem every schoolboy used to learn about how "Orpheus with his lute" made the very trees bow down when he sang, is an ambitious affair for soprano, flute, viola, and harp that uses the voice in fresh and unusual ways, especially in wordless solo passages of supple lyrical splendor. Derived from incidental music Schuman wrote for *Henry VIII* in 1944, it is certainly one of his most persuasive pieces, and Rosalind Rees, with polished accompaniment from a trio of first-rate instrumentalists, makes the most of its possibilities.

The Young Dead Soldiers, with a text by Archibald MacLeish, is a "lamentation" for soprano, French horn, eight woodwinds, and nine strings. It is a far more austere accomplishment, culminating in the haunting words from beyond the grave of the men in uniform, "Remember us." The use of the horn is reminiscent of Benjamin Britten's in his *Serenade for Tenor, Horn, and Strings*, but the style is far closer to atonality. The effect of the work is—no doubt intentionally—quite chilling. More pleasantly affecting are the three settings of sentimental poems by MacLeish about the elderly in *Time to the Old*, a cycle that Schuman wrote for its performer here, Rosalind Rees. She sings it touchingly, accompanied by the same pianist, Thomas Muraco, as when she gave the premiere in New York on May 19,

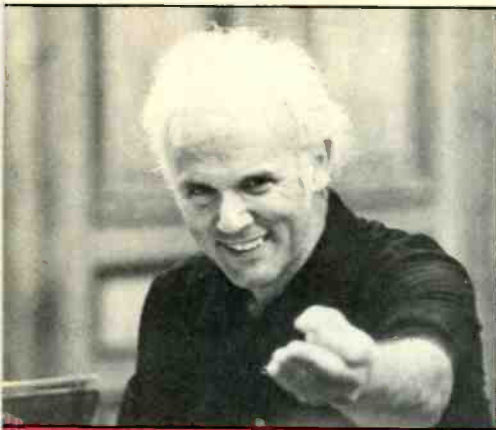
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Gerard Louceff/Musical Heritage Society

Conductor Michel Corboz

Monteverdi Madrigals

By 1638, when Claudio Monteverdi, then seventy-one, published his gargantuan Eighth Book of Madrigals (referred to as "Madrigals of Love and War"), the term "madrigal" had become a catch-all for any sort of vocal music with or without instrumental accompaniment. The range of Book VIII is tremendous, from duets and trios with continuo to full-scale choral works with orchestra and elaborate dramatic cantatas. In short, the Eighth Book virtually sums up Monteverdi's entire creative work, and it is perhaps one of the greatest artistic achievements of the seventeenth century.

Philips has now released a sumptuous-sounding three-disc recording of the complete Eighth Book performed by some of England's finest singers and instrumentalists under the direction of Raymond Leppard. Those who are comfortable with Leppard's approach to early seventeenth-century opera, as in his recent recording of Monteverdi's *Il Ritorno d'Ulisse* (see review in the April issue), will feel right at home with this release. The music is belted out in a virtuoso style with all the sonorities and gestures of nineteenth-century Italian opera. While this may be thrilling for those who do not want to get too far away from Verdi and Puccini, I find that the overblown performance manner does a great deal of damage to Monteverdi's intimate chamber style. Luigi Alva and Ryland Davies, for example, sing magnificently, but much of the counterpoint and declamation in their parts is lost in the heroic blustering. There is no proper blend, and a harpsichord continuo is simply unable to support such vocal sonorities. The choral singing is lush, but too much detail is lost. Only in the cantata *Il Ballo della Ingrate*, sensitively sung by Heather Harper, Lillian Watson, and Stafford Dean, is there a proper emphasis on declamation and word coloration.

Moreover, although the jacket notes are in three languages, the texts themselves are supplied only in Italian. The essence of

Monteverdi's genius is his approach to the word and its meaning, not just its sound. The lack of translations is a serious shortcoming in such a de luxe presentation.

I found the performances generally much more satisfying on a two-disc set of assorted Monteverdi madrigals from the Musical Heritage Society, the second volume in a projected complete series. The singing, under the direction of Michel Corboz, is lighter and clearer than on the Philips recording, the textures are transparent, and one can hear more of the musical detail. The male ensemble singing, especially that of tenors Olivier Dufour and John Elwes, is a model of good style. A heroic effect is created by precision and nuance rather than by *ye olde can bello*.

Finally, a Bis recording of a *cappella* works by Monteverdi and his contemporaries sung by the Chamber Choir Camerata of Copenhagen, under the direction of Per Enevold, seems rather tame and colorless compared with both the Philips and MHS releases. The singing is certainly pretty, but the chorus lacks rhythmic precision and clear diction. The performances are what one might expect of a rather good college glee club.

—Stoddard Lincoln

MONTEVERDI: Madrigals, Book VIII (Madrigali Guerrieri et Amorosi). Sheila Armstrong, Angela Bostock, Yvonne Fuller, Heather Harper, Anne Howells, Lillian Watson (sopranos); Alfreda Hodgson (mezzo-soprano); Anne Collins (contralto); Luigi Alva, Ryland Davies, Alexander Oliver, Robert Tear, John Wakefield (tenors); Stafford Dean, Clifford Grant (basses); members of the Glyndebourne Chorus and the Ambrosian Singers; Raymond Leppard (harpsichord); Robert Spencer (lute); Osian Ellis (harp); English Chamber Orchestra, Raymond Leppard cond. PHILIPS 6768 175 three discs \$29.94.

MONTEVERDI: Madrigals. Jennifer Smith, Wally Staempfli (sopranos); Nicole Rossier (mezzo-soprano); Hanna Schaer (contralto); Olivier Dufour, John Elwes (tenors); Philippe Huttenlocher (baritone); Michel Brodard (bass); Catherine Einsenhoffer (harp); Jürg Hübscher (lute); Marçal Cervera (viola da gamba); Christiane Jaccottet (harpsichord); Philippe Corboz (organ); Vocal Ensemble and Chamber Orchestra of Lausanne, Michel Corboz cond. MUSICAL HERITAGE SOCIETY MHS 824283 two discs \$13.90 (plus \$1.25 postage and handling charge from the Musical Heritage Society, 14 Park Road, Tinton Falls, N.J. 07724).

MONTEVERDI: Lamento della Ninfa; Lamento d'Arianna. WEELKES: *Hark All Ye Lovely Saints.* BENNET: *Weep, O Mine Eyes.* DOWLAND: *A Shepherd in the Shade.* SANDRIN: *Douce Memoire.* CLEMENS NON PAPA: *Iuvons Beau Lieu.* JANEQUIN: *Le Chant des Oyseaux; Au Joli Jeu.* SERMISY: *Languir Me Fais.* PASSEREAU: *Il Est Bel et Bon.* Chamber Choir Camerata of Copenhagen, Per Enevold cond. Bis LP-148 \$10.98 (from Quality Records, Ltd., 39-28 Crescent Street, Long Island City, N.Y. 11101).

1980. As with other recent albums from CRI, the recorded sound is perfectly brilliant and the surfaces are almost uncannily silent. P.K.

SCHUMANN: Piano Quartet in E-flat Major, Op. 47. Jaime Laredo (violin); Walter Trampler (viola); Leslie Parnas (cello); Richard Goode (piano). **SCHUBERT: Variations for Flute and Piano (D. 802).** Paula Robison (flute); Richard Goode (piano). MUSICMASTERS MM 20006 \$8.98, © MMC 40006 \$8.98.

Performance: **Outstanding Schumann**
Recording: **Excellent**

This is the first release to reach me on this new label, which represents the Musical Heritage Society's entry into retail stores. It inaugurates a series of recordings by the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center and shows a great deal of loving care in both the musical and technical aspects of the production. I don't think I've heard a more persuasive performance of the Schumann quartet than this one; it is fiery and warm-hearted in just the right proportions, with beautiful individual contributions and exceptional integration of the four players. Leslie Parnas' solo at the start of the slow movement will melt the hardest heart, and the momentum throughout the work seems as natural as breathing. The sound itself is also agreeably warm, well balanced, and unusually "live." For Schubert's somewhat less winsome variations on the song *Trock'ne Blumen* (from his cycle *Die Schöne Müllerin*), I'm afraid I've been spoiled by the old Archiv recording in which Hans-Martin Linde played a wooden flute and Alfons Kontarsky accompanied him on an 1838 *Hammerflügel*; but that disc (which also included Klaus Störck playing an actual arpeggiated in Schubert's sonata for that instrument) is not available now, and Robison and Goode do about as much as can be done with this sprawling piece. If the coupling looks attractive, or if you're simply after an outstanding account of the Schumann Piano Quartet, you can count on this disc. R.F.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

SCHUMANN: Three Romances, Op. 94; Abendlied, Op. 85, No. 12; Adagio and Allegro in A-flat Major, Op. 70; Fantasiestücke, Op. 73; Fünf Stücke im Volkston, Op. 102, Nos. 2, 3, and 4. Heinz Holliger (oboe, oboe d'amore); Alfred Brendel (piano). PHILIPS 9500 740 \$9.98, © 7300 847 \$9.98.

Performance: **Virtuosic**
Recording: **Lifelike**

Schumann didn't really write this much for oboe; all that links these works together in his catalog is the simple circumstance of his having written them all in the same year, 1849. Only the Op. 94 Romances were actually composed for oboe. The Adagio and Allegro was written for horn, the Op. 73 *Fantasiestücke* for clarinet, and the *Fünf Stücke im Volkston* for cello, and the *Abendlied*, played here in an arrangement by Joachim, was the concluding number in a set of twelve piano duets. Schumann did, however, indicate substitutions for his original instrumentation in most of these works, and Heinz Holliger makes an eloquent case

for all of them as parts of his repertoire—most especially the Op. 73 *Fantasiestücke*, which (as Philips neglects to note on its jacket or label) he plays on the oboe d'amore, and the *Abendlied*, which is much more effective in this setting than in Schumann's original one. Personally, I feel the oboe is less successful than the horn and cello, respectively, in Opp. 70 and 102, but doubts, reservations, etc. tend to vanish in the face of Holliger's and Alfred Brendel's superb playing and sensitive response both to the music and to each other throughout this program. Perhaps it is not for everyone, but it is for lovers of Schumann. *R.F.*

JOHANN STRAUSS II: Kaiserwalzer, Op. 437 (arr. Schoenberg); Rosen aus dem Suden, Op. 388 (arr. Schoenberg); Wein, Weib und Gesang, Op. 333 (arr. Berg); Schatzwalzer, Op. 418 (arr. Webern). Ensemble 13, Baden-Baden, Manfred Reichert cond. PRO ARTE PAL-1011 \$9.98.

Performance: **With feeling**
Recording: **Good**

This disc offers precisely the same selection as that by the Boston Symphony Chamber Players (Deutsche Grammophon 2530 977) reviewed here in December 1979. Three of these arrangements, along with a Strauss/Schoenberg *Lagunenwalzer* (still not in the catalog—perhaps the manuscript has not been recovered), were made in an attempt to raise money for Schoenberg's Society for Private Musical Performance in 1921. A benefit concert was given, and the manuscripts were auctioned off after the concert. The waltzes were scored for string quartet, piano, and harmonium, and some exceedingly fine musicians devoted twenty-five hours of rehearsal time to four waltzes. The *Kaiserwalzer* (*Emperor Waltz*) was a later (1925) transcription for flute, clarinet, piano, and string quartet.

Though what emerges from this Pro Arte disc no more implies twenty-five hours of rehearsal than the other one, it is much preferable to the DG release. There is here, at least, the feeling of Vienna, the lilt, the *Luftpausen*, the proper setting off of new themes and new tempos. In addition, the balance on the Baden-Baden group's *Emperor Waltz*, if less even, is more musical. The playing is not as meticulous as that of the Boston players, but the spirit is there, and the recording is quite good if a little overblown in the attempt to make a small ensemble sound large. —*James Goodfriend*

RECORDINGS OF SPECIAL MERIT

TCHAIKOVSKY: Trio in A Minor, Op. 50. Vladimir Ashkenazy (piano); Itzhak Perlman (violin); Lynn Harrell (cello). ANGEL SZ-37678 \$9.98.

Performance: **Uncut and impassioned**
Recording: **Generally good**

TCHAIKOVSKY: Trio in A Minor, Op. 50. Mirecourt Trio. GRAND PRIX GP 9006 \$8.98 (from the German News Co., Inc., 220 East 86th Street, New York, N.Y. 10028).

Performance: **Brilliant, but cut**
Recording: **Bright, spacious**

Tchaikovsky dedicated his A Minor Trio "to the memory of a great artist," the pi-

anist Nicholas Rubinstein, who had died suddenly in March 1881. Contemporary with the Second Piano Concerto, it is one of the most unusual works of its kind because of both its long playing time (nearly fifty minutes when performed without cuts) and its unconventional structure. The second movement is altogether unique, consisting of eleven variations—many of the kind associated with ballet—plus a lengthy and elaborate finale with coda.

The work's special character may explain why the more successful recordings of it over the years have been by musicians better known as celebrated solo virtuosos rather than by established chamber ensembles. Certainly Angel's team of Vladimir Ashkenazy, Itzhak Perlman, and Lynn Harrell, virtuosos all, put the music across as well as I have ever heard it done. Passionate conviction is the hallmark of their uncut reading, and the intimate ambiance of the recorded sound befits their broodingly emotional approach.

For those who find the uncut score too much of a good thing, the recording by the West Coast-based Mirecourt Trio, with cuts sanctioned by the composer, also, I think, surpasses its predecessors, though the character of both the performance and the recorded sound is quite different from that of the Ashkenazy/Perlman/Harrell disc. The Mirecourt's reading is essentially dramatic, highly colored, and outer directed, and the sonics complement this approach. The sound is very bright, perhaps a trifle overly reverberant, and with quite a wide stereo "stage."

The differences in details of balance and coloring between these two recorded performances point up the inherent difficulty of recording this music, which at times seems to call for an orchestral canvas. In places the Mirecourt Trio's reading seems to have something of an edge in realizing the coloristic detail, but I think the Angel disc has a slight edge stylistically. In any case, comparison with earlier recordings of the work shows both new releases to be clearly superior. Both companies, however, need to check their jacket copy more carefully: Ashkenazy does not play the cello nor Harrell the piano, and Nicholas, like Anton and Arthur, spelled his name "Rubinstein," not "Rubenstein." *D.H.*

VERDI: La Traviata. Joan Sutherland (soprano), Violetta Valéry; Luciano Pavarotti (tenor), Alfredo Germont; Matteo Manuguerra (baritone), Giorgio Germont; Della Jones (mezzo-soprano), Flora Bervoix; Marjon Lambrinks (soprano), Annina; Alexander Oliver (tenor), Gastone; Jonathan Summers (baritone), Doupoul; John Tomlinson (bass), D'Obigny; Giorgio Tadeo (bass), Dottore Grenvil; others. London Opera Chorus; National Philharmonic Orchestra, Richard Bonynge cond. LONDON LDR 73002 three discs \$32.94.

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

There are moments in this *Traviata* (the Violetta-Germont scene and parts of the last act) that bear comparison with the best on records. The exceptionally silent surfaces of the discs and generally pleasurable overall sound are also helpful. But the set leaves me with the impression that it will

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Schubert's Lovable F Major Octet

FEW masterworks of the stature of the Schubert Octet are so downright lovable, and fewer still, perhaps, have been so fortunate in their recordings. All five stereo versions that were available before the release of the Vienna Chamber Ensemble's new one on Deutsche Grammophon are

more than good; those by the Melos Ensemble (Angel S-36529), the New Vienna Octet (London STS 15436), and the Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields' Chamber Ensemble (Philips 9500 400) are so satisfying that it hardly matters which of them one might choose—unless you happen to care about repeats in the fourth-movement variations, which the Academy players omit. But the affectionate, joyous new performance (with repeats taken) seems the closest yet to the Schubertian ideal; it is so extraordinarily persuasive one might think that the musicians came together specifically and solely to perform this work. (Except for second violinist Klaus Maetzel, who holds the same position in the Alban Berg Quartet, the members of the Vienna Chamber Ensemble, like those of the "old" and New Vienna Octets before them, come from the Vienna Philharmonic, among them the orchestra's concertmaster, principal viola, and principal clarinet.) The comfortable unanimity, the balance of elegance, warmth, and spontaneity, the unselfconscious enlivening of every phrase, and the extremely lifelike recording add up to something quite exceptional. No one who already owns one of the earlier recordings cited should be unhappy with it, but if you are shopping for a recording of this work now, this latest one is surely the one to go for.

—Richard Freed

SCHUBERT: Octet in F Major, Op. 166 (D. 803). Vienna Chamber Ensemble. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2531 278 \$9.98, © 3301 278 \$9.98.

please only the uncritical fans of the two superstars.

Joan Sutherland can still produce beautiful sounds with her amazing technique virtually unimpaired, though the top notes no longer soar without some effort. But she is not a truly involved and believable Violetta, and her vocal mannerisms—indistinct pronunciation, sliding into notes instead of cleanly attacking them, lagging behind the beat—have not become more endearing through familiarity. Luciano Pavarotti sounds somewhat uncomfortable in the early scenes and cannot summon a rich enough sound for the big Renunciation Scene in Act II. He finds himself in "*Dei miei bollenti spiriti*" and flings out a healthy high C in its *cabaletta*, but his overall achievement is only routine by Pavarotti standards. Alone among the three principals, Matteo Manuguerra sings with consistent refinement, observing the many helpful and specific nuances Verdi carefully notated in the score.

With an excellent orchestra at his disposal, Richard Bonyngé conducts the two Preludes sensitively, but he cannot resist the temptation—in common with many other "modern" conductors—to rush the ensembles to the point where the singers are unable to phrase with clarity, meaning, and precision. When it comes to the principals, Bonyngé is at times *too* considerate. As an off-stage Alfredo, Pavarotti is permitted to

interpolate an unwritten high D-flat in "*Sempre libera*," to which Sutherland retaliates with excessive embroideries, and the whole thing deteriorates into a singing contest.

The recording is absolutely complete, with second verses unfaithfully (and, in my view, unnecessarily) supplied. This is not a "bad" performance, but neither is it a particularly idiomatic one, and it is certainly less than we would expect from such highly touted stars. In their own different ways, the Angel (3910), Deutsche Grammophon (2707 103), and RCA (LSC-6154) sets are all preferable.

G.J.

WAGNER: Parsifal (see Best of the Month, page 66)

COLLECTION

ELLY AMELING: Think on Me. Scott: Think on Me. Weckerlin: Tambourin. Vaughan Williams: Silent Noon. Dvořák: Als die Alte Mutter. Liszt: Es Muss ein Wunderbares Sein. Brahms: Mein Mädels Hat einen Rosenmund. Wagner: Träume. Granados: El Majo Discreto. Guastavino: La Rosa y el Sauce. Nin: Paño Murciano. Montsalvatge: Cançion de Cuna para Dormir un Negro. Turina: Las Locas por Amor. Poulenc: Les Chemins de l'Amour. Hahn: Le Rossignol des Lilas. Gershwin: By Strauss. Elly Ameling (soprano); Dalton

Baldwin (piano). CBS M 36682 \$9.98, © MT 36682 \$9.98.

Performance: **Intimate and charming**
Recording: **Very good**

The listing above speaks for the range of this program. From a sentimental old Scottish air to deftly vitriolic Gershwin, from Wagner to Poulenc, we are treated to singing of high polish and expertise in five languages. According to the subtitle, these are Elly Ameling's "Personal Favorites," and I am sure you'll find some of yours too in this likable sequence of sixteen songs. None calls for spectacular singing, and all are delivered with the artless, natural charm that characterizes Miss Ameling's work. Her mastery of all the languages and styles is most impressive, and her diction is exemplary. What else can I say? This is not so much a "recital" as pleasant and intimate entertainment for all seasons. Dalton Baldwin performs with his usual excellence.

G.J.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

CAROLE BOGARD: Songs by Le Groupe des Six. Poulenc: Poèmes de Ronsard (Attributs, Le Tombeau, Air Champêtre); Hier; Chanson Bretonne; La Petite Servante. Honegger: Clotilde; Le Delphinium; Les Cloches. Milhaud: Trois Poèmes de Jean Cocteau; L'Aurore. Durey: La Boule de Neige; La Métempsychose; La Grenade. Tailleferre: Six Chansons Françaises. Auric: Cinq Chansons de Lise Hirtz; Primitifs. Carole Bogard (soprano); John Moriarty (piano). CAMBRIDGE CRS 2777 \$8.98.

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

There are no fewer than twenty-eight songs on this disc, but there is no list of titles on the jacket; you have to go through the eight-page text insert to find out what is performed, which means you don't find out until you buy the album. This is regrettable because it might deter some people from investing in what proves to be an enchanting release. Indeed, just going through the texts—verses by Ronsard, Apollinaire, Max Jacob, Cocteau, and so on—is a lovely experience, one that seems to promise what the music and the performances recorded here in fact fulfill. How fresh all the material seems, first of all. Only the three songs from Poulenc's *Poèmes de Ronsard* are likely to be at all familiar to many listeners. Poulenc occupies half of the first side, the rest of which is shared by the other members of *Les Six's* big three, Milhaud and Honegger. But it was to side two that I found myself returning more. Although Germaine Tailleferre's *Ballade* for piano and orchestra has been available for the last year or so on Turnabout TV 34754, her music and that of the late Louis Durey are generally heard only in the context of *Les Six*; pity, but that makes this sampler all the more welcome. Durey's settings of three Petronius texts and Tailleferre's of French verses spanning the fifteenth to eighteenth centuries are perhaps the most charming components of this charming collection. But all the material reflects the imaginativeness and thorough knowledge of the repertoire and its style that went into the making of this rec-

ord. The programming, the fine performances, the realistic sound, and the thoughtful documentation add up to a delightful package that should exert strong appeal even for listeners not ordinarily attracted to French song recitals. R.F.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

THE CANADIAN BRASS: *The Village Band. Sousa: A Sousa Collection. Foster: A Stephen Foster Treasury. Verdi: La Traviata: Sempre Libera. Suppé: Poet and Peasant Overture. Trad.: Carnival of Venice; The War Between the States (Civil War Songs). Puccini: La Bohème: Musetta's Waltz. Rimsky-Korsakov: Tsar Saltan: The Flight of the Bumblebee. Rossini: The Barber of Seville: Largo al Factotum. R. Strauss: Allerseelen.* The Canadian Brass. RCA • ATCI-3924 \$15.98, © ATK1-3924 \$15.98.

Performance: **Delicious**
Recording: **Super**

If any real "village band" ever had it so good sonically or was able to turn chestnuts into the musical marvels heard in this album of "nostalgic recollection" by the Canadian Brass, our parks would probably fill up again with the Sunday crowds that once thronged to hear such concerts. But this group of five of the world's best brass players can do what no ordinary bandstand group ever could, turning dross into gold in one number after another. Take their approach to the Rossini *Largo al Factotum*, always such a bore in its military garb for the bandstand. The Canadian group not only tosses the melody about to a fare-thee-well but adds a piquant comic touch when suddenly a voice cries "Figaro!" amid the sounding brasses. They take all sorts of liberties that would probably fall flat in less adroit hands, but even Rimsky's old bumblebee buzzes more bravely and acrobatically than I ever heard it. This is a box of musical bonbons in gleaming wrappers with toothsome surprises inside every one. And the digital recording makes them all even more delicious. P.K.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

MIRELLA FRENI AND RENATA SCOTTO: *Opera Duets. Mercadante: Le Due Illustri Rivali: Leggo già nel vostro cor. Bellini: Bianca e Fernando: Sorgi, o padre. Mozart: Le Nozze di Figaro: Canzonetta sull'aria. Bellini: Norma: Act II, Scene 1.* Renata Scotto, Mirella Freni (sopranos); National Philharmonic Orchestra, Leone Magiera and Lorenzo Anselmi cond. LONDON OS 26652 \$9.98, © OS5 26652 \$9.98.

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

What a marvelous idea: two rival divas sharing the same disc. It is difficult to see how such a plan would have worked twenty years ago with Callas and Tebaldi, however desirable the results might have been.

The results here are imperfect but never less than interesting. An entire side is given to the scene in *Norma* that begins with the monologue "Dormono entrambi" and ends with the thrilling conclusion of the duet "Mira o Norma." The bright tones of Mi-

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The Classical Guitar

Left to right: David Leisner,
Robert Secrist, Eliot Fisk



Peter Scheest

In eighteenth-century Europe there was not only the Spanish guitar but also a "Viennese guitar." Not that this latter was a different instrument. The "Viennese guitar" was mostly composer-performer Mauro Giuliani, who came to Vienna from his native Naples (a city that was long ruled by a Spanish court). Giuliani's style was High Classical; though we associate that kind of music making with Vienna, it was also Italian. Whatever its origins, it is charming and appealing to hear today.

A new Titanic disc by David Leisner offers Giuliani's best-known larger work, the Sonata in C Major, Op. 15, plus a set of variations. A Musical Heritage Society release by Robert Secrist features the same Giuliani sonata and his dramatic *Grande Overture*, Op. 61. The sonata is no deathless masterpiece, but it is well worth hearing. Both Leisner and Secrist are estimable younger players, but I prefer Secrist's broader, more virtuosic approach; he seems to make the music come more alive with effective phrasing, dynamics, technical wizardry, and panache. Leisner is perhaps more musically and musicologically careful, but there are awkwardnesses in his playing (let's face it—guitar virtuosity has not achieved the level that is the norm with more standard instruments).

Leisner pairs the two Giuliani works with a Hungarian Fantasy and several shorter pieces by the mid-nineteenth-century Viennese Johann Kaspar Mertz. He was a sort of Schubert of the guitar, and the music is pleasant stuff. Secrist's coupling consists of several pieces by Giuliani's great Spanish contemporary Fernando Sor. His études are still basic classical-guitar material; the Fantasia in C Minor is much more difficult—virtuosic guitar music intended for the Pa-

risian public (who adored Sor). I think the Giuliani is the stronger part of Secrist's album, but both sides are very well played, and the recordings are mellow and attractive sounding.

THE so-called "lute suites" of J. S. Bach—themselves at least partly transcriptions of other music—have become classical-guitar standards. For a Sound Environment recording, Sharon Isbin uses a version of the Suite in E Minor that was prepared by Rosalyn Tureck. Her performance not only offers all the notes of the original (most arrangements omit some of them) but also all the important embellishments and stylistic niceties; it is an excellent and musical job, excellently recorded too.

The other side of Isbin's disc holds brilliant performances of Benjamin Britten's powerful *Nocturnal*, a set of variations on a John Dowland song, and Leo Brouwer's *La Espiral Eterna*. Brouwer is a contemporary Cuban whose works are in a new-music mold but whose music has nevertheless had wide circulation in the guitar world. *La Espiral Eterna* is a very effective sonority piece. I commend this exceptional disc to the attention of guitar fanciers (though the two modern works are listed in the wrong order).

For the new Musicmasters label, Eliot Fisk—like Robert Secrist a faculty member of the Mannes School of Music in New York (Sharon Isbin teaches at the Manhattan School of Music and David Leisner at the New England Conservatory)—has put together a collection of Latin American guitar music that combines the well known (Manuel Ponce's twenty variations and fugue on the famous traditional *folia* tune) with some wonderful rediscoveries: light

music from Argentina, Paraguay, and Venezuela. The disc is most engaging and delightful—with the accent on *light*.

—Eric Salzman

GIULIANI: *Sonata in C Major, Op. 15; Variations, Op. 9.* **MERTZ:** *Fantaisie Hongroise, Op. 65, No. 1; Liebeslied, Op. 13, No. 4b; Kindermärchen, Op. 13, No. 8; Polacca, Op. 5, No. 3; Romanze, Op. 13, No. 1b; Tarantelle, Op. 13, No. 6.* David Leisner (guitar). TITANIC TI-46 \$9.

GIULIANI: *Sonata in C Major, Op. 15; Grande Overture, Op. 61.* **SOR:** *Fantasia in C Minor, Op. 7; Etude in E Minor, Op. 6, No. 11; Etude in G Major, Op. 29, No. 23; Etude in B-flat Major, Op. 29, No. 12.* Robert Secrist (guitar). MUSICAL HERITAGE SOCIETY MHS 4285 \$7.75, © MHC 6285 \$7.75 (plus \$1.60 postage and handling charge from the Musical Heritage Society, Inc., 14 Park Road, Tinton Falls, N.J. 07724).

J. S. BACH: *Lute Suite in E Minor (BWV 996).* **BRITTEN:** *Nocturnal.* **BROUWER:** *La Espiral Eterna.* Sharon Isbin (guitar). SOUND ENVIRONMENT TR-1013 \$9.98 (from the Sound Environment Corp., 5421 South 84th Street, Lincoln, Neb. 68516).

PONCE: *Theme, Twenty Variations, and Fugue on "La Folia de la España."* **SAGRERAS:** *El Colibri; Merengue.* **BARRIOS-MANGORÉ:** *Danza Paraguaya; Aire de Zamba; Maxixe.* **LAURO:** *Seis por Dercheo; Angostura; Carora; El Niño; El Marabino/El Totumo de Guarenas.* **SOJO:** *Aguiñaldo; Mi Teresa/Estrella del Mar/Mi Teresa.* Eliot Fisk (guitar). MUSICMASTERS MM 20008 \$8.95, © MC 40008 \$8.95.

rella Freni succeed in projecting a youthful Adalgisa, but the gain in dramatic plausibility is partly at the expense of musical rightness because the two singers' timbres are not sufficiently contrasted. Moreover, conductor Lorenzo Anselmi, though he provides dutiful accompaniments to Renata Scott's absorbing Norma in the opening portions, paces the duet in an inflexible and mechanical fashion.

It is not likely that we'll ever hear the duet from Bellini's early opera *Bianca e Fernando*—in which the intertwining vocal phrases of *Norma* are prefigured—better done than it is here, and I find the delightful Mozart excerpt charmingly sung and full of character. Freni is, of course, a seasoned Susanna, but Scott reveals the outlines of a remarkably insightful Countess in this brief scene. (The otherwise informative liner

notes ignore the fact that Emma Eames and Marcella Sembrich recorded this same duet back in 1908. Such stellar pairings are not exactly a modern invention.)

Mercadante's forgotten opera *The Two Illustrious Rivals* yields a duet involving two ladies (one of them a queen) in love with the same man. Musically, this is the weakest part of the recital, for Merca-

(Continued on page 105)

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dante's more complex writing produces effects that are far less memorable than those attained by Bellini's flowing simplicity and poignancy.

In a general sense, Mirella Freni's achievement here is characterized by tonal evenness and a firmer top range, while Renata Scotto displays more tonal variety and dramatic insight. Both are compelling artists, however, not to be easily pigeonholed. And both, along with their producers, deserve our thanks for this program. G.J.

GALA NEW YEAR'S CONCERT IN VIENNA. Johann Strauss Jr.: *Die Fledermaus: Overture; Csárdás. New Pizzicato Polka; Perpetual Motion; Wiener Blut; Banditen-Galopp; Kaiser March; Fata Morgana; The Blue Danube.* Johann Strauss Sr.: *Radetzky March. Josef Strauss: Eingesendet. Offenbach: Orpheus in the Underworld: Overture. Ziehrer: Loslassen!* Vienna Philharmonic, Lorin Maazel cond. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON • 2532 002 \$10.98, © 3302 002 \$10.98.

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

So much of the Johann Strauss we have been getting from Vienna in recent years has been under the strict baton of Willi Boskovsky that I had almost forgotten there are dreamier, more flexible approaches than his to the works of the Waltz King. The difference is audible on this New Year's Concert with Lorin Maazel at the helm of the Vienna forces. There is a palpable lilt and sway from the opening notes of the *Fledermaus* overture, an expansive songfulness that makes the melting beauty of the waltzes and even the brisk beat of the polkas sound more entrancing than under more military maestros. Strauss Sr. also benefits from this kind of treatment, making the *Radetzky March* for once not only stirring but exceptionally sonorous. In *Eingesendet* another Strauss, Josef, is heard from, and he fits in fine too. The presence of the Offenbach overture puzzled me momentarily, but George Jellinek's notes cleared it up: "... it was actually he who attracted Johann Strauss to operetta. Without *Orpheus* perhaps there would have been no *Fledermaus*. Perish the thought!" It's a brilliant concert in any case, and besides the music there is the cheering presence of a high-spirited audience to give the listener the feeling of being part of a gala occasion. P.K.

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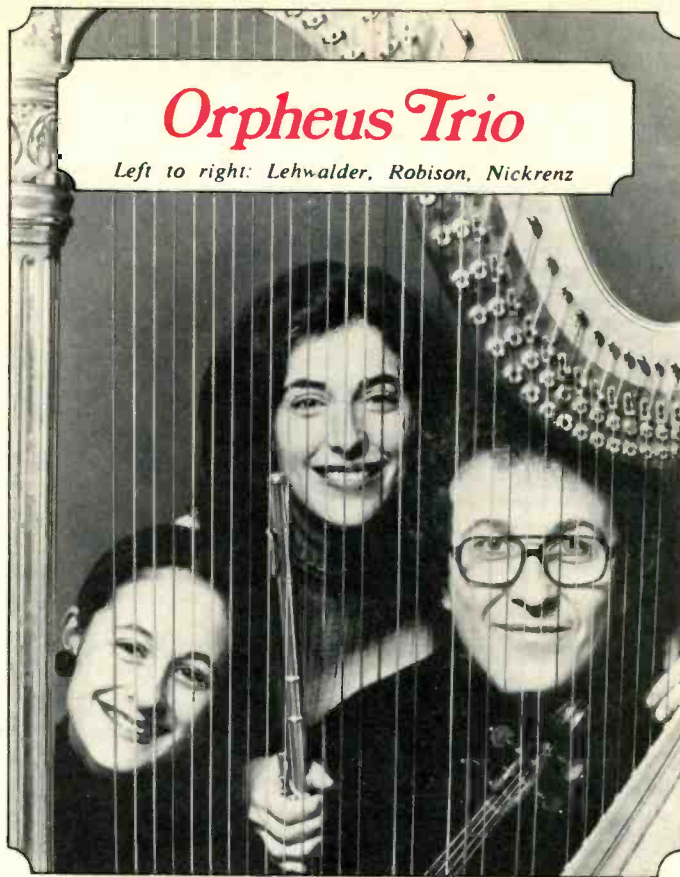
THOMAS STEVENS: *Musique Française pour Trompette.* Tomasi: *Triptyque.* Ibert: *Impromptu.* Ropartz: *Andante and Allegro.* Poulenc: *Sonata for Trumpet, Trombone, and Horn.* Bozza: *Lied; Badinage; Caprice.* Thomas Stevens (trumpet); Zita Carno (piano); John Cerminaro (horn); Ralph Sauer (trombone). CRYSTAL • S367 \$7.98.

Performance **Expert**
Recording: **Superb**

Thomas Stevens, who plays one of the two principal trumpets with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, has put together a program of pieces that not only provide opportunities for virtuoso playing but are, for once, less than tired—not a trumpet voluntary in the

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Christian Steiner/Vanguard

Orpheus Trio

Left to right: Lehwalder, Robison, Nickrenz

THE Orpheus Trio's new Vanguard album of French music is as delectable a chamber disc as has come my way in a long time. It's not just that it features superlative playing by some of the finest solo musicians in the business (Paula Robison, flute; Scott Nickrenz, viola; and Heidi Lehwalder, harp) and outstanding recorded sound; the canny programming also offers varied and neatly contrasted styles and timbres.

The disc opens with an enormously clever and effective trio arrangement—by famed harp virtuoso Carlos Salzedo—of Ravel's piano *Sonatine*. Then Heidi Lehwalder plays Fauré's *Impromptu, Op. 86*, and the side concludes with Paula Robison's elegant account of Debussy's celebrated *Syrinx*. Most of side two is devoted to Debussy's bittersweet *Sonata for Flute, Viola, and Harp*. The vitality and precision of this performance really point up the quality of the Orpheus Trio as an ensemble: both the individual playing and the balance between the players are exemplary. The record concludes with a vastly entertaining seven-min-

ute *Duo for Flute and Viola* by Mozart's longer-lived contemporary François Devienne (1759-1803).

The legend on the record jacket speaks of a "Vanguard stereo digital master processed from an original four-track recording," which suggests that this is not a "digital recording" in the presently understood sense of the word. But despite what seems to be the occasional intrusion of traffic noise from outside the recording studio (on 23rd Street in New York City), the sonics here are a model of their kind by whatever process they were achieved. The presence, balance, and frequency and dynamic ranges are all eminently satisfying, and they helped provide me with forty-five minutes of most enjoyable listening. —David Hall

RAVEL (arr. Salzedo): *Sonatine*. FAURÉ: *Impromptu for Solo Harp, Op. 86*. DEBUSSY: *Syrinx for Solo Flute; Sonata for Flute, Viola, and Harp*. DEVIENNE: *Duo No. 3 for Flute and Viola*. Orpheus Trio. VANGUARD VA 25002 \$12.98.

lot. The Henri Tomasi *Triptyque* runs a whole gamut of moods and tempos in its four minutes. The Eugene Bozza pieces are miniature models of French clarity, the lbert *Impromptu* is two perfect minutes of adroit musical clowning, and the J. Guy Ropartz selection is an example of French "regional" music that suggests in its harmonics the austere coast of Brittany. The

pièce de résistance, served up on side two, is Poulenc's nine-minute, four-movement sonata, a playful work that sports among its subjects like a vaudeville otter, bowing out with a pert rondeau that almost turns into a can-can. The playing throughout is expert, with the sound of the trumpet in particular gaining in brilliance and focus through the digital recording process. P.K.

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