

HOW TO EXPLAIN **STEREO** TO YOUR FRIENDS

ICD.

X

# high fidelity

JANUARY  
1960

THE MAGAZINE FOR MUSIC LISTENERS 60 CENTS



# VERDI



on records—a discography

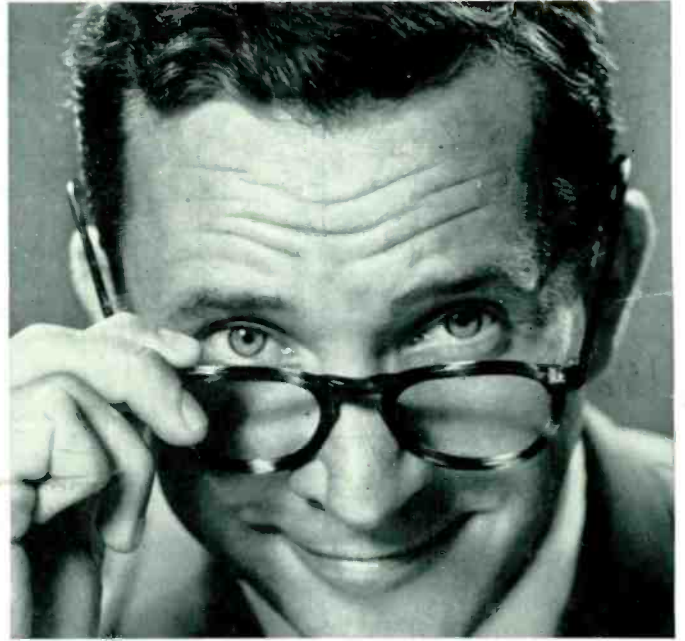
by **Conrad L. Osborne**

a visit to his Sant'Agata

by **William Weaver**



**3 SECONDS** . . . It's the Glaser-Steers GS-77. You can tell by its modern trim styling—a hint of the precise mechanism that's 'under-the-hood'. A record has just completed its play. The tone arm has lifted from the groove and returns to rest. So far, so good—it might be any changer. But, here's where the similarity ends. Watch what happens next.



**6 SECONDS** . . . the turntable has stopped—the next record drops gently into play position. Suddenly you are aware that you have just seen something different—different from any changer you've ever known. You have seen how *turntable pause* eliminates the harsh grinding action caused by dropping one record on another or onto the turntable while in motion.



**9 SECONDS** . . . the tone arm leaves its rest, moves toward the record, and then—gently, sets itself down into the lead-in groove of the record. Then—and only then does the turntable resume its motion. In these 9 seconds you have seen a record handled automatically with greater care and gentleness than you could possibly give it manually. Don't you agree that . . .



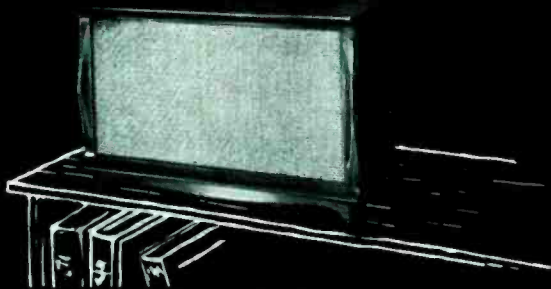
**The GLASER-STEERS GS-77** is worthy of the finest stereo or monophonic system. It is designed and engineered to protect your records and add hours of listening pleasure to your treasured recordings. Enhance the performance of your high fidelity system, today. Add the Glaser-Steers GS-77. \$59.50 less cartridge and base at your high fidelity dealer.

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*Read the Audiolub Test report in the August issue of High Fidelity magazine, you'll realize immediately why audiophiles everywhere are switching to the modern high fidelity record changer, the Glaser-Steers GS-77. For a copy of the full report write:*

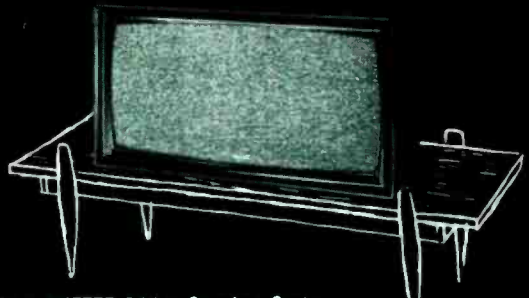
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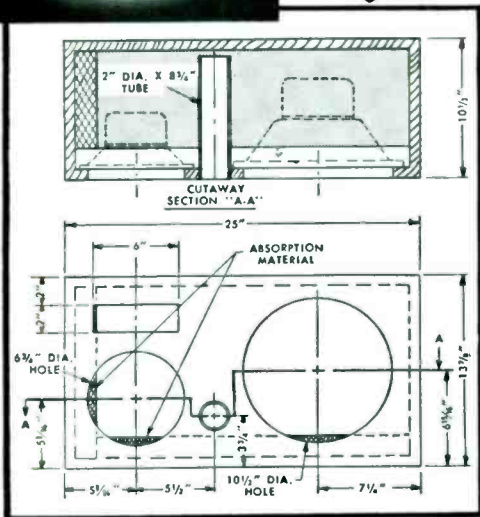


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For outstanding TRI-ETTE performance in your own enclosure or custom built-in system, the KT-33 Kit is the answer. Includes P12-NF 12-inch FLEXAIR woofer, P8-UM 8-inch midchannel, RP-103A compression driver tweeter, H-F control, crossover network, wiring

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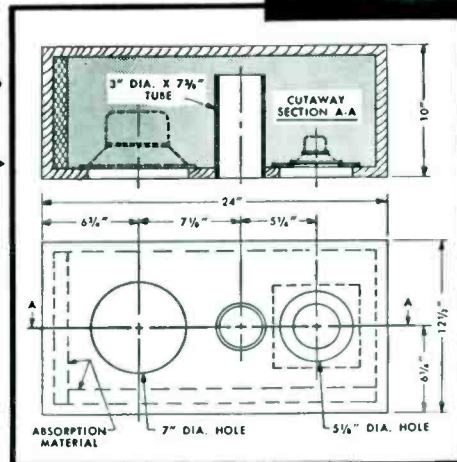
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Model 380E Collectors' Ensemble includes the Stanton Stereo FLUXVALVE with 3 "V-GUARD" styli for stereo, microgroove and 78 rpm records. ....\$60.00  
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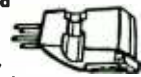


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# high fidelity

including **AUDIOCRAFT** and **HI-FI MUSIC AT HOME**

**JANUARY 1960**  
volume 10 number 1

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*A visit to Verdi's Sant' Agata, the country retreat which the composer lived in, and loved, for more than half a century.*

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*Forty-six recordings of seventeen operas, critically evaluated: a HIGH FIDELITY discography.*

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*The answers to the questions they ask.*

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*In which is promulgated the thesis that "they make singers now better than they used to."*

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IN KIT FORM  
**74.50**

LT-50  
COMPLETELY WIRED  
**124.50**

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A precision engineered, highly stable tuner—perfect for lifelike stereo FM-AM broadcast reception, FM reception and/or AM reception. Features separate tuning and volume controls for AM and FM. Magic eye on AM and FM, plus automatic frequency control on FM for accurate tuning—stations are "locked" in. Other deluxe features include cathode follower outputs and 5-position Function Selector. Efficient, broadband circuitry on AM with built-in antenna. FM section features include 2 microvolts sensitivity for 30 db quieting, frequency response 20-20,000 cps  $\pm$  1/2 db and full 200 KC bandwidth. Two printed circuit boards make wiring simple—even for such a complex unit. Complete kit includes all parts, deluxe cabinet and detailed instruction manual. Size is 13 3/4" W x 10 3/4" D x 4 1/2" H. Shpg. wt., 22 lbs.

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• RESPONSE 5-40,000 CPS  $\pm$  1 DB • UNIQUE STEREO & MONAURAL CONTROL FEATURES • PRECISE "NULL" BALANCING SYSTEM • CONCENTRIC INPUT LEVEL CONTROLS

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## AUTHORitatively Speaking

Last heard from in these pages relating the somewhat frenetic career of young Thomas Schippers from Kalamazoo (Michigan), William Weaver takes, in this issue, a decided change of pace: see "The Pavilion of the Open Sky" (p. 42), being an account of Giuseppe Verdi at his bucolic retreat near Busseto (Duchy of Parma). For some years Mr. Weaver has been an observer of Italian artistic affairs and is presently engaged in a detailed examination of Verdi's letters. Like all good writers, he has placed his subject in its proper milieu. The result, for us, is this personally conducted visit to Verdi's villa at Sant' Agata.

Readers of HIGH FIDELITY's "Records in Review" will have noted in late months the name of Conrad L. Osborne. With the appearance of his discography, "Verdi on Microgroove" (p. 46), we feel Mr. Osborne should no longer remain a man of mystery. Out of Nebraska by way of Columbia University, C. L. O. embarked on a series of diverse professions: student of vocal music and piano; actor for stage, radio, and television; editor and freelance writer. He's also paid his respects to the Government, by way of the U. S. Army, psychological warfare division. And there's a Mrs. Osborne—young, pretty, and a student of Yeats.

When Herman Burstein wrote one of our first articles on stereo (in the remote past, some two years ago) he had to his credit thirty published articles on high-fidelity reproduction and a technical handbook. Which clearly made him an authority. We don't know what to add now, when the roster has grown to half a hundred magazine pieces and the book-length *Fundamentals of High Fidelity* and *Stereo—How It Works*, as well as the earlier *Elements of Tape Recorder Circuits*. Mr. Burstein is an economist, statistician, and management consultant; but you can't blame us if we regard him as audio man *par excellence*. Therefore we present with absolute assurance his advice on "How To Explain Stereo to Your Friends," p. 52.

Alan Wagner is a refugee from the academic world who became an executive in a large New York advertising agency—and who finds refuge from that harried sphere in the world of music. As producer-host of WNYC's weekly "Living Opera" broadcast, he knows very well whereof he writes in "The New Golden Age of Opera," p. 55. He also lectures widely on the present state of vocal music (and other subjects), first practicing his addresses on one musically knowledgeable wife and one musically intuitive son, aged twenty months. Best friends and severest critics, Mr. Wagner—not unsurprisingly—says.

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AND PASTE  
ON POST  
CARD







1. Also: Let It Rain, Stairway to the Sea, Flame of Love, etc.

STEREO RECORDS for every musical taste!



5. A Night on Bald Mountain, Steppes of Central Asia, etc.



6. Bess, You Is My Woman Now, It Ain't Necessarily So; etc.



17. Over the Rainbow, Night and Day, Easy to Love, 9 more



34. "...the music is all extraordinary" - Boston Daily Record



33. This brilliant musical painting is an American classic



10. A brilliant new performance of this popular concerto



13. But Not for Me, Fascinating Rhythm, Man I Love, 9 more



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9. Sweet Adeline, For Me and My Gal, Pretty Baby, 13 more



15. An exciting array of 16 classical and popular selections



18. Rain in Spain, I Could Have Danced All Night, etc.

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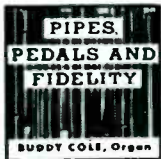
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11. Also: Blessed Are They That Mourn, Come Ye Saints, etc.



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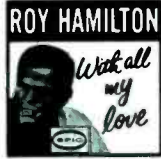
56. Serenade in Blue, Willow Weep for Me, 9 others



3. Stella by Starlight, Pacific Sunset, Yesterday, 9 others



25. Superbly played by one of Europe's finest orchestras



40. I Miss You So, Speak Low, Time After Time, 9 more



36. A musical landscape... "spacious, noble" - High Fidelity



26. Blue Moon, Fools Rush In, Don't Worry 'bout Me, 9 more



47. Solitude, Where or When, Dancing in the Dark, 5 more



49. One of the most melodically beautiful of all symphonies



30. Alexander's Ragtime Band, Cheek to Cheek, Always, etc.



19. Tales from the Vienna Woods, Blue Danube, 8 others



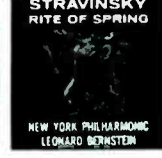
12. Londonderry Air, Shenandoah, 11 more folksong favorites



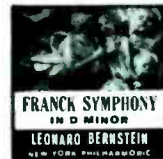
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7. One Kiss, Will You Remember, Song of Love, 9 more



29. Three of the Master's favorite chamber works



31. You've Changed, Body and Soul, I Got It Bad, 9 others



35. "One of the great, great albums" - San Francisco Examiner



50. Come to Me, That Old Feeling, Long Ago, 9 more



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You may accept the monthly selection for your Division, take any other records offered (classical or popular), or take NO record in any particular month.

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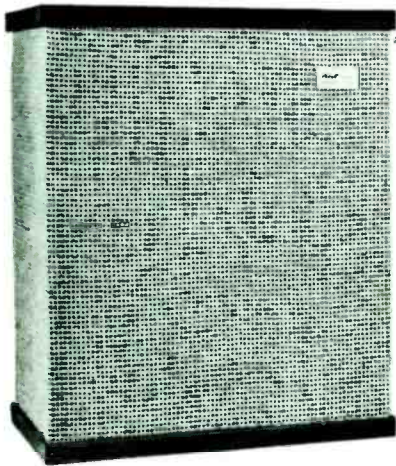
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Don't fall victim to the myth that some of your stereo components can be weak links without loss in performance. A boy sent to do a man's job is still a boy no matter how many men surround him. Pilot stereo components are all "men." Each is a strong link in any system... each is as responsive an instrument as you could demand.



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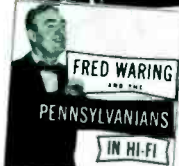
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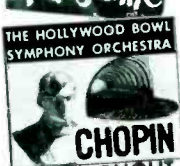
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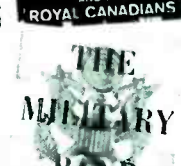
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## Vienna's Real Bargain

Sir:

While Hans Herzog's article ["Night Lights in the Konzerthaus"] in the November issue is entertaining, it contains some statements which are erroneous and others which may lead the reader to unfortunate impressions.

Among the inaccuracies is the statement that members of the Vienna Symphony Orchestra receive \$3.00 per recording session currently. The figure is at least several times that amount. Further, if the Vienna Philharmonic comprises a body of over one hundred men drawn from a total of less than one hundred fifty in the entire State Opera orchestra, that would leave less than fifty in the Volksoper orchestra. The Volksoper orchestra actually comprises about eighty players. Thus any large-scale recording made by this orchestra would actually include so-called Philharmonic personnel. More to the point, however, is the fact that this orchestra has made literally hundreds of recordings during the past few years, under a roster of some of the greatest living conductors. . . .

Moreover, it is patently an oversimplification to state that [the economic factor] was the prime reason for all of the recording activity taking place in Vienna. France, Italy, and Spain were also economically depressed, and no activity took place in these countries on the same scale. The answer must lie, as is made clear in the other excellent articles in the selfsame issue, in the unparalleled assemblage of musical talent available in this city. It is all well and good to point out the incredibly low prices paid by the original Haydn Society in recording its Nelson Mass in Vienna in 1950, or that Walter Berry received \$20 for a recording made at that time. As an indication of how times have changed, suffice it to say that this selfsame star, Mr. Berry, received a fee in four figures (American, not Viennese) for his participation in Vanguard's current recording of the Bach *St. Matthew Passion*.

The fact that the Vienna Symphony has its own recording studio

Continued on page 10



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**"I THINK GOD HAS VISITED ME"**

WHEN Handel finished that triumphant climax to the second part of the work, the 'Hallelujah Chorus,' tears were streaming down his cheeks. 'I did think I did see all Heaven before me and the Great God Himself!' he told his servant. And when the score was written he pointed to his bulky manuscript and said simply: 'I think God has visited me.' —DAVID EWEN. It was during the first London perform-

ance that the audience, carried away by the power of the "Hallelujah Chorus," arose in concert as though by a prearranged signal. Ever since then, audiences the world over express a similar respect: rising at the onset of this chorus and remaining standing until its conclusion.



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## LETTERS

*Continued from page 8*

does not make it any more tempting for American firms to operate in Vienna. No responsible recording firm uses outside engineers more than occasionally. As a point of fact one of the key reasons for our own firm's work in Vienna, aside from musical considerations, is that we maintain full studio facilities in that city, as do Westminster and London-Decca.

The Schwann catalogue is littered with the remains of those record companies which tried to prosper through "bargain basement" recordings. The real "bargain" in Vienna is the quality of its musical wares.

*Seymour Solomon*  
 Vanguard Recording Society, Inc.  
 New York, N. Y.

**MR. HERZOG REPLIES:** Mr. Seymour Solomon's letter, if I may quote his own words, is entertaining but it, too, contains some statements which are erroneous and others which may lead the reader to unfortunate impressions.

May I, for my part, correct an unfortunate slip of the pen. The Vienna Symphony gets \$3.00 per man per hour, not per session. On the other hand, Mr. Solomon seems to feel that he must persuade American readers that the Volksoper (not Volksobern) Orchestra usually includes Philharmonic players when it makes records. In the first place, Mr. Solomon's mathematics are faulty. The total figure of 150 for the State Opera Orchestra does *not* include the eighty excellent men of the Volksoper Orchestra. Let me explain it once again:

Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra: plays in the State Opera Orchestra.

State Opera Orchestra: includes the Vienna Philharmonic *and* nearly fifty more.

Orchestra in the Volksoper: some eighty players included neither in the Philharmonic nor in the State Opera personnel.

As to the economic advantages of recording in Vienna, I assure Mr. Solomon that the Viennese are fully aware that the real bargain here is the quality of our wares. We knew about these long before the record companies "discovered" us.

*Hans Herzog*  
 Vienna  
 Austria

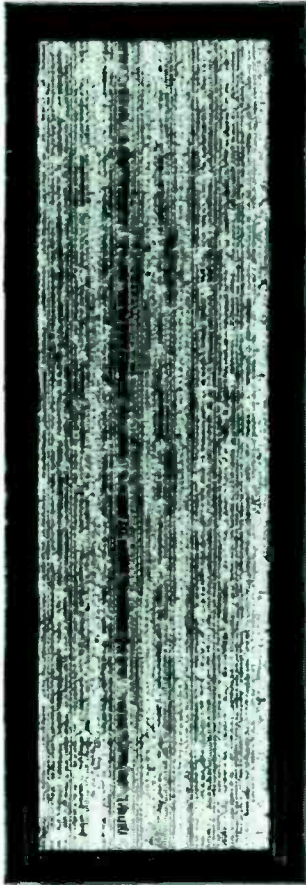
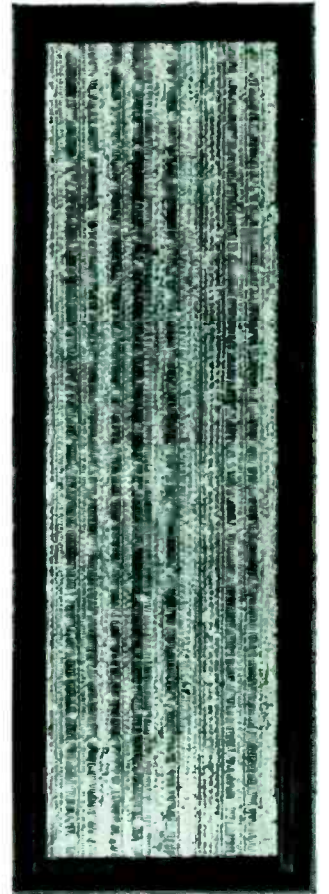
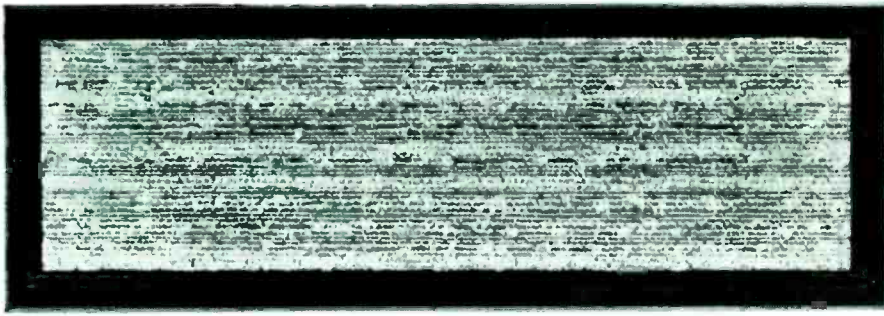
### Errors of Fact

SIR:  
 Peter Heyworth's article on my late husband ["Ernest Newman," Oct. 1959] is extremely interesting, and so far as my husband's character and professional career are concerned a true and penetrating study. But there are one or two factual errors which I

*Continued on page 12*

HIGH FIDELITY MAGAZINE





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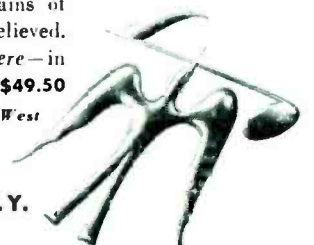
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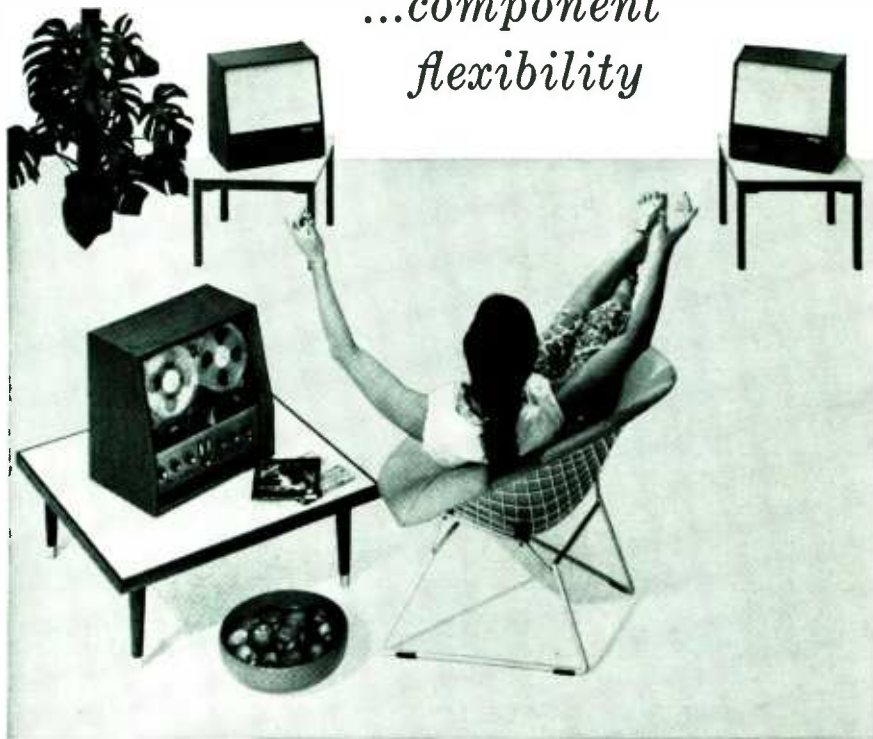


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LETTERS

Continued from page 10

should be glad if you could find an occasion to correct.

The most important one is the date of our marriage. According to Peter Heyworth, it took place after the move to Tadworth. This was in April 1928, and as everybody knows we had been living together in London since our marriage on June 14, 1919. Such a statement might cause complications. Also we did not build the house in Tadworth; we bought it in March 1928, and the library was added afterwards. My husband's name was never E. N. Roberts. He was christened William, and was so called by his intimate friends all his life.

Vera Newman  
Woldingham, Surrey  
England

Somebody Loves Us

SIR:

Bravo! Your editorial ["A Scolding"—to manufacturers and to customers] in the October issue hit the proverbial nail on the head. It couldn't have appeared at a more opportune time.

Another point worth mentioning is the method in which you present your record and equipment reviews. One is immediately struck with the idea that here are people who know what they are doing. This is not to mention the wonderful articles appearing each month which never fail to interest me. To prove my point I have recently renewed my subscription for five years.

P. L. Glénat  
RCAF Cold Lake, Alb.  
Canada

The Sterbas

SIR:

I noticed that the excellent article ["Freudians in Euterpe's Realm," September] refers to the authors of the book *Beethoven and His Nephew* as Edith and Erika Sterba. The names are Richard and Editha Sterba.

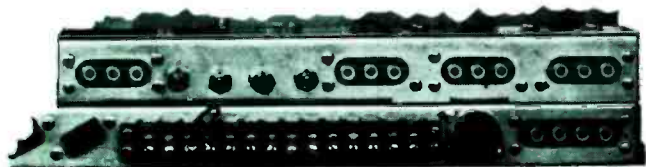
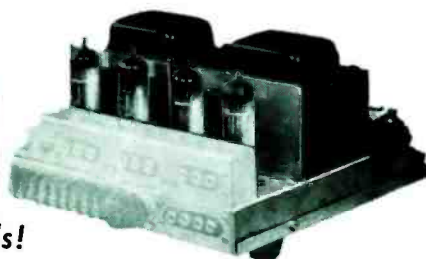
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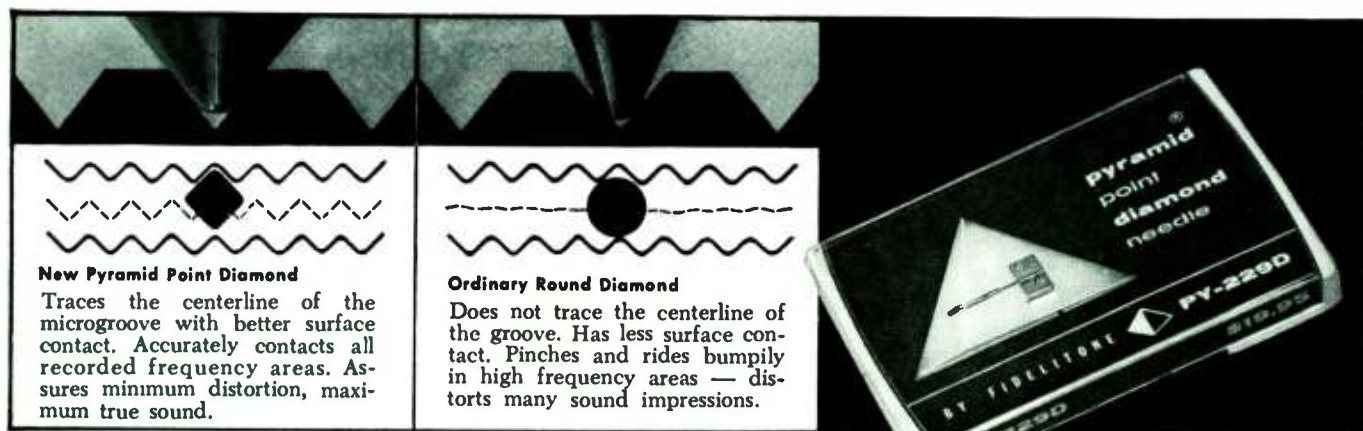
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JANUARY 1960

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The Pyramid Point Diamond positively traces the centerline of the microgroove. Tracing distortion is reduced to the amount theoretically equivalent to a .2 mil contact radius. All harmonic distortion is reduced to imperceptible values. Sound on both the inside and outside of the record groove is cleanly reproduced.

## Transient and tangential distortions are reduced

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to the other without clatter or ringing. Any tangential weakness in the design of any pick up system shows improved performance with the Pyramid Point Diamond.

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The Pyramid Point Diamond allows more surface contact between needle and record. This distributes the tone-arm weight over a larger surface area, lowers unit area pressure, prolongs the useful life of your records and needle.

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*\*On-axis response from 7,500 cps to 20,000 cps is  $\pm 1\frac{1}{2}$  db; maintenance of excellent (although somewhat attenuated) response off-axis, both horizontally and vertically, is inherent in the use of the very small, stiff diaphragm as a direct-radiator.*

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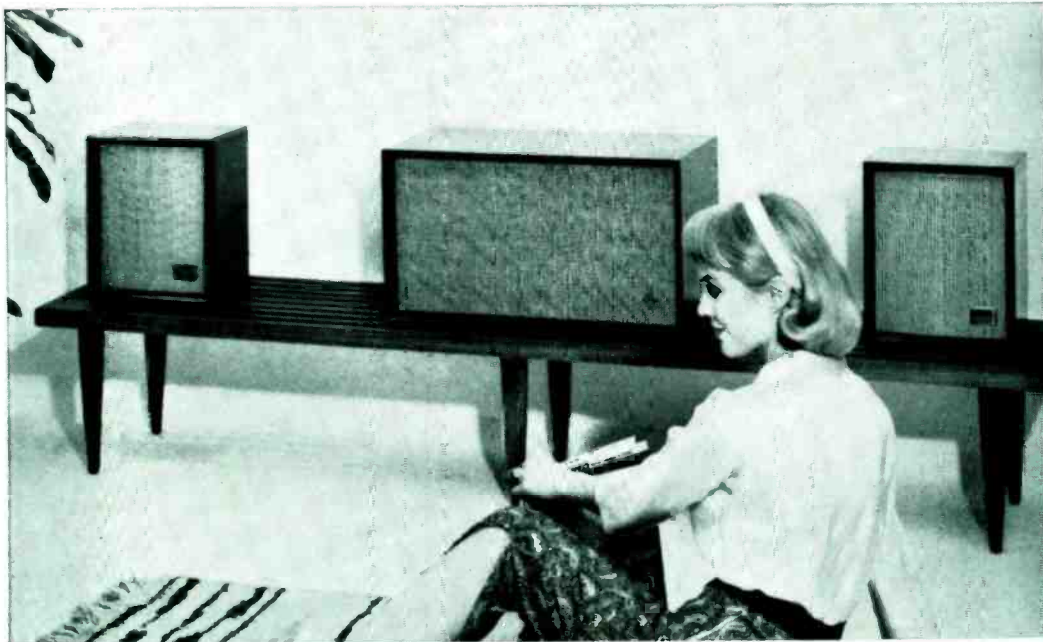
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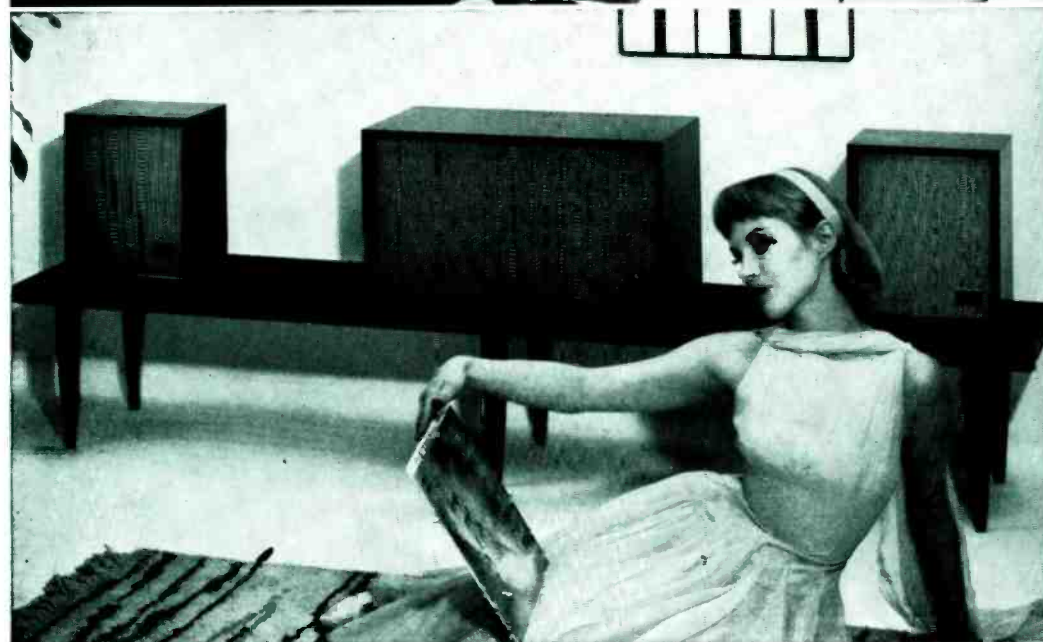
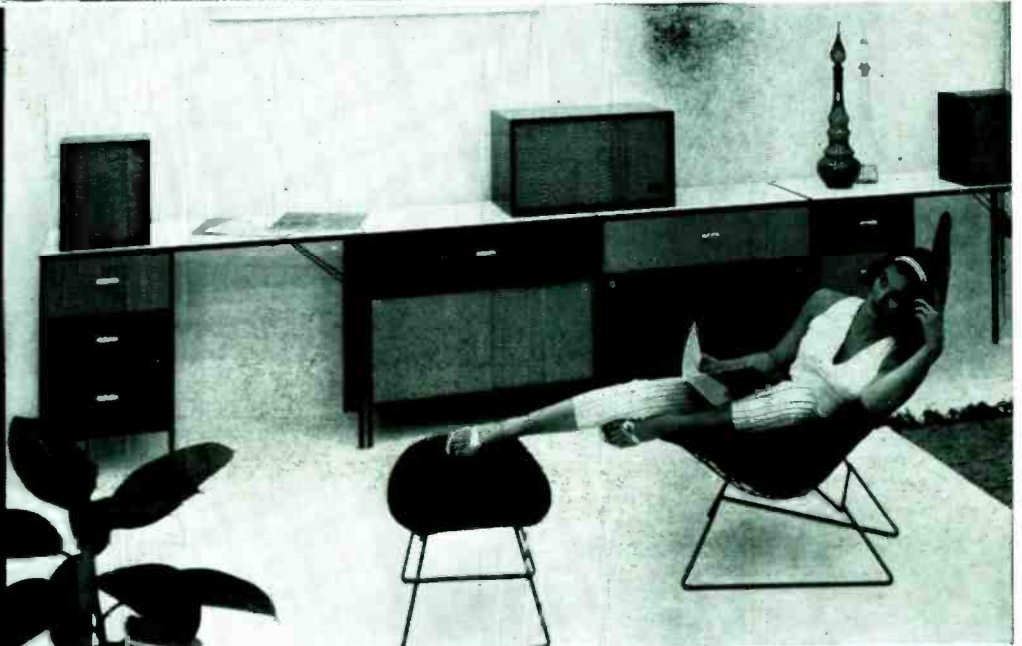
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## Notes

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## Abroad

LONDON—From EMI news comes that Maria Callas has agreed in principle to record three operas before the end of 1960. Which operas these shall be has not been decided, and any decision is unlikely until litigation over the diva's marital affairs has been disposed of.

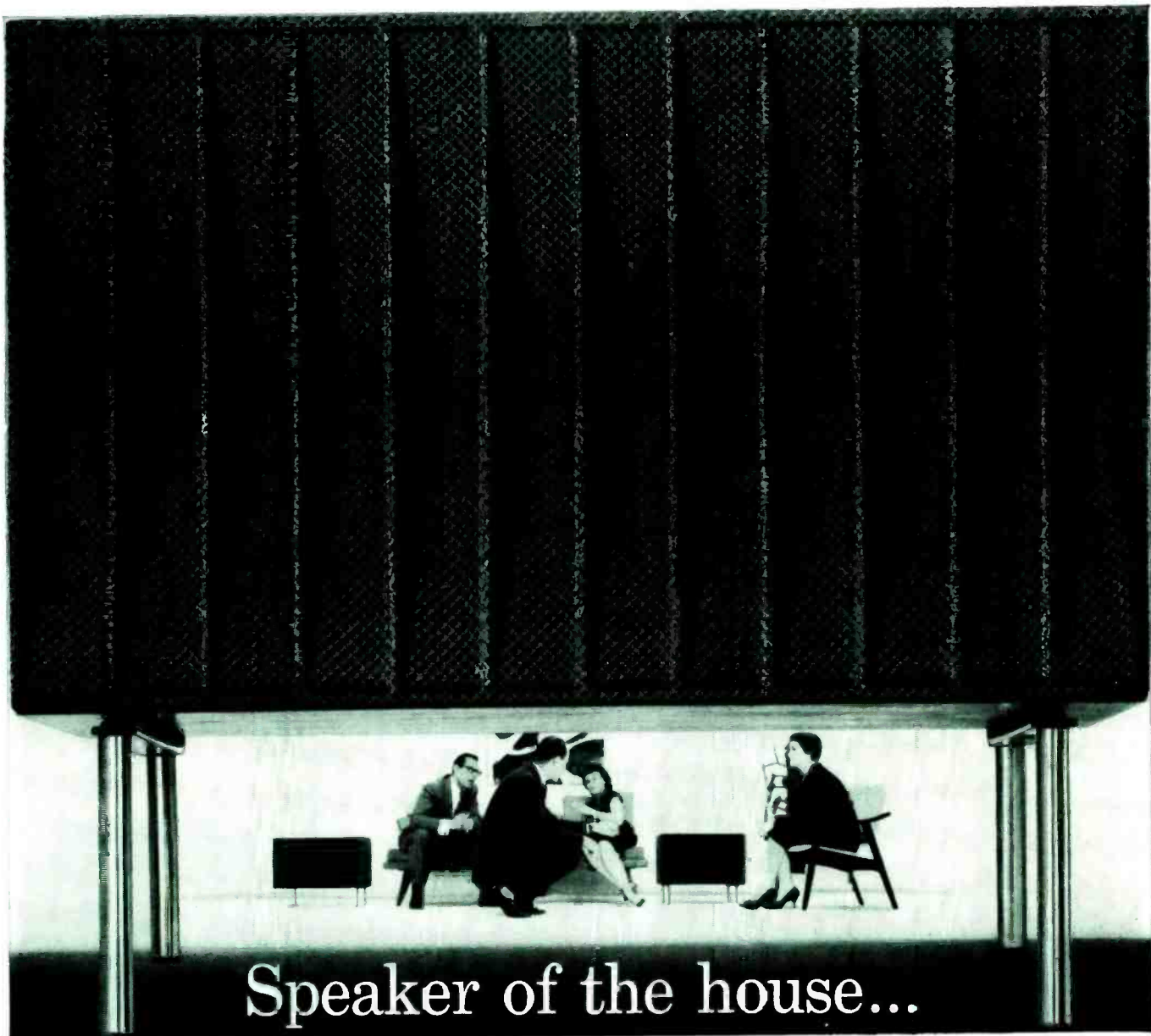
Meantime, her recording for EMI-Angel of *La Gioconda*, made with the cooperation of La Scala, is the first outward sign of her reconciliation with the *Sovrintendente* of that august house, Antonio Ghiringelli. I am told that on the third day of the *Gioconda* recording Miss Callas met Signor Ghiringelli in the Scala courtyard. Figuratively, if not literally, they fell on each other's necks; tears of relief were shed on both sides. The two-year Callas absence from the Scala probably won't be protracted.

Klemperer in Fine Fettle. Forced by an infection to withdraw from EMI's *Don Giovanni* sessions (now, with Ginlini conducting, almost finished), the unquenchable Otto Klemperer has again shown his talent for quick recuperation. Back in the studio for stereo remakes of his Beethoven recordings, he finished the Symphony No. 4, with *The Consecration of the House* as a filler, and the *King Stephan Overture* as filler, to the Fifth Symphony. He then started on the *Eroica*.

Klemperer's prankish sense of humor is also still undimmed. At a morning rehearsal before one of his Royal Festival Hall Beethoven concerts—with a single lone figure, that of his daughter Lotte, in the auditorium—he rapped his baton sharply on the desk and shouted portentously: "Gentlemen! Beethoven—Symphony No. 2" (this being the first item on the rehearsal plan). The Philharmonia Orchestra instantly plunged, by conspiratorial prearrangement, into that un-Beethovenian ditty, *Happy Birthday to You*. The "you" so honored was Lotte Klemperer, who—once re-

Continued on page 20





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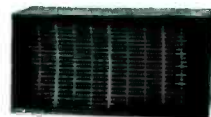
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Continued from page 18

covered from the shock—roared with laughter. "It's Papa's best joke," she opined later.

**Maag—On To New Things.** Shutting between English Decca's studios, the Festival Hall, and La Scala, where he was billed for two orchestral concerts, Mozart-specialist Peter Maag, the Swiss conductor, told me cheerfully that a couple of days earlier he had given in a verbal resignation from the musical directorship of the Netherlands Opera, Amsterdam. His tenure has been short. Formerly (1952-55) principal conductor of the Düsseldorf Opera and thereafter general music director of the Bonn Opera, thirty-eight-year-old Maag fulfilled a four-week pilot engagement with the Netherlands Opera during Holland's summer music festival and took over the musical directorship, with a two-year contract, on September 1. A prospective two-year stay dwindled to two months. I of course asked why he was leaving.

"Because," he replied, "I am profoundly dissatisfied with Amsterdam's rehearsal facilities, general disciplinary arrangements, and the interference in artistic matters by the musicians' and 'house' unions. . . . I cannot tell you how glad I am to get away."



Maag

Maag's current and prospective recording arrangements with Decca-London involve Mozart and (mainly) the London Symphony Orchestra. They include the Twelve *Deutsche Tänze*; three out of the four horn concertos (one in D major, two in E flat major), with Barry Tuckwell, the LSO's first horn, as soloist; the Clarinet Concerto, with another LSO principal, Gervase de Peyer; and one LP disc comprising the *Idomeneo* and *Finta Giardiniera* overtures, three entr'actes from *König Thamos*, and a *recherché* Serenade for Four Orchestras, each orchestra consisting of strings and two horns. In January, with the Suisse Romande Orchestra and their first horn player, Edmond Leloir, Maag will do a stereo remake of the *Posthorn* Serenade, K. 320. He tells me that the instrument Leloir uses comes from the Swiss State Museum, Zurich, and that a century ago it was used by

Continued on page 22



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The short, elderly man with the round face leaned forward in his chair. A television reporter had just asked him why he selected the works of Bach for a special concert. With the honesty and dignity characteristic of him, he replied "*Bach is my best friend.*"

This simple, yet profound statement, sums up the love and joy of his life. Once during a rehearsal, he stopped the orchestra and explained that in Bach "Every note is variety — that is what gives life."

This man — this musician, has reached an understanding of Bach so intimate, so complete that it bridges the two and a half centuries between them, making the composer so alive that the musician can truly say "*Bach is my best friend.*"

The words of the musician have a very special significance for the manufacturer of stereophonic high fidelity instruments. They recall our responsibility to create components which can reproduce every nuance of a Bach performance. The brilliant engineering and the functional design of Harman-Kardon tuners and amplifiers reflect the work of people who understand and love music.

Typical of the instruments which reflect this understanding are the new CHORALE, Model A260 integrated stereophonic amplifier ( see below) and THE MADRICAL, Model ST360 AM/FM stereophonic tuner. THE CHORALE is a powerful 60 watt stereophonic amplifier incorporating two 30 watt power channels and dual preamplifiers. Features include: New Third Channel Speaker Selector for local or remote stereo systems. Friction-Clutch Tone Controls to adjust bass and treble separately for each channel. Tone Control Defeat Switch, Illuminated Push-Button On/Off Switch and Speaker Phasing Switch.

THE MADRICAL tuner actually has everything: Separate AM and FM sections for simulcast (stereophonic) reception. MA350 Multiplex Adapter plugs into ST360 chassis to provide a completely integrated tuner for receiving multiplex broadcasts. Distortion and drift are virtually unmeasurable and sensitivity is limited only by galactic noise. THE CHORALE and THE MADRICAL are handsomely finished in straw gold with highlights of deep brown.

The Chorale, Model A260 — \$199.95. Optional Enclosure, Model AC60 — \$12.95. The Madrigal, Model ST360 — \$199.95. Optional Enclosure, Model CX60 — \$12.50. MA350 Multiplex Adapter — \$49.95. All prices slightly higher in the West.

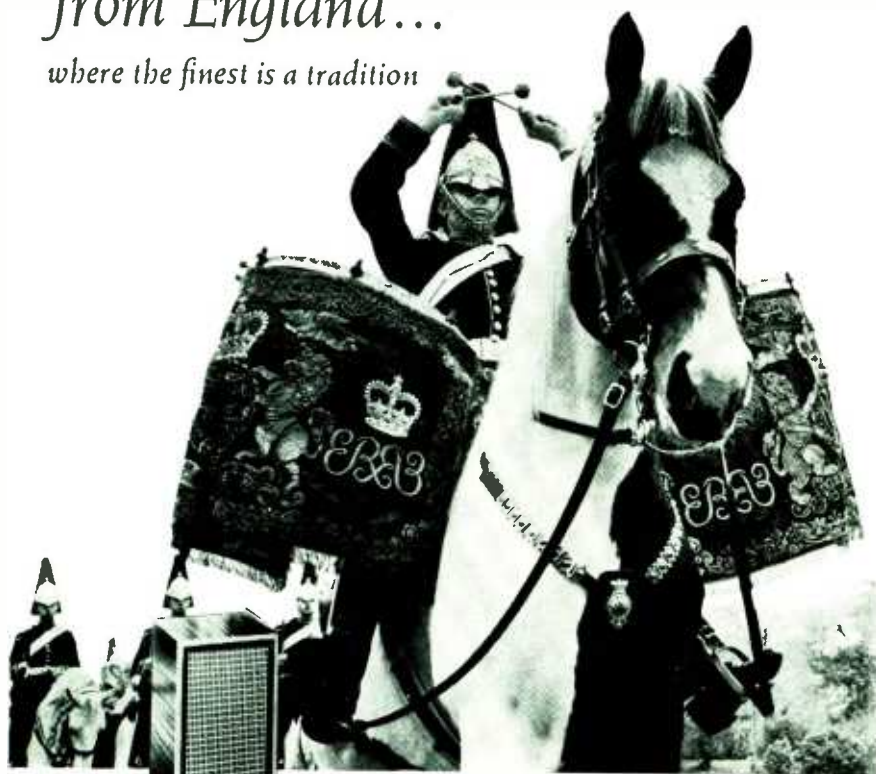


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NOTES FROM ABROAD

Continued from page 20

postilions on the Gotthard coaches to warn *auberges* in advance how many horses and passengers were to be fed, whether there were any VIPs on board, and so on.

**Ben Hur, 1960 Version.** Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer's technicolor spectacular had its London opening ten days before Christmas, a month after the world premiere in New York. Miklós Rózsa, the Hungarian-born composer now based in Hollywood, spent nine months writing three and a half hours' of music for the film and then cutting it to two and a half. Later, in Rome and Nuremberg, he recorded condensations of his score for the M-G-M and Lion labels—a task of condensation taking him a mere fortnight. For the M-G-M disc he used the Banda di Carabinieri (which has a more impressive ring than the Rome Police Band) in the marches and "triumph" bits and the Rome Radio Orchestra and Chorus in the rest of the score. For the Lion disc of highlights he had the North Frankland State Symphony Orchestra, Erich Kloss as conductor, and no chorus at all.

"What is the most interesting thing technically about your *Ben Hur* music?" I asked him, when he stopped off in London on his way home.

"The big problem," said Rózsa, "was the music for Christ. The director and everybody else wanted me to use a Theremin, all very spellbinding and eerie; but you can't use electronics for the First Century. So I opted for a pipe organ. Every time you see Christ in the film or hear about Him or feel His presence you hear the pipe organ and effects for divided high strings, usually playing harmonics. For the recordings in Nuremberg we used an excellent church organ and in Rome a studio organ—after adjusting it technically to cut out any suspicion of vibrato."

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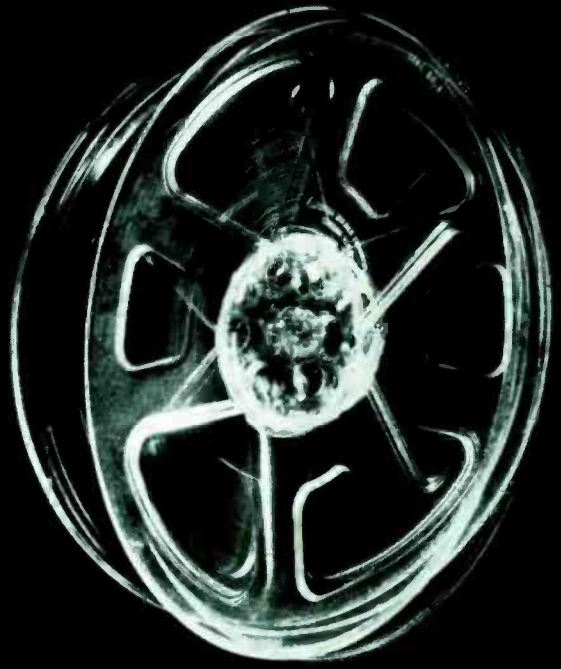
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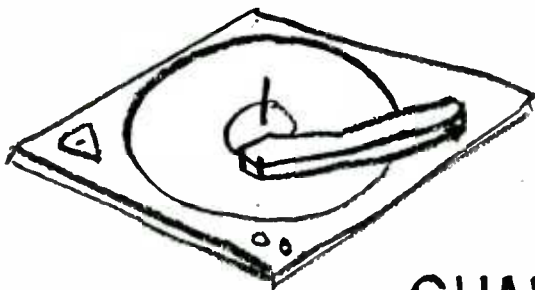
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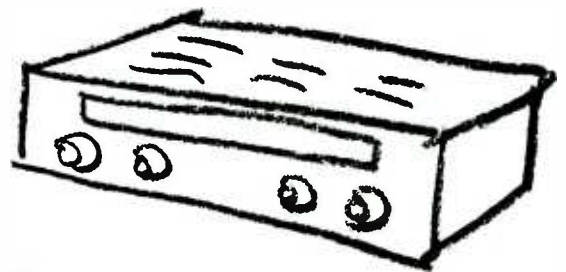
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We also said (that you said) you were going to spend \$40-million in the next 12 months for components and LP's and tape. Now, it occurs to us that perhaps you'd like to be reminded about what specifically you intend to spend all that money for . . .

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How about LP's and tape? After all, you must already possess the world's largest record library. Well (as though you didn't know), you're going to buy 3,400,000 LP's (that's almost 10,000 a day!) . . . more than a million units of pre-recorded and raw tape.

We've taken the liberty of telling manufacturers of quality components, and the leading recording companies about all this. We know what conscientious citizens they are . . . why, they'll knock themselves out to deliver the newest and best for you. After all, the most constructive force in the past, present and future of "music listening" is *you*. Your good taste and discriminating judgment, as well as your many dollars, have made high fidelity. And . . . HIGH FIDELITY!



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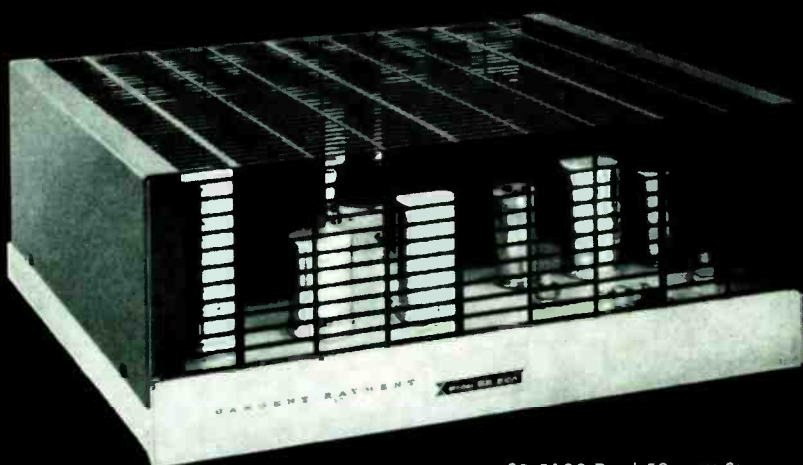
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## Books in Review

**Score Reading**, by Roger Fiske, greatly increases my hopes that more and more discophiles will learn to taste for themselves the delights of a combined aural and visual approach to musical enjoyment. While primarily designed for schools, Fiske's twin booklets are ideal introductory guides for adult laymen too, since they not only begin right at the beginning (taking no previous training or experience for granted), but include admirably chosen first-practice examples: fifteen short and mostly slow pieces or movements, leading up to the complete *Eine kleine Nachtmusik*, in Book 1, "Orchestration"; eight somewhat longer and more elaborate movements, leading up to the complete *Hebrides Overture* by Mendelssohn and Schubert's *Unfinished*, in Book 2, "Musical Form" (Oxford University Press, \$1.75 and \$2.00 respectively).

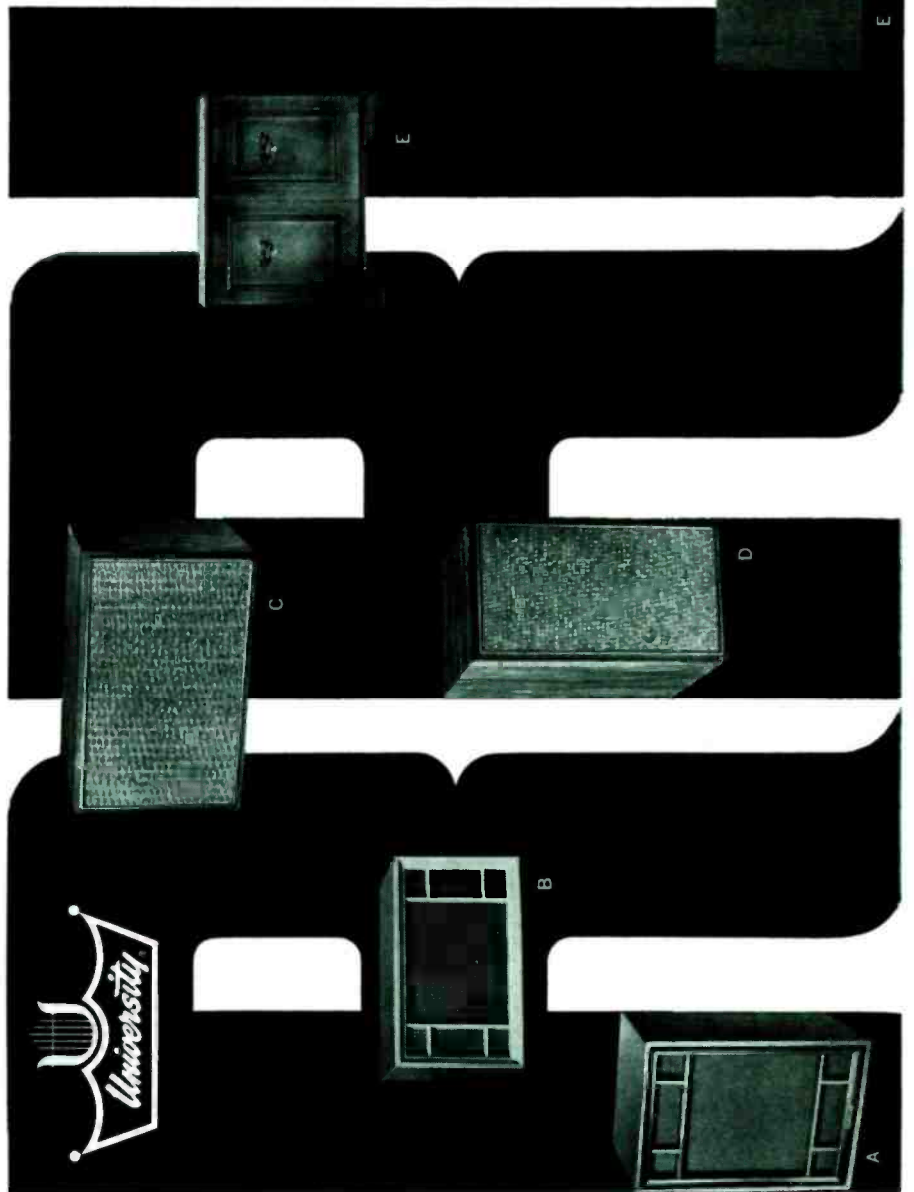
Once the start has been made with Fiske's help (and perhaps also with Bockman and Starr's *Scored for Listening*, published last fall), the novice score follower should have no trouble in going on to more detailed instruction books (particularly Hans Gál's *Directions for Score Reading*, "Philharmonia" Edition, and Gordon Jacob's *How To Read a Score*, Boosey & Hawkes), as well as in starting his own collection of miniature scores themselves. The latter are issued by most major music publishers, but the largest and best-known collections, particularly of standard works, are the "Eulenberg" series (represented in the U.S.A. by C. F. Peters Corp., 343 Fourth Ave., New York City 16) and "Philharmonia"—Universal Edition series (represented by Associated Music Publishers, 1 West 47th St., New York City 36). Smaller but good catalogues are published by Penguin Books, Lea Pocket Scores, Edwin F. Kalmus, and many others; most of these are carried by leading music dealers in the larger cities, and many are available in large-city libraries.

**Preservation and Storage of Sound Recordings**, by A. G. Pickett and M. M. Lemcoe, is the sober title of a highly technical report, sponsored by the Library of Congress and subsidized by the Rockefeller Foundation. Its publication is in fact one of the great milestones in audio history, for, unbelievable though it may seem, this is the first serious scientific examination of the life expectancy, in physical

*Continued on next page*

JANUARY 1960

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- D) Model RRL-8 8" 3-Speaker RRL System—Response from 28 cps to 20,000 cps. Finished on all four sides. 22 1/2" x 12 1/2" x 10-5/16" d. From \$95.50 net.
- E) TMS-2 "Tridimensional" Stereo Speaker System—Integrates two complete 3-way speaker systems in one compact enclosure. Provides fully balanced stereo throughout the room. Contemporary model: 30" wide x 25" high x 12 1/2" deep. From \$258.00 net. Early American model: 30" wide x 24" high x 13 1/2" deep. \$279.95 net.



Here from University is a complete range of superb high compliance systems—the finest on the market today! *Authentic, smooth, full-range performance from ultra-compact, beautifully styled systems. Cleaner, fuller bass response than ever before obtained from any small enclosure . . . due to the development of the University RRL feature!*

RRL—radiation resistance loading—provided by a precisely matched acoustic coupler, considerably increases bass efficiency. This enables the woofer to develop ample sound output with only a small portion of its great excursion potential . . . only 1/4 the excursion required by the older, fully sealed small-space systems to give the same output. Result: 75% less bass distortion at higher output levels.

Perfect matching of all speakers in each RRL system produces level response from lowest bass (as low as 15 cps for the S-11S) to smooth highs well beyond audible limits. Compare University prices and performance with any competitive units and convince yourself that RRL systems offer the finest value in high fidelity. For the full story, write Desk P-8, University Loudspeakers, Inc., White Plains, N. Y.

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# With DYNAKIT you KNOW you have the BEST!

The finest high fidelity you can buy at any price.

## DESIGNED FOR STEREO



PAS-2 \$59.95

- New stereo control preamp with complete flexibility, fastest construction, and simplest operation.
- Only 8 hours to build.
- Truly unmeasurable distortion—below 0.05%.



Stereo 70 \$99.95

- Two outstanding 35 watt channels (160 watts peak) to power any speaker.
- Unequaled transient response.
- Absolute stability with every loudspeaker without restriction of bandwidth.

## STEREO IN EASY STEPS

*Start with a superb monophonic system*



PAM-1 \$34.95

- History-making "no-distortion" preamplifier which has never been equalled.
- 6 hour assembly.



Mark IV \$59.95

- Either the renowned 60 watt Mark III or its new little brother, the 40 watt Mark IV.
- 3 hours to build.

*Expand to matchless stereo*



Add on the DSC-1  
\$12.95

- Every stereo function at your finger tips.
- Unsurpassed flexibility.
- Unitized panel or cabinet mount available as an accessory.



Two Mark III's  
\$79.95 each

- Just add on the second Mark III or Mark IV and you can have the most highly recommended, most desired stereo amplifier ensemble for less than 20 hours of your time.

See and hear Dynakits at your local dealer

A post card will bring complete specifications

**DYNACO, INC. 3916 Powelton Ave., Philadelphia 4, Pa.**

## BOOKS IN REVIEW

*Continued from preceding page*

terms, of disc and tape. Unfortunately, if perhaps necessarily, it is confined exclusively to storage-deterioration problems (which leaves the even more vital ones of use-wear still awaiting attack), and most of its 74 pages, 6 tables, and 30 illustrations will be largely incomprehensible to nonchemists and nonphysicists. Its conclusions, however, are expressed in language all of us can plainly understand, and these are of scarcely less significance to the ordinary record buyer than they are to the professional archivist. Some of them merely confirm generally known principles: that discs should be stored vertically; that temperature and humidity extremes must be avoided; etc. Others are more startling: that most paper and even plastic envelopes are potentially dangerous; that life qualities are largely built in by the manufacturer's choice of materials and care of processing; and that fungi rank among the most lethal enemies of stored discs. But it is encouraging also to learn that most vinylites and many shellacs (as well as most current types of magnetic tapes)—if proper precautions are taken. And many connoisseur collectors may be especially delighted by the investigators' earnest recommendations that manufacturers not only adopt the generally improved materials, packaging and shipping methods, that are available nowadays, but also venture on limited editions specifically designed for archive preservation (Library of Congress, via Government Printing Office, paper, 45¢).

**Beethoven's Beloved.** Perhaps the greatest of musical-biography enigmas is the identity of the "Immortal Beloved" to whom Beethoven addressed the most famous of all his letters, and who is believed by many to have been the inspiration of *An die ferne Geliebte* and perhaps numerous other works. Various likely candidates have been suggested over the years, but none more vigorously and emotionally than by the late Dana Steichen (wife of the famous photographer and herself a passionate musical amateur), who here pleads the cause of an entirely new name—Countess Anna Marie Erdödy, née Niczky, to whom Beethoven dedicated his two piano trios, Op. 70. Mrs. Steichen has a plausible-enough case to begin with and some of her deductions are extremely ingenious, but she defeats

*Continued on page 30*





TD-124  
Turntable **\$99.75 net.**  
(Base only \$9.00)

## A pleasure to buy..

Thorens has thought of many ways to make *buying* a Thorens TD-124 a distinct pleasure. A Thorens franchised dealer is a man of broad knowledge and ability, can command your immediate respect, That's why there aren't too many of them. The service *after* you buy is just as important as the initial sale. You get an almost unheard of full one year guarantee. All this in addition to "music as it's meant to be heard." See your Thorens dealer tomorrow . . . you're in for a real treat.



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**SWISS MADE PRODUCTS** HI-FI COMPONENTS • MUSIC BOXES  
SPRING-POWERED SHAVERS • LIGHTERS • New Hyde Park, New York

## a continuing pleasure to own!

No other turntable combines all these features. The Thorens TD-124 gives you . . .

- 4 speeds—plays any record you have or can buy.
- Easy-to-use illuminated strobe lets you set exact record speed for best musical reproduction *while* record is playing.
- Extra heavy table (11½ lbs.) for extra smooth running . . . includes light-weight aluminum cueing table.
- Built-in level with easy-to-get-at fingertip control.
- Easy arm installation or change.
- Motor operates on 50/60 cps, any voltage from 100 to 250.

This isn't all . . . when you see it, you'll agree that this is the turntable you've been waiting for.

0.1

# What's the latest score on cartridges?

✓	<b>1<sup>ST</sup></b>	ceramic cartridge was invented by Sonotone...
✓	<b>13</b>	years ago. Today, over...
✓	<b>65</b>	different manufacturers have specified Sonotone for...
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✓	<b>9,000,000</b>	Sonotone Ceramic Cartridges have been used for original and replacement purposes. ('Nuff said!)

**Sonotone** CORP.

Electronic Applications Division, Dept. C4-10

**ELMSFORD, NEW YORK**

In Canada, contact Atlas Radio Corp., Ltd., Toronto

Leading makers of fine ceramic cartridges, speakers, microphones, electronic tubes.

## BOOKS IN REVIEW

Continued from page 28

herself in the end by a compulsion to find the Countess' influence in practically everything Beethoven wrote after meeting her, and to "correct" every earlier writer whose evidence tends to weaken her own argument. Nor does the added "Study of a Study," by Dale S. Kugel, which endeavors to document the Erdödy case by musical analysis of obsessive Beethovenian thematic fragments, add much conviction. In fact, Mrs. Steichen would have been better advised to recast her notions and "discoveries" in the form of a frankly fictional work or to have written a biography of the lady herself, who, whatever her relationship to Beethoven may have been, was certainly a fascinating personality in her own right (Doubleday, \$6.95).

Mozart and His Times, by Erich Schenk, a noted Austrian musicologist and Mozart specialist, immediately takes a high place in the enormous Mozartean literature by reason of both its authority (soundly based on the latest scholarly researches) and sheer scope (probably the largest of Mozart biographies since Jahn's, and certainly one of the handsomest in its printing and illustrations). And since the author eschews strictly musical analysis to concentrate on the "life" alone, he has been able to include an extraordinary wealth of documentary detail. For earnest Mozartean, then, the new Schenk work (admirably translated here by Richard and Clara Winston from the 1955 German original) will be a valued acquisition, but for less omnivorous collectors it is far less essential than the Mozart Family Letters and the works of W. A. Turner, Einstein, Dent, and even Eduard Mörike's fictional story of *Mozart on the Way to Prague*—in each of which the man himself comes far more vividly to life than he ever does in Schenk's richly informative but overobjective pages (Knopf, \$10).

Subway to the Met and Please Don't Hate Me. The present volumes are only too characteristic of the current trend to folksy human-interest stories, entertaining enough but signifying little: in the former Kyle Crichton recounts Risé Stevens' "own lighthearted story of the long road from the Bronx to the Met"; in the latter Prosper Buranelli puts into idiomatic English Dimitri Tiomkin's tale of his even longer road from Czarist and revolutionary Russia to Hollywood and the scores for *High Noon*, etc. The fact

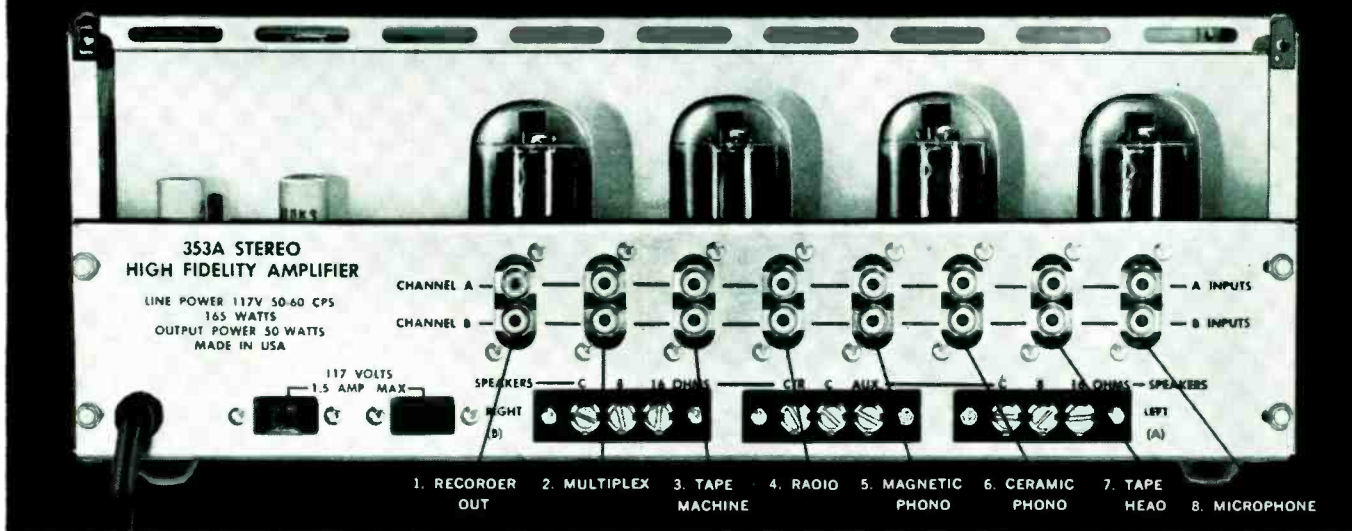
Continued on page 32





*in performance, chassis design, control flexibility...*

## ALTEC'S 50 WATT 353A IS THE FINEST STEREO AMPLIFIER BUILT



**FULL SIZE POWER TUBES**—Four 6L6GC power tubes (a vastly improved version of the standard 6L6) provide undistorted peak power. Each tube operates completely within its rated capacity. You get better performance, longer tube life.

**LARGE OUTPUT TRANSFORMERS**—The power handling capability of a transformer at low frequency is determined by size. The 353A employs two output transformers large enough to handle the full audio frequency range, from 10 to 30,000 cps.

**BETTER VENTILATED CHASSIS**—Altec divides the 353A chassis into two separate sections to eliminate troublesome thermal paths that cause overheating. Altec engineers have placed components so that normal room air-flow properly ventilates the entire chassis. Output tubes are mounted on a separate base at the back of the chassis. Heat is forced directly out the back and away from front section. Transformers are protected against heat transference from output tubes by air separation and a metal guard plate. A specially engineered heat shield protects the cabinet top. The unit can be conveniently mounted in wooden cabinet installations if desired.

**CONTROLS:** Input selector switch • Channel balance control • Dual gain control • Dual bass control • Dual treble control • Stereo two channel—three channel switch • Stereo-Monophonic switch • Rumble filter switch • Loudness contour switch.

**AC CIRCUIT BREAKER**—A trip-free circuit breaker replaces the old-fashioned fuse to protect against thermal overload. Circuit breaker can be reset only when trouble is corrected and the 353A is ready for normal operation.

**DECORATOR COLORS**—The new 353A is handsomely designed to enhance any decor. You may select from two panel finishes—Platinum Gold, or Platinum Pink.

**SPECIAL FEATURES:** Recorder outputs independent of gain and tone control • Dual microphone inputs for stereo recording • 14 stereo or mono inputs • 6 stereo or mono outputs • adds left and right stereo program for single speaker use at remote locations • center speaker output for full three speaker stereo.

**SPECIFICATIONS:** POWER OUTPUT: 100 watts stereo program peak power, 50 watts rms continuous, 25 watts per channel (nominal), stereo or mono. DISTORTION: Less than 1% THD at 25 watts 1,000 cps, each channel; less than 1% THD at 20 watts 30 to 15,000 cps, each channel. FREQUENCY RESPONSE:  $\pm 1.0$  db 20 to 20,000 cps at 25 watts;  $\pm 0.5$  db 10 to 30,000 cps at 1 watt. TONE CONTROL RANGE:  $\pm 14$  db at 50 cps;  $\pm 14$  db at 10,000 cps. DIMENSIONS: 5 $\frac{7}{8}$ " H x 15" W x 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ " D. WEIGHT: Approximately 35 pounds.

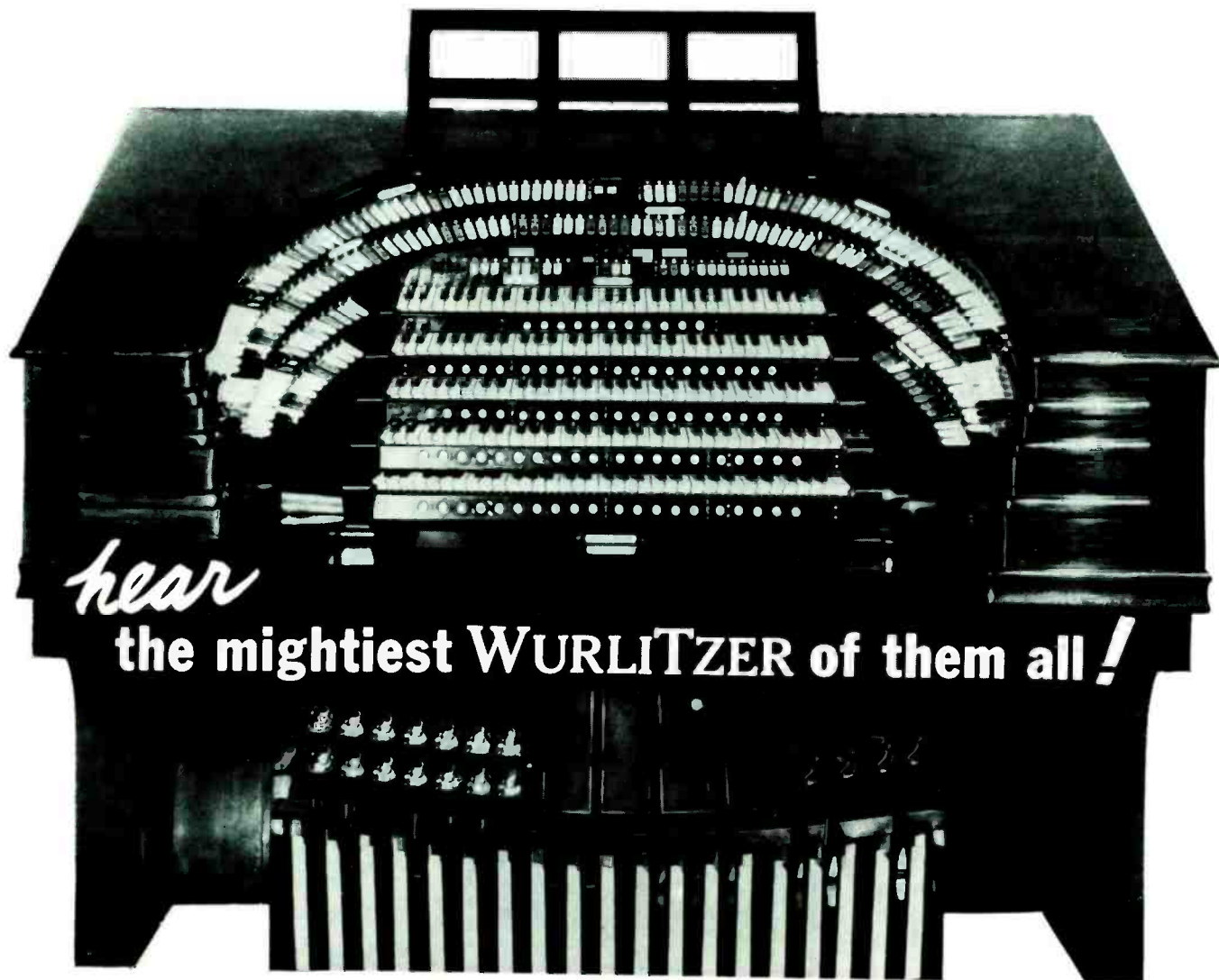
PRICE: \$199.50



ALTEC LANSING CORP., Dept. 1H, 1515 S. Manchester Ave., Anaheim, Calif. / 161 Sixth Avenue, New York 13, New York  
a subsidiary of Ling-Altec Electronics, Inc.

# GEORGE WRIGHT

Has Made Over 3,000,000 Record Buyers Pipe Happy!



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**the mightiest WURLITZER of them all!**

**14** *ON* **EXCITING  
ALBUMS  
TO SHOW OFF  
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## STEREOPHONIC HIFIRECORD

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- R707 More George Wright
- R708 George Wright's Showtime
- R710 The George Wright Sound
- R721 Have Organ Will Travel

## STEREOPHONIC HIFTAPE

- R712 George Wright Plays the Conn Electric Organ
- R713 The Genius of George Wright
- R714 Hymns That Live (George Wright Pipe Organ)
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- R716 George Wright Goes South Pacific
- R717 George Wright's Flight to Tokyo
- R718 The Roaring 20's

*Available at record shops and HIFI equipment dealers everywhere*

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# New Stereo Amplifiers

*MORE OF THE BEST FROM THE LEADER . . .*

Heathkit, first in performance, quality and dependability, proudly presents a host of new, outstanding do-it-yourself projects designed, as always, to bring you the finest in kit-form electronics.

*FOR THE FINEST IN STEREO . . .*

## 14/14-WATT STEREO AMPLIFIER KIT (SA-2)

A complete dual channel amplifier/preamplifier combination, the new Heathkit SA-2, in one compact, handsomely styled unit provides every modern feature required for superb stereo reproduction . . . yet is priced well within your budget.

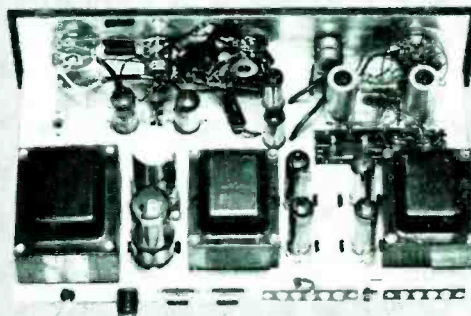
Delivers 14 watts per channel stereo, or 28 watts total monophonic. Maximum flexibility is provided by the 6-position function switch which gives you instant selection of "Amp. A" or "Amp. B" for single channel monophonic; "Mono. A" or "Mono. B" for dual channel monophonic using both amplifiers and either preamp; and "Stereo" or "Stereo reverse". A four-position input selector switch provides choice of magnetic phono, crystal phono, tuner, and high level auxiliary input for tape recorder, TV, etc. The magnetic phono input is RIAA equalized and features 3 mv sensitivity—adequate for the lowest output cartridges available today.

Other features include a speaker phasing switch, two AC outlets for accessory equipment and hum balance controls in each channel. As beautiful as it is functional, the SA-2 will be a proud addition to your stereo sound system. Shpg. Wt. 23 lbs.

**SPECIFICATIONS—Power output:** 14 watts per channel, "hi-fi"; 12 watts per channel, "professional"; 16 watts per channel, "utility". **Power response:**  $\pm 1$  db from 20 cps to 20 kc at 14 watts output. **Total harmonic distortion:** less than 2%; 30 cps to 15 kc at 14 watts output. **Intermodulation distortion:** less than 1% at 16 watts output using 60 cps and 6 kc signal mixed 4:1. **Hum and noise:** mag. phono input, 47 db below 14 watts; tuner and crystal phono, 63 db below 14 watts. **Controls:** dual clutched volume; ganged bass, ganged treble; 4-position selector; speaker phasing switch. **AC receptacle:** 1 switched, 1 normal. **Inputs:** 4 stereo or 3 monophonic. **Outputs:** 4, 8 and 16 ohms. **Dimensions:** 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ " H. x 15" W. x 8" D. **Power requirements:** 117 volts 50/60 cycle, AC, 150 watts (fused).



HEATHKIT SA-2  
**\$52<sup>95</sup>**



## STEREO PERFORMANCE AT MINIMUM COST

### ECONOMY STEREO AMPLIFIER KIT (SA-3)

The amazing SA-3 delivers more than enough power for pure undistorted room-filling stereophonic sound at the lowest price anywhere. Delivers 3 watts per channel stereo—or 6 watts monophonic. The built-in high level preamplifier has two separate inputs for each channel, designed for use with ceramic or crystal cartridge record players, tuners, tape recorders, etc. Ganged tone controls provide convenient bass "boost" and treble "cut" action, while a dual concentric clutched volume control makes possible precise channel balancing. A channel reversing position is provided on the function switch and a speaker phasing switch on the back panel allows optimum performance with any speaker system. Tastefully styled in black with gold trim. Shpg. Wt. 13 lbs.

**SPECIFICATIONS—Power output:** 3 watts per channel. **Power response:**  $\pm 1$  db from 50 cps, 20 kc at 3 watts out. **Total harmonic distortion:** less than 3%; 60 cps, 20 kc. **Intermodulation distortion:** less than 2% @ 3 watts output using 60 cycle 4.6 kc signal mixed 4:1. **Hum and noise:** 65 db below full output. **Controls:** dual clutched volume; ganged bass; ganged treble; 7-position selector; speaker phasing switch; on-off switch. **Inputs (each channel):** tuner, crystal or ceramic phono. **Outputs (each channel):** 4, 8, 16 ohms. **Finish:** black with gold trim. **Dimensions:** 12 $\frac{1}{2}$ " W. x 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ " D. x 3 $\frac{3}{4}$ " H.



HEATHKIT SA-3  
**\$29<sup>95</sup>**

**HEATH COMPANY** / Benton Harbor, Michigan

 a subsidiary of Daystrom, Inc.

# New Amplifiers & Tuners

A NEW AMPLIFIER AND PREAMP UNIT  
PRICED WELL WITHIN ANY BUDGET

## 14-WATT HI-FI AMPLIFIER KIT (EA-3)

This thrilling successor to the famous Heathkit EA-2 is one of the finest investments anyone can make in a top quality monophonic high fidelity amplifier. It delivers a full 14 watts of hi-fi rated power and easily meets professional standards as a 12 watt amplifier.

Rich, full range sound reproduction and low noise and distortion are achieved through careful design using the latest developments in the audio field. Miniature tubes are used throughout, including EL-84 output tubes in a push-pull output circuit with a special-design output transformer. The built-in preamplifier has three separate switch-selected inputs for magnetic phono, crystal phono or tape and AM-FM tuner. RIAA equalization is featured on the magnetic phono input. The stunning new styling of the EA-3 represents the latest word in modern design, with mar-proof vinyl-clad steel cover in black leather-like texture, inlaid gold design and brushed gold trim. Shpg. Wt. 15 lbs.

**NOTE THESE OUTSTANDING SPECIFICATIONS—Power output:** 14 watts, Hi-Fi; 12 watts Professional; 16 watts Utility. **Power response:**  $\pm 1$  db from 20 cps to 20 kc at 14 watts output. **Total harmonic distortion:** less than 2%, 30 cps to 15 kc at 14 watts output. **Intermodulation distortion:** less than 1% at 16 watts output using 60 cps and 6 kc signal mixed 4:1. **Hum and noise:** mag. phono input, 47 db below 14 watts; tuner and crystal phono, 63 db below 14 watts. **Output impedances:** 4, 8 and 16 ohms.



**NEW**

HEATHKIT EA-3  
\$29<sup>95</sup>

MORE STATIONS AND TRUE FM QUALITY ARE YOURS  
WITH THIS FINE TUNER KIT

## HIGH FIDELITY FM TUNER KIT (FM-4)

This handsomely styled FM tuner features better than 2.5 microvolt sensitivity, automatic frequency control (AFC) with on-off switch, flywheel tuning and prewired, prealigned and pretested tuning unit. Clean chassis layout, prealigned intermediate stage transformers and assembled tuning unit makes construction simple—guarantees top performance. Flywheel tuning and new soft, evenly-lighted dial scale provide smooth, effortless operation. Vinyl-covered case has black, simulated-leather texture with gold design and trim. Multiplex adapter output also provided. Shpg. Wt. 8 lbs.

**SPECIFICATIONS—Tuning range:** 88 to 108 mc. **Quieting sensitivity:** 2.5 uv for 20 db of quieting. **IF frequency:** 13.7 mc. **Image ratio:** 45 db. **AFC correction factor:** 75 kc per volt. **AM suppression:** 25 db. **Frequency response:**  $\pm 2$  db 20 to 20,000 cps. **Harmonic distortion:** less than 1.5%, 1,100 uv, 400 cycles 100% modulation. **Intermodulation distortion:** less than 1%. **60 cycle signal:** 16 kc mixed 1:4:1 1,100 uv, 30% modulation. **Antenna:** 300 ohm, unbalanced. **Output impedance:** 600 ohms (without follower). **Output voltage:** nominal .5 volt (with 30% modulation, 20 uv signal). **Overall dimensions:** 4 1/2" H. x 13 1/4" W. x 5 1/2" D.



**NEW**

HEATHKIT FM-4  
\$34<sup>95</sup>



HEATHKIT UA-2  
\$22<sup>95</sup>

**NEW**



HEATHKIT W-7A  
\$54<sup>95</sup>

**NEW**



HEATHKIT SP-2A  
(two channel stereo).  
Shpg. Wt. 15 lbs.  
\$56<sup>95</sup>

**NEW**

HEATHKIT C-SP-1A (converts SP-1A to SP-2A).  
Shpg. Wt. 4 lbs. \$21.95

HEATHKIT SP-1A (single channel monophonic). Shpg.  
Wt. 13 lbs. \$37.95

NEVER BEFORE HAS ANY HI-FI AMPLIFIER  
OFFERED SO MUCH AT SO LOW A PRICE!

## "UNIVERSAL" 14-WATT HI-FI AMPLIFIER KIT (UA-2)

Meeting 14-watt "hi-fi" and 12-watt "professional" standards the UA-2 lives up to its title "universal" performing with equal brilliance in the most demanding monophonic or stereophonic high fidelity systems. Its high quality, remarkable economy and ease of assembly make it one of the finest values in high fidelity equipment. Buy two for stereo. Shpg. Wt. 13 lbs.

## WORLD'S BIGGEST BARGAIN IN A HI-FI AMPLIFIER

### 55-WATT HI-FI AMPLIFIER KIT (W-7A)

Utilizing advanced design in components and tubes to achieve unprecedented performance with fewer parts, Heathkit has produced the world's first and only "dollar-a-watt" genuine high fidelity amplifier. Meeting full 55 watt hi-fi rating and 55-watt professional standards, the new improved W-7A provides a comfortable margin of distortion-free power for any high fidelity application.

The clean, open layout of chassis and precut cabled wiring harness makes the W-7A extremely easy to assemble. Shpg. Wt. 28 lbs.

### STEREO-MONO PREAMPLIFIER KIT (SP-2A)

Available in two outstanding versions! SP-2A (stereo) and SP-1A (monophonic). SP-1A convertible to stereo with conversion kit C-SP-1A. Use with any basic amplifier as the control center of your entire high fidelity system. Six inputs in each channel accommodate most any program source. Switch selection of NARTB or RIAA, LP, and 78 rpm record compensation.



# New **HEATHKIT** Tape Recorders



## PROFESSIONAL QUALITY TAPE RECORDER KITS (TR-1 Series)

Enjoy the incomparable performance of these professional quality tape recorders at less than half the usual cost. These outstanding kits offer a combination of features found only in much higher priced professional equipment, generally selling for \$350 to \$400. Not the least of these special features is the handsome styling which characterizes the kits . . . a semi-gloss black panel is set off by a plastic escutcheon in soft gold, which is matched by black control knobs with gold inserts. The mechanical assembly, with fast forward and rewind functions, comes to you completely assembled and adjusted; you build only the tape amplifier. And, you'll find this very easy to accomplish, since the two circuit boards eliminate much of the wiring. Separate record and playback heads and amplifiers allow monitoring from tape while recording and a "pause" control permits instant starting and stopping of tape for accurate cueing and tape editing. A digit counter is provided for convenient selection of any particular recording. Push-pull knob provides instant selection of 3¾ or 7½ IPS tape speed. Safety interlock on record switch reduces possibility of accidental erasure of recorded tapes. Shpg. Wt. 30 lbs.

**SPECIFICATIONS—Tape speed:** 7.5" and 3.75" per second. **Maximum reel size:** 7". **Frequency response (record-playback):** ±2.5 db, 30 to 12,000 cps at 7.5 IPS; ±2.5 db, 30 to 6,500 cps at 3.75 IPS. **Harmonic distortion:** 1% or less at normal recording level; 3% or less at peak recording level. **Signal-to-noise ratio:** 50 db or better; referred to normal recording level. **Flutter and wow:** 0.3% RMS at 7.5 IPS; 0.35% RMS at 3.75 IPS. **Heads (3):** erase, record, and in-line stereo playback (TR-1C, monophonic playback). **Playback equalization:** NARTB curve, within ±2 db. **Inputs (2):** microphone and line. **Input impedance:** 1 megohm. **Model TR-1D & TR-1E outputs (2):** A and B stereo channels. **Model TR-1C output (1):** monophonic. **Output levels:** approximately 2 volts maximum. **Output impedance:** approximately 600 ohm (cathode followers). **Recording level indicator:** professional type db meter. **Bias erase frequency:** 60 kc. **Timing accuracy:** ±2%. **Power requirements:** 105-125 volts AC, 60 cycles, 35 watts. **Dimensions:** 15½" W. x 13½" D. Total height 10½". **Mounting:** requires minimum of 8½" below and 1½" above mounting surface. May be operated in either horizontal or vertical position.

**MODEL TR-1C Monophonic Tape Deck:** Monophonic Record and Playback. **\$159<sup>95</sup>**  
\$16.00 DN., \$14.00 MO.

**MODEL TR-1D Two Track Stereo Tape Deck:** Monophonic Record and Playback, plus Playback of 2-track Pre-recorded Stereo Tapes (stacked). **\$169<sup>95</sup>**  
\$17.00 DN., \$15.00 MO.

**MODEL TR-1E Four Track Stereo Tape Deck:** Monophonic Record and Playback, plus Playback of 4-track Pre-recorded Stereo Tapes (stacked). **\$179<sup>95</sup>**  
\$18.00 DN., \$16.00 MO.

**MODEL C-TR-1C Conversion Kit:** Converts TR-1C to TR-1D (see TR-1D description above). Shpg. Wt. 2 lbs. **\$19.95**

**MODEL C-TR-1D Conversion Kit:** Converts TR-1D to TR-1E (see TR-1E description above). Shpg. Wt. 2 lbs. **\$14.95**

**MODEL C-TR-1CQ:** Converts TR-1C to TR-1E (see TR-1E description above). Shpg. Wt. 2 lbs. **\$19.95**

## STEREO-MONO TAPE RECORDER KITS (TR-1A Series)

Here are the tape recorders the avid hi-fi fan will find most appealing! Their complete flexibility in installation and many functions make them our most versatile tape recorder kits. This outstanding tape recorder now can be purchased in any of the three versions. You can buy the new two-track (TR-1AH) or four-track (TR-1AQ) versions which record and playback both stereo and monophonic programming, or the two-track monophonic record-playback version (TR-1A) and later convert to either two-track or four-track record-playback models by purchasing the MK-4 or MK-5 conversion kits. The tape deck mechanism is extremely simple to assemble. Long, faithful service is assured by precision bearings and close machining tolerances that hold flutter and wow to less than 0.35%. Power is provided by a four-pole, fan-cooled induction motor. One lever controls all tape handling functions of forward, fast-forward or rewind modes of operation. The deck handles up to 7" tape reels at 7.5 or 3.75 IPS as determined by belt position. The TR-1A series decks may be mounted in either a vertical or horizontal position (mounting brackets included). The TE-1 Tape Electronics kits supplied feature NARTB equalization, separate record and playback gain controls and a safety interlock. Provision is made for mike or line inputs and recording level is indicated on a 6E5 "magic eye" tube. Two circuit boards simplify assembly.

**MODEL TR-1A:** Monophonic two-track record/playback with fast forward and rewind functions. Includes one TE-4 Tape Electronics kit. Shpg. Wt. 24 lbs. **\$99<sup>95</sup>**  
\$10.00 DN., \$9.00 MO.

**TR-1A SPECIFICATIONS—Frequency response:** 7.5 IPS ±3 db 50 to 12,000 cps; 3.75 IPS ±3 db 50 to 7,000 cps. **Signal-to-noise ratio:** better than 45 db below full output of 1.25 volts/channel. **Harmonic distortion:** less than 2% at full output. **Bias erase frequency:** 60 kc (push-pull oscillator).

**MODEL TR-1AH:** Two-track monophonic and stereo record/playback with fast forward and rewind functions. Two TE-1 Tape Electronics kits. Shpg. Wt. 36 lbs. **\$149<sup>95</sup>**  
\$15.00 DN., \$13.00 MO.

**TR-1AH SPECIFICATIONS—Frequency response:** 7.5 IPS ±3 db 40 to 15,000 cps; 3.75 IPS ±3 db 40 to 10,000 cps. **Signal-to-noise ratio:** 45 db below full output of 1 volt/channel. **Harmonic distortion:** less than 2% at full output. **Bias erase frequency:** 60 kc (push-pull oscillator).

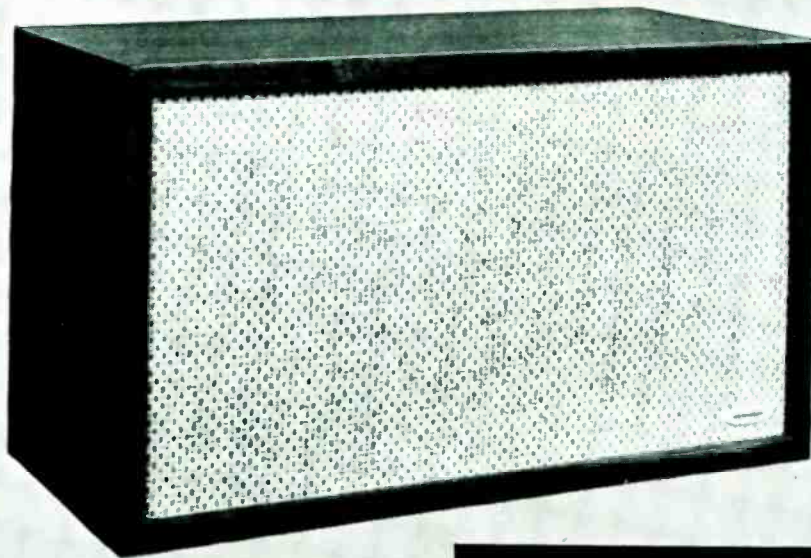
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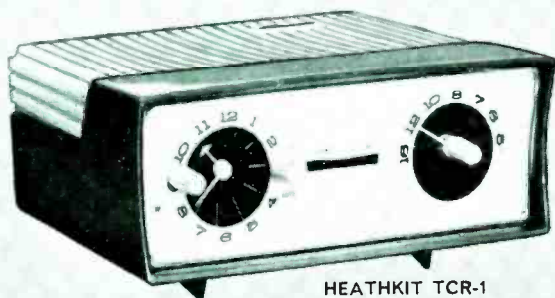


### NEW COAXIAL HI-FI SPEAKER KIT (US-3)

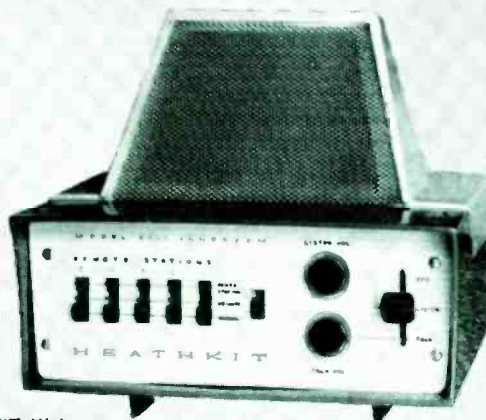
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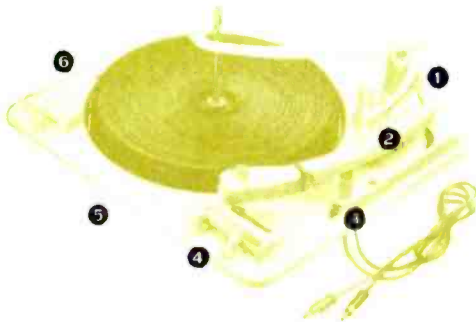
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## Musical Suggestion Box

LAST MONTH John Indcox assayed the yield of disc stereo in its first full calendar year, 1959. He compiled quite a tempting list, and one of considerable variety. The diskeries (as the trade papers call record companies) are not doing at all badly. Still, of course, they've been working in a hurry; hence they have made omissions. It occurred to us that we could help them, i.e., render their lives more miserable, by suggesting some records they ought to have made by the time Mr. Indcox gets around to his 1960 summation.

The source for such suggestions was at hand, our Editorial Board. This consists, I may say, altogether of men to whom music serves as a living companion; so they are always as ready for its wit as for its wisdom. They were asked for purely personal suggestions, just whatever their wants were. As example, the chairman (undersigned) listed his own choices: Haydn's 39th Symphony; Weber's *Der Freischütz*; Goldmark's *Rustic Wedding* Symphony; Thomson and Stein's *Four Saints in Three Acts*; De Koven's *Robin Hood*.

Three members couldn't contribute. Dr. Howard Hanson, Director of the Eastman School of Music, was away working with the President's Music Committee. Francis Robinson, assistant manager of the Metropolitan Opera, had a season beginning and no time to cogitate. Julian Hirsch, of the Hirsch-Houck Laboratories, was deep in sine waves, which come thickest in winter.

In the answers which did arrive, be it noted (by record makers, especially) that three works received two votes each: Beethoven's *Wellington's Victory*; Stravinsky's *Symphonie des psaumes*; Virgil Thomson's *Four Saints*.

E. Power Biggs, leading American organist, answered from a Baltimore hotel room, where he was stopping on tour. The gist of his message was: Poulenc. He's been a Poulenc man ever since he made the first American LP of the Poulenc Organ Concerto (the only one, in fact, that has survived in the catalogues), and he thinks we need more, more, more Poulenc. Amen.

Nathan Broder, associate editor of *Musical Quarterly*, chose Mozart's *Zauberflöte*; Verdi's *Otello* and *Requiem*; Berg's *Wozzeck*; Ives's *The Unanswer'd Question*; Stravinsky's *Symphonie des psaumes*; Samuel Barber's *Essay* No. 2; and William Schuman's Third Symphony.

R. D. Darrell, editor of the world's first record encyclopedia, came up with suggestions of works never recorded at all before: Albinoni's *Two Fugues on a Subject*

by Bach; Handel's dramatic oratorios *Saul* and *Jephtha* in their original forms; and Henry Gilbert's *Symphonic Piece*. To these he added the Mozart Bassoon Concerto; Stravinsky's *Orpheus* and *Symphonie des psaumes*; Handel's Double-Wind Concertos; the Smetana-Szell orchestral version of *From My Life*; Couperin's *Leçons de ténèbres*; and *Four Saints* again.

Alfred Frankenstein, music and art critic of the *San Francisco Chronicle*, proposed Mussorgsky's *Boris Godunov* in its original version; Vaughan Williams' *Sir John in Love*; the Mozart C minor Mass; Delius' *Sea Drift*; Roger Sessions' String Quintet; Randall Thompson's *Requiem*; Schoenberg's *Gurrelieder*; Dallapiccola's *The Prisoner*; Monteverdi's *L'Incoronazione di Poppea*; a selection of William Billings' Anthems and Fuguing Tunes; Berlioz's *Benvenuto Cellini*. And, finally, *Wellington's Victory* ("with the English army in one speaker and the French in the other").

Robert Charles Marsh, music critic of the *Chicago Sun-Times*, also voted for *Wellington's Victory*, although without specifying tactical dispositions. Further he wanted the Mahler Third and Eighth Symphonies; *Siegfried* (with a realistic dragon fight); Rimsky-Korsakov's ("inspired nonsense") *Le Coq d'or*; Berlioz's *Les Troyens*; Smetana's *The Bartered Bride*; Robert Parris' Timpani Concerto; and some of the Gabrieli Processional Music.

The longest telegram came from the honored violinist Joseph Szigeti, and I will use his own words: "I suggest reconstruction of a camp meeting like the one Charles Ives speaks of, complete with hymn singing and organ, et cetera. Second suggestion: Jacques Ibert's lightweight opera *Angélique*, which I took Klemperer to see in Paris in the late 1920s and which enchanted him. If I am not mistaken, he produced it later in Berlin. Third suggestion: something by Johann Georg Pisendel (1687-1755), a pupil of Vivaldi who was also personally acquainted with Bach. The little I know of his music whets my appetite for more."

In view of the deluge of black diamonds, signifying deletions, in the Schwann LP catalogues lately, a drive in the direction of enriching the stereo repertoire and heightening its variety is clearly indicated, to make up for the monophonic depletion. Our probe here has been a modest one, but we hope it may stir interest.

JOHN M. CONLY

AS THE EDITORS SEE IT



**A Visit to Verdi's Sant' Agata**

*If a music-dramatist is not to die young, as Mozart did, probably he must have a retreat from the centers of artistic warfare. Giuseppe Verdi died old: hence we have Otello and Falstaff. We owe them to a house, a garden, and a quiet pond in the flat Po Valley.*

The  
Pavilion  
of the  
Open  
Sky





by **WILLIAM WEAVER**

**F**OR THE PAST YEAR I have had the particular pleasure of reading through various collections of Verdi's letters, including some not yet published. They are, of course, a fascinating study; and although most of them are concerned with business—or, at least, the business of writing operas—some reveal the writer's most personal feelings. Verdi did not love many people: his wife, his patron and father-in-law, a few trusted friends like Countess Maffei and, at the end of his life, Boito; and he loved even fewer places. But one spot he felt profoundly and permanently bound to. This was his home, the villa at Sant' Agata, near Busseto, which he bought in 1849 at the peak of his career and which he spent the rest of his life improving and embellishing.

I first saw the house in December, a year ago. "The country is sad, silent, and bare in winter. Then I do not love it." Thus wrote Giuseppina Strepponi, Verdi's second wife, not long after she and Verdi had settled at the villa. And even today, in a century of all-pervading noise, the country around Sant' Agata is silent. Its winter is still sad and bare, too. Mists sweep over the flat plains, strawstacks bulk shapelessly and ominously in the gray light. It is, indeed, not a country to love at first sight.

The villa is not inhabited during the winter months. Its owners, Verdi's heirs, the Carrara Verdi family, move every October to nearby Busseto, where they have a notary's office (in Italy, the notary functions rather like the solicitor in England), carrying on the tradition of their great-grandfather and his son, who married Maria Verdi, the composer's cousin. Signorina Carla Carrara Verdi, a charming and friendly titian-haired girl, kindly offered to accompany me out to the villa and show me through it.

When we got there, even though it was early afternoon, the garden was dark and gloomy, almost conspiratorial; but I wanted to look at it for a moment before entering the house. Tall trees seemed to dwarf the curving paths that Verdi had laid out, and at the end of the garden, the little artificial lake—his mud puddle, he called it—was shrouded in haze. Beyond the lake, a gate led into the open country, and on either side of an alley of bare trees the dormant winter fields stretched away—the farms in which Verdi had soundly invested a good part of his earnings. He knew them all by name, these fields; and in the last year of his life, when he was drawing up his will in Milan, he could tick off the farms, one by one, as if naming his children.

Inside, my first impression of the house was its comfort. In their day the furnishings were surely in the very finest taste; they belong to a period now out of favor, but the heavy plush hangings, the lace curtains, the dark overstuffed sofas and chairs have an antiquated, family charm. There is no mistaking the fact that the house was

—and is—a pleasant and easy place to live, and evidence of the pleasure Verdi took in it is everywhere. His guns and hunting equipment are still kept in good order; his writing table—in the little study off his bedroom—remains where it always was, facing a window which overlooks the back entrance of the house, so that the owner could observe the comings and goings of his workmen and farmers.

Verdi's music library is smaller than one might expect: mostly piano scores of operas by his contemporaries, and the four-hand piano literature he used to play for fun with such musical guests as Boito and his publisher, Tito Ricordi. His sets of Shakespeare and of Wagner's *Scrivi* are on the little shelf within reach of his bed, in a room cluttered with souvenirs, portraits of friends and heroes, like Alessandro Manzoni. There is also an ample room dedicated to a huge billiard table, and next to it, a good-sized library, where a heterogeneous collection—obviously all personal choices—is housed in glass-front cases. The dining room can hold a dozen people without crowding (a TV set is now discreetly placed in one corner); and the display of glass and porcelain on the shelves confirms Verdi's reputation as a good host. "I ate too poorly in my day to be able to give up the pleasure of eating fairly well now," Verdi once said in later life.

As she led me from room to room, opening cabinets and removing dust covers, Signorina Carla kept apologizing for the severe cold in the house. "You must come back and see it in summer," she repeated.

And I did. While my first visit had been greatly interesting and useful in revealing many facets of Verdi's personality (Sant' Agata is as much his own creation as one of his operas), the second visit was deeply moving. I went in mid-September, and in the fine sunny weather the countryside was like a different land.



Citterio

*The main façade, shaded by the willows Verdi planted.*

"It's impossible to find an uglier place than this," I had read in a letter of Verdi's written from Sant' Agata in 1858. And though I knew that Verdi had been joking, or rather trying to mask under gruffness a passionate love for his land, even so, on the strength of my first visit, I would have been inclined to take him at his word. The choice of Busseto seemed incredible: in 1849 Verdi was a rich man, any city in Europe would have welcomed him, and in Italy—a country famous for its spectacular landscapes—he picked the one dull region. The fact that he was born there is counterbalanced by the fact that, by 1849, he had quarreled with the people of the neighborhood more than once.

But, seeing the country in September, I could understand Verdi's choice. The charm of the Po plain is subtle. As I drove from Parma to Busseto, the fields were green and glowing, prim rows of leafy trees separated one farm from the next, families out digging up sugar beets (an important local crop) looked up and smiled as I went by. All was a picture of sanity, sobriety, and health. If this is a taciturn country, it is one made after Verdi's own image. Not for him the flamboyant beauty of a Venice or the pastel loveliness of an Amalfi or Capri.

The villa itself, seen as Verdi would have wanted it to be seen (he, too, shut it up in winter and moved away, to Genoa or Milan), expresses the owner's character: reserved on the outside, warm within. The neat, anonymous wall that runs along the little country road hardly gives an idea of the luxuriant park it encloses. Two weeping willows, planted by Verdi, stand at the entrance (Ghislanzoni, the librettist of *Aida*, found these trees highly exotic and expressive of the composer's "poetical" side). The façade is plain yellow stucco, and long French windows open from all the ground-floor rooms onto the garden, which in September is a cool and shady haven, with stands of magnolia and lacy shrubs. An arbor covers a sandy court where *bocce*—the Italian version of lawn bowls—was played.

I found the rooms, too, airier and brighter than they had seemed to me the previous winter, and it became possible to imagine the life lived here in the days of the composer, those long, leisurely days in the periods when he wasn't writing music, with the welcome visits of the few intimate friends he invited into his home: his librettists, his publisher, the singer Teresa Stolz, his sister-in-law Barberina Strepponi. And as I walked again into the bedroom—dominated by the long Erard grand piano—I could hear the notes of *Otello* and *Falstaff*, composed on it, and I recalled reading how Verdi would often get up in the heart of the night and would



Beffmann  
Giuseppina Strepponi, Verdi's "Peppina."

call through the open door into the adjoining bedroom for his Peppina to listen to the music that had just come to him.

The present inhabitants of the house—Signorina Carla, her sister Gabriella, her brother Alberto, and their mother—have managed to achieve something rare and admirable: they have kept the house and the garden virtually as they were when Verdi left them, over half a century ago, but at the same time they have not allowed the place to acquire the chilling

museum pall of houses that become shrines. If Verdi were to return to Sant' Agata tomorrow, he would be able to find his way around in the dark.

And if he did come back, surely one of the things that would most please him would be the presence of a fine collection of dogs: two handsome (though, alas, not overfriendly) German shepherds named Beauty and Black, the latter named after a favorite dog of the composer's frequently referred to in his letters (usually misspelled "Blach"), plus a dignified and sweet-natured Great Dane called Astra, and Aroldo, a playful young bulldog.

In talking about the composer and his wife, the Carrara Verdis refer to them familiarly and affectionately as "il maestro" and "zia Peppina." You feel almost as if they were alive and around the house somewhere, perhaps in the next room. Certainly if ghosts exist and can choose their abode, Verdi's ghost is not at La Scala, but in some part of Sant' Agata.

The house was an obsession with him. In a letter to Countess Maffei, Peppina Verdi describes the origin of this passion:

"Many years ago (I don't dare say how many), I asked Verdi with some insistence to leave Paris in order to go out beneath the pavilion of the open sky and take those baths of air and sun which give vigor to the body as well as calm to the mind. Verdi, who—like Auber—had almost a horror of staying in the country, after much beseeching consented to take a little house a short distance from Paris. This new life was for Verdi a revelation. He began to love it with such passion that I found myself overwhelmed and paid back only too well for my love of the gods of the woods. He bought the land at S. Agata, and I—who had already furnished a house in Milan and another in Paris—had to organize a *pied-à-terre* for the illustrious professor of Le Roncole. To our infinite pleasure we began to plant a garden, which at first was called 'Peppina's garden.' Then it was extended and called 'his' garden; and I must say that in this garden of his he is Czar to such an extent that I am reduced to a few patches of soil where, by conditions established, he hasn't the right to stick his nose. I can't always say he respects these

*Continued on page 124*





G. Niccolai

*Above, Verdi's "mud puddle," the artificial lake at the bottom of the garden, where the composer and his wife often went boating. At right, tall plane trees line a walk through the fields; as they were in Verdi's own day, household dogs are very much part of the scene. Below, the Maestro's bedroom: everything remains as it was when in the night he would call Peppina to listen to the music he composed there on the Erard grand.*



Criterion



# VERDI *on Microgroove*

by CONRAD L. OSBORNE

ASCANT three years after the beginning of the LP era, in the summer of 1952, HIGH FIDELITY published its first Verdi discography, written by C. G. Burke. Mr. Burke's remarks covered eighteen recordings—thirteen Verdi operas, the *Requiem*, and a few of the composer's shorter works. In the discography that follows, no fewer than forty-six recordings of seventeen operas are considered, and the advent of stereo undoubtedly portends further opera releases in the next couple of years.

The turnover has been tremendous. There are, for instance, three *Otellos* in the current catalogue, not one of them available in 1952. Of the six *Aidas* now in circulation, there was only one in the catalogue at that time. In fact, it would be possible to build a fair-sized Verdi library (albeit one of uneven quality) from recordings that have come and gone in the last seven years, and are not discussed either in Mr. Burke's discography or the present one. Camden's reissues (*Trovatore*, *Traviata*, *Otello*), priced at a bargain rate of \$1.98 per record, were on the market for a very short time, and Columbia's Entré series (*Rigoletto*, *Aida*, *Falstaff*) has also passed into history. A few of these are well worth a search; I have called attention to them under the appropriate headings below. At that, not all the riches of 78-days have been mined. Victor had a wonderful *Aida* featuring Giannini, Cattaneo, Pertile, and Inghilleri, but bypassed it in favor of the Caniglia-Gigli version. The latter, of course, had the better-known names, but it was a shameful performance, reflecting clearly the decline of the artists involved; yet Victor issued it, on four LPs, in "The Treasury of Immortal Performances."

Since the summer of 1952, recorded opera has become a mass commodity. With each season the packaging be-

comes increasingly elaborate, the advertising increasingly pompous. Singers record entire operas as they used to record single arias. Buyers choose their *Rigolettos* either on the advice of a reviewer or, even worse, on the basis of the names involved plus the packaging of the album. It seems not at all improbable that our generation will see the birth of a new trade—the fine-boxing trade; people will collect aristocratic albums as they now collect aristocratic book bindings, and Angel's old thrift packages will be sought as some bibliophiles now seek out Dickens' novels in their original, serialized form. My point is this: while reviews can be of real help in directing a buyer to significant releases (and perhaps of more help by steering him away from the slag), the best way to select a recording is to listen to it—a process becoming more and more difficult as more and more records are sold firmly, if elegantly, sealed.

A brief statement regarding my own predilections and prejudices may be useful. I am in favor of performances that seem to me to convey a work's total meaning. The process of evaluating different recordings by comparing their separate elements can lead us far astray. While one performance may seem to have better singing in all the leading roles, better sound, and even better conducting, it may be the competitive version that, for reasons hard to define, conveys the totality of the work to better effect. This recording will get the nod from me. (I must add, however, that I fail to see how an opera's meaning can be conveyed without first-class singing, whereas poor sound or mediocre conducting will not necessarily strike a deathblow.) The operas considered are arranged in chronological order, and the recordings listed in descending order of preference, with my favorite cited first.

## Un Giorno di Regno (1840)

It would be easy to sentimentalize over *Un Giorno di Regno*. With his entire young family carried away by disease in less than two years, and his own health in precarious condition, Verdi regarded with deep-rooted loathing the task of setting

Romani's arch libretto. But set it he did. After the success of his first opera, *Oberto*, La Scala refused to release him from his contract for a comic opera. The result was the one unequivocal, permanent failure of Verdi's long career. But indulgence for this work would be arrogant, and dismissal presumptuous; the

fact is that *Giorno* is a very entertaining little piece. The only objections one can have about the libretto are objections to *buffo* conventions as such. The music is not memorable, but it is far from dull. It contains the only *secco* recitative to be found in Verdi's published works, and owes much to Donizetti and Rossini; but



it is tuneful, lively, and astonishingly professional in construction, particularly in the ensembles.

As with most of Verdi's early operas, one must take the Cetra recording or none at all. The performance here is top-flight. Pagliughi, vocally a bit faded, still brings the right touch to the music. Oncina's voice had not yet acquired the wiry edge that mars his more recent recordings, and is a pleasure to hear. Capecchi's work is expert, Bruscantini's a bit pushed but still more than competent. And Dalamangas, operating with practically no voice, turns every comic point to account. Simonetto is firm and vigorous with his forces, though the chorus is occasionally limp. The sound, not ideal, is clear.

—Lina Pagliughi, Juan Oncina, Renato Capecchi, Sesto Bruscantini, Cristiano Dalamangas. Radiotelevisione Italiana Chorus and Orchestra, Alfredo Simonetto, cond.

CETRA 1225. Two LP.

### Nabucco (1842)

It was Solera's book for *Nabucco*, with its liberal paraphrasing of *Jeremiah*, that lured the despondent Verdi back to the job of composing. It contains nearly all the elements which were eventually to inspire the best of Verdi's music: foredoomed love, religious and patriotic zeal, and an ambivalent but passionate father-daughter relationship. *Nabucco* also affords the earliest example of Verdi's sustained musical inspiration. In the first act, for example, nearly every number is strong—Zaccaria's opening aria, "*D'Egitto la sui lidi*," is followed almost immediately by the chorus "*Come notte a sol fulgente*," the dramatic entrance of Abigaille, and then the ingeniously handled choruses in which the approach of the Babylonians is reported. Later in the opera we hear the best-known numbers: "*Anch'io dischiuso un giorno*," "*Tu sul labbro dei veggenti*," the Anathema Chorus, and the renowned "*Va, pensiero*." The latter part of the

opera gives us the composer's first penetrating character study in the Nabucco of Acts III and IV. Solera's work here is puerile enough, but in Verdi's music we are given a first glimpse of the insight that was to produce *Rigoletto*, *Boccanegra*, *Philip*, and finally *Otello*.

Cetra's effort is just good enough to make us wish for singers who could really do justice to the music. In addition, since *Nabucco* is beautifully tailored for stereo, it is to be hoped a two-channel version will be forthcoming. Among *Nabucco*'s requirements are two front-rank basses, and both Cassinelli and Gaggi here are swamped by the music. Mancini makes a brave stab at Abigaille, and with highly dramatic results at some points, but it is a part that demands not only voice and temperament, but repeated performance and study. The same is true of the title part, and Silveri's conscientious reading is not a filled-in portrayal. The other singers are adequate, Previtali's conducting forceful. The sound was acceptable in its day, and is still listenable, but there is much more to *Nabucco* than these records can convey.

—Caterina Mancini, Gabriella Gatti, Mario Binci, Paolo Silveri, Antonio Cassinelli, Albino Gaggi. Radiotelevisione Italiana Chorus and Orchestra, Fernando Previtali, cond.

CETRA 1216. Three LP.

### I Lombardi alla Prima Crociata (1843)

Another libretto by Solera, another religio-patriotic theme to inflame the Milanese public, another triumph for Verdi. I do not know Tomasso Grossi's poem on which the book is based, but I know the libretto, God help me; and I can only suggest that this opera be listened to as a piece of absolute music. The first two acts are dross through and through, manner without substance; only the Hermit's monologue and Giselda's prayer are of any interest. In the third and fourth acts, however, the music sud-

denly takes on emotional coloring and a sense of forward motion. Especially interesting is the scene of Oronte's death, with its almost shocking introduction for solo violin, the virtually continuous obbligato for that instrument, and the fine trio "*Qual voluttà trascorrere*." Two scenes later (one in this recording, since IV, i is dropped), the crusaders and pilgrims sing the moving "*O Signore, dal tetto natio*." The concluding laud is impressive, and in the theatre must make a magnificent tableau.

There is one outstanding performance on the Cetra recording—the bass Petri's as Pagano. This is extremely intelligent, well-shaded singing, and his voice, of only moderate caliber, is a responsive, round one. Gallo is one of the mouthiest tenors I have ever heard, though his upper register has a good ring; and Vitale's thin voice and rather precious approach make her work tiresome. The role of Arvino gives the capable Bertocci little chance. Wolf-Ferrari's conducting seems to me on the heavy side, but this may be the nature of things. The recording brings us fairish sound and a variety of coughs, paper rattling, bow tapping, and other noises—welcome, in a way. In fact, for three full sides, they are the only signs of life.

—Maria Vitale, Aldo Bertocci, Gustavo Gallo, Mario Petri. Radiotelevisione Italiana Chorus and Orchestra, Manno Wolf-Ferrari, cond.

CETRA 1217. Three LP.

### Ernani (1844)

I suppose that, as a stage piece, *Ernani* is dead and gone. Such matters as the sanctity of hospitality or the honor of an oath cannot be expected to excite today's audiences, and such devices as the fateful horn call are grounds for general amusement. But whether or not *Ernani* is dramatically viable, its music is very strong. Each of the four leading roles contains at least one outstanding aria, and the baritone role of Carlo has hardly a pedestrian moment. The finales and several other ensembles are vigorous and thematically in-



Zinka Milanov



Robert Merrill



Antonietta Stella



Photos courtesy Metropolitan Opera  
Giorgio Tozzi

teresting. Even though the last act is, regrettably, much the weakest of the four (and in consequence the denouement barely endurable) I would judge the melodic inspiration of this opera as a whole to be very close to the level of *Trovatore*.

Cetra's recording is one of that company's better efforts. The role of Elvira presents very little challenge after the opening "*Ernani, involami*"; in general, Mancini does very well for herself, though she must slow both cavatina and cabaletta, thus robbing them of brilliance. Penno's unusually fine singing of the title role serves as reminder that his sudden disintegration was a major disaster for the operatic world. There is not another post-war dramatic tenor who can combine such ringing tone with such flexibility—his graceful rendition of "*Come rugiada al cespite*" puts his contemporaries entirely in the shade. Taddei hasn't quite the light legato touch for a really topnotch "*Vieni meco*" or "*O de' verd' anni miei*," but his voice is always plump, and he makes the most of the dramatic moments. Vaghi's monochrome Silva is the one weak performance on the recording. Previtali's leadership is properly impetuous, the sound respectable.

—Mancini, Gino Penno, Giuseppe Taddei, Giacomo Vaghi. Radiotelevisione Italiana Chorus and Orchestra, Previtali, cond.

CETRA 1210. Three LP.

### Macbeth (1847)

For extended commentary on both this opera and the recent RCA Victor stereo recording, I refer the reader to page 81 of the November 1959 issue of this magazine. For present purposes, I will merely say that I regard *Macbeth* as a worthy repertory opera, despite the unfortunate business with the Witches and some other banal passages. Victor's edition, the only one now in the catalogue, boasts a high-powered cast of principals, and orchestra and chorus (the Witches excepted) are

shown to advantage in sound that is remarkable for stereo directionality.

—Leonie Rysanek, Leonard Warren, Carlo Bergonzi, Jerome Hines. Metropolitan Opera Chorus and Orchestra, Erich Leinsdorf, cond.

RCA VICTOR LSC 6147. Three SD.

### Luisa Miller (1849)

*Luisa Miller* is often referred to as a precursor of *La Traviata*, apparently because these two are intimate in theme and less than grand in scale. But Parisian salons are not Tyrolean castles, and the highly individual personal destinies of Violetta and Alfredo are a good distance from the stereotyped difficulties of Luisa and Rudolfo. Cammarano's libretto, hacked out of Schiller's *Kabale und Liebe*, retains just enough of the drama's vital social conflict to serve as impetus for the ordinary set of intrigues and misunderstandings that comprise the lovers' "tragedy." Musically, the opera is afflicted with page after page of deadly recitative. There is one memorable aria for tenor ("*Quando le sere al placido*")—still not of Verdi's best), a typically powerful ensemble in the first finale, and an effective concluding terzette; otherwise, it's just not very interesting.

Cetra's liberally cut *Luisa* is a grim production. Lauri-Volpi, far beyond his prime and in bad voice to boot, is tolerable when singing at full voice above the staff, but most of his work is painful to hear, and "*Quando le sere*" is wrecked. Colombo is a decent baritone, but his competent performance has little variety. The others cannot bring life to their parts. Rossi maintains the pace and keeps things in order, which is all that is called for. Peerce sings "*Quando le sere*" stylishly in Victor's set (LM 6041) of Verdi selections, and that will be enough of *Luisa* for most listeners.

—Lucy Kelston, Giacomo Lauri-Volpi, Scipio Colombo, Vaghi, Dullio Baronti. Radiotelevisione Italiana Chorus and Orchestra, Mario Rossi, cond.

CETRA 1221. Three LP.

### Rigoletto (1851)

*Rigoletto* is the first of Verdi's operas about which there can be no argument as to quality. Of its recordings I should like to mention first the Columbia Entré set, dubbed from 78s and now deleted.

Although its sound is naturally narrow in range and a bit tubby, it has Lorenzo Molajoli conducting, Riccardo Stracciari singing the title role (head and shoulders above all others on records), Dino Borgioli as the Duke, excellent supporting singers, and the *élan* of a Golden Age performance. Another remarkable performance is that of Act IV, a fascinating rendition from Milanov, Warren, Peerce, and Moscona, under Toscanini—on RCA Victor LM 6041. All soloists are in splendid shape, the original notes are sung, and despite the old sound you will never hear another storm like Toscanini's.

Among the more modern versions, the Victor (Cellini) and Angel sets have distinct advantages, and either of them can be considered a good investment. Cellini clomps through some of the music, but maintains discipline and a good pace. Warren had not completely built the character when his *Rigoletto* was committed to records; however, his voice rings out wonderfully, and in the cantabile passages he easily outclasses his competitors. Peerce is in good form, bringing a firm line to the music. Berger, though aging, still produces consistently lovely sound, and wisely replaces the sensational coloratura effects with a melting legato. Tajo's smooth voice is too light for Sparafucile, and his characterization consists of throwing away the last syllables of words.

The Angel version gives us Gobbi's *Rigoletto*, an admirable creation very different from Warren's. Gobbi cannot sustain the high-lying cantilena in the second part of "*Cortigiani*" or in the ensuing duet with Gilda, but he brings a fine dramatic insight to the part, particularly useful in the first and last acts. Callas contributes a well-drawn, incisively vocalized Gilda. Angel's Duke is Di Stefano, and I will make it clear now that I find most of his performances distressing; each successive recording brings additional evidence of vocal deterioration. I have no intention of belaboring this point in succeeding sections; let it stand that this Duke is typical of his somewhat strenuous efforts, and is this recording's one grave drawback. The Angel pressing boasts better sound than the older Victor one, and includes a few bars omitted by Cellini, running to a fifth side in the process.

Questa conducts a graceful, balanced production, not exciting, but amiable. The *Rigoletto*, Taddei, is splendid in the dramatic outbursts, less so when the long



Leonie Rysanek  
Louis Mélançon



Jan Peerce  
Metropolitan Opera



Nicola Moscona  
Metropolitan Opera



line is called for, and his concept of the role is pedestrian. Pagliughi has some precarious moments, but is generally acceptable. Tagliavini is adequate until he tries to "refine," whereupon he becomes repellent. Neri is a ponderous Sparafucile. The sound features the soloists too prominently, especially in the first-act ensemble.

The new Victor set, under Perlea, claims good, bright sound and an outstanding Sparafucile by Tozzi. Bjoerling is, characteristically, the best recorded Duke, though not in his best form. Peters is an uninteresting Gilda. Merrill makes imposing sounds, but is musically sloppy and interpretatively unappetizing; I cite his near-blubbing on "*La ran, la ra*" and his spoiled-child "*No's*" in the *Vendetta* duet. Perlea tends to rush things, and there is a disastrous sag in pitch on the final chord of Act III.

London's well-recorded set suffers from a nondescript Rigoletto by Aldo Protti, an inexcusably miscast Duke in Del Monaco, and flabby, obvious conducting by Erede. Its virtues are a beautifully vocalized Gilda by Hilde Gueden and a rich Sparafucile by Siepi. This set—and the Cetra—include the Duke's "*Possente amor*" (the cabaletta to "*Parmi veder*"). It is a routine number, much below the level of the score, and neither Del Monaco nor Tagliavini is the sort for whom to revive it.

—Erna Berger, Jan Peerce, Warren, Italo Tajo. RCA Victor Symphony Orchestra, Renato Cellini, cond.

RCA VICTOR LM 6021. Two LP.

—Maria Callas, Giuseppe di Stefano, Tito Gobbi, Nicola Zaccaria. Chorus and Orchestra of Teatro alla Scala (Milan), Tullio Serafin, cond.

ANGEL 3537. Three LP. (Five sides.)

—Pagliughi, Ferruccio Tagliavini, Taddei, Giulio Neri. Radiotelevisione Italiana Chorus and Orchestra, Angelo Questa, cond.

CETRA 1247. Three LP.

—Roberta Peters, Jussi Bjoerling, Robert Merrill, Giorgio Tozzi. Rome Opera Chorus and Orchestra, Jonel Perlea, cond.

RCA VICTOR LM 6051. Two LP.

—Hilde Gueden, Mario del Monaco, Aldo Protti, Cesare Siepi. Chorus and Orchestra of Accademia di Santa Cecilia (Rome), Alberto Erede, cond.

LONDON A 4313. Three LP.

## II *Trovatore* (1853)

Considering the popularity of *Il Trovatore*, there have been relatively few recordings of the complete opera. I suspect that one reason is that it demands real singers. I mean by this that in contrast to, say, *Rigoletto*, *Trovatore* contains no

characters—it has only stage figures. A singer whose voice is well past its prime can nevertheless make a powerful Rigoletto, even on records, provided he has dignity, intelligence, and strong histrionic ability. But the same singer will never get away with Di Luna; the *Trovatore* crew are just singers in costume, and if they can't sing, there is no excuse for their existence. They all sang on the old Victor recording, reissued on the Camden label but now withdrawn. I have a personal distaste for the spread tone of Aureliano Pertile, the Manrico, but he was in some ways a thrilling tenor; and the rest of the cast, particularly the baritone Granforte and the contralto Minghini-Cattaneo, are superlative.

They also sing on the more recent Victor set—a little restrained, perhaps, but beautifully nonetheless. Milanov was in superb form when this recording was made, floating one phrase after another on the delicate pianissimo which is the trademark of her best singing, swelling to fine climaxes, and executing her runs cleanly. Her Leonora is one of the great individual performances of our generation, and Victor captured it at just the right moment. Bjoerling turns in a faultless Manrico, clean and smooth from first note to last. "*Ah, si ben mio*" is rendered with tenderness and elasticity, and seconds later the "*Di quella pira*" is hurled forth in spine-tingling fashion. Warren's pliant, wide-ranging instrument gives Di Luna's music its full value, and Barbieri is a forceful, lush-voiced Azucena. The leadership of Cellini may be perfunctory and occasionally rushed, but it is at least lively; he also has the Shaw Chorale, a real advantage. Victor's sound is perfectly acceptable, and the opera is gotten onto two records, as against three for all other versions.

The casts of both the Angel and London albums offer strong singing from the distaff side. Angel presents Callas, who is, as one would expect, a sensitive Leonora, but her peculiar talents for plumb character are of relatively little use here, since there is no character to plumb;

and while she is adept with the passage work (including the rarely heard cabaletta to "*D'amor sull' alli*"), her voice has not the steadiness nor the body of Milanov's. Barbieri's Azucena is in some ways more refined here than on the Victor set (compare the two openings of "*Ai nostri monti*"), but the separation of registers is also a bit more extreme, and she is given to more exaggeration. Di Stefano is not a very knightly Manrico; in addition his attempt at a high D flat is a mistake, and the C at the conclusion of "*Di quella pira*" is as tight as a drumhead. Panerai pushes his vibrant voice mercilessly. Von Karajan's treatment is a little slow for my taste, and he includes repeats of "*Per me ora fatale*" and "*Di quella pira*," dissipating the effect in both cases.

London gives us Tebaldi, who as usual produces consistently beautiful, strong tone, and demonstrates a wide dynamic range. Still, her Leonora has not the poise or polish or passion of Milanov's. Simionato is a smart singer with a flexible instrument, but I prefer Barbieri's dark voice and unpremeditated approach to this role. Del Monaco is a clangorous Manrico, Savarese a lackluster, limp Di Luna. Erede has a feeling for this music, and I rather like his ability to give-and-take with the soloists. As for engineering, this album is the richest and most spacious among *Trovatores*; it is also available in stereo.

Cetra gets a sterling Azucena from Miriam Pirazzini, a contralto more concerned with the music than with the hysteria. Lauri-Volpi's Troubador is, however, thoroughly bad. The rest of the cast is capable but hardly magnetic, the recording beset by occasional echo.

—Zinka Milanov, Fedora Barbieri, Bjoerling, Warren. RCA Victor Symphony Orchestra, Cellini, cond.

RCA VICTOR LM 6008. Two LP.

—Callas, Barbieri, Di Stefano, Rolando Panerai. Chorus and Orchestra of Teatro alla Scala (Milan), Herbert von Karajan, cond.

ANGEL 3554. Three LP. (Five sides.)

—Renata Tebaldi, *Continued on page 95*



Angel Records

Maria Callas



Metropolitan Opera

Renata Tebaldi



Metropolitan Opera

Mario del Monaco

*London Records gathered its forces in Vienna for a full-scale recording of Aida—and, as expected, found that the city on the Danube furnished fine facilities for Giuseppe Verdi's tragedy of life on the Nile. At right, Herbert von Karajan shares a score with Giulietta Simionato, who sings Amneris, and below, he goes to work—directing soloists, chorus, and the Vienna Philharmonic.*



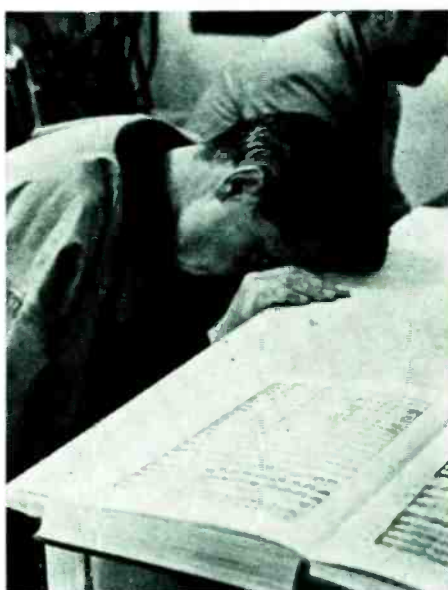
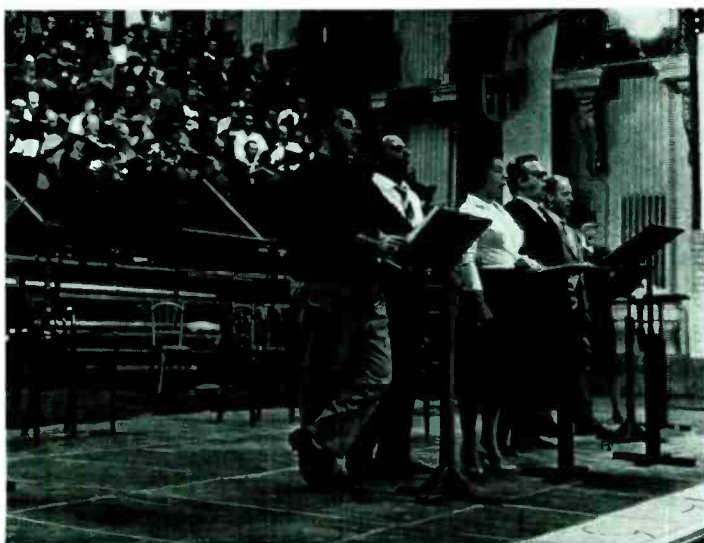
# Egyptians in Vienna







*No miracle of modern technology was absent from this recording session. Note, at left, the conductor of the off-stage band for the Triumphal Scene, who follows Karajan's beat on closed-circuit television. . . . Everybody seems to be enjoying everything: the soloists peal forth in full voice for the Finale of Act I; Von Karajan quips with his stars Tebaldi and Bergonzi. . . . In the photograph at bottom, the engineers playback the results of everyone's labors, and Karajan abandons the score to revel in the full majesty of Verdi's music.*



**Photographs by Hans Wild**

# How to Explain **STEREO** to Your Friends

**Lest we seem repetitious: there appears an endless demand for analyses of the basic stereo proposition by thoughtful experimenters. This sits well with us; no good gospel deserves less than dozens of preachers. Here is one worth attending.**

by **HERMAN BURSTEIN**

**M**OST OF US now have a happy confidence that we can define stereo to the satisfaction of any curious inquisitor: it means solid or complete sound, complete in the sense that stereophonic reproduction brings us all the characteristics of the original sound. But we may feel less assured when we're asked for further explanation. "All the characteristics?" our interested party may demand. Answer him boldly. Yes, stereo in itself is complete. If what we hear in our homes is still incomplete, it is because engineering technology has not yet reached the ultimate. What we have today, however, comes remarkably close to re-creation of the full, complete illusion, and represents a long, long step forward from yesterday's level of monophonic achievement.

For real understanding of what is being done, it becomes important that we should know something about

stereo illusion: how much is image, and how much illusion. For while directionality is the major—and certainly the most widely advertised—attribute of stereo, other characteristics are equally or even more important, depending on the music and on the listener. As an aid to buying wisely and listening fully—even, should the need arise, to explaining convincingly—this article will review the essential characteristics of sound and hearing which, combined, make stereophonic sound possible.

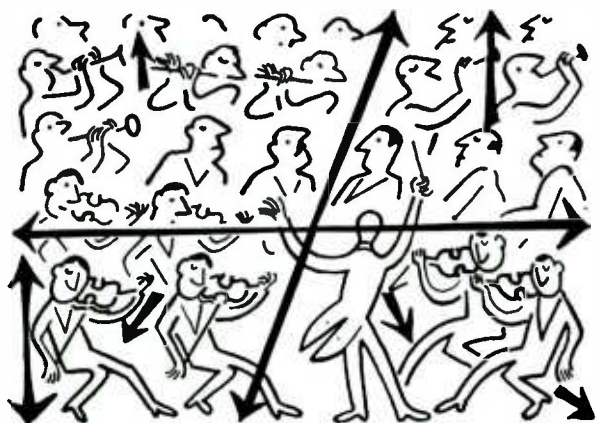
## **Directionality**

Directionality refers not only to lateral spacing of sound (left, center, right) but also to depth (front to back) and perhaps even to height. Several factors account for our ability to assign spatial position to a sound source. While there is substantial agreement among the experts as to what these factors are, there is less agreement as to their relative importance. Conceivably, this importance varies with the listener, the listening site, and the type of sound.

Directionality is attributed to the following factors:

1. **Difference in Arrival Time of the Sound at Each Ear.** A sound reaches a listener's left ear, say, about half a millisecond before it reaches his right ear. Apparently even such a tiny difference in time leads the mind to conclude: "The sound is from the left." (This is known as the precedence effect.)

The ability of the mind to orient sound in this manner seems confined to transients rather than steady sine waves. Most sounds in nature, however, are initiated by a pulse of some degree, and not built up slowly and gradually. One set of experiments has indicated that the aural nerves discharge a signal to the brain at the first positive peak of the sound, and it has been reasoned







that this signal serves as a reference for measuring the interval between arrival time at each ear.<sup>1</sup>

2. Intensity Difference at Each Ear. Let us say a sound from the left reaches the left ear at a certain level of loudness. Because the ears are separated by the width of the head, the same sound will reach the right ear at a lower level of loudness. This difference helps the mind to determine the direction of the source. There is also an increase of air pressure on the ear nearest the source, and a decrease of pressure on the ear away from the source. The higher the frequency, the greater is the pressure difference, because the head is relatively large, compared with one wavelength of sound. This is why one can more readily identify the direction of sounds with high frequencies than those with low ones.

Intensity differences are regarded as more important than arrival time differences in producing a sense of directionality. How sensitive are we to differences of intensity? “. . . with sustained tones,” say two authorities, “even a 2-db difference in loudspeaker intensity can produce a shift in the apparent position of the sound source.”<sup>2</sup> This helps explain the importance of achieving balance between channels and of having speakers with matched frequency characteristics.

It is believed that through experience the mind has learned to interpret a given difference in loudness at each ear as corresponding to a given angular placement of the source with respect to the listener. In an experiment, listeners were asked to state the location of a sound source on the basis of sound heard through earphones. So long as the *difference* between the sound level at each ear was held constant, each subject was highly consistent in ascribing the same angular location to the source.<sup>3</sup>

3. Waveform Difference. Most of those who have explored stereophonic phenomena have concluded that differences in the waveform at each ear help account for

the sense of directionality. The most thorough exposition of this point of view is perhaps that of Hume,<sup>4</sup> who has claimed that waveform differences at each ear are the basic factor, with intensity and arrival-time differences serving merely to confirm what the mind already knows. “. . . The stereophonic effect,” says Hume, “is produced by a difference in high-frequency or harmonic content, created by head and external ear shadowing, of the sound signal reaching the inner ear.” To illustrate, the left ear would receive all the frequencies of a sound arriving from the left, while the sound reaching the right ear from this same source would be substantially stripped of its harmonic content.

If this is true, how then does a person with only one good ear identify a sound source? Several authorities have suggested that slight movements of the head result in changes of the waveform at the good ear; although a person presumably remains still, nevertheless his head will make minute involuntary movements, permitting spatial orientation.

4. Ratio of Direct to Reverberated Sound. We normally receive sound both directly from the source and indirectly as the result of reflections from room surfaces and objects in the room. The ratio of direct to reverberated sound helps us locate the source; sound appears



to come from the source with the highest ratio. One authority has stated: “In general, the localization tends toward the channel giving the most natural or close-up reproduction. . . . Experiment shows that decreasing either the total loudness or the amount of direct sound relative to reverberant gave the impression that the sound was moving back on the stage. Depth localization is thus a complicated function of loudness and relative reverberation.”<sup>5</sup>

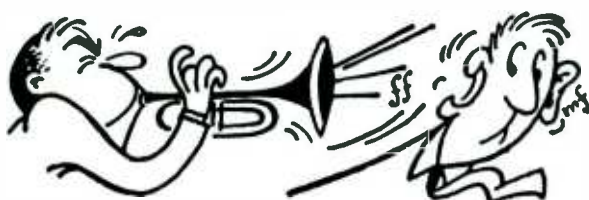
In reproducing sound, the illusion of directionality may depend partly upon keeping reverberation out of one or the other speaker, so that the source appears to be in the locality of the speaker with the least reverberation. Or the illusion of instruments arrayed in depth may be achieved as the result of the different amounts of reverberation associated with each instrument.

Reverberation does not altogether prevent us from gauging the location of a sound source. It is believed that the mind distinguishes direct from reverberant

<sup>1</sup> James Noir, “Stereophonic Reproduction,” *Audio*, October 1952.

<sup>2</sup> James Cunningham and Robert Oakes Jordan, “Stereophonic Microphone Placement,” *Audio*, November 1956.

<sup>3</sup> W. B. Snow, “Auditory Perspective,” *Bell Laboratories Record*, March 1957.



<sup>4</sup> Howard F. Hume, “A New Concept on the Physiological Aspect of Stereophonic Sound,” *Audio*, March 1957.

<sup>5</sup> W. B. Snow, *op. cit.*

sound on the basis of arrival time and gives much heavier weight to the direct sound, thereby locating the source.

### Spaciousness

At least as important to stereophonic effect as directionality and very likely more important is the sense of spaciousness, which has nothing to do with either lateral or depth perception. The objective is to make the listener believe the source is a large one rather than of the order of the dimensions of the speaker enclosure and to create the illusion that the performance is taking place in a large hall instead of in the typical living room. Snow maintains that "The enhanced aesthetic appeal obtained from an auditory-perspective reproduction of an orchestra is not due so much to an accurate localization of the various sounds as to a general effect of space distribution, which adds a fullness to the over-all effect."<sup>6</sup>

The sensation of spaciousness may be achieved in at least two ways:

1. By a physical spread of the sound source, namely the use of two or more speakers spaced several feet apart, generally in lateral fashion, and fed by one sound channel. This explains why quasi-stereo in the form of two speakers connected to a monophonic channel can noticeably increase listening pleasure.

2. By reverberation. It is estimated that at a musical performance in a typical hall, as much as "90% of the sound energy reaching a member of the audience may have been reflected one or more times from the various surfaces in the auditorium."<sup>7</sup> Our minds tend to associate a given amount of reverberation—the ratio of reverberated to direct sound and time interval between the two types of sound—with a given size of room or hall. Moreover, as previously noted, a large amount of reverberated sound relative to direct sound reduces the ear's ability to localize the source and thereby lessens the impression that the sound originates in a restricted area.

On the other hand, too much reverberation can muddy the sound, and excessive time intervals between direct and indirect sound can produce an echo rather than concert hall effect.

### Multiplicity Effect

Studies of orchestra reproduction reveal that our aural image of a large number of violins playing at once depends upon the fact that they are playing not quite together. Slight and inevitable differences in attack and release time, in pitch and timbre, produce the effect of a group of violins. If all the violinists played exactly together and produced exactly the same sound, the effect would be of a single violin greatly amplified.

Similarly, stereo illusion depends to a degree upon multiple representations of sound (usually two in home stereo) that differ slightly in some manner—intensity,

phase, waveform, arrival time. A crude analogy may be drawn with visual stereo, where two slightly different images, seen by each eye, fuse in the mind to produce the effect of solidity.

The multiplicity effect, like the sense of spaciousness, can be achieved to some degree by certain quasi-stereo techniques. With a single channel serving as the sound source, a partial illusion of solidity can be conveyed by altering the sound's characteristics in some manner (e.g., phase, frequency, arrival time) as it is reproduced through a second speaker system. It is possible that quasi-stereo effects might be attained even with a single speaker system.

### High Fidelity Attributes

Although stereo is not necessarily high fidelity, the best stereo is at the same time high fidelity and therefore possesses the following characteristics essential for realistic reproduction.

1. High Signal-to-Noise Ratio. An appreciable noise level tends to prevent one's hearing the weakest sounds, many of which are high frequencies and play an important role in the stereo effect, particularly with respect to directionality. Moreover, noise in itself is objectionable.

2. Low Distortion. Although the initial dramatic impact of stereo upon the newcomer tends to obscure for him the differences between mediocre and excellent speakers, mediocre and excellent amplifiers, etc., repeated listening will clearly reveal whatever distortion is present. It is just as true for stereo as for monophonic reproduction that minimum distortion is a requisite for maximum listening pleasure. Directionality, spaciousness, and so forth cannot compensate for sound that lacks the clarity and cleanness of the original performance.

3. Good Frequency Response. It seems to be true that limited frequency range is less noticeable in stereo than mono. But this does not mean that stereo with a range of, say, 50 to 8,000 cycles will be just as good as stereo with a range of 30 to 15,000 cycles. Stereo depends substantially upon adequate treble reproduction. Transients, associated with directionality, are by their nature high frequencies. Inadequate reproduction of transients causes loss in directionality and clarity.

Equally important is uniformity of response. In mono and stereo, acute peaks are in themselves disturbing to the ear. In the case of stereo, peaks or dips that occur in one sound channel but not in the other tend to produce an apparent shift of source from the left to the right or vice versa.

4. Wide Dynamic Range. At a live orchestral performance, the range between the softest and loudest sounds is approximately 60 to 70 db. Realistic reproduction requires that this range be substantially retained. The loudest sounds must not overload the equipment so as to cause noticeable distortion, and the weakest sounds must be above the

*Continued on page 123*

<sup>6</sup> W. B. Snow, *op. cit.*

<sup>7</sup> E. H. Bedell, "Auditorium Acoustics and Control Facilities for Reproductions in Auditory Perspective," *Bell Laboratories Record*, March 1934.



by ALAN WAGNER



## The New Golden Age of Opera

**Mr. Rudolf Bing of the Metropolitan Opera said not long ago, and firmly: "The golden age of opera is now."**

**Our author expands upon the Bing pronouncement.**

**B**LESSED is the LP — and thrice-blessed among lovers of opera. For their private pleasure it has made available a repertoire ranging from Monteverdi to Alban Berg, an array of vocal talent covering half a century.

And yet, the blessing is not unmitigated. The man who collects canned glories may forget that opera is a living art, rooted in that most energetic of disciplines, the theatre, and meant to be performed, not merely recorded. It's all too easy to succumb to the insidious cult of the definitive, to proclaim that the best of opera is past and available only on disc. Among my acquaintances are some who seriously maintain, for example, that since Flagstad retired from the stage to the studio they need never again attend a *Ring Cycle*.

Even recordings themselves are judged on the basis of their antiquity. Age becomes equated with virtue, and an acoustic circa 1908 is held *ipso facto* superior to an LP circa 1958. Complete operas as well as recitals are also subject to this kind of evaluation. A 1936 Glyndebourne Mozart recording becomes preferable to newer releases—not because its conductor is the great Fritz Busch, but because it has acquired a patina of venerability. "All in all," comes the plaint from behind a pile of deleted 78s, "they don't make singers like they used to. Where are the glories of yesteryear?"

Such rhetoric is decidedly pointless. All praise to microgroove and allied arts for resurrecting the honored past, but the mid-twentieth century has its glories, too. Even though there are perhaps a few giants of vocal history we cannot match—a Caruso or a Claudia Muzio, say—we have artists who are at least worthy successors. And as a group our singers are every bit as fine as their predecessors.

To begin with, there is now such a sheer abundance of talent. If nothing else, 1959 surpasses the Golden Age in numbers. A half-century ago it was a rare season indeed when the Metropolitan Opera Company, for example, could boast more than two or three first-rate voices in any category. This year the same company has on its roster double or even triple that many leading artists, with as many more



Boris Christoff



Antonietta Stella



Richard Tucker



Jan Peerce



Cesare Valletti



Zinka Milanov



Cesare Siepi



Maria Callas

Photographs courtesy Metropolitan Opera



George London



Renata Tebaldi



waiting for places. Perhaps four singers now stand where one stood before.

Instances abound. How many important basses can you name from the turn of the century to the period when the current crop became active? Edouard de Reszke, Pol Plançon, Feodor Chaliapin, Adamo Didur, Marcel Journet, Léon Rothier, Andrès de Seguro, Ezio Pinza, Alexander Kipnis—who else? That's nine, over a period of half a century. Right now, singing at opera houses around the world, are artists of the caliber of Cesare Siepi, Giorgio Tozzi, Boris Christoff, Nicola Rossi-Lemeni, Kim Borg, Miro Changelovich, Jerome Hines, the Russians Mark Reizen and Alexander Pirogov. That's also nine—and there are many more. One thinks of Mihaly Szekeley, William Wildermann, Nicola Moscona, Fernando Corena, Raphaél Arié, Norman Treigle, Nicola Zaccaria, Ludwig Weber, Josef Greindl, Arnold van Mill, all active simultaneously.

These singers would have been useful in any opera house at any time, and some are peers with the best of any age. For skill and delicacy combined with rolling beauty of sound, listen to Tozzi sing "*Infelice e tu credevi*" from Verdi's *Ernani* or "*Deh, vieni alla finestra*" from *Don Giovanni*: he commands a *mezza voce* that would have done Pinza proud. Feel the sheer power and the dignified grief of Siepi's "*Ella giammai m'amò*" from *Don Carlo*, or the raw elemental strength of Christoff's Boris Godunov. I venture to say their performances rank with anything the lyric stage has ever offered.

Our era is similarly rich in Germanic bass-baritones. Friedrich Schorr is silent, and Richard Mayr and Joel Berglund; but I remember no other age when there has been at one time a group of first-line Wagnerian and Straussian experts to match Hans Hotter, Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, Paul Schöffler, Otto Edelmann, Eberhard Wächter, Joseph Metternich, George London, Hermann Uhde, Walter Cassel, and James Pease. These men could staff a couple of Bayreuths.

None of them is limited in scope, either. On occasion

they have all forgotten that they are *Helden*-baritones and have wandered successfully far afield. If you tell me about Heinrich Schulsnus and Lieder, I'll speak of Hotter singing the *Winterreise* or Fischer-Dieskau the *Dichtersliebe*. London and Cassel are fine Scarpias, Fischer-Dieskau a marvelous Falstaff. And Mozart—they almost all sing Mozart beautifully. Among them are three of the finest of Count Almavivas.

Nor am I stacking the cards. We may be living through a particular renaissance of bass-baritones, but it seems to me that contemporary superiority is evident almost anywhere you look. To continue with Mozart, compare the best of the past as preserved on vinylite with what we can produce today. Ina Souez, for instance, enjoyed a tremendous reputation as Fiordiligi in *Così fan tutte*, and yet Souez simply couldn't manage the jumps and runs of "*Come scoglio*" with anything like the facility displayed by Eleanor Steber. Of course, as far as I'm concerned, on grounds of technique Steber outclasses any Mozart soprano you'd care to mention. Anyone fortunate enough to have heard her Donna Anna in the Met's production of *Don Giovanni* will have experienced a truly remarkable performance. Nor was she alone; the Donna Elvira in that cast was Lisa Della Casa, who is also such a lovely Countess in *The Marriage of Figaro* that her "*Dove sono*" makes me forget Elisabeth Rethberg. Maria Stader (who sings a wonderful Pamina), Elisabeth Schwarzkopf, Irmgard Seefried, Sena Jurinac, Hilde Gueden, Erna Berger, Wilma Lipp—all perform Mozart with extraordinary skill.

In that same Metropolitan *Don Giovanni* was the Don Ottavio of Cesare Valletti. The grace of this tenor's passage work, the ease with which he spins out the cruelly long phrases of "*Il mio tesoro*" (as if breathing were an obsolete necessity), both mark him as the worthy heir to the mantle of Tito Schipa. And there are others. During this production's first season Jan Peerce and Nicolai Gedda sang the role with brilliance. Anton Dermota, Léopold Simoneau, and Ernst Häfliger are lyric tenors





Eleanor Steber



Giorgio Tozzi



Victoria de los Angeles

in the greatest tradition: listen to Dermota as Don Ottavio, or Simoneau as Ferrando in *Così fan tutte*, or Häfliger as Tamino in *The Magic Flute*. Ferruccio Tagliavini is also still active, and what person who has ever heard him sing Nemorino in Donizetti's *L'Elisir d'amore* can forget him?

To point up once more the versatility characteristic of today's singers, consider again the ladies—Steber and Della Casa and company. They are as at home in Strauss, and Wagner, and even Italian opera, as they are in Mozart. Della Casa as Arabella, Steber as Elsa in *Lohengrin*, Schwarzkopf as the Marschallin and Jurinac as Octavian in *Der Rosenkavalier*, Seefried as the Composer in *Ariadne*, Gueden as Musetta in *La Bohème*, Berger as *Rigoletto's* Gilda: all these portrayals are worthy of admiration. Steber in particular varies her roles. She sings Puccini widely and well, created the title role in Samuel Barber's *Vanessa*, sang Marie in Alban Berg's biting *Wozzeck*, and tops it all off with a successful appearance in *Otello* or *Traviata* or *Der Rosenkavalier*.

For my part, I am convinced that there are more good sopranos around today, more sopranos with the potentiality for greatness, than there were in any so-called Golden Age. Start with Kirsten Flagstad, now in her sixties but no stranger to today's microphones. When has there been a dramatic soprano with the sheer majesty of voice that Flagstad still commands? Already she seems to dwarf the memory of all the Frida Leiders and Olive Fremstads. Her recorded performance of *Tristan und Isolde* under Furtwängler and the first and third acts of *Die Walküre* under Knappertsbusch and Solti are landmarks in Wagnerian history. And there is, of course, London's recent *Das Rheingold*. Mme. Flagstad is now almost exclusively a recording artist, but her place on stage is being taken by some exciting young artists. Birgit Nilsson is turning into a Valkyrie of high order, and at least on the concert stage Eileen Farrell pours out silver floods of sound as sumptuous as even Richard Wagner himself might wish.

Many will want to remember Ljuba Welitch (she still sings a little—she's the Duenna, an infinitesimal part, on the *Angel Rosenkavalier*), but one need not mourn the passing of her Salome, memorable though it was. We now have Inge Borkh—endowed with a lovely, shining voice, great intelligence, immense acting resources. In this young singer, the brutally taxing roles of Salome and Elektra have found a fine new interpreter.

As for the Italian repertoire; we can cast it today with more felicity than ever. *Norma*? Watch the protean Maria Callas in good form make something royal and searing out of the Druid priestess. There has never been a more touching, more ravishingly sung Mimi in *La Bohème* than Renata Tebaldi, or a more searching and vivid Leonora in *Il Trovatore* than Antonietta Stella. Callas, Tebaldi, Stella: these artists alone might single out an epoch for grandeur.

The theatrical excitement of Callas, her incisive grasp of the drama in a musical phrase, and her range of roles from *Turandot* to *Lucia di Lammermoor* and back to *Tosca* by way of *The Barber of Seville* can charge a season with electricity. She is the Mary Garden of the mid-century—and more. A vivid flair for personal dramatization adds an extra dimension to her appearances, and before the intensity of her performances any qualms about the high tones dissolve.

Seldom in history has there been a voice as melting as Tebaldi's to reduce an audience to tears and cheers. The excruciating loveliness of her "Willow Song" from *Otello* is something to treasure, but then so is most of the music this voice makes. Honey and liquid fire, one of the most beautiful voices, note for note, ever produced, all directed by a personality of warm charm and by a telling dramatic instinct: this is the essence of Tebaldi.

It may be too early to assess the full powers of Stella, but this much is certain: here is an artist of the highest integrity, possessor of an enchanting lyrico-spinto voice, trained well and thoroughly. She is an outstanding actress, capable of making

*Continued on page 120*

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by Roland Gelatt

# Music Makers

MAX GOBERMAN, who has embarked on a complete-Vivaldi recording project, is no stranger to long-remembered collectors. Almost twenty years ago he and his New York Sinfonietta made the then-startling gesture of recording eight string symphonies by the English composer William Boyce. This little-known music was issued on nine 78-rpm discs by one of the earliest "independents," an outfit called Timely Records. Goberman has since then taken part in a goodly number of recordings, but more usually as the conductor of Broadway musicals (*West Side Story*, to name one) than of recondite repertoire from the eighteenth century. Now he has returned to the classical fold in a quite spectacular way by proposing to do no less than put the entire life work of Antonio Vivaldi on records.

The agency of this ambitious undertaking is the Library of Recorded Masterpieces, a new "independent" founded and directed by Mr. Goberman. The LRM will sell its records exclusively by mail. Subscribers to the series will receive a new Vivaldi record each month, complete with scores reproduced from the Ricordi Edition. The first record is now in the hands of charter subscribers, and material for several ensuing records is already on tape.

Goberman defrays the cost of preparation by combining his recordings with all-Vivaldi concerts in New York City. Each concert provides enough music for two discs, and studio recordings in three-channel stereo are made immediately following the public performances. Goberman's schedule calls for six concerts and twelve records per year. At this rate he expects to write "Finis" to the complete-Vivaldi project some time late in the 1960s.

Subscribers to the Library of Re-

corded Masterpieces receive a record (mono or stereo) and accompanying scores for \$8.50 a month. You cannot purchase one without the other. Goberman believes that the enjoyment of music—particularly music as transparently orchestrated as Vivaldi's—is measurably heightened by attention to the printed score. "Most record listeners won't go to the trouble or expense of buying a score," he says, "but if they have one presented to them they invariably enjoy following the music as they listen. Anybody interested in a complete recording of Vivaldi should be interested in owning the complete scores as well." This is a refreshingly uncompromising point of view, especially at a time when the large companies are retreating more and more from the esoteric and the experimental. Vivaldians should communicate with the Library of Recorded Masterpieces, 150 West 82nd Street, New York 24, N. Y.

ELEANOR STEBER is another musician who has taken the step of becoming an entrepreneur in the record business. Her company, called Stand Records, has started off by issuing an actual-performance LP of Miss Steber's Carnegie Hall recital of October 10, 1958.

Like a good many other artists, Eleanor Steber has discovered that the big companies are no longer as receptive as in days past to recordings of fairly limited sales potential. But instead of merely bewailing this state of affairs (a favored indoor occupation of musicians), she determined to do something about it. Result: Stand Records. "I feel there's a need," Miss Steber told us, "for recordings of the more unusual vocal repertoire. Of course, it attracts a smaller audience than the standard arias you hear all the time, and for that reason most

record companies won't bother with it. But I believe I can bring out this kind of music and at least make ends meet." This spring Eleanor Steber will make an all-Mozart record with an orchestra conducted by Robert Lawrence. Also on her agenda is an all-Debussy recital (including the *Cinq Poèmes de Baudelaire*), the *Seven Early Songs* of Alban Berg, and the Cantata No. 51, *Jauchzet Gott*, by Bach.

ABOUT TWO MONTHS AGO Decca-London's chief recording engineer, Arthur Haddy, left England for an unpublicized visit to Sunnyvale, California. His mission: to talk to the engineers at Ampex Audio and investigate the four-track tape processing of Ampex's subsidiary, United Stereo Tapes. In 1958, just before the introduction of London's stereo discs, Arthur Haddy had told us that he was and had always been opposed to tape as a stereo medium for home listening. The trip to Sunnyvale changed his mind. On January 18, United Stereo Tapes will release a great batch of Decca-London recordings, the first fruit of a five-year pact.

"I suppose everyone is entitled to second thoughts," says Lee Hartstone, vice president of London Records. "Haddy talked to the Ampex people, listened to their ideas about the future of tape, saw their processing operation, and decided that this was a company we should work with. Had it not been for Ampex, we wouldn't today be in the tape field. I don't believe there's another company in the world to whom we would have leased our catalogue."

In the first tape release are London's complete stereo recordings of *Rheingold*, *Butterfly*, and *Figaro*, also Von Karajan's *Also sprach Zarathustra*, Ansermet's *Coppélia*, and much, much more. Four-track tape has been given a very sizable boost.

# 1950



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# 1959



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## Records in Review



## The Early Quartets: Beethoven Anew, by the Budapest at Its Finest

by Robert C. Marsh

COMMENTATORS on Beethoven's Op. 18 quartets—now issued by Columbia in a new Budapest stereo version—are prone to begin with the "accepted scholarly idea" that in these works one sees the young composer operating within a form taken over very largely from Haydn and Mozart and yet to be modified with any distinctive contribution from his own genius. Like many "accepted scholarly ideas," this is more truth than falsehood, but it is just a little too pat a generalization to be swallowed unchewed. The six Op. 18 quartets are filled with the most individual marks of Beethovenian creativity, and we would do well to stress these features rather than the links with their predecessors.

For one thing, the Op. 18 quartets are not as early as some may suppose. Written between 1798-1800, they are prefaced by the

first of the five canonical piano concertos, ten piano sonatas, and a great deal of other music, including (if one accepts its authenticity) the *Jena* symphony. This is youthful Beethoven but it is not juvenilia.

I do not think, for example, that there is any set of variations in Haydn and Mozart which one may regard as anticipation of the *Andante cantabile* of the Op. 18, No. 5. Here the Beethoven stamp is unmistakable, and the variation writing stylistically grounded on the techniques which, in time, produced the great Diabelli series of Op. 120. Harmonically, these quartets are a fully realized expression of the Beethoven character that is more forcefully pronounced in his middle period. The wit (beautifully illustrated in the complimentary exchanges that open Op. 18, No. 2) is far removed from any Haydn joke; while the tragedy, found in the mag-

nificent slow movement of Op. 18, No. 1, is distinctively shaped in terms of Beethoven's Promethean manner. And it should also be noted that these six quartets cover an enormous range of content, from the sublime to the courtly gallant to the stab of grief to quasi-Hungarian frivolity. Not even the six quartets of Bartók offer such scope of material and emotional content, and few living composers could hope to encompass half this range.

Early Beethoven is not, of course, late Beethoven, but we would do well to avoid the delusion that our lives are conducted on such a level that only the most transcendent works of art deserve attention. These quartets are worth all the interest and affection one may care to give them.

For many of us, their qualities first registered with force as they appeared fifteen or

more years ago in a series of Budapest recordings. That first Budapest edition, a mixture of American Columbias and HMVs, was not fully complete, since the opening and closing movements of Op. 18, No. 5 were missing. Time corrected this omission, however, and the microgroove album of 1952 gave us the whole of the series in consistent sonics.

It is natural to fear that on the third time around repetition might have done its worst and introduced a deterioration from those superb earlier statements of these works. It is therefore pleasing to discover that quite the contrary has taken place, and this third edition (the first, of course, in stereo) is quite the finest of the three. I do not say this arbitrarily, since I gave considerable time to playing Budapest Beethoven against Budapest Beethoven. I expect that some who have become thoroughly accustomed to the earlier performances will resent the fact that these are different, but for me the changes may all be taken validly as further refinements.

Just to avoid any confusion, it hardly needs be said that at no time since it established itself in this country in 1938 has the Budapest String Quartet been anything less than an impressively fine musical organization. The difference is simply that between a group playing well from notes it has carefully rehearsed and one which, in this new set, takes its knowledge of the notes for granted and is free to concentrate on stating a musical line with the maximum of expression and force.

The effect of such playing is completely realized only in stereo recording which separates the four instruments to a degree such that the interplay of the themes is heard rather than imagined. Take, as illustration, the menuetto (it is really one of Beethoven's early scherzos) of the quartet Op. 18, No. 3, where the lively thematic line moves back and forth from the violins on the right to the viola and cello on the left. No monophonic recording can reproduce this effect—which Beethoven plainly wanted to exploit. Here in stereo it is just right.

The microphone placement was clearly very close (at times you can even hear the players' breathing), and the sound is consequently that heard when one is in the midst of a group of stringed instruments rather than the blended and softened sonorities experienced midway back in a hall. I approve, for this is the only way that stereo can offer a genuine, quartet-in-the-living-room effect; but be prepared for realism.

Be prepared, too, for ten more Beethoven quartets to complete this third Budapest edition. I, for one, find that prospect thoroughly appealing.

#### BEETHOVEN: *Quartets for Strings*

Op. 18: No. 1, in F; No. 2, in G; No. 3, in D; No. 4, in C minor; No. 5, in A; No. 6, in B flat.

Budapest Quartet.

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Fricsay, Seefried, and Sardi. Wilhelm

## A Notable *Don* from Deutsche Grammophon

by Nathan Broder

ONE OF THE CURIOUS and unexpected results of modern recording of operas has been to throw an extra burden on the singer. Deprived of costume, gesture, movement, and all other visual props, he must create the character he is portraying entirely with his voice, coloring it in such a way as to reflect the different emotional states and mental attitudes he assumes in the course of the story. To be sure, the greatest artists did this on stage too, but—to judge by records—the ability to do it has always been rare; even celebrated singers of the Golden Age seldom had more than two or three emotional strings to their bow. One thinks, of course, of Chaliapin, but the very fact that he springs to mind so far ahead of all others shows how lonely he is on his peak. Perhaps the microphone will force singers to try to develop this skill, which would be only fair, since the microphone has relieved them of the necessity of having a big voice.

These reflections were brought to mind by Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau's performance in this new Deutsche Grammophon recording of *Don Giovanni*. More than any other recorded Don, I think, he takes the pains to characterize with his voice. When, at the beginning of the second act, he pretends to be consumed once more with love for Elvira, without exaggerating he makes it quite clear to the audience that he is putting it on. And a little later, when he masquerades as Leporello, his voice immediately takes on the color of Karl Kohn's. Yet at no time is the music distorted. In other respects too this Don is a highly commendable one. Fischer-Dieskau does not have quite the bravura to carry off the "*Finch'han del vino*" without a slip of tongue or lip (how many Dons do?), and he is perceptibly off on a high D sharp in the graveyard scene;

but his fine, lyric voice flows accurately everywhere else. This Don Giovanni is noble, cruel, lively, and fearless, not cringing even before his terrible doom.

The Leporello of Karl Kohn is a not unworthy servant to this Don. Considerably less varied in color, it is nevertheless sung in rich and well-focused tones. Ernst Häfliger, the Ottavio, handles his two arias with skill and musicianship. One has heard tenors with more honey in the voice, but not many nowadays who can spin out a phrase more smoothly or land so solidly yet effortlessly on a high note. Sardi's Masetto does not reflect all the feelings experienced by that much-put-upon character, but it contains one or two fine touches. For example, when the disguised Don, craftily removing the weapons with which Masetto plans to attack him, asks whether he has any more, Sardi's "*Non basta?*" ("Aren't these enough?") has an innocent surprise that is delicious.

There is more unevenness on the distaff side, frequently within the same role. Sena Jurinac, the Anna, produces some lovely singing, full of feeling, as in the wonderful accompanied recitative following the Commendatore's slaying. Her "*Non mi dir*," too, is moving, though it would be even more effective if its first section were softer; and she sails through the extremely difficult Allegretto section with hardly a trace of strain. Elsewhere, however, as in "*Or sai chi l'onore*," her tone becomes pinched or metallic in moments of stress or on high-lying passages. The Elvira, Maria Stader, is at her best in "*Mi tradi*," where leaps are successfully negotiated and scale passages and arpeggios unroll smoothly. In other places, such as "*Ah chi mi dice mai*," she is rather unsteady, and scoops up to high notes; in a laudable attempt to convey Elvira's desperation in her last plea to Don



Giovanni to turn from the path of evil, she unfortunately becomes screamy and inaccurate. More consistent than either of these ladies is Irmgard Seefried, who makes a very pleasing, if not a particularly caressing, Zerlina. One final remark about the singers: if you are sensitive to a German accent in Italian, you should be warned that half the cast (Kohn, Stader, Häfliger, Sardi) says "qvi," "qvel," or "qvesto."

Fricsay directs the proceedings with much skill. Except for a moment in the first finale, where he speeds things up much beyond the Allegretto marked in the score, his tempos are plausible. An especially fine effect results from his light touch in the accompaniment to Don Giovanni's serenade. The orchestra sounds very good indeed, and in general the winds can be clearly heard when they have something important to contribute. It is only in the scene with the three orchestras that the balance fails: orchestras two and three are drowned by the voices.

How does this compare with other available recordings of *Don Giovanni*? I do not know the Epic set, but can report on the London (conducted by Josef Krips), Cetra (Max Rudolf), and Pathé (Hans Rosbaud). Each, as often happens, has its good points. None of the Don Giovannis, in my opinion,

surpasses Fischer-Dieskau's. Siepi's (on London) is very close, and his and Gueden's "*Là ci darem*" is the finest of the four. There is something to be said for Taddei (Cetra) and Campo (Pathé) too, but not as much. All the Leporellos sing well; my vote would go to Tajo (Cetra) as the most imaginative. If I had to choose among Ottavios I suppose I would pick Häfliger, though Dermota (London), Valletti (Cetra), and Gedda (Pathé) are all better than acceptable. While Jurinac's Anna is not consistent in quality, it is on the whole a stronger performance than that of Danco (London), whose voice sounds rather lightweight for the role and not always firmly supported, or that of Stich-Randall (Pathé), which is monochromatic. (The ladies in the Cetra set need not be considered here; they are all, unfortunately, second-rate.) Elvira is a tossup between Danco (Pathé) and Della Casa (London). Both are well sung, but Danco this time has more of the heroic quality required by the part. Gueden (London) is my choice for Zerlina; hers is a performance that would grace any *Don Giovanni*.

Of the conductors, it seems to me that Max Rudolf (Cetra) has a slight edge over the others in dramatic intensity and in nuance. Fricsay comes close, as far as these qualities are concerned, Josef Krips (Lon-

don) and Hans Rosbaud (Pathé) farther behind.

The Deutsche Grammophon set has by and large the best sound. In the London the violin tone is harsh and unreal, and there is some distortion in both the Pathé and Cetra sets.

It will be seen that no one set has clear-cut superiority. There are more good things in Deutsche Grammophon and London than in the other two. Whether a fully satisfactory *Don Giovanni* will ever come along is a question no one can answer. But that it is possible to come near to doing full justice to a Mozart opera on records has been shown by London's *Figaro*. Let us not, therefore, despair.

#### MOZART: *Don Giovanni*

Sena Jurinac (s), Donna Anna; Maria Stader (s), Donna Elvira; Irmgard Seefried (s), Zerlina; Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau (b), Don Giovanni; Karl Kohn (bs), Leporello; Ernst Häfliger (t), Don Ottavio; Ivan Sardi (bs), Masetto; Walter Kreppel (bs), the Commendatore. RIAS Chamber Choir and Berlin Radio Symphony Orchestra, Ferenc Fricsay, cond.

● DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON DGMO 302. Three LP. \$15.94.

● DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON DGSO 7302. Three SD. \$18.94.



by John S. Wilson

## Ella Meets the Gershwins

### With an Assist from Nelson Riddle

ELLA FITZGERALD's reputation as "a jazz singer" is, to a large extent, deserved—but it is also misleading. Miss Fitzgerald's association with jazz has been more a matter of circumstance than inclination, for her primary talent is her treatment of warmly melodious ballads. She began her career twenty-five years ago as the vocalist in Chick Webb's quite genuine jazz band, but Webb hired her because of her way with a slow and sentimental ballad (her entire repertory at the time is reputed to have consisted of two songs, both pop ballads of the moment) and ballads have been her forte ever since. Nonetheless, the jazz label has clung to her. She

has spent the bulk of her career in a jazz milieu—singing with Webb's band, leading a band of her own, appearing as a "single" in night clubs which cater to a jazz audience and as a perennial star of the "Jazz at the Philharmonic" troupe—and although she has sung and recorded numerous ballads, her popular hits have usually been novelty tunes with jazz overtones (*Stone Cold Dead in the Market*) or such out-and-out jazz efforts as her scat versions of *Flyin' Home* and *Oh, Lady Be Good*.

It is only in the past few years that Miss Fitzgerald's talents as a singer beyond the jazz fold have begun to be realized. From

what has previously seemed to be a haphazard selection of tunes, she has been guided, under the direction of Norman Granz, towards the melodious heart of the popular repertory, a move which has resulted in recorded sets of the songs of Cole Porter, Rodgers and Hart, Duke Ellington, and Irving Berlin. All of these albums were partially successful—but only partially; Miss Fitzgerald was not at home with trickily worded lyrics, and her accompaniment too often missed the mark (the most surprising instances being the inept backing she received from Duke Ellington's orchestra on Ellington's own songs).

**BEETHOVEN: Quartets for Strings**

Op. 18: No. 1, in F; No. 2, in G; No. 3, in D; No. 4, in C minor; No. 5, in A; No. 6, in B flat.

Budapest Quartet.

- COLUMBIA M3L 262. Three LP. \$14.94.
- • COLUMBIA M3S 606. Three SD. \$17.94.

For a feature review of this album, see p. 61.

**BEETHOVEN: Symphony No. 3, in E flat, Op. 55 ("Eroica")**

Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, Georg Solti, cond.

- • LONDON CS 6145. SD. \$4.98.

This release inaugurates another complete edition of the Beethoven Nine, which Solti began in 1959 and will complete this year. It is only just that the Vienna orchestra should record a Beethoven cycle, and from this performance it seems equally just that the conductor's assignment should have gone to Solti.

This is an exceptional *Eroica*, distinguished by outstanding orchestral playing, and paced in such a manner that, even though Solti takes the first movement repeat, the music always has a positive sense of movement and appears, at the end, to have passed rather quickly. This sort of legerdemain marks a master conductor. Solti's reading is distinctive and imaginative, rather than a "standard" performance, but its departures from tradition are all quite in keeping with Beethoven's intentions as I see them. It is therefore a pleasure to hear an *Eroica* that escapes conventionality without loss of authority and strength.

The engineering provides a striking likeness of the orchestra. R.C.M.

**BRAHMS: Concerto for Violin and Orchestra, in D, Op. 77**

Arthur Grumiaux, violin; Amsterdam Concertgebouw Orchestra, Eduard van Beinum, cond.

- • EPIC BC 1017. SD. \$5.98.

Good recorded performances of the Brahms Violin Concerto are not hard to come by, but this one by Grumiaux certainly deserves to rank among the best. The Belgian violinist plays with his customary sweet, rich tone, yet his traversal of this masterpiece remains level-headed and sanely expressive. The orchestral support by the late Eduard van Beinum is marked by the same sanity and sense of proportion, and the stereo sound, with soloist somewhat to left of center, is of a high quality. P.A.

**BRAHMS: Symphony No. 3, in F, Op. 90**

Hamburg State Philharmonic Orchestra, Joseph Keilberth, cond.

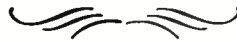
- TELEFUNKEN TC 8009. LP. \$1.98.

Houston Symphony Orchestra, Leopold Stokowski, cond.

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*A Profile of Giulietta Simionato*

by Herbert Kupferberg

**Feature Reviews of Carmen**

conducted by Beecham and Aida conducted by Von Karajan

In his traversal of this symphony, Keilberth presents a rather heavy, hard-driven reading of the first movement, with a strangely broadened return to the recapitulation. His handling of the second movement is fairly intense, while the Trio of the third movement is slightly dragged, and the finale is slow and heavy-handed. Strong, full-range recording prevails.

Despite its shortcomings Keilberth's conception is, however, a model of correctness compared to Stokowski's erratic treatment—or rather, mistreatment—of the score. In the latter's reading no two measures of the first movement are taken at the same tempo. The second movement is more even and is beautifully phrased but inordinately slow. The third movement again is uneven in tempo and is heavily sentimental, while the last movement is slow, overdramatized, and generally exaggerated in pace and phrasing.

Yet with it all Stokowski works wonders with the Houston orchestra, which has never sounded better. He draws from the players an extremely polished, rich-colored tone. The strings sound positively gorgeous, and the wind soloists and choirs are of the first rank. Sonically, the monophonic version is excellent, but it is the stereo edition that really shines: it is the last word in naturalness, spaciousness, and distribution.

Since neither of these interpretations is up to standard, the best of the newer

versions remain those by Klemperer and Kubelik. P.A.

**BRAHMS: Variations on a Theme by Haydn, Op. 56a**

†Wagner: *Siegfried Idyll; Träume*

Philharmonia Orchestra, Paul Kletzki, cond.

- ANGEL 35765. LP. \$4.98.
- • ANGEL S 35765. SD. \$5.98.

Kletzki is not a showy conductor. He allows the music to sing, to emerge frankly and naturally, and in so doing, serves it best. Other performances of the *Haydn Variations* and the *Siegfried Idyll* may have more tension and excitement, but few, if any, are more solidly grounded, more carefully wrought, or more satisfying. The orchestral arrangement of the hauntingly beautiful song *Träume*, the last of the five *Wesendonck* *Lieder*, is presumably the composer's own, with one slight variation: the solo line is allotted to a single violin, here affectingly played by Hugh Bean.

While the monophonic recording is strong in the middle frequencies, it is a bit weak in the highs. The stereo version, on the other hand, is ideal in every respect, with every leading voice emerging with the clear relief the conductor intended—in other words, reproduction as warmly satisfying as the interpretations. P.A.

**CAGE: Indeterminacy**

John Cage, narrator; David Tudor, music.

- FOLKWAYS FT 3704. Two LP. \$5.95 each.

Here John Cage tells about ninety short anecdotes, one after the other, while David Tudor adds bleeps and bangs in the background, some of them taken from Cage's piano music and some from his tape recorder works. Cage's stories, on the whole, are very good. He gives us bits of autobiography, philosophic tales, and whatnot, as if he were unloading two years of amiable dinner conversation in one monologue, but before long it all begins to sound very arbitrary and affected. The music makes no sense, and neither does Cage's way of speeding up and slowing down his speech, now dragging the words with long intervals between them, now spilling them out as fast as he can. *Indeterminacy* is an attractive idea, but there is nothing more completely determinative than a phonograph record, and such charm as this experiment may have had in live performance is lost when it is transferred to discs. A.F.

**CHOPIN: Sonata for Piano, No. 3, in B minor, Op. 58; Barcarolle, Op. 60; Waltzes: in A flat, Op. 34, No. 1; in D flat, Op. 64, No. 1. Mazurkas: in C minor, Op. 56, No. 3; in A minor, Op. 59, No. 1**

Vladimir Ashkenazy, piano.

- ANGEL 35648. LP. \$4.98.
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Continued on page 68



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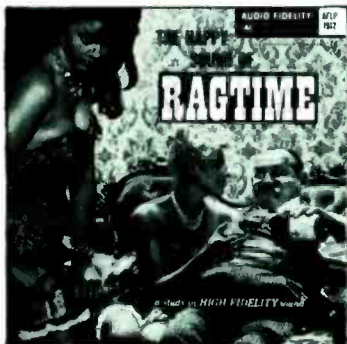
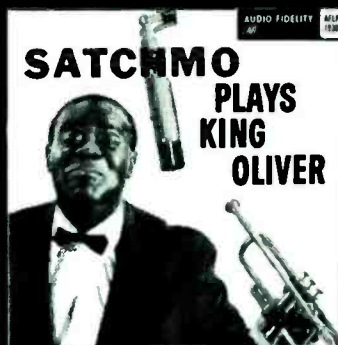
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In its highly special, personal way, this is superb music making. The recording sounds as if it had been made in a particularly resonant, echoing hall, with results that are cleaner on the monophonic than the stereo disc. There is no actual blurring on the latter, but there the tone loses some of its body in loud passages. R.E.

**DAHL:** *Allegro and Arioso for Five Wind Instruments*—See Etlér: *Quintet for Winds*.

**DEBUSSY:** *Quartet for Strings, in G minor, Op. 10*—See Ravel: *Quartet for Strings, in F*. § 74

**DONIZETTI:** *La Favorita*

Giulietta Simionato (s), Leonora; Bice Magnani (s), Ines; Gianni Poggi (t), Fernando; Piero di Palma (t), Don Gasparo; Ettore Bastianini (b), Alfonso; Jerome Hines (bs), Baldassare. Chorus and Orchestra of the Maggio Musicale Fiorentino, Alberto Erede, conductor.

• • LONDON OSA 1310. Three SD. \$17.94.

This is a stereophonic reissue of a performance which has been in the catalogue for a couple of years now. Apart from Simionato, who fills the bill beautifully as Leonora, the performance is not ideal; one could ask for more elegance from everyone concerned, and for more fire from Mr. Hines. The voices are all of imposing caliber, however, and much of the music is magnificent—the opera's total effect is quite powerful. Stereo is an asset, particularly in the last act. Soloists do not move around much, but the added depth is important at several points, and the sound throughout is richer than in the monophonic edition. C.L.O.

**ETLER:** *Quintet for Winds*

†Dahl: *Allegro and Arioso for Five Wind Instruments*

†Barber: *Summer Music for Woodwind Quintet*

New York Woodwind Quintet.

• • CONCERTDISC CS 216. SD. \$6.95.

Alvin Etlér of Smith College here makes his debut on records with a wonderfully brilliant, vivacious, and flawlessly constructed work. It contains the deftest imaginable writing for the woodwinds, and its neoclassical counterpoint is made to order for just this type of ensemble. A highly distinguished first recording.

Etlér's is the big piece on this disc. It is coupled with two smaller works by his contemporaries. The *Allegro and Arioso* by Ingolf Dahl is in the peppery, Stravinskian style which this composer employed early in his career; it is most remarkable for the pungent virtuoso writing of its second movement. The *Summer Music* of Samuel Barber is a pleasantly impressionistic piece that provides an excellent foil to the other two works.

As is always the case with the New York Woodwind Quintet, the performance is impeccable. There is probably no finer woodwind ensemble in the world than this one, and the recording does it full justice. A.F.

**FELDMAN:** *New Directions in Music—2*

*Extension 1 for Violin and Piano; Structures for String Quartet; Projection 4 for Violin and Piano; Extension 4 for Three Pianos; Intersection 3 for Piano; Two Pieces for Two Pianos; Three Pieces for String Quartet; Piece for Four Pianos.*

David Tudor, Russell Sherman, Edwin Hymovitz, pianos; Matthew Raimondi and Joseph Rabushka, violins; Walter Trampler, viola; Seymour Barab, cello. • COLUMBIA ML 5403. LP. \$4.98.

This is one of the most important records of the year, for it introduces the work of a young American composer who is bound to win recognition as one of the most creative and original musical minds of the present day. The record will, of course, speed that recognition enormously, and Columbia is to be congratulated on bringing it out.

Containing eight short compositions, the disc is representative of Morton Feldman's output from 1951 to 1957. Two of the works are for violin and piano and

two are for string quartet; the others are for one, two, three, or four pianos. How three pianists—only three are named—manage to play four pianos we are not told. In fact, we are told exasperatingly little in the turgid notes on the record sleeve. This is unfortunate, since in confronting so new and different an idiom as Feldman's one tends to fall back on theoretical explanation as a means of understanding and as a method for acquiring the vocabulary needed if one is to speak intelligently about the new phenomenon.

It would appear, however, that Feldman makes use of a technique of partial control which, in the philosophic sense, is not unlike that of abstract expressionism in painting; it is far from insignificant that the jacket of his record is adorned with a drawing by the abstract expressionist painter, Philip Guston, and that Frank O'Hara, his annotator, is on the staff at the Museum of Modern Art. In some instances, Feldman leaves the time intervals of the music to the choice of the player. In other instances the player is free to select the pitch intervals within certain broadly indicated levels; here Feldman is forced to use a special graph notation. One gathers that freedom in one area is coupled with exceptionally rigid control in others; this, after all, is composition, not improvisation.

Be all that as it may, Feldman possesses an incredibly acute and subtle ear. Although O'Hara quotes him as denying that his *Piece for Four Pianos* has anything to do with Webern's pointillism, the effect of all eight works is eminently Webernian. They are full of spots, sparks, and spangles of radiant color; a single note becomes an event of epic portent; the final result is to compact hours into seconds with an almost overwhelming intensity and depth of feeling.

The performance is clearly a labor of love by the participants, who are among the finest chamber music players in New York. Feldman's gamut of color strains recording to the utmost, but it seems safe to assume that most if not all of his delicacies have been captured in the grooves. A.F.

**GRIEG:** *Concerto for Piano and Orchestra, in A minor, Op. 16*—See Liszt: *Concerto for Piano and Orchestra, No. 2, in A*. § 76

**HANDEL:** *Messiah*

Adele Addison, soprano; Lorna Sydney, contralto; David Lloyd, tenor; Donald Gramm, bass; Handel and Haydn Society; Zimble Sinfonietta, Thompson Stone, cond.

• • KAPP K 38000 S. Three SD. \$14.94.

This is a stereo version of a recording made in 1955. The sound is very good, and there is some fine work by Adele Addison and Donald Gramm, but in most other respects this set is surpassed by other *Messiahs* now available. The edition used is based on that of Robert Franz, and there are some hefty cuts, among them "And He shall purify," "And

Continued on page 70

HIGH FIDELITY MAGAZINE





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MG 50222 / SR 90222



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with His stripes," "Their sound is gone out," and "Since by man came death." N.B.

### HANDEL: "Music of Handel"

*Alcina: Tornami a vagheggiar; Ombre pallide. Esther: Tune Your Harps; Turn Not, O Queen. Jephtha: Sinfonia; Symphony. Rodrigo: Suite.*

Joan Sutherland, soprano; William Herbert, tenor; Hervey Alan, bass; Philomusica of London, Anthony Lewis, cond.

• • OISEAU-LYRE SOL 60001. SD. \$5.98.

As an insatiable Handelian, I am so enraptured by the mostly unfamiliar melodic jewels here that I can only pretend to evaluate the performances objectively. Miss Sutherland's arias, evidently made before her sensational rise to British fame, may not display the young Australian soprano's full powers—but what a fresh voice she has and what restrained yet dramatic grace she brings, for instance, to "Ombre pallide." Neither Herbert nor Alan has exceptional vocal equipment—but how expressively and straightforwardly they sing here, and what a superb dialogue between tenor and oboe in the former's "Tune Your Harps," surely one of the most enchanting airs of all the Handelian masterpieces. The recording may be a bit unkind to the properly small orchestra's more intense string passages, especially in the forceful, high-stepping *Jephtha Sinfonia*, but in general how transparently it reveals, in beautifully blended and unexaggerated stereoism, the felicities of the apparently undoctored scoring and those of the unidentified but superb oboist. In short this is a disc which many of us will cherish as one of the rarely delectable jewels of our baroque collections. R.D.D.

### HAYDN: *Symphonies: No. 44, in E minor ("Trauer"); No. 57, in D*

Netherlands Chamber Orchestra, Szymon Goldberg, cond.

• EPIC LC 3625. LP. \$4.98.  
• • EPIC BC 1046. SD. \$5.98.

No. 44, with its gravely lovely slow movement and its fine canonic Minuet (which, according to Robbins Landon, should precede the Adagio, not follow it, as it does here), is available in several satisfactory recordings, but this seems to be the first appearance on discs of No. 57. It is very welcome indeed: although the first movement is not especially distinguished, the Adagio makes charming play with plucked and bowed strings, the Minuet contrasts a hearty peasant dance with a delicate, melancholy trio, and the finale whizzes along in Haydn's gayest vein.

Szymon Goldberg is well known as an excellent violinist; this is the first time I have heard him in the role of conductor, and I must say he sounds like a veteran. Except for one or two pizzicatos, the men play with admirable precision, and there is plenty of drive and power as well as nuance. With its good sound (in both versions, although the stereo has its usual advantage of spaciousness), this is altogether an enjoyable disc. N.B.

### JANACEK: *Quartets for Strings: No. 1; No. 2*

Smetana Quartet.

• ARTIA ALP 109. LP. \$4.98.

Leos Janáček is here revealed as a kind of cross between Dvořák and James Joyce. Like Dvořák, he drew upon an inexhaustible fund of melody, all of it strongly beholden to Czech folk song and folk dance. His harmony, too, has something of Dvořák's sweetness, but his forms, in sharp distinction to those of the older master, have nothing to do with the classic patterns but seem to have been constructed on the principle of free association. Proceeding according to no perceptible logic, they have a fresh, improvised, white-hot quality that stamps this music with a personal thumbprint like none other in the entire literature. There is also in Janáček's use of the instruments something extravagant and capricious which contributes mightily to the special character of these delightful works. The performance is excellent, the recording somewhat astringent. A.F.

### LISZT: *Concerto for Piano and Orchestra, No. 2, in A*

†Grieg: *Concerto for Piano and Orchestra, in A minor, Op. 16*

György Cziffra, piano; Philharmonia Orchestra, André Vandernoot, cond.

• ANGEL 35738. LP. \$4.98.  
• • ANGEL S 35738. SD. \$5.98.

György Cziffra deserves his reputation as an old-fashioned, bravura, freewheeling pianist, and in music of this romantic cast he is in his element. Both concertos are given large-format, highly colored performances that—quite reasonably—try to be as effective as possible at every possible moment. What could be more ravishing than Mr. Cziffra's softly glistening tone as he accompanies the cello in the Liszt work—and in the whole section that follows? Yet to this same artist tremendously surging octave passages sound like child's play. The first-movement cadenza of the Grieg is conceived and carried out on a grand scale, one that erupts in the

end in some startling added notes, as if the pianist found the printed page too confining for his temperament. Again, how gentle and caressing the slow movement of the Grieg. This all-stops-out treatment may irritate some, but it should gratify many more.

André Vandernoot stays right with his capricious soloist, and the orchestra plays beautifully. On the monophonic edition the sound is clean, lifelike, and well balanced; on stereo, perspective gains depth, but the pianist is given too much prominence relative to the orchestra. R.E.

### MARTIN: *Le Voilier sous la Croix*

Thérèse Haim, soprano; Louis Noguera, bass; Jean Clairville, narrator; Les Chanteurs de Saint-Eustache; Orchestre de l'Association des Concerts Pasdeloup, Pierre Dervaux, cond.

• PATHE DTX 290. LP. \$5.95.

Emile Martin, a French priest well known in Paris as a composer of religious music, wrote this oratorio in 1957 to commemorate the 300th anniversary of the founding of the Roman Catholic Church in Canada. It is eminently descriptive, almost operatic in character, although the occurrences with which it deals are nearly all inward and psychological in their nature. After the overture, we hear the gathering of the missionaries, who sing in a severely fugal style as they embark at Saint-Nazaire for the wilderness. The longest part of the work is concerned with the anguish of the voyage and the temptations of the Devil, who taunts the missionaries with the idea of failure, with nostalgia for home, and so on. But the Devil, his temptations and his storms, are overcome, and the oratorio ends in triumph.

The style of the piece is neither entirely conservative nor entirely modern; it pays its respects to César Franck and to Arthur Honegger; it uses the chorus, solo voices, and the speaking voice in highly dramatic style; and one would like it better if the text had been provided with the disc. The performance seems to be excellent; there is nothing to complain about in the recording. A.F.

### MENDELSSOHN: *Octet for Strings, in E flat, Op. 20*

Janáček Quartet; Smetana Quartet.

• WESTMINSTER XWN 18856. LP. \$4.98.  
• • WESTMINSTER WST 14082. SD. \$5.98.

It is almost frightening to contemplate, but this masterpiece of chamber music was written when Mendelssohn was only sixteen. Its performance here, the first in stereo, is a sound one, very well balanced, wonderfully transparent, and full of spirit. Though the monophonic edition is first-rate, it cannot possibly distribute the players and their music nearly as effectively as does the stereo version. The over-all sound on both could have been just a trifle brighter, but this is a relatively unimportant detail in an otherwise commendable presentation. P.A.



Joan Sutherland: grace and drama.

Continued on page 72



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**MOZART: Concertos for Flute and Orchestra: No. 1, in G, K. 313; No. 2, in D, K. 314. Andante for Flute and Orchestra, in C, K. 315**

Elaine Shaffer, flute; Philharmonia Orchestra, Efreim Kurtz, cond.

• • CAPITOL SC 7135. SD. \$5.98.

Miss Shaffer, according to the notes, studied with the great William Kincaid at the Curtis Institute, and that experience shows. Her tone is beautifully round and liquid, she phrases musically, her intonation is accurate, and she gives the impression that technically she can handle far more difficult tasks than confront her here. The soloist is placed at a proper distance from the microphone, so that we are spared the extraneous noises, such as the clicking of the key mechanism, that often mar close-up recording of woodwind instruments. Kurtz keeps his orchestra nicely scaled down, though by no means lacking in verve, and aside from a few questionable appoggiaturas turns in a first-rate job. N.B.

**MOZART: Concertos for Piano and Orchestra: No. 17, in G, K. 453; No. 24, in C minor, K. 491**

Gina Bachauer, piano; London Symphony Orchestra, Alec Sherman, cond.  
• • CAPITOL G 7194. LP. \$4.98.

In the marvelous G major Concerto, Mme. Bachauer's playing is buoyant and crisp. In the great C minor she falls in with the dramatic mood established by the conductor, but does not let the music's intensity lead her into exaggeration. Straightforward and high-grade are the words for these performances. There is a little more nuance in Serkin's reading of K. 453, and some phrases are more highly polished in the Casadesus and Gieseck versions of K. 491. The sound here is first-rate, and the balance generally good, though there are moments in both first movements when the bassoons are too faint. N.B.

**MOZART: Don Giovanni**

Sena Jurinac (s), Donna Anna; Maria Stader (s), Donna Elvira; Irmgard Seefried (s), Zerlina; Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau (b), Don Giovanni; Karl Kohn (bs), Leporello; Ernst Häffiger (t), Don Ottavio; Ivan Sardi (bs), Masetto; Walter Kreppel (bs), the Commendatore. RIAS Chamber Choir and Berlin Radio Symphony Orchestra, Ferenc Fricsay, cond.  
• • DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON DCMO 302. Three LP. \$15.94.  
• • DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON DGSO 7302. Three SD. \$18.94.

For a feature review of this opera, see page 62.

**MOZART: Serenades: No. 13, in G, K. 525 ("Eine kleine Nachtmusik"); No. 6, in D, K. 239 ("Serenata Notturna"). Divertimento in D, K. 136**

I Musici.

• • EPIC LC 3613. LP. \$4.98.

I do not remember having ever encountered a really bad performance of *Eine kleine Nachtmusik* on records. It has



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been done by ensembles too large for it, and some conductors are inclined to race through the finale, but otherwise everybody seems inspired by this adorable work to his best efforts. The present performance is no exception: it is straightforward but sensitive, by turns robust and poetic, and because it is done by a chamber orchestra, completely transparent. Equally pleasing is the performance of the delightful serenade for two string groups and a pair of kettledrums.

The least familiar work of the three here is K. 136, written when Mozart was sixteen. Einstein surmised that the title was not Mozart's and that the work was actually an Italian-style opera symphony without winds. It has some of the earmarks of that category—such as the fast-slow-fast pattern—and contains some passages of special interest, such as a sudden bit of sadness intruding on the gaiety of the first movement, the pert opening of the finale, and a later section of counterpoint, as though the young master were showing off his skill at "learned" music. Except for a slight edginess in the violin tone, the sound is good. N.B.

**MUSSORGSKY: Pictures from an Exhibition**

Vladimir Horowitz, piano.

• • RCA VICTOR LM 2357. LP. \$4.98.

Vladimir Horowitz's performance of his own "edition" of this work has been available in an old recording. This one was made during a Carnegie Hall recital on April 23, 1951, and offers—along with audience coughing—a wonderfully direct experience, as if one were close to the piano yet enjoying concert hall acoustics. The sonorities stagger the senses—sometimes the recording cannot handle the pianist's extraordinary percussive chords—and all the minutely delicate colorations are faithfully mirrored.

Mr. Horowitz's version of this music goes in for much note doubling, octave tremolandos, transpositions of phrases up and down—à la Liszt—in an effort to "orchestrate" the work. It gives the pianist a chance to perform as only he can in miraculous fashion at the keyboard. Stunning his effects are, literally, and just how beautiful they can be is best illustrated by the sustained chords in the "Con mortuis in lingua mortua" section of "Catacombs." But in the standard version of this work, a pianist's problem is to avoid loud monotony, and it seems to me that Mr. Horowitz has compounded the

problem with his additions—and not solved them. And many are hound to find his free reading of melodic lines highly mannered. These "Pictures" might be described as garish, but for students of piano playing they represent a unique "exhibition." R.E.

**PUCCINI: La Bohème**

Renata Tebaldi (s), Mimi; Gianna d'Angelo (s), Musetta; Carlo Bergonzi (t), Rodolfo; Piero di Palma (t), Parpignol; Ettore Bastianini (b), Marcello; Renato Cesari (b), Schaunard; Cesare Siepi (bs), Colline; Attilio d'Orazi (bs), Sergeant; Giorgio Onesti (bs), Doganiere. Chorus and Orchestra of Accademia di Santa Cecilia (Rome), Tullio Serafin, cond.

• • LONDON A 4236. Two LP. \$9.96.

• • LONDON OSA 1208. Two SD. \$11.96.

This recording is another in the series of London remakes of standard operas. *Pagliacci*, *Tosca*, and *Aida*—the last two again with Mme. Tebaldi—will follow soon. If they are all up to the standard set here, we can be very content with the project. Presumably, the commercial arrival of stereo is the impetus behind the decision to give Mme. Tebaldi the chance to record these roles a second time in less than a decade, and a comparison of the new version of *Bohème* with the old (which was among the best-sounding of the early LP releases) serves to justify the repetition of even so familiar a work.

The depth and richness of the sound and the clarity of definition, particularly of orchestral detail, add immeasurably to the work's impact. I do wish, however, that recording supervisors could be persuaded that this is enough and that the directional effect has only a limited use. London's taste in this matter has been generally good, but on this recording there is some really needless wandering about. It is most obtrusive in the opening scene between Rodolfo and Marcello, with tenor and baritone crossing back and forth in pointless fashion. It is true that this has the air of the stage, but that is no advantage in this case: we are reminded of the countless *Bohèmes* we have seen which featured just such empty business, though on the stage some visible excuse (Marcello must get a new brush, or what have you) is usually put forward for most of the movement. Since the sound is splendid, it would be better to leave the gimmick at rest.

Tebaldi's voice remains the lushest soprano in the operatic world, and she is at her best in Puccini. It may be that her darker tone and more deliberate style make her Mimi a bit less exciting than formerly; it is still better than anyone else's, at least as recorded, with the possible exception of Carteri's. The rest of the cast stands comparison with the best to be found today, and is certainly improved from that of the old London set. Bergonzi's voice isn't a liquid, effulgent one of the Gigli variety, but it is

Continued on page 74





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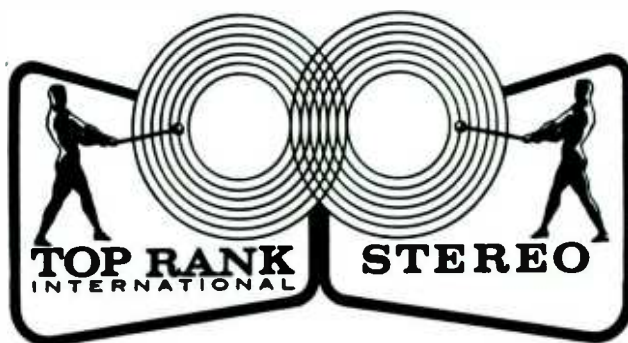


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solid, and the recording lends a meatiness to his upper register which is not evident in the house. He molds phrases well, and his taste lapses only in the final measures—a traditional place for hamming. In sum, he holds up his share of the music. Bastianini's nappy baritone is ideal for Marcello, despite a moment or two of strain, and Renato Cesari is a full-voiced Schaunard. Gianna d'Angelo is vocally the best Musetta on records, though in her eagerness to create a picture she occasionally neglects to really sing. Siepi intones a touching Coat Song, but Corena does some flagrant overacting as Benoit and Alcindoro.

Finally, there is Serafin, who goes straight to the heart of *Bohème*. His per-

formance is the quintessence of tradition in matters of pacing and emotional emphasis, and he pulls things together in a way that Beecham, for all his concern for showing the music as Puccini intended it, never achieves. Beecham (and, in a very different way, Toscanini) demonstrates the score; Serafin plays it, and the effect is a great deal more sweeping and direct. A highly satisfactory performance all around. C.L.O.

RAVEL: *Quartet for Strings, in F*  
 †Debussy: *Quartet for Strings, in G minor, Op. 10*

- Paganini Quartet.  
 • KAPP KCL 9038. LP. \$3.98.  
 • • KAPP KC 9038 S. SD. \$4.98.

The recordings are not the best in the world, but the performance is quite remarkable and deserves attention. These quartets are often sentimentalized, refined to wisps, or bathed in marshmallow; here is an interpretation full of sinew and life, one that places the two works in the classic line where they belong and provides new insight into them by returning to what their composers wrote. Beautiful playing. A.F.

RIMSKY-KORSAKOV: *Scheherazade, Op. 35*

- Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra, Antal Dorati, cond.  
 • • MERCURY SR 90195. SD. \$5.95.

It was back in 1952 that Mercury released a monophonic recording of *Scheherazade* by Dorati and the Minneapolis Symphony, and it earned some words of high praise from me at the time. Some seven years later, Mercury returned to Northrop Auditorium and did the whole thing over again in stereo. The results are spectacularly clean and brilliant, especially in the over-all separation, the strings and the percussion. From the standpoint of sheer sound, there probably isn't a better *Scheherazade* around. As for Dorati's interpretation, it is just a little on the businesslike side. Since there is really no distortion of musical values, however, those who don't want too much oriental lushness in their *Scheherazade* may appreciate this conception. Those interested in sonics *per se* will be using this disc to test their equipment. As for me, I still prefer Beecham on Angel. P.A.

ROSSINI: *Overtures: Guillaume Tell; Semiramide; Il Barbiere di Siviglia; La Gazza ladra*

- Bamberg Symphony Orchestra, Jonel Perlea, cond.  
 • Vox PL 11180. LP. \$4.98.  
 • • Vox STPL 51180. SD. \$5.98.

With all the collections of Rossini overtures on the market, the matter of choosing among them has become a rather silly game. This collection is as good as most, though it's hardly going to make Toscanini move over. Perlea tends to build the crescendos somewhat precipitously, and in some of these spots his grip is not quite as firm as it might be. The strings play with a tight, slightly dry tone. While the stereo version is clearly preferable to the monophonic, both have occasional distortion, mostly on Side 1. There is extremely sharp definition in the treble—so sharp, in fact, that I found it necessary to take the treble down a few notches for fear of losing effect in the bass, where things are not as clear. C.L.O.

SCHUBERT: *Trio for Piano and Strings, No. 1, in B flat, Op. 99*

- David Oistrakh, violin; Sviatoslav Knushevitzky, cello; Lev Oborin, piano.  
 • ANGEL 35713. LP. \$4.98.  
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Of all the lyrical outpourings of the song-minded Franz Schubert, this trio is among the most glorious. Every phrase overflows with song. Why, then, did three artists of the stature of Messrs. Oistrakh, Knushevitzky, and Oborin approach the music with such cautious timidity? The result is a very carefully phrased but altogether too tentative performance of a work that must glow from beginning to end if it is to break into open flame in the more dramatic portions of the final movement.

Whereas I usually object to stereo for two instruments only, such as violin and piano, I find it definitely enhances the sound of this trio. After all, *something* has to hold the listener's attention during a pallid performance.

My favorite version of this work—available only monophonically—is that by Fournier, Janigro, and Badura-Skoda on Westminster, though despite its age there is still much to be said for the great old Thibaud-Casals-Cortot performance, recently reissued on Angel's "Great Recordings of the Century" series. P.A.

STRAUSS, RICHARD: *Don Quixote, Op. 35; Till Eulenspiegels lustige Streiche, Op. 28*

Paul Tortelier, cello (in *Don Quixote*); Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, Rudolf Kempe, cond.

• • CAPITOL SG 7190. SD. \$5.98.

The first stereo *Don Quixote*, happily, is a good one, spreading Strauss's opulent orchestration over two channels that fuse into an impressive likeness of the great Berlin orchestra. Since this is my favorite symphonic work of the Strauss repertory, experiencing it in this way was a satisfaction which those who admire this music as much as I do will probably share.

Kempe is remarkably self-effacing in both these scores, so *Till* suffers from a lack of the firm character delineation the conductor must provide. *Don Quixote*, on the other hand, is powerful enough to produce a strong effect without the services of a zealous interpreter. Kempe's intentions in this music therefore seem very much like Toscanini's, although the details are rarely the same. Fortunately for everyone, Tortelier shares the same outlook and plays the solo part as an integral aspect of the design rather than a concertolike display of personal virtuosity.

The flock of sheep, the amusing episode with the wind machine, and the other well-known passages are recorded with exceptional realism and the elegance of slight understatement. R.C.M.

STRAUSS, RICHARD: *Parergon to the Sinfonia Domestica, for Piano and Orchestra, Op. 73*

Paul Wittgenstein, piano; Boston Records Orchestra, Eric Simon, cond.

• BOSTON B 412. LP. \$4.98.

This is the first recording anywhere of the ambitious work Strauss wrote in 1925 for Paul Wittgenstein, the re-

nowned one-armed pianist who also commissioned the better-known concerto by Ravel. The title, from the Greek "para-ergon" (beyond, or outside of, work), indicates a sort of musical *hors d'oeuvre*, in this case served up twenty-two years after the meal, the *Sinfonia Domestica*. Leading motives from the earlier work bob up somewhat aimlessly here; all varicolored, but without real transformation. Another, more successful "parergon" comes to mind: Wagner's *Siegfried Idyll*, in which the derivative themes are given a fresh direction and symphonic adaptation.

The effect is more curious than convincing; that of random pictures of ideas colored in sundown tones. Somehow, one misses the warmth needed to fuse these elements into an experience. Undoubtedly Mr. Wittgenstein's reworking

of the solo part (done with the approval of Strauss) adds something in the way of dramatic terseness, but the piano is blurred by an overcode of pedal and by an oversupply of mikes above the brasses. Nevertheless, we welcome Mr. Wittgenstein out of his virtual retirement from the public (he turned seventy-two last November), and look forward to his unveiling those concertos for left hand by Korngold, Weigl, and Prokofiev that he still carries in his brief case.

The second side of the disc is given to five effective transcriptions from the pianist's *School for the Left Hand*, which allow a fairer estimate of his remarkable accomplishment. ROBERT W. DUMM

STRAUSS, RICHARD: *Der Rosenkavalier*

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schallin; Rita Streich (s), Sophie; Irmgard Seefried (s), Octavian; Ilona Steingruber (s), Marianne; Sieglinde Wagner (ms), Annina; Rudolf Francl (t), A Singer; Gerhard Unger (t), Valzacchi; Albrecht Peter (b), Police Commissary; Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau (b), Herr von Faninal; Kurt Böhme (bs), Baron Ochs. Ensemble and Chorus of the Dresden State Opera; Saxon State Orchestra (Dresden), Karl Böhm, cond.  
• • DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON DGS 7301. Four SD. \$23.92.

Despite some fine individual work, my general feeling regarding this release is one of disappointment. I have great admiration for Karl Böhm, and indeed prefer his sincere, straightforward reading to the slick, heavily cologned job by Von Karajan. That many passages never quite get off the ground is, I think, due to the fact that the Saxon State Orchestra is just a good one—highly satisfactory, I'm sure, for Dresden opera performances, but not in a class with Von Karajan's or Kleiber's aggregations. The strings do not have quite the ripe sound I would like to hear (the scrapy violin fermata at the close of Act I is downright painful), and only the woodwinds seem to me really to meet the challenge.

There are also certain fatal weaknesses in the casting. While the Marschallin may be the opera's pivotal role from a dramatic standpoint, and Sophie is certainly a vital part, it is Octavian and Ochs to whom we must listen most of the time, and I fear that both Seefried and Kurt Böhme are lacking, though the latter's portrayal is probably worth seeing. Miss Seefried is so completely wrong as Octavian that I can only chalk up her performance as a mistake for all concerned. She does not produce a round, rich tone from beginning to end, is quite unable to open up in the climaxes, and clips off so many tones in what I gather is supposed to be a boyish manner that Octavian emerges as a snippy, smug youth. (Granted, Octavian is not the retiring sort, but his delight at the Feldmarschal's absence need not seem downright offensive.) Böhme knows his way around the role of Ochs, and has found solutions for its problems. But, though much of the dialogue must be rattled off in a quasi-parlando, I cannot for the life of me see why a good number of the notes should not be sung. London's Weber manages to sing most of them, as Mayr seems to have, and Kipnis and List. Mr. Böhme simply roars, and while it may all be very appropriate and funny on the stage, it is rough to listen to through most of *Rosenkavalier's* three and a half hours. In addition, Rudolf Francl fails to take advantage of the Singer's moment in the sun, and Steingruber is a frayed-sounding Marianne.

On the credit side are Fischer-Dieskau's pungent, pompous Faninal, Streich's lovely vocalism as Sophie, an outstanding pair of conspirators in Unger and Sieglinde Wagner, and a strong bit by Albrecht Peter. Somewhere between is the Marschallin of Marianne Schech. She is a woefully underrated singer of whom I hope we shall hear more soon, but she is at her best in the

soaring, full-voiced music of Sieglinde or Elsa. Her voice is not always as steady here as I have heard it, and the role's inwardness does not seem to come naturally to her. Still, it is a solid, conscientious Princess, and somewhat more than that in the Monologue. Possibly a more idiomatic, spontaneous Octavian would have made a difference for the better in Mine. Schech's Act I work.

DGC's sound is wide-ranging, but the soloists are too close-up, especially Böhme, and the stereo separation is only a distraction in the *Levée* Scene. The accompanying booklet contains the complete text, translation, and a good essay and synopsis by Alec Robertson. In sum, I'll still take Kleiber, especially with Gueden and Jurinac. C.L.O.

## STRAVINSKY: *Pétrouchka*

London Symphony Orchestra, Sir Eugene Goossens, cond.

- EVEREST LPBR 3033. LP. \$4.98.
- • EVEREST SDBR 3033. SD. \$5.98.

Another *Pétrouchka* is not front-page news, but I have never heard the polyphony of this great work so beautifully set forth on a phonograph record as it is in the stereo version here presented. The interpretation is a classic one, without tricks or exaggerations, but vivid and exciting, and the sound in general is extremely fine. A.F.

## TCHAIKOVSKY: *Marche slave, Op. 31.* *Eugen Onegin: Waltz and Polonaise.* *Francesca da Rimini, Op. 32*

Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra, Antal Dorati, cond.

- MERCURY MG 50201. LP. \$3.98.
- • MERCURY SR 90201. SD. \$5.95.

Except for a properly lively finale, Dorati's *Marche slave* lumbers along with stiff, ponderous steps; but in the music from *Eugen Onegin*, his long experience as a ballet conductor comes to the fore as he leads vivacious, strongly rhythmed performances of the *Waltz* and *Polonaise*. And the reading of *Francesca da Rimini* is even better—a powerful, intense, and, above all, extremely transparent and cleanly articulated performance that allows every passage and every instrument to stand out in bold relief. The Minneapolis Symphony is here at its best; and while the monophonic disc is brilliant, its stereo counterpart has excellent depth and direction. P.A.

## VILLA LOBOS: *Forest of the Amazon*

Bidu Sayao, soprano; Chorus; Symphony of the Air, Heitor Villa Lobos, cond.

- • UNITED ARTISTS UAS 8007. SD. \$4.98.

How can a good composer's style be watered down and blown up at one and the same time? The answer, if you care to seek it, may be found in this well-recorded movie score. A.F.

## WAGNER: *Siegfried Idyll; Träume*—See *Brahms: Variations on a Theme by Haydn, Op. 56a.*



## RECITALS AND MISCELLANY

**EILEEN FARRELL:** "Arias in the Great Tradition"

Beethoven: *Ah, Perfido!*; *Fidelio: Abscheulicher! Wo eilst du hin?* Weber: *Der Freischütz: Leise, leise; Und ob die Wolke.* Cherubini: *Medea: Solo un pianto.* Gluck: *Alceste: Grands Dieux! du destin, qui m'accable.*

Eileen Farrell, soprano; Columbia Symphony Orchestra, Max Rudolf, cond.

- COLUMBIA ML 5408. LP. \$4.98.
- COLUMBIA MS 6086. SD. \$5.98.

**EILEEN FARRELL:** "Eileen Farrell in Songs and Ballads"

Eileen Farrell, soprano; George Trovillo, piano.

- ANGEL 35608. LP. \$4.98.

For a feature review of these discs, see p. 64.

**MAITRISE D'ENFANTS ET ORCHESTRE NATIONAL DE LA RADIO-DIFFUSION FRANCAISE**

Poulenc: *Litanies à la Vierge Noire.* Fauré: *Messe Basse; Tantum Ergo.* Bartók: *Six Chants Populaires Hongrois.* Honegger: *Cantique de Pâques.*

Henriette Roget, organ; Maitrise d'Enfants et Orchestre National de la Radio-diffusion Française, Jacques Jouineau, cond.

- PATHE DTX 247. LP. \$5.95.

If, like me, you have a wife who weeps when she hears children sing, keep her away from this record; she'll be in tears for a week if you don't. She will be particularly affected, I suspect, by the Poulenc and the two works of Fauré on the first side. All the little angels in heaven are going to sound like this, especially those whom the good Lord has modeled after Raphael. Whether in the modal style of Poulenc or the diatonic style of Fauré, the voices of these children are absolutely seraphic, thanks about equally to the music, to the perfection of the performance, and the sensationally beautiful quality of the recording.

The Bartók and Honegger works on the second side are equally well sung and recorded. The Bartók is a set of Hungarian folk-song miniatures, not arrangements but original compositions based on folk themes. They are delightful, but slight, especially by comparison to the French works with which they are here associated. The Honegger is not in the angelic style but is very intense, highly polyphonic, and exceedingly difficult. Its performance is a major triumph for M. Jouineau and his singers. A.F.

**ANNA MOFFO:** "Anna Moffo Sings Mozart"

*Le Nozze di Figaro: Voi che sapete; Non so più; Deh vieni non tardar; Venite inginocchiatevi. Don Giovanni: Vedrai*

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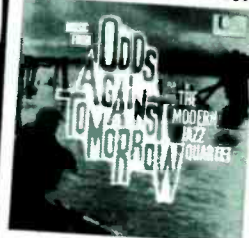
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carino. *Die Zauberflöte*: Ach, ich fühl's. *Così fan tutte*: In uomini. *Misera, dove son?*, K. 369. *Mass in C Minor*, K. 427: *Laudamus te*; *Et incarnatus est*. *Exsultate, jubilate*, K. 165: *Alleluja*.

Anna Moffo, soprano; Philharmonia Orchestra, Alceo Galliera, cond.  
• • ANGEL S 35716. SD. \$5.98.

This young American soprano's first recorded recital has much to recommend it. Hers is decidedly a lyric instrument, but it is a full-bodied, mature one, and I welcome a singer who will give us *Susanna*, *Zerlina*, and *Despina* without coy squealing and simpering. Her characterizations are still rather generalized, but they have life and taste, and Miss Moffo has sufficient time to bring them into sharper focus. The concert arias are expertly done, if we overlook a few precarious pianissimos in *Misera, dove son?* The two C minor *Mass* sections are unusually warm and reposeful. There is nothing to fault in Galliera's accompaniments, nor in Angel's sound, except for a trace of echo on the second side.

C.L.O.

**ELISABETH SCHWARZKOPF**: "*Elisabeth Schwarzkopf Sings Weber and Wagner*"

Wagner: *Tannhäuser*: *Dich, teure Halle*; *Allmächt'ge Jungfrau*. *Lohengrin*: *Einsam in trüben Tagen*; *Euch Lüften, die mein Klagen*. Weber: *Der Freischütz*: *Wie nahte mir der Schlummer* . . . *Leise, leise, fromme Weise*; *Und ob die Wolke*.

Elisabeth Schwarzkopf, soprano; Christa Ludwig, mezzo-soprano (in "*Euch Lüften* . . ."); Philharmonia Orchestra, Walter Susskind and Heinz Wallberg, conds.

• ANGEL 35806. LP. \$4.98.  
• • ANGEL S 35806. SD. \$5.98.

Schwarzkopf's voice is nearly always a beautiful sound to listen to, and her interpretations are invariably well planned and carefully executed. Some of this music, though, could do with more vocal spontaneity and with more freedom of expression. "*Dich, teure Halle*" nearly suffocates beneath her intense concentration, and her *Elsas Traum* does not possess much visionary glow. She is noticeably more successful with the two *Freischütz* arias, particularly "*Und ob die Wolke*," which is nearly flawless. In the second *Lohengrin* excerpt, she loosens up and gives us some of her finest work, aided in large measure by Ludwig, who demonstrates an amplitude of tone and temperamental affinity for the dramatic that I have not previously detected.

Susskind's leadership is appropriate throughout; Wallberg, who conducts the *Elsa/Ortrud* Scene, overdoes the contrasts a bit, but stirs up plenty of excitement for the Invocation. Stereo directionality is valuable in this one scene, with Ortrud calling out from one side and Elsa answering from the other, but otherwise I would rather listen to the monophonic version, which is clearer and



brighter. Notes and translations of the full texts are by Andrew Porter. C.L.O.

**IRMGARD SEEFRIED: Brahms and Strauss Lieder**

Brahms: *Wir wandelten; Nicht mehr zu dir zu gehen; Ruhe, Süßliebchen; Die Mainacht; Der Tod, das ist die kühle Nacht; Unbewegte, laue Luft; Ständchen.* Strauss: *Morgen; Die Nacht; Du meines Herzens Krönelein; Allerseelen; Die Georgine; Meinem Kinde; Traum durch die Dämmerung; Ständchen.*

Irmgard Seefried, soprano; Erik Werba, piano.

• DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON DGM 12018. LP. \$4.98.

• DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON DGS 712018. SD. \$5.98.

This recording gives me more pleasure than Miss Seefried's Schubert recital of a few months back, but still does not capture the qualities that made some of her earlier recordings so rewarding. Everything sounds quite difficult for her: when she sings the long phrase, we are conscious that she has used the last of her breath; when flowing legato is called for, her voice, instead of rolling naturally over the notes, must be steered along, and instead of resting on a sustained tone, must be held there. Her most conscientious efforts cannot paint for us the setting of *Die Mainacht*, and when she reaches the song's great climax on "*Und die einsame Träne/Beht mir heisser die Wange herab,*" she has no reserve to bring forth.

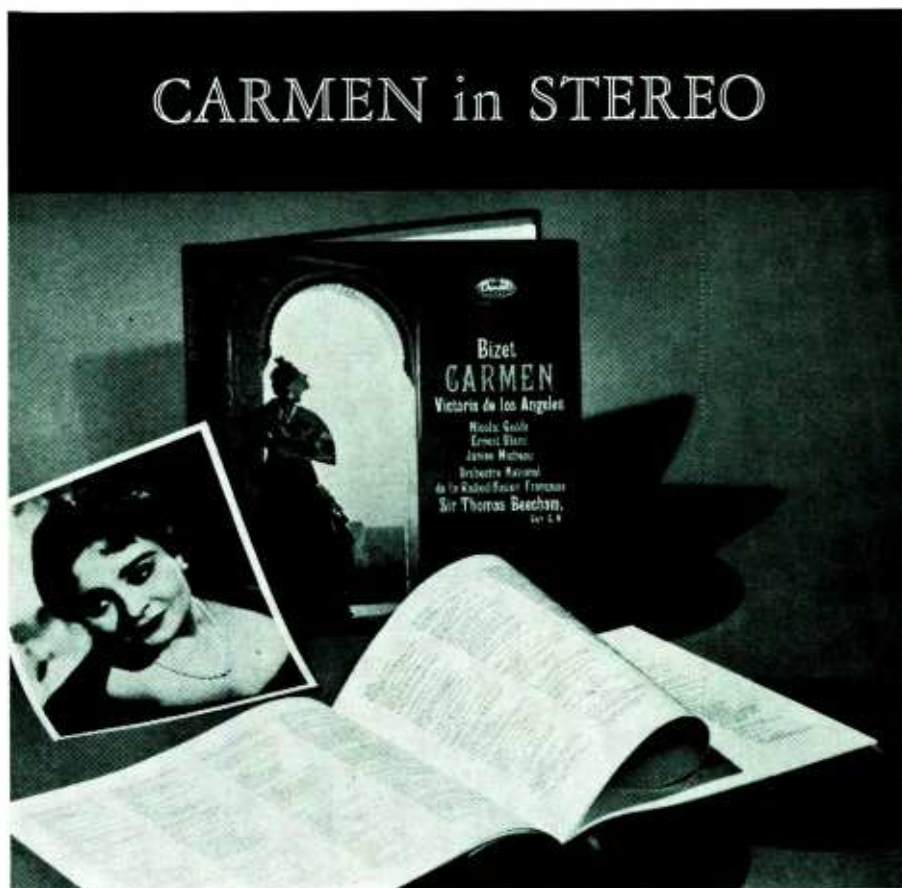
There are countless such opportunities missed, which is certainly a pity, in view of the artist's intelligence and sensitivity; in fact, the only song which is really done justice is the concluding *Ständchen* of Strauss—Miss Seefried has an unsurpassed flair for this sort of music. My impression is that this singer could benefit by a period of rest and vocal readjustment; it would be a shame to lose a singer of Miss Seefried's temperament when years of worthwhile singing should lie ahead of her. Werba's accompaniments are technically first-rate, but seem to me lacking in warmth. DGG's sound is clear, though not very rich; surfaces are silent. I would as soon listen to the monophonic version of this release as to the stereo. C.L.O.

**LEOPOLD STOKOWSKI: "Italian Program"**

Symphony of the Air, Leopold Stokowski, cond.

• UNITED ARTISTS UAL 7001. LP. \$4.98.

The best of the "best" Stokowski may be heard on one disc side here; the best of the "worst" on the other. Four transcriptions of Renaissance works can be quickly dismissed as aural sweetmeats, as sumptuous sonically as they are indigestible aesthetically. It's far too late for Stokowski to learn that heart-throbbing emotionalism is wholly alien to music of this kind, but one would expect him to be familiar enough with contemporary musicology to abandon the



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long-disproved attribution of the *Adoramus Te* to Palestrina.

Respighi's *Pini di Roma* is something else again, for here if ever is music that might have been specifically composed for Stokowski's unique talents and in which he actually is far less emotionally mannered. Sonically, this disc is so broadspread, pellucid, and brilliantly detailed that at first I was quite deluded into assuming it was stereophony. The actual SD, which I haven't yet heard, must be even better—although it's hard to imagine how it can be. But, more surprisingly, even the sonic splendors here are scarcely as profoundly impressive as the verve, restraint, and poetic eloquence of the reading. No other version I've ever heard, including Toscanini's, approaches this one, which wholly warrants the rarely deserved accolade of "definitive." R.D.D.

**RITA STREICH: Mozart Concert Arias**  
*Ah se in ciel, benigne stelle*, K. 538;  
*Vado, ma dove?*, K. 583; *Popoli di Tessaglia*, K. 316; *Vorrei spiegarvi, oh Dio!*, K. 418; *No, no, no, che non sei capace*, K. 419; *Mia speranza adorata!*, K. 416; *Nehmt meinen Dank*, K. 383.

Rita Streich, soprano; Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra, Charles Mackerras, cond.

• DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON DGM 12012. LP. \$4.98.

• DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON DGS 712012. SD. \$5.98.

Rita Streich offers further evidence here as to her technical security and range, and in these respects this German coloratura ranks with today's best. Her tone is consistently lovely, her attack clean, her articulation of all manners of embellish-

ment above reproach. Miss Streich, however, apparently subscribes to the theory that Mozart intended his concert arias to be sung as vocalises, without the slightest hint of emotional coloring. This approach leaves me cold, unless the singer is of a sort who can turn the music into a real bravura display, and Miss Streich's gifts are not quite that extensive. The notes of *Popoli di Tessaglia* are all there, but there is no hint of the mourning Alceste. In this regard I can do no better than to quote Lilli Lehmann, who in her preface to the Peters Edition of the Mozart arias said that the recitative must be sung "*wie eine lebendige Theaterszene*" ("like a living theatrical scene . . . Mozart was no pedant, no schoolmaster—he made concessions to his artists and left to the singer what belongs to the singer, as did all great musicians of the time."). Amen. Those for whom the notes themselves are enough will find this a satisfying disc; the accompaniments are proper and the sound good, though dry for my taste; texts and translations are provided. C.L.O.

**JOAN SUTHERLAND: Operatic Recital**

Donizetti: *Lucia di Lammermoor: Regnava nel silenzio; Il dolce suono; Ardon gl'incensi. Linda di Chamounix: O luce di quest'anima. Verdi: Ernani: Ernani, involami. I Vespri Siciliani: Merce, diletti amiche.*

Joan Sutherland, soprano; Nadine Sautereau, soprano; Paris Opéra Chorus; Orchestre de la Société des Concerts du Conservatoire de Paris, Nello Santi, cond.  
 • LONDON 25111. SD. \$5.98.

The recent reports out of England on this young Australian soprano have been nothing short of ecstatic, and her recent Covent Garden appearance as Lucia was an unequivocal triumph. Her first recital for London Records leaves no doubt at all as to her natural gift or the thoroughness of her schooling. Her voice is fresh and free, with resonances well blended except at the bottom of her impressive range. She has a very pretty trill (not at all a common thing any more, even among coloraturas) and a nice sense for the lilting rhythms of the Donizetti numbers. But everything on this disc receives the same careful treatment, filtered through the same silvery tone; she never becomes very intense, and I am not convinced that she is yet "inside" the music. At present, she uses a little glide as a means of getting down off too many notes in the upper register, and some phrases are disfigured by it.

The *Lucia* excerpts are her best. Even here, I wish she would calculate a bit less and empathize a bit more, but there's no denying that the vocalism, as such, is remarkable. The Verdi numbers want more punch and more body of tone, though I am grateful for the soaring ease of her "*Ernani! involami.*" Since Miss Sutherland clearly has the equipment, I hope she will soon feel secure enough to devote more effort to communication, rather than mere tasteful vocalism. The accompaniments are just that, correct but not very uplifting. The London sound is fine. C.L.O.



## TRIBUTE TO CARNEGIE HALL

The passing of the wonderful old building, announced for the end of the 1959 season, stirs up memories of historic events. Among them is the "Spirituals to Swing" concert of December, 1938 (followed by another in 1939) which was the first time that blues, gospel songs and jazz were heard in the hall consecrated to Bach, Beethoven and Brahms. The importance of the event was its confirmation that jazz belonged there, as a vital American music of deep folk roots. The participants were inspired and the music was glorious. We are proud to present, as a memento of the great days of Carnegie Hall, the best of these two memorable concerts. We think that not only the jazz lover, but everyone interested in the living musical currents of our time, will want it.

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## Here at Home

"Dinah, Yes Indeed." Dinah Shore; Orchestra, Nelson Riddle, cond. Capitol ST 1247, \$4.98 (SD).

This superbly sung program of great standards marks Dinah Shore's debut as a Capitol artist. To call the occasion "auspicious" would be something of an understatement; this is not only the best recording ever made by the Tennessee thrush (and I am not forgetting those wonderful sides made with the Chamber Music Society of Lower Basin Street many years ago), but it's also one of the finest albums, by any female singer, issued over the past year.

Leaning heavily on ballads, Miss Shore illuminates each one with warm, smooth-as-honey tones and distinctive phrasing. Furthermore, she seems to have abandoned a good many of the little vocal tricks so noticeable in her previous work. Their disappearance is all to the good, for she now seems to be singing with much more depth and feeling. When in the mood, she can also swing with the best in the business, as she proves in a rousing version of *Yes Indeed*; and I liked, too, her handling of *Falling in Love with Love*, brilliantly arranged by Nelson Riddle and lovingly projected by Miss Shore. Riddle's arrangements, as well as his sympathetic support, go a long way to make this an exceptional album.

"Leave It to Jane." Recording with the cast of the 1959 New York production. Strand SLS 1002, \$5.98 (SD).

A recording of Jerome Kern's 1917 musical *Leave It to Jane*, made by the cast of the current off-Broadway revival, is as unexpected as it is welcome. To waste no time about it . . . it's a pure delight. A great deal of my own pleasure is due to the fact that the show turns up without any misguided attempts to modernize the music, to update the lyrics, or to turn it into a big, overblown production. It has been left for what it is, a period piece. Although originally produced at the Longacre, *Leave It to Jane* belongs to those legendary musicals known as "The Princess Theatre Shows," along with *Nobody Home* and *Very Good Eddie* (1915), *Oh, Boy* (1917), and *Oh, Lady, Lady* (1918). Because the Princess was merely a little handbox, big productions were out, and intimate musicals in. For

these, Bolton and Wodehouse provided witty books and lyrics, and Kern delicious scores.

Some of the music from these shows has previously been available on discs, but this represents the first complete recording of one of Kern's early scores. A remarkably tuneful work it is, too, with no less than six songs any audience will be humming as they leave the theatre. Best remembered are the syncopated title tune, the gay *The Crickets Are Calling* (usually done in slower tempo than it is here), and one of Kern's most haunting strains, *The Siren's Song*. Add to these the charming duet *The Sun Shines Brighter*, the wistfully romantic *Wait Till Tomorrow*, and the humorous *Cleopaterer*, and you see that Kern was more than liberal with good songs. The young and enthusiastic cast do well by the composer's music, with the work of Angelo Mango and Jeanne Allen being particularly outstanding. (The latter, who has an Ethel Mermanish manner, should go on to bigger things.) Appropriately small-scaled orchestral accompaniment, under the direction of Joseph Stecko, sustains the intimacy of the production, and the stereo sound, apart from an occasional feeling of too wide separation, is excellent. I very much hope that this is merely the first of a series from Strand.

"The Velvet Side of the Roaring Twenties." The Neighborhood Kids; The Corner Quartet; The Grand Street Harmony Club. 20th-Century Fox 3017, \$3.98 (LP).

The most refreshing aspect of this re-



Dinah Shore: smoother than honey.

ording is that it avoids the *Ain't She Sweet* or *Yes Sir, That's My Baby* type of song that today's listeners have been led to regard as typical of the Twenties. For a change—and how welcome the change is—here are a score of delightful ballads from the days of flappers, rum runners, and hip flasks. If you are old enough to recall songs like *June Night*, *Yearning*, *Get Out and Get Under the Moon*, I think you'll revel in this collection. (One number, I expect, crept in more by association than anything else; *Happy Days Are Here Again* belongs actually to the Thirties, as anyone who heard Andy Sanella play it, every morning, could testify.) But what matter. . . . The three singing groups do an excellent job on these old-timers; and since the arrangements sound much as they did in those far-off days, this is a record loaded with nostalgia.

"Take Me Along." Original Cast Recording. RCA Victor LSO 1050, \$5.98 (SD).

*Take Me Along* is a brisk, pleasantly folksy musical based on Eugene O'Neill's autobiographical comedy of youthful aspiration and indiscretion, *Ah, Wilderness*. For the most part, the authors have been reasonably faithful to O'Neill's original, and Robert Merrill has fashioned a bright and attractive score. It isn't exactly a masterpiece of melody, but every song is eminently listenable.

There isn't a really difficult vocal number, fortunately, since once again we have a musical with a cast who are actors rather than singers. The nearest approach to the latter is Eileen Herlie, whose small, sweet, quavery voice is perfectly suited to the role of Lily. She is completely winning in all her solo numbers, and wonderfully roguish, in a prim sort of way, in her duet with Gleason, *I Get Embarrassed*. As the somewhat harassed New England father, Walter Pidgeon gives a bluff, good-natured performance, half-singing, half-talking his easy way through his songs. Merrill has provided some sympathetic songs for the hero, Richard, and Robert Morse does well with them, especially in *I Would Die*. As Sid, the old personality kid Gleason gives a swaggering performance that smacks more of the vaudeville theatre than true musical comedy. However broad it may be, however, it is extremely effective, and in the later numbers, he is quite moving. The recorded sound is inclined to over-brightness, but has good directionality.

"Leroy Anderson Conducts Leroy Anderson." Decca DL 8865, \$3.98 (LP); DL 78865, \$4.98 (SD).

I've lost count of the number of times Decca has issued, reissued, and recoupled most of Leroy Anderson's music, but this release, like them all, is a charmer. Nobody in this country writes more delightful light music, and nobody manages to make it more appealing than does the composer when he turns conductor. Here are brand-new recordings, monophonic and stereo, of the old standards (*Blue Tango*, *Sleigh Ride*, *The Typewriter*, etc.) plus two new numbers salvaged from the musical *Goldilocks*, for which Anderson wrote the score. The charming ballad *Lady in Waiting* has been expanded into a short ballet sequence, and the song *Heart of Stone* is the basis for another brief ballet work, *Pyramid Dance*. Both are charming additions to the Anderson repertoire. The new recordings are a tremendous sonic advance on the earlier editions. The mono is excellent, the stereo outstanding, especially in *Bugler's Holiday* and *The Phantom Regiment*, though there is no number that does not benefit tremendously by the new process.

"Great for Dancing." Eddy Howard and His Orchestra. Mercury SR 60104, \$4.98 (SD).

This is a surprisingly well-played program of dance music by a band previously condemned to supporting the leader's vocal efforts. In fact, the excellent teamwork, the crisp orchestra playing, and the uncluttered arrangements suggest that this could easily be the David Carroll orchestra operating under a "Nom du disque." Not that the name really matters, since this is a record that will bring a good deal of pleasure to both listener and dancer. The former can just sit back and enjoy the relaxed performances of a group of old favorites; the dancer, particularly if he doesn't feel overspry, can revel just as easily in the smooth rhythms. Mercury's stereo sound here has a better than adequate spread, good depth and resonance.

"Now." Fred Astaire; Chorus and Orchestra, Pete King, cond. Kapp KL 1165, \$3.98 (LP).

To judge from this recording, the Astaire voice has deepened a good deal since I heard it last. It is still no great shakes musically, but it is serviceable enough; and any lack of purely vocal prowess is more than compensated by Astaire's adroit presentation and his knack of letting a winning personality shine through. Most of the songs in this program are from the memorable movies Astaire made in the Thirties. Many he has recorded before, and in definitive versions; but if you can possibly have a definitive version of a definitive version, you'll find it here. The only real newcomer is a smart rhythm song, *The Afterbeat*, a thoroughly typical Astaire number and one likely to develop into a new dance craze. Neat arrangements by Pete King and Marty Paich provide an added fillip to an excellent memento of late Astaire.

"Ted Straeter Sings to the Most Beautiful Girl in the World." Ted Straeter; piano; orchestra. Columbia CS 8170, \$4.98 (SD).

When Billy Rose's gargantuan musical entertainment *Jumbo* collapsed in 1935, Richard Rodgers' agreeable score seemed to be headed for oblivion. Fortunately, two numbers escaped this fate. *Little Girl Blue* was adopted by night club singers, and Ted Straeter latched on to *The Most Beautiful Girl in the World*. He, and he almost alone, has been singing, playing, and recording it ever since. Naturally it turns up on this program of dance music, with Straeter supplying the vocals and the piano work. Straeter's voice is a peculiarly half-musical one, used in breathless fashion, which somehow manages to be oddly attractive. The orchestra is a good society dance band, and it is not surprising that it has been delighting habitués of the Persian Room of the Plaza for many years. Nice, small-scaled stereo sound, particularly adaptable to the average-size living room. Dorothy Kilgallen's gushing liner notes add nothing to an attractive disc.

"Semprini's Piano." Albert Semprini, piano; The Abbey Orchestra. Capitol ST 10218, \$4.98 (SD).

Like his American counterpart Roger Williams, England's Albert Semprini is a pianist who shines brightest in the field of light or semiclassical music arranged for large orchestra and piano. In Semprini's case, the ratio of musicians (sixty) to pianist (one) seems at first glance too lopsided, but in items like *Three Coins in the Fountain*, *No Other Love*, or *Symphony* he can well hold his own. And he can do even better than that in Liszt's *Liebestraum*, the "Chopin" section of Schumann's *Carnaval*, or Chopin's *Nocturne in E flat, Op. 9, No. 2* (here called *Tristesse*), where the orchestral arrangements have been scaled down considerably. This is a particularly good record for occasional listening. The piano sound is unusually true, that of the orchestra quite lush, and both are admirably transmitted.

"The Game of Love." Vic Damone; Orchestra, Robert Smale, cond. Columbia



"Now": the real definitive Astaire.

CL 1368, \$3.98 (LP); CS 8169, \$4.98 (SD).

Vic Damone gets top billing here, but it is the unconventional orchestral arrangements of Robert Smale that walk off with top honors. Damone handles these romantic ballads with a nice appreciation for their mood and lyrical value, and he's in good voice (though still sounding like a carbon copy of Sinatra), but he is not a dynamic enough vocalist to hold the listener's interest in his work when the orchestral arrangements offer such stiff competition. Featuring flute, celeste, harpsichord and other unusual instruments, the arrangements are fascinating and constantly surprising. Stereo points up the disposal of individual instruments quite strongly, its only advantage over the good monophonic version.

"Square Dancing Made Easy." Slim Jackson; The Promenaders; Calls by Slim Jackson. Epic LN 3607, \$3.98 (LP); BN 543, \$4.98 (SD).

For anyone who doesn't know a Do-si-do from an allemande right but who would like to be initiated into the mysteries of this most athletic form of terpsichore, the present album should prove the perfect guide. Slim Jackson enunciates the calls clearly—and at a speed reasonable enough to eliminate the possibility of any confusion in the set; the Promenaders play the country music briskly; and in the unlikely event of your finding the art of square dancing still a mystery, the liner notes are admirably explicit as to the terms and patterns in use. There is little, if anything, to choose between the two recorded versions.

"The Music Goes 'Round and Around."

Original Hit Performances: The Late Thirties; Into the Forties; The Middle Forties; Into the Fifties; The Early Fifties; The Late Fifties. Decca DL 4000/05, \$3.98 each (Six LP).

Here Decca has exhumed from its vaults some of its outstanding recordings made since the company went into business in August 1934. Understandably, the three early-period discs are the most interesting, since they contain many items that have long been out of print. DL 4000 offers, among other gems, Andy Kirk's *Until the Real Thing Comes Along*, Jimmie Lunceford's *Organ Grinder Swing*, Basie's *One O'Clock Jump*, and Ella Fitzgerald's *A-Tisket A-Tasket* (with Chick Webb). There is also Judy Garland's appealing *You Made Me Love You*—with the "Dear Mr. Gable" verses—one of her very best sides. On DL 4001 the most interesting items are Woody Herman's *Woodchopper's Ball*, Bob Crosby's *Big Noise from Winnetka*, a version of *Yes Indeed* by Bing Crosby, and Connie Boswell and Lionel Hampton's *Flying Home*, plus the first *Over the Rainbow* made by Judy Garland. DL 4002 is relatively a loss, except perhaps for pops songs by Dick Haymes (*You'll Never Know*), The Andrews Sisters (*Rum and Coca Cola*), and Hoagy Carmichael's version of *Huggin' and Chalkin'*. I'd recommend DL 4003 if only for Ray Bolger's *Once in Love with Amy* and his duet with Ethel Merman of *Dearie*; the



remainder of the numbers on this disc are pretty dull. Since DL 4004 and 4005 contain many numbers available singly on 45-rpm records, the 12-inch format seems unduly expensive. Where the original recordings date back some twenty years, the sound appears to have been enhanced slightly, and is certainly an improvement over the original issues. The early and mid-Forty sides still suffer from some surface noise common to the 78 issues of that day.

**"Leibert Takes You Dancing."** Dick Leibert, organ. Westminster WST 15043, \$5.98 (SD).

Today's mighty Wurlitzer organs, endowed with as many orchestral side effects as can be found in the ordinary dance orchestra, still can't provide the crisp beat and steady rhythm necessary for modern dances. Dick Leibert here tries to turn out a dance program, but his efforts are only occasionally successful. When he has the assistance of Bunny Shawker on bongos and drums, keeping a pronounced and steady beat, the result is fine. Elsewhere the rhythm tends to become slack, and in the slower numbers, where the organist is playing rather freely, the most accomplished dancer would find himself in trouble. The stereo sound is extremely effective and brilliantly reproduced. It was not intended to be overpowering, and the greater part of the program has a nice intimate quality.

**"Kiss Me Kate."** Capitol STAO 1267, \$5.98 (SD).

The tempus that fugits has not made any imprint on Shakespeare's *Taming of the Shrew*, on which the Spewacks based their book for the musical *Kiss Me Kate*. Nor has it dated in any way the Cole Porter lyrics and music, which both sound as fresh and ingenious today as they did eleven years ago. Unfortunately, it has laid a heavy hand on the voices of the principals of the original production, here assembled for a re-recording under Capitol auspices. Patricia Morison now sounds like an excessively shrill shrew, Alfred Drake more stuffy and churchwardenish than before, and Lisa Kirk, throwing the subtlety of her earlier performance out the window, sounds like Sophie Tucker, slightly subdued. Only Harold Lang and Lorenzo Fuller appear to have escaped the general decline, and even the latter's performance of *Too Darned Hot* is by no means equal to the earlier version. The stereo version has been skillfully managed where stage movement is concerned, and the sound is really impressive. These virtues, however, do not outweigh the considerable attractions of the original recording on Columbia OL 4140.

**"Enchanted Waltzes."** Bela Sanders and His Orchestra. Telefunken TP 2510, \$1.98 (LP).

Ten lilting waltzes of Austro-German derivation, superbly performed. For those who can manage the usual faster waltz tempo used by most Continental orchestras this is an excellent dance program; others are advised to sit these out,

and simply be beguiled by the luscious melodies of Ziehrer, Lincke, Lehár, and Strauss. Good sound, though needing some reduction of the top end. Previously released, with two additional waltzes, as Telefunken LGX 66052, at \$4.98, at its cheaper price this disc obviously represents an attractive buy.

JOHN F. INDCOX

## Foreign Flavor

**"Caramba!"** Richard Hayman and His Orchestra. Mercury MG 20431, \$3.98 (LP).

A resplendently engineered big-band treatment of Latin-American themes woven together in a "Day of the Bullfight" suite. To display dawn and its imminent tension, Hayman employs the prelude to the film *Captain from Castile*, follows with a series of musical vignettes (notably an electrifying treatment of *La Virgen de la Macarena*), and finishes with *Twilight on the Pampas*. Although the music often lacks even the most tenuous relationship with the *corrida*, it all has its own interest and is played with great verve and color. To repeat, the recorded sound is absolutely dazzling.

**"Japan: Its Sounds and People."** Capitol ST 10230, \$4.98 (SD).

A big *banzai!* to Capitol for this superb sonic portrait of the strange amalgam of West and East that constitutes contemporary Japan. Here are the *samisen* and the organ, the sounds of traffic and the sounds of temple bells; here too is a solitary night watchman clacking his traditional sticks as he shouts warnings against fire, the chugging of ferryboats along Tokyo's Sumida River, the loneliness of a noodle-seller's piped tune, the simplicity of an ancient cradle song. Rose Okugawa's ungimmicked commentary links the parts into a whole that will fill old Asia hands with nostalgia, and entice others to visit Japan at any price—even a reenlistment.

**"Monsieur Georges Brassens Sings . . . with His Guitar."** Epic LN 3619, \$3.98 (LP).

Georges Brassens will never win any *Grand Prix du Disque* for his vocal gifts. His voice is of limited range, his enunciation sloppy. But Brassens is a terrifyingly effective *chansonnier*, and to a *chansonnier* vocal quality is nothing—impact alone counts. Take the straightforward introductory song which commences, "*Je suis pornographe du phonographe*" ("I am the pornographer of the phonograph"): Brassens calmly flays everyone who has ever sung or heard a risqué song. Other high spots are the searing bitterness—counterpointed by a devastatingly bouncy rhythm—of *Le Cocu* (*The Cuckold*) and the fugitive tenderness of *Au Bois de mon Coeur* (*In the Wood of My Love*). Brassens himself composed all of the dozen songs in this well-recorded disc. Epic provides comprehensive summaries a half-step removed from actual translations.

**"Takarazuka Dance Theatre."** Takarazuka Grand Theatres in Japan. Columbia WL 163, \$4.98 (LP); WS 315, \$5.98 (SD).

A recording is not quite a substitute for actual attendance at a Takarazuka Dance Theatre performance, but Columbia very nearly succeeds in making it one. This record presents, at least, a dazzling array of musical selections—some composed especially for the dances, others arranged from traditional Japanese songs. The vocalists sing the melodies with bell-like clarity, and brilliant orchestration suggests the spectacular precision of the dancers. In keeping with the Takarazuka principle of fusing Oriental themes with the theatrical *expertise* of the West, the instrumentation is Western but the flavor of Japanese music is never abandoned. Both mono and stereo versions are excellent, with the latter having a slight edge in conveying the excitement of the performances.

**"Rhythm of Spain."** Curro de Utrera; Rafael de Cordobes, guitar. United Artists UAS 6054, \$4.98 (SD).

With this release, United Artists makes an exceptionally fine addition to the growing galaxy of brilliant flamenco discs. Curro de Utrera is a credit to his homeland, Andalusia, where flamenco music is heard in its purest form. His voice, powerful and impassioned, is a marvel of flexibility in the complex melodic lines of the *polo*, *cana*, and *siquiriyas* (more difficult modes of *cante jondo*), and the record is further distinguished by the electrifying dexterity and emotional restraint of guitarist Rafael de Cordobes. Both artists have been given superb reproduction.

**"Austria Revisited."** Vienna Choir Boys. Capitol T 10217, \$3.98 (LP).

The Wiener Sangerknaben, or Vienna Choir Boys, have achieved a world-wide renown both through their tours and their regular Sunday appearances at home with the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra and the Vienna State Opera. Lightness and vivacity mark their close-textured performances in this crisply engineered release, and give freshness to a wide-ranging program of folk songs, lullabies, and Viennese favorites. The ensemble is particularly moving in Brahms's *Cradle Song*, particularly gay in the traditional *A Hunter from Kurpfalz*.

**"Tahiti."** The Surfers. HiFiRecord R 417, \$4.95 (LP).

Veterans of three previous island forays for HiFiRecords, the youthful Surfers are wise in the ways of the South Seas Quartet. There is sweetness and studied lyricism in their style, and it's excellently set off by a suave rhythm quintet. The reproduction, however, is somewhat thick-textured, and the Surfers' repertory—including *Song of Old Hawaii*, *My Wahine and Me*, and *Beauty Hula*—smacks rather more of the fiftieth State than of Tahiti.

**"Folk Songs from Around the World."** United Nations Singers. Coral CRL 757301, \$4.98 (SD).

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in this chorus, composed of members of the U.N. Secretariat staff, and each song on their program here is sung in a different language. Add the fact that many of the members do not read music and that there is a tremendous turnover in their ranks, and you'll appreciate how ambitious an undertaking this is. Under Donald Read's direction it comes off remarkably well; the group not only displays an extraordinary depth of feeling but maintains a highly professional quality of choral singing. Except for some distortion in the upper register, the sound is adequate—but no more than that.

"All the Way." Emil Stern, piano; rhythm group. Felsted FS 17506, \$4.98 (SD). Deft fingers on the keyboard and a light, caressing way with a melody put Frenchman Emil Stern at the head of the cocktail hour class. This is an easy and entertaining recital—so much so that *Ay! Mourir pour Toi* merely implies drowning in the next Cinzano. In addition to a good deal of tape hiss, the stereo sound is somewhat uneven; Emil's piano gravitates from center to right, slyly but disconcertingly.

"Continental Favorites." Caterina Valente; Werner Mueller and His Orchestra. London TW 91198, \$4.98 (LP).

Although Caterina Valente reputedly is a "chanteuse internationale," her repertoire is limited here to French and German songs, except for two Italian selections—*Non e Così* and Modugno's *Ciao, Ciao Bambina*—which are also sung, inexplicably, in German. Her voice, pleasant and mellow in the middle range, takes on excessive harshness when she reaches for high notes, which she tends to shriek out. Miss Valente's renditions are reproduced with clarity, but the accompaniment of the chorus is, invariably, muffled.

"Tequila." Arcadio Elias and His Mariachi Nacional. Dot DLP 3217, \$3.98 (LP).

A well-chosen collection of Mexican favorites including, in "mariachi" style, Señor Bob Willis's *San Antonio Rose* and *La Varsoviciana* (Put Your Little Foot). Elias and his band convey the brassy timbre of genuine mariachis, but unfortunately, with spotty engineering, this brassiness sometimes grates on the ear.

"Passport to China." Chinese National Song and Dance Ensembles; Chenk-heng Yin, Tsu Te Fang, conds. Artia ALP 112, \$4.98 (LP).

The Chinese music represented on this American release from the Czech Supraphon catalogue—while performed with traditional Chinese concern for individual notes and their ramifications—shows very decided Western influence. Both *The Bubbling Brook* and *The River Tatu*, conducted by Tsu Te Fang, sound disconcertingly like American cantatas written with Chinatown in mind, although the four selections guided by Chenk-heng Yin hew more closely to the harsh sonorities of old China. While the sound is acceptable, voices tend to be distantly miked and strident. Credit

should be given, however, for a strikingly attractive album and notes that are a model of cogency.

"Bullring! The Sounds and Story of *La Corrida*." Carlos Arruzza, commentator. Riverside RLP 5501, \$5.95 (LP).

If you're already an *aficionado* of the *corrida*, this record won't impress you; if you're not, it won't make you one. Side 1 is devoted to an interview between the narrator and Matador Carlos Arruzza, who makes an attempt to dispel some common misconceptions about bullfighting. Side 2, recorded at two actual bullfights, tries hard to reproduce the excitement and tension of the spectacle but falls far short of success.

"Bésame!" Sara Montiel. Columbia WL 149, \$4.98 (LP).

It's possible that a contingent of male listeners will succumb to the languorous charms of velvet-voiced Sara Montiel, but probably even those most susceptible to vocalised aphrodisiacs will become bored by the monotony of this disc. Each selection is like the one that has gone before and the one that follows: *Bésame Mucho* (*Kiss Me Lots*), *Mil Veces* (*A Thousand Times*), *Mil Besos* (*A Thousand Kisses*), *Acercate Mas* (*Come Closer*). In addition, Señorita Montiel's voice is consistently overmiked, and its heavy breathiness thereby intensified.

O. B. BRUMMELL

hi-fi music

"Pop Concert, Latin America." Cleveland Pops Orchestra, Louis Lane, cond. Epic LC 3626, \$4.98 (LP); BC 1047, \$5.98 (SD).

The praises lavished on both the programming and recording of Lane's "Pop Concert, U.S.A." of last April must be repeated here. In addition to perceptive musical glimpses of our Southern cousins' music from the "outside" (such as Gershwin's too seldom heard *Cuban Overture* and Benjamin's even less well-known but highly evocative *From San Domingo*), the conductor also presents both familiar and novel native works: Lecuona's *Andalucia* and *Malagueña*, and the ever-captivating Villa Lobos *Little Train of Caipira*, on one hand; on the other, Galindo's improvisatory *Sones de Mariachi* and—best of all—Guarnieri's superbly exciting toccatalike samba, *Danza Brasileira*. All of these are played with immense gusto, and all of them are recorded with great power in big-hall acoustics. The stereo edition is recommended, both for its superior atmospherics and greater kindness to the high-string intensities, which become rather harsh in the monophonic version.

"Stereo Showcase." Capitol SKAO 1268, \$4.98 (SD).

One of the most effective stereo demos to date, featuring pops materials only (topped by Les Baxter's ingeniously stereoscopic scoring of *Banana Boy* and Felix



Slatkin's virtuoso big-band performance of *American Patrol*) and happily free from any spoken narration or sales plugs. The recording is Capitol's broadest and most ultrabrilliant throughout, and the accompanying 12-page illustrated booklet not only provides unusually detailed notes, but in many instances shows scattering diagrams of the participating ensembles—a practice which every stereo release might profitably emulate.

“Hands Across the Sea.” Eastman Wind Ensemble, Frederick Fennell, cond. Mercury MG 50207, \$3.98 (LP); SR 90207, \$5.95 (SD).

Interesting and impressive as Fennell's concert-band releases invariably are, this is perhaps one of the most attractive programmatically and certainly one of the most striking for its technical qualities—notable in particular for an enormous dynamic range and an almost overpowering “presence” of the percussion section in the stereo edition (the even higher-level LP is tonally sharper, harder, more “sensational,” and less natural). Besides such relatively familiar materials as Sousa's title piece, Tiede's *Old Comrades*, Ganne's *Père de la Victoire*, and Eric Coates's *Knightsbridge March* (taken here so slowly and in such sharply delineated fashion that it sounds surprisingly novel), Fennell ventures far off the usual band program paths to bring us a slashing exciting performance of Prokofiev's Op. 99 March, the florid *Golden Ear* by Mariano San Miguel, the extremely odd and gusty *Inglesina* by D. Delle Cese, and—best of all—the wondrously lilting and haunting *Valdres March* by Johannes Hanssen. James Austin is the dazzling trumpet soloist in this last as well as in several of the other pieces.

John Sebastian: *Harmonica Recital*. Renato Josi, harpsichord and piano. Deutsche Grammophon DGM 12015, \$4.98 (LP); DGS 712015, \$5.98 (SD).

Larry Adler's only rival as a virtuoso exponent of the chromatic harmonica's serious musical potentialities demonstrates them again in an excellent recording of a Veracini Sonata No. 1 in F and Telemann Sonata No. 1 in G minor (original scoring unspecified). Played with unromanticized expressiveness, genuine verve and precision, and beautifully accompanied by a harpsichord, these two sonatas reveal the modern mouth organ's subtle variety of tonal coloring perhaps even more effectively than the fascinating contemporary works, written especially for the harmonica, which Sebastian plays on the “B” side: Milhaud's nostalgic *Chanson du Marin* and Hovhaness' rhapsodic Six Greek Folksongs. And all of these far overshadow the showpieces quite superfluously included. The monophonic edition is as clean and brilliant as the SD, but it is only in the latter that the harpsichord and piano tones ring most authentically and the piquant harmonica timbres float most airily.

Suppé Overtures. Hallé Orchestra, Sir John Barbirolli, cond. Mercury SR 90160, \$5.95 (SD).

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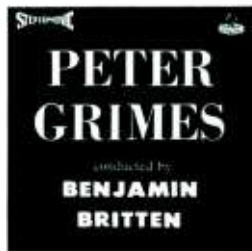
Mozart: **LE NOZZE DI FIGARO**  
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Wagner: **DIE WALKURE—Act 3**  
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Britten: **PETER GRIMES**  
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Verdi: **AIDA**  
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**Suppé Overtures.** Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, Georg Solti, cond. London CS 6146, \$4.98 (SD).

Although to my mind the ideal recorded performances of Suppé were provided once and for all by Henry Krips on an Angel stereo tape and disc, many listeners may have preferred the more extroverted treatments by Barbirolli, only three of which were released in the Mercury two-track tape of November 1958. It is good to have all six (*Light Cavalry, Morning, Noon and Night, Poet and Peasant, Pique Dame, Jolly Robbers, and The Beautiful Galatea*) in the present stereo disc edition, which sounds mightily impressive both for the razzle-dazzle orchestral playing and brilliant big-hall sonics—that is, until one hears the Solti disc.

The latter includes only the first four of

these overtures, but it demonstrates even harder-driven and more precise orchestral virtuosity, as well as the further advances in technology achieved only within the last year. Here the recording is even bigger, livelier, more incisively detailed, and more dazzlingly glittering. Solti seems almost cynically determined to extract the last drop of blood from his warhorses to make a hippodrome holiday, but whatever his motives, he—and his engineers—certainly do succeed in providing a truly extraordinary sonic spectacular.

**Dukas-Falla-Ravel Program.** Symphony Orchestra of the Belgian National Radio, Franz André, cond. Telefunken TCS 18008, \$2.98 (SD).

Extremely transparent recording and

André's precisely controlled and brightly colored performances are the attractions of this bargain-price stereo disc; its shortcomings are the lack of really full-blooded sonorities and the overobjectivity of the readings. There are many fine details in the *Bolero* (one of the faster versions at 14:40) and *L'Apprenti sorcier*, but both works lack dramatic weight and climactic impact. Falla's *Nights in the Gardens of Spain* comes off best, even though it lacks full atmospheric magic. And why is the notably gleaming-toned solo pianist denied labeling credit?

**Rossini Overtures.** New Symphony Orchestra of London, Kenneth Alwyn, cond. Richmond S 29058, \$2.98 (SD). This must be one of English Decca's low-price "Ace of Clubs" originals, rather than a reprint of an earlier recording now withdrawn from the regular English Decca/London series. Although the recording sounds recent and is beautifully blended and transparent, it—or the New Symphony itself—is singularly lacking in substantial tonal body. Alwyn's performances (*Semiramide, The Silken Ladder, The Barber of Seville, and William Tell*) are similarly clean-cut and lightweight, pleasantly vivacious in their lighter moments, but overintense elsewhere.

**"A High-Fidelity Introduction to the World-Famous Wurlitzer Pipe Organ."** Don De Witt, Dick Scott, Johnny Seng, organ. United Artists UAS 5059, \$4.98 (SD).

The instrument in question is identified only as the "four-manual Wurlitzer formerly owned by Paramount Pictures Corp.," but for once in a movie-organ release the jacket notes provide detailed stop specifications; and the present highly stereoisitic, quite closely miked yet reverberant, recording effectively demonstrates the wide range of registrations available. The dozen selections themselves are all pops tunes, mostly delivered with synthetic vivacity and full-organ blare, but the four pieces featuring Dick Scott, while little less coarse and blustery than the rest, are notably freer from interpretative mannerisms than those by De Witt and Seng.

**"Holy, Holy, Holy."** Roger Wagner Chorale and Capitol Symphony Orchestra, Roger Wagner, cond. Capitol SP 8498, \$5.98 (SD).

I'm not sure what the audience which will relish these suave versions of popular church-music favorites will make of the true masterpieces (Bach's *Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring* and the final chorus and chorale from the *St. John Passion*) also included here. I am sure, however, that no Bachian connoisseur can approve of the overexpressivity and meandering quality of the latter. The unexaggerated stereoisim floats the fine voices beautifully and also does full justice to Greig McRitchie's sonorous but not overfancy orchestrations, but Wagner's readings lack conviction in themselves as well as the eloquent simplicity which Robert Shaw has brought to many of the same materials.

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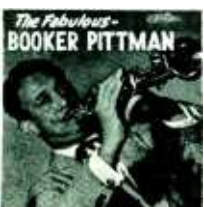
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**"Military Marches of Sweden."** Army and Navy Corps Bands of Stockholm, Mare de la Berg and Bertil Driving, respectively, conds. London SW 99003, \$4.98 (SD).

The performances here are seldom more than routinely blustery (with the Navy Band on the "B" side proving to have somewhat less hard tonal qualities), but the dozen Swedish marches themselves are refreshingly novel—with honors going to the Army's jaunty *Kungl. Gotlands Infanterireg Marsch* and the Navy's swinging *Svensk: Signalmarsch Nr. 1*. And the moderately stereoistic recording provides admirably natural—and undoubtedly highly authentic—sonics throughout.

**"Pop-Overs."** Eastman-Rochester Pops Orchestra, Frederick Fennell, cond. Mercury MG 50222, \$3.98 (LP); SR 90222, \$5.95 (SD).

The LP version of this performance is considerably higher in level, heavier, and more keen-edged than the stereo disc, but even the latter seems somewhat coarse and overly detailed. This may be at least partly the fault of the orchestra (which seems to lack sufficient strings to balance its powerful wind and percussion sections) or even of the conductor himself (whose readings give more attention to details than to over-all dramatic continuity). At any rate, Fennell for once is disappointing, except perhaps in his forceful Shostakovich *Age of Gold* Polka and Sibelius *Finlandia*. Not only do the pops staples on this program suffer, but also such pieces as Glière's *Russian Sailors' Dance*, the Procession of the Nobles from Rimsky's *Mlada*, and the Polka and Fugue from Weinberger's *Schwanda*—where much more might reasonably have been expected.

**"Eddie Layton at the Mighty Wurlitzer."** Mercury MG 20433, \$3.98 (LP).

The Radio City Music Hall organ heard here is not that in the main auditorium but an instrument in the adjoining broadcasting booth, occasionally augmented by Doug Allen's snare drum and sock cymbal. Layton is conventionally schmaltzy in his slower pieces, yet even here his registrations are better varied than those of most Wurlitzerians and his blustery performances of *Enjoy Yourself*, *Bye Bye Blackbird*, *Ain't Misbehavin'*, etc., have considerable jauntiness. The constant clatter and tinkle of the decorative and rhythmic effects, however, become outright earsplitting in the exaggerated high-end brilliance of the extremely powerful and high-level monophonic recording. I imagine that this cutting tonal edginess is likely to be much less evident in the simultaneously released stereo edition.

**"Spike Jones in Stereo."** Warner Bros. WS 1332, \$4.98 (SD).

Remembering Spike's ribald extravaganzas of the past, I find his present "spooktacular in screaming sound" a sad disappointment. Here he merely provides unimaginative background effects for take-offs on horror movies and TV shows as they might be done by "monsters."

Only the sickest of juvenile *aficionados* will be amused. The exaggeratedly stereoistic recording (with many cross-channel dialogues and duos) is brilliant, but the novelty sound effects themselves are pretty thin stuff.

**"The Red Army Marches in Hi-Fi."** Alexandrov Song & Dance Ensemble, Boris A. Alexandrov, cond. Artia ALP 113, \$4.98 (LP).

This Red Army group sounds to me intoxicated with its own virtuosity and patriotic fervor—singing and playing with indefatigable bluster, especially in the mostly martial works on the "A" side. The other side, devoted to the folk songs of neighboring countries, is somewhat better varied, although it too gets tiresomely

raucous in the present (Supraphon/Ramco) ultrabright but decidedly top-heavy and too closely miked recording.

**"David Rose Plays David Rose."** M-G-M E 3748, \$3.98 (LP).

This is one of the highest-level monophonic discs I have ever encountered; and since it is coarsely as well as earsplittingly recorded, Rose's bid for Leroy Anderson honors has little chance of success. His *Holiday for Strings* is a fine *divertissement* (although it's been done more effectively elsewhere), but his ambitious *Concerto* (with Don Ferris as pianist) and *Majorca* are merely pretentiously melodramatic, while his shorter genre pieces are mostly inconsequential.

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## JAZZ

**Jimmy Cleveland:** "A Map of Jimmy Cleveland." Mercury 20442, \$3.98 (LP); 60117, \$4.98 (SD).

The colorless, ad-lib blowing atmosphere in which Cleveland is usually recorded has been abandoned this time in favor of some neat, unpretentious Ernie Wilkins arrangements which give the performances a suggestion of body. Cleveland responds by playing with warmth and a sense of involvement, a pleasant change from the staccato exercises he often favors. He is surrounded by a capable group including Ernie Royal, Jerome Richardson, and Don Butterfield. It's a pleasant, if scarcely distinguished, set.

**Ornette Coleman:** "The Shape of Jazz to Come." Atlantic 1317, \$4.98 (LP). "Tomorrow Is the Question!" Contemporary S 7569, \$5.98 (SD).

Coleman, who plays a flexible alto saxophone and has an eccentrically slashing yet detached manner of developing his solos, is being pushed as a potentially important influence on the future of jazz. On the basis of his current Contemporary disc and an earlier one on the same label, Coleman sounds more like an oddity than an influence. But on the Atlantic disc there are definite signs of a validly original approach. This approach uses Charlie Parker as a jumping-off point but, instead of indulging in the customary dilution of Parker's ideas, Coleman moves off in his own direction. On both discs he has the company of Don Cherry, a highly sympathetic trumpet player whose work many listeners may find more immediately communicative than Coleman's own.

A crucial difference between these two discs is in the selection of bassist and drummer to accompany Coleman and Cherry. On the Contemporary set, the accompanists are Shelly Manne and either Percy Heath or Red Mitchell, superb rhythm men. But Coleman's playing lies limply on top of their conventional playing. The drummer and bassist on the Atlantic disc are youngsters—Charlie Haden and Billy Higgins—who seem capable of adapting to the Coleman idiom. Their presence gives a cohesiveness to Coleman's ideas (all pieces on both discs are originals by Coleman), and the potentials of his approach become much more apparent. Although there is little indication that Coleman is particularly aware of pre-Parker jazz, traditionalists may be fascinated by the similarity between the lamenting wail that Coleman creates on *Lonely Woman* and the plaintive New Orleans dirges recorded by the Eureka Brass Band and the Young Tuxedo Band.

**Miles Davis:** "Jazz Track." Columbia CL 1268, \$3.98 (LP).

The score created by Davis for a French film, *Elevator to the Scaffold*, occupies one side of this disc. It is unusual in that Davis, working with a French group which includes pianist Rene Urteger, tenor saxophonist Barney Wilen, and bass-

ist Pierre Michelot, improvised these performances while watching the film. The result is a score that is freer than those cut to fit film sequences. Davis makes extensive use of his slow, soaring, muted lines to produce a fitting lonesome and lost effect. This mood is sustained through most of the score, but Davis and his associates keep shifting it just enough to avoid monotony. Wilen and Urteger have slight opportunity to be heard, but Michelot is a mountain of rhythmic strength and has one brilliantly developed solo which is just about as far from the usual show-off bass solo as one can imagine. The disc is filled out by three pieces by Davis' late sextet which have a leftover quality about them.

**Vic Dickenson and Joe Thomas:** "Mainstream." Atlantic 1303, \$4.98 (LP).

Of the two groups featured on this disc, the one led by trumpeter Joe Thomas arouses the most immediate interest because of its relatively adventurous personnel. In addition to Thomas, an all-but-forgotten onetime Jimmie Lunceford trumpeter, it includes trombonist Dickie Wells, tenor saxophonist Buddy Tate, and clarinetist Buster Bailey. But, except for a long ad-lib blues, its performances are ragged and lumpy, and only Tate and Johnny Latman, a second trumpeter, solo effectively. Thomas and Wells contribute their only interesting work on the blues, but even here they are overshadowed by the lithely swinging Tate. In Dickenson's group, which is granted only two selections, are Buck Clayton, Hal Singer, and Herbie Hall, all playing with quiet purposefulness; but the most provocative man in this outfit is pianist Al Williams, whose tasteful and piquant fills are of immeasurable help to both solos and ensembles.

**Ella Fitzgerald:** "Sings the George and Ira Gershwin Song Book." Verve 4024/28, \$4.98 each (Five LP). (Also available in a cardboard box, \$25; in a walnut box, \$100.)

For a feature review of this album, see p. 63.

**Benny Goodman:** "Benny Goodman Rides Again." Chess 1440, \$3.98 (LP).

The Goodman big-band and small groups heard here appear to be the same as those on Goodman's earlier *Happy Session* (Columbia CL 1324), but this is a much brighter and more consistently swinging record. It is, in fact, the best new disc Goodman has made in many years, although in a sense it is not new at all. The big-band selections are Goodman successes of the early Forties (*Mission to Moscow, The Earl, Benny Rides Again*) played with solid ensemble cohesion but not quite the bite of the original recordings. Goodman, however, seems to have regained some of his old vitality in these pieces and plays with more warmth and interest than he has shown in a long time. The small-group selections are less derivative, and the presence of pianists André Previn and Russ Freeman creates a different climate than the old Goodman small groups had. Goodman's playing is

Continued on page 90





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erratic in these pieces, running from flowing inventiveness on *Whispering* to an unformed collection of phrases on *You Do Something to Me*.

**Gigi Gryce:** "Nica's Tempo." Savoy 12137, \$4.95 (LP).

This is a mishmash given positive interest by four quartet selections which make up one side. The quartet—Gryce, alto saxophone, Thelonious Monk, piano, Percy Heath, bass, Art Blakey, drums—plays two relatively mild and melodic Monk works, one of his dryly quirkish pieces, and Gryce's graceful *Nica's Tempo* with more cohesive drive than Monk's recent quartets have shown. Part of this can be attributed to the superb rhythm team of Heath and Blakey, part to the playing of

Gryce (who seems much more suited to the Monk idiom than Charlie Rouse, Monk's regular saxophonist). Gryce, in fact, plays exceptionally well, showing a lovely, singing tone and a fine sense of structure both on these pieces and in the selections by a big band on the other side. Aside from Gryce and a brief glimpse of pianist Horace Silver, however, these big-band pieces are pretty routine. Singer Ernestine Anderson makes two appearances which will do her growing reputation no good.

**Johnny Hodges and His Strings:** "Play the Prettiest Gershwin." Verve 8314, \$4.98 (LP).

The soft, sometimes sticky side of Hodges

dominates this set of almost too familiar Gershwin tunes, recorded in Germany with the Stuttgart Light Orchestra. Even in his most purple passages, however, Hodges manages to inject implications of musical sinew so that, although these overly pretty performances fall into the mood music category, they are very superior mood music.

**Billie Holiday:** "The Billie Holiday Story." Decca DXB 161, \$7.98 (Two LP). "All or Nothing at All." Verve 8329, \$4.98 (LP).

Billie Holiday's recording career falls into three distinct sections which, by chance, happen to coincide roughly with her recording periods with three different labels. She was with Brunswick-Columbia during the early, ground-breaking, zestful days, with Decca in the moody middle years, and with Verve in the fading days. For a two-disc commemorative set, Decca has managed to put together some top-drawer Holiday singing (*Lover Man*, *Porgy*, *Don't Explain*, *Good Morning Heartache*, among others) along with a few less memorable pieces, all made between 1944 and 1950. Her accompaniments, unfortunately, are almost all utterly lacking in imagination and are generally inappropriate. The Verve set might be classified as a middle-ground representation of her last years—not as dispiritingly wrong as some LPs she made in the Fifties and yet not quite as good as the one hopeful flower of her final years, *Songs for Distinguished Lovers*, Verve 8257.

**Ahmad Jamal:** "The Piano Scene of Ahmad Jamal." Epic 3631, \$3.98 (LP).

The recordings on this disc were made several years ago when Jamal's instrumentation consisted of his piano, Israel Crosby's bass, and Ray Crawford's guitar (since replaced by Vernell Fournier's drums). There are suggestions of things to come in the prominence given Crosby's bass in a few of these pieces, but by and large they are closer to the traditional piano-led trio format than Jamal's later work. Here Jamal is out front most of the way, playing more overtly and less sketchily than he does now. He shows himself to be unusually sensitive to dynamics, a romantic with a swinging beat, and an urge toward variety. His playing here is less hampered by mannerisms than it is now although the group as a whole is not as dynamic as his present trio.

**John Lewis:** "Improvised Meditations and Excursions." Atlantic 1313, \$4.98 (LP).

The mixture of fine precision and intense, innate rhythm—the unfailing characteristics of John Lewis' piano playing—is given more overt display than usual in this collection. These are ad-lib performances of strongly melodic standard tunes (*Smoke Gets in Your Eyes*, *Yesterdays*, and so forth) along with two of Lewis' own tunes with backing supplied by Connie Kay, drums, and Percy Heath or George Duvivier, bass. Either way, this is a practically nonpareil trio, and the per-



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formances have all the polish, distinction, and grace one expects from Lewis.

**John Lewis: "Odds Against Tomorrow."** United Artists 4061, \$3.98 (LP).

John Lewis' second film score (his first was for *No Sun in Venice*, recorded on *One Never Knows*, Atlantic 1284) employs a twenty-two-piece orchestra made up largely of musicians not associated with jazz. This second score is more closely allied to the action of the film than Lewis' first and, consequently, has the fragmentary quality common to utilitarian film scores. Although it takes on the texture of jazz only occasionally, it has many of the distinguished markings of Lewis' work (including one of his typically lovely melodies, for an incident titled *Skating in Central Park*). It is imaginative, skillfully conceived and executed music and is far from the routine Hollywood scoring, either in the Tiomkin sense or the garish pseudojazz of Elmer Bernstein. But, because of its nature, it is at best only a tantalizing sampling of ideas that cry out for further development.

**Modern Jazz Festival.** Harmony 7196, \$1.98 (LP).

This appears to be a collection of leftovers originally recorded for the Dawn label by the Jazz Modes and Mat Mathews, and groups led by Joe Puma, Randy Weston, Paul Quinichette, Zoot Sims, Bob Brookmeyer, and Tony Scott. For a culling of this nature, the disc holds to a good level, particularly in the work of the Modes, Weston, and Sims, but it adds no new laurels for anyone.

**Kid Ory: "Plays W. C. Handy."** Verve 1017, \$4.98 (LP).

This is one of the lesser groups with which Ory has recorded lately. Trumpeter Teddy Buckner gives it a firm lead voice and some crackling solos, but Caughey Roberts' clarinet work is trivial and hackneyed. Ory, at seventy-two, seems as sturdy and dauntless as ever, although some of Handy's tunes are becoming threadbare through repetition. Fortunately, this set includes a few Handy items which are relatively fresh and have a charm which belies their obscurity—*Harlem Blues*, *Friendless Blues*, and *Way Down South* in particular.

**Johnny Rae's Afro Jazz Septet: "Herbie Mann's African Suite."** United Artists 4042, \$3.98 (LP); 5042, \$4.98 (SD).

Presumably because of contractual complications, Rae, a vibraphonist, is listed as leader of this group although the recording focuses on the composing and performing talents of flutist Herbie Mann. Mann's flute playing is apt to be pale and stiff in the usual jazz context, but in a rhythmic setting dominated by three African drums and supplemented by the strong jazz rhythms of drummer Philly Joe Jones, found on one side of this disc, Mann seems to have finally found a stimulus and support that urges him to a really virile flute attack. He is at his best on the Esy Morales classic, *Jungle Fantasy* (mistitled *Sorimao* on both liner and label), and Sonny Rollins' *St.*

*Thomas.* Jones drops out on the second side, made up of four originals by Mann based on African rhythms which come out as neither jazz nor satisfactory Africanisms.

**The River Boat Five: "Take the Train."** Mercury 20422, \$3.98 (LP); 60094, \$4.98 (SD).

The River Boat Five is a pretty dismal Dixieland band but it takes on unexpected life when it shifts into small-group swing with only undertones of Dixie. Most of this disc displays the group in its swing style, warm, lusty, high-spirited playing which makes the change to shallow, shrill corniness on a pair of Dixieland numbers all the more inexplicable.

**Horace Silver Quintet and Trio: "Blowin' the Blues Away."** Blue Note 4017, \$4.98 (LP).

Horace Silver's present group (Blue Mitchell, Junior Cook, Eugene Taylor, and Louis Hayes) has reached a point of cohesion achieved by none of the earlier Silver teams. The ensembles are blistering and crisp; both Mitchell on trumpet and Cook on tenor saxophone have solo styles which reflect a wry, driving bite; and Louis Hayes has developed into a really brilliant drummer. Silver remains one of the most consistent and vital jazzmen playing today, and on the whole this is the most fully realized LP he has made.

JOHN S. WILSON

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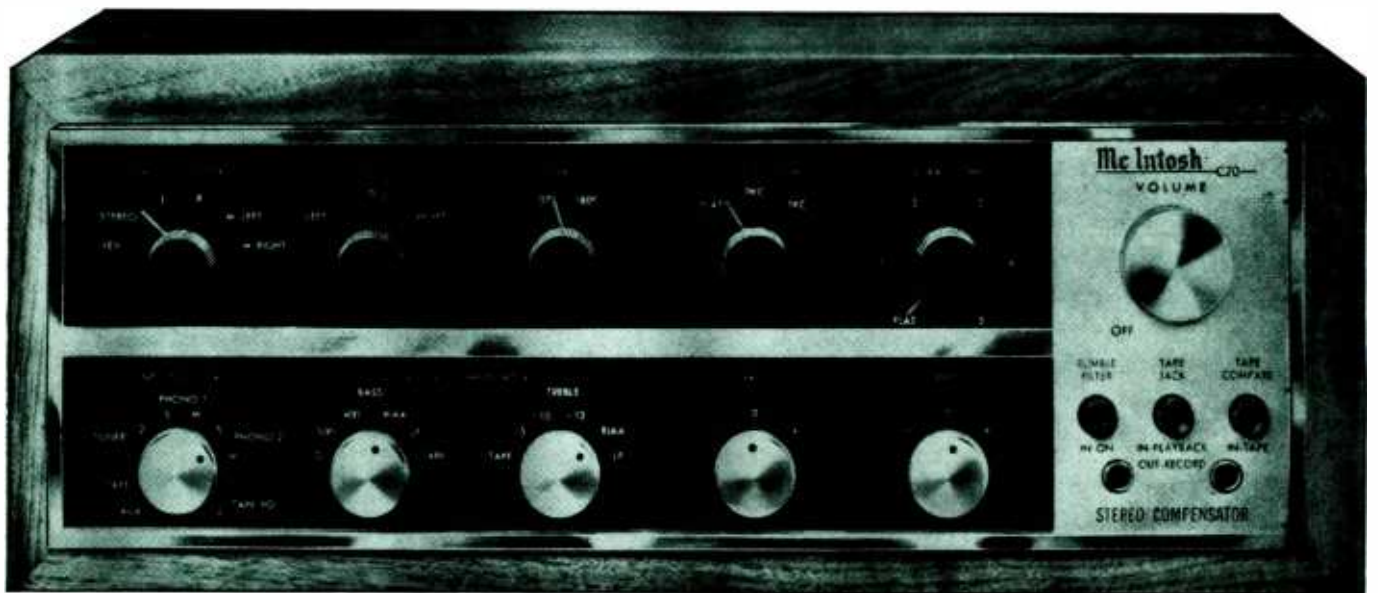
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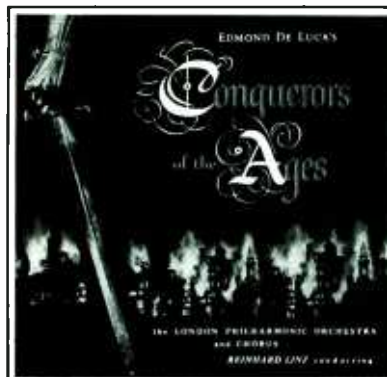


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LONDON A 4326, Three LP; OSA 1304, Three SD.

—Mancini, Miriam Pirazzini, Lauri-Volpi, Carlo Tagliabue. Radiotelevisione Italiana Chorus and Orchestra, Previtali, cond. CETRA 1226. Three LP.

## La Traviata (1853)

It seems to me that there is in *Traviata* a special kind of subtlety that seldom occurs in Verdi's work prior to *Don Carlos*. This consists in the ability to convey a character's inner emotional state, as opposed to a conscious mask. "Or son tranquilla," insists Violetta in Act II ("Now I am calm"), but the music tells us that she is only guarding herself. In Act III, Violetta's pathetic little "Ora son forte, vedi?" ("I am strong now, do you see?") is better than the most beautiful conceivable setting of "Now I am weak, but will make a last effort." Verdi is scarcely ever given credit for this sort of commentary. And Verdi's deliciously brittle choruses are pointed reflections on Parisian high life, but the tunes are so good that the reflections are ignored.

The Victor performance under Monteux is, so far as I am concerned, the best available in nearly every respect. The conductor gives his singers plenty of leeway without for a second becoming lax—all is crisp, delicate, and balanced. His soloists fit perfectly into this scheme. Carteri's voice is precisely the right timbre, light but never pallid, with just an overtone of the dramatic. She is technically secure, and her characterization has both fragility and backbone, without preciousity. Valletti is so clearly superior to the other recorded Alfredos that little comment seems necessary; impeccable musicianship plus a voice of burnished quality, capable of fine tinting, makes for an admirable performance. The role of Germont fits Warren like a glove, and when this baritone is set to a congenial task, he has no equal. All elements are knit and blended; the sound is excellent.

Toscanini's hard-driven performance has its moments, but I cannot accept his approach to the score. Albanese and Peerce have such difficulty wrapping themselves about the Maestro's unflagging tempos that there is no room left for anything else. This is a shame, since Albanese is an affecting Violetta under normal conditions (even here, she sustains the mood of the last act), and Peerce need not have sounded as wooden as he does. Merrill is in resplendent voice, but is just a good-sounding baritone, instead of Germont. The 1946 off-the-line recording is decent, but cramped.

London has Tebaldi, fine recording, and that is about all. It is true that the soprano must adjust things rather carefully for "Sempre libera"; however, there are three more acts to the opera, and she sings them magnificently. Time and again the sheer beauty and power of the voice sweep the performance along: the hushed pianissimo of "Dite alla giovine" and "Addio del passato," or the impassioned full-voice of "Amami, Alfredo!" Poggi is a whiny Alfredo, Protti a fair-to-middling Germont, competent in the duets, less so in the aria. Molinari-Pradelli's work arouses neither enthusiasm nor grave complaint from me.

Angel's version has next to nothing to recommend it, what with eccentric pacing by Serafin, a half-formed Violetta by Stella, a blatant Alfredo from Di Stefano, and a bullish Germont in Gobbi. Cetra's is an utter bore from beginning to end, for which Santini is to blame, since his soloists, though routine (including, in this instance, Callas), are pleasant enough, and with a bit of fire from the pit could turn in an acceptable *Traviata*.

—Rosanna Carteri, Cesare Valletti, Warren. Rome Opera Chorus and Orchestra, Pierre Monteux, cond.

RCA VICTOR LM 6040. Three LP.

—Licia Albanese, Peerce, Merrill. NBC Orchestra, Arturo Toscanini, cond.

RCA VICTOR LM 6003. Two LP.

—Tebaldi, Gianni Poggi, Protti. Chorus and Orchestra of Accademia di Santa Cecilia (Rome), Molinari-Pradelli, cond. LONDON A 4314. Three LP.

—Antonietta Stella, Di Stefano, Gobbi. Chorus and Orchestra of Teatro alla Scala (Milan), Serafin, cond.

ANGEL 3545. Two LP.

—Callas, Francesco Albanese, Savarese. Radiotelevisione Italiana Chorus and Orchestra, Gabriele Santini, cond.

CETRA 1246. Three LP.

## Simone Boccanegra (1857)

There is small hope of *Simone* ever becoming a really popular opera. The events on stage are confusing enough, but in addition we are expected to be acquainted with happenings at a far remove in time and place. *Simone* is also unfortunate in that it opens uninterestingly. But Verdi kept a clear eye for his characters, and when personal relationships replace political events as the subject matter, *Simone* takes on a glowering grandeur and an air of tender sadness. The Council Chamber Scene is one of the most impressive Verdi ever penned (it was inserted in the revised version of 1881, thanks to Boito) and the entire last act is on his highest level of composition. When we come to know *Simone* and *Fiesco* well, we can recognize this opera as one of Verdi's finest creations.

Although the individual elements of the Capitol version seem much superior to those of the Cetra, they do not succeed in giving much more impact to the work. Gobbi is immense in the big dramatic moments, and moving in the death scene, but how I wish he could maintain the flowing line of the lyrical passages! De los Angeles, despite her intelligence and lovely voice, is not really a satisfactory Amelia; she seems to hold back much of the time, to etch out the line, instead of sweeping through it. The Act I love music is well suited to Campora's abilities, but he is not a dramatic tenor, and has heavy going in "O inferno!" The Fiesco of Christoff poses a problem. He renders some of the *piano* phrases stunningly, and indeed seems to do everything correctly—yet his performance does not quite come off; his voice is too cutting in quality, his attack too phlegmatic. Moreover, he constantly thickens Italian vowel sounds, and fails to use the explosive consonants for effect. Santini seems to have good ideas about the score, but things do not quite cohere—his singers are not old ensemble partners, after all. Capitol's sound is better than average, but the review copy had miserable surfaces, dotted with pits and scratches.

The older Cetra album has a somewhat slapdash atmosphere. Stella and Bergonzi were young, inexperienced performers at the time of the recording; the soprano's work has not a spark of life, though the voice should be ideal for Amelia, and the tenor, since become a suave singer, wails a great deal. Silveri, as usual, brings an enviable sensitivity to the music, but his voice is beset by a bad tremolo and dryness of quality. Petri's voice is not rich enough, but he is knowledgeable and original in his approach. The Paolo on both recordings is Monachesi, and he sings a great deal better for Cetra than for Capitol. Molinari-Pradelli integrates his performance better than Santini, but the sound doesn't do the orchestra justice.

—Victoria de los Angeles, Giuseppe Campora, Gobbi, Boris Christoff, Walter Monachesi. Rome Opera Chorus and Orchestra, Santini, cond.

EMI-CAPITOL GCR 7126. Three LP.

—Stella, Bergonzi, Silveri, Petri, Monachesi. Radiotelevisione Italiana Chorus and Orchestra, Molinari-Pradelli, cond. CETRA 1231. Three LP.

## Un Ballo in Maschera (1859)

In my judgment, there is no Verdi opera in the repertory with a worse libretto than *Ballo*. The poet of the case, Somma, is generally absolved of responsibility, since the censor wreaked such havoc with the scenario. And to be sure, Somma

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cannot be held to account for the wild transplantation of his characters from the court of Gustav of Sweden to the chamber of the Governor of Boston, though from the standpoint of the American operagoer, it would have been better to make them all Aztecs or Polynesians—anything but New Englanders. (How does Riccardo stand on the Stamp Tax?) On the other hand, no censor forced Somma to include the sophomoric business with Silvano, and it is assuredly Somma's fault that Riccardo is so unappealing a hero. He sings his graceful songs, makes love, reads letters, signs orders, and dies, and I, for one, could not care less. Typically, Verdi wrote music of such melodic appeal and theatrical force that the score commands us to accept *Ballo*, libretto or no. And Renato, at least, is an interesting figure, as is Amelia on a shallower plane.

My pick amongst the current recordings is the Angel set, though lovers of showy, if sloppy, vocalism will be interested in the deleted Victor album with Caniglia, Barbieri, Gigli, and Bechi. Angel's Callas is not in her best vocal form; the lower and middle parts of her range sound muffled a good share of the time, and the high C at the climax of "*Ma dall'arido*" is hard to take. But even when not at her best, she can bring more voice to bear than her recorded rivals, and she is well inside the role—in fact, her desperate, whispered colloquy with Riccardo in the Ball Scene is nothing short of brilliant. Here is Di Stefano again, with his excellent natural gift making itself felt from time to time, and with some nice phrasing, but also with unspeakable gaucheries: the sick pianissimo at the end of the "*E scherzo*" quintet, his lugubrious entrance in the reprise of "*Qual soave brivido*," and his really amusing treatment of Riccardo's very last line. Gobbi's dramatic sense makes him the most interesting Renato on disc, despite some difficulties with "*Eri tu*." Barbieri and



Ratti are in rapport with their roles, and Votto paces the performance well. The sound is fine.

Toscanini's leadership is, as one would expect, extremely clear and tense, and he brings home tellingly countless points usually passed over. But the singers let him down. Nelli is a colorless Amelia, very much extended by the vocal demands of the role. Turner's Ulrica is a raw creation, while Haskins is nearly inaudible as Oscar. By 1954, Peerce's voice had gone into decline, and all his musicianship cannot make up for strangled, nasal tone. Merrill sings along stolidly, innocent of any attempt to create mood or variety of color.

Cetra's performance is comfortable and capable. Verna is a surprisingly good Amelia, with more body of tone than is her wont, and considerable temperament. Tassinari's work, too, is steady, if not very contralto-ish. Tagliavini is blessedly straightforward most of the time, and I believe I prefer his Riccardo to either Peerce's or Di Stefano's. Valdenigo is a smooth Renato with constriction in the upper register. The Oscar is squeaky. Questa never stirs things up, but his conducting is not dull, and the whole performance is squeezed onto four sides without grave mishap.

—Callas, Barbieri, Eugenia Ratti, Di Stefano, Gobbi. Chorus and Orchestra of Teatro alla Scala (Milan), Antonino Votto, cond.

ANCEL 3557. Three LP.

—Herva Nelli, Claramae Turner, Virginia Haskins, Peerce, Merrill. NBC Orchestra, Toscanini, cond.

RCA VICTOR LM 6112. Three LP.

—Maria Curtis Verna, Pia Tassinari, Maria Erato, Tagliavini, Giuseppe Valdenigo. Radiotelevisione Italiana Chorus and Orchestra, Questa, cond.

CETRA 1250. Two LP.

**La Forza del destino (1862)**

The big problem in any performance of *Forza* is that of which scenes to leave in, and in what sequence. The idea of producing the opera complete, in the order indicated by Verdi in the revised edition of 1869, seems to have occurred to no one. Cuts are also made on each of these recordings, though London's slashing is negligible. I will grant that *Forza* is a long opera, and a wearing one, but I think that cutting invariably detracts from some character's stature, tends to obscure motives, and confuses the story line. The choruses cannot be dropped, because they are musically strong, and provide necessary relief from the overwrought tale of destiny's force.

Eyebrows may be raised over my preference for the wartime Cetra album, and certainly I would be happier if more of the music had been retained and the recording were of more recent origin. But Cetra's singers comprise the best all-around cast. Masini and Stignani hold an edge over the other Alvaros and Preziosillas; Caniglia, Tagliabue, and Pasero, veterans even then but still in peak condition, hold their own with the best of the more recent singers. Most important, Gino Marinuzzi provides firm, fiery leadership, and all hands throw themselves into the work. This is a performance, not a studio reading.

The London set is an excellent one, well recorded in both the monophonic and stereo versions. Tebaldi brings an effulgent tone and grand line to her Leonora; Simionato has some troubles with pitch, but her voice is of large caliber. I do not at all like Del Monaco's incessantly loud Alvaro. He does make an effort at shading, however, and occasionally hits the proper stride, as with "*No, d'un imene il vincolo*." The warm-voiced Bastianini is especially good in the Inn Scene, and never less than first-class. The splendid bass and mellow portrayal of



Siepi add up to a fine Guardiano, and Fernando Corena is an exemplary Melitone. Molinari-Pradelli's reading of the Overture is somewhat routine, but he is incisive the rest of the way, and chorus and orchestra distinguish themselves.

Callas fans will not be disappointed in the Angel set, for Leonora is one of her best recorded roles. Despite Tucker's all too audible self-pity, he is the best of recent Alvaros, singing with fat tone and good legato line. Tagliabue and Rossi-Lemeni are below par: the former is simply too far over the hill, and the latter reveals weakness below the staff and hootiness above it. Serafin has plenty of drive, and makes the most of mood changes and dramatic opportunities.

Victor's performance, though "chosen" by the Metropolitan, is happily not the nonsensically slashed Met production. But, though I am apparently in a minority, I find Milanov's Leonora saddening. Her voice sounds pushed and hard most of the time, and the pianissimo, while not gone, is thinning. She has had some triumphant evenings in this role, but Victor has waited too long. Di Stefano takes another giant step backward with his Alvaro—in addition to everything else, the pitch is now beginning to sag. Warren sounds shaky in recitative, but is fine in the "Son Pereda" and "Urna fatale," and positively sensational in some of the climaxes (his high B flat effects a total eclipse of Di Stefano's). Tozzi, lighter in timbre than Siepi, sings with extraordinary ease and command, but Elias tries a bit too hard with Preziosilla. The sound is bright and clear in both editions, but the stereo separation is too extreme for me.

—Maria Caniglia, Ebe Stignani, Galliano Masini, Tagliabue, Tancredi Pasero. Radiotelevisione Italiana Chorus and Orchestra, Gino Marinuzzi, cond. CETRA 1236. Three LP.

—Tebaldi, Simionato, Del Monaco, Ettore Bastianini, Siepi. Chorus and Orchestra of Accademia di Santa Cecilia (Milan), Molinari-Pradelli, cond. LONDON A 4408, Four LP; OSA 1405, Four SD.

—Callas, Elena Nicolai, Richard Tucker, Tagliabue, Nicola Rossi-Lemeni. Chorus and Orchestra of Teatro alla Scala (Milan), Serafin, cond.

ANGEL 3531. Three LP.

—Milanov, Rosalind Elias, Di Stefano, Warren, Tozzi. Chorus and Orchestra of Teatro alla Scala (Milan), Previtali, cond. RCA VICTOR LM 6406, Four LP; LSC 6406, Four SD.

### Don Carlos (1867)

This opera usually inspires me to a lively resentment of Méry and Du Locle, who not only trampled on Schiller, but failed to provide Verdi with a unified, intelligible substitute. Actually, their libretto for *Don Carlos* could easily have been an outstanding one. It is easy to see what has happened to Rodrigo in translation from play to opera, but of equal interest is the reduction of the Eboli/Carlos relationship, and the replacement of the final scene in the Queen's chamber with the embarrassing *coup de théâtre* of Charles's ghost's appearance. In the scenes where

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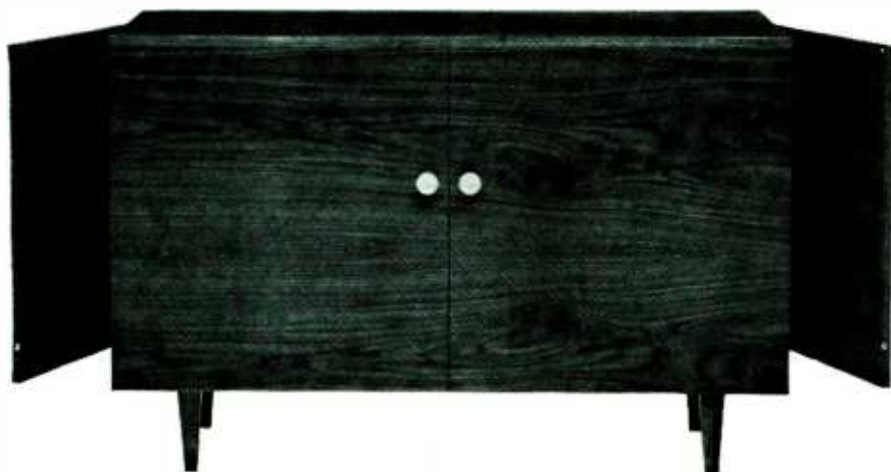
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the drama is on an adult level Verdi has written music of such dark penetration, such emotional persuasiveness as to place this at the pinnacle of music-drama. But where his libretto leads him to worse-than-conventional operatic staginess, the music takes on a corresponding tone; the trio for Eboli, Carlo, and Rodrigo, for example, is effective only as an ordinary scene-ending ensemble. But Philip is one of opera's great characters, and the Inquisitor a towering figure of tyranny. And Verdi's music almost always goes to the psychological nub of the situation.

My choice of the Cetra over the Capitol album is based largely on the spirit of the performance. The ladies are pretty worn-sounding (particularly Caniglia, shrill on top and flattening frequently), but their status as *prime donne* is confirmed in every phrase. I also have much admiration for Rossi-Lemeni's performance. The voice is black and full, the characterization perceptive—this is one of his earliest recordings, and probably his best. The tenor Picchi is sometimes adenoidal and thin-sounding, but generally adequate. Silveri has his role in hand, but seldom produces a firm, resonant tone. Neri powers his way impressively through the Inquisitor's big scene. Previtali starts slowly, but catches fire in the second scene. Cetra's sound is sometimes blurred, but otherwise acceptable.

Capitol's Stella and Nicolai vocalize at least as well as their Cetra counterparts (Stella, in fact, rather better), but never really sink their teeth into the music. Christoff is effective, but less idiomatic than Rossi-Lemeni; and while Picchi is not an ideal Carlo, Filippeschi is no bargain, either, with his heavy, strained vocalism. Gobbi must be accounted the better Rodrigo, his hollow tone above E flat notwithstanding; his handling of the plea to Elisabetta in Scene Two and of "*Per me giunto*" is extremely smart, and he is steady of voice. Neri is less authoritative than in the Cetra version. Santini lends vigor to the proceedings, aided by bright, clear, but rather shallow sound. This three-disc version is as complete as Cetra's four-record set.

—Caniglia, Stignani, Mirto Picchi, Silveri, Rossi-Lemeni, Neri. Radiotelevisione Italiana Chorus and Orchestra, Previtali, cond.

CETRA 1234. Four LP.

—Stella, Nicolai, Mario Filippeschi, Gobbi, Christoff, Neri. Rome Opera Chorus and Orchestra, Santini, cond.

EMI-CAPITOL GCR 7165. Three LP.

#### **Aida (1871)**

These six *Aidas* all have points of interest. I have heard complaints that the Perlea recording for RCA Victor is too obviously studio work, and it is a valid observation. There is a detachment about most of the singing, and the individual voice parts are sometimes stressed at the expense of the total effect. But I like Perlea's firm hand, the slightly overmiked engineering (appropriate for *Aida*, I think), the wonderful sound of the Rome chorus, and nearly all the singing. Milanov's *Aida* has not quite the bloom that it had around 1951-52, and I have heard her do "*Rit...na vincitor!*" to better ef-



fect than she does it here. Her Nile Scene, however, could hardly be improved upon, and the same can be said for the final duet. Bjoerling is light in tone, but the voice is so pliable and resonant, the artistry so secure, that he is actually more "dramatic" than most heavier tenors. Barbieri uses her big voice effectively as Amneris, while Warren's Amonasro, excellent in the Grand Scene, becomes a little chattering in some of the Act III haranguing. Christoff's Ramfis is a trifle rough.

Both Cetra sets seem to me good renditions of the score. The newer performance interests me more, largely for Pirazzini's very strong Amneris and the exciting Radames of Corelli. This tenor's voice is not perfectly balanced, but it is healthy and virile, capable of considerable variety. He is not an artist of Bjoerling's stature, but he is a true *tenore robusto*, and apart from Bjoerling the best Radames on LP. Verna's Aida lacks character, but has no other serious failing; Guelfi barks too much as Amonasro, though his equipment is awesome. Neri is a dead Ramfis. The older Cetra version has the conducting of Vittorio Gui (more arousing than Questa's), and another fine Amneris, Simionato. Mancini, an uneven singer, is a more dramatic Aida than Verna, and Panerai's Amonasro is solid, if occasionally strained. Neri sounds fresher here than on the later recording, but is still not well cast as Ramfis. Filippeschi is the harsh Radames.

I take violent exception to Serafin's full-speed-ahead reading on Angel; while he is no faster than Perlea, he seems to be outdistancing his performers—the chorus frequently leaves phrases in half-finished condition. Callas handles the music well, especially "O patria mia," although some of her upper notes are razor-sharp. Barbieri is better on the Victor set, Tucker sounds constricted and thick, though secure, and the bass soloists have little punch. Gobbi, though, is a splendid Amonasro, tremendously exciting and moving in his scene with Callas. The volume level is down on this recording, and the strings do not sound good, though things improve in the last two acts.

London's set is shortly to be withdrawn in favor of a new stereo recording under Von Karajan's direction, and it is just as well, for Tebaldi's Aida is its only real asset, and she will undoubtedly do it even better on the new version. Stignani is faded, Del Monaco crude, the others undistinguished.

"Cut off a man's head and then try to recognize him if you can!" wrote Verdi to Ricordi when *Boccanegra* failed in Milan, and in the Toscanini album we have a headless *Aida*—a magnificent, unique demonstration of the orchestral score, lacking only the singers. The female side of the cast is hopelessly weak, and only Tucker brings any real life to his part. Verdi would have given the Maestro a proper scolding.

—Milanov, Barbieri, Bjoerling, Warren, Christoff. Rome Opera Chorus and Orchestra, Perlea, cond.

RCA VICTOR LM 6122. Three LP.

—Verna, Pirazzini, Franco Corelli, Gian-giacomo Guelfi, Neri. Radiotelevisione

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—Tebaldi, Stignani, Del Monaco, Protti. Chorus and Orchestra of Accademia di Santa Cecilia (Rome), Erede, cond.

LONDON A 4308. Three LP.

—Nelli, Eva Gustafson, Tucker, Valdeno, Norman Scott. NBC Orchestra, Toscanini, cond.

RCA VICTOR LM 6132. Three LP.

### Requiem (1874)

The *Requiem* takes us straight into Verdi's last period as a composer, and I am not being whimsical when I say that with this work he at last got hold of a good libretto. The Mass for the Dead is pure drama, unencumbered by expositional devices; every phrase carries emotional import. In consequence, Verdi was able to write a continuous line, one "number" beginning precisely where the spirit of the previous one ends. To be honest, I find the Sanctus commonplace, particularly in its final measures, but apart from this short section, the text is set to music intense in feeling, artless in its complete technical command. Surely no other composer has painted quite so vivid a picture of the "Dies irae, dies illa," nor presented quite so powerfully the "Rex tremenda majestatis."

The force and iron control of Toscanini's leadership carry the day, and his version is easily the choice among the available three. (But I understand that the prewar HMV album with Caniglia, Stignani, Gigli, and Pinza, under Serafin, is scheduled for another incarnation in the near future on Angel's "Great Recordings of the Century" series.) The timpani strokes are like shots, and the whole texture is clarified in the best Toscanini fashion—listen, for example, to the accompaniment for the ensemble rendition of the descending line, "Quam olim Abrahae promisisti et semini ejus." Nelli gives her all, but just does not have the authority for the "Liberate me." Barbieri is smoother of voice than she has been lately, and the Di Stefano of 1951 was in infinitely better shape than the Di Stefano of the Angel series. Siepi, of course, is excellent, if at times almost too relaxed. The sound minimizes some of the climaxes, but is otherwise quite good.

Decca's release makes an interesting complementary version. The reflective sections, such as "Quid sum miser," are beautifully rendered, and Fricisay's reading has fine balance and precision throughout. He does not have the drive for the more cataclysmic portions, however, and so I cannot call his performance a very satisfying one. The soloists, all excellent musicians, are in general too light-timbred for this music, especially the heady tenor, Helmut Krebs. The sound is somewhat distant and lacking in dynamic contrast.

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RECORD REVIEW

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Angel's should have been a superior *Requiem*, but isn't. The sound leaves much to be desired, being dry and cramped, and leveling highs, as on the climactic "omnes ante thronum." De Sabata drags things in the early sections, and there are little evidences of sloppiness here and there; I draw attention to the unaccompanied duet in octaves at the opening of the *Agnus Dei*, where Schwarzkopf is allowed to carry over a phrase while Dominguez, assigned to the same notes and words on the lower pitch, sneaks in a breath. A small thing, but such details should be caught in a recorded version. Schwarzkopf is one of our outstanding sopranos, but sounds thin here; the mezzo Dominguez is adequate but undistinctive. Di Stefano is his familiar self in this performance, ramming his way through the high-lying bars, and sounding about as devotional as Frankie Laine. Siepi is once again the welcome bass.

—Nelli, Barbieri, Di Stefano, Siepi. Robert Shaw Chorale; NBC Orchestra, Toscanini, cond.  
 RCA VICTOR LM 6018. Two LP.  
 —Maria Stader, Marianna Radev, Helmut Krebs, Kim Borg. St. Hedwig's Choir; RIAS Symphony Orchestra, Ferenc Fricsay, cond.  
 DECCA DX 118. Two LP.  
 —Elisabeth Schwarzkopf, Oralia Dominguez, Di Stefano, Siepi. Chorus and Orchestra of Teatro alla Scala (Milan), De Sabata, cond.  
 ANGEL 3520 B. Two LP.

### Otello (1887)

There is no concise comment that one can make about this opera which is not manifestly inadequate. I can only observe here that in *Otello* we have a remarkable summation of all that is best in Italian romantic opera.

Toscanini's performance, on the RCA set taken from the 1947 broadcasts, is considerably larger than the sum of its parts. From the first shattering tutti through the final leaden chords, the Maestro's progress is inexorable; once the winch has tightened, he simply does not let go. Listening to this rendition is a genuinely cathartic experience, provided it is not repeated too often. There is much criticism of Ramon Vinay, and I would be the last to deny his vocal shortcomings. Yet I like his *Otello*, for he is attuned to the character, keenly aware of the least detail of emotional significance. He may be less than hair-raising on "Esultate!" but he is most moving in the monologue and final scene. Valdenigo's light-textured, modest-sized voice is hardly the ideal organ for Iago's music, but he sings well within his limits, and never lets things down. Nelli, I am afraid, does sag, and in Act III this is serious. Excepting the wiry Cassio, the supporting roles are well done.

The Cetra effort is by no means negligible. Although Capuana does not build the massive choruses with Toscanini's touch, he leads with expansiveness and *élan*. Broggini is an exquisite Desdemona, vocally fresh and interpretatively sensitive. Guichandut's tenor is dark but clear, with open production at the top; except

for some ill-advised hamming at the close, his *Otello* is aurally believable. But the dominating performance is the Iago of Taddei, snarling and tough-sounding, ample of voice. He towers over Valdenigo and Protti. The supporting performers are excellent, the recording very alive, with imposing masses of choral and orchestral sound.

Tebaldi is the star of the London set, and though in some ways I prefer the more committed portrayal of Broggini, Tebaldi has an amplitude of tone that cannot be brushed aside. Del Monaco has his rousing moments, but I hope he is given a chance to re-record his *Otello*, which he has improved beyond all measure since the time of this production. Protti is a choppy, obvious Iago, almost lost in the shuffle, and Erede's conducting is droopy. London's sound has the edge over the other companies'.

—Nelli, Ramon Vinay, Valdenigo. NBC Orchestra, Toscanini, cond.  
 RCA VICTOR LM 6107. Three LP.  
 —Ceszy Broggini, Carlos Guichandut, Taddei. Radiotelevisione Italiana Chorus and Orchestra, Franco Capuana, cond.  
 CETRA 1252. Three LP.  
 —Tebaldi, Del Monaco, Protti. Chorus and Orchestra of Accademia di Santa Cecilia (Rome), Erede, cond.  
 LONDON A 4312. Three LP.

### Falstaff (1893)

The second child of Verdi's old age is to all appearances a giddy, exuberant off-spring; but under the surface, in tones of

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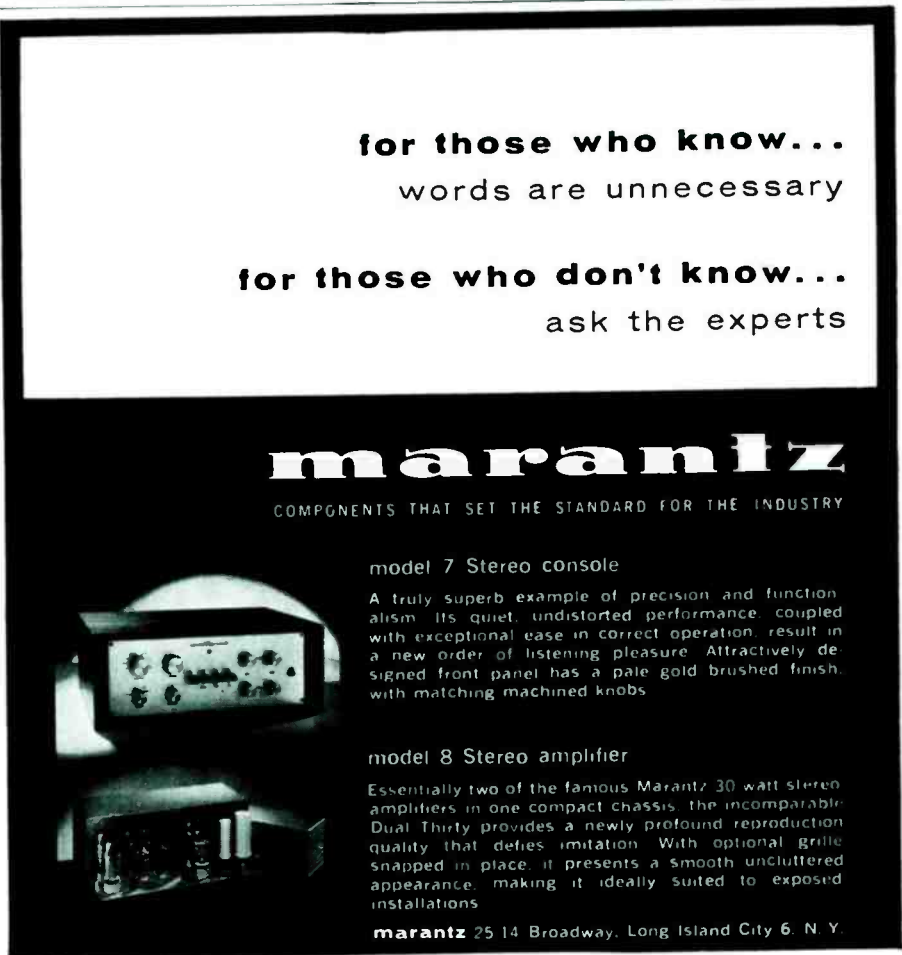
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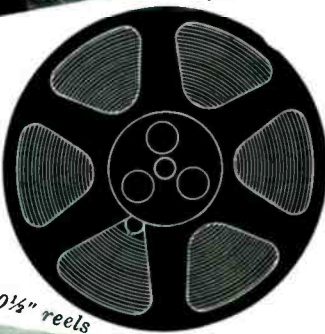




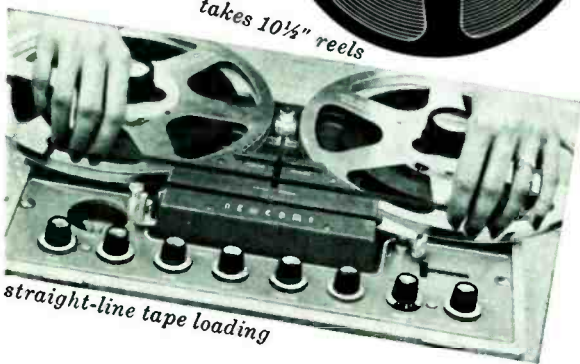


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gray rather than black, he is mournful, nearly as moody as the Moor. *Falstaff* is truly funny, but it is permeated by that potent melancholia and pathos that is the quality of the greatest comedy, whether spoken (*Midsummer Night's Dream*), sung (*Meistersinger*; *Nozze di Figaro*), or simply played (*City Lights*). Even as we laugh, we fight to hold back tears; indeed, the closing statement of the work, the astounding fugue, buffets us cruelly from mirth to a resigned *tristesse*, then back again.

The Cetra effort is best forgotten, in view of the competition. It presents steady singing by Carteri as Alice, and vibrant vocalism from Taddei, the Falstaff, but the remaining women are awful, and Saturno Meletti is severely taxed as Ford. The sound is old, and with such forces Rossi cannot risk impetuosity.

The Angel album is my own favorite, though the Toscanini version is a strong one. Von Karajan has charge of a group of virtuosos, led by Gobbi, a memorable Falstaff. The baritone conveys not only the absurdity of the role, but the poignancy, too—the monologue at the opening of Act III is steeped in sadness. All the Merry Wives are excellent, though Barbieri overdoes Quickly; and while Panerai is a disappointing Ford (his "E sogno" is literal note reading), the other male members of the cast are satisfactory. Von Karajan does things to a turn, and the orchestra and chorus have a definite sheen. The topnotch sound is little better in stereo than it is in the monophonic edition.

Toscanini squeezes the last ounce of turbulent gaiety from the score, and at some points, notably the finale of the first scene, leaves Von Karajan far to the rear. Nelli is certainly better suited to Alice than to Aida, and her companions are well cast, Stich-Randall being at least Moffo's equal as Nannetta and Elmo less a burlesque Quickly than Barbieri. Valdenigo is a superb imitation of Falstaff, but does not quite achieve Gobbi's identification with the part. Guarrera's heavy-handed antics are no improvement on Panerai's underplaying; the lesser singers are good, with an outstanding Dr. Cajus by Gabor Carelli.

The close of the fugue brings us to the end of Verdi. It seems easy enough to follow the ups and downs and windings of the half-century-plus from *Oberto*, *Conte di San Bonifaccio*. But just how they bring us to *Falstaff* is an enduring mystery.

—Schwarzkopf, Nan Merriman, Anna Moffo, Barbieri, Gobbi, Panerai. Philharmonia Chorus and Orchestra, Von Karajan, cond.

ANGEL 3552 C/L, Three LP; S 3552 C/L, Three SD.

—Nelli, Merriman, Teresa Stich-Randall, Cloe Elmo, Valdenigo, Frank Guarrera. Robert Shaw Chorale; NBC Orchestra, Toscanini, cond.

RCA VICTOR LM 6111. Three LP.

—Carteri, Pagliughi, Taddei, Saturno Meletti. Radiotelevisione Italiana Chorus and Orchestra, Rossi, cond.

CETRA 1207. Three LP.







# the Tape Deck

Reviewed by R. D. DARRELL

The following reviews are of 4-track 7.5-ips stereo tapes in normal reel form.

**BEETHOVEN: Symphonies: No. 3, in E flat, Op. 55 ("Eroica"); No. 5, in C minor, Op. 67. Overtures: Egmont, Op. 84; Coriolan, Op. 62**

Philharmonic Promenade Orchestra, Sir Adrian Boult, cond.

• • VANGUARD VTF 1605 (twin-pack). 93 min. \$9.95.

The economic significance of the new (four-track) tape era is obvious when one compares the cost of this cornucopia-reel with that of the same program on two stereo discs (\$11.90) and that of the previous (two-track) tapings of the symphonies only (\$26.90). What is even more important, only the price has been cheapened: the present versions sound if anything slightly cleaner, brighter, and more natural than the two-track tapes, and notably better in definition and low-frequency solidity than the stereo discs.

Boult's performances themselves have been widely admired in whatever media they have appeared. I myself prefer more robust and tightly integrated readings of these particular works, but even I find it hard not to respond wholeheartedly to their freshness and almost feminine charm. At any rate, there is a rich abundance of both musical and sonic attractions here.

**BERNSTEIN: West Side Story: Ballet Music**

†Prince: *Ballets U.S.A.: N. Y. Export: Op. Jazz*

Orchestra, Robert Prince, cond.

• • WARNER BROS. BST 1240. 44 min. \$7.95.

Divorced both from its stage action and its original-score song and choral contexts, the rowdy *West Side Story* ballet music is likely to be much too strenuous for tender ears, especially as recorded here in almost completely separated stereo channels and with the most razor-edged of closely miked wide-range recording. But those who can stand it will find fascination in this sharply focused view of every detail in the score—in which the intricately rhythmed "Jump" from "The Dance at the Gym" and the piquant Scherzo opening of the "Ballet Dream Sequence" must surely rank with Bernstein's most striking and original achievements as a composer. Prince's own work (played by the same anonymous but obviously first-rate orchestra, conducted

with the same precision and intensity, and recorded in no less sharp detail) was far better received by jazz reviewers than by "serious" critics when it first appeared about a year ago in disc editions. In general I too question the genuine artistic significance of its attempts to utilize jazz techniques and sonics. Nevertheless, the experiment still strikes me as an unusually interesting one; and while the first three movements seem somewhat arbitrary and pointless without the ballet action for which they were designed, the final Theme, Variations, and Fugue has much more inherent continuity and achieves quite impressive dynamic momentum and dramatic force. And the extremely ingenious scoring, with its wide variety of wind and percussive timbres, is—for tough-eared sound fanciers at least—as exciting as it is vivid.

**MAHLER: Das Lied von der Erde**

Grace Hoffman, mezzo; Helmut Melchert, tenor; Orchestra of the Southwest German Radio, Hans Rosbaud, cond.

• • TANDBERG/SMS S 17. 64 min. \$8.95.

The Mahler centennial year (he was born on July 7, 1860) hardly could be inaugurated more happily than with the release of this fine tape, which for the first time in any recording medium does full justice to the richness of the composer's perhaps most appealing masterpiece. Incomparable as the Ferrier-Patzak-Walter monophonic version always will remain, the technology of 1952 dealt less adequately with the orchestral than with the vocal demands of the score; and while the Vox stereo release of the present performance supplied spaciousness and lucidity of detail, it did so only at the cost of two discs (the Vox LP took only one) and an unfortunate side-break in the *Abschied* movement. In the present taping the reel-turnover comes at the close of the fifth movement, *Der Trunkene im Frühling*, so that the long "Farewell," with its haunting orchestral interlude, flows uninterrupted from its ominous introduction to the inexpressibly poignant "Ewig . . . ewig . . ."

There is no need to repeat the earlier praise of Miss Hoffman's lovely voice and artistic restraint, the more workaday robustness of Melchert, or the breadth and strength of Rosbaud's conducting. They never will efface memories of Ferrier, Patzak, and Walter, but that inevitable failure is richly compensated by the lucidity and expansiveness with which Mahler's scoring felicities are caught to

perfection in gleaming stereo sound. There is no excuse, however, for the omission of a text booklet.

**PRINCE: Ballets U.S.A.: N. Y. Export: Op. Jazz—See Bernstein: West Side Story: Ballet Music.**

**PROKOFIEV: Peter and the Wolf, Op. 67; Lieutenant Kije: Suite, Op. 60**

Boris Karloff, narrator (in *Peter and the Wolf*); Vienna State Opera Orchestra, Mario Rossi, cond.

• • VANGUARD VTC 1601. 45 min. \$7.95.

Karloff does surprisingly well with his narration for *Peter*, but it is highly questionable whether the composer would have approved of featuring the spoken program so prominently and with so much sonic presence that the gay music itself seems merely illustrative and excessively episodic. The recording (stereoscopic, sharply detailed, and glittering) adds further realism at the cost of a more appropriately fairy-tale atmosphere. This treatment is of course far more suitable for the *Lieutenant Kije* Suite, but since the usually perceptive Rossi here seems to have no inkling at all of the music's satirical humor, his brilliant virtuosity is wholly on the surface. Admirable, then, as both works indubitably are for sonic vividness, neither interpretation is likely to move or satisfy any but the most casual and impressionable listeners.

**SHOSTAKOVICH: Symphony No. 6, Op. 54**

London Philharmonic Orchestra, Sir Adrian Boult, cond.

• • EVEREST T4 3007. 33 min. \$7.95.

The Shostakovich Sixth is probably one of the last works I should ever have imagined as appealing to Sir Adrian Boult—or if it did, that he could bring to it either the passionate eloquence (in the brooding Largo) or rambunctious gusto (in the incongruously appended Scherzo and Finale) that he does here. I'm not at all sure that he succeeds in unlocking the enigma of the immensely long first movement, but he makes it more than ever moving; and if he, like everyone else so far, fails to explain the composer's sudden shift to the extrovert zest of the two succeeding movements, he certainly makes

Continued on next page



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## TAPE DECK

Continued from preceding page

them more zestful—and far less vulgar—than they ordinarily sound.

In any case, we can thank him not only for bringing the Sixth back into the active discography, but for a performance which in the present open and powerful recording will be hard indeed to excel. Lavishly praised when it first appeared in a stereo disc almost a year ago, its tape version with its high-end brilliance even better balanced by the superb low-frequency clarity and depth of which tape alone seems capable, is both a delight to one's ears and a provocative introduction to the puzzling contradictions of the symphony itself.

**TCHAIKOVSKY: Symphony No. 4, in F minor, Op. 36**

Mannheim National Symphony, Herbert Albert, cond.

• • LIVINGSTON 4T 4. 43 min. \$8.95.

Played much as it must have been played by a German provincial orchestra under a nonvirtuoso conductor in the 1880s or 1890s, Tchaikovsky's familiar showpiece is here given an old-fashioned relaxation, some romantic warmth, and some nicely dark-colored wind-instrument playing—but also a phlegmatic stodginess and lack of continuity and dramatic point which make it sound singularly characterless. The performance bored me intolerably. To make matters worse, the recording is unusually low-level and bottom-heavy, and there is a disconcerting reel-turnover break in the slow movement.

**"Leroy Anderson Presents."** Orchestra, Leroy Anderson, cond. Tandberg/SMS S 15, 40 min., \$7.95.

The extramusical interest of this release is its unidentified origin. As far as I know, Anderson has conducted his own works only for Decca records; can the Stereophonic Music Society have obtained tape rights to some of his earlier, now withdrawn, masters for that series? In any case, the recording, although clean, sweet, and moderately stereoistic, doesn't sound of recent vintage, and it certainly cannot match that of Fennell's Anderson concerts for Mercury, Vol. 2 of which was reviewed here only last month. Despite this, however, and even despite the obviously small size of his anonymous orchestra, the composer's readings of thirteen of his popular genre pieces (including a *Plink, Plank, Plunk* unmentioned on the reel box) will have a special appeal for listeners who believe that the higher-powered Fennell and Fiedler readings lose something of their ingratiating charm. I can't quite agree, myself (at least for the more overtly showy *divertissements*), but I must concede that Anderson does bring a unique rhythmic grace and lyric expressiveness to the gentler numbers.

**"Basie."** Count Basie and His Orchestra. Roulette RTC 502, 32 min., \$7.95.

I was so carried away by the exuberant excitement of *The Kid from Red Bank*, fascinated by Joe Newman's and Thad Jones's muted trumpets in *Duet*, and moved by the sonorous *Lil' Darlin'* here, that for a moment I feared I had abdicated all my critical responsibilities! Yet I can only agree with John S. Wilson's review of the original monophonic disc: "This is without any qualification the best LP that Basie's current band has ever made, and it is the best collection of performances by a Basie group since the halcyon days of the original Basie band in the late Thirties and very early Forties."

On tape the LP has undergone a marvelous stereo metamorphosis; almost as aurally exciting in its transparency as the driving momentum and many-colored sonority of the Basie band itself.

**Brahms: Hungarian Dances (9); Dvořák: Slavonic Dances, (4).** Bamberg Symphony Orchestra, Jonel Perlea, cond. Tandberg/SMS S 14, 39 min., \$8.95.

This is a good representative selection of the vivacious *Hungarian Dances*, but the other "side" includes only four of the longer and more poetic *Slavonic Dances*. I regret that Perlea doesn't bring to his performances more idiomatic authenticity and gusto, but his lightweight readings do have considerable sparkle and there is even more in the unexaggeratedly stereoistic recording (of Vox origin).

**"Dance Atop Nob Hill"; "Fabulous Fairmont."** Ernie Heckscher and His Orchestra. Verve VST4 202 (twin-pack), 80 min., \$11.95.

Hip youngsters may sneer "Square!" but San Francisco's answer to Meyer Davis' East Coast society orchestra will delight their less sophisticated and energetic elders throughout these two long programs consisting of no less than sixty-two tunes—among them almost every favorite of the past. There are no vocals, just a few waltzes and Latin-American rhythms (and even a couple of moments of well-diluted Dixieland) for contrast, and generally a smooth variation between businessman's bounciness and nostalgic romanticism. The recording, too, in well-spread and blended stereoism, authentically conveys the atmosphere of a delectable dance-evening "atop Nob Hill."

**"Hollywood Themes in Stereo."** Frank Hunter and His Orchestra. Kapp KT 41006, 34 min., \$7.95.

A round dozen of the best-known movie theme songs, all notable for the unusual freedom from fanciness in their rich big-band scorings, the romantic warmth and yet vital lilt in Hunter's performances, and the sumptuous stereo sonics. Particularly interesting are the cery *Wild Is the Wind*, the imaginative *Variations on Colonel Bogey*, the beautifully played Love Theme from *La Strada*, and the atmospheric *Old Man and the Sea*; the

Continued on page 106





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## TAPE DECK

Continued from page 104

whole program, in fact, is one of the best—and most tastefully restrained—of its kind ever to come out of Hollywood.

"Secret Songs for Young Lovers." André Previn, piano; David Rose and His Orchestra. M-G-M ST 3716, 37 min., \$7.95.

In the ingeniously arranged *Young Man's Lament*, the combination of Previn's deft piano playing with Rose's some twenty-five-man string section, plus a rhythm group, is imaginatively exploited, and one wishes this were done more often. Even in the more conventional mood-music performances of eleven other pieces, however, the meandering piano and lush string passages are consistently attractive in extremely natural and well-differentiated stereoism.

"Songs of a Russian Gypsy." Theodore Bikel and Instrumental Ensemble. Elektra ETC 1501, 41 min., \$7.95.

Bikel has seldom been more versatile and persuasive than in this rhapsodic gypsy program, but except in the most striking performances here, the typical alternations between wailing gloom and robust exultation do tend to get a bit tiresome. I should have welcomed more of the variety provided by the little balalaika-accordion-violin-guitar ensemble alone in its vibrantly exciting dance pieces. The recording itself is clean, but excessively dry, and the markedly differentiated stereo channels rather unnaturally separated.

"Stereo Goes Charleston." Ira Ironsides and His Orchestra. Warner Bros. WSR 1297, 27 min., \$7.95.

Whoever the "notorious Ira Ironsides" may be, he surely remembers the frenetic Twenties better than most of their current musical archeologists. His rowdy banjo-dominated versions of *Sheik of Araby*, *Varsity Drag*, *Barney Google* (I never thought to hear *that* one again!), *Black Bottom*, *Ain't She Sweet*, and seven other undying period pieces are unflaggingly invigorating and often surprisingly virtuosic too. In the present markedly stereoistic and powerful recording the program makes an appropriately razzling-dazzling clatter too, and I relished every moment of it.

"Strauss Conducts Strauss." Vienna State Opera Orchestra, Eduard Strauss, cond. Tandberg/SMS S 16, 47 min., \$7.95.

By all the data this is the same program as the "Strauss Concert," conducted by the Waltz King's great nephew, which I reviewed only last month in a Vox SD version; but it here sounds astonishingly sweeter sonically and less markedly spotlighted in details. Evidently the touch of harshness I ascribed to the "recording" earlier should have been blamed on the disc processing. And while the young conductor himself still seems self-con-

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- Tape Head Equalized NARTB Sensitivity 2 MV
- FM ● AM ● FM Multiplex ● Tape Head
- Microphone (switched into one channel for announcing, faded in or out with balance control)

#### OUTPUTS 2 Ampl., 2 Tape, 3rd Channel

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OUTPUT SELECTOR 7 MODES (Check-A, Check-B, Stereo, Stereo Reverse, Monaural A-B, Monaural A, Monaural B.) 6 panel light Matrix provides selection Mode at a glance.

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DIMENSIONS 4-1/2H x 13-3/4L x 6-3/8D

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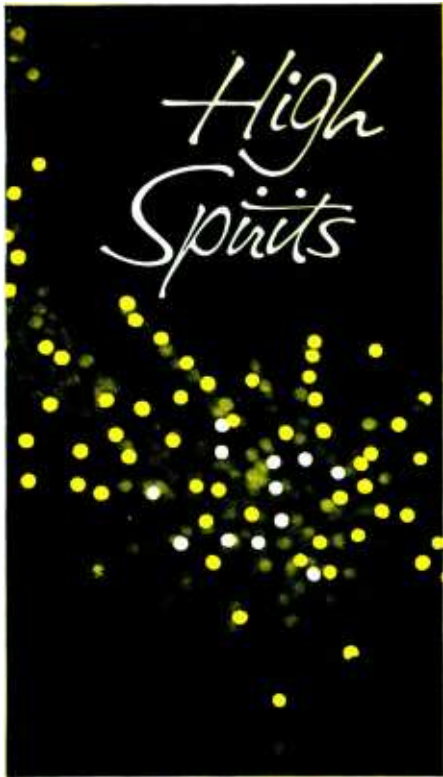
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sciously nervous, tending to "press" and to italicize inner voices, his effectively pulsing performances of five favorite waltzes generally reveal him—as well as his original engineers—to considerably better advantage than in the disc edition.

"Zitherama." Anton Karas, zither; Vienna Amusement Orchestra and The Two Rudi's, accordions. Omegatape SST 809, 29 min., \$6.95.

Some of the brightest timbres I remember from my first (monophonic) tape-reviewing experiences were those provided by "Third Man" Karas for the Omega catalogue. So it is a special pleasure to hear him again, with still more of his instrument's glitter and vibrant twang now captured in brilliant stereo recording. His playing, too, is as engaging as ever in the lighter pieces here, but in five other selections it has to cope unhappily with a stolid and far from competent salon orchestra (which is also heard alone in *White Lilacs*).

The following reviews are of 4-track 3.75-ips stereo tapes in "cartridges."

**OFFENBACH:** *Gaité Parisienne*  
†**Khachaturian:** *Gayne: Ballet Suite*

Boston Pops Orchestra, Arthur Fiedler, cond.

• • RCA VICTOR KCS 4002. 44 min. \$6.95.

The perennial best seller again, this time in its latest—third—Fiedler recording (first released nearly a year ago in SD and LP versions), which is perhaps the most vivaciously played and certainly the most scintillatingly recorded of them all. Here it is filled out on the "B" side (as it was on discs) with the noisily splashing "Lezghinka," "Dance of the Rose Maidens," "Dance of the Kurds," and —of course—"Sabre Dance" from *Gayne*, but these probably will be disregarded as cavalierly by listeners as they are in the accompanying leaflet and even on the cartridge and its box-cover labels themselves.

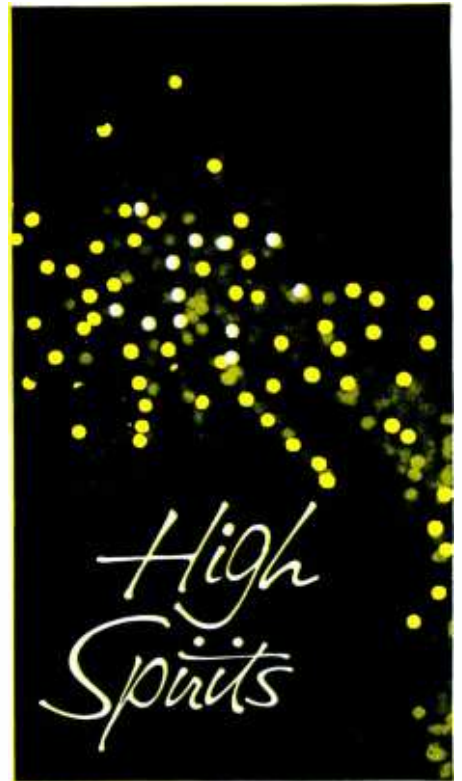
**RAVEL:** *Daphnis et Chloë* (complete)

New England Conservatory Chorus and Alumni Chorus; Boston Symphony Orchestra, Charles Munch, cond.

• • RCA VICTOR KCS 6001. 53 min. \$6.95.

The belated appearance in stereo (and for the first time in any tape form) of this performance—first released in 1955—forces me to supersede even my favorite Ansermet version. For Munch is fired by this music to truly passionate eloquence, his Bostonian players and Robert Shaw-trained singers respond superbly, and the recording shows no indications of its age in its poetic revelation of the full sonic splendors of this incredibly inspired score. Every moment here is pure delight and I commend it especially to listeners who have previously known only the highlights of the work in the

*Continued on next page*



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**TAPE DECK**

Continued from preceding page

two popular suites drawn from it and have thus lost much of both this music's true grandeur of architectural design and its incomparable evocative magic.

**TCHAIKOVSKY: Concerto for Piano and Orchestra, No. 1, in B flat minor, Op. 23**

Van Cliburn, piano; Symphony of the Air, Kiril Kondrashin, cond.

• • RCA Victor KCS 4020. 35 min. \$6.95.

At this late date there is nothing new to be said about so widely known a best seller as Van Cliburn's Tchaikovsky First, except to note that the present edition compares quite favorably with the two-track 7.5-ips taping of October 1958 in every respect save that of background hiss, which as in all cartridge (slow-speed) tapes is somewhat more noticeable (although to my ears, at least, neither bothersome in itself nor as conspicuous or annoying as the rougher-grained surface noise of all but the very best—and freshest—of stereo discs). And as between the SD and cartridge-tape versions of the present work, I should say that except under ideal disc-playback conditions the tape is likely to be considered preferable.



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Hi Fi Review explains the importance to you of the ESL Gyro/Balance arm:

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"[The ESL Gyro/Balance arm's] combined vertical and lateral stabilization... keeps it tracking the groove regardless of turntable tilt. It would even play upside down if the record were glued on.... Aside from these spectacular capabilities, the ESL arm is of quality design throughout."



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"Cugat in Spain." Xavier Cugat and His Orchestra. RCA Victor KPS 3053, 29 min., \$5.95.

Marked stereoism and recording brilliance can't compensate for the dry acoustics and coarse playing in these heavily plugging, raucously jangling versions of a dozen mostly familiar Spanish pops pieces—not excluding a disarrangement of Falla's *Ritual Fire Dance*.

"Love Is a Swingin' Word." Sid Ramin and His Orchestra. RCA Victor KPS 3028, 34 min., \$5.95.

Here brilliant and broadspread recording is effectively exploited by somewhat fancy big-band arrangements of popular love songs: a program heard now in its entirety (in contrast to the two-track taping, October 1959, which included only the six "B"-side selections). Most effective are the rollicking Latin-American-styled *Love* and atmospheric *Love Is Here To Stay*.

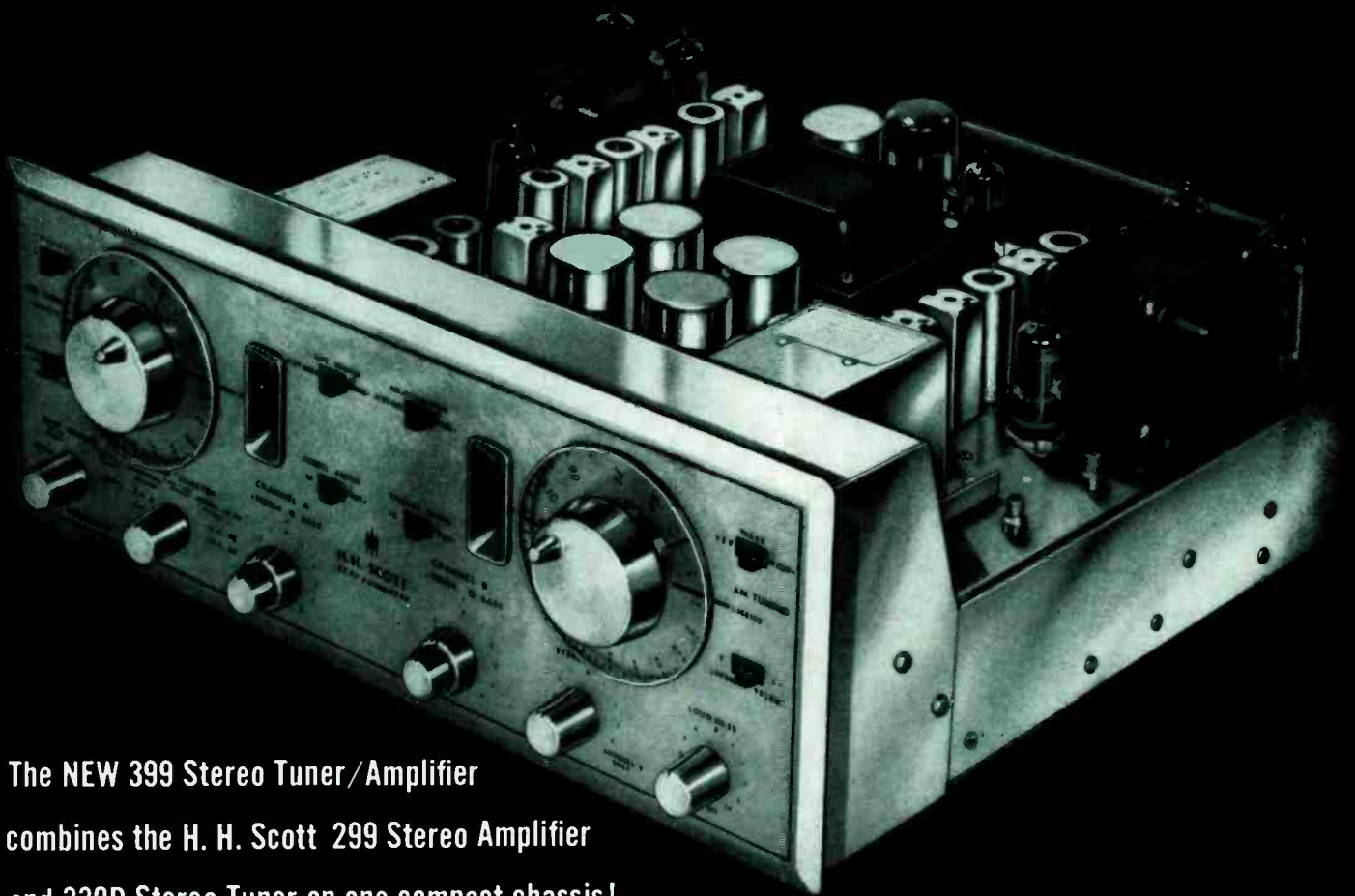
"When You Come to the End of the Day." Perry Como; His Orchestra and the Ray Charles Singers. RCA Victor KPS 3043, 35 min., \$5.95.

Quasi-religiosity, but done here with somewhat suaver, expressiveness than is often the case. The soloist is recorded with exaggerated presence, while the broadspread stereoism captures only too clearly every detail of the fancy orchestral, "angelic" choral, and organ accompaniments, and their occasional prententious emotional climaxes.



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**New HF87 70-Watt Stereo Power Amplifier:** Dual 35W power amplifiers of the highest quality. Uses top-quality output transformers for undistorted response across the entire audio range at full power to provide utmost clarity on full orchestra & organ. 1M distortion 1% at 70W, harmonic distortion less than 1% from 20 to 20,000 cps within 1 db of 70W. Ultra-linear connected EL34 output stages & surge-protected silicon diode rectifier power supply. Selector switch chooses mono or stereo service; 4, 8, 16, and 32 ohm speaker taps, input level controls; basic sensitivity 0.38 volts. Without exaggeration, one of the very finest stereo amplifiers available regardless of price. Use with self-powered stereo preamplifier-control unit (HF85 recommended). Kit \$74.95. Wired \$114.95.

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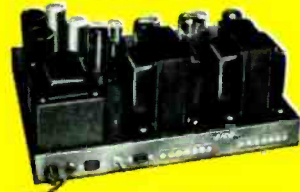
**HF12 Mono Integrated Amplifier** provides complete "front-end" facilities and true high fidelity performance. Inputs for phono, tape head, TV, tuner and crystal/ceramic cartridge. Preferred variable crossover, feedback type tone control circuit. Highly stable Williamson-type power amplifier circuit. Power output: 12W continuous, 25W peak. Kit \$34.95. Wired \$57.95. Includes cover.

**New HFS3 3-Way Speaker System Semi-Kit** complete with factory-built ¾" veneered plywood (4 sides) cabinet. Bellows-suspension, full-inch excursion 12" woofer (22 cps res.), 8" mid-range speaker with high internal damping cone for smooth response, 3½" cone tweeter, 2¼ cu. ft. ducted-port enclosure. System Q of ½ for smoothest frequency & best transient response. 32-14,000 cps clean, useful response. 16 ohms impedance. HWD: 26½", 137%, 14¾". Unfinished birch \$72.50. Walnut, mahogany or teak \$87.50.

**New HFS5 2-Way Speaker System Semi-Kit** complete with factory-built ¾" veneered plywood (4 sides) cabinet. Bellows-suspension, ¾" excursion,



Stereo Preamplifier HF85



70W Stereo Power Amplifier HF87  
28W Stereo Power Amplifier HF86



FM Tuner HFT90 AM Tuner HFT94 FM/AM Tuner HFT92



Stereo Integrated Amplifier AF4



12W Mono Integrated Amplifier HF12  
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50, 30, & 20W (use 2 for stereo)



2-Way Bookshelf Speaker System HFS3  
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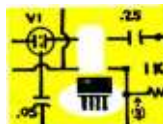
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## From the High-Fidelity Newsfronts

The Institute of High Fidelity Manufacturers is sponsoring another High Fidelity Music Show in Los Angeles this month (Jan. 13-17, Pan-Pacific Auditorium). Presumably, the show will be keyed to the same theme as the New York exhibit last October—"Decorate Your Home with Music." Are you listening, ladies?

What the women of America think of high-fidelity sound is of prime concern to manufacturers in this industry. And they believe they know what the women of America think. First of all, women do not like loud sound. In keeping with their gentle nature, they prefer music softly played. Secondly, they cannot abide the sight of "naked" components. And, if the components have wires strung between them in plain view, the sight is doubly offensive. Hence, the "Decorate Your Home with Music" theme.

Worth noting also is a second important High Fidelity Music Show to be held this month in San Francisco (Jan. 23 through 26, The Cow Palace). This second West Coast show is being sponsored by the Magnetic Recording Industry Association. Don't let the MRIA tag fool you. This is not a show devoted only to tape recording but, to use MRIA's term, an "all-industry" affair. That is to say, all the Los Angeles exhibitors will trek up the coast to show their wares. If the MRIA has any opinions on how to satisfy the housewives of America, it hasn't gone on record with them.

Preoccupation with the ladies' criticism of high-fidelity sound could be misconstrued as some obscure form of male chauvinism. Not so. Rather, it appears in merchandising manuals under the heading "Broadening the Market," and can be summed up as follows: "let's design equipment to appeal to the women and we'll be able to sell more to the men"—or to state it more directly,—"if the women like it, they'll let the men buy it."

There are several observations we'd like to make on this subject.

First of all, publicity prior to and during the October show in New York made much of five "decorator rooms," which integrated stereo music systems with chic

and chintzy surroundings. Women, as well as men, completely ignored this conspicuously placed exhibit although they flocked into the Audio Fidelity demonstration room close by. It's worth pointing out that Audio Fidelity's major attraction was a half-hour lecture by the firm's president, Sidney Frey, who played excerpts from his stereo disc catalogue. The audiences—one-third of them women—showed little inclination to run even when Frey cranked up the gain on his "Locomotives: Steam and Diesel" to room-shattering level. The ladies, who were not handcuffed to their husbands, even seemed to enjoy the program.

Commenting on the "decorator rooms," one New Yorker correctly told us: "The rooms may have been decorated *with* stereo but not *for* stereo. In only one of the rooms was it possible to sit in the stereo sound area."

The second and by far the more important observation we'd like to make on the subject of "women and high fidelity" is this: intense interest in décor and what the ladies supposedly think could lead to compromising the product in a business that grew quickly because of its search for the best possible way of reproducing sound.

Here's an example. Recently, we spoke to a manufacturer who is trying to "broaden the market" by placing all components in a cabinet.

"What about feedback?" we wanted to know. "Won't the speaker vibration be picked up by the cabinet and transmitted to the tone arm, cartridge and needle? Seems you fellows were awfully particular about that a couple of years back."

"Well," said the manufacturer, "it's not as important as we used to think it was. After all, speakers on one side of the room can cause vibration in an equipment cabinet on the other side."

This sounded to us—as it must to you—as if the manufacturer were fence-straddling. We would prefer to have him give results of test procedures proving his point, rather than brush the question aside with an offhand comment.

To sum up, women may be very interested in the appearance of high-fidelity equipment, but that does not mean they are indifferent to the quality of the sound. We believe that the 60.3 per cent of our readers (according to a recent survey) who are married will agree with the above. Neither are the men electronically-minded brutes with so little regard for aesthetic considerations that they buy anything regardless of its appearance. We must recognize in passing that components today are much handsomer than they were five years ago.

We think the IHFM would be interested in an actress friend who called on us recently to fix her component rig. She wouldn't know a baffle *Continued on page 116*

prepared by  
**Hirsch-Houck Laboratories**  
and the technical staff  
of **High Fidelity**

# HF reports

## Norelco Continental 400 Stereo Tape Recorder

**SPECIFICATIONS** (furnished by manufacturer): A 3-speed stereo tape recorder with built-in left-channel speaker, accessory right-channel speaker, and built-in preamplifiers and power amplifiers. It may be used to record four monophonic tracks, two in each direction. **Speeds:** 7½, 3¾, and 1½ ips. **Capacity:** 7-inch reels. **Inputs:** left and right microphone channels, left and right high-level channels. **Outputs:** for left and right extension speakers and far left and right amplifiers (low-level outputs). Also connection for stereo headphones to monitor inputs. **Signal-to-noise ratio:** 55 db or better. **Crosstalk:** 55 db down. **Wow and flutter:** 0.15% at 7½ ips. **Dimensions:** 18½ by 15½ by 8½ in. **Weight:** 55 lbs. **Price:** \$399.50. **MANUFACTURER:** North American Philips Co., Inc., 230 Duffy Ave., Hicksville, L. I., N. Y.

**At a glance:** An excellent, all-round recorder providing fine fidelity and exceptional flexibility.

**In detail:** This test report is being written in two parts. One of the HIGH FIDELITY staff members (C.F.) took the Norelco home for a couple of days of experimentation and study, and for general listening tests. Then the recorder was transferred to the Hirsch-Houck Laboratories, where basic electronic measurements were made. The H.-H. results will be given at the end, under the heading of "test results." Let's start with C. F.'s comments . . .

This is an attractive, easy-to-handle, pleasant-sounding recorder, that functions smoothly and has several unusual features. The features . . . well, down under the handle, on the left side of the recorder, is the input connections panel. There are two phono jacks (of standard U.S. design) for left- and right-channel high-level inputs; they are marked radio/phono. The phono would be crystal or ceramic, not magnetic. There is a single phone (not phono) jack for stereo microphone. This connection can be used with a monophonic microphone

jack, and which channel it feeds to depends on the setting of a selector knob on top of the recorder. Another phone jack, for stereo headphones, is connected to monitor inputs.

On the other side of the recorder are the output connections. There are four phone jacks here; two are for speakers, to be operated by the power amplifiers built into the Norelco. The other two are low-level, for connection to external amplifiers. A switch on this panel cuts out the built-in speaker, which is connected to the left channel. The AC power cord, by the way, is in a hole under the bottom of the recorder, covered by a little trap door.

Now . . . let's attack the dashboard. Up between the reels, to the rear, is a four-digit counter, operating off the supply reel. A 1,200-foot reel counts up to almost 1,000 . . . and takes a whisker under two minutes to wind fast forward or rewind.

Tape is threaded straight through, and very easily.

There are nine stubby piano key levers, plus three buttons. Extreme left is PLAY. Next is RECORD, but you have to push a red button above it first. Then comes PAUSE, which does that and does it fast and soundlessly. The PAUSE button is released by pushing the red button above it. The three center levers are REWIND, STOP, and FAST FORWARD. They may be "played"



The Norelco Continental 400.

. . . that is, you can go from REWIND to FAST FORWARD without damage. Finally, there are three levers at the right which select speed and which—we discovered belatedly—turn the machine on when depressed. A little button to the left turns everything off. Just below the three center levers there is a sensitive recording level indicator.

At the extreme front are the knobs. The two at the left are to control input level for microphone and radio. The two inputs can be mixed, and their levels adjusted separately. The third knob from the left is the function selector. It has four positions. The first is PA, which connects inputs to loudspeaker. And it also does a cute trick: it snaps out any lever controls which may be depressed. Thus if the PLAY lever is down (it catches down, normally, to be released when the STOP lever is depressed), turning the function selection to PA releases the PLAY lever, and so on.

The second position of this knob is STEREO, and that's perfectly straightforward. The third position is marked 1-4 and the fourth, 2-3; between these two positions is the word MONO. These two positions make it possible to record four monophonic tracks on one tape. One position gives you track #1 going and coming, with the #1 coming being equal to #4. Similarly, the other position gives you #2 coming, which becomes #3 when the tape is flipped for its return trip. We'll come back to this in a couple of paragraphs; we must first finish going across the board.

In the center of the forward row are two buttons. Both slide laterally. The left-hand one is marked DUBBING. If you record . . . wind back . . . play back to a preselected point . . . push the PAUSE lever . . . push the RECORD lever . . . release the PAUSE lever and apply a second signal (voice or music) then the first recording will be partially erased and the second ap-



plied over it. Hence the dubbing: dubbed in over the first. Cute trick, yes? Thus you can put voice over music either by simultaneous recording or by subsequent dubbing.

The next button has an R+L position (to the left) and a simple L position, to the right. When the function selector knob is in its STEREO position, this knob is automatically sprung to the L position to feed the left channel to the built-in speaker. When the function selector is in either of its monophonic positions, this button may be pushed to its R+L position and it will then blend left and right channels, for monophonic playback of stereo recordings.

The three knobs to the right are: VOLUME, which is ganged, both channels being affected equally. (Same principle is used on input level controls, too.) Next is BALANCE, and that's what it does, between the two channels. The third is a clutched TONE control, each channel being separately adjustable but, once set, the upper and lower sections of the knob can be turned together.

We did a good deal of listening to music recorded over the Norelco. About two-thirds was monophonic, picked up from a good FM station nearby. The sound was excellent all the way along and A-B tests against the original broadcast (versus taped version) were almost entirely indistinguishable. Stereo tests were not too conclusive because we simply had to dub from discs onto tape and then compare; the tapes sounded as good as the discs, but this in a sense is putting the cart before the horse. We'd rather leave the judgment of performance to the Hirsch-Houck tests.

The Norelco comes equipped with a stereo microphone . . . and we make it singular because it is only one plastic case with two microphones positioned in the cross-fire arrangement that is moderately common for European recordings. We didn't test it at all conclusively. Yes, we talked and walked around while talking; it picked up the motion and blended it nicely. We didn't think the family grand piano sounded quite as good as with a pair of microphones set up according to the more usual U.S. arrangement . . . but more experimenting is indicated. It does have the great advantage of being compact and simple to use; it cannot provide the flexibility—nor the complexity—possible with two separate microphones.

### Test Results

To test the playback frequency response of the Norelco recorder, we used a prerecorded tape employing standard NARTB recording equaliza-

tion (the NCB Alignment Tape, recorded at 7½ ips). Up to the 10-kc upper limit of the tape, the recorder's response is quite good, except for a distinct rise in low-frequency response. The Ampex 5563-A5 Alignment Tape yielded similar results.

We measured the over-all record/playback frequency response by recording through the RADIO input, at a level 20 db below maximum recording level (the level for which the indicator tube closes). The playback output was measured at the preamplifier output jack, with the tone controls centered (the position for flat response, according to the manual accompanying the recorder). This procedure was performed at all three tape speeds.

The response curves plotted from these tests show a pronounced rolloff of both high and low frequencies, compared to the results obtained with the prerecorded tape. This must be due to deficiencies in the recording equalization, especially noticeable below 100 cps, where the playback equalization is greater than normal, yet the over-all response falls rapidly. The frequency response falls somewhat short of specifications in the instruction manual, although the recorder is usable to over 10 kc at 7½ ips and over 7 kc at 3½ ips. The low-frequency rolloff is not noticeable when using the small internal speaker, but becomes apparent when an external amplifier and good-quality external speaker are used.

To check the performance of the built-in amplifiers, the frequency response to the NCB Alignment Tape was measured at the speaker output,

using a resistive load. It proved to be quite the opposite of the response at the preamplifier output, with a loss of low frequencies, and rising highs. We measured the action of the tone controls at both extremes of rotation. Strangely, there was no detectable boost action at the clockwise limit, merely a 1.5 db increase in over-all level. At the other extreme a drastic rolloff above 200 cps made recorded speech nearly unintelligible.

Intermodulation distortion was measured by recording 60 and 5,000 cps, mixed in a 4:1 ratio. We fed the playback to an IM Analyzer, and the recording level was varied, from indicated maximum downward. The IM proved to be appreciable even 10 db below maximum level. We then measured the IM of the amplifier alone in the PA position of the function selector; this too was high at all outputs. Over most of the frequency range an output of some 5 to 6 watts could be obtained with a fairly undistorted waveshape as seen on an oscilloscope.

The signal-to-noise ratio was measured as 42 db to 48 db, depending on the settings of the recording and playback level controls. The average was -46 db relative to maximum recorded level. This was all hum, with tape noise being far below the hum level. The manufacturer's specification of a 55-db s/n ratio seems rather optimistic for a 4-track machine. We consider the measured 46 db to be excellent for a 4-track recorder, and in fact it is comparable to the s/n ratios of some good-quality two-track recorders.

Stereo crosstalk, rated at -50 db or better, was easily that good at 1 kc. We could not make an accurate measurement, but crosstalk was well below the hum level.

We received a pleasant surprise when we measured wow and flutter, which at 7½ ips were 0.02% and 0.06% respectively. This is the performance one expects of the finest professional machines, and is completely outside the range one measures on home tape machines. At the 3½-ips speed, we found wow and flutter to be only 0.04% and 0.09% respectively. To top it off, at 1½ ips, a speed usually reserved for recording baby's first words or dictating correspondence, the wow and flutter were each only 0.1%.

In sum, although the distortion and over-all frequency response of the Norelco 400 when its internal amplifiers and speaker are used are not as good as its superb tape deck's performance, it is capable of making good-quality stereo or monophonic recordings, and should deliver excellent results when playing commercially recorded tapes through a good-quality pair of external power amplifiers and speakers.

H. H. Labs.

### REPORT POLICY

Most equipment reports appearing in this section are prepared for us by Hirsch-Houck Laboratories, a completely independent organization whose staff was responsible for the original Audio League Reports. Their reports are signed: H. H. Labs. Reports are published exactly as they are received. Neither we nor the manufacturers of the equipment tested are permitted to delete information from or add to the reports, to amend them in any way, or to withhold them from publication. Manufacturers may add a short comment if they wish to do so.

On equipment that demands more subjective appraisals (such as loudspeakers), the reports may be prepared by members of our own staff. Such reports do not carry a signature. The policy concerning report publication and amendment by the manufacturer is the same as that for H. H. Reports.

## Leak "Point One" Stereo Preamp

**SPECIFICATIONS** (furnished by manufacturer): A complete, two-unit stereo amplifier system consisting of a preamplifier-control unit and remote power amplifier.

**POINT ONE STEREO PREAMPLIFIER** provides input selection of five sources, including microphone and two high-level sources. **FUNCTION SWITCH** positions include stereo pickup converted to monophonic, as well as the usual stereo, stereo reverse, either input channel to both speakers. Other controls include rumble filter and ganged bass, treble, and volume controls. Harmonic distortion less than 0.01% at 125-mv output (sufficient load when used with matching Leak power amplifiers). **Price: \$119.50.**

**STEREO 50 POWER AMPLIFIER:** Output: 25 watts per channel. **Hum and noise:** 80 db  $\pm 3$  db below 20 watts. **Frequency response:**  $\pm 0.5$  db 20 to 20,000 cps. Specifically designed to match Leak preamplifiers. **Price: \$199.**

**MANUFACTURER:** Leak. **IMPORTER:** British Industries Corp., 80 Shore Rd., Port Washington, N. Y.

**At a glance:** Though they are sold separately, the Leak "Point One" stereo preamplifier and Stereo 50 power amplifier are so designed that, used together, they form a high-quality stereo amplifying system with ultraconservative design and craftsmanship, of a caliber found on only one domestic make of high-fidelity equipment. However, neither is likely to work well with typical American components. [This drawback has now been corrected. See manufacturer's comment below.—Ed.]

Although the Leak units lack some of the gadgetry and flexibility found in American stereo amplifiers, their electrical performance is generally excellent and their listening quality leaves nothing to be desired.

**In detail:** The "Point One" preamplifier is designed for use with any two Leak mono power amplifiers, or with the Stereo 20 or Stereo 50 power amplifiers. The associated power amplifier supplies the power, and the preamplifier controls it for the entire system. The full rated output from the preamplifier is 0.125 volts, sufficient to drive any Leak power amplifier to full output, but much too low to drive an American amplifier. Since a 4- to 5-



Leak Stereo 50 amplifier.

millivolt signal is required at the magnetic phono or tape head inputs to develop an output of 0.125 volts, the gain of the preamplifier is very low by our standards.



Leak "Point One" preamplifier.

The gain of the power amplifier, however, is much higher than we are accustomed to finding, so that the combination of the two has about as much gain as any comparable combination of American units.

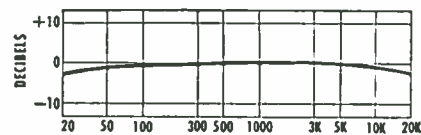
When used with the Stereo 50 power amplifier, a single cable from the preamplifier carries power and signals to the power amplifier. A separate cable carries the AC line voltage into the preamplifier, where it is controlled by the switch on the volume control.

Inputs are provided for a stereo (or mono) pickup, tape heads, microphones, tuner, and one extra high-level input. Level-set controls (ganged for both channels) are provided for phono, tuner, and extra inputs. The Leak amplifier's sensitivity on its nominally high-level inputs is much greater than that of domestic amplifiers: less than 30 millivolts are required for 10 watts output from the Stereo 50 power amplifier when it is used with the "Point One" preamplifier. (This is because most British tuners have relatively low output levels, so it is imperative to adjust the level-set controls properly. Clear instructions are provided for this adjustment.)

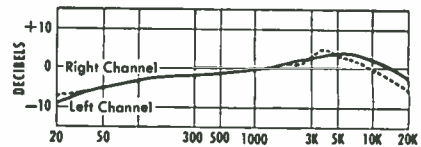
When used with a pair of mono amplifiers, the preamplifier obtains its power from the left-channel amplifier. A separate output jack supplies the signal to the right-channel amplifier. Tape recorder outputs are also provided, ahead of the volume control but after the controls and equalization.

Tone controls are of the feedback type, with boost or cut characteristics hinged at about 200 cps and 3 kc. This type of control is most effective, yet has little or no effect on the middle frequencies. No loudness control is provided, but the tone control characteristics are admirably suited for loudness compensation. An effective rumble filter takes over below 100 cps, leaving most of the program unaffected.

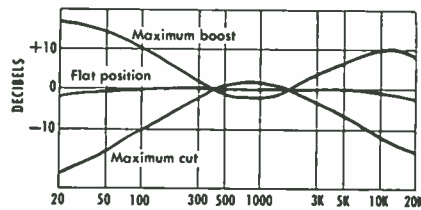
Phono equalization deviates considerably from the RIAA characteristic, and there are significant differences between the two channels. Although the tone controls would be capable of reasonably good compensation for these errors, this is not feasible because



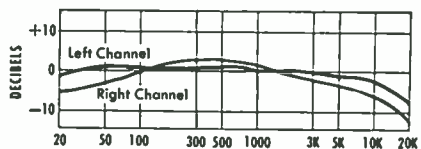
Frequency response: 0 db = 1.0 watt.



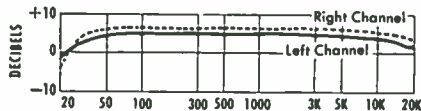
Tape equalization error: NARTB curve.



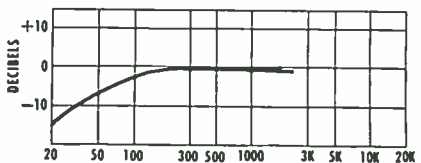
Tone control range.



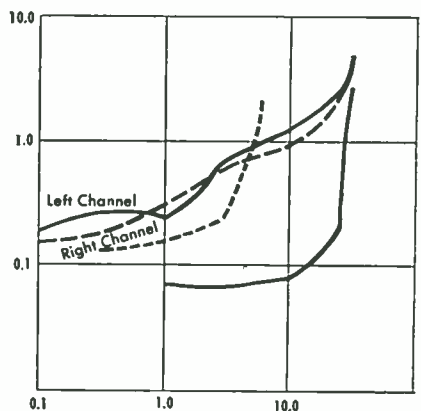
Phono equalization error: RIAA curve.



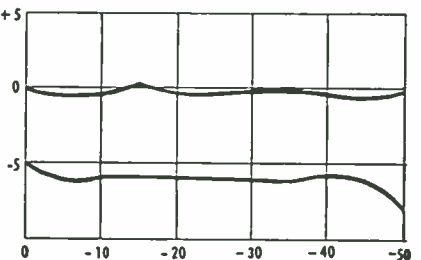
Maximum power output: 0 db = 10 watts.



Effect of rumble filter.



Percent distortion vs. watts: Two top lines, 1M left —, right --; two lower lines, Harmonic 20 cps --, 1 kc —.



Volume control tracking error.





10-kc square wave response . . .

tone controls for both channels are ganged. The tape equalization also departs appreciably from the NARTB playback characteristic, though both channels are well matched. Equalization accuracy is the only aspect of the Leak amplifier that fails to meet the highest performance standards.

The ganged volume control tracks extremely well down to  $-50$  db relative to maximum gain, with only plus or minus  $0.25$  db unbalance. The balance control can cut off either channel completely, while raising the level of the other channel slightly more than  $1$  db. This is a very good design, since it has negligible effect on over-all level when the balance control is adjusted.

Although the preamplifier's IM distortion rises to appreciable levels at outputs higher than a couple of volts, it must be remembered that normally it will never be required to deliver more than  $0.125$  volts. Distortion at that level is masked by hum, but appears to be about  $0.3\%$ , which is very low indeed. At usual operating levels

the distortion contributed by the pre-amplifier would be very difficult to measure, much less hear.

The power amplifier is nominally a dual  $25$ -watt unit, with a pair of EL34 tubes in each channel output stage. The tubes and other components are operated far below their ratings and should give long and trouble-free service. Our tests showed only slight difference between the channels, each of



. . . with .05-mfd capacitive load.

which was capable of an output of at least  $30$  watts. The  $1,000$  cps harmonic distortion was less than the inherent distortion of our test equipment up to  $10$  watts output, and was only  $0.2\%$  at  $25$  watts. The low-frequency power-handling ability of the Stereo 50 was somewhat below its mid-frequency rating, but at levels of a few watts the  $20$  cps harmonic distortion was under  $0.2\%$ .

We measured hum and sensitivity on the combination of preamplifier and power amplifier. Except on the tape input, the hum was entirely in-

audible, being from  $60$  to  $80$  db below  $10$  watts output. The gain is high enough for even low-level magnetic stereo cartridges.

The power amplifier's chief weakness is a tendency toward instability with capacitive loads. The scope sketches show the effect on a  $10$ -kc square wave of a  $0.05$ -mfd capacitor shunting the  $8$ -ohm resistive load. A large capacitance, such as would be presented by certain electrostatic speakers, drastically reduces the high-frequency power output. Our conclusion is that the Leak Stereo 50 should not be used with electrostatic speakers, though it will perform admirably with any conventional speakers including low-efficiency types. The damping factor is high, being in excess of  $20$ .

The construction of the Leak units is superb. All parts are mounted on boards, with neatly cabled wiring. It is the sort of construction one expects to find on the finest laboratory instruments. The power amplifier is large, uncluttered, and well ventilated.

H. H. Labs.

**MANUFACTURER'S COMMENT:** The "Point One" stereo preamplifier has been designed for use only with Leak stereo and monophonic amplifiers. However, the Leak amplifiers may now be used with any American preamplifiers. The Leak Stereo 50 and Stereo 20 amplifiers, and the TL/50 Plus monophonic amplifier are all presently equipped with gain controls, enabling them to function excellently with preamplifiers of other makes. This is a new feature, and was not included at the time of testing. Naturally, all other American stereo components, such as tuners, record changers, turntables, microphones, and tape recorders can be used with Leak equipment and will give full performance in accordance with their own capabilities.

## Empire 88 Stereo Cartridge

**SPECIFICATIONS** (furnished by manufacturer): A dynamagnetic (moving magnet) stereo cartridge, fully compatible with monophonic records and usable in changers. **Frequency response:**  $\pm 2$  db  $20$  to  $20,000$  cycles. **Output voltage:**  $5$  mv per channel. **Load impedance:**  $47,000$  ohms. **Compliance,** vertical and horizontal:  $5 \times 10^{-6}$  cm/dyne. **Tracking force:**  $2$  to  $5$  grams. **Output terminals:** 4. **Prices:** with diamond,  $\$24.50$ ; with sapphire,  $\$18.50$ . **MANUFACTURER:** Audio Empire Division of Dyna-Empire, Inc., 1075 Stewart Ave., Garden City, L. I., N. Y.

**At a glance:** The Empire 88 is a moving-magnet stereo cartridge offering relatively smooth response and good channel separation throughout most of the audio range. Its listening quality is pleasant and free from audible distortion or peaking.

**In detail:** The moving-magnet principle is being adopted by more and more stereo cartridge manufacturers, and the Empire 88 is one of the most recent designs to be offered.

The Empire 88 features an easily replaceable stylus with low moving



The Empire 88 stereo cartridge.

mass and high compliance; it is free from magnetic attraction to turntables, and has low susceptibility to induced hum. Its output is fairly high for a stereo cartridge, being approximately  $6$  millivolts per channel at a stylus velocity of  $5$  cm/sec at  $1,000$  cps.

The cartridge was tested in an "Empire 98" arm. The low-frequency resonance was approximately  $10$  to  $15$  cps. We determined this with the aid of a sweep frequency record covering from  $100$  cps to  $10$  cps. The resonance was very slight, amounting to a broad  $2.5$  db rise, followed by an abrupt falloff below  $10$  cps.

The stereo performance was measured by means of the Westrex 1A test record. The two channels exhibited very similar response characteristics, and were free from sharp peaks. The stereo channel separation was very good up to about  $6$  kc, and adequate even at the higher audio frequencies.

The mono response, with the two outputs paralleled, was very smooth out to well beyond  $16$  kc. The freedom from sharp resonances no doubt contributes to the easy listening quality and low noise level which we observed during listening tests. We found that at least  $4$  grams of tracking force was necessary for clean reproduction of the loudest passages on stereo records. Operated in this way, our general listening impression was of a smooth, well-rounded sound, free from any stridency or shrillness. H. H. Labs.

**MANUFACTURER'S COMMENT:** The Empire 88 "Stereo/Balance" cartridge is truly an outstanding buy among high-fidelity stereo components. This cartridge has excellent stereo

channel separation, extremely wide-range frequency response, with wonderfully clean sound reproduction, as you have determined

in your laboratory tests. The extremely low dynamic mass and unique stylus lever design of the Empire 88 "Stereo/Balance" cartridge

virtually eliminate record or stylus wear, an important fact to consider when purchasing a stereophonic phonograph cartridge.

## Blaupunkt AM-FM-M Auto Radio

**SPECIFICATIONS** (furnished by manufacturer): This transistorized auto radio covers not only the AM broadcast band but also the FM band and a marine band range from 2.15 to 2.75 mc. Two push-button station selectors are provided for FM and two for AM bands. Incorporates tone control. Dimensions: receiver, 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ " wide, 3" high, and 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ " deep, excluding knobs; power pack: 7 $\frac{1}{4}$ " x 3 $\frac{3}{4}$ " x 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ ". Price: \$137.50; cost of installation kit averages \$20, varying according to car model. Auto 2800 aerial: \$8.00. **MANUFACTURER:** Blaupunkt, West Germany. **IMPORTER:** Robert Bosch Corp., 40-25 Crescent St., Long Island City 1, N. Y.

This is a most unusual car radio, in that it provides coverage of the FM band. It is the second such instrument tested by HIGH FIDELITY; both were imports. One American manufacturer makes a converter (a good one, too) but, we believe, this is all the equipment that is available, as far as FM car radio reception is concerned.

The fidelity of the Blaupunkt is above average. Both AM and FM sound much better than we had an-

anticipated; and, if one switches to a larger speaker than the one provided, there is a substantial improvement in the sound. The radio has provision for two speakers, so the second one is no problem.

We tested the Blaupunkt primarily around the Great Barrington area, and on a trip to and from New York City. Although FM reception is very difficult around Great Barrington, and in the Berkshires generally, we were able to receive an FM station—audibly, and not always with sufficient limiting—from forty-five airline miles away, and over a good many intervening hills. Driving to New York, the FM dial became decidedly busy.

The AM section proved to be astonishingly active—not just on the way to New York, but around Great Barrington itself. Lots of stations, good fidelity, an occasional squeal as stations collided with one another.

Let's see . . . the set is compact, can fit almost anywhere. The transistor section is normally attached to the rear of the main tun-



ing section, but can be detached if desired. There are two push buttons on FM and two on AM. They are very easy to set. The fifth push button is for the marine band.

No installation instructions were furnished with the radio. For best results it would be well to have the job done by a competent service man. The set operates on either 6 or 12 volts, positive- or negative-grounded. Care should be exercised here; even though we specified the make of car in which the set was to be used, we had to change the strapping on a transformer to get the necessary positive ground connection.

All in all, this is a very competent auto radio, with interesting extra features (especially for lovers of FM programming) whose value will have to be determined by the prospective user.

## NEWSFRONTS

*Continued from page 111*

batter but she likes good sound and she likes it loud.

When the rig had been put back in working order, we were about to replace the wooden panel that enclosed her tuner and amplifier on a shelf.

"Dah-h-ling, don't put that front thing back on," she said. "Those gadgets—do you call them amplifiers?—look so cheery when the tubes and bulbs and things light up. Kind of like a Christmas tree, don't you think?"

Haydn's *London Symphony* has a playing time of 26 minutes plus or minus 2 minutes and 10 seconds, depending on the orchestra and the conductor. Schumann's *Romances* (Op. 28) takes 4 minutes, plus or minus 48 seconds.

These facts may have little meaning to the average concertgoer but the tape enthusiast who records his own music from FM can save tape and, therefore, money, if he knows the approximate playing time of a specific musical composition.

The playing times of about 1200 classical compositions are now available in a little booklet *Timetable for the Classical Repertoire* (\$2.75). Compiled by William Colbert, who manages a chain of high-fidelity retail outlets under the name Audio Exchange, *Timetable* should also prove useful to concert managers and classical disc jockeys.

In a short, pithy introduction, Colbert points out that many recordists have tapes in their libraries which can accommodate additional short works. Knowledge of time can mean savings in tape, and a more compact library.

Performance time given in the booklet results from averaging out the times of as many performances as the author could find of a given work. In compiling the list, he discovered that orchestral works seldom vary more than plus or minus 10%, whereas solo performances may differ by as much as plus or minus 20%. Because operas are often cut, the performance time may vary greatly. Times of operas which are part of the compilation are set down in parentheses for this reason. Wisely included in the booklet is a table of running times of various tape lengths at different speeds.

Eighteen stereo amplifiers are evaluated in a 64-page book, produced by the American Audio Institute (AAI), Paterson, New Jersey (\$2.50). The booklet is detailed and comprehensive. It contains 128 tables, 574 test ratings and 162 performance curves describing the specific characteristics of the 18 units. Also included is a detailed description of the various tests performed on each amplifier.

The book will appeal to readers of various interests. Engineers who study such factors as control calibration, stereo crosstalk, etc., will find many tables and charts to study. The reader new to high fidelity can gain an education and learn what characteristics to search out in buying equipment. The person who already has a stereo amplifier tested by AAI will learn more about the unit he owns and, perhaps, enjoy its use more by having more knowledge of it.

While the publication is not fancy in terms of appearance or printing, it is packed with knowledge. What it lacks in lavish formality it makes up for in subject matter.

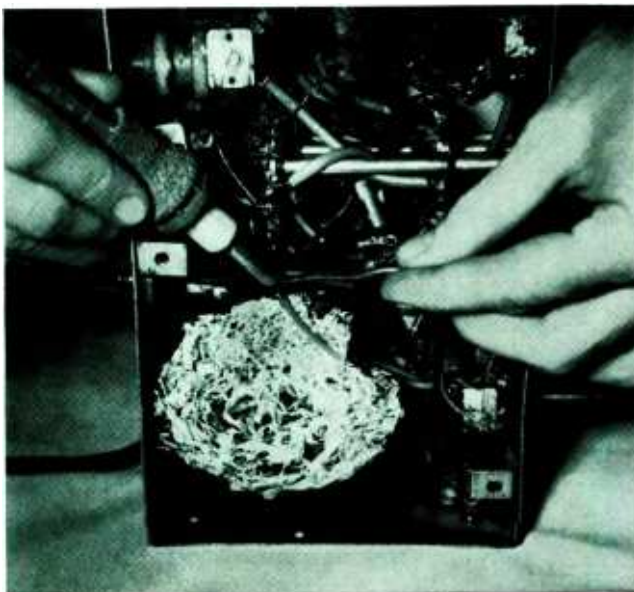
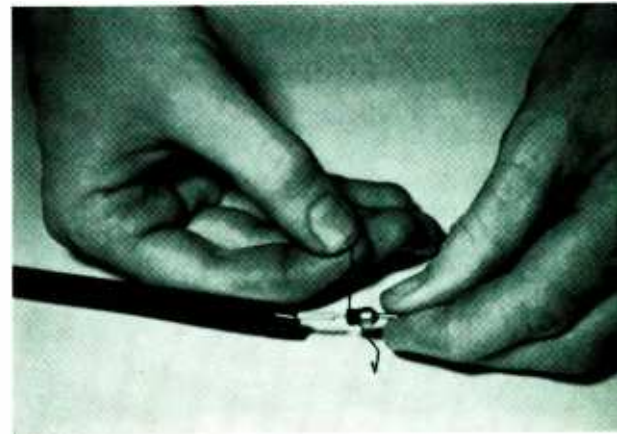
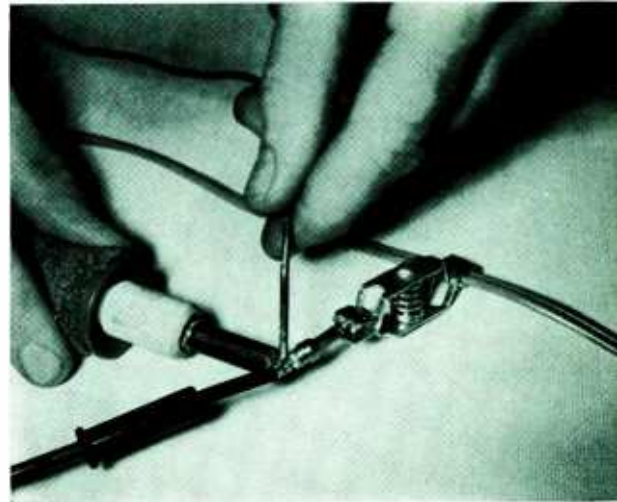
RALPH FREAS





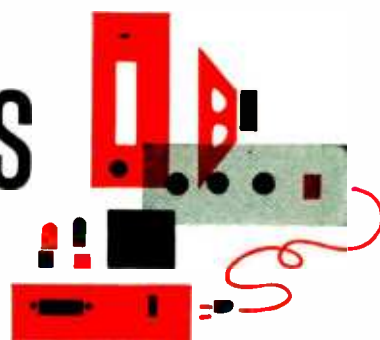
HELPFUL  
HINTS

**T**O PREVENT your FM antenna from splitting and tearing, make a round hole at the base of the V with a paper punch (above). This works just as well where a ribbon TV lead-in is attached to the antenna. (Right) Attach a Mueller B22 dual clip to your soldering iron's power cord, then use it as a vise to hold work firmly while it is being soldered. Clip can be bought for less than 50 cents. (Lower right) When inside-handle threads get stripped off your plastic-handled test prods, wrap tip threads in coarse thread, then screw the handle back in place. (Below) Use aluminum foil to catch metal chips and drops of solder; this way they won't get mixed up in high-fidelity gear, and you'll save yourself a lot of trouble.



# AUDIO NEWS

*A Preview of New Equipment*



## Two German Recorders Introduced

Two models of Harting recorders, made in West Germany, were introduced recently in New York. The Model HM-4 is an all-monophonic record/playback unit with built-in power amplifier and speaker. The HM-4-S includes an additional playback preamp, for stereo playback through a radio or high-fidelity system. An accessory recording preamp converts the HM-4-S to stereo record. Prices are \$264.95 for the all-mono unit, and \$355.95 for the HM-4-S.

## New Line of Harman-Kardon Kits

The Citation I is the first in a new line of Harman-Kardon kit components. The twelve knobs and four slide switches furnish complete control over all preamp and stereo functions, including tape monitor, contour, and phase reverse. Tone controls are step type, separate bass and treble for each channel. A matching power amplifier completes the line of kits, which are also available factory-wired.



## Transcription Arm Has Cuing Device

Fairchild's new transcription arm incorporates a cuing device which permits precise locating of record grooves before lowering the stylus onto the record. Cartridge slide is removable, and there is a spirit level built into the base. Rear overhang is only  $2\frac{3}{8}$  inches; only one hole is needed to mount the arm on turntable or changer. Price: \$34.95.

## To Protect Your Records

A surer, safer method of raising and lowering the pickup on automatic record changers or manually-operated turntables is embodied in the Magic Finger, which supports the pickup during raising and lowering operations. The Magic Finger is easily attached to any turntable base, and does not interfere with normal operation of automatic changers. It is made from styrene and nylon. \$4.95.







### Compact Speaker System by Leonhardt

The LH-80 measures only 11 inches high by 20 wide and 9½ deep, yet is a full-range speaker system with a frequency range stated to extend from 35 to 18,000 cycles. Some models are equipped, at an additional cost of \$8.00, with a frequency range selector which produces an apparent increase in bass response. Without the selector, prices are \$54.95 unfinished and \$59.95 with walnut finish.

### Cartridge with 3 Styli

The Pickering Collectors' Series of cartridges is based upon the Model 380 Stanton Stereo Fluxvalve. Styli are interchangeable, so the Model 380E at \$60 includes three styli: for stereo, LP, and 78s. The 380A includes a single stereo stylus, and sells for \$34.50. It is recommended for transcription arms, whereas the 380C, at \$29.85, is recommended for changers requiring 3 to 7 grams.



### Turntable Has Built-In Stroboscope



To complement its line of stereophonic high-fidelity components, Channel Master has introduced a 4-speed turntable and transcription tone arm, the turntable of heavy cast aluminum, with electronically balanced 4-pole motor. A built-in, illuminated stroboscope provides a continuous check on speed—which can be adjusted by a friction-free eddy-current vernier. The tone arm is nonresonant at all audio frequencies, features a plug-in head and an arm rest shutoff switch. Price: \$64.95; with furniture finished mahogany base, \$79.95.

### For Better Balance in Stereo

To aid in balancing speaker units, Kinematix has developed a twin-signal tone generator. The unit generates a constant tone of 1,000 cycles which can be switched from one amplifier to the other in a stereo system. Balancing can be accomplished quickly by ear but best results are achieved with a balance meter, another Kinematix product. The signal generator, called Twin-Tone, retails for \$12.95.



### Transis-Tronics Offers 2-Year Guarantee

So sure is the manufacturer of the quality of this all-transistor stereo amplifier and preamplifier that it carries a two-year unconditional guarantee of materials and workmanship. Known as the TEC-25, it provides 25 watts continuous per channel as well under 1% harmonic distortion. The preamp section includes full control and switching facilities. May be operated from 110 volts AC or 12 volts DC.

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## NEW GOLDEN AGE

Continued from page 57

even the timeworn melodramatics of *Il Trovatore* fresh and moving, and she has so much vocal facility that the most difficult passage work Verdi ever wrote holds few terrors for her.

These are only three. There are others. There is the wondrously warm Licia Albanese, a singer of marvelous lyric beauty. Her Violetta stands with the finest. There is Victoria de los Angeles, with a voice of crystal, whose Manon and Mélisande and Marguerite in *Faust* are memorable creations, and who can work wonders with Puccini and Verdi as well. There is Zinka Milanov, still capable of the most exquisite singing. There are Leonie Rysanek, Janine Micheau, Ebe Stignani, Nell Rankin, Christa Ludwig, Renata Scotta, Clara Petrella, Giulietta Simionato, Herva Nelli, Rosanna Carteri, Mary Curtis-Verna, Phyllis Curtin. There is, in short, a world of sopranos and mezzo-sopranos, impressive as a group and as individuals. From Aida to Tosca to Marguerite to any role you care to mention, there is more than ample talent available.

Even that trade-mark of the Golden Age, florid coloratura work, has its exponents. Listen to Callas sing Bellini's *I Puritani* or *La Sonnambula*, for example, or Stella the cabaletta following "*Tacea la notte placida*" from *Il Trovatore*, or De los Angeles the Rondo Finale from Rossini's *La Cenerentola*. For pure vocal pyrotechnics play Mado Robin's recording of the Mad Scene from Thomas' *Hamlet* with its fantastic high G, or Rita Streich's rendition of Zerbinetta's aria from *Ariadne*. Closer to home, catch Roberta Peters on a good night doing *Lucia di Lammermoor*, or Lily Pons, a quarter of a century after her debut, singing the "Bell Song" from *Lakmé*.

Grant, if you like, that voices are the essence of opera; if so, opera today can be proud of that essence. And it can boast other distinctions. Even without Toscanini, we can number among contemporary conductors musicians of genuine stature. In recent years house orchestras have enjoyed the direction of men like Tullio Serafin, Fritz Reiner, Herbert von Karajan, Josef Krips, Erich Leinsdorf, Dimitri Mitropoulos, Georg Solti, George Szell—and the list is far from complete. Fifty years ago worship of the virtuoso singer had almost relegated opera to the status of a circus side show; today, it has been restored to music.

Restored, I should say, to music and to drama. Throughout the world opera houses are now quick and alive with

Continued on page 122

# CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

Not so long ago the mahatmas of hi fi were solemnly preaching ancient loud-speaker enclosures that "the bigger the box, the better the sound." Since the advent of stereo, this catch-phrase is no longer heard. The reason, obviously, is purely commercial. The monaural market was able to swallow one big box, but the stereo market couldn't swallow two.

Since necessity is the mother of invention, this situation created a galaxy of new geniuses. Though they had never thought of it before stereo, or even said it couldn't be done, there suddenly appeared a rash of small boxes, even "shelf-size," all with the most astonishing attributes. They were "even better" than their big brothers. Actually, they were nothing more than smaller versions of the same old hass-reflexes and folded-horns with their inevitable boom and distortion.

Some time before this stereo-forced miniaturization, an entirely new, definitive and compact loudspeaker enclosure was invented . . . an invention of such outstanding novelty and merit that fifteen claims . . . all that were asked . . . were allowed by the Patent Office. Equally valuable foreign patents were also granted. The principle was ingenious, logical and scientific, and should appeal at once to anyone who has perception enough to grasp the idea.

The best loudspeaker enclosure is, obviously, the totally enclosed cabinet because it is entirely neutral and neither adds to, nor takes from, speaker performance. Unfortunately, it must be large (20 cubic feet) or the enclosed air acts as a cushion upon cone movement, thereby impairing reproduction. The Bradford Baffle, by its patented pressure relief valve, eliminates this air pressure, and can, therefore, be made compact . . . only a few inches larger than the speaker itself . . . without sacrificing any of the performance values inherent in the large infinite baffle. Furthermore, there is no cabinet resonance, boom or distortion. For these reasons, the Bradford Baffle was and is the only compact cabinet fully equal to, or better than, the large enclosures, either before or after stereo.

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See page 78 for RECORDS IN REVIEW — 1959.

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## NEW GOLDEN AGE

Continued from page 120

the sense of theatre. No longer can managers allow any old set, any old staging. Not more than a few decades ago it would have been unthinkable to give stage directors anything like the free hand recently enjoyed by such nonoperatic craftsmen as Alfred Lunt, Margaret Webster, Cyril Ritchard, and José Quintero. Experienced opera men, like Herbert Graf and Dino Yannopoulos, have eagerly seized upon the new opportunities offered them and revitalized the tiredst war horses. The Metropolitan has even gone to the extent of hiring Japanese theatre people to restage *Madama Butterfly*, with results that are authentic, touching, and beautiful. From *Don Carlo* to *Così fan tutte* the repertoire is being infused with new dramatic cogency. In Europe the situation is even more pronounced, with Gunther Rennert, Wolfgang and Wieland Wagner, Carl Ebert, and Margherita Wallmann wielding unprecedented power.

Again, where during the Golden Age could a designer of the genius of Eugene Berman have found employment? His settings for *Don Giovanni* are superb, and they spring naturally from the growing realization that opera is more than a singing contest. Berman and his colleagues—men of talent and experience like Oliver Messel, Cecil Beaton, Rolf Gerard, Howard Bay, Donald Oenslager, and Horace Armistead—now contribute to a total stage picture that is something more than a painted backdrop in front of which an overdressed soprano and a tenor in tights hurl B flats at one another.

These developments are all to the benefit of opera as an integrated art form, a conception which has communicated itself to performers too. Only rarely now is a singer given a role for which he is physically unsuited. Opera stars keep their weight down, and by and large they can act. There are scores of current performances that are exciting for sheer theatrical effectiveness, above and beyond any vocal resource: Callas as Tosca, Stella as *Butterfly*, Ramon Vinay as *Otello*, Frank Guarrera as *Guglielmo*, Tito Gobbi as *Scarpia*, Nell Rankin as *Princess Eboli*, Boris Christoff as *Boris*, Cesare Siepi as *King Philip*. Against a list like this, the fascinations of a *Mary Garden* take on only an isolated significance.

Finally, keep in mind that the Golden Age derives a good portion of its luster from the polishing process of memory. It was probably not as great an era as its apologists would have us believe. For every Giuseppe

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Audio Products Section

GENERAL  ELECTRIC

JANUARY 1960

de Luca there were a dozen Pasquale Amatos, in fact barely adequate. For every lovely Lina Cavaliere there were a dozen vocally passable ugly ducklings. Remember that Amelita Galli-Curci often sang flat, that Antonio Scotti's acting had to compensate for his singing, that Gigli often displayed the most atrocious taste, that Rosa Ponselle could trill but couldn't handle runs and had a variable sense of pitch. Remember the generally deplorable sets and amateurish acting. Remember, in short, that no age, whatever its grandeurs, is wholly Golden.

All in all, production for production and voice for voice, I would far rather be a subscriber to Rudolf Bing's Metropolitan than to Maurice Grau's or Giulio Gatti-Casazza's. In those days too, in the days of Caruso and Marcella Sembrich and Emmy Destinn and Emma Eames, people were saying, "They don't make singers like they used to." Enjoy your nostalgia for the past, but don't let it blind you to the gold in the present.

## STEREO

*Continued from page 54*

noise level of the system lest they be masked.

5. Appropriate Reproduction Level. It is common for owners of monophonic systems to operate them at levels which to the ear equal or exceed the original sounds. Thereby they seek to bring out all the instruments, to avoid the apparent loss of bass at low levels, and to re-create the vibrancy of the original performance. Are such levels necessary for stereo? Authorities basically agree that the stereo illusion is at maximum when the reproduced level is close to the original one. But this does not mean that the reproduced level has to be fully as loud. And it does not mean that for comparable realism the level must be as loud in stereo as in mono. It means simply that a reasonable approach to the original level makes for the most satisfactory stereo illusion.

## Summary

Stereo, as a means of reproducing the "whole" sound, seeks to impart the sensations of directionality, spaciousness, and solidity. The illusion it creates is the aural equivalent of a three-dimensional image, possessing a high degree of definition. For the maximum in realism, stereo, like mono, depends upon low noise, low distortion, wide and smooth frequency response, wide dynamic range, and a level of reproduction similar to that of the original sound.

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## THE PAVILION

Continued from page 44

conditions, but I've found a way to recall him to order, by threatening to plant cabbages instead of flowers. . . ."

Peppina's garden still flourishes, a row of roses and other flowers along the western side of the house, just outside the two master bedrooms. As I looked at the orderly flower beds, I



thought also of other passages in her letters and in Verdi's, describing their life at the villa.

"I get up at five and go out after quail," the composer wrote to a friend in the late 1850s. "I fire a few rounds at the birds, who are not so foolish as to fall into the net. We eat lunch; I take a look at the workmen; I nap a little from one until two; afterwards we tend to household matters and write letters; we dine and take a walk until nightfall, then home again, a little chat, and then to bed . . . to rise the next morning at five. But now there is so much going on, it's impossible to be bored."

But domestic life at Sant' Agata was not always serene. When I walked past the lake again, I recalled an incident described by Peppina in a letter to Countess Maffei (July 18, 1869):

"Thank God, it's all over. And since it is, there's no use in my trying to make a palpitating-tragic description of it. But you must know that the *mud puddle*, the infamous mud puddle, was very nearly converted into our tomb. The old proverb is right when it says never trust dead water. Verdi was in the boat and was holding out his hand to help me step down into it. I planted one foot in the boat, and as I was setting down the other, the boat overturned and down we both went to the bottom of the lake, really, the bottom! Verdi—thanks to God, to chance, or to his presence of mind—feeling the boat lightly touch his head, was able to raise his arm and strongly push back that kind of sepulchral lid. This movement somehow helped him to stand up, and in



this position, with incredible vigor, assisted by Corticelli, he extracted me from the water, where I was lying, unable to move, held down by my silk dress, frightfully swollen. . . . I can't tell you the alarm and despair of my poor sister. . . . I was about to lose my senses, when I opened my eyes and found myself supported by Verdi's arm. He was standing there with the water up to his neck. . . . It was only later that I learned what had happened, and then I was seized with terror, thinking of Verdi and the consequences that this sad and involuntary bath could have had for him and for art. . . . Tell Giulio [Ricordi] about the incident . . . but for Heaven's sake, save us from the newspapers and their false exaggerations."

Though the character of the villa is Verdi's, the house is also filled with the unique personality of Peppina, that rare mixture of strength and submission. When I stepped back into the bedroom, I thought of her death. Verdi died away from Sant' Agata, in his hotel room in Milan, but Peppina died here, in her own room, on a cold winter afternoon in November 1897—just the time of year that she hated in the country. And on a foggy morning, at dawn, her body was carried out of the villa—"no flowers, or delegations, or speeches," her will had specified—to be buried in Milan.



Even when he was away from Sant' Agata, as he was much of the time, Verdi had the house always on his mind, harassing his agents with letters and instructions.

*Continued on next page*



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**THE PAVILION**

*Continued from preceding page*

"Have them cut whatever poplars are necessary for wood and building," he wrote from Paris in 1866, "but give an account of it, both its quality and the quantity, to Dr. Carrara. From your letters I understand that you have not been working Milord much, and that you haven't broken the colt. I do not like this, because the horses won't stay in good health or else they will become fat and heavy like Rossi's. I also want my horses to eat the hay from S. Agata. I trust also that you are taking care of the compost heap, which is very important to me. . . .

"What are the workmen doing?"

"What are the masons doing?"

"Where has Carlo gone?"

"Where has Ettore gone?"

"Write me at once. Addio."

And in his will, Verdi enjoined: ". . . my heiress to maintain in their present state the garden and my house in Sant' Agata, asking her also to maintain the lawns around the garden in their present state."

The day I was there, last September, a troop of gardeners were busy raking leaves, sweeping the pebbled paths, trimming trees; and inside the house, where I sat for a while to sip coffee with the family and pat the dogs, there was a sound of rugs being beaten and vacuum cleaners in operation. Signorina Carla explained: "My mother and sister and I have been away for a few weeks in the North, and today we're giving the house a good turning out. I'm afraid I've had to speak to the housekeeper . . . . If you leave a house alone, even for a short time—you know how it is."

I had never seen a house in better order, and Verdi's ghost has nothing to worry about. Ettore, Carlo, and Milord have gone to their reward, and there are no horses left to eat the hay of Sant' Agata. But the workmen are there, and they are hard at work—as Il Maestro would expect them to be.



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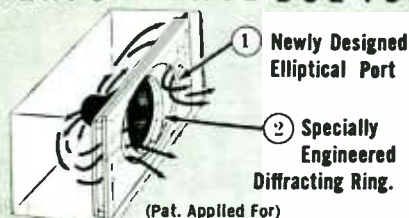
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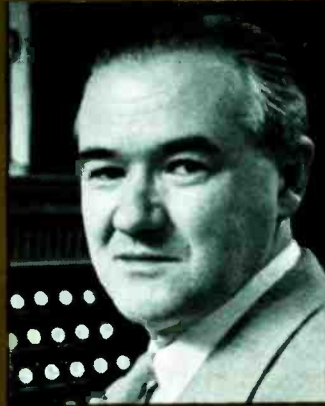
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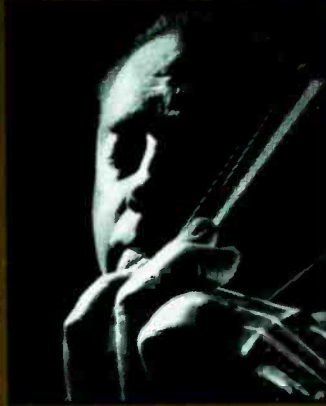
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