

# HIGH FIDELITY

MARCH 1970 60¢

*Samuel Lajon* ✓

**LAB TEST REPORTS**

BSR S44 Changer

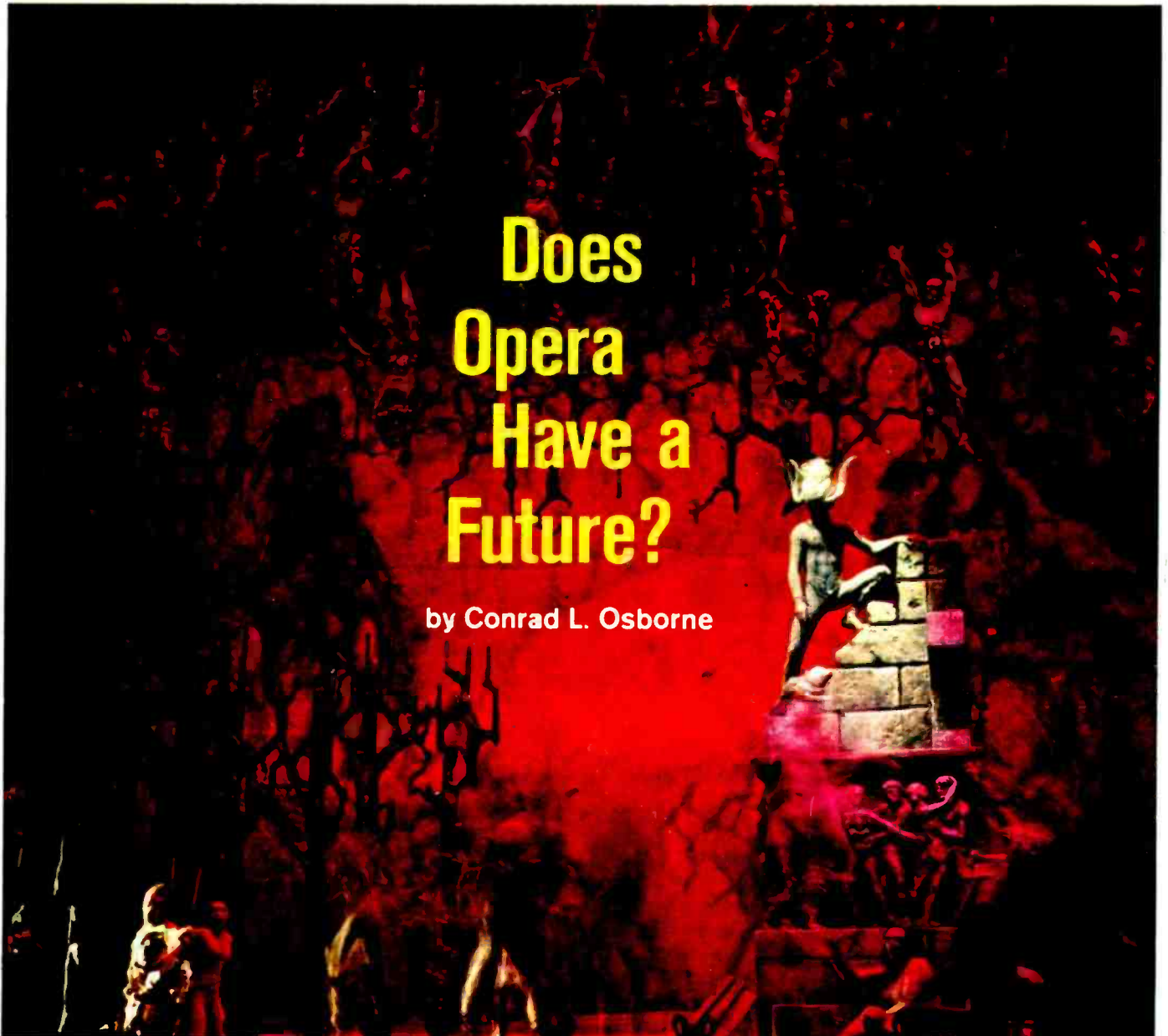
Quad's New Amp and Preamp

ADC's Latest \$100 Speaker

## How to Shop for a Stereo Compact Improve Your Sound with an Extra Woofer Musical Parodies on Records

### Does Opera Have a Future?

by Conrad L. Osborne



# The Fisher 500-TX has made its own tuning knob obsolete.



# Push-button electronic tuning without moving parts is more convenient, more accurate, and more foolproof than tuning by hand. (No matter how many meters or scopes you use!)

If you saw Audio magazine's review of the Fisher 500-TX 200-watt AM/FM-stereo receiver, you may have been surprised, and maybe a bit confused, by a statement that was made about our AutoScan® electronic tuning.

We quote Audio: "AutoScan is probably more accurate in tuning to center of desired channel than can be accomplished manually."

At this point in history, when other receivers are offering two and three tuning meters, oscilloscopes, words that light up, and various other devices to help you tune in stations more accurately, we thought you might like to know why we at Fisher are putting simplified push-button tuning into all our best receivers. And how our push-button tuning is more accurate than anybody's manual tuning, including our own.

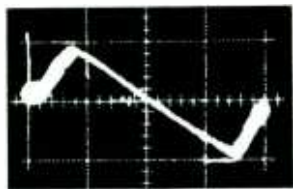
**For the moment, disregard its convenience.**

**Diode tuning is dead-accurate, instantly.**

AutoScan (as well as our Tune-O-Matic push-button memory tuning) is a purely electronic tuning system. There are no moving parts. Instead, devices called varactor diodes are used to lock in stations at their most powerful, most distortion-free tuning point. We again quote Audio:

"Station lock-in is flawless. That is, when the AutoScan stops on a station it stops on the exact 'center' of that channel.

"The photograph shows the detector 'S' curve obtained using the AutoScan and letting it 'home in' on our signal. Note that it locked in on the precise center of the curve. This test, by the way, is far more severe than would be encountered in normal station selection because of the extremes of modulation we employed."



Now comes the question of how important this degree of tuning accuracy is to you. Can you hear it?

We believe you can. There's a subtle distortion that creeps into complex orchestral material, at every

volume level, when an FM station isn't precisely tuned. If you've ever tried to listen to an FM concert, and felt somewhat unsatisfied with the sound as compared to records or tape, it could be a tuning problem. No tuner or receiver can be manually tuned as accurately as the Fisher 500-TX (as well as the Fisher 450-T) with AutoScan. Our engineers estimate that tuning accuracy is at least ten times greater with AutoScan than with manual tuning.

Also, AutoScan accuracy requires no warm-up. Stations can be locked in instantly, as soon as the receiver is switched on. That's important, because even some of the best manual tuning systems can't be

tuned with reasonable accuracy until the circuits are stabilized, after the tuner has been on for twenty minutes or so.

**AutoScan is so automatic — does it take the fun out of tuning?**

Everyone who has ever used the AutoScan mechanism has found it to be a more enjoyable way to tune than any other they've tried.

Here's how AutoScan tuning is accomplished:

Press one of the AutoScan buttons and you automatically bring in the next station, right or left, on the dial. (Even far-off stations that are marginal or completely impossible to tune in manually on other good receivers, are brought in loud and clear, automatically, by AutoScan.) Keep your finger on the button and the AutoScan will scan the entire FM band, station by station. There's nothing further for you to do but enjoy the parade of perfectly tuned-in stations filing before you. Stop when you hear what you like.

For added convenience, a remote control option is available. You can work the AutoScan from your favorite chair.

Of course, for the psychological benefit of those who still want to tune manually, the Fisher 500-TX also has ultra-smooth flywheel tuning, complete with an accurate tuning meter. And, in addition to AutoScan automatic tuning, and manual tuning, the 500-TX has still another tuning convenience called Tune-O-Matic®.

**A button for each of your favorite FM stations.**



Tune-O-Matic is another form of diode tuning. It has no moving parts, and works completely electronically, just like AutoScan.

However, Tune-O-Matic is actually a simple computer with a memory. You program each of the Tune-O-Matic push buttons with the frequency of a favorite FM station. After that, you just push the button that corresponds to the station you want to hear, and that station will be locked in immediately. Perfectly tuned to center-of-channel of course.

Tune-O-Matic push-buttons can be re-programmed (set for a different station) anytime, in a matter of seconds.

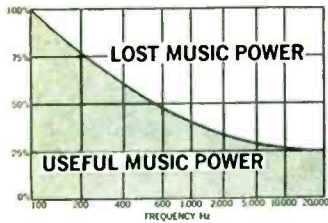
Tune-O-Matic is also available in a lower-cost Fisher receiver, the new Fisher 250-TX.

**Fisher receivers pull in more stations than equally sensitive, competitive receivers.**

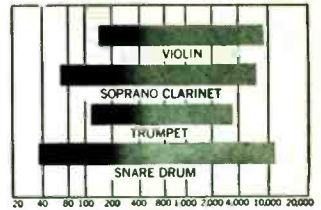
**Why?**

**Open the flap for more information about all the new Fisher receivers.**

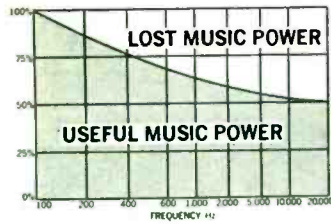
A new concept **100% MUSIC POWER<sup>®</sup>**



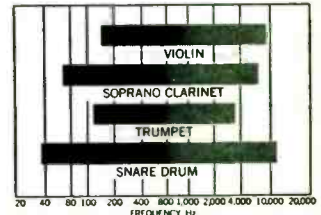
**CARTRIDGE "C"**  
at 25% Music Power



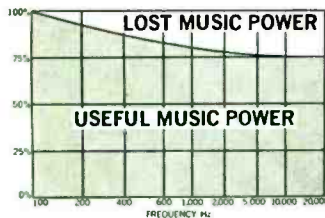
... a serious loss of definition occurs: because cartridge "C" has completely lost 75% of the Music Power at the higher frequencies.



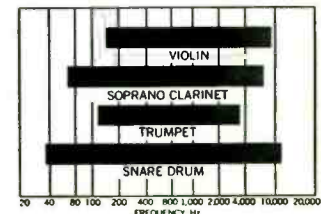
**CARTRIDGE "B"**  
at 50% Music Power



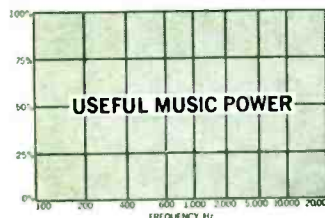
... in this case you lose definition of tone and instruments: because cartridge "B" loses as much as 50% at higher frequencies.



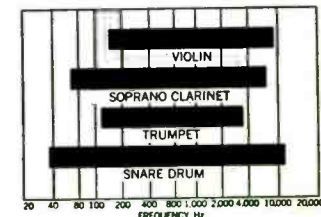
**CARTRIDGE "A"**  
at 75% Music Power



... the instruments seem a little faded in the upper frequencies: because cartridge "A" attenuates higher frequencies as much as 25%.



**XV-15**  
at 100% Music Power



... the instruments, all of them, are distinct and clear throughout the entire fundamental frequency range.

**With the Pickering XV-15 Cartridge You Get 100% Music Power — You Hear It All!**

Only Pickering's XV-15 series of cartridges features 100% Music Power. With the Pickering, a harp sounds like a harp, a trumpet has the biting sound that you expect from a brass instrument, the flute has a rich romantic tone, the orchestra is the full-throated instrument the composer called for. So choose Pickering — and make the enjoyment of 100% Music Power a part of your life.

**PICKERING**

For those who can **HEAR** the difference



THE NEW PICKERING XV-15/750E. PREMIER MODEL OF THE XV-15 SERIES. TRACKS AT 1/2 TO 1 GRAM. DYNAMIC COUPLING FACTOR OF 750 FOR USE IN FINEST TONEARMS. \$60.00. OTHER XV-15 CARTRIDGES FROM \$29.95. PICKERING & CO., PLAINVIEW, L.I., N.Y. CIRCLE 43 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

# HIGH FIDELITY

VOL. 20 NO. 3 MARCH 1970

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# Ford, Rockefeller, and Acoustic Research

DEAR READER:

In the 1970 edition of the *Musical America Directory* (known to insiders as *MAD*), Gene Bruck outlines the proposals he made on commission to the Rockefeller Foundation regarding aid to composers of serious music. He mentions a series of surveys the Foundation financed, which included a questionnaire and interviews with hundreds of American composers. It should come as no surprise that almost to a man they insisted on recordings as the most important channel of their music's dissemination. Neither publication nor live performance could compare in the composers' esteem and affection.

Thousands of contemporary recordings have of course been made, though most are now deleted. One of Bruck's proposals in fact suggested that a fund be established to finance an overrun of recordings of contemporary American composers' works, to keep them available for at least twelve years (the time needed for colleges—the greatest market for such esoteric material—to include them in their curricula). Another suggestion would aid colleges in making and distributing their own recordings—sort of an aural University Press—with the composers themselves approving the quality of the performances.

Meanwhile Acoustic Research, the audio-equipment manufacturer, has initiated its own program of aid to contemporary composers [see "AR and the Now Composers," *News & Views*, HF, November 1969] by financing a recording project with an eye to broadcasting at least a season of FM radio shows of new serious music.

Both the Rockefeller and AR plans call for a disinterested committee of experts—fellow composers, college personnel, altruists—to determine what music gets recorded. In other words, theoretically the decision-makers have no personal financial stake in their decisions. Fine and dandy. This has been the traditional stance of American charity.

Now along comes the Ford Foundation with a completely opposite attitude. Let whoever has a financial stake in the music make the decision, says Ford. That would be the publisher. Then let the publisher interest a record company in recording the music, just as in commercial recordings. In fact, let it be a commercial recording. Ford will help, to the tune of up to \$7,500 per LP, for artists' fees and studio costs. But the record company will have to bear the cost of pressing, distributing, and promoting the album. In order to ensure the publisher's financial commitment, he will have to really publish the work—not just add a copyright notice and mail two Xeroxes plus a registration fee to Washington, but go to the expense of printing copies and making them publicly available. Thus, presumably, decisions will be made with a market in mind, with the consumer rather than the insulated producer eventually determining what music gets disseminated. The Ford plan requires record companies to keep the recordings in their catalogues for only two years, which might tend to discourage colleges from including worthy though commercially unsuccessful works in their courses, but otherwise I think the plan has exciting potential.

But if only Ford and Rockefeller had shared their thoughts!

\* \* \* \* \*

Next month we will devote a major portion of HF to turntables and record changers, surveying the field, giving shopping advice, and pointing out **THE CHALLENGE OF THE CHANGERS** to the once complete hegemony of the manual turntable in the quality field. Also, since most of you have seen ads or demonstrations of record players running upside down—to show how well the arm is balanced—we will present a feature to tackle the question **HOW IMPORTANT IS A LEVEL TURNTABLE?** The answer may surprise you. Our main music article will be the third part of our continuing Beethoven discography, **BEETHOVEN'S STRING QUARTETS**, about which I will have more to say in next month's letter.

Leonard Marcus

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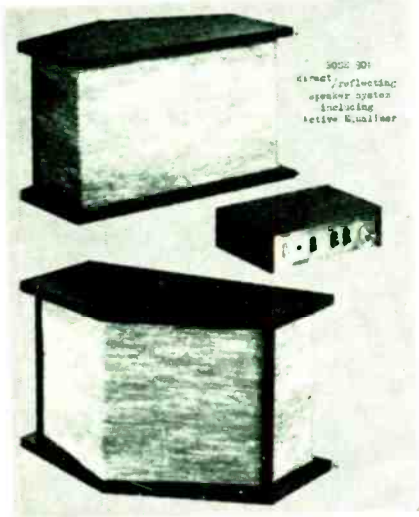
# The rave reviews keep coming...

from the **AMERICAN record guide**, December 1969

## SOUND IDEAS

An Equipment Review

By LARRY ZIDE



Bose 901 Speaker System

**T**HERE IS a great deal of advance interest in this report—and not without reason, as you will see.

Bose is a relatively new company, and the 901 is its one and only product. This is a "system" in every sense of the word, because the model number actually includes two speaker units plus an electronic control that goes between your preamp and amp. (It can also be hooked up to the tape monitoring circuits, and will provide switching for a tape recorder in addition to fulfilling its own primary functions. More about these presently.)

The two speaker enclosures are marked for left and right channels. At first glance you might think that they are meant for corner placement only, though this is hardly the case. They are not very large—only about 19" wide across the flat front and 13" deep.

Yet inside each box are nine small high-quality speakers! Eight face the rear, via the two faces of the pointed side. The ninth faces forward, in the upper left of the left speaker and upper right of the right speaker. The frequency spectrum

and strength are divided among the speakers so that each gets fundamentally the same. The enclosure is intended to be free-standing, some distance from a wall. The eight rear speakers act as dispersers, serving mostly to reflect sound from the wall. Only the ninth or forward speaker localizes sound, in particular for the poorly-reflected highs. The net effect is intended to be an impression of wide sound dispersion over a broad plane (as in a concert hall) which nevertheless preserves the localizing information of stereo.

It works!

The Bose 901 is, indeed, one of the finest speaker systems it has ever been my pleasure to hear. I have lived with it now for several months, so that I am quite sure of what I say. I have long believed in the value of wide sound dispersion, and this system amply provides it.

Dispersion notwithstanding, it is the sound itself that remains paramount. The 901 is characteristically smooth. Everything is simply *there*. At high frequencies the ear indeed tells you that the

frequency is there, but you do not have any "beaming" effect as with direct radiators. The bass is smooth down to my room's resonance at 34 Hz, with a smooth rolloff below. And there is useful output to about 25 Hz, which is plenty low enough.

In part the 901 achieves its excellent bass response by means of a boost circuit in the control box. This places an enormous strain on a power amplifier of marginal power. And 60 watts may prove to be marginal! I would say that to use the Bose 901 at its full potential demands an amplifier that can provide at least 50 or 60 watts at 50 Hz and below. Less than that will cause you to hear some audible bass distortion (caused by the amplifier clipping) at very high listening levels in large rooms. In any case I think that so fine a speaker would be simply wasted on amplifiers that can provide only 20-25 watts per channel.

The control box provides a useful degree of speaker tuning. It does serve to compensate the speaker against room acoustics, but it will do more. If you have a bright (or dull) cartridge and a tape recorder that is flat, they will not sound alike with equally good material. The high-frequency control can be used to (subtly) boost or cut highs in such a way as to equalize a bright cartridge. I have used this to compare more accurately the relative sound of cartridges, and it is effective.

But back to the sonic quality per se. I would have expected that all this reflected sound might have a bad effect on the sharpness of transients. Not so. The 901 is quite crisp in its attacks. When the music stops, so does the speaker.

But you really have to hear music from the best sources (such as master tapes) to appreciate all the virtues of this extraordinary system. True, at a price of \$476.00 for the pair its virtues may not be for everyone. And perhaps I have failed (I suspect that I *have* failed) to give a clear picture of its special qualities. I urge that you listen for yourself. I think you will have to agree that Bose has, in a single giant step, produced one of the finest speaker systems ever made.

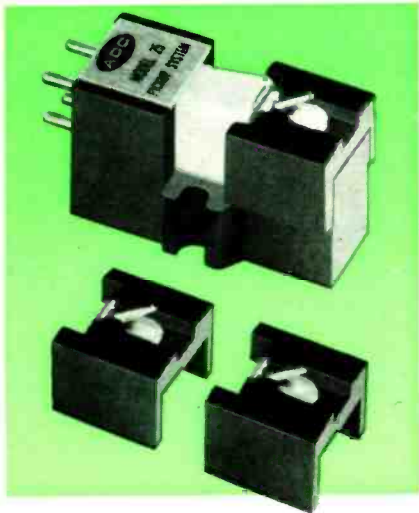
You can hear the difference now.

THE **BOSE** CORP.

East Natick Industrial Park, Natick, Massachusetts 01760

CIRCLE 9 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

# THE LITTLE PERFECTIONIST. ONLY \$100.



Not all records are created equal. And now Audio Dynamics has done something about it. We've hand-crafted the world's only 3 stylus cartridge. It allows you to custom match the cartridge to each record in your collection, simply by selecting the optimum stylus assembly.

The ADC 25 represents the "state of the art"—the ultimate refinement of Audio Dynamics' induced magnet principle.

With all this, the ADC 25 naturally costs a little more than most other cartridges, but for audiophiles \$100.00 is a small price to pay for perfection.

If money is an object, buy the ADC 26. It is the same cartridge, but with one elliptical stylus. You can always add one or both of the other 2 styli later.

#### SPECIFICATIONS ADC 25 STEREO PICKUP SYSTEM with GRAIN ORIENTED DIAMOND STYLUS\*

Type . . . Induced magnet  
Sensitivity . . . 4 mv at 5.5 cms/sec.  
recorded velocity  
Tracking force range . . . 1/2 gram to  
1 1/4 grams  
Frequency response . . . 10 Hz to  
24,000 Hz  $\pm$  2 db  
Channel separation . . . 30 db from 50  
Hz to 10 KC  
20 db from 12,000 Hz to 24,000 Hz  
Compliance . . . 40 x 10<sup>-6</sup> cms/dyne  
Vertical tracking angle . . . 15 degrees  
Recommended load impedance . . .  
47,000 nominal ohms  
Price . . . \$100.00 suggested resale  
Replacement Styli . . . #251, #252,  
#253

\*For substantially increased stylus life



## AUDIO FOR AUDIOPHILES

CIRCLE 6 ON READER SERVICE CARD

## letters

### New York Lives

Gene Lees would have the naïve believe that culture in New York is dead ["New York City—R.I.P.," November 1969], and cites the following as evidence: 1) the record industry has left; 2) so have Johnny Mandel, Henry Mancini, and Antonio Carlos Jobim; 3) Broadway is dying; 4) live jazz is dead; 5) you can't get a ticket to the Met; 6) the "heart of the city," including restaurants, bars, music shops, and recording studios, has been torn down.

I haven't mentioned Mr. Lees's clever remarks about the telephone system, the traffic situation, etc., because I can't imagine these as being relevant to anyone's (even Mr. Lees's) definition of culture. True, if you share Mr. Lees's extraordinarily narrow view of what constitutes "culture" in New York, then you can go off to Detroit or Miami (the latter "swings hard") and groove. Most of us, however, are remaining in New York and loving it.

New York is the undisputed world center of art and dance. Now I know HF is a music magazine, but if Mr. Lees can include restaurants and Broadway in his definition of culture, then I think I can include art and dance in mine. There is more symphonic music offered in New York than in any other city in the United States (probably the world). Some of us, believe it or not, prefer a live concert to records. Besides, can't Mr. Lees also hear his jazz and Henry Mancini on disc "a hundred miles out in the bush?" True, it's difficult to get tickets for the Metropolitan Opera. But if you're an opera nut, you might wait in line, or, heaven forbid, step next door to the City Opera, or hop on the subway and hear the Amato Opera in Brooklyn, or go to Juilliard, or . . . Yes, Broadway is dying. Long live the Off-Broadway of Joseph Papp's Public Theater, of Circle in the Square, and numerous others.

In short, there's more culture in the two square blocks of Lincoln Center (the real cultural heart of the city—not because of its "palaces," but because of the terrific things going on within them) than in all the cities Mr. Lees mentions put together.

Mr. Lees needs to open his eyes and ears to some of the other arts, not just the "pop" arts he seems to think constitute the cultural life of New York. Maybe then he wouldn't find the city such a dull place after all.

Andrew Beecher  
New York, N.Y.

### Thanks From a Former Prisoner

It is now several months since I returned to Berlin, and I am gradually reading all the documents of assistance and friendship which contributed so much to help me during those difficult

months in prison. I came upon the December 1968 issue of HIGH FIDELITY with your kind article ["New Hope for Isang Yun"], and I should like to thank you very sincerely; I am quite convinced that the many voices from the free world helped to save me from a hard and undeserved fate.

The only way for me to show my gratitude is to go on working as a composer, hoping that I may succeed and so to prove my good will to all those who were kind and faithful to me.

Isang Yun  
Berlin, Germany

### Poor Man's Opera

Elizabeth Bessaraboff's "Poor Man's Glossary of Musical Terms" ["Letters," October 1969] has inspired me to submit a list of operatic puns.

*Ernani*—What Mary Poppins was to little Jane.

*Un Ballo in maschera*—A Helena Rubenstein bash.

*Die Frau ohne Schatten*—Margo Lane splits with Lamont Cranston.

*Nabucco*—Acronym for the National Bucket Company.

*Carmen*—Henry Ford, Barney Olds, et al.

*Aida*—Cannibal's repast.

*Götterdämmerung*—A house painter's first words after a two-story fall.

*Thäis*—What one does to shoelaces.

*Love for Three Oranges*—What one gets in a glass of Tropicana O.J.

*Boris Godunov*—The verdict offered by the Boyars in turning down the false Dmitri.

*La Bohème*—Or how the Albert clarinet system vanished.

Melvin Rosenberg  
Roslyn, N.Y.

### Mahler's Tenth

While I share Robert C. Marsh's high opinion of the new Kubelik recordings of Mahler's Sixth and Tenth Symphonies [December 1969], I must object to his apparently innocent statement that "the text of the Tenth Symphony played here is, of course, the old one . . ." Which "old one?"

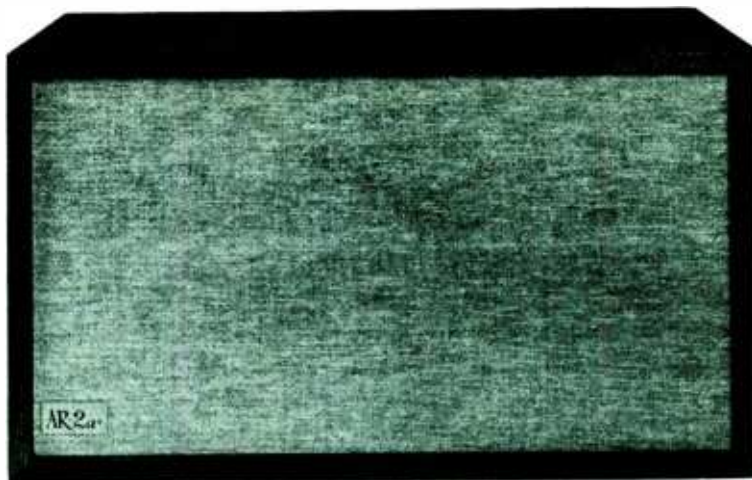
There is a score, published by Associated Music Publishers, of two movements (the same opening movement Kubelik plays, and a demonic scherzo). This score "reads" like the one used by George Szell in his Cleveland recording for Epic. It is *not*, apparently, the edition used by Kubelik, whose performance differs from it in the following ways: 1) the first violins play the fifth and sixth bars after No. 1 an octave lower than the score indicates; 2) an A sharp rather than F sharp is played in the first violin melody two bars after No. 5; 3) wind parts are omitted in bar

Continued on page 10

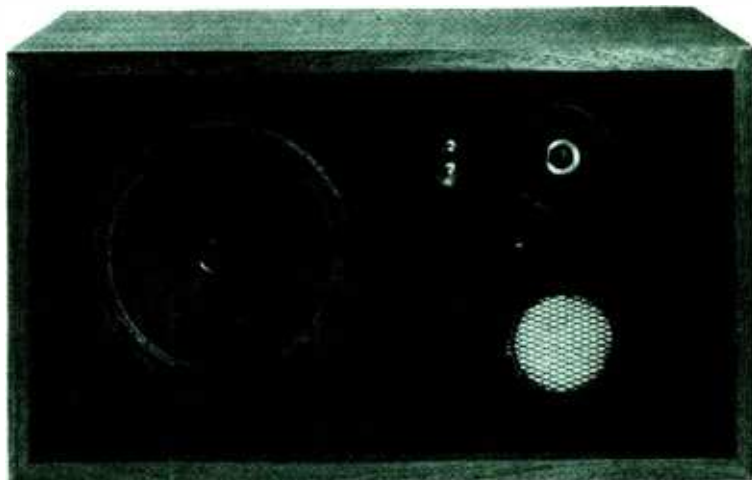
HIGH FIDELITY MAGAZINE



# The AR-2aX: an evolutionary new speaker system.



1970 AR-2aX



1964 AR-2aX



1959 AR-2a



1958 AR-2

The AR-2 series of speaker systems made by Acoustic Research has long been considered a standard of high-fidelity performance where cost requirements made technical compromise necessary. The best speaker system in the series, the AR-2aX, was the result of a series of refinements of the original AR-2. The most important such change has probably been the conversion of the older unit to a three-way system.

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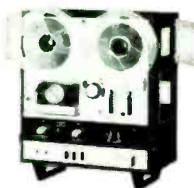
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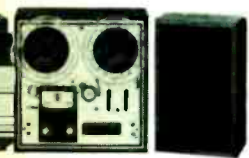
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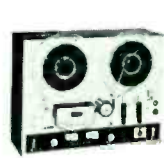
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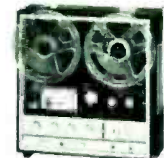
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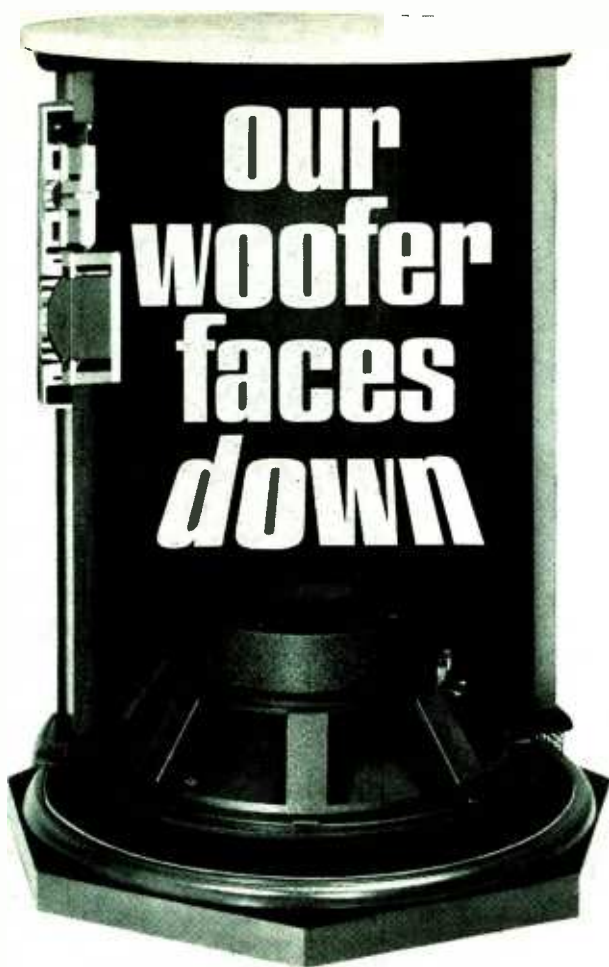
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CIRCLE 28 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

## LETTERS

Continued from page 6

5 and the first three beats of bar 6 after No. 2, between Nos. 3 and 4 (the stopped horns *may* be playing two bars after No. 3—it's difficult to tell from the recording), bars 3 to 8 after No. 20, bars 1 to 4 after No. 21, and bars 1 to 4 after No. 30; 4) the bassoons are omitted one bar before No. 10, and the bassoons and trombones two bars before No. 17.

With the exception of items 1 and 2, I find all of Kubelik's additions much to the work's advantage. The question is, are they additions or do they represent yet another edition? Under these circumstances Mr. Marsh's statement that "this orchestration is almost entirely Mahler's work . . ." requires some elaboration. Enlightenment, anyone?

Paul Turok  
New York, N.Y.

### Seasoned Electronics

I have news for Paul Lewinson ["Letters," December 1969], who complained that "the music of the future will be produced by teenyboppers who have graduated from kindergarten rhythm toys to the home electronic workshop." Most composers interested in and creating electronic music are not youngsters, but well-seasoned musicians. I, for instance, am a composer and composition teacher at a university and I am in my late fifties. Though I have not yet actually tried my hand at electronic music, I have guided some students in this direction and still intend to investigate the medium myself on a small scale.

Violet C. Severy  
Morehead, Ky.

### Mancini in Philadelphia

I was thoroughly disgusted and disappointed to read Robert W. Schaaf's unfair review of Henry Mancini's "Debut" album with the Philadelphia Pops Orchestra on RCA [December 1969]. In the past, both Morgan Ames and Gene Lees have given more accurate judgments of Mancini's music which is definitely in a class by itself—I'm sure his work deserves a place next to George Gershwin's in the American repertoire. We are indeed lucky to have someone who can compete so successfully with the trash turned out by the "beat generation."

Earl H. Swen  
Schiller Park, Ill.

### Monteverdi's Madrigals

In a report from London ["Behind the Scenes," November 1969] Edward Greenfield wrote about a Philips project to record Monteverdi's complete madrigals on sixteen discs. The description of the contents of each disc indicates miracles of compression and expansion. Book

Continued on page 12

HIGH FIDELITY MAGAZINE

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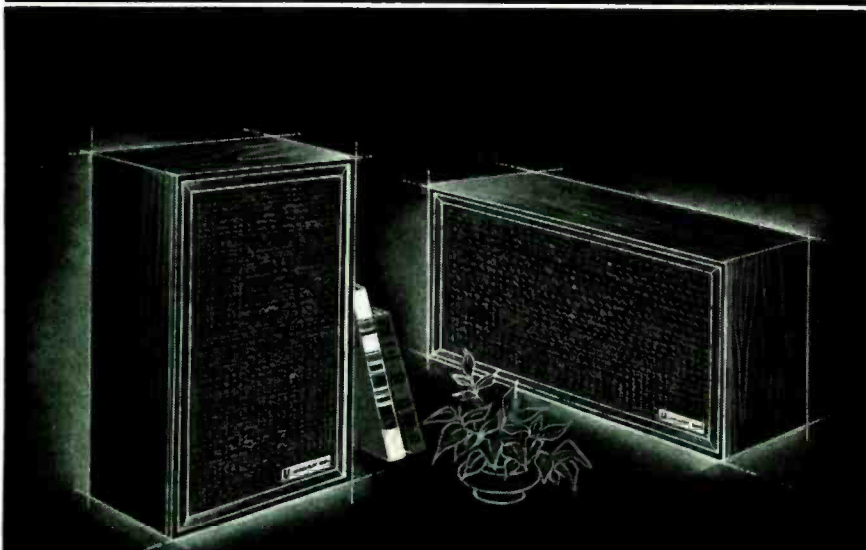
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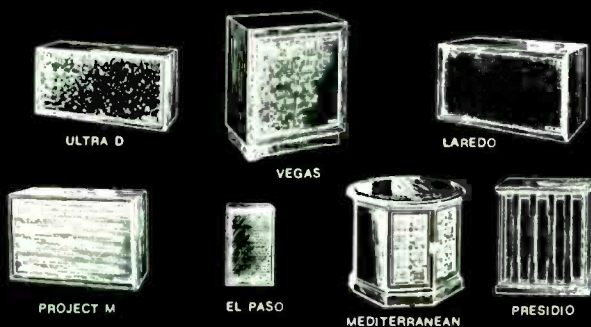
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## LETTERS

*Continued from page 10*

Four would certainly fill a single disc to overflowing—it took four sides for Marcel Couraud's excellent group of madrigalists on Discophile Français. How Books Seven and Eight could each fill six sides baffles me. After all, Book Seven takes up 214 pages and Book Eight 348 pages in the Malipiero edition. This leaves nine records for the remaining 762 pages. Surely this information must be incorrect.

We are also told that Raymond Leppard was directing a full five-part chorus in the madrigal *Voi pur da me partite* and that the recording ended with a "plink" from the harpsichord. Plink, indeed! Monteverdi did not provide a basso continuo part for this madrigal and one should certainly not be added.

Even more disturbing is the performing group—a full five-part chorus. Monteverdi wrote this and all his madrigals for one voice to a part. The recordings of choirs singing Monteverdi madrigals that do exist prove that using a chorus for this music would be the equivalent of asking sixteen string players to perform a Haydn quartet. On top of this we are told that Raymond Leppard has brought together young singers to form a new choral group. If any music needs the team training and discipline only achieved by years of singing together, it is the Monteverdi madrigals.

*Gunnar Westerlund  
Stockholm, Sweden*

### A Schubert Discography

I have compiled a list of every Schubert song that has been recorded. The songs are arranged alphabetically with each entry followed by up to six or eight recordings. A list of artists is also included. A copy of this twenty-page listing may be obtained from the undersigned for \$1.00.

*J. F. Weber  
1 Jewett Place  
Utica, N.Y. 13501*

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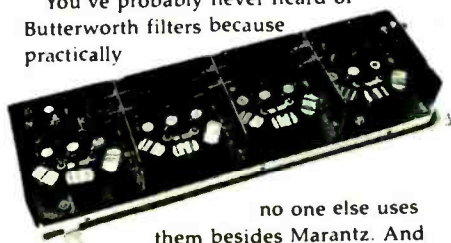
That's why we put an oscilloscope in our best components.

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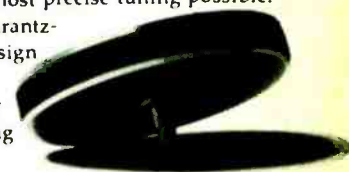
have to measure up to Marantz'. Butterworth filters let you hear music more clearly, with less distortion, and, unlike conventional I.F. coils or filters, they never need realignment. They help pull in distant FM stations and separate those right next to each other on the dial. Although Butterworths cost more, Marantz designed not one but four of them into our Model 18 receiver.

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And this Marantz-exclusive design requires considerably fewer moving parts than conventional systems used by other manufacturers. The benefits: reduced friction, wear, and service problems. We call this patented feature "Gyro-Touch tuning."

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Marantz stereo components aren't built in the ordinary way. For example, instead of just soldering connections together with a soldering iron, Marantz uses a highly sophisticated waveflow soldering machine—the type demanded by the Military. The result: perfect, failproof





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to perform. For example, the Marantz Model 16 can be run all day at its full power rating without distortion (except for neighbors pounding on your wall). That's power. And that's Marantz.

## Marantz Speaks Louder Than Words

In a way, it's a shame we have to get even semitechnical to explain in words what is best described in the medium of sound. For, after all, Marantz is for the listener. No matter what your choice in music, you want to hear it as closely as possible to the way it was performed.

In spite of what the ads say, you can't really "bring the concert hall into your home." For one thing, your listening room is too small. Its acoustics are different. And a true concert-hall sound level (in decibels) at home would deafen you.

What Marantz does, however, is create components that most closely recreate the sounds exactly as they were played by the musical performers. Components that consistently represent "where it's at" in stereo design. And no one gives you as much—in any price range—as Marantz.

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## behind the scenes

*A little chapel at Tooting Graveney provides Klemperer's new EMI recording of Die Walküre with a real "Wagner sound."*



### LONDON

#### Klemperer's Die Walküre Project

At the age of eighty-five Otto Klemperer is embarking on one of his most ambitious tasks to date: a complete recording of Wagner's *Die Walküre*. The original plan was to tape Act I and leave it at that, but EMI, not to mention the conductor himself, was so pleased with the results of the sessions last December that plans have now been drawn up to record the remaining two acts next fall. Like Deutsche Grammophon in Berlin, EMI chose a church for their recording of Wagner's pagan ritual. It was the little chapel at Tooting Graveney, way out in the southern suburbs of London—a building so well hidden that even local cab drivers take one in circles while searching for the exact location. It was there that Daniel Barenboim recorded the Bruckner *Te Deum* and Bach *Magnificat*, so the members of the New Philharmonia Orchestra were at least familiar with the surroundings.

These sessions were linked—as in the old days of Walter Legge's Philharmonia—with a live performance at the Royal Festival Hall. On this occasion Klemperer broke his usual habit of completing the recording before the concert. He started with a rehearsal session and followed it with two recording sessions; then came the live performance with three more sessions scheduled afterwards. Against all Klemperer precedent, the sessions after the excitement of the concert produced the bulk of the finished performance. Klemperer approached them a

little uneasily, wondering why the engineers had not recorded the live performance which might have conveyed that important touch of extra tension. But with a visiting critic as arbiter, he was quickly convinced that the Festival Hall would hardly have provided a congenial acoustic for Wagner and recording in the church promised to yield a real "Wagner sound."

The main job of re-creating the tension after the concert fell to Suvi Raj Grubb, the recording manager who has worked with Klemperer since the days of Walter Legge. Klemperer was not too eager to spoil the spontaneity of the occasion by indulging in retakes, but the more he was challenged, the more the results pleased Grubb. So during the initial session after the concert, Klemperer completed the first two scenes and then took no more than an hour and a quarter to tape the third scene—the third and final scheduled session was not needed at all.

The three singers make an interesting trio—Helga Dernesch, best known as the impressive Brünnhilde on the Karajan *Siegfried*; the American Heldentenor, William Cochrane, whose finely projected, carefully enunciated, and accurate singing especially pleased the engineers; and what Grubb describes as "a real find," Hans Sotin as Hunding. Klemperer and Grubb auditioned the bass in Zurich in September and, as Grubb says, "nearly got blown out of the room." Sotin has been a member of the Hamburg Opera and now, at the age of thirty, has a dark and supple voice reminiscent of a young Gottlob Frick. Klemperer was so delighted that he was moved to sing all the extra cues—vocal and instrumental—during the audition. The conductor's

love of Wagner's score was felt throughout the project, and though sometimes criticized for not demanding crisper discipline, Klemperer was acutely aware of one of the major stumbling blocks during the recording: the dotted rhythms for the Wagner tubas. He patiently rehearsed the players separately for an hour or more in his hotel room. There is no evidence of the neighbors' reaction.

**Debussy à la Boulez.** The other major opera project this month has also been linked with live performances. CBS has recorded Debussy's *Pelléas et Mélisande* complete, using the much praised production recently staged at Covent Garden with Pierre Boulez conducting. The first obvious advantage of this arrangement was that the singers did not have to refer to their scores as they sang. Everyone knew his part to the last semiquaver with complete confidence and could concentrate completely on expressing Debussy's vocal lines. I attended the session devoted to the opening of Act II, the scene by the well where Mélisande loses Golaud's ring. I had already seen this passage rehearsed at Covent Garden, and here again Elisabeth Söderström as Mélisande and George Shirley as Pelléas acted out their parts—this time before the microphones. One main problem with non-French singers is pronunciation and CBS had not overlooked it. A French language adviser sat beside recording manager Paul Myers and at the end of most takes she made a few suggestions to the singers, who then proceeded to practice such tongue twisters of nasal sound as "*Jontaine abandonnée*" or "*à notre rencontre*."

It says something for Pierre Boulez' sense of timing and clear confidence that it was more than an hour after the session started that the tape was set rolling for the first take. First there was a run-through with the soloists "marking" their parts, then an extremely detailed rehearsal of incidental points, and then another full run-through. Two complete takes before the break, and that was it. Toward the end of this third session of the twelve scheduled, we had only reached take twenty. "Some artists arrive at that point in a quarter of an hour," Myers pointed out. Boulez certainly follows the long-take technique to the full limit.

**In Search of a Studio.** For all the Debussy sessions CBS used both the EMI studios at St. John's Wood and an EMI engineer familiar with the equipment. There has been something of a studio shortage in London lately owing to the temporary unavailability of Kingsway Hall, a favorite recording site of both EMI and Decca. In the early autumn, without warning, part of the ceiling fell down and the need for immediate repairs pushed the recording people out. Argo had a number of sessions lined up at Kingsway for Neville Marriner and the Academy of St. Martin's, but fortunately they found the perfect substitute venue: St. John's in Smith Square. This former church was bombed during the war and very recently restored as a small, beautiful concert

*Continued on page 22*

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## BEHIND THE SCENES

Continued from page 18

hall. Joan Sutherland and Richard Bonyngé have been associated with its restoration, and now it looks as though Argo and its parent company, Decca/London, will be using it regularly as a studio.

Not that it was easy going at first for the Argo engineers. Mike Bremner, the Argo recording manager, found at first, to his disappointment, that when used crosswise the sound at St. John's turned out to be "as dead as mutton"; but when used lengthwise the sonics became as richly reverberant as in a cathedral. This gave him plenty of scope, and he is very pleased with the results. To date, Neville Marriner and the Academy orchestra have recorded Vivaldi's *The Four Seasons* with Alan Loveday as violin soloist; Handel's "Look Down Harmonious Saints" and Boyce's "Momus to Mars" both with tenor Robert Tear as soloist; and Bartók's *Music for Strings, Percussion, and Celesta*. There is now a bit of a race between Argo and EMI over the Bartók. EMI's version was recently taped by Daniel Barenboim and the English Chamber Orchestra. EDWARD GREENFIELD

## BERLIN

### Karajan Completes The Ring Cycle

First DGG invited, then disinvented: Herbert von Karajan preferred to have no outsiders whatever present at his *Götterdämmerung* sessions. Perhaps he still rankled from the events of one afternoon during his recent taping of the Beethoven Triple Concerto ["Behind the Scenes," December 1969]; the word had spread round Berlin concerning the almost incredible simultaneous presence of Richter, Oistrakh, and Rostropovich, and when Karajan mounted the podium he found to his intense displeasure that he and his glamorous Muscovites were the cynosure of far more eyes than any of them had reckoned with. After the *Götterdämmerung* disinvention, during a consolation luncheon at the Kempinski Grill with Dorothee Koehler (DGG's charming and intelligent new press chief), Otto Gerdes, the leader of the company's Karajan team, happened by and said he and the Maestro planned a two-hour stroll through the Grunewald that afternoon. Next morning, the suave and diplomatic Herr Gerdes telephoned me that in my own case at least, the disinvention had turned back into an invitation.

Nervousness? Perhaps. Karajan surely regards this as one of the most important recordings of a career that has seen many high points. Members of the Berlin Philharmonic told me that Helga Dernesch as Brünnhilde had proved downright *fabelfhaft*—fabulous—a judgment I take on faith, since she had finished all her scenes before the afternoon of my invitation. The session I attended began with the basso Karl Ridderbusch rising

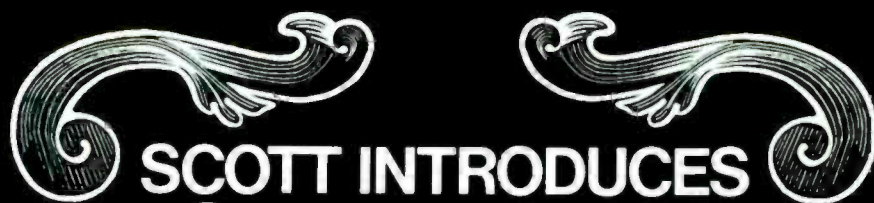
to the microphone as Hagen. Big, brawny, and heavily sideburned, Ridderbusch proved nonetheless just as concerned about drafts and his pipes as any prima donna. "Is it warm here?" he asked anxiously. "It's warm, isn't it?" The assistant assigned to watch the score for possible textual skips reassured him that one could indeed call the temperature in the Jesus-Christus-Kirche warm. Ridderbusch then—but only then—relaxed, removed his jacket, and unbuttoned his collar before settling down to work. Gundula Janowitz, so tightly corseted as to evoke one of W. C. Fields's more memorable (but possibly libelous) remarks, shared the platform as Gutrune, with Helge Brilioth, a surprisingly young Swede of whom I'd heard enthusiastic reports, as Siegfried. Other principals in the completed recording, which will be released to coincide with the stage production's Easter premiere in Salzburg, will include Thomas Stewart as Gunther and Zoltan Kelemen as Alberich.

Karajan has the rare ability to combine a businesslike briskness with an unhurried, unaggressive approach. I can recall no other conductor who, in moments of high tension involving big climaxes with appropriately large gestures, retains the greatest possible degree of muscular relaxation; this comes, I should think, from his profound mastery of yoga. His voice may take on a slight edge when a player needs more than two attempts to respond to a correction of phrasing or accent, but he never rages or rides his artists, as I have seen other conductors do in this studio: smiles characterize his recording manner far more than frowns. Even so, on one occasion when Karajan returned from the listening room to the podium and sauntered past a minor young DGG employee, I noted that the young man snapped to military attention out of sheer reflex.

When Karajan feels a passage needs more than momentary rehearsing, he asks the singers to come down from the high platform at the back of the room and sit in chairs right under his nose to save their voices. During one such rehearsal passage he managed the nimble feat of suddenly removing a pull-over sweater, all without missing a beat. During breaks, the Berlin Philharmonic retired in groups to various niches and crannies of the case-hardened church to smoke and play poker and skat for what looked to me like fairly serious stakes. "Those *Philharmoniker*," a DGG representative said; "the only orchestra I know of in the world that demands single rooms when they go on tour."

Miss Koehler tells me that DGG, with the Boston Symphony now under exclusive contract, also worked out an agreement to record the Vienna Philharmonic under Karl Böhm. Does that mean Karajan and the Vienna Philharmonic might also finally rejoin forces? Miss Koehler gave me a charming, sphinxlike smile and suggested that perhaps a *Himbeergeist* might complement our *Mokka*.

PAUL MOOR



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# Records for a Critic's Holiday

by Robert C. Marsh



AS A CRITIC for a large metropolitan newspaper I spend several evenings a week evaluating live music from distinguished artists. Why should I listen to records on my day off? Plainly I am not interested in hearing standard repertory in average performances. I am indeed saturated with the staples of the day and may take pains to avoid some of them. (With sufficient repetition, you can forget at times that a masterpiece really is a masterpiece.) If I simply want to hear a standard work, all that is required is patience. It will return in the performance cycle with the inevitability of tomorrow's sunrise.

A record, to claim attention, must offer something that the opera house and concert room cannot match, either in terms of repertory, interpretation, or excitement. We know that the music heard most frequently in public is only a sampling—sometimes a capricious sampling—of the greater body of music literature from which it is drawn. The sophisticated listener, and the critic in particular, must know more than this sample. The works of the major composers, the output of the important periods of music history should be understood with some awareness of the whole.

One of my ambitions as a record collector is to assemble the complete works of Mozart, K. 1 to K. 626 on discs. This will take some doing, since quite a few Mozart works still await their first recording, but I have about 60% of the total. Completeness attracts me. It fulfills a need for logic and order, and it is specially welcome when the concertgoer normally hears only part of a composer's work in a form.

The Kertesz/LSO edition of the nine Dvořák symphonies (London DVO-S-1, nine discs, also available singly) found me in an especially responsive state, since I respect the composer and find in this series the most persuasive account of his musical development. The Watanabe, and now the Bernstein, editions of the complete Sibelius symphonies (Epic BSC 157 and Columbia M55 784 respectively) and the Dorati, Mauzel, and Markevitch performances of the early Tchaikovsky symphonies (Mercury SR 6-9121, London TCH-S 1, and Philips PHS 900223,

*A long-time contributor to HIGH FIDELITY, Mr. Marsh is principal music critic for the Chicago Sun-Times.*

900205, and 900224 respectively) have all proved instructive in completing the artistic profiles of these composers. Of course there are classic complete editions, with the Schnabel version of the thirty-two Beethoven piano sonatas (now thirteen Angel discs) one of the most valuable. Even a comprehensive edition of familiar music can be a revelation of interpretive achievement. In this category I would place Szell's account of the four Brahms symphonies (Columbia D3S 758) or the Goberman set of the Bach *Brandenburg* Concertos (Odyssey 32 26 0017). Indeed, thinking of Goberman, even an incomplete edition can be a monument—witness the Haydn albums he left us at his death. They too are being reissued on Odyssey.

Naturally there is much valuable expansion of the repertory through individual recording projects. It is amazing that the popularity of baroque instrumental music has done so little for baroque opera. Admittedly it is difficult to cast, but operatic music is the key to the understanding of the period. The Cambridge recording (CRS 1901) of Monteverdi's *L'Incoronazione di Poppea* showed what a small company could do in this area, but apparently the project was not a success with the public. Columbia's recent albums of Gabrieli, the excellent brass disc (MS 7209) and the two wonderful sets from San Marco, Venice

(MS 7071 and 7142) are examples of how imagination and creativity on the part of a recording company can provide musical experiences that not even the most widely traveled listener would have encountered for himself. This suggests a point that is very important to me: records are now technically so fine that they can be developed as an independent musical medium, aiming at more than the duplication of a live performance in a public hall (who ever said that was the optimum way to listen to music anyway?) and going beyond the predictable events of a concert season.

One would not call *Louise* a rarity on the level of most baroque operas, but its composer, Gustave Charpentier, is missing from my Schwann catalogue. I have the Epic set SC 6018, and World Series has announced a reissue of the performance at a budget price. This is one of the great French operas, and it once was a Metropolitan favorite, and in Chicago a Mary Garden specialty. French and German operas, in fact, formed a major part of the Chicago repertory a generation ago. The Italians are dominant now, and one must turn to the phonograph for a *Ring*, a *Rosenkavalier*, or a *Meistersinger*. Solti's new *Rosenkavalier* album has been widely acclaimed and his *Ring* albums for London are surely classics. In the absence of an outstanding stereo *Meistersinger* I have been deriving much solace from the recent Seraphim set (IE 6030) drawn from the 1951 Bayreuth Festival (Karajan conducts with a cast headed by Schwarzkopf, Hopf, Edelmann, and Kunz).

My taste in orchestral music was shaped by the conductors whose work was best represented in my earliest record purchases: Toscanini, Stokowski, Koussevitsky, Beecham, Rodzinski, and Walter. All of them, with the exception of Koussevitsky, are still reasonably well represented in the catalogue. The recordings which had the greatest effect on me were, of course, the 78-rpm productions, long out of print, but when I return to them now my ear has become so accustomed to better sound that I must confess my antiquarian interests frequently have to compensate for a lack of real musical excitement.

George Szell once expressed to me his skepticism over the real value of record-

*Continued on page 30*

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## SPEAKING OF RECORDS

*Continued from page 26*

ings as musical documentation, and I see his point. I keep a stock of Toscanini and Furtwängler discs and check them frequently to contrast their interpretive approaches, but does anyone believe that these are anything more than fairly pale copies of the original performances, pencil sketches of oil paintings?

It would be pleasing to say that I use records to keep up with new and experimental music, but of course I do not. Far too little of this repertory is recorded, and discs bring only random samplings. It is frustrating that so many interesting works are left unrecorded.

Varèse's *Poème électronique* (Columbia MS 6146) is a work I like to hear with some regularity. I find it marvelously evocative. Columbia has given us three other discs in recent months which I find are full of fresh, imaginative possibilities. The highly popular "Switched-On Bach" (MS 7194) hardly requires more comment. I was less enthusiastic than my friend Alfred Frankenstein about Terry Riley's *In C* (MS 7178), but agree it has remarkable properties. Add my vote for "The World of Harry Partch" with its unusual exploration of sounds and textures (MS 7207). Here again records are important; so many things are happening outside the conventional framework of the concert hall and theater. I shall probably never hear Partch with the Chicago Symphony (worse luck), even though it needs him.

Finally a few words about recordings I play simply for pleasure and to ease the strains of living. Visit me on Saturday night and you are more likely to hear Bessie Smith (Columbia CL 855/58) than Beethoven. Yet I find jazz criticism extremely difficult to write well, and the presence of such a splendid work as Gunther Schuller's *Early Jazz* is a powerfully inhibiting force. Schuller can do the writing; I'll settle for listening.

As a supplement to my opera collection I have tried to put together a set of discs representative of the development of the American musical theater, but there are many gaps, and even as important a figure as Kurt Weill is imperfectly represented in the catalogue. Isn't it time someone did something about this?

I also confess to a fascination with sound as sound. I have kept the Emory Cook classics, and when I am in the right mood you may find me listening to steam locomotives, the whistle of the Queen Mary, or my favorite Cook, "Burlesque Uncensored." (Like many another, I am an alumnus of Harvard and the Old Howard.) "Sounds of the Sea and Ships" (Argo DA 37) is another disc with a real emotional pull. But the most elemental stimulation I have ever found on records is at the close of side 1 on M-G-M tape 4457, a Ferrari engine going flat out on the Monza circuit. It is a sound that makes a direct, animal appeal to the naked ape, and it can turn me on all the way.



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found only in much more expensive units. Versatile, it offers: 2 phono, tape monitor, microphone, auxiliary and main amplifier inputs. Outputs for two pairs of speakers make it ideal as a power source for any fine stereo system. Elegantly styled in an oiled walnut cabinet, it's the perfect complement to the most discriminating decor. Hear it at your local Pioneer dealer. Only \$299.95

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CIRCLE 42 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



## too hot to handle

I have used a Dokorder, a Uher 4000-S, and a stereo Uher 4200—all open-reel portables—for conferences and lectures and for recording local music while traveling. But I would prefer something as light and inconspicuous as a portable cassette recorder if it will give me comparable quality. When used with quality mikes, are the heads, transport mechanisms, and electronics of the pocket models really as good as those of the cassette decks, and is it possible to defeat their AGCs [automatic gain controls] for greatest fidelity and dynamic range in recording music?—S. G. Lutz, Los Angeles, Calif.

It sounds as if you want a class of equipment that doesn't really exist as yet. Cassette equipment manufacturers so far have concentrated on servicing the most obvious markets for their wares and hence have given little attention to the needs of specialists. Consequently, record/playback specs generally aren't as impressive as playback-only data, using the best of the prerecorded cassettes. Likewise, simplicity of operation has been deemed more important than the fine points of ultimate quality for in-the-field recordings. But cassettes are young, and anything's possible.

Where in the world can I buy a professional tape splicer? I'm transferring to tape my entire collection of 78s—and that includes some sets.—J. Anthony Salerno, Houston, Texas.

We must confess to a deep prejudice for the aluminum EdiTall blocks—a prejudice that seems to be shared by most recording studios and broadcast stations. The blocks are available in most audio stores or direct from Elpa Marketing Industries, Inc., Atlantic and Thorens Ave., New Hyde Park, N. Y. 11040. Used in conjunction with the narrow (7/32-inch) splicing tape and a really sharp razor blade, they are the simplest, most foolproof route to really good splices. Some of the more complex devices introduce more problems than they solve, and the less expensive ones generally are not as accurate in lining up the tape and holding it flat—a prime requisite. For most purposes, however, an efficient pause control on the recorder will do an excellent job; moreover, it will leave your tapes splice-free, and allow you to use all four tracks on the tape.

Since we moved to our present address, our V-M phonograph has decided that it is a radio! It picks up nearby station

WHBI whenever it is turned on. While I mean no disparagement to the station, there are times when I'd like to listen just to my records. So far, repair men have been unable to help me. Can you?

—Dorothy C. Heckel, New York, N.Y. Maybe. It's not unknown for a phonograph to "think" it is a radio due to a cartridge that may, under certain conditions and given a certain radio frequency, exhibit spurious response as a radio detector. Looseness or dirt at any of several electromechanical contact points inside the cartridge or in the wiring from it to the amplifier can be the cause. So first try disconnecting everything and then reconnecting it. The scraping action at the contacts may clean them and solve the problem. Include the clips in the pickup head and the connections at the amplifier in this procedure. If the phenomenon persists, check the connections on any separate grounding wire from the turntable. If there is none, try adding a ground, experimenting with various connection points to see whether it will get rid of the station. Next, try a new cartridge. If none of these dodges work, a capacitor may be called for in the first stage of amplifier gain to block the unwanted signal. But that's a job for an experienced technician.

I have an Eico 70 amplifier and a Sherwood 3000 tuner operating with two AR3ax speakers. The room is small—10 by 16 feet—with a soundproofed ceiling, carpeted floor, a lot of furniture, and what have you. Would I obtain substantial improvement in over-all reception with some of the receivers now available?—George Friedman, Glen Burnie, Md.

Improvement is substantial only if you can really hear it. So your question should have been, "Is there anything I lack in my present setup?" and you should have asked it of yourself. If the answer is yes, then try to pinpoint exactly what it is you want but don't have. When you've determined which specifications are the significant ones to effect a remedy, compare the data on your present equipment (we've published test reports on both tuner and amplifier) with the data for any receiver that may interest you. If the receiver is superior in those areas that you feel need improvement, without being deficient in any way to your present system, you may be in the market for a receiver. But if the answer to the question is no, there's nothing you can do but sit back and enjoy.

I can't believe that cassettes really are the coming thing in audio recording, since breaks in the tape are so difficult to mend. What do manufacturers say about the problem, and how can it be solved?—Louis Vyner, Reading, Pa.

Splicing is admittedly difficult with cassettes. For that reason, even their most ardent proponents have not pushed them for most uses where editing is to be expected. If you must splice cassette tapes, Elpa offers an appropriate EdiTall block. (Robins has also announced a unit.) First fish the broken tape ends out of the cassette. It may mean undoing the screws that hold the cassette case together and reassembling the cassette after the splice is made. If your cassette is held together by sonic welding (now standard procedure) you can shop for one that uses screws, discard the tape it contains, and replace it with the tape you want to salvage. You will have to pry open the damaged cassette, destroying its case. Since the design is standardized, the hubs that came with the salvaged tape should fit into the new cassette; if not, you'll have to take the hubs from the discarded tape, attaching the salvaged tape to the clips molded into most hubs. If you use splicing tape to attach the recording tape to the hubs, it will tend to pull off when you fast-wind to the ends. While the tape is out of the cassette, it's easy enough to make the required repair, of course. But don't unwind any more tape than necessary, since putting it back onto the hubs can be difficult. Incidentally, we have experienced only a few broken cassette tapes in testing equipment, and none at all recently. At one time, C-120 (double-play) cassettes frequently spelled trouble; but manufacturers seem well on the way to solving that problem—in the case of most major brands, at least.

I'm using a JBL SA-600 amplifier and a Shure V-15 Type II cartridge. I have no hum or other sign of malfunction, and the sound is great—but I find I have to turn the amplifier volume control up to the three o'clock position to get good volume. I have tried different phono inputs but find no difference in volume. JBL suggests that the output of the cartridge used with this amplifier should be 3.5 millivolts or more. Are they right? Should I get a higher-output cartridge?—William Stivelman, West Los Angeles, Calif.

JBL is right. Our own tests of the SA-600 amplifier showed that the phono input sensitivities for full rated output on the low, medium, and high inputs were, respectively, 4.7, 9.4, and 18 millivolts per channel. The V-15 Type II furnishes 3.2 millivolts per channel, which makes it a bit underrated to drive the JBL amplifier.





—or the Rock, or the Bartok, or the Bach.

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CIRCLE 33 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

# Introducing...A KENWOOD



KENWOOD's proud tradition of quality craftsmanship and superb engineering has achieved a new milestone in stereo receivers. Super-abundant power, exceptional broadcast reception, magnificent stereo performance and sophisticated controls open new worlds of enjoyment to the connoisseur of fine stereo.

CIRCLE 32 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

# NEW MILESTONE KR-7070 STEREO RECEIVER



## NEW 3-WAY FM/AM TUNING CONVENIENCE

Remote Automatic Control and Manual Tuning. Exclusive Automatic Tuning. Circuit selects only FM stereo station.



Automatic Station Selector

## NEW OUTSTANDING TUNER SECTION

4 ICs and Crystal Filter FM IF Stages deliver superb selectivity and 1.5 dB capture ratio.

3 FETs, 4-gang Tuning Condenser FM Front-end provides superior sensitivity and spurious response ratio.

## NEW DYNAMIC AMPLIFIER SECTION

300 watts (IHF) power output to drive any low efficiency speakers.

2 dB Step-Type Tone Control and Presence Control for best sound.

## SPECIFICATIONS:

### FM TUNER SECTION

Usable Sensitivity (IHF)	1.5 $\mu$ V
Harmonic Distortion	less than 0.4%
Signal to Noise Ratio	better than 70 dB
Capture Ratio (IHF)	1.5 dB
Selectivity (Alt. Channel, IHF)	better than 75 dB
Image Rejection	better than 100 dB
Stereo Separation	better than 35 dB at 1,000 Hz

### AMPLIFIER SECTION

Dynamic Power Output (IHF)	300 watts both channels at 4 ohms
	220 watts both channels at 8 ohms
Continuous Power Output Each Channel Driven	110/110 watts at 4 ohms; 90/90 watts at 8 ohms
	Both Channels Driven
	65/65 watts at 8 ohms, from 20 Hz to 20,000 Hz
Mono Output	5 watts
Harmonic Distortion	less than 0.5% at rated output
Intermodulation Distortion	less than 0.5% at rated output
	less than 0.1% at -3 dB rated output

### AM TUNER SECTION

Usable Sensitivity	15 $\mu$ V
Signal to Noise Ratio	50 dB at 1 mV input
Selectivity (IHF)	better than 30 dB
Image Rejection	better than 70 dB

Frequency Response	12 Hz to 40,000 Hz $\pm$ 1.5 dB
Power Bandwidth (IHF)	10 Hz to 30,000 Hz
Damping Factor	50 at 8 ohms; 100 at 4 ohms
Loudness Control (at -30 dB)	MAX: +10 dB at 100 Hz, +5 dB at 10,000 Hz
	MID: +6 dB at 100 Hz
Presence Control	1k Hz: +6 dB at 1,000 Hz; 400 Hz: +6 dB at 400 Hz
DIMENSIONS	17"W, 6 1/2"H, 15"D
WEIGHT	40 lbs.

the sound approach to quality



15711 So. Broadway, Gardena, California 90247  
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For complete specifications visit your nearest KENWOOD authorized dealer or write to:

CIRCLE 32 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

## IS NOTHING REAL ANYMORE?

However devoted to stereo components we may be, we've always had to recognize that sound is not the only factor of importance to those who buy the vast array of products lumped uncomfortably together under the vague term "high fidelity." And loudly as we may have railed against second-rate electronics and third-rate speakers done up in impressive woodwork and sold as "fine stereo furniture," we're aware that distressed pecan still is more important to some purchasers than undistorted decibels.

The siren song of "fine furniture" (regardless of the equipment it contains) struck an odd note recently with the announcement that GE—a major console manufacturer—was dispensing altogether with wood. Instead, its console cabinets would be constructed of a plastic imitation "based on a combination of injection-molded polystyrene and pressure-foamed polyurethane resins." Heavenly days, McGee, what next?



## SEPARATE DOLBY UNIT ANNOUNCED FOR HOME USE

Among the more widely acclaimed developments in audio in the last few years, the Dolby noise suppression system stands out as a frontal attack on what is perhaps the weakest facet of modern sound recording technique: inherent noise. The professional Dolby units divide the frequency spectrum into four bands and in effect boost the signal in each of these bands whenever it falls below a predetermined level. The result is that the signal is kept up away from the inherent noise level of the tape medium no matter how quiet are the sounds being reproduced.

In playback it is necessary to reverse the process, of course; and this the Dolby does in elegant fashion when the signal is fed "backward" through it. Used this way, it will return all the boosted levels to their original relative loudnesses—and push down tape hiss and any other noise generated in the recording process along with it. Properly applied, the Dolby system has therefore given us recordings virtually free of background noise.

KLH, of course, was the first company to announce a product adapting the Dolby for home use. The KLH Model Forty and Model Forty-One tape recorders incorporate a simplified Dolby system, known as the "B-Parameter" version. Instead of dividing the frequency spectrum into four bands and operating on each of them, the B-Parameter model concerns itself only with the high end of the audio range, where most tape noise—known as hiss for obvious reasons—is generated.

Now Advent Corporation too is developing the possibilities of the B-Parameter Dolby. But whereas KLH uses the system only as a built-in feature of tape decks, Advent has announced a separate model that can be used with any tape deck. The obvious appeal of the separate unit for serious tape recordists is that it allows them to pick a deck on the basis of otherwise desirable features and then Dolbyize it. In addition, it will now be possible to hook the Dolby into existing tape recorders or to use a single Dolby with several decks, if the recordist owns more than one.

Admittedly, Advent's separate Dolby unit, at about \$300, plus a tape deck will be somewhat more costly than it would be if built as a single unit. But the added flexibility in customizing the system to the particular needs of the recordist will in many cases be an overriding consideration.

CIRCLE 146 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

## HAVE YOUR HEAD EXAMINED

Nortronics, a major producer of tape-recorder heads for all sorts of applications, has issued some interesting figures on the life expectancy of heads. Since the company sells replacement heads for just about every recorder on the consumer market, it is understandably concerned that owners may not be aware of the fact that heads *do* wear out. But the figures may also be of help if you are undecided about which recorder model to buy among several that use different transport designs.

Two basic design features affect head life, says Nortronics: pressure pads and tape lifters. For the uninitiated, pressure pads are little, spring-mounted squares of felt (usually) that press against the back of the tape to keep it in contact with the heads. The alternative is to use tape tension in combination with precise positioning and contouring of the heads. Tape lifters are gadgets in the basic transport design that hold the tape away from the heads in the fast-wind or rewind modes.

If your recorder has pressure pads but no tape lifters, Nortronics will give average heads only 300 to 400 hours before wear appears. Add tape lifters, and you gain about 200 hours of life. Designs that dispense with pressure pads should allow 1,000 to 2,000 hours of useful head life even without tape lifters—which should double those times.

The figures come from a Nortronics leaflet called "Every Tape Recorder Ought to Have his Head Ex-

*Continued on page 40*

CIRCLE 21 ON READER-SERVICE CARD →

# life test

**New 5,000 play tests prove the 999VE is the longest playing cartridge.**

No one ever dared to challenge a stereo cartridge again and again the way we did. But then no one ever created a cartridge like our 999VE before. We designed it to give superb playback of all frequencies, at any groove velocity, at tracking forces so low that records sound brand new even after 5000 plays.

We cycled the 999VE through 5000 complete plays on a test pressing, *more than 50 times* the ordinary life usage of a record. Through the entire low and middle spectrum there was no audible or measurable wear or distortion, while at the high frequencies the loss was less than 3 dB at 20,000 Hz . . . *after a full 5000 plays.*

These sensational figures are only matched

by the enthusiastic acclaim of the experts. Stereo Review Magazine, ranked the 999VE "#1 in light-weight tracking ability." Hi Fi Sound called it "A real hi fi masterpiece." Popular Science chose the 999VE for "The stereo system I wished I owned," while Audio Magazine said "Outstanding square waves. Tops in separation."

There's no question about it — if you want the *longest playing* cartridge money can buy you want Empire's 999VE at \$74.95.

**TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS 999VE Stereo Cartridge.** Frequency Response 6 to 35,000 Hz; Stereo Separation more than 35 dB; Output Voltage 5 mv/channel; Compliance  $35 \times 10^{-6}$  cm/dyne. Stylus .2 mil. x .7 mil. hand polished elliptical diamond.

Write for your free "Guide to Sound Design for 1970."  
Empire Scientific Corp., 1055 Stewart Ave., Garden City, N. Y. 11530  
**Circle No. 21 Reader Service Card**

**EMPIRE**



amined." If you're interested in knowing how to check your heads for wear, write for a copy to: Distributor Division, Nortronics Co., Inc., 6140 Wayzata Blvd., Minneapolis, Minn. 55416.

**CIRCLE 147 ON READER-SERVICE CARD**

### FOR COLLECTORS ONLY

An interesting tape was sent to our offices recently by Arthur Shifrin, a student who lives in Flushing, N. Y. The tape contained a number of dubbings derived from records of the early swing era—say about 1930, judging from the sound. Aside from the nostalgic delights of the music itself, the interesting thing about the tape was that it gave an A/B comparison between a "straight" dub of the discs—surface noise and all—and the sound produced by copying the records through Shifrin's Sonic Attenuator, a product he is offering for sale.

It's not often these days that collectors of older 78s find their needs being catered to. And on the basis of the tape, Shifrin's device seems to do a remarkably good job. It is described as an equalizer containing a twenty-four position sharp-cutoff high filter, a midrange control that allows varying degrees of both boost and cut, a bass control that acts similarly, and a bypass switch allowing the sort of before-and-after comparison reproduced on the tape. Since losses in the equalizer run to about 16 dB, the bypass position includes a 16-dB loss pad to match its level to that of the equalized signal.

At first we were startled to note that Shifrin makes

a stereo model. Why stereo, since all 78s were mono? But a little thought convinced us that it probably makes sense, since most systems today—even in the homes of 78-collectors—are stereo and many include a stereo pick-up custom fitted with a 3-mil or 2.5-mil stylus for playing 78s. If you're interested, the mono Model A costs \$78; the stereo Model B, \$150. Special input and output impedances are available, as is a standard 19-inch housing for rack mounting.

**CIRCLE 148 ON READER-SERVICE CARD**

### SHOW PLANNED FOR ATLANTA

Mrs. Teresa Rogers, better known to industry insiders as Terry, has built an enviable reputation in recent years as the organizer of successful high fidelity shows in Philadelphia and Washington. The shows have taken place, usually in February, in alternate years in the two cities.

Now we have word of Mrs. Rogers' first show venture in Atlanta. The Atlanta High Fidelity Music Show is planned for March 20-22 in the newly remodeled Sheraton-Biltmore Hotel on Peachtree Street. And it may be the prelude to ventures even further afield. Terry tells us that she has received overtures from other cities in the past but has hesitated to move out of home territory. The Atlanta show may serve as a pilot project from which she can gauge the feasibility of possible expansion of her activities. It's a likely city for the purpose. Atlanta has not had any sort of show for a good many years and has been undergoing a burgeoning community interest in cultural matters. The recently completed arts center is symptomatic of this interest.

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## equipment in the news

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### Twenty-eight drivers make a stereo pair

Biggest in the line of feedback loudspeaker systems made by the LWE Division of Acoustron is the LWE IV, available both as finished systems in three different styles (at \$950) and as an Instant Kit for custom mounting (at \$750), shown here. The driver complement includes four 15-inch woofers, four 8-inch lower midrange, four 6-inch upper midrange, and two horn tweeters, with level controls provided for the three highest ranges. The control panel also features a phase switch and connections that will allow driving upper and lower ranges from separate amplifiers, as in a bi-amplification system. Feedback connections—a central feature of LWE systems—provide inverse feedback to the amplifier or amplifiers, controlling both distortion and potential overload. The LWE IV requires at least 100 watts rms per channel and will handle up to 200 watts.

**CIRCLE 149 ON READER-SERVICE CARD**



### New name enters tape-deck field

Astrocom/Marlux, a newcomer to the tape recorder field located in Oneonta, N. Y., has announced a model that, the company says, offers specifications comparable to those of the finest home recorders at a price of \$379.95. The Model 407 is a three-motor solenoid-operated stereo deck with automatic reverse in playback. It contains four quarter-track heads (erase, record, forward playback, and reverse playback), and offers two speeds, 7½ and 3¾ ips. The automatic reverse function is triggered by metallic foil strips applied to the tape. Other features include automatic tape lifters and shutoff switch, dual meter, and tape-echo and sound-on-sound recording.

**CIRCLE 150 ON READER-SERVICE CARD**

*Continued on page 42*

# Citation is back.



Minimum resale prices—  
(Kit) \$225. (Wired) \$295.

## TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS AND FEATURES FOR CITATION TWELVE POWER AMPLIFIER

- Continuous Power Output:** • 120 watts, RMS, both channels driven simultaneously @ less than 0.2% THD, 20-20,000 Hertz @ 8 ohms.
- Intermodulation Distortion:** • Less than 0.15% at all power levels, 60 and 6,000 Hertz.
- Hum and Noise:** • Better than 100 db below 60 watts.
- Damping Factor:** • 40:1.
- Frequency Response:** • 1-70KHZ,  $\pm 0.5$  db @ normal power level. Less than  $\frac{1}{2}$  Hertz—100KHZ,  $\pm 1$  db @ normal listening level.
- Power Bandwidth:** • 5-35,000 Hertz.
- Phase Shift:** • Less than 5 degrees at 20 Hertz.
- Rise Time:** • Better than 2 microseconds @ 20K Hertz.
- Dimensions:** •  $5\frac{7}{16}$ " H x  $12\frac{3}{16}$ " W x  $12\frac{3}{8}$ " D (complete with metal cage).
- Weight:** • 30 pounds.
- Finish:** • Olive, black trim and gold escutcheon.
- Outstanding Features:** • Two individual power supplies deliver superb regulation for absolute stability and extended low frequency response. Handling of transients is effortless at any power level.

- Thermal cutouts remove power from output stage when heat build-up exceeds 80 degrees C. Series-type limiting relays protect amplifier from short circuits. Reset automatically once short is removed.
- Absolutely stable with any type of speaker system.

The Citation Twelve is available as a factory wired and tested amplifier or as a simple-to-construct kit. No special technical or mechanical skills are required. Instructions are complete and easy to follow. See and hear the Citation Twelve soon. We think you will agree it represents a remarkable breakthrough in high fidelity.

For complete technical information, write to Harman-Kardon, Inc., 55 Ames Court, Plainview, N.Y. 11803, Dept. HF3.

**harman kardon**



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CIRCLE 25 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

## EQUIPMENT IN THE NEWS

Continued from page 40

### "Human engineering" a feature of Scott receiver

Scott's latest stereo FM/AM receiver, the 3800, features a tilted control panel and key-type switches designed to increase visibility and ease of use by contrast to older models, according to the manufacturer. The receiver retains the Perfectune light that was introduced in an earlier Scott model to indicate correct tuning of an incoming signal. The IF circuitry features a permanently aligned crystal lattice filter. The power amplifier section is rated at 53 watts per channel continuous into 4-ohm loads, or 43 watts per channel into 8-ohm loads. The price is \$419.95.

CIRCLE 151 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



### Loudspeaker system first product from Advent

Advent Corporation has announced a two-way acoustic-suspension speaker system that the company says is designed to equal the performance of any system on the market for home use. In making the claim, it cites its two-way system as inherently superior to three-way systems on the grounds that only one, simple crossover is needed and the possibility of interference between drivers is reduced. While allowing that multiple-driver designs are appropriate for use in filling large listening areas, the company says that modern driver design obviates the need for a separate midrange unit. Crossover of the system is at 1 kHz; selling price is \$112 in walnut.

CIRCLE 152 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

### More power in JBL Energizer

The SE460 Energizer from James B. Lansing Sound is a stepped-up version of the SE400S, rated at 80 watts. The new model is rated at 120 watts continuous rms output. Like other JBL Energizers, it is a solid-state power amplifier designed for use either as a separate component or mounted in the cabinet of the speaker it is driving. Custom equalization boards tailor the output to specific JBL speaker models. The SE460 will sell for \$354.

CIRCLE 154 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



### Quickie size for cassettespondents

For those who record their correspondence on cassettes and don't need a full sixty minutes to speak their minds, the 3M Company has introduced the Scotch C-30 size, which will hold thirty minutes—fifteen on each side of the cassette. The C-30 size is available in a Post Office-approved mailer at \$2.35 or in a standard plastic box at \$2.25.

CIRCLE 161 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

### Component-styled cassette recorder

Lafayette's RK-510 recorder combines a stereo cassette deck with a built-in monitor amplifier. Cassettes may be played back through speakers connected to the monitor amp or through a component system. In addition to jack-panel connections for use with a stereo system, there are front-panel jacks for a pair of microphones and for stereo headphones. Separate record and playback level controls are provided for each channel. Playback tone controls gang the two channels together. The transport is provided with a tone control. The RK-510 sells for \$149.95.

CIRCLE 162 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



CIRCLE 57 ON READER-SERVICE CARD →



# What's your stereo type?

**You've got a room at the top.** You want a complete stereo music system to put into it. You're an HP-580. A complete system of component quality with a pair of high-compliance 3-way speakers (8" woofer, 3" mid-range, 2" tweeter). It includes an all-silicon transistor amplifier with exceptionally high frequency response and low signal-to-noise ratio, a sensitive Sony FM stereo/FM-AM tuner and a Dual professional auto/manual turntable with Pickering moving magnet cartridge. The works, \$419.95.\*

**You're a nervous beginner.** You want to ease your way into stereo. Just turntable and speakers. You want the HP-155: Sony amplifier, a 4-speed BSR automatic turntable with a Sony-designed featherweight cartridge, a pair of 2-way high-performance speakers with a 6½" woofer and 2" tweeter for \$179.95.\* (After their nervous beginning, HP-155's nearly always want to add ST-80's—our nifty little tuner.)

**You just want the best of almost everything.** An HP-465 is what you are. A Sony-designed amplifier (that means all-silicon transistors and OTL circuitry), the reliable Garrard auto/manual turntable and Pickering V-15 magnetic stereo cartridge, a pair of matched high efficiency speakers with a 6½" woofer and 3" tweeter for \$249.95.\* When you're ready for everything, you can add the ST-80—a compact, sensitive tuner—for \$89.95.\* A happy ending.



## Sony

**You're the man who has nothing.** No turntable, no speakers, no amplifier, no tuner. And not much money. You're an HP-188: A tuner and amplifier with FET circuitry and solid state IF filters like every Sony, 4-speed BSR automatic turntable and two-way high-compliance speakers. \$239.95.\*

**You're a once-in-a-lifetime plunger.** So you'll spend more to get more. Like the HP-480A: Sony's sensitive FM stereo/FM-AM tuner and all-silicon transistor amplifier in a rich walnut-finished cabinet with an automatic turntable. The high-efficiency bass-reflex speakers (6½" woofer and 3" tweeter) deliver the sound beautifully. \$319.95.\*

\*Mfr.'s suggested retail price.

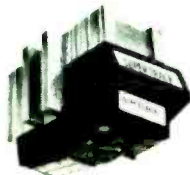
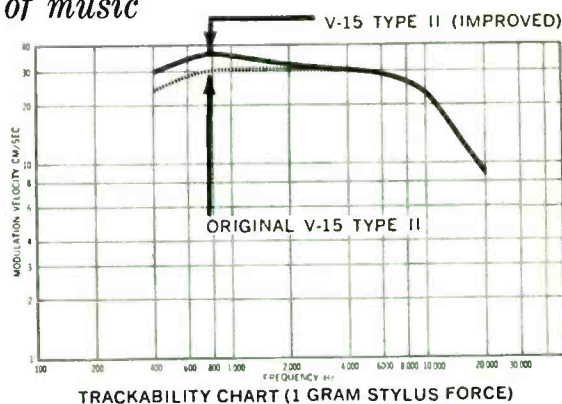


# THE SOUND OF A DIFFERENT DRUM

## *Higher trackability in the "backbone" region of music*

The grand structure of orchestral music relies heavily upon tympani, tuba, contrabass, bassoon, bass drum, and other low register instruments to form the solid foundation upon which the harmonies and melodic line are built. Unfortunately it is exceedingly difficult to track these passages when they are cut at high velocities. Even the Shure V-15 Type II, the world's highest trackability cartridge, required raising the tracking force when playing recordings containing this type of program material. We took this as a challenge and have prevailed. The top line of the graph at right shows the increased bass and mid-range trackability of the IMPROVED V-15 Type II. Practically speaking, it means you can reduce 1¼ gram tracking force to 1 gram, or 1 gram force to ¾ gram for records with high velocity bass register material. No increase in price (\$67.50 net), but you will significantly extend record and stylus tip life.

**NOTE:** You can attain this superior bass and mid-range trackability with your present V-15 Type II by using the IMPROVED VN15E stylus at \$27.50. Look for the word Shure in red letters on the stylus grip.



**SHURE**

**V-15 TYPE II (IMPROVED)**

SUPER TRACKABILITY PHONO CARTRIDGE

© 1969, Shure Brothers Inc., 222 Hartrey Ave., Evanston, Illinois 60204

CIRCLE 55 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

# new equipment reports

THE CONSUMER'S GUIDE  
TO HIGH FIDELITY EQUIPMENT



## QUAD'S TWO-PIECE AMPLIFIER

**THE EQUIPMENT:** Quad 33, a stereo preamp-control unit. Dimensions: 10¼ by 3⅝ by 6½ inches. Price: \$180. Quad 303, a stereo power or basic amplifier. Dimensions: 4¾ by 6¼ by 12¾ inches. Price: \$220. Manufactured by Acoustical Manufacturing Co., Ltd., Huntingdon, England. Distributed in the U.S. by Harmony House, Inc., 197 East 76th St., New York, N.Y. 10021.

**COMMENT:** Although either the Model 33 preamp or the Model 303 power amp may be purchased separately and used with other makes of power amp and preamp respectively, the two units mate most conveniently with each other as the fore and aft sections of a complete stereo amplifier. In common with all two-piece amplifiers of whatever make, the basic or power amp may be installed out of sight, while the preamp or "front end" is intended for normal access location. To the average U.S. user unpacking a Quad for the first time, the novelty of its appearance and of the requirements for hooking it up and putting it into service may prove fascinating or annoying, depending on individual inclination. Everything about it is atypical, from the plug-in circuit boards (three of which are supplied "loose" and must be inserted by the owner) to the European DIN connectors (multi-pin types to which your U.S.-made gear must be related, via the included cable adapters). Even the output terminals from the power amp are unique, requiring that you solder the leads from each speaker system to special plugs which then jack into the amplifier. And so on.

Some of this need for fussing around can be justified on technical grounds: the hookups, once made, probably are stronger and more durable than usual (we have, in fact, commented in this magazine in the past on the flimsy mechanical connections provided on most audio gear), although some of it strikes us as window-dressing, or—in this day of product appeal

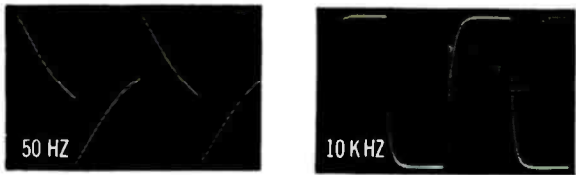
gambits—as "image reinforcement." Quad claims to offer nothing less than the best available equipment; certainly the products look like nothing else in the field, and a Quad owner—once he has figured out the hookup adaptations—can boast of owning a unique setup . . . down to the very styling of the unit, and the intransigence of its appeal vis-à-vis the U.S. market by such flourishes as the "E" (for "earth") rather than a "G" (for "ground") on one of its rear terminals, not to mention the wording used in the owner's instruction booklet. It's rather like buying a Jaguar with the steering wheel on the right.

The comparison, by the way, is fairly apt. For if the Quad is fairly difficult to become acquainted with and get into use, it also is a smooth, honey of a performer. As our tests indicate, both preamp and power amp either meet or exceed all performance claims within normal tolerance limits. For instance, Quad claims for the Model 303 a mere 0.1 per cent distortion for 45 watts output at 10,000 Hz; CBS Labs measured less: 0.067 per cent. Distortion, in fact (either THD or IM), over most of the response band at any output level was almost nonmeasurable, well down into the hundredths-of-a-per-cent range, and we had to expand the vertical scale of our distortion graph to show any amounts. Signal-to-noise ratio was outstandingly good at 95 dB. Power bandwidth, while not as spectacular as on some other high-priced amplifiers, did conform to Quad's specifications which, we ought to point out, express a deliberate design philosophy of rolling off the response below 20 and above 20,000 Hz. At that, the 303 produces its power bandwidth for rated distortion of 0.1 per cent from just below 20 Hz to 16,000 Hz. Frequency response remains within 2 dB from 20 Hz to 45,000 Hz.

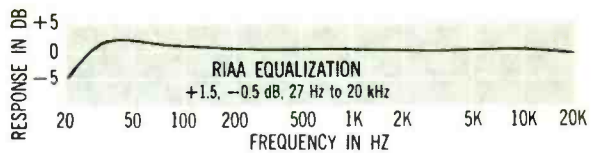
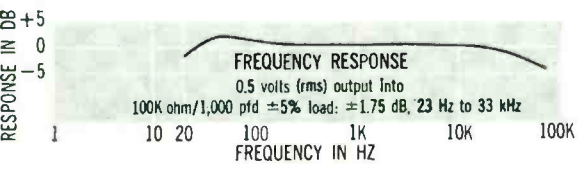
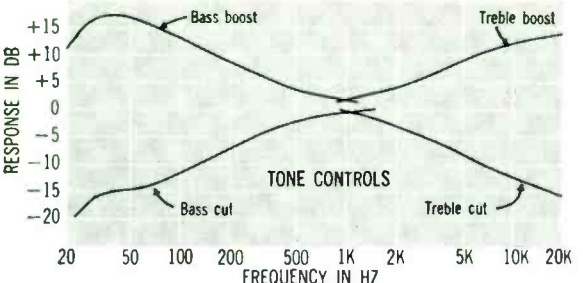
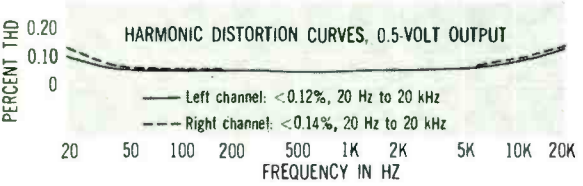
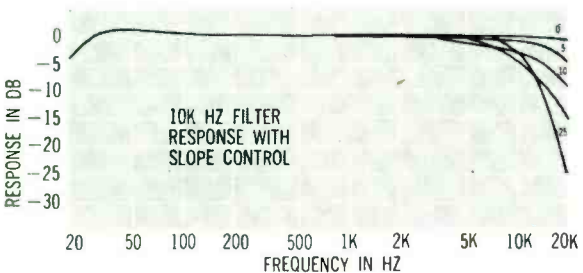
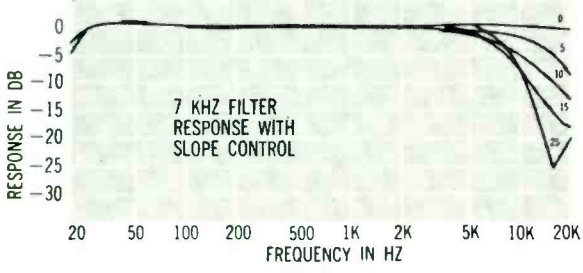
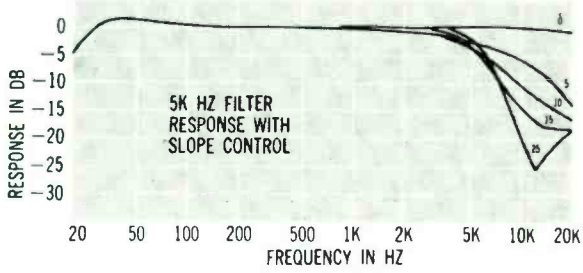
The preamp (Model 33) tested ran with no more than a few hundredths-of-a-per-cent distortion within its specified range. Although the lab could not duplicate the 90-dB signal-to-noise figure claimed, it

## REPORT POLICY

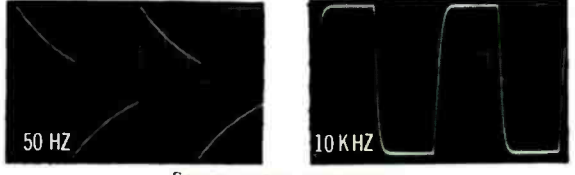
Equipment reports are based on laboratory measurements and controlled listening tests. Unless otherwise noted, test data and measurements are obtained by CBS Laboratories, Stamford, Connecticut, a division of Columbia Broadcasting System, Inc., one of the nation's leading research organizations. The choice of equipment to be tested rests with the editors of HIGH FIDELITY. Manufacturers are not permitted to read reports in advance of publication, and no report, or portion thereof, may be reproduced for any purpose or in any form without written permission of the publisher. All reports should be construed as applying to the specific samples tested; neither HIGH FIDELITY nor CBS Laboratories assumes responsibility for product performance or quality.



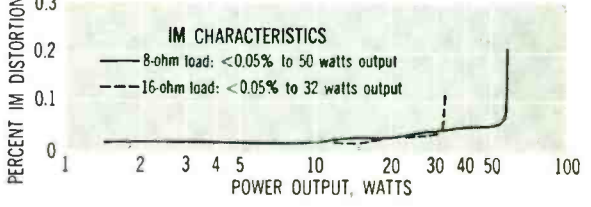
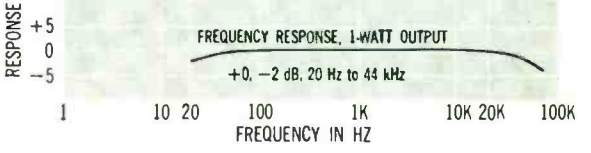
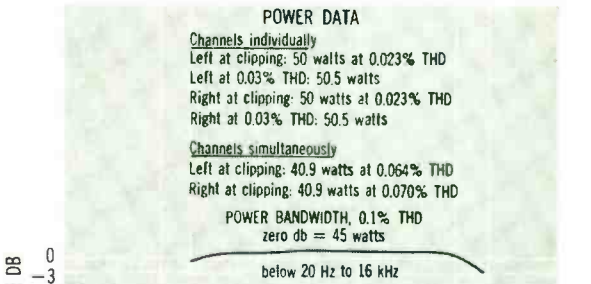
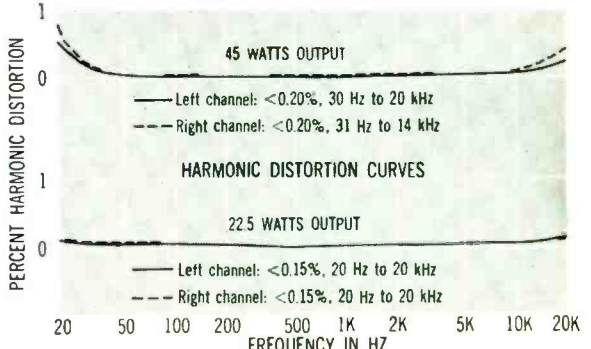
Square-wave response



Quad 33 Preamp		Additional Data
Performance characteristic	Measurement	
Output at clipping		
left channel	1.63 volts at 0.13% THD	
right channel	1.58 volts at 0.14% THD	
(figures remain same for channels driven individually or driven simultaneously)		
IM distortion	0.06% at 1 volt output	
Inputs (for 0.5 volt out)	Sensitivity	S/N ratio
Radio 1, 2	96, 96 mV	73, 73 dB
Tape (M, L, H)	380, 93, 950 mV	74, 61, 63 dB
Disc (M2, M1, C1)	5.5, 1.9, 27 mV	60, 54, 60 dB



Square-wave response



## Quad 303 Power Amp *Additional Data*

Performance characteristic	Measurement	
Damping factor	40	
Input characteristics (for 45 watts output)	Sensitivity 480 mV	S/N ratio 95 dB

did confirm that S/N on all inputs came to better than 60 dB, which is excellent by any standards.

The cosmetics of the Quad, while novel, do relate to the unit's functionalism. The large knob on the left of the preamp serves as the volume control combined with a power off/on switch. Directly below it a slide control adjusts for channel balance. The lower left row of push buttons is divided into two groups; the first three, colored orange, select mono left, mono right, or stereo. Pressing the two mono buttons at once sends the same mono signal through both channels (the preferred way to play mono discs with a stereo pickup). The four white colored buttons in this row select input signals: radio 1, radio 2, disc, and tape monitor. Radio 1 and 2 correspond to the auxiliary or high-level inputs on U.S. equipment. The knobs at the right control tone and filter action: bass control on both channels simultaneously, similar-acting treble control, and filter slope. The last knob is used in conjunction with the other set of push buttons below it which determine the frequency at which the filtering becomes effective. A fourth button in this group marked "cancel" deactivates all tone and filter action to return the preamp to flat response. This unusual versatility may not concern many users, although it could be of interest to professionals and to those who do a good deal of listening to, or dubbing of, older recordings. A final flourish on the front panel is the word Quad which lights up when power is turned on.

The preamp's rear panel contains the little "doors" that you lift to slide in the circuit boards for tape and disc playback, a grounding (pardon, earthing) post, a fuse holder, three AC sockets, and the signal input and output connectors. Of the AC sockets, two are convenience outlets for powering other equipment, including the basic amplifier; one is the main AC line connector. This last is a three-prong connector at the preamp end, although it may be terminated in a normal two-spade plug for insertion into a wall outlet. Of the signal connectors, four (the signal inputs and the tape feed) are 5-pin types which must be wired, via shielded cable, to standard U.S. phono connectors. The fifth (output to the power amp) is a 4-pin connector which may be wired directly to the 4-pin input on the Quad power amp via the reversible cable supplied. To use the preamp with a U.S. power amp you would, however, have to adapt the cable with suitable plugs.

The 303 power amp, in keeping with its function, has far less external hardware, all of which—happily—is located on one end panel to facilitate installation. The signal input jack is the 4-pin type, corresponding to the preamp's signal output jack. Speaker connectors are separate pin-jacks, one each for signal and ground sides of each channel, and color-coded for polarity. There's a fuse holder and an AC connector (again, it's a three-prong connector on the chassis, although a standard two-spade plug may be used at the other end to connect either to the preamp or to an ordinary AC outlet). Finally, the 303 has an adapter plug that permits running the amplifier on 110, 120, or 240 volts AC. A pilot lamp comes on with the power.

Either the 33 preamp or the 303 power amp stands as a top-grade performer in its respective class. The combination offers, at a premium price, correspondingly high-grade performance combined with stability, reliability, apparent longevity, and a distinctly "British-modern" appearance.

CIRCLE 144 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

## BSR AUTOMATIC COMES WITH STEREO CARTRIDGE



**THE EQUIPMENT:** BSR McDonald 300T, a four-speed automatic turntable supplied with stereo cartridge and fitted onto mounting base. Dimensions: 15 $\frac{1}{4}$  by 14 by 7 inches. Price: \$44.50. Manufacturer: BSR (USA) Ltd., Blauvelt, N.Y. 10913.

**COMMENT:** When we first saw this new BSR we were skeptical. Four speeds, a good-looking mounting base, and a magnetic pickup—all for less than \$45? How good could it be?

The answer is, surprisingly good for the cost. What we have here is a cleverly integrated ensemble in which certain design compromises (such as the particular cartridge employed, and the fixed—rather than user-adjustable—antiskating force) add up to a given

level of performance which, while not the equal of other possible turntable/pickup assemblies costing considerably more, still is not as far below them as one might think.

A four-speed (16-, 33-, 45-, and 78-rpm) unit, the Model 300T may be used manually or as an automatic, depending on which of the two spindles (long and short, supplied) is used, and how you adjust the position of the over-arm. For instance, with the short spindle and the over-arm moved to the center, you can cue manually via the finger lift, and set the pickup down as desired. The unit will shut itself off at the end of the record. In this mode, by the way, you can—by swinging the over-arm to the right—get the machine to repeat the same record automatically. The

long spindle, of course, permits stacking up to six records (of the same size and speed) and playing them in automatic sequence; in this mode, the over-arm must be moved to the center to help hold the records in place. We found operation in all modes to be very simple and foolproof, with no evidence of jamming or faltering at any point.

Prefitted on arrival in its stylish walnut and black base, the machine required a minimum of fuss and bother to set up for use. We did check stylus force, however, as we do on all record players that are supplied with a cartridge. We found it to be 3¾ grams. Consulting the literature sent with the unit, we found that with the particular cartridge employed (a modified Shure M75, here designated as Model NC 71), the recommended stylus force was 3 to 5 grams. Just to be ornery, we reduced stylus force to the lowest value, 3 grams, and found that the machine still worked beautifully—and the sound of the cartridge remained unimpaired. In tests at CBS Labs, the minimum stylus force needed to trip the automatic mechanism was found to be 2.5 grams, admittedly high as modern automatics go but, on the other hand, obviously suited for the particular cartridge used and—just as interesting—well matched to the fixed amount of antiskating or bias force built into the machine. What this means simply is that while the BSR 300T is quite definitely designed to perform optimally with the cartridge it comes with, it is not—by the same logic—too well suited for use with higher-compliance cartridges. Indeed, the head or shell of the tone arm is so dimensioned that it won't accept most cartridges.

Speed accuracy was distinctly better than average for a changer-with-pickup in this price class. In fact, at the most used setting of 33 rpm, the 300T ran with no measurable error at the standard line voltage of 120 VAC, and deviated by no more than 0.2% for the most extreme variations in supply voltage. This would be a commendable score for any turntable; in a unit as low priced as this, it's almost phenomenal. There is no provision for varying the speed—but unless you deliberately want to do so for special purposes, there

really is no need for it in this model, so close to absolute accuracy does it run. Flutter was clocked at a very low average of 0.15%, completely inaudible. Rumble, by the CBS-ARLL method, was measured as -47 dB, and arm resonance occurred as a 7-dB rise at 22 Hz. These figures mean that when playing through really powerful amplifiers and wide-range speakers with full bass response, the 300T will produce some low-pitched noise that could intrude at times into the music. How much, and how often, depends a great deal on the record itself and how loudly you play it. Our feeling on this point is that while lower rumble and/or lower arm resonance would be ultimately desirable, they are not out of line here in view of the ensemble's low cost.

Other vital statistics: the platter itself weighed in at 1 pound, 8 ounces—fairly lightweight but obviously capable of moving smoothly and accurately at all speeds. Arm friction laterally measured 0.50 grams; vertically, 0.12 grams—again, higher than you'll find in costlier models but still within acceptable design limits for the ensemble.

To sum up: the BSR offers a great deal of convenience and "bonus" features in a good-looking and good-functioning format which, at its very low cost, recommends it as a reliable record-playing ensemble for use in less-than-perfectionist, but still fairly high quality, stereo systems.

CIRCLE 141 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

### BSR 300T

Speed setting (rpm)	Speed Accuracy Percentage (fast or slow)		
	105 VAC	120 VAC	127 VAC
16½	0.2 f	0.3 f	0.4 f
33½	0.2 s	exact	0.1 f
45	0.3 f	0.6 f	0.7 f
78	0.3 f	0.5 f	0.6 f

## ADC'S REVISED BRENTWOOD SPEAKER

**THE EQUIPMENT:** ADC 303 AX, a compact, full-range speaker system in enclosure. Dimensions: 23¾ by 13 by 11¾ inches. Price: \$100. Manufacturer: Audio Dynamics Corp., Pickett District Rd., New Milford, Conn. 06776.

**COMMENT:** An updated version of ADC's popular Brentwood system, the new Model 303 AX looks very much like its predecessor (still available, by the way, as Model 303A for \$10 less), but two internal design changes can be credited with a subtle, though audible, improvement in sound. The "AX" version employs a 10-inch woofer (as compared to an 8-inch unit in the older version), and the nominal frequency crossover occurs at about 1,500 Hz (the older crossover is at 2,000 Hz). The net result is a speaker system which sounds to us a little smoother (in the treble)



and a little fuller (through the midrange and in the upper bass) than its antecedent. Another way of putting it would be to say that the 303 AX sounds a little "less bright" than the 303A.

Neatly styled in walnut, with its dark grille framed in aluminum, the 303 AX may be positioned vertically or horizontally. In addition to the woofer, the system houses a 5-inch tweeter whose center is fitted with a plastic dome that helps disperse the highs evenly into the listening area. The enclosure is completely sealed. Connections at the rear are screws marked

for polarity. Near them are two toggle switches marked for midrange "down" and "up" and for treble "down" and "up." These controls provide a deliberately limited tonal adjustment range (a 3-dB difference between the two positions of either switch) to help suit the system to different room acoustics. After some experimentation, we settled on the "down" position on both switches as delivering—in our room—the smoothest sound. The 303 AX is moderately efficient and can be driven by amplifiers producing as little as 6 watts per channel, although they will make a better acoustic showing when connected to higher-powered equipment. They are rated for a maximum capacity of 60 watts (music power) each. Impedance is 8 ohms.

In response checks, the 303 AX doubled very slightly at about 55 Hz; this effect increased a bit at 45 Hz, but was no worse at 35 Hz. Response at 30 Hz was very faint, but still quite clean. In all, we'd say the 303 AX introduces relatively little distortion at the low end, and has a useful bass output to 35 Hz. The upper bass is ample and remains level in output, with no discernible peaks or roughness. This same smoothness characterizes the midrange and highs, except for a hint of a peak at about 6 kHz.

Directional effects do not become very noticeable until at above 8 kHz, with the sound rolling off and becoming gradually narrower, although tones up to 12 kHz remain audible slightly off axis. At 13 kHz, the output is still audible on axis; ditto for 14 kHz, from which frequency the response slopes to inaudibility. White noise response varied from fairly smooth (on axis) to very smooth (off axis).

In describing the 303 AX, one must acknowledge that it stands up as a very worthy competitor in the densely populated \$100 price class. Vis-à-vis any of several costlier and/or larger systems, its bass sounds adequate though not overpowering; its midrange is strong and clear with a slight tendency to favor the upper mids; its extreme highs are clean and well aired. A well-balanced system, its sound is generally uncolored, smooth, and capable of presenting good inner detail of complex musical textures. A pair, on stereo or mono, can fill a larger-than-average room with very listenable sound; the same pair work very well in smaller rooms with no evidence of musical dropout. The 303 AX may be located on the floor, on any convenient base or bench, or on a shelf deep enough to accept it.

CIRCLE 143 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

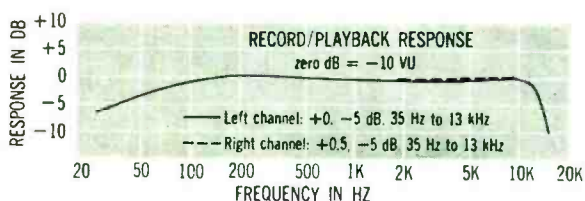
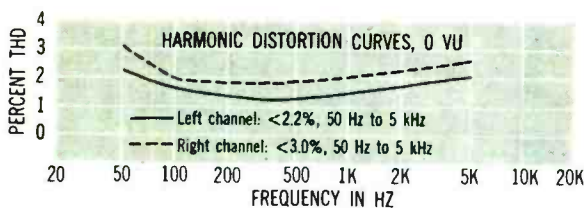
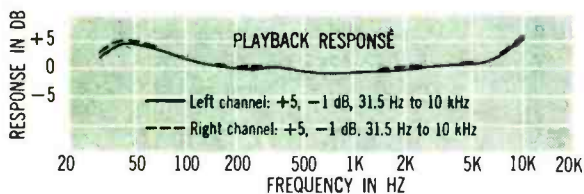
## 3M ENTERS THE CASSETTE FIELD



**THE EQUIPMENT:** Wollensak 4700, a stereo cassette tape deck (transport plus record/playback preamps), housed in walnut. Dimensions: 14 by 4½ by 9½ inches. Price: \$159.95. Manufacturer: Mincom Division, Minnesota Mining and Manufacturing Co., 3M Center, St. Paul, Minn. 55101.

**COMMENT:** In most ways the Model 4700 resembles other cassette recorders we've reported on. It is, however, the largest cassette deck yet tested. It also appears to be ruggedly built and handsomely finished, with obvious attention to controls and exterior details. Completely encased in walnut, the 4700's top panel is dominated by the dark tinted plexiglas cover which you lift to get at the cassette well. To its left there's a three-digit tape index counter with reset button; farther left is a pair of microphone input jacks for left and right channels. At the right you'll find the power off/on slide switch; next to it is a pilot lamp that comes on with the power. The aluminum strip across the panel contains individual VU meters for each channel, the cassette eject lever, and the printed legends for the bottom row of controls. This group includes left- and right-channel level knobs, a lever for fast forward and rewind, a recording button, a pause control, and two heavy-duty push-switches for play and for stop. The right-channel level control doubles as a mono conversion gimmick: when it is turned fully counterclockwise it clicks into "mono" position; this puts any left-channel input signals onto both left and right channel recording heads so that identical mono may be recorded on the twin tracks; the resultant recording then can be played on any mono cassette machine. These controls also allow independent adjustment of each channel during stereo recording, and during stereo playback through one set of output jacks. There's also a second set of output jacks which is not controlled by these knobs.

As in all cassette units we've encountered, the record button is interlocked with the play control, so that both must be engaged simultaneously to put the machine into the recording mode, a safety feature to prevent accidental erasure of recorded tapes. The



Wollensak 4700		Additional Data	
Performance characteristic	Measurement		
Speed accuracy, 1 $\frac{1}{8}$ ips	105 VAC: 0.45% fast 120 VAC: 0.97% fast 127 VAC: 1.17% fast		
Wow and flutter, 1 $\frac{1}{8}$ ips	playback: 0.18% record/playback: 0.25%		
Rewind time, C-60 cassette	41 sec.		
Fast forward time, same cassette	43 sec.		
S/N ratio (ref 0 VU) playback record/playback	l ch: 44 dB l ch: 41.5 dB	r ch: 44 dB r ch: 41.5 dB	
Erase (400 Hz at normal level)	59 dB		
Crosstalk (400 Hz) record left, playback right record right, playback left	40 dB 38 dB		
Sensitivity (for 0 VU recording level) preamp input mike input	l ch: 37 mV l ch: 0.18 mV	r ch: 37 mV r ch: 0.14 mV	
Accuracy, built-in meters	left: exact right: 0.5 dB high		
IM distortion (record/play) 1 $\frac{1}{8}$ ips, 0 VU and -10 VU	l ch: 10%	r ch: 9%	
Maximum output, controlled jacks	l ch: 1 V rms	r ch: 1 V rms	
Fixed jacks	l ch: 850 mV	r ch: 760 mV	

recording button cannot be pressed unless a cassette is correctly seated in the well, or if the little tabs have been removed from the back edge of a cassette—as they are on all prerecorded cassettes. In other words, it is impossible to erase a commercially programmed cassette unless, of course, you deliberately want to do so and insert tab-equivalents into the little spaces on the edge of the cassette housing.

The output jacks mentioned are found along the left-hand side of the recorder where there's also a stereo pair of input jacks. All connections, except for the mike inputs, are phono-plug types; the mike jacks take the larger phone plugs. The unit's AC power cord emerges from underneath the set. In common with all cassette machines, the 4700 uses two heads: one for erase and one for combined record/playback. During play (or record), the heads and the drive capstan move out from a recess in the well; during fast wind, pause, and stop, these parts are withdrawn into the recess. The mechanism works very smoothly, and indeed the unit's excellent marks for speed accuracy and wow and flutter attest to the high-grade transport mechanism employed here.

The record/playback response remains literally flat all the way out to 10,000 Hz, although a rising noise level tends to obscure the extreme highs, thus limiting the unit's effective clean response during recording to perhaps 7 or 8 kHz—still an average good mark for this class of equipment. Playback response, however, which also goes to beyond 10 kHz (it actually rises at the high end) does so without any apparent noise other than the residual hiss on a programmed cassette. And so while the 4700 can serve as a reasonably good recording device, it does excellently as a player of commercially recorded cassettes. Other characteristics, detailed in the accompanying graphs

and chart based on data taken at CBS Labs, add up to a satisfactory performer in the cassette class.

Like any cassette machine, installing the 4700 for recording and playback via an existing stereo system (the unit has no built-in power amplifier or speakers) takes no longer than the few minutes required to connect four signal cables and the AC line cord. Operation proves to be simple, virtually fool-proof, and—thanks to its sound—quite gratifying.

CIRCLE 142 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

### TEST REPORT GLOSSARY

**Bias:** antiskating, a force applied to counteract a tone arm's tendency to swing inward; a small amount of voltage applied to a device to prepare it for correct performance.

**Clipping:** the power level at which an amplifier's output distorts.

**Damping:** a unit's ability to control ringing.

**dB:** decibel; measure of the ratio between electrical quantities; generally the smallest difference in sound intensity that can be heard.

**Doubling:** a speaker's tendency to distort by producing harmonics of bass tones.

**Harmonic distortion:** spurious overtones introduced by equipment to a pure tone.

**IM (intermodulation) distortion:** spurious sum-and-difference tones caused by the beating of two tones.

**k:** kilo-; 1,000.

**m:** milli-; 1/1,000.

**M:** mega-; 1,000,000.

**$\mu$  (mu):** micro-; 1/1,000,000.

**Power bandwidth:** range of frequencies over which an amplifier can supply its rated power without exceeding its rated distortion (defined by the half-power, or -3 dB, points at the low and high frequencies).

**Resonance:** a tendency for a device to emphasize particular tones.

**Ringing:** a tendency for a component to continue responding to a no-longer-present signal.

**RMS:** root mean square; the effective value of a signal that has been expressed graphically by a sine wave. In these reports it generally defines an amplifier's continuous, rather than momentary, power capability.

**Sine wave:** in effect, a pure tone of a single frequency, used in testing.

**S/N ratio:** signal-to-noise ratio.

**Square wave:** in effect, a complex tone, rich in harmonics, covering a wide band of frequencies, used in testing.

**THD:** total harmonic distortion, including hum.

**Tracking angle (vertical):** angle at which the stylus meets the record, as viewed from the side; 15° has become the normal angle for the cutting, and thus the playing, of records.

**Transient response:** ability to respond to percussive signals cleanly and instantly.

**VU:** volume unit; a form of dB measurement standardized for a specific type of meter.

### REPORTS IN PROGRESS

#### Grado FTE Cartridge

#### Benjamin EMI 205 Speaker System



**"... (the Dynaco A-25's) are quite probably the best buy in high fidelity today."**

The Stereophile Magazine.



DYNACO A-25  
\$79.95

Dynaco designed the A-25 loudspeaker system to have the most accurate reproduction of any speaker available, regardless of price, yet at a low cost to the consumer. Here's what two of the most respected publications say about the results of our efforts.

**The Stereophile, Vol. 2, No. 9**

"... (when) some really deep stuff came along ... what came out of the A-25's simply defied belief, for they went deeper even than two of our standard systems ... We were certainly not prepared to find these piddling little Dyna systems going flat down to 35 Hz and rattling windows at a hair below 30 Hz! ... these A-25's are better than anything else we've ever encountered for less than \$200 each ..."

**Julian Hirsch in Stereo Review, June, 1969**

"... the Dynaco had a remarkably neutral quality. Many speakers have response irregularities that ... leave no doubt in the listener's mind that he is listening to a speaker. The A-25 had less of this coloration than most speakers we have heard, regardless of price ... nothing we have tested had a better overall transient response ... Not the least of the A-25's attraction is its low price of \$79.95.

"The excellent overall transient response of the Dynaco A-25 speaker system is shown by the tone-burst response photos at (left to right) 600, 2,000 and 10,000 Hz." (Stereo Review)



Send for literature or pick some up at your dealer where you can also hear the A-25

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**3060 JEFFERSON ST., PHILA., PA. 19121**  
IN EUROPE WRITE: DYNACO A/S, HUMLUM, STRUER, DENMARK

**There are 202 parts  
in a Garrard automatic turntable.**

**We make all but a  
piddling few.**



Today's automatic turntable is a beastly sophisticated device.

The Garrard SL95B, below, has 202 different parts.

That is, unless we tally the "parts" that go into such final assembly parts as the motor and pickup arm. In which case the total is more like 700.

A few of these parts we buy. Mostly springs, clips and bits of trim.

But the parts that make a Garrard perform, or not perform, we make ourselves.

### To buy or not to buy

At our Swindon works, in England, a sign reads "If we can't buy surpassing quality and absolute accuracy, we make it ourselves."

E. W. Mortimer, Director of Engineering Staff and a Garrard employee since 1919, says "That sign has been there as long as I can remember.

"But considering the precision of today's component turntables, and the tolerances we must work to, the attitude it represents is more critical now than it was even ten years ago."

Our Synchro-Lab motor is a perfect example.

To limit friction (and rumble) to the irreducible minimum, we super-finish each rotor shaft to *one microinch*.

The bearings are machined to a tolerance of plus or minus one ten-

thousandth of an inch. Motor pulleys must meet the same standard.

"When you make them yourself," observes Mr. Mortimer "you can be that finicky. That, actually, is what sets us apart."

### Mass produced, by hand

Despite its place as the world's largest producer of component automatic turntables, Garrard stubbornly eschews mass production techniques.

Every Garrard is still made by hand.

Each person who assembles a part tests that finished assembly.

And before each turntable is packed in its carton, 26 final tests are performed.

Thus, we're assured that the precision achieved in its parts is not lost in its whole.

### Swindon, sweet Swindon

In fairness to other makers, we confess to a special advantage.



CIRCLE 103 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

Our home.

At last census the total population of Swindon, England was 97,234. Garrard employs a rather large share of them, and has for fifty years.

"Not everyone has been here from the year one as I have," smiles Mortimer "but we have 256 employees with us over 25 years. Many are second and third generation.

"It's hardly your average labor force. Everyone feels a part of it."

### The sum of our parts

Today's SL95B is the most highly perfected automatic turntable you can buy, regardless of price.

Its revolutionary two-stage synchronous motor produces unvarying speed despite extreme variations in line voltage.

Its new counterweight adjustment screw lets you balance the tone arm mass to within a hundredth of a gram.

Its patented sliding weight anti-skating control is permanently accurate.

And its exclusive two-point record support provides unerringly gentle record handling.

You can enjoy the SL95B, the sum of all our parts, for \$129.50.

Or other Garrard component models, the sum of fewer parts, for as little as \$44.50.

Your dealer can help you decide.

**Garrard**

by Robin S. Lanier

# Stereo Without Fuss

What to know when shopping for a compact system

A HIGH FIDELITY BUFF just returned from five years in the upper Amazon would have difficulty recognizing some of the hybrid products on dealers' shelves today, thanks largely to the compact format in moderate-priced stereo equipment.

So diverse are the permutations that are marketed under the name "compact" that the term is almost impossible to define simply. The most elaborate compacts contain most of the features of a full-fledged component system and may even include electronics that are identical (or nearly so) to a stereo receiver model sold as a separate component by the same company. Looking in the other direction, you can find a good many so-called compacts that are really nothing more than table radios or table phonographs dressed up with component styling.

Another expression for stereo compacts, and one that further complicates the problem of definition, is "modular systems"—or "mods" for short. The awkward thing about the word modular is that it also has been used by makers of consoles to characterize the "separates" that they have, from time to time, introduced in imitation of true stereo components. Or it may be used to suggest subassemblies that can be removed, replaced, and rearranged at will. So we'll stick to the less equivocal "compacts."

That word is, for one thing, a reflection of the fact that compacts have evolved by combining separate components into single units whose design saves space—as well as bother and money—by comparison to the separate units from which they are derived. So for our purposes a compact will contain, as a basic minimum, a turntable plus the necessary electronics—often the equivalent of a stereo receiver. If no tuner is included, the electronics will be only a stereo amplifier—plus preamp stages, assuming that a magnetic cartridge is provided in the turntable's arm. These elements will of course be housed in a single unit, known often as the "control module."

Unlike most table-model phonographs, a compact requires (and usually includes) a pair of separate speakers. Lest this criterion appear to defeat the concept of compactness, consider that built-in speakers can't be moved about for optimum sound and stereo

effect—or, at best, they offer only limited adjustments to this end.

These basic requirements can be elaborated upon in a number of ways. The tuner section, if one is included, may cover the FM band or both FM and AM. Tape equipment—often for cassettes, sometimes for eight-track tape cartridges—may be built in. If the tape facility is capable of recording, the compact probably will have microphone jacks; but in any case, a compact should provide for interconnection with other components if it is to be more than simply a table phonograph with outboard speakers. Unless the necessary jacks are provided, you will not be able to use it with a separate tape deck, for example.

The flexibility possible in interconnecting the compact with other components and in controlling the system through the compact's switching arrangements are subject to wide variation from manufacturer to manufacturer and from model to model, of course. Some designers feel that complexity of control defeats the basic aims of a stereo compact: simplicity and efficiency. Others feel that oversimplified controls undermine component-quality electronics by limiting their adaptability to other program sources and varying signal quality. Take your choice.

## The Argument for Compacts

One strong point of stereo compacts is ease of use and installation. Equally basic, they take up very little room: two or four square feet of table space for the control unit plus a couple of corners or some shelves for the speakers. On the technical side, the compacts' speakers have the advantage of being freed from the equipment case so that they can be put where you choose. (To hear stereo across a moderate-sized room, for example, you need speakers six to ten feet apart.)

Another basic advantage of the compact format is the opportunity it gives the manufacturer to match all the parts, increasing the design's over-all efficiency. Matching speaker and amplifier is particularly helpful: good results can be had at minimum cost if the two are made to go together. This approach



Not all compacts are delivered with speakers. The Heath AD-27 (left), one of the few kit models available, will drive a choice of speakers from Heath or other manufacturers. Marantz Model 25 (right) is one of few that offer choice of turntable. Miracord is shown; Garrard and Dual are other options.

can be carried just so far, however, if the compact is to continue to allow a choice of speakers—necessary, for example, if extension speaker connections are provided or if you may want to replace the original speakers with better units eventually.

The efficiencies of system design help to keep compact costs down, too. The format doesn't repeal the laws of hi-fi economics, however. If a stereo compact costs, say, \$200, it probably will sound as good as a carefully chosen component system of the same total cost. At that price, both types of system border on the lower edge of high fidelity.

By the same token, compacts in the \$100 range (there are some) will have many of the hang-ups of inferior equipment—including pickups that tend to wear stereo records rapidly.

In the \$250 to \$450 bracket, though, where most of the popular compacts are, there is a lot of good fidelity to be had. Power will be in the moderate range—10 to 30 watts rms—but the speakers supplied with the compact are usually efficient enough to make a satisfyingly loud sound with the power available. Pickups will be very good, if not the best available. Speakers will have smooth highs and satisfying bass, if not that final low octave you get in the best speakers (at up to \$250 or more apiece). In other words, by choosing components carefully and spending more money, you can beat the fidelity of almost any compact. That is hardly a surprising state of affairs, because really good sound has never been cheap.

Compacts are generally not aimed at the audio upper crust. Many stereo buyers want the most fidelity they can get at a middle-bracket price. If they also want minimum technical fuss and easy installation, a compact may be a completely satisfying answer. For that reason, compacts today make up one of the main underpinnings of the high fidelity market.

### How to Choose a Compact

The traditional disc compact is the standard, basic model. Your first decision, therefore, must be between it and those models that add extra functions. It's a question of what you want from your compact.

If you're looking for the widest range of musical choice in commercial recordings of top fidelity—and for a minimum cash outlay—the standard format still is best for your needs.

If you want to make your own recordings, you must consider tape: either open-reel or cassette. Right now, for top quality, open-reel tape does best. And if you are serious about the production of tapes that require interpolations, excisions, rearrangements—tape editing, in other words—an open-reel tape machine is a necessity. But if you are interested in playing and recording on tape without editing, you should consider the cassette, about which so much is being written in this magazine and elsewhere. The audio industry is obviously betting on the future of the cassette in high fidelity, because equipment to handle it is being incorporated into more and more components and systems.

One popular tape format, for example, combines a cassette deck with a tuner from which programs can be recorded directly. In a stereo compact, of course, FM multiplex would be a minimum requirement; but many throw in the AM band as well. (If you already have a tuner to use with the compact, you need only be sure that an appropriate input is provided.) Considering how easy cassettes are to use by comparison with tapes that must be threaded, many users are quite willing to forego the extra quality of open-reel in favor of cassette convenience.

Others will be willing to forego the ability to record as well. If you're one of them, there are a number of eight-track cartridge units on the market. The advantage of these cartridges to owners of automobile stereo systems is that they can be played either in the home or on the road—unless your car system takes the older four-track cartridges. If so, don't look for a compact to handle your cartridges. Few four-track home systems have been offered and, with the declining popularity of the four-track medium, you'll probably want to switch to eight-track or cassettes in your car before long.

A final basic consideration in buying a compact is the speaker systems it will drive. Most stereo compacts include a pair of speakers, and some even offer



Component manufacturers tend to offer more "advanced" features than other producers of compacts. Electro-Voice (in Landmark 100, above), Harman-Kardon, and Nivico are among those whose speakers use special dispersion techniques to fill listening room. Pioneer C-5600 (upper right) features built-in biamplification; Kenwood may offer model with jumpers between preamp and power amp to allow addition of biamplification system. Bogen BC-460 (right) has Crescendo Control—a variable expander-compressor to extend or limit dynamic range.

you a choice of speakers. In a few cases the compact may be offered without speakers, allowing you to choose among appropriate systems on the market.

The least flexible arrangement is, of course, the sort in which electronics and speakers are custom-engineered for each other. If the compact will not accept any speakers except those that are delivered with it—or if you feel that you will never want to upgrade the compact by adding better speakers—you should do some careful listening before you buy. Any shortcomings in the speakers will be with you for the life of the compact.

Listen first for smoothness and balance by playing various sorts of music—small instrumental groups, solo voice, full orchestra, solo instruments (particularly organ), and chorus. Do any particular notes, ranges, or instruments seem to stand out unnaturally, forcing themselves on you, so to speak? Next, using deep organ or orchestral sounds, check the bass response. Is the bass simply a thumping, rumbling noise that suggests the presence of these notes without accurately reproducing them? Using a passage rich in high frequencies (cymbals and triangle are particularly good) check for naturalness and openness of reproduction and wide sound dispersion. Is the sound fuzzy or sizzly or muffled? And do you lose much of the highs as you move away from the speaker's axis?

If the speakers are interchangeable, it might be advisable to listen to the compact with better speak-

ers—choosing models with which you are familiar, if possible. Does the compact have difficulty pumping out a full, natural sound with the other speakers? If there are connections for a second pair of speakers and you think you will eventually want extension speakers, check the amplifier's power rating. If it is less than 20 watts rms per channel, you may have trouble finding four quality speakers that can be driven well simultaneously by the compact.

Those are, in briefest terms, some of the main factors to consider in choosing basic functions. But there are also a number of particulars you should watch out for when you buy a compact.

On a disc machine, first check out the pickup. It should be a high-compliance magnetic or ceramic unit that will track stereo records at 3 grams or less. An elliptical tip is nice but not essential; sphericals should have a 0.7-mil radius. The lowest-bracket compacts tend to have ceramic cartridges with turn-over stylus assemblies—one stylus for microgroove and one for 78 rpm. As a class, these pickups are not appropriate for high-grade stereo use. They are too "stiff" and contain too much moving mass. The result is high record wear and poor fidelity.

A good assurance of pickup quality is a statement by the compact maker that he is using a standard model from one of the top audio manufacturers. Many manufacturers are doing that. If the pickup is a mystery, your best quick check is a recording

with very loud orchestral music, one you have heard several times on a machine that plays without a trace of shatter in the peaks. You also need to know, or measure, the tracking force on the pickup. The calibration on the changer arm itself may be inaccurate, but most audio shops have tracking-force gauges.

Changers need careful attention because they can be the weakest element of a low-cost compact. To check for high flutter, play a record that has a very slow piano passage. Any noticeable pitch wavering or sourish quality on long-held notes is caused by flutter, and it probably will bother you more and more as time goes on. You may even begin to hear it in faster music and with other instruments, though the effect is not as striking.

Many of the changers in medium-priced compacts run a little fast. Tempo will be a shade too quick, the pitch a little too sharp. The best check is a stroboscope disc. But a small speed error may not be bothersome, or even detectable by ear. If familiar music sounds right to you, speed probably is within acceptable limits. The limits get very much tighter if you are a musician, amateur or pro, and want to play along with the phonograph. For that, speed has to be right on the nose, and you should look for a changer with adjustable speed.

To check for rumble, play an orchestral record, turning up the volume about as loud as you'd ever

want it for prolonged listening. Adjust the bass control for good bass balance. Then move the pickup back to the starting grooves on the record, ahead of the music. Is there an objectionable low-pitched noise when you drop the stylus in the blank groove? Judge whether or not this noise is too loud for soft passages of music. Try two or three different records: rumble is sometimes in the recording itself.

Another failing in the changers of some compacts is high susceptibility to outside vibration. A heavy footstep—sometimes even a light one—may jiggle the stylus around in the groove, causing very distressing noise and distortion. Unfortunately, this is hard to check except in the room where the machine will be used: the characteristics of the floor and of the table holding the machine enter the equation. An agreement with your dealer that will permit you to exchange an unsatisfactory unit is a good idea. But you can often cure transmitted noise problems by putting the compact on a very heavy piece of furniture or a noise-absorbing pad such as those used under typewriters.

For a rough check of FM radio, first find out what kind of antenna is being used in the shop. Then tune across the dial, noting whether or not all local stations, and some further away, come in loud and clear, without noise. If you get such reception with an inside antenna, the set has enough sensitivity for almost any location in the city and

## CAN COMPACTS BE AS GOOD AS SEPARATES?

Although as a class the compact systems have achieved a reputable level of performance, no compact system we have listened to can match—let alone surpass—the performance of any number of possible systems made up of carefully chosen and costlier separate components. Which raises an interesting question: will, or can, compacts ever appeal to the all-out stereo enthusiast who need not concern himself with considerations of budget and installation space?

The answer, it seems, is both technical and cultural. To begin with, from a quality and performance standpoint, it is quite feasible to install the most sophisticated, refined, or advanced "state of the art" turntable/arm/pickup together with a high-powered deluxe amplifier (or amplifier plus tuner) in a wooden wraparound that itself is large enough to accommodate it all. Indeed, if you buy such equipment as completely separate components and later install them in some form of cabinetry or housing, what you've done—from a technical standpoint—has been essentially to make your own "integrated" system. How "compact" such a system is may well depend on one's concept of size, but basically a super record player plus a super amplifier or receiver fitted into a common housing is, by any definition, an integrated assembly: it corresponds functionally to the "control module," if you will, of a stereo compact.

The fact is, however, that no manufacturer has so far brought out an integrated system designed on an all-out performance level. The industry as a whole does not feel the market is ready for a compact (or, let's allow, a not-so-compact-but-still-integrated) system designed on a state-of-the-art basis. Manufacturers certainly know how to make such systems, but they have to date deliberately opted to limit the size, performance level, and cost of such systems in keeping with their evaluation of the market. Putting it another way: at the ultrahigh performance level, the "single format" concept is regarded as too auspicious and too expensive for the large market which is known to exist and which has been accurately defined (judging by sales success up to now) as a market seeking reasonably high quality combined with convenience, compactness, low price, and a non-involvement with the technicalia and "personal commitment" that have long been associated with high fidelity ownership.

Can compacts be as good as the best available separates? The answer is yes, but they probably would be a little bigger and a lot costlier than what we now call compact. Are they now as good? The answer is no, but they're not terribly far behind, all things considered. Will they ever be as good? The answer is maybe, depending on the industry's changing view of the market. N.E.

suburbs. If the shop uses an outside antenna and you plan to do the same, you should get similar results at locations not too much further out. If you are very far out—fifty miles or more from the stations you want to hear—you need very high FM sensitivity, especially for stereo. That means 3 microvolts or less under the IHF standard.

For a quick check of an open-reel tape unit, bring along a recording on tape with which you are familiar, one with low noise and distortion. Playing it will give you a rough but useful idea of frequency response, distortion, and so on. Is the low bass really there? Are the highs airy, open, easy? Try

all the controls to make sure the various transport functions follow one another smoothly.

The same scheme can be used with a cassette machine. If radio is built in, it is very useful to tune in a program and listen carefully, at the same time recording it on a blank cassette. After a few minutes, rewind and listen to the cassette. It probably won't be quite as good as direct listening, but it may be close enough to make you happy.

Lastly, buy from a dealer who won't shrink from servicing the unit. Expert help, if you need it, is worth many times more than what you might save by buying at a discount from a no-service dealer.

## FOR THE RECORD: THESE ARE MAJOR SOURCES OF PHONO COMPACTS

In the following representative list of manufacturers, all of whom offer stereo compacts, no attempt has been made at a model-by-model comparison for several reasons. First, compacts represent the most mercurial area of stereo componentry today. New offerings appear with such rapidity that any list prepared for publication would be out of date by the time it reached you in printed form. Second, as the accompanying article points out, there are no clearly drawn boundaries around the models that might qualify as compacts—as opposed to table phonographs, mini-consoles, prepackaged component systems, or what have you. And a list including all models that might be considered as possible candidates would be endless. Third, there is no unanimity among manufacturers about such matters as terminology and specifications. For example, power-rating figures (when they are published at all) can run the gamut from conservative to wildly inflated. So comparative listings based on manufacturers' specifications would be grossly unfair to those brands that are most conscientious about product listings.

The models referred to below all contain, as minimum equipment, a record changer with cartridge and a stereo amplifier. If you have specific questions or want over-all product literature, we suggest you write to the manufacturers on our list. Addresses are included for that purpose.

**Allied Radio Corp.**  
100 N. Western Ave.  
Chicago, Ill. 60680.

1 system, with AM/FM and cassette. About \$380.

**Benjamin Electronic Sound Corp.**  
40 Smith St.  
Farmingdale, N.Y. 11736.

4 systems, 3 with AM/FM, 1 with FM only. Priced from about \$300 to \$600.

**Bogen Communications**  
P. O. Box 500  
Paramus, N.J. 07652.

3 systems, all including AM/FM. Prices vary according to speaker system chosen; from about \$350 to \$490.

**Claricon, Inc.**  
663 Dowd Ave.  
Elizabeth, N.J. 07201.

3 systems, all including AM/FM. Prices not available at press time.

**Concertone, Inc.**  
7035 N. Laurel Canyon  
North Hollywood, Calif. 91605.

1 system, includes AM/FM. Price not available at press time.

**Concord Electronics Corp.**  
1935 Armcost Ave.  
Los Angeles, Calif. 90025.

3 systems, all including AM/FM, 1 with cassette. Priced from about \$250 to \$400.

**Consolidated Merchandising Corp. (Webcor)**  
520 W. 34th St.  
New York, N.Y. 10001.

1 system, includes AM/FM. About \$190.

**Crown Radio Corp. (Industrial Suppliers Co.)**  
755 Folsom St.  
San Francisco, Calif. 94107.

1 system, includes AM/FM and cassette. About \$300, not including speaker systems. Optional matching speakers available at about \$70 per pair.

**Electro-Voice, Inc.**  
P. O. Box 186  
Buchanan, Mich. 49107.

1 system, includes AM/FM. About \$445.

**Fisher Radio Corp.**  
11-35 45th Rd.  
Long Island City, N.Y. 11101.

5 systems, 3 with AM/FM, 1 with FM and cassette, 1 with FM only. Priced from about \$270 to \$450.

**Harman-Kardon, Inc.**  
55 Ames Court  
Plainview, N.Y. 11803.

9 complete lines, all but 1 with FM, 4 with AM/FM, 2 with cassettes. Prices vary according to speaker systems selected; from about \$200 to \$530.



**Heath Co.**

Benton Harbor, Mich. 49023.

2 kit systems, 1 with FM. Priced at about \$110 to \$180, not including speakers. Matching speakers available at about \$145 to \$170.

**Hitachi Sales Corp.**

48-50 34th St.

Long Island City, N.Y. 11101.

2 systems, both including AM/FM. Priced from about \$250 to \$350.

**JVC America, Inc.**

50-35 56th Rd.

Maspeth, N.Y. 11378.

2 systems, 1 with AM/FM, 1 with eight-track cartridge. Priced from about \$140 to \$220.

**KLH Research & Development Corp.**

30 Cross St.

Cambridge, Mass. 02139.

4 systems, 2 with FM and optional AM. Priced from about \$200 to \$430.

**Kenwood Electronics, Inc.**

3700 S. Broadway Place

Los Angeles, Calif. 90007.

1 system, includes AM/FM. About \$330.

**Lafayette Radio Corp.**

111 Jericho Turnpike

Syosset, N.Y. 11791.

5 systems, 2 with AM/FM, 1 with FM only. Priced from about \$70 to \$250.

**Lear Jet Corp.**

13131 Lyndon Ave.

Detroit, Mich. 48227.

1 system, includes AM/FM, eight-track cartridge. About \$290.

**Marantz, Inc.**

8150 Vineland Ave.

Sun Valley, Calif. 91352.

2 systems, both including AM/FM. Record changer and speakers not included with 1 system; has space for installation of Dual, Garrard, or Micracord changer. Priced from about \$340 to \$400.

**Mikado Electronics Corp.**

1072 Bryant St.

San Francisco, Calif. 94103.

3 systems, all including AM/FM. Price on 1 system varies according to changer selected. From about \$190 to \$300.

**Motorola, Inc.**

9401 W. Grand Ave.

Franklin Park, Ill. 60131.

4 systems, all including AM/FM. Priced from about \$200 to \$230.

**Panasonic (Matsushita Electric Corp. of America)**

200 Park Ave.

New York, N.Y. 10017.

6 systems, all including AM/FM. Priced from about \$130 to \$350.

**Pioneer Electronics USA Corp.**

140 Smith St.

Farmingdale, N.Y. 11735.

2 systems, including AM/FM. About \$500 to \$550.

**Radio Shack Corp.**

730 Commonwealth Ave.

Boston, Mass. 02215.

2 systems, 1 with AM/FM, 1 with FM and cassette. Prices not available at press time.

**Roberts Division, Rheem Mfg. Co.**

5922 Bowcroft St.

Los Angeles, Calif. 90016.

1 system, includes AM/FM. About \$300.

**H. H. Scott, Inc.**

111 Powdermill Rd.

Maynard, Mass. 07154.

5 complete lines, 4 with AM/FM, 1 with FM only. Prices vary according to speaker systems selected. From about \$300 to \$600.

**Sherwood Electronic Laboratories, Inc.**

4300 N. California Ave.

Chicago, Ill. 60618.

1 system, includes AM/FM. About \$390, not including speakers, changer, or cartridge. Has accommodation for any current Dual, Garrard SL65 or SL55, or Sherwood SEL-100 changer. 2 speaker systems available.

**Sony Corp. of America**

47-74 Van Dam St.

Long Island City, N.Y. 11101.

5 systems, 2 with AM/FM, 1 with FM only. Priced from about \$180 to \$380.

**Sylvania Electric Products, Inc.**

703 Third Ave.

New York, N.Y. 10017.

6 systems, 4 with AM/FM. Priced from about \$150 to \$400.

**Telex Corp.**

9600 Aldrich Avenue South

Minneapolis, Minn. 55420.

3 systems, all including AM/FM, 1 including eight-track cartridge. Prices not available at press time.

**Toshiba America, Inc.**

477 Madison Ave.

New York, N.Y. 10016.

3 systems, all including AM/FM. Priced from about \$100 to \$250.

**Yamaha**

7733 Telegraph Rd.

Montebello, Calif. 90640.

1 system, includes AM/FM. Price varies according to speaker systems selected. From about \$280 to \$595.

**Zenith Sales Corp.**

1900 N. Austin Ave.

Chicago, Ill. 60639.

1 system, includes AM/FM. About \$240.

by Conrad L. Osborne

# Does Opera Have A Future?

Opera is not a form of music, claims the author; opera is simply opera, but it needs a radical reorientation if it is to become relevant to our times

EVERY SO OFTEN, a certain New York sports columnist takes a poke at opera. I'm ready for it now, of course, but the first two or three times, it sneaked up on me. The column would be running its normal, tie-undone, cigarette-dangling course, explaining why it was that soccer will not catch on in the U.S., or how baseball owners came to be such a foam-headed, avaricious lot, and then here would come this mildly contemptuous crack about opera, as if some perfectly representative white-collar type, out on his lunch hour, had crossed the street to punch an elderly stranger in the nose.

Oh, there's no danger. The attitude of most people toward opera most of the time is one of indifference. They figure maybe they don't like it, but they don't actually know, and above all they do not give a damn. Yet there is an antipathy about, however peripheral. And that, if you think about it, is remarkable. Few people of any intelligence or maturity will express contempt for poetry per se, or painting. They may feel it, but they do not express it, for the silliness of condemning an entire artistic form, with all its possibilities, is too evident. Not evident at all, it seems, with respect to opera.

We converts no longer look at the face opera presents, and so we forget how very unappealing it is. We fail to note, for example, that the form's present structure of presentation, its repertory of works, and its inbred little social universe, all so charmingly disconnected from the post-World War I world, so engagingly oblivious to its deep need for a responsive art, and so thoroughly worthy of its contempt, have come to personify the form itself, so that the form's true nature and potential are utterly obscured. And we look past, or feebly rationalize on exclusivist grounds, the fact that this structure does not pull its

own weight, that it sucks on society for the nourishment of a rarefied little minority.

But this face is not that of the form itself, nor this posture toward the world that of art itself. And before we can decide what must be done to make opera excusable in this country and century, we must have a belief about what it is, and a belief about why art should exist at all.

In my judgment, there is only one unexceptionable statement that can be made about opera as a form: it is the form of theater in which the essential means of expression is the singing voice. It is obvious that most operas consist of more than these two elements, but they need not to be identifiable as opera. (An orchestra, for instance, is by no means essential. To take a commonplace example: *Aida* minus the orchestral parts is still an opera, however poor; *Aida* minus the vocal parts, however, is no longer an opera, but some dreadful and interminable sort of suite; and *Aida* minus its theatrical context is no longer an opera either, but an oratorio straining at the seams.)

The essential elements are theater and singing; theater through singing. That creates opera. One of the peculiarities of this definition is that, although it seems to strip the form of some of its richest customary attributes, it opens up a whole range of possibilities not discernible in opera as it is presented. How much more is implied by the word "theater" or the word "singing" than can be glimpsed in what we think of as "opera"!

Also proceeding from this definition of opera are some logical inferences as to what it is not. It is not, for instance, a form of music. It remains not a form of music despite the fact that in theory it is commonly considered such, especially by classifiers and observers who have nothing to do with its performance. (Newspapers send their music critics to opera performances, universities consign opera to their music departments.)

Having told us that opera is not a form of music but a form of theater, the definition has some further limitations to impose, for there are many things in the realm of theater that opera is not. It isn't a sung play or a play with music. (It would make just as much sense—none—to call a play a spoken opera.)

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This is a point of some interest, inasmuch as the spoken drama has a habit of lurking about as a reference point in the operatic background, and while few people who think on the subject would actually term an opera a sung play, there is a strong tendency to suppose that a libretto is, approximately, the "play" part of an opera. But that is no more accurate than to say that song is "elevated speech," or that dance is "walking extended"; there are differences of kind, not simply of degree. Play: the form of theater in which the essential means of expression is the spoken word. Dance: the form of theater in which the essential means of expression is bodily movement. Opera: the form of theater in which the essential means of expression is the singing voice. Let's not talk of opera as music, or even of opera as drama, but of opera as opera.

### Apologia for the Abashed

I have already spoken of the necessity to render opera excusable, and to relate it to a belief about the *raison d'être* of art in general. This springs partly from a feeling of abashment—on the face of it, opera is to such a large extent inexcusable—and partly traceable to my belief that questioning art's necessity or desirability is entirely valid. I cannot see why art should not be called to account. Art for art's sake, sure—the thought is philosophically unassailable, marvelously employable in turning aside some of the more childish questions about art's "usefulness." But it answers the query as to why art *should* be, rather than why art is; the latter is the more interesting and urgent question. And though art's existence may be its own justification, and though it may be as inviolable as the Sahara or the Atlantic, it differs from these two phenomena in that it exists as a result of human volition.

Art is a means of symbolization for the purpose of understanding. Understanding—of self, environment, and the relationship between the two—is the only discernible, logical reason for these forms of human activity. I also believe that artistic expression is an actual function of the human organism; that it is essential to man's spiritual well-being. But that, too, is really a sort of understanding, for it re-establishes contact with something that is of the human essence, and reveals to us the true order of our inner necessities.

In theater, the self and the environment, and their interrelationship, are expressed by the characters and the settings. We are able to fragment the psyche, to personify conflicts and meanings, to represent any selected view of ourselves and our world. It is our hope that this process of selective objectification will help us to understand—even to come to terms with—the forces represented. Theater has this hope in common with all other efforts toward understanding and self-unification, artistic or otherwise. There is a particularly striking parallel with the twentieth century's most characteristic effort in this direction—psychoanalysis: both seek to place us simultaneously within and

without a spiritually significant experience. This enables us not only to undergo the impact of the experience without having to endure the consequences of it, but to comprehend it as it is happening. Failure is of course the rule for both kinds of attempts; but the exceptions have their piquancy.

Given this definition of purpose, we cannot be surprised that theatrical performance has so often been intertwined with religious ritual—the latter being a symbolic, celebrative re-enactment of basic myth (that is, of commonly held understanding). The theater periodically returns (usually with conscious reference to the Greek festivals) to a religious ideal. According to this ideal, a theatrical performance is an occasion on which a community gathers, in a celebrative atmosphere, for presentations of spiritual significance, either in the form of familiar ritual or of a fresh attempt at clarification by a new author. This ideal has special relevance to the development of the modern opera, since it recurs at its very origin in the aims of the Florentine *camerata*, and again, with varying emphases, in the work of a number of its quintessential creators, notably Gluck and Wagner.

Regrettably, operatic presentation currently partakes of precisely those qualities that have tended to render religion itself decadent and irrelevant (churchiness and a falsely elevated tone, exclusivity and snobbishness, self-righteousness, and a parasitical relationship to society) rather than those that can render it relevant and necessary (joy, refreshment of spirit, rededication of purpose, service to the community). It is time for a New Reformation.

Opera is now enduring the most severe crisis in its three-hundred-year existence. This crisis is to an extent a popularity problem; it is also a matter of mounting economic pressures. But more profoundly, it is a crisis of relevance. Both as an institution and as an art, opera is in a terminal stage. Along with every other art form, it is being tested for its adaptability, for its capacity to break through to something new when conditions insist upon it. So far, it's flunked—flunked more miserably than its sister stage arts. It has, in fact, flunked in the most ignominious of all possible ways: by default. It has simply failed to show up for the exam.

The reasons for this failure are embedded in the structure we have developed for the presentation of opera, which operates in a vigorous and thorough manner to discourage evolution and mutation in the form, and in the narrowness of our vision with respect to the unexplored potential of the form.

### Buried Needs, Nails in the Coffin

There is not yet a significant lyric theater system in our country for a simple and excellent reason: almost no one feels the need for it. The need is there, inside people, to be sure, but it does not make its presence felt in any specific or identifiable way.

How could it? No important number of Americans have ever had evidence that an operatic theater can

have any direct relationship to their own lives. Of the works that are performed, almost none has any explicit meaning for contemporary Americans, and though many have an important or even a profound meaning on a more indirect, implicit level, they are presented in such a way as to actually disguise, rather than illuminate, such meaning. What hint are we given of the power of theater-through-song to leap off the stage, seize us by the throats, and shake us, hard?

Consequently, most Americans regard such opera as they may encounter with indifference. Some are contemptuous, out of ignorance and defensiveness, and some are respectful, out of ignorance and defensiveness, but few are taken by the urgency of it. One of the depressing aspects of operagoing in most American cities (and in European cities too for that matter) is the observable detachment and distance between the performance and the audience. There is no emotional interplay, hardly the sense of an event under one roof—it's more like standing on a sidewalk watching an animated store window display.

So people are right to withhold their support, dead right. They are wrong who give token support, without conviction, without involvement, without even a momentary gut connection.

Now it is true that in some cities companies have developed enough support to sustain a brief season; but even here, no ground swell rises to force the establishment of permanent resident companies, and no body of opinion—even that of a significant minority—popularizes the notion that opera is a public matter.

A dual revolution is needed: a revolution in the form itself, so that a body of current work that speaks to present times and circumstances grows, and a revolution in the means of presentation; so that the incredibly rich store of past work can have vitality for contemporary audiences—for, say, some of the same audience that customarily patronizes good movies. The people who seek out Antonioni or Bergman or Fellini or Kubrick are people in search of art. There are a lot of them.

I am not offering an original insight when I say that we need a breakthrough in the form. We all know that (I include in the "we" even the stodgiest and most self-interested of the resisters). But I do have a rather special viewpoint on the kind of effort required, and it stems from my belief that opera is a form of theater, and not a form of music. For we are all straining our eyes, trying to penetrate the mists of evolving musical idioms, when the breakthrough we must make is not a musical one at all, but a theatrical one.

It is for this reason that the presentation of each new opera by our tradition-oriented companies seems nothing more than another nail in the coffin of the form itself. Composers attempt settings in various musical languages—neo-Americana, *neoverismo*, neo-Berg, Great Grey Atonal—and with differing degrees of compositional sophistication and an almost uniform incompetence in the handling of their primary solo instrument, the legitimate singing voice.

The conservatives suppose that by cleaving to the outward symptoms of the old disease they may infect us all anew. Wrong. The "modernists" imagine that through the adoption of a musical language that is nominally contemporary, they will produce a new kind of opera. Wrong.

The most clever, innovative, and audacious of avant-garde scores alters the *form* not one jot. On the other hand, the simplest and least original of scores, wedded to a theatrical concept that is new and urgent, would constitute an important alteration.

Since the theater is a means of symbolizing the forces of the self and of environment, it is logical that it change as men's view of themselves and their world change. These changes in this century have been soul-shaking. And if a man views himself and his relationship to the universe in a new way, where is the truth for him in a theater that mirrors the old? Would not a lyric theater of our time of *necessity* come to grips with the crisis of identity, of moral meaning, of environmental convulsion, through which we are passing? Might not this theater expressly confute the views of self and environment expressed by the theater we now accept as "opera" and replace them with our own? And could these new views of ourselves and our world possibly be expressed in a fixed proscenium theater? On the far side of an orchestra pit?

The new technology of the theater, with all its implications, has far outstripped our imagination in the controlled use of it. We have glimpsed more of it at World's Fair exhibits than in any avowed theater, and the experimental application of it to the theatrical situation, musical and nonmusical, is just beginning. But it is clear that the possibilities that lie before us *at this moment* as a result of recent (and some not so recent) developments in film and projection work, in lighting, in sound recording and reproduction, are staggering. It is possible, right now, to completely surround an audience with an unprecedented diversity of visual and aural images—still or motion, black and white or color, on surfaces of many shapes and changing shapes, a single image or twenty images, sound and sight synchronized, combined or alternated with live performance, and in space that does or does not resemble theaters past and present. These possibilities amount to nothing less than the means for portraying, with a hitherto undreamt-of sorcery, an entirely new view of the universe, and consequently of man's relationship to the universe and to other men.

The danger of the new technology is that it is seen as a salvation, as the theatrical statement in and of itself. And to be sure, it can effect basic alterations. In the Joffrey Ballet's *Astarte*, for instance, we already have a sophisticated and successful example of simultaneous live and filmed explorations of the same event; and we have a set that performs.

But the performers can become the set, too, as in certain works of Alwin Nikolais. Regardless of technological advancement, the performer remains the center of any theatrical event. And here the path of

discovery is much more rugged. For not only have there been no sustained efforts at getting at the problems of the singer as actor, as theatrical instrument—we have gone from bad to worse in dealing with the problems of the singer as singer. Teachers, performers, composers have not merely altered styles or adopted new attitudes; they have lost contact with functional realities. The performer must locate himself, must find the means of making his voice, body, and imagination the means of direct, spontaneous creativity.

It is in these areas that the breakthrough must come. The music will follow.

### An Informative Parallel

In considering how this breakthrough might come about, it may be instructive to consider the world of dance, where approximately just such a breakthrough has been made, and where, for that reason, more growth and artistic excitement has taken place over the past quarter-century in the United States than has been the case in any of the other live performing arts. This experience reaffirms some basic truths about the juxtaposition of art and society. The revolutions (I use the plural advisedly) in dance have not been preconceived. They have had nothing to do with intellectually formulated theory, with sociologically determined needs, or with civic pride, misguided or otherwise. Above all, they have had nothing to do with buildings or complexes or centers. They have arisen out of the inspired responses of individual artists to the same challenge that now faces opera: to find an expression for what we *now* believe to be true and important. These individuals saw that the challenge could not be answered with the language of the classical ballet, and so they simply invented their own forms of dance: they actually changed, many times over and in many ways, the basic language of their art. Because works did not exist in these new languages, these innovators created their own works, and soon others created works for them. Because companies did not exist to perform these works, these too were organized and trained in the new styles and languages. Thus, entire repertoires of work and entire schools of dancers grew from those original responses to expressive needs, and our dance world now includes not only several fine classical companies, but a raftful of highly individualistic modern dance groups, each offering its peculiar vision on a continuing basis.

This observation does not tell us precisely how a parallel breakthrough may be brought about in opera, for we cannot legislate the appearance of fresh insight and original perception. But it tells us something of what we are looking for. It tells us that we should look for it outside the present operatic establishment—a mutation in form is no more likely to occur in one of our repertory opera companies than Martha Graham might have been likely to spring from the Kirov, or Merce Cunningham from the Royal Dan-

ish. And perhaps it indicates that in the new lyric theater, the composer, librettist, director, and performers will work in more nearly the relationship of the modern composer, choreographer, and dancer than in the fragmented, musically dominated patterns of the recent past.

The artistic revolution is only half the story: the other half lies in the re-establishment of an active, edifying relationship between art and the community at large. Recent dance history is again instructive, though in a negative sense, for while the artistic breakthrough has been achieved and considerable growth has taken place, there has existed an unfortunate assumption (which now shows some sign of correcting itself) that the community, despite its total lack of previous experience and of any other compelling reason for interest, would by some extrasensory process apprehend the relevance of the new forms. Or else that the community did not count. The first assumption contradicts all history and sense; the second is arrogant and, worse, suicidal.

Suddenly the societal considerations, which seemed so irrelevant to the artistic creation, become altogether urgent, for they are the key to the survival of the institutions that perpetuate those creations. A new operatic theater must not only find its creative and interpretative validity, but must demonstrate that these discoveries can have significance for more than a fraction of a per cent of its potential constituency.

### Preserved in Amber

The operations of our present operatic theater are geared to the presentation, and repeated re-presentation, of a very limited number of works. With token exceptions, these works have in common origins in times, places, and societies well removed from our own. As in any performing art whose disciplines are not subject to continual juggling by the infusion of fresh creation, the style of presentation has gradually become generalized, homogenized, and ritualized. It is above all imitative. The "why" of the performance is no longer there—we are given, at best, a reasonable "how." Methods of preparation and rehearsal are based on the assumption that a common tongue exists, a basic identification among performer, material, and audience that will tolerate preparation roughly equivalent to giving the air conditioner its spring start-up: coach the role, decide on tempos, get your blocking.

But this assumption is incorrect. That basic identification is not present, and the "why" is no longer a self-answered question. In a serious, creative theater, nothing is predetermined. Rehearsal is a time of exploration and discovery, not of drill on specifics that have been fixed in advance, in a vacuum.

Since the means of preparation do not even address themselves to the proper problem, they naturally do not solve it. Further, there is increasing pressure, largely economic, to accomplish this essentially

imitative (coached) preparation in a shorter time, and to multiply the number of performances.

So we have a theater in which a repertory that ought to be considered in the light of quite special qualities and special problems of performance, and that should occupy a slice of high but restricted terrain on the operatic landscape, is instead presented on a strictly routinized basis, and then by means which simply omit the basic steps underlying any true creation.

This situation has had two disastrous consequences, to wit: 1) the rich and immensely varied repertory of the past, much of which possesses an importance and relevance equal to that of Shakespeare or Sophocles, is cheated twofold—it is accorded neither the careful preservation of its traditions and past performance standards (which would at least grant it an integrity) nor the exploratory, genuinely re-creative search for a “why,” an interpretation that is truly of this time and place; 2) the construction and consolidation of this means of presentation has effectively closed off channels to new creative effort, which depends in large measure on the existence of a performing medium responsive and flexible enough to incorporate innovation and mutation, and creative enough to suggest it. Operawrights have, therefore, by and large given up. Some have tried to create for the existing situation, writing for this sort of theater as a playwright might attempt to create a work for, say, a rep company specializing in nineteenth-century Romantic French drama. Such operas turn up hither and yon and are always awful, whether their scores consciously hark to the past or scream of the present.

In all sobriety, and without malice toward any of the interpreters of this theater (there are many potent talents among them), one can only say that it is decadent, an absurd frivolity in a society whose need for truth, for compassionate insight held up for all to see and feel, is acute. Moreover, it is not going to change. The three or four large companies and assorted imitators which constitute the world of this theater are locked firmly in place, complete with audiences, boards of directors, funding structures. They constitute a self-sufficient closed system. This system is probably in no danger of immediate collapse, but its difficulties are mounting and, in the long run, it is doomed, for it has made itself *structurally, organically* incapable of adapting to a world that is changing so rapidly that in many fields the man who has just completed his education finds the knowledge he has acquired already on the way to obsolescence.

There is no point in attacking or goading this system. For that matter, there is no persuasive argument against the notion that a nation's system of lyric theaters should include several whose primary function is to maintain the “classical” repertory, presenting older works of proven merit with every effort bent toward ensuring that all aspects of the performances are of a kind and caliber designed to bring the best qualities of those works home to succeeding generations of operagoers. Such a company would

constitute a well-stocked and well-maintained “performing museum,” and would not have to waste effort or confuse itself by trying to be something else part of the time.

Unhappily, the Metropolitan (which of course heads and symbolizes this closed little system) is not even a very good museum. It exhibits only a fraction of its warehouse, and the works are often carelessly hung and thoughtlessly lit. Nor can those of us interested in a renewal or mutation of the form altogether ignore the fact that the Met acts as a blinder on the vision, a clamp on the imagination, and worst, as a very synonym for opera in the general mind. Still, it need only be ignored. It has isolated itself, to the point where the bulk of its tickets are not placed on truly public sale. It is caught behind the lines, and the wide front is ours.

### Art in the Service of Life

Let us try to imagine a new operatic theater. Let us begin by assuming that it exists to serve its community. It claims no *a priori* right to existence, but proposes to stand or fall on its power to make itself a necessity in the eyes of the community, and an organic, functioning part of it. It aims to justify its presence among the urgent priorities of its time and place by demonstrating to a widening group of citizens the special exaltation, the peculiar clarity and depth of understanding, that is conveyed by theater-through-song.

Such a company's structure, and the pattern of its activities, might of course vary broadly from one community or region to another. Certainly the resemblance to past and current efforts would be few and slight. Since it would be conceived not as an opera company but as an organization geared to servicing the people of a community or area with theater-through-song of many varieties, it is probable that the principal activity of traditional companies—the presentation of full-scale productions in a fixed location—would be the least of its functions, the special event rather than the routine occasion. The study, rehearsal, and presentation of such productions would emerge from the company's ongoing occupations in response to increased community awareness of lyric drama and its potential importance for the community's citizens. Here are a few of the things that might constitute such a company's “ongoing occupations”:

1) Community outreach. Sorry about that social welfare label; it's descriptive. It implies something beyond doing one's toilette in the washroom mirror of one's own Arts Center, Culture Complex, or Entertainment Enclave, and charging a few people high prices to watch. It might mean taking performances, complete with theater or other environment, to people where they already exist in social units—the true divisions, not the ones that show on maps. And taking artists too, individually or in small groups, to churches, places of work, housing developments,

## What, Then, About Opera Recordings?

THE PROBLEMS OF OPERA ON recordings pretty much reflect the problems of opera in the theater: most of the repertory consists of machinelike repetition of works that have already been done far too often. As in the theater, there is the occasional notable exception—a new work or an unfamiliar older one, or a performance that really means it. Don't hold your breath.

Of course when it comes to opera, recordings labor under a tremendous disadvantage: they cannot reproduce a theatrical event, but only the audible portion of it. This is bad all around. It encourages the incorrect notion that opera is basically a musical, rather than a theatrical, form and establishes an artificial separation of the elements. It throws the whole weight on the performance of the score and, in particular, lays a false emphasis on the orchestral portion thereof. This doesn't mean that a recording of an opera is automatically an event of negative value; it does mean, however, that we must be careful to see it for what it is.

The time is soon upon us when recordings will consist of a visual element as well as an aural one. And there it will be—Theater of the Game Room, Theater of the Split Level, Theater of the Already Overcrowded Apartment. (And you can figure the apartment wall

of the future will be so thin you'll be able to see, as well as hear, your neighbor's recordings. Backwards, of course.) We all say (me too): that'll be marvelous. But chances are it'll be marvelous some small part of the time and boring and crummy most of the time, because the technology cannot transcend the motives and imaginations of those who use it. The medium is a message, but it's not *the* message.

However that turns out, this will still be true—it will be recorded theater, different from live theater and therefore no replacement for it. Recorded performances (quality aside, now) are just not the same as live performances, and the experience of a performance at home, alone or in a small group, is plainly not at all the experience of a performance in a place away from home. Sometimes we will prefer one, sometimes the other, as now. The great function of the live theater—the function it will maintain or die ignoring—will be to keep itself truly "live," creatively changing and of the moment, ruthlessly destructive of barriers and distances. That, and to bring people together for a shared event. It will thus combat the mechanical, the fixed, the alienated, the awful crowded isolation of our lives, the mass-distribution conformity of our time on earth. And technology—which is a tool, not an end—can serve such a theater.

neighborhoods where they still exist: places where the artists can be present as persons and, therefore, spokesmen for the very idea of art and its connection to living.

2) Promotion of the product. Again I apologize for the terminology. In this case, it reeks of the commercial and suggests a connection to the world that actually exists, as opposed to the largely fictional one fit only for artists and devotees. I intend the word "promotion" in both its denotative and connotative meanings. It means, for instance, actual advertising and p.r. work as normally understood. America is full of people who are very good at this sort of thing. They apply themselves heart and soul to the flourishing of products and services and causes, exalted and base, essential and useless. Do we think so little of art, and have we so little belief in its potential worth to the public, that the sole connection with this standard means of contacting people must be the lending of its techniques to the wider distribution of deodorants, soft drinks, and carpet remnants on the time payment plan?

But "promotion"—watch this, now—also means everything that can be stated or implied under 1: the publication of a serious periodical (other arts have them—why not opera?), or presentation of a mature radio/TV discussion program (not fan babble).

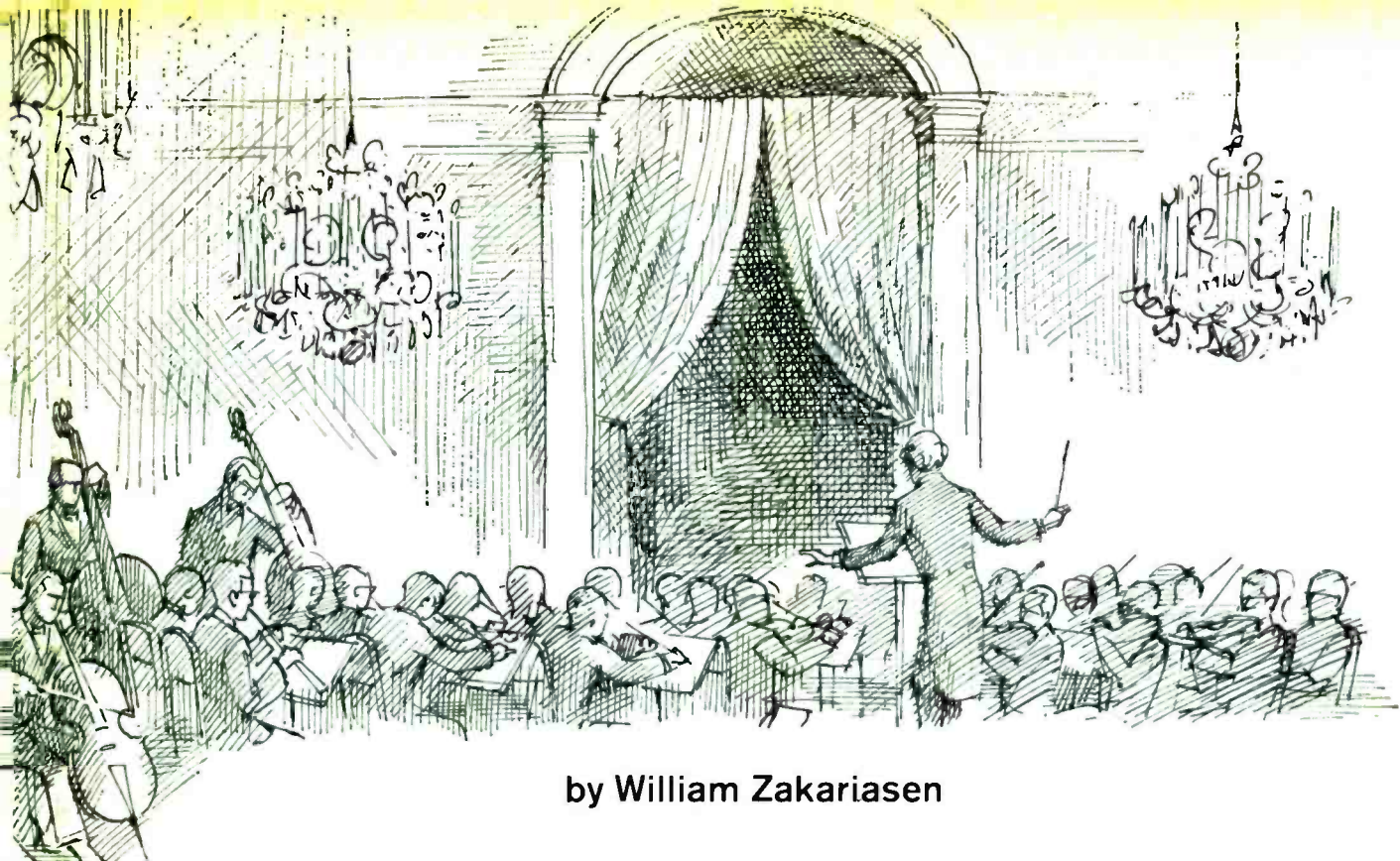
3. Education. When it comes to the performing

arts, American schools—public and private, elementary and secondary—add up to a plump zero. Such activity as exists is accorded an extracurricular position that guarantees the status of performing art as something unimportant, sometimes even freakish. On the whole, it seems to me that the teachers are as ignorant as the students. The engagement of their attention, the availability of materials to them, and the awareness of the power of performance as an actual classroom tool in nearly any subject—history, for instance, or literature—is therefore extremely important. So is a sustained performance program for the schools—not cutesy-up Rossini or bleeding gobbets of poor *Così*, but original works and specially designed programs at several age levels, whose purpose is to touch the children, to widen and deepen their understanding and strengthen their dignity and humanity. For inner city kids: a bilingual (Spanish/English) opera (placards with subtitles to translate), built around a simple conflict, perhaps real, perhaps all too easily imagined. It uses a few singers and the instruments that lie around—guitar, sax, piano, maybe a clarinet, perhaps some amplification. Hopefully, it employs the kids; hopefully, they helped write it, under professional direction, all very local. Hopefully, it won't be a masterpiece (though some masterpieces have been born this way), for with the recog-

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by William Zakariasen

# The Siegfried ~~Waltz~~?

AN ENTHUSIAST LOOKS AT MUSICAL PARODY

A cursory examination of musical parody, with emphasis on Webster's definition: Parody, *n.* (Fr. *parodie*, Gr. *paroidia*; fr. *para-* + *oide*, *ode*) 1. Literary or musical composition imitating the characteristic style of some other work or of a writer or composer, but treating a serious subject in a nonsensical manner in an attempt at ridicule. 2. A poor or weak imitation.

ON A DEPRESSING TRAIN trip from Prague to Munich last summer in a virtually empty car, I sought to alleviate the gloom a bit by twiddling the dials of my transistor radio—perhaps something enjoyable was on the Bayrische Rundfunk or AFN's *Luncheon in Munchen*. I settled for the BR, which had just begun to play what seemed to be an obscure concert waltz by a member of the Strauss family. Enjoyment changed abruptly to amazement when the familiar Wagnerian motifs of the Nibelung's hammering, Siegfried's horn call, the Woodbird, and God knows what else, appeared separately and/or in waltz counterpoint, all developed into a beautifully organized twelve-minute example of lilting Viennese

*William Zakariasen, an indefatigable record collector, sings tenor with the Metropolitan Opera Chorus.*

mastery. Naturally, after the final chord, I discovered that this peculiar composition was not by any Strauss—it was rather the *Siegfried-Walzer* by one Josef Klein. No information was given by the announcer about this composer nor about the following *Nibelungenmarsch* of Gottfried Sontag and the *Tannhäuser-Parodie* Overture of H. Carl Binder, except that all three gentlemen had been contemporaries of Wagner and that the Sontag work uses the original 1876 Bayreuth fanfare.

These three works clearly belong to the art of musical parody, and fit Webster's first definition with honor. They inspired me to conduct a little research: how many works of quality exist in this bizarre field—particularly on records? This search has been largely frustrating—there is quite a large assortment of available written material, but little music (the Wagner parodies exist only on tape, for instance). Moreover, the bulk of the reading catalogue is made up of such horrors as the Byron/Henderson *Trovatore Ill-Treated*, a skit that held sway in London music halls during the 1860s. Like most parodies on serious music from this period, all that remains is the libretto. To peruse this document is rather like being trapped in a kiddies' movie matinee, which is showing a double exposure of the Three Stooges and the Bowery Boys with a defective

# The Siegfried Waltz?



Continued

projection bulb. Here's a sample quatrain, apparently sung to Manrico's offstage Serenade: "O but my throat is sore/I won't take no encore/You need expect no more/From your dear Trovatore." Such stuff is really of only historical interest, but it does show what certain segments of Victorian England thought was funny.

Webster's definition unfortunately must eliminate some of the greatest jokes in music, based on amusing quotes from other composers' works or even the composer quoting himself. From Mozart's snide interpolation of *Figaro* into the *Don Giovanni* supper scene to Henze's "seventy-six-trombones" treatment of a tune from Mozart's own *Die Entführung* to herald the entrance of an ape in *Der junge Lord*, inside jokes have been a part of great music; but true parody must be a complete work in itself, or at least a complete through-composed *part* of a work like an operatic aria.

Many musical genres sprang from the opera, and parody is no exception. Its birthplace was France of the late seventeenth century, where spoofs of operas by Jean-Baptiste Lully, Louis XIV's mollycoddled favorite composer, were staged in several theaters. Nothing seems to remain of these early efforts—even Lully pretended ignorance of them (rather like Lyndon Johnson holding himself aloof from *MacBird*). It remained for the British to publish the first (and the most durable) operatic parody: the Pepusch and Gay *Beggar's Opera*, which satirized the work of the leading composers of the day—particularly Handel. It is also the earliest parody on records, and the choice between the Argo, Everest, and Seraphim, with their minor differences, is a tossup—until some enterprising label records the Britten arrangement. As a stopgap, Goberman's on Everest 3127/2 is closest to the original.

*The Beggar's Opera* continued its unabated popularity well into the following century, adding such timely political satire to the plot as the Prince of Wales's affair with Mrs. Fitzherbert. For the changing times and situations, the music was altered along with portions of the book, until we reach Germany of the 1920s and the immortal Kurt Weill/Bertold Brecht version. Other, and less successful, operatic satires were offered by the forementioned *Trovatore* and similar efforts of that ilk—*Ah! Sonnambula!*, for example, or *Norma*, *the Pretty Druidess*, *Carmen*, or *Seville and Civilians*, and an American entry, *Il Pescebello* by Rossibelli and Donnimozarti (the librettist's real name was James Russell Lowell).

In the mid-nineteenth century the wind blew from France again, perhaps inspired by that adopted Frenchman, Rossini, whose "sins of old age" were often spiked with musical parody, even of his own music. The hilarious Cat Duet is actually based on a

tragic aria from *Otello*. The leering masterpieces of Offenbach, thumbing their noses at the politics of the time, and the *Moulin Rouge* arrangements of Meyerbeer are too well known to analyze here, as are the little masterworks of Gilbert and Sullivan. Several volumes could be filled on the latter subject (it would take one volume to deal with *Pinafore* alone!); I cannot resist mentioning that I never hear the D minor Trio from Act II of *Ballo in maschera* without thinking of the *Nightmare Song* from *Iolanthe*. It is unfortunate, however, that most performances still accent Gilbert at the expense of Sullivan, who, proper Victorian though he was, had an even more devastatingly subtle sense of humor. Since their works were largely parodies of grand opera, the lack of a recording with a true grand opera approach makes it impossible for me to enthuse over the various editions from the D'Oyly Carte and Malcolm Sargent, especially since the finest and funniest *Mikado* I ever heard, language notwithstanding, was in Vienna, starring Karl Dönch, Hilde Konetzni, and other Wagnerian voices.

Wagner has, of course, been parodied more than any composer. The disastrous Paris premiere of *Tannhäuser* inspired the French once again to several take-offs, including one with a talking dog. An early Offenbach opus, *Carnival des Revues*, showed the hapless Wagner driven from the Elysian fields by the shades of Mozart, Lully, Rameau, Gluck, et al. The German Wagnerian satires at this time culminated in 1865 with the rather heavy-handed *Tristanderl und Süsshölde* (perpetrators anonymous), which had its premiere in Munich five days *before* that of the opera it parodied! Things improved a bit a few years later with the Binder *Tannhäuser-Parodie* (from which the forementioned overture was taken)—the great playwright Johann Nestroy wrote the libretto for this operetta, which enjoyed great popularity for a time in Vienna. On perusal of the incomplete score in the Lincoln Center Library, the music seems several notches above the average. The Overture, constructed like the original, used German drinking songs for its themes. *Tannhäuser's* Hymn to Venus is one of homesickness for his friends at the Münchener Hofbräuhaus, and in that famous edifice Wolfram and Walther, in typical Bavarian fashion, respectively receive a radish and a carrot for their vocal efforts. The procession of the guests includes eight couples from popular operas of the period (*Norma*, Rossini's *Otello*, etc.), each heralded by the appropriate music. When these themes are played in rudimentary counterpoint over Wagner's cantus firmus, one realizes that Binder's pastiche was perhaps the first in a line that culminated with the masterful creations of Franz Reizenstein (i.e., *Let's Fake an Opera*) for the Hoffnung Music Festivals.

Getting back to the French repertory, we find what is perhaps the most recorded parody in the catalogue—Saint-Saëns' *Carnival des Animaux*, in which the composer pokes fun at any number of pieces (including his own) as well as performers. A delightful version for chamber orchestra having long vanished, Georges Prêtre's excellent, if somewhat overblown, account on Angel S 36421 is the choice. In the same vein are the *Réminiscences de Bayreuth*, a collection of piano vignettes composed by Fauré, Messager, and Chabrier in 1876, of which Chabrier's is the easiest to find (Vox SVBX 5400). It is also the funniest: it has a quadrille for four hands on themes from *Tristan*—Wagner supposedly enjoyed it too.

There have been many expert parodists among solo entertainers and many of them pianists. One of the first to record parodies on serious music was a music hall comedian known by the odd name of Béthove—in 1926 he made a ten-inch 78 for Odeon (available later on American Decca) of four through-composed operatic and song take-offs on Wagner, Rossini, Massenet, and Reynaldo Hahn. Not side-splitting, but cute. Slightly later, Alec Templeton recorded a few sides for Victor and for the Gramophone Shop label—his *Kravattentenor* rendition of *The Shortest Wagnerian Opera* is most famous (why does Wagner bring out the best and worst in us?). Best known of this school is Victor Borge, who for some reason was able to convulse an audience with the staggering revelation that he was playing a Mozart sonata from an upside-down score. His favorite stunt was to request melodies from the audience, and then improvise on the tune in the style of several composers. Samples of Borge's work can be heard on Columbia CCL 554 and 646, and Verve 15044.

The funny faces of our adversaries in World War II inspired a series of movie cartoons lampooning the Axis—naturally the incidental music was transmogrified Wagner. Everyone from Tom and Jerry to Bugs Bunny warbled, barked, meowed, or quacked unholy arrangements of the Bayreuth master. But it was a non-Wagnerian Disney soundtrack of 1942 which initiated the unique career of a master parodist. *Der Führer's Face*, with its spoof of a Brauhaus band complete with nasal vocalist, made a star of Spike Jones, who managed even to upstage the on-screen antics of Donald Duck. Naturally the soundtrack record became a best seller. Jones's subsequent efforts, which included *Dance of the Hours*, *William Tell Overture*, *Nutcracker Suite*, and old favorites such as *Chloe* and *Laura*, became classics and remain so today. Jones was deceptively lowbrow, but only a musician of first rank could have pulled off these masterful tours de forces. His secret was incredible virtuosity coupled with perfect timing—an absolutely essential quality for any form of humor.

Jones possessed a conductor's knowledge of exactly when to make a point in this most exacting art: one might call him the Furtwängler of musical humor. His *Thank You Music Lovers* (RCA Victor LPM 2224) is but a fraction of his work, and doesn't include my own personal favorites, *Love in Bloom* and *Il Barkio* (featuring Ina Souez!) but even so, like all great comedians of the past, his wit is just as effective now as it was when new.

*Musically Mad* (RCA Victor LSP 1929), with its rather forced collegiate humor exhumed by Bernie Green and "Dr. Heinrich von Morgan," features dated take-offs on the masters (including Wagner, who must be extremely tired by now of rolling in his grave). Another group, a reasonable successor to Jones (1950s' style), is the San Francisco-based Guckensteiner Sauerkraut Band, an organization of music-loving gentlemen who chose to perform under pseudonyms: the bass drum player turns out to be cartoonist George Lichty of *Grin and Bear It*. Do not expect Jones's timing or virtuosity—it's like comparing Florence Foster Jenkins with Mrs. Miller—but their monumentally incompetent readings of *Poet and Peasant* (on RCA Victor LPM 1453), *Hungarian Rhapsody No. 2*, and *Stars and Stripes Forever*, with its recently discovered vocal part in tritones (on RCA Victor LSP 1721), still command a devoted audience.

Band music of a more monumental style can be heard on Amadeo AVRS 9111: the Viennese Carl Michael Ziehrer's *Traum eines Osterreiches Reservisten*—a "*Grosses Militärisches Tongemälde*," written at the turn of the century—does not use one original note throughout its record-breaking thirty-six minutes. Chunks of Richard and Johann Strauss, Beethoven, Berlioz, Weber, Nicolai, Boito, Wagner, and you name it are mixed along with various extramusical noises into an odd Greek musical salad—it's sort of a Bauermusik *Heldenleben*. After a few preliminary chuckles, one discovers that Strauss's *Tongemälde* is really funnier. Be that as it may, it is representative of the period and is on record for those who care.

Much more succinct humor can be heard on the "Collector's Party Record" (Belcanto BC 235) containing the Handelian *Little Jack Horner* sung by Alexander Kipnis, and a recently discovered one-act opera, *Die Zauberposaune*, by "Wolfgang Amadeus Moooooozart"—voices, instruments, assorted noises, and commentary by Peter Ustinov, who also offers *Phony Folk Lore* and manages to sound like a certain renowned Norwegian soprano. Ustinov's Bach discoveries—the cantata *Herr Gott, Sei mit mir nicht so Böös*, and the Seventh Unaccompanied Cello Suite—are unfortunately not available.

Anna Russell is justifiably famous for her literate

musical humor. With Gilbert, Sullivan, and Ustinov, she shares that elusive quality of crucifying sacred cows with a light hand—so typically British. Though she has made many records, it is her first—"Anna Russell Sings?" (Columbia ML 4594)—which is her most successful parody. Her analysis of the *Ring* is famous (ML 4733), but the humor comes more from speech than song. Her first record, while uneven, is made up of through-composed take-offs on Rossini, American Folk Music, Wagner (vy not?) and, best of all, a devastating specimen of German Lied—*Schlumpf*, written for "that singer with no voice, but grrrreccaaat artistry." Her later *Hamletto* (a recently discovered Verdi score) and Gilbert and Sullivan parodies are funny in spots but lack the magic of her early effort.

Passing reference could be made to certain modern composers' spoofs. On an antediluvian Colosseum CRLP 167—"Footlight Favorites from Behind the Iron Curtain"—one can hear (if you can call it that) Shostakovich's Waltz from *The Golden Mountains* and *The Tahiti Trot*. The latter is as horrifyingly funny as its title—*Tea for Two* from a samovar, served naturally in a glass. Vanguard VRS 432 contains a section of Glière's chintzy *Red Poppy* not available elsewhere—an *American Dance*: imagine a half-tempo Charleston lost in the percussion section of the Mahler Sixth! Ginastera's *Overture to the Creole Faust* (Mercury SR 90257) depicts an excited narration by a gaucho to his friends of his first opera—*Faust*. Bits of Gounod get confused with the rhythm of the pampas, and if the themes used indicate our gaucho fell asleep after Act I, this still delightful music.

The Broadway musical has occasionally burlesqued serious music with success, as in *A Symple Little System* from *Bells Are Ringing*. (How many know that the character of Sandor in this show is a parody on an actual record company president who put out bogus records for many a year? I believe he's still peddling his line somewhere.) There was a screamingly funny impression of Pears and Britten in *Beyond the Fringe*, and *The Littlest Revue* parodies included the career of a renowned American Wagnerian soprano—though in this case, her original records with Jimmy Durante were even funnier. I sometimes consider things like *Kismet* and *Song of Norway* as take-offs, but I guess they weren't intentional.

The category of unintentional parody might be noted here. Were Mrs. Miller and Mme. Jenkins serious? Or the Bach, Wagner, and Chopin transcriptions of Stokowski? Or Stan Kenton's Wagner? Naturally these artists spoke only in the most elevated terms of their work, but for those whose taste says otherwise, Kenton's *Lohengrin* Preludes (Capitol STAO 2217) and Stokowski's Mazurka in A minor (Everest SDBR 3070) almost succeed in making the composer's identity a secret. They are models of taste, however, compared to an old French Pathé of *Pictures at an Exhibition* arranged for an orchestra of fifty accordions! One might mention in this de-

partment the numerous "operas" performed in such films as *Phantom of the Opera*, *Two Sisters from Boston*, and *That Midnight Kiss*, in which Nelson Eddy, Susanna Foster, Kathryn Grayson, Lauritz Melchior, and Mario Lanza sang the immortal scores of *L'Amour et gloire*, *Le Prince masqué du Caucassus*, *My Country*, and *Marie Antoinette* (the authors remain anonymous—they had to be kidding!). Believe it or not, the last two were recorded by Melchior and Nadine Connor (a sadly underrated soprano) on RCA Camden CAL 424—"The Lighter Side of Melchior."

Also in the realm of popular music, we should mention *The Baroque Beatles Book* (Elektra EKS 7306), a reasonably amusing Handelian setting of Mersey favorites, though my preference runs to a 45 I heard once in England called *Eine kleine Beatlesmusik*. I don't know the number or label, but it's worth a search.

Getting back to intentional parody, Peter Schickel's services on behalf of P. D. Q. Bach, the black sheep son of Johann Sebastian, is amply documented on Vanguard 9195, 9213, and 9268, and a few items are genuinely funny (i.e., the *Quodlibet* and most of *Iphigenia in Brooklyn*). Many of his pieces, while having ideas of potential hilarity, begin well, but soon run out of steam through overstatement or just plain poor timing. Much greater were the tragically defunct Hoffnung Festival Concerts. For literate musical humor on a grand scale, they still lead the field. One can only conjecture if Gerard Hoffnung, had he lived longer, could have sustained their remarkably high level. Though no musician himself, Hoffnung knew what was musically funny and who could bring it off, so we have on Angel 35500, 35828, and 35800: Franz Reizenstein's *Concerto Popolare* and *Let's Fake an Opera*, Joseph Horowitz' *Horroratorio*, Humphrey Searle's *Punkt Kontrapunkt* and the *Barber of Darmstadt*, to say nothing of "original" manuscripts of the Haydn *Surprise* Symphony and the *Leonore* No. 4. These three discs remain the most cultivated and side-splitting examples of musical humor on records; one can return to them again and again and find something new to laugh at and admire. Hoffnung's use of some of the finest musicians of the day contributes to the polish of these performances.

The test of any music of quality is its ability to stand repeated hearings, and parody is no exception. Unfortunately, we discover that many musical jokes not only wear thin quickly, but often fit Webster's *second* definition, not his first. Comedy is an elusive form in all fields, and that is apparently why we have so few Joneses, Ustinovs, and Hoffnungs to make us realize with Verdi that "*Tutto nel mondo è burla*." There are still enough laughs for us in musical history, however, including many I have been unable to mention in a limited space; surely they too are worth performances by competent musicians. Now, if Georg Solti or Willi Boskovsky could get the Vienna Philharmonic together for the *Siegfried Waltz*. . . .

# How I Hooked Up My Center-Channel Speaker

Few articles published in **HIGH FIDELITY** have sparked as much reader response (if phone calls and letters received are evidence) as George Movshon's piece on "Records to Test Your Woofer's 'Crunchability'" which ran in June 1969. Interestingly, the burden of these queries had less to do with the recordings Mr. Movshon discussed than with the modification—provision for a center bass channel—he made in his stereo system to hear those recordings.

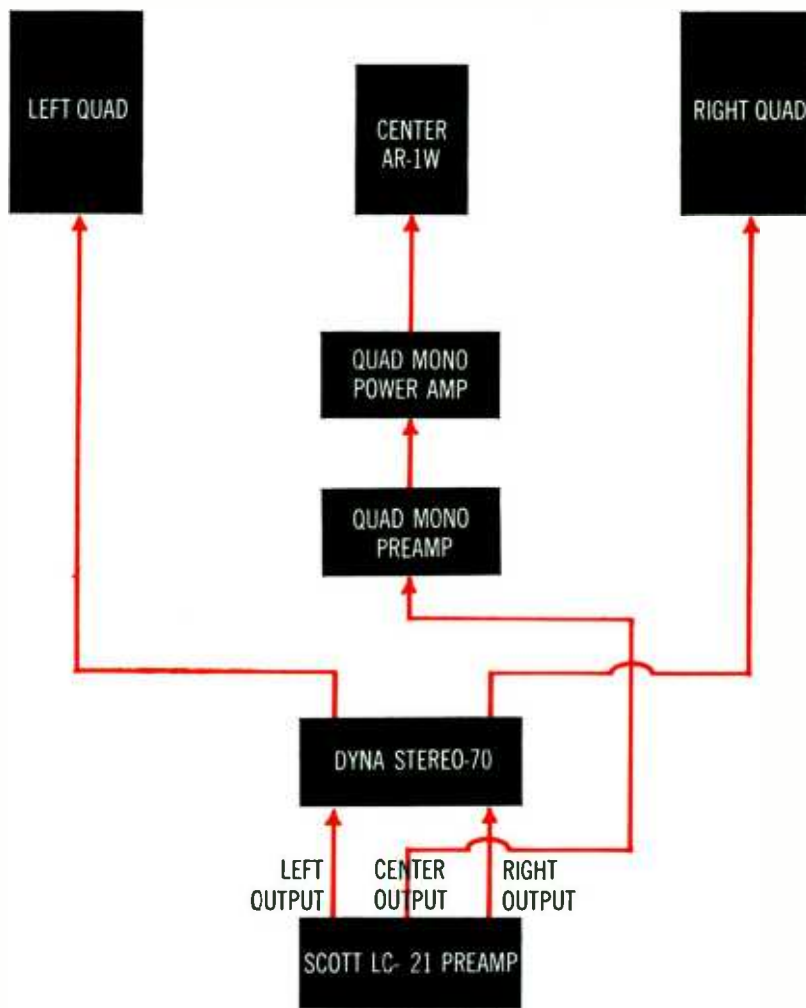
The inquiries ranged from simple requests for details on how to do it, to the comment from one reader who tried the modification and found "the results not wholly satisfactory."

Mr. Movshon began, earnestly, to reply to all these letters individually. He soon gave up and—at our suggestion—has written an additional piece which should answer all questions about setting up a "crunchability test" system. In his own words, then, here is Mr. Movshon's further amplification (pun intended) on his original theme. We have, incidentally, heard this setup and can attest to its sonic excellence: the sound is exceptionally clear and wide-range; the stereo effect is broad and room-filling.

The added third channel speaker described in my "Speaking of Records" column consists of an AR-1W speaker powered by its own amplifier, a Quad II 15-watt monophonic veteran which has a separate "front-end" or preamplifier, also mono.

Into the "tuner" input of this Quad preamp, I feed the center-channel output of my main (stereo) preamplifier, a Scott LC-21. This unit has a combined-channel mono output governed by its own volume control, a feature not always found on today's equipment.

The volume control of the Quad has been set by ear, after careful listening; it is now fixed by adhesive tape to its predetermined optimum setting—that point on the volume dial which provides a little bass "crunch" yet does not contribute significantly to



the total mid- or upper-range signal. The treble control of the Quad is set to minimum; the bass control to maximum.

A further refinement: I have modified the Quad front end so as to eliminate mid- and upper-range tones entirely. The Quad happens to have a cut-off filter, designed originally to make short-wave listening more intelligible. This provides sharp high-frequency slopes beginning at, respectively, 10 kHz, 7 kHz, and 5 kHz. An engineer friend showed me how to modify this part of the circuit so that

the 5-kHz setting in fact starts sloping off (and soon disappears) above about 120 Hz. This modification, the mathematics of which I cannot claim to understand, means that the mid-channel now yields only "crunch."

Not all of these arrangements are possible for every gramophile, nor are they necessary. But if you happen to have an old loudspeaker with good bass, as well as an unused monophonic amplifier, there is probably some improvement you can bring to your present listening setup.

GEORGE MOVSHON

# Four-Channel Stereo FM- From One Station

By Jason P. Meute

ALTHOUGH QUADRIPHONIC SOUND has been broadcast in Boston, New York City, and San Francisco by the two-station method (dual transmissions by pairs of stereo FM stations working in harmony—musically and technically), a new thrust has developed in broadcast circles for a single FM station to put four-channel sound on the air. To do so, the one station would require, of course, additional transmitting equipment that would, to put it simply, enable two more audio channels to piggy-back their way through the air on the same carrier frequency now being used for regular stereo and mono FM signals.

The immediate prospect for this new form of four-channel broadcasting—let's call it "quadricasting"—is a system developed by William Halstead and Leonard Feldman. Halstead, it may be recalled, was one of the movers and shakers in the early days of two-channel stereo FM; Feldman has been involved for years in the engineering and manufacture of home receiving equipment, and is also known to readers of HF as a contributor of technical articles. Together, Messrs. Halstead and Feldman have evolved a one-station-four-channel system which they claim will allow a single FM station to transmit four independent channels simultaneously, is compatible with existing transmitting and receiving equipment, is also compatible for two-channel stereo or one-channel mono reception, offers clean and wide-range response on all channels, and will not interfere with adjacent stations on the FM band.

Listeners would require only the addition of a small adapter or decoder to an existing stereo tuner or receiver, rather than a second complete set, to receive a quadricast. Eventually, the decoder circuitry would be built right into four-channel tuners and receivers; in this sense, then, the progress of quadricast FM would parallel that of two-channel stereo FM. Of course, we'd also need another pair of amplification channels and speakers—as we would for any kind of four-channel sound, including discs and tapes. Like the transmitter, the new receiver-cum-adapter would also be compatible—that is, it would respond to quadricasts when they are trans-

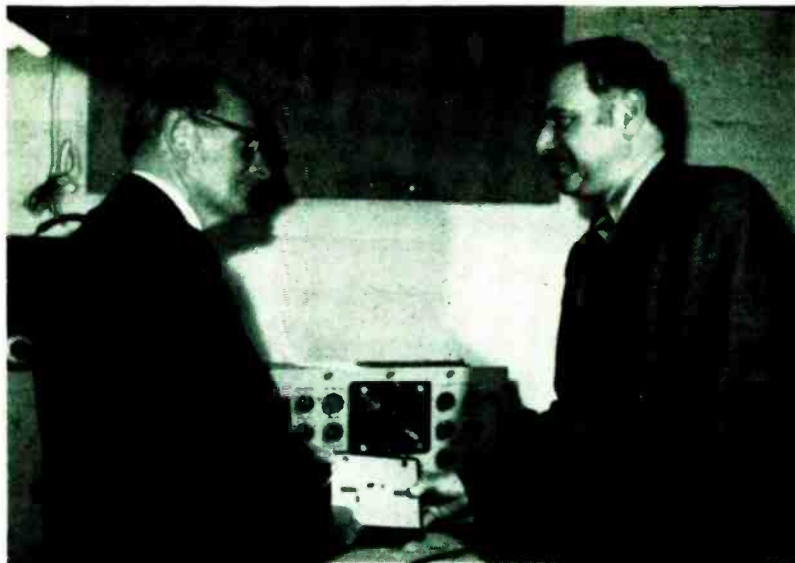
mitted, and continue to bring in conventional one- or two-channel signals when those are transmitted.

Of course, the two new channels added to a single FM station's carrier wave would preclude that station's also sending out *at the same time* SCA material for private subscribers, a practice which we had been led to believe has become an important source of income for many FM stations. SCA—the letters stand for Subsidiary Communication Authorization—is the FM subcarrier system by which background music is beamed, on a private subscription basis, to restaurants, shops, and other commercial establishments. If, indeed, quadricasts spelled the end of SCA (even for a limited amount of time during any station's daily broadcast schedule) and that demise in turn meant economic hardship for a station, then of course the proposed technique would likely be viewed askance by broadcasters and by the Federal Communications Commission (which has the final word on system approval).

But some experts believe that SCA already has become an anachronism—technically and economically. Bob Richer, vice-president and general manager of Quality Media, Inc., reputedly the largest advertising sales representative for FM stations in the U.S., tells us that SCA once was, but no longer is, a commercially valid idea: "Back in the days when there weren't enough FM receivers around to allow a station to show much of a profit, the idea of being able to lease a subcarrier for regular income was a good one. Today, however, there is no valid reason why virtually *any* FM station can't be profitable using only its main channel."

As for continuing SCA, Richer feels that "... any FM station leasing its subcarrier ... is running a serious risk of losing a competitive advantage in the market place." Why this apparently about-face attitude toward SCA? Because, explains Richer, SCA does interfere with main-channel transmission (in fact, although in theory it need not do so). The result is that FM stations using SCA sound inferior to those stations not using it; the former stations turn off an audience and consequently lose their main market. "Thus," says Richer, "considering

*Adapter that permits FM set to receive four-channel broadcasts is displayed by system's inventor William Halstead, left, and associate Leonard Feldman.*



the relatively small amount of income available through the leasing of an SCA, most stations are in reality *losing* more money (via lost audience) than they are making by leasing the subcarrier."

How does quadricasting come into this picture? "With the advent of four-channel stereo," says Richer, "those stations with no SCA involvement stand to build reputations as broadcasting leaders in much the same way that those stations which pioneered two-channel stereo did a few years back."

Richer's views seem substantiated by a recent trade report that a relatively small percentage of FM stations actually are using their subcarrier space for SCA services. In the New York metropolitan area, for example, only six out of fifty-three stations are bothering with SCA.

If economics proves no deterrent to quadricasts, what about sonic quality? It has been argued that the additional channels, now pre-empted by SCA, are inherently limited in frequency response; thus, if they were to be used in four-channel broadcasts, they would degrade the over-all musical presentation. According to Halstead and Feldman, audio response on the two added channels can easily make a 10- to 12-kHz or better mark. And these engineers are quick to point out that their own tests indicate that the glorious FM sound we have been accepting for years rarely exceeds a 10- or 12-kHz top. Furthermore, the new system—which by common agreement has come to be known simply as the Halstead system—boasts such desirable features as very good signal-to-noise ratio and better than 40 dB of separation between the added rear channels. (Present FCC standards call for at least 30 dB of channel separation.)

The Halstead system, briefly, uses a technique known as low-level multiplexing in which a portion of the total available spectrum is "borrowed" for use by added signals. That is to say, the main-channel modulation is reduced to accommodate subcarriers which themselves have been impressed by FM with additional audio information. The modu-

lated subcarriers in turn modulate the main carrier at a relatively low modulation percentage as compared with the "primary" main-channel signals. This technique, in fact, is now used for SCA.

For quadricasts, the Halstead system would provide two multiplex channels, each at about a ten per cent modulation level, at subcarrier frequencies higher than those used by stereo program signals. The stereo program modulation is reduced by only a slight amount, causing no significant change in normal stereo reception or in signal-to-noise performance. However, as present rules of the FCC specify that all subcarriers are to be limited to frequencies below 75 kHz, modification of the rules would be required to permit addition of a subcarrier between 75 kHz and 100 kHz. Measurements and field tests will, of course, have to satisfy the FCC that no interference with adjacent-channel stations or with normal FM stereo transmissions is produced by the added subcarrier above 75 kHz.

As this is being written, at least one FM station—New York's municipally owned WNYC-FM—has asked for experimental authorization from the FCC that would permit on-the-air tests of the Halstead four-channel technique for a short period. Pending the actual start of such broadcasts, Halstead and Feldman are assembling technical data to present to the FCC for its consideration and, hopefully, approval. Very likely the FCC will grant permission for experimental Halstead broadcasts (or will have by the time you read this), but equally likely, the Commission will consider other proposed quadricast systems for some time before it decides on any. Unfortunately, few listeners will be able to tune in on quadricasts because so far the "little black box" you need to decode the extra two channels just isn't being marketed. We expect to hear the quadricasts, when and if they get aired, along with Messrs. Halstead and Feldman who do have the adapter. How these sessions turn out, and how they impress the FCC, may have a decisive bearing on what you will be hearing on FM in coming years.

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## Exploring Idomeneo

by Paul Henry Lang



Colin Davis' recording of Mozart's problem opera is a major artistic event

MOST LOVERS OF music take for granted that the Haydn-Mozart-Beethoven period is one of the best-known territories in music. Yet it is one of the least explored by scholars; there is not even a decent monograph on the "classic era," although practically all other areas of music history are represented by many fine comprehensive studies. The reason for this anomaly is that the beginnings of what we call the classical style reach well back into the baroque era, while its culmination found Romanticism already in full bloom. In this extremely complicated stylistic development there are many masterpieces that have become terra incognita; of these, no better example could be cited than Mozart's opera *Idomeneo, rè di Creta*. The appearance of this recording is therefore nothing short of a momentous artistic event.

As the eighteenth century yielded to the nineteenth, the most popular of Mozart's operas was his last, *La Clemenza di Tito*. At its original performance in Prague in 1791 it failed to please, but soon afterward it conquered all of Central Europe. Transcriptions for all imaginable instruments and combination of instruments were numerous—including an arrangement for two flutes!—and in 1815 alone eight different piano-vocal scores were published. Although the other operas—especially *The Magic Flute*—soon surpassed it, *Tito* remained popular until the middle of the century, after which it faded rapidly, becoming by our time a mere library item. In contrast, the first of Mozart's full-fledged mature operas, *Idomeneo*, produced in Munich ten years before *Tito*, was well received but did not become a favorite. While our books praise some of its qualities, the work, like *Tito*, is declared no longer viable beyond its magnificent overture. *Tito* and *Idomeneo* are usually bracketed together and rightfully so; both belong to the genus *opera seria*, the old baroque form of the lyric stage which by

Mozart's time had ceased its natural evolution; its essential character became stationary, relying on mere variants of a formula on which the design became more and more obviously imposed. *Tito* largely succumbed to the formula, for by that time Mozart could not retrace his steps, but *Idomeneo* is an unquestioned masterpiece. It is also a prime example of the great problem of opera, which, more than any other genre of music, must be brought periodically into a certain conformity with the prevailing attitudes if it is to be kept alive. There is a great difference between absolute fidelity to the *Urtext* in an instrumental work and in an opera; the living theater has rights and prerogatives that musicologists at times do not understand. The tendency is to resign ourselves to the idea that we are so far removed from the world which this work represents that the gulf is unbridgeable. In *Idomeneo*, unlike Mozart's later operas, the world must be seen through the mask of certain socio-artistic conventions. This opera was not addressed to the same audience that loved the realism of the *buffa*, as in *Figaro*; *Idomeneo* was not even an opera of *mezzo carattere*, the compromise genre that was so successfully achieved in *Don Giovanni*—it is a pure *opera seria*. Yet when intelligently restored, much of the ancient glory of these operas can be recaptured, *vide* the great success of Handel's *Julius Caesar*.

It is also difficult for us to realize that even though the theater was Mozart's real home, his most cherished musical arena, all of his great dramatic works were commissioned as *pièces d'occasion*; and in the case of *Idomeneo* the commission was hedged in by textual and formal prescriptions which by that time were almost completely anachronistic. The court even chose the libretto's theme by suggesting an old French opera set many years before by Campra, and the form it was to

take was the old full-dress *opera seria* complete with castrato. Mozart asked the Salzburg court chaplain, Abbé Varesco, to convert the French text into the required Italian libretto.

The voluminous correspondence between Mozart and his father about *Idomeneo* is most interesting; both of them felt that Wolfgang's "whole future depends on this opera." Besides showing his thorough knowledge of operatic dramaturgy, the correspondence reveals Mozart's attitude to be that of the pragmatic creative artist: he accepted the conventions and techniques without seeking their moral or intellectual justification, but he was going to deal with all this on his own terms. In the eighteenth-century manner, the libretto was delivered piecemeal (Leopold Mozart was the go-between), Wolfgang constantly requesting changes, always specifying the reasons for his requests. Some of the arias had to be redrawn three times and the good Abbé was driven to distraction. When Mozart was still dissatisfied, he wrote his father, "Just send along the aria, we will print it in the libretto as Varesco has it, but won't sing it that way." Mozart *père* contributes intelligent remarks and suggestions that show his intimate acquaintance not only with opera but also with classical mythology. Both father and son disclose a remarkable knowledge of Metastasio to the point of discussing the master librettist's use of single words. We tend to regard the Mozart who composed *Figaro* and the other operas as the mature artist, and to ascribe all earlier operas to the incredible *Wunderkind* who was the manifestation of God-given talent, a phenomenon of nature. But at the age of twenty-two, three years before *Idomeneo*, Mozart declared to a friend that there was not one famous master whose works he had not studied, and indeed at that age he was an incomparably trained and equipped composer of mature judgment, infallible taste, and redoubtable craftsmanship. We fail to notice the thoughtful, disciplined artist who, on his many trips abroad and under his father's expert tutelage, methodically studied and absorbed all styles and all techniques. All this wisdom and experience went into the composition of *Idomeneo*.

Baroque opera sought its ideal in planned stylization. What Mozart did with the old form was revolutionary; *Idomeneo*, rather than Gluck's *Orfeo*, was perhaps the great reform opera, though neither of them had an appreciable effect on posterity. Though the old frame was retained, the new is present everywhere, in harmony, rhythm, instrumentation, tone color, and dynamics; only the tempos recall the old *seria*. *Idomeneo* has many more slow arias and ariosos than the later operas, so there is in this work a little of Gluck's static quality; but the continuity is seamless, both musically and dramatically. More than in any of his later operas, Mozart connects recitatives, arias, and choruses: instead of reaching full closes with the customary double bar, he proceeds either directly or by providing transition passages. (Incidentally, the recording does not handle this without a couple of awkward breaks.) Then there are the ensembles. No one up to the time of *Idomeneo* had composed anything like the quartet in the third act. It is in these dramatic situations, where several independent characters sing simultaneously without losing their identity, that Mozart leaves the old opera completely behind. There is no longer any compromise with singers, no yielding to librettist or court chamberlain; Mozart himself declared that in the ensembles the "free will" of the composer is given full play. Since the original libretto was a French *tragédie lyrique*, provision was made for a number of choral scenes which Varesco had preserved in the Italian version. The dramatic force of these choruses is unequalled—only in Verdi's *Otello* do we encounter such stormy eloquence. Nowhere in his following operas has Mozart surpassed the elaborate dramatic orchestral writing of *Idomeneo*, and the orchestra he employed is large: it uses a third flute, a second pair of horns, and in one of the scenes trombones make their appearance. He was

of course writing for the most admired and accomplished orchestra of the age, the Mannheim ensemble, transferred to Munich when the Elector Palatine inherited the duchy of Bavaria. But Mozart had some novelties even for this famous modern body: muted brasses and covered timpani. (The mutes had to be imported from Salzburg as none were available in Munich.) The characterization is not as psychologically penetrating as in *Figaro* or *Don Giovanni*, but that is due to the *opera seria* frame which demands an unabated heroic tone. The figures are, shall we say, only two and a half dimensional, but even so, in the great recitatives and in the ensembles they rise to genuine poignancy, and the melodic substance is rich and sustained.

It was not easy for Mozart to deal with mythological figures and with the baroque *deus ex machina*: he always wanted believable human beings. The old *seria* did not appeal to him, and he could not translate into pure drama even those situations that attracted him—the conflict between father and son, for instance—because between the two human protagonists there was the enraged and insulted god Neptune. More to his liking was the relationship of the two women, Priam's gentle daughter, Ilia, and the passionate Mycenaean, Electra, feuding over Idamante. The Euripidean spirit of the third act overwhelmed him too. In a letter to his father, Mozart says: "My head and my hands are so full of Act III that it would be no wonder if I were to turn into a third act myself."

Arrived at this point, the reader may reasonably ask why, if *Idomeneo* is such a masterpiece, it is so neglected, and why Mozart abandoned this type of opera. The answer is simply that the *opera seria* could not be carried on to new paths; Mozart realized that it was the *opera buffa*, not Gluck's reform *seria*, that held the key to the future. The Mozartean miracle that followed, the blending of all operatic strains into a supreme synthesis, has made it difficult for us to give a fair hearing to this composer's work in the older genre. But he himself loved *Idomeneo* and considered it one of his finest operas.

That *Idomeneo* could and should be reinstated in the repertory as fully the equal of the Mozart operas we love so well is proven by this faithful recording. The carefully planned enterprise is a credit to the entire company. The program notes by David Cairns are excellent and to the point, and Philips even engaged an Italian coach to supervise the singers' diction. But the lion's share of praise belongs to the conductor, Colin Davis. His phrasing is aristocratic and unfailingly musical, the precision of ensemble playing is admirable, he follows Mozart's many sophisticated dynamic shadings to the letter, conducts the great accompanied recitatives—the touchstone of the conductor's art—with remarkable flexibility, and his control of the orchestra and the singers is splendid. Davis also had the good sense to assign the castrato role to a tenor rather than having it sung by a female soprano—this substitution is a *sine qua non* if we want to resuscitate old opera, for theatrical truth takes precedence over antiquated conventions. The purists will howl, but actually the "damage" is less than minimal compared to the gain in dramatic values. In the solo numbers the tenor sings the original part an octave lower without any alteration of the melodic line, while in the ensembles the adjustments concern a handful of notes. And besides, Mozart himself preferred a bass for *Idomeneo* and intended to rewrite the role for a projected performance in Vienna.

Ryland Davies, the tenor who sings the castrato role of Idamante, is a fine and highly musical singer. His voice is warm, expressive, flexible, and is used with literate artistry. There is an attractive Mediterranean quality in his inflections and in his pronunciation of the double consonants. George Shirley (*Idomeneo*) is an accomplished singer, but his smallish voice is not a heroic tenor. At times the resonance goes out of his voice leaving a momentary hollowness, and he also

exhibits a trace of sobbing. Nevertheless, on the whole he holds his own, especially in the soft lyric passages. The minor male roles are all satisfactorily executed. Margherita Rinaldi is an admirable Ilia. She has a beautiful voice with plenty of color, and that voice can soar. She sings with complete empathy, her limpid pianos trailing away yet always remaining fully audible. Pauline Tinsley (Electra), another fine soprano with a substantial voice, has plenty of temperament. In fact, this temperament is her undoing at times, for excitement makes her voice a little edgy in the higher ranges. It is possible that this is not altogether her fault, because the engineering—the only flaw in this remarkable recording—leaves something to be desired in the animated scenes. Davis' first oboe, the kingpin in his woodwind ensemble, is pinched and weak beyond the degree that could be charged to the engineering, but the thinness of the first violins when playing high and the indistinct thuds of the timpani could hardly be original sins—this is a first-class orchestra. In general there is often a slight haze over the orchestra, though when the voices pause,

as for instance in the March (No. 8), the orchestral tone is full and round. Apparently this is again the untenable idea that the orchestra merely accompanies and should be little in evidence lest the singers be covered. That is nonsense, of course; the orchestra in a Mozart opera is an equal partner with the voices. Mozart himself regarded the woodwind parts as "roles." John Constable's tasteful harpsichord continuo, however, is heard throughout—surely an unusual recording achievement. This whole *Idomeneo* is in fact a memorable achievement and will provide lovers of Mozart and opera with a red-letter day.

**MOZART: Idomeneo.** Margherita Rinaldi (s), Ilia; Pauline Tinsley (s), Electra; George Shirley (t), Idomeneo; Rylanc Davies (t), Idamante; Robert Tear (t), Arbace; Donald Pilley (t), High Priest; Stafford Dean (bs), Voice of Neptune; BBC Chorus and Symphony Orchestra, Colin Davis, cond. Philips SAL 3747/9, \$17.94 (three discs).

## The Return of Magda Olivero by Peter G. Davis



A legendary diva's first operatic recording in over thirty years

HERE'S AN enterprising bit of artist-and-repertory casting. One can only speculate on the circumstances that led to this recording, which brings Magda Olivero to the attention of American record collectors once again, after a thirty-two year hiatus, in one of her most celebrated roles. It's regrettable that London did not forge ahead and record the complete opera, but I suppose one-third of a *Francesca* is better than none at all.

Zandonai's best-known opera, *Francesca da Rimini* was premiered in 1914, and although it never really established itself outside Italy, the work did enjoy a brief international exposure (including a handful of performances at the Met with Frances Alda and Martinelli). As a juicy *fin-de-siècle* Italian operatic melodrama, though, *Francesca* has attractions potent enough to inspire a fierce loyalty among its admirers. Zandonai's long suit was atmosphere, and D'Annunzio's purple-prose play/libretto provided him with a rich tapestry of luscious, dark-hued Renaissance backgrounds. Although he could never quite spin out a long melodic line on the order of a Puccini, Zandonai more than compensated, with a flair for impressionistic harmonic coloring and a spicy orchestral palette. The finale to Act I, for instance, where Paolo and Francesca first meet without singing a word, is one such magical moment: while the ill-fated lovers are lost in silent mutual contemplation, an off-stage female chorus and a throbbing "viola pomposa" intone the big love theme as a lute and *piffero* (a kind of fife) splash daubs of color over a diaphanous texture of divided strings.

The three scenes recorded here trace the Paolo/Francesca relationship from the tense game of cat and mouse on the castle turrets in Act II, through their declaration of love in Act III, to the unbridled passion of the final duet just before Gianciotto surprises his wife and brother and murders them both. The central panel of this triptych forms the emotional climax to the opera: the conversation gradually develops from seemingly innocent chitchat between in-laws to a heated love scene inspired by the lovers' joint reading of the Lancelot and Guinevere romance. Under the influence of this

graphic poem, Paolo and Francesca succumb to their desires and, as Dante put it, "they read no more that day." It's an immensely effective scene and Zandonai paints the sensuous mood of this doomed affair in vivid, stabbing primary colors. The opera contains a lot more good music (and there is plenty of spare room on the disc), but evidently this was all that could be practically managed with the two stars at London's disposal.

Which brings us to Mme. Olivero, surely one of opera's most extraordinary and unaccountably neglected prima donnas. Until her recent appearances in Dallas as Medea and Fedora and in Hartford as Adriana, few Americans had probably ever heard of this elusive soprano. Her only recording to be widely circulated here was the old prewar Cetra *Turandot* (now available on Everest), so these *Francesca* excerpts—and London's new complete *Fedora* which should be released by the time these lines appear—are in the nature of an introduction. You may well wonder about the merits of a relatively unknown singer whose debut dates back to 1933 and is now in her late fifties; the merits are real enough but the Olivero *persona* is a complex one and defies a simple explanation. Marriage and independent wealth seemed to spell the end of a promising career when Olivero decided to retire in 1941. Ten years later, however, the aging Francesco Cilea, who never forgot her powerful impersonation of his Adriana Lecouvreur, coaxed her back to the stage. Although the return performance was a great success, Olivero's second career moved gradually. As the Callas/Tebaldi factions raged in Italy, she was regarded as a figure from the past; this, coupled with a naturally retiring personality and a disinclination to push herself to the top of the operatic heap, undoubtedly accounts for Olivero's slow re-emergence into the limelight.

Yet anyone who has seen her perform the *verismo* repertory will certainly never forget the experience. I first saw her at La Scala in 1959; the opera was *Francesca* and when Olivero stepped on stage, her aristocratic bearing, delicately chiseled features, and smoldering physical presence suggested a Renaissance portrait come to life. Her acting style might best be described as "old-school grand manner": carefully conceived in every detail with broad, almost silent-movie gestures that would hardly be acceptable if applied with less intense conviction and sincere involvement with the character. The voice too will not appeal to all tastes and is certainly not a beautiful one by conventional standards. The over-all quality tends to be rather dry and reedy—the chest register is dark and hollow yet hauntingly provocative, while the top of the voice burns with a powerful steely edge that can, when the occasion demands it, be scaled down to a finely spun *pianissimo*. Olivero uses these vocal characteristics to create a variety of telling dramatic effects: the very lack of rich overtones in the voice allows her to "read" the music with an expressive flexibility that covers an extraordinarily wide range of shadings and nuances. The role of Francesca is ideally suited to her special gifts and she draws a subtle picture of a woman literally consumed by passion. It's a pity that she is partnered here by Mario del Monaco, who screams out Paolo's music at an unrelenting *fortissimo*, completely insensitive to the role's many graceful courtly phrases. Offsetting this liability is the splendid playing by the Monte Carlo orchestra under Rescigno and London's customary plush, vibrant reproduction.

Magda Olivero may always remain an artist for the operatic gourmet, but every Italian opera buff should hear this singular personality for himself. And London's *Francesca* excerpts offer an excellent introduction.

ZANDONAI: *Francesca da Rimini* (excerpts). Magda Olivero (s), Francesca; Annamaria Gasparini (s), Biancofiore; Mario del Monaco (t), Paolo; Athos Cesarini (t), Balestriere; Virgilio Carbonari (bs), Gianciotto and Torrigiano; Orchestre National de l'Opéra Monte Carlo, Nicola Rescigno, cond. London OS 26121, \$5.98.

Two rare recordings  
and the hope  
of more to come

## The Furtwängler Archive

by David Hamilton



THE RECENT UPSURGE of interest in Wilhelm Furtwängler's conducting is a striking phenomenon, and if all goes well we may soon be able to hear a number of remarkable performances. Furtwängler was a great but occasionally erratic conductor, whose techniques of preparation (rehearse the piece, not the performance) did not always lead to satisfactory results in concert or even in controlled studio situations. When everything went right, however, the cumulative power of his readings could be quite overwhelming, as is evidenced by such phonographic classics as the Bayreuth performance of Beethoven's Ninth, the Berlin Schubert Ninth, and the famous *Tristan* recorded in London in 1952.

The formation of a Furtwängler Society in England, with the active co-operation of the conductor's widow, has already brought about some interesting developments, and there is hope that a number of performance recordings will be on the way, some of them of unquestionable interest. EMI is re-examining the practicability of issuing the famous 1953 Rome *Ring* cycle (see HIGH FIDELITY, October 1963) and other companies have also expressed interest in Furtwängler material. I have heard the *Ring* and can vouch for its extraordinary structural grasp and breadth of line, and the same can be said for the 1950 Salzburg *Fidelio* (with Flagstad, Patzak, Schwarzkopf, and Schoeffler) and *Don Giovanni* (Welitsch, Schwarzkopf, Seefried, Gobbi, Dermota); other operas in existence and floating around the Furtwängler "underground" include Gluck's *Orfeo*, Mozart's *Zauberflöte* and *Figaro* (the latter in German, alas), Verdi's *Otello*, Wagner's *Parsifal* and *Meistersinger*, and Weber's *Freischütz*. The orchestral repertory is similarly tantalizing: Beethoven's Eighth, Bruckner's Fourth and Fifth, Haydn's *Clock* Symphony, Schumann's First, Tchaikovsky's Fifth, Bartók's *Concerto for Orchestra*, Brahms's Double Concerto, choral works such as Bach's *St. Matthew* Passion and Brahms's Requiem (the latter in a performance with Seefried and Fischer-Dieskau)—not to mention numerous twentieth-century works from the staid wing of the German school: Hindemith, Blacher, Fortner, Pfitzner, Pepping.

While these possibilities are developing, the Furtwängler Society has arranged the release of several wartime performances. We have already had an unauthorized and mutilated U.S. issue of the Society-sponsored set containing the 1942 Beethoven Ninth (on Everest; see HIGH FIDELITY, April 1969). Now Turnabout has secured the American license for these recordings, and we shall have a correct issue of that Ninth, as well as a number of other pre-1945 Berlin and Vienna recordings.

Some of these will fall into the category of additions to Furtwängler's recorded repertory, such as the Brahms B flat Concerto with Fischer under review, recorded at a Berlin Philharmonic concert (probably on November 8 or 9, 1942). Unfortunately, the sound is far from ideal, with the shallow piano tone suffering from gritty, ringing distortion whenever it rises above mezzo forte or reaches the upper register. The orchestra is often similarly handicapped; further, the balance permits the piano to overwhelm important orchestral events, most notably the horn entry that starts the recapitulation.

This, then, is probably a record primarily for specialists—admirers and students of the work of Fischer and/or Furtwängler—and perhaps for passionate adherents of the slow movement, which is here spun out with loving eloquence and climaxed by the glorious repose of the clarinet solo passage before the recapitulation. (The Berlin audience, too, seems to have been awed, judging from the coughs they turn out to have been holding back until the cello re-enters; happily, too, the sonic disabilities are pretty much in abeyance in this movement.) The scherzo is considerably successful, with Fischer's rhythmic command put to valuable use.

More problematic are the outer sections. The technical demands of the opening movement are a severe strain on Fischer, not so much because they give rise to fluffed

notes (though such are not rare) as because he cannot always manage both the fingerwork *and* the massive power to make certain passages convincing. As Tovey pointed out, Brahms's strategy in this piece involves reversing the traditional roles of solo and orchestra; often the piano is called on to build a textural and dynamic climax introducing an orchestral proclamation, rather than the other way around (compare the end of the first solo with the more traditional relationship at the piano's second entry). These spots give Fischer problems, and the balance of the movement is upset—although nobody can match the way Furtwängler builds up the orchestral climaxes or sails into the development. Also pianistically unhappy are the soloist's closing theme and the march-like episode in the development, but Fischer plays well elsewhere. In short, this movement is a magnificent frame with an incomplete picture.

In the finale, I suspect Furtwängler of seeking to broaden Brahms's range of contrasts, so as to add weight to the end of the Concerto. The opening is cheery enough, but the F major tune in the second group becomes almost solemn. The "problem" he is trying to solve may not even exist—at any rate, the solution doesn't work, although there are many graceful details. In sum, a provocative and often very beautiful performance, and yet not a completely successful one.

The *Eroica* is another story—a piece that Furtwängler recorded twice in the studio (the first time on 78s, the 1952 LP still available in Seraphim IC 6018). This Turnabout version is in fact not entirely new to the American market, for this is the same performance that was briefly available around 1953 as Urania 7095 and then withdrawn under legal pressure from the conductor. Urania labeled it as a Vienna Philharmonic performance, giving no date; Turnabout says Berlin, 1944. I'm still working on this mystery, but it seems probable that Turnabout is correct.

What they are not correct about is the pitch; on both Urania and Turnabout, this *Eroica* comes out in E major, so avoid it if your turntable can't bring it down a semitone—or buy a turntable with speed adjustment, for this performance constitutes one very good reason for owning such equipment. Unlike the Brahms, this is rather decently recorded—a bit thick in the lower registers, not entirely free of distortion and overloading at a few spots, but fuller in over-all tonal quality than the 1952 Vienna version.

On the whole, this is basically the same reading already known, but a livelier, more impulsive execution thereof; it gains in particular from more subtle tempo contrasts in the first movement. The conductor still retards the C major episode that opens the development, and the E minor theme later, but the modifications are fewer and more gentle. Actually, the 78-rpm version is even more coherent in this respect, but it is also slower and seems stodgy by comparison.

Furtwängler's other movements were never as controversial as the first, and the Turnabout version is well-played throughout. This performance has more than merely historical interest, for it is eminently listenable and illuminating. (Incidentally, some European enthusiasts have been touting as Furtwängler's an Allegro disc of the *Eroica* labeled with that ubiquitous pseudonym Fritz Schreiber; though impressive in its way, this is extravagantly different from any Furtwängler performance I know.)

**BEETHOVEN:** Symphony No. 3, in E flat, Op. 55 ("Eroica"). Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, Wilhelm Furtwängler, cond. Turnabout TV 4343, \$2.98 (mono only).

**BRAHMS:** Concerto for Piano and Orchestra, No. 2, in B flat, Op. 83. Edwin Fischer, piano; Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, Wilhelm Furtwängler, cond. Turnabout TV 4342, \$2.98 (mono only).

# classical

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**BACH: Concertos for Harpsichord and Orchestra: No. 2, in E, S. 1053; No. 4, in A, S. 1055; No. 5, in F minor, S. 1056.** Gustav Leonhardt, harpsichord; Leonhardt Consort. Telefunken SAWT 9538, \$5.95.

This is the fourth disc from Telefunken in a series of five which will contain the complete concertos for harpsichord (or harpsichords) and orchestra. The fifth record in this series (containing the D minor Concerto for one harpsichord and the C major for two) is scheduled for release as a single sometime in the spring; in the meantime, a five-record boxed set of the complete collection is already available.

The outstanding feature of the present disc, setting it apart from the numerous other available versions, is the unique sound produced by the chamber ensemble (one player per part), which uses authentic instruments. No other recording offers such transparent or more clearly defined textures. Every note emerges sweetly and distinctly and Telefunken's reproduction is, as usual, superb.

Leonhardt's playing is brisk and rhythmically taut in the outer movements with just the right amount of relaxation in the middle movements. The ornamentation is not only flawless but very imaginatively employed—Leonhardt does not simply follow a formula that dictates a trill here or a grace note there.

Perhaps the most impressive achievement of these performances is their highly polished sense of ensemble. There is a genuine give and take between the harpsichord and the strings which would be difficult to attain with a chamber group of more generous dimensions. This permits Leonhardt the luxury of indulging in a more liberal use of expressive rubato than he could have with a larger orchestra and conductor. Yet the ensemble is utterly precise at all times.

There are certainly less expensive versions of these concertos to be had, but none, regardless of price, have I found more exciting. C.F.G.

**BARTOK: Concertos for Piano and Orchestra: No. 1; No. 3.** Daniel Barenboim, piano; New Philharmonia Orchestra, Pierre Boulez, cond. Angel S 36605, \$5.98.

The year 1926 was a particularly fruitful one for Bartók and the piano: the Sonata, *Out of Doors*, Nine Little Piano Pieces, sketches for *Mikrokosmos*, and the first Piano Concerto were the chief products of a bountiful harvest. The piano writing in the Concerto exemplifies Bartók's martellato style of that period—indeed, the second movement presages the Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion (1937) in fully integrating the piano with the percussion battery. Harsh chordal clusters assault the listener; there is hardly a trace of lyricism or orchestral color; one's attention is riveted on pulsing, intricate rhythmic configurations and fragmentary thematic material.

Though undeniably virtuosic in character, the Concerto has been painstaking-

ly balanced by the composer to preserve a clear solo-vs.-ensemble character. Rudolf Serkin's recording, despite the pianist's tremendously exciting performance, is invalidated by a complete lack of audible orchestral detail. Barenboim and Boulez, on the other hand, have solved the balance problem quite admirably. The many brief rhythmic instrumental episodes and quirky banter among the woodwinds are easily heard, yet never torn outright from the over-all orchestral fabric. Barenboim plays with vibrancy and much freedom, but never contradicts Boulez' taut, controlled approach.

In complete contrast to the trip-hammer piano writing of this work is the serene, reflective, often songful nature of Bartók's Third Piano Concerto, written in 1945. (The work was left unfinished at the composer's death—Serly completed the last seventeen measures.) Boulez and Barenboim tend to ignore the work's emotional content: one hears an inciseness in the outer movements more appropriate to the First Concerto. The slow movement is finely nuanced but strikes me as matter of fact, despite the meticulous detail. For this Concerto, I continue to recommend Anda's sympathetic (though not nearly so well-recorded) account on DGG which is coupled with the Second Concerto. Peter Serkin has recorded Nos. 1 and 3 with Ozawa for RCA and is therefore directly competitive. As with the current disc, young Serkin and Ozawa achieve a superbly integrated balance, and the mosaic of instrumental color is also superbly articulated. In No. 1, I marginally prefer Barenboim, whose exuberance captures the spirit of the music more readily than does Serkin's occasional studied vehemence. But in the Third Concerto, Serkin brings a warmth to the score missing from the Barenboim/Boulez account.

S.L.

**BEETHOVEN: Die Geschöpfe des Prometheus, Op. 43.** Menuhin Festival Orchestra, Yehudi Menuhin, cond. Angel S 36641, \$5.98.

Like Abravanel's version (Vanguard VSD 71124), this is not a complete performance of Beethoven's ballet, although it is abridged in a different way: Menuhin omits Nos. 4, 5, and 13, while the Utah performance bypassed Nos. 6, 7, 8, 11, 12, and 13. Since No. 5, the Adagio from the Second Act with harp and wind obbligatos, is one of the more substantial and characteristic pieces, I regret its omission by Menuhin rather more than I applaud his inclusion of the other num-

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bers. For those who value completeness (and the old, long-deleted mono versions by Van Otterloo and Van Beinum demonstrated that the whole score can be made to fit on one disc), the Beethoven year will surely bring something better.

Aside from the matter of comprehensiveness, Menuhin's orchestra gives a good light account of the Overture, with excellent balance between strings and winds, but later, when the music is less familiar to the players, the execution is often short on finesse, although amiably phrased. This isn't a reading that will galvanize your interest in the score's more tediously repetitive sections, however. Perhaps by the time the appropriate installment of HIGH FIDELITY'S Beethoven discography rolls around, there will be better news to report on the *Prometheus* front. D.H.

**BEETHOVEN: Quintet for Strings, in C, Op. 29; Quartet for Strings, in F (after the Sonata for Piano, No. 9, in E, Op. 14, No. 1).** Cecil Aronowitz, viola (in the Quintet); Amadeus Quartet. Deutsche Grammophon 139444, \$5.98.

The quintet was written in 1801—a sort of artistic cousin to the six quartets of Op. 18, which it resembles in all important matters of style. Except for the eighty-three bars of Op. 137, it is the only work of Beethoven originally conceived in the format of the string quintet. Apparently the five-voiced format had no special appeal for him after this initial experiment. The quartet in F is a curiosity, not included in the canonical sixteen, but present in the Kinsky *Verzeichnis*. The arrangement was made in 1802, about three years after the composition of the Piano Sonata, with the change of key presumably a concession to string players.

Odds are you don't know either work, and the Beethoven birthday year is a good time to do something about this. Although there is a suave, persuasive account of the quintet from the Budapest Quartet (with Walter Trampler), the

Amadeus performance, stressing youthful energy, is a good one, and the coupling with the all but forgotten Op. 14 quartet adds up to an extremely attractive disc.

When listening to the latter work, try to think of it as keyboard music. You'll discover, I think, that Beethoven was so fully the master of textures, that he could transform what was normally pianistic into effective and perfectly natural-sounding string music. In an 1802 letter to the publishing firm of Breitkopf and Härtel he deplores "the *unnatural mania*, now so prevalent, for transferring even *pianoforte compositions* to stringed instruments," insisting that only the composer is equal to the task, since the work must, in many ways, be recomposed.

We should be grateful to the Amadeus for recording this delightful music and giving us a chance to learn the lessons it contains. R.C.M.

**BEETHOVEN: Symphony No. 3, in E flat, Op. 55 ("Eroica").** Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, Wilhelm Furtwängler, cond. For a feature review of this recording, see page 78.

**BEETHOVEN: Symphony No. 6, in F, Op. 68 ("Pastoral").** Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Henry Lewis, cond. London Phase 4 SPC 21039, \$5.98.

The sensationalism of the pop-oriented Phase 4 techniques is only intermittently in evidence here—mostly in flute solos that leap out from Beethoven's brook like so many playful fish. Otherwise, the sound is surprisingly conservative, albeit uncomfortably close, and consequently never reproduces a true pianissimo. Indeed, in the coda to the first movement, Beethoven asks for an antiphonal dialogue between first and second violins which seems to me a natural for exaggerated stereoism, but most modern-day recordings—the present one included—nullify this modest bit of musical sensationalism by lumping first and second

violins together! How ironical that in prestereo days most orchestras favored stereo seating arrangements only to regroup themselves now that it really matters.

Lewis provides a genial, musical exposition. Few standards for technical refinement or rhythmic discipline are set here, but his orchestra is good and the whole approach is musical and unpretentious. Aside from the third movement—which strikes me as too slow—tempos are moderate to leisurely, and most of the problematical sectional transitions are satisfactorily judged. The storm is a bit underplayed, but not detrimentally so. Lewis observes the repeat in the peasants' merrymaking, but not the one in the first movement.

A good presentation of the music, then, in a style reminiscent of William Steinberg's with the Pittsburgh Symphony. H.G.

**BIBER: St. Polycarp Sonata à 9; Laetatus sum à 7; In Festo Trium Regum, Muttetum Natale à 6 (Epiphany Cantata); Requiem.** Soloists; Vienna Boys Choir; Chorus Viennensis; Concentus Musicus, Nikolaus Harnoncourt, cond. Telefunken SAWT 9537, \$5.95.

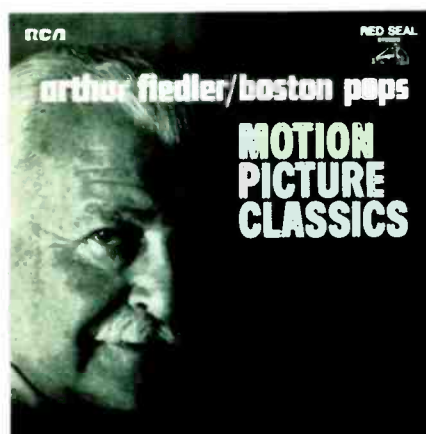
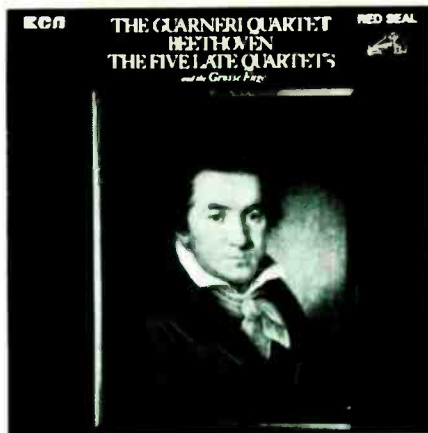
The gradual disinterment of the music of Heinrich Biber, music director of the Prince-Archbishop of Salzburg during the last quarter of the seventeenth century and violinist/composer extraordinary, may turn out to be one of the greater services rendered by the record companies' continuing search for fresh scores to bring before the microphones. Here, if I am not mistaken, are the first examples of Biber's sacred vocal music to be resurrected, and they are well worth the labors of Nikolaus Harnoncourt, who specializes in such things.

The major work is the Requiem, in which the composer utilizes five vocal soloists and a five-part choir, plus strings, trombones, and continuo, to achieve a remarkably varied setting of the text. Each line, in fact, calls on different forces and is set to a different thematic subject, and one might argue that the whole gives way to the demands of the parts. One might also, while criticizing, find portions of the text conveyed in a manner that seems surprising to an ear attuned to the big nineteenth-century Requiems that have intervened between us and Biber (the "*Rex tremendi*," for instance, is happier and less magisterial than we might have expected). But say what you will, the work has great vitality and impressive dimension. The combination of two boy sopranos and a boy alto with tenor and bass produces an effective vocal coloration; the Benedictus goes too low for the alto, but never mind.

Next in importance, and next in gravity, comes the *Laetatus sum*, peculiarly dark in color and solid in import by virtue of its pair of solo bass voices and an ensemble of strings incorporating only a viola and two gambas. The ace in the hole is a solo violin—the first ever to appear in this manner, according to Harnoncourt. It bursts with its flashes







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83

of lightning into moments between vocal solos and once does its stuff over a sustained low vocal line. Biber makes three distinct protagonists out of solo violin, voices, and instrumental group, and brings them all together in a grand climax. The gentleman knew what he was doing. The vocal line is expressive, and the instrumental scoring calls for something I have never encountered before—a vibrato created by quick leanings of the bow into the strings.

By way of contrast to *Laetatus sum*, the *Epiplany* Cantata is extraordinarily light and bright. Two boy sopranos command a melismatic line for the most part joyous and jolly, nicely offset by oboes and recorders. Lovely effects everywhere.

The *St. Polycarp* Sonata for eight trumpets and bass viol becomes pretty well hamstrung with tonic-dominant tonality (these are natural, valveless trumpets, don't forget), but the sheer sonority and ring of opposed brass via stereo reproduction are enough to make me, at least, forget my lessons in harmony. Stereo, as a matter of fact, has real point in all these works.

Performances throughout do justice to the music, and are notable in particular for their rhythmic life. All the instruments are old. Let's hope Mr. Harnoncourt keeps digging. S.F.

**BRAHMS: Concerto for Piano and Orchestra, No. 2, in B flat, Op. 83.** Edwin Fischer, piano; Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, Wilhelm Furtwängler, cond. For a feature review of this recording, see page 78.

**BRAHMS: Rinaldo, Op. 50; Song of Destiny, Op. 54.** James King, tenor (in the *Rinaldo*); Ambrosian Chorus; New Philharmonia Orchestra, Claudio Abbado, cond. London OS 26106, \$5.98.

Suppose Brahms had written an opera... what would it sound like? I suspect *Rinaldo* gives us the answer. Composed to a text by Goethe in 1863 while Brahms was working on the First Symphony, it is an example of really juicy high German romanticism; a crusader rescued from an enchantress through the moral entreaties of his comrades. (Change it a bit here and there and you have Parsifal and the Flower Maidens, another artistic reflection of the same cultural theme.) If Brahms now represents the middlebrow ideal of the serious composer, here is a work the middlebrow listener ought to love—a mixture of the noble and the voluptuous that made DeMille a master showman. Naturally this is on a somewhat higher plane, but I'm not precisely sure how much. This work which caresses the ear with its sensuous sonorities, is German through and through, filled with *Sentimentalität*.

Abbado and his colleagues take the music just the way they should for maximum effect: with clarity and discipline, a well-controlled, well-accented thematic flow, and a tendency to underplay the passion. The results are excellent and

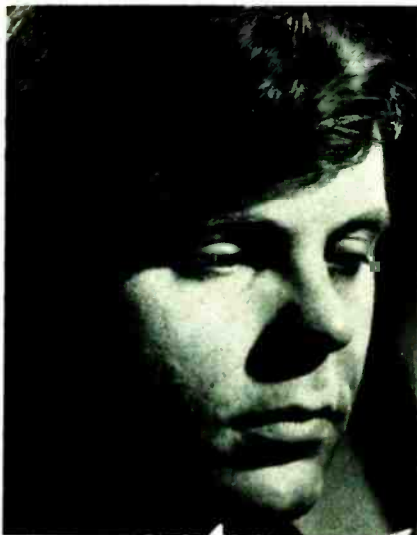
admirably recorded. Moreover, unless you know this work, you really can't claim to have a comprehensive view of Brahms.

The *Song of Destiny* is more familiar repertory, but the qualities that make Abbado's performance of *Rinaldo* a success are equally applicable here. The performance, therefore, is a very good one with a dramatic point of view that makes it an interesting foil to the older Bruno Walter version. R.C.M.

**BRAHMS: Variations on a Theme of Handel, Op. 24; Intermezzos (3), Op. 117; Klavierstücke (4), Op. 119.** Stephen Bishop, piano. Philips SAL 3758, \$5.98.

Young Stephen Bishop turns in some truly memorable, sophisticated performances here. His cultivated and immensely subtle approach is evident right at the outset of the Variations. Bishop is intent on making his piano sing and the trills in the Handel theme itself are wonderfully liquid and unpressurized. The pianist's perceptive pauses between each variation give an effect of repose and spacious expanse—quite the opposite of the hectoring "cumulative" piling up of variation upon variation so beloved of most modern exponents. Despite his eschewal of superficial drama and continuity, Bishop's structures are so firmly delineated and his insights into each variation's special qualities so penetrating that his interpretation turns out to be all the more eventful and truly cumulative in its over-all effect.

He is equally successful in the shorter works from Opp. 117 and 119. Bishop's resourceful gradations of touch and his exquisite control of pedal effects cast a magical mist over the tear-laden B minor Intermezzo, Op. 119, No. 1, and his simplicity is touching in the Op. 117 triptych. The treacherous little C major Intermezzo, Op. 119, No. 3, is amazingly perky and lightheaded in Bishop's dancing account—all that is missing is a shade of the subjective involvement that Kempff brings to his equally volatile account of the same piece on DGG. The big E Flat



Stephen Bishop—a cultivated, subtle, and sophisticated approach to Brahms.

major Rhapsody, Op. 119, No. 4, is similarly a shade too detached in Bishop's reading, but otherwise memorably re-created.

Another decided "plus" is the ultra-smooth processing of this imported Philips pressing. From start to finish, this record is a true artistic achievement and I recommend it highly. H.G.

**BRUNSWICK: Quartet for Strings; Seven Trios for String Quartet—See Laderman: Quartet for Strings, No. 2.**

**BURGMULLER: La Péri.** London Symphony Orchestra, Richard Bonyngé, cond. London CS 6627, \$5.98.

Only ballet historians are likely to recognize the name of Friedrich, or Frédéric. Burgmüller (1806–74), but a couple of examples of his music are generally known (although not credited to him) by their inclusion in Adam's *Giselle*. His major work, a romantic ballet in two acts, was created in 1843 by the same fabled team responsible for *Giselle* in 1841: librettist Gautier, choreographer Coralli, and dancers Carlotta Grisi and Lucien Petipa. Long one of the most popular ballets in the repertory, *La Péri* would justify exhumation on the mere basis of its past fame; what ensures a wider audience for this premiere recording other than balletomanes is the grace and charm of the music itself—sometimes swaying dangerously on the knife-edge separating romanticism from camp, but more often genuinely lyrical and rhythmically appealing. Certainly Tchaikovsky and other great ballet composers must have learned much from Burgmüller's score.

Richard Bonyngé, once again emerging from a background role as conductor-accompanist for his wife, Joan Sutherland, demonstrates anew his talent for unearthing novel historical treasures. As usual, Bonyngé's treatment of these layend-and-old-lace materials is sincerely affectionate. His Londoners play graciously, the stereo recording is warmly attractive, and for good measure there is a four-page leaflet of informative annotations (by Bonyngé himself) and fascinating period illustrations. R.D.D.

**CARTER: Eight Etudes and a Fantasy; Quintet for Winds. HENZE: Quintet for Winds.** Dorian Quintet. Candide CE 31016, \$3.98.

The Dorian Quintet is a relatively new woodwind ensemble and in this, their first recording, the young group demonstrates a real flair for new music. Although each of these works involves considerable technical and musical difficulty, they are all played cleanly and clearly and with a convincing sense of style.

The *Eight Etudes and a Fantasy* (actually for quartet; the horn is omitted) and the Quintet by Carter were written in 1948 and 1950 respectively, and the two intervening years reveal a remarkable development from the neoclassicism



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The night was May 29, 1913. In Paris. The first performance of Stravinsky's "Le Sacre du Printemps" (The Rite of Spring) caused one of the biggest scandals in theatrical history.

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# The Grandeur of Couperin

by Paul Henry Lang

FRANCE'S GREAT suite-music appeared on the scene as opera celebrated its first triumphs, and instrumental music took its first inventory of lessons learned from English, Dutch, and Italian music to see how to blend them into a national style. Organ and lute music seemed to have fulfilled their mission in France, and retired in favor of the harpsichord, which became the prima donna of baroque concert music. This burgeoning clavecin literature developed in two directions. Some composers turned to opera for nourishment, seeing their master in Lully, but others showed a more adventurous bent, picking up the variation from England and Holland, elements of sonata music from the Italians, and a certain brilliance from French ballet music. This ballet music, with its colorful titles and characters, was French to the core, supporting the literary and pictorial penchant always present in French music. Germans and Italians watched with amazement the inimitable blend fashioned from all this by Louis Couperin. But even greater surprises were waiting for them when his nephew, François, called "the Great," renewed and re-created all keyboard music.

In the preface to his volumes of clavecin music, Couperin says that he endeavored to depict definite persons and objects—shall we believe him? Are these wondrous miniatures program music? True, Couperin seldom writes real dance music, for he sees more in the dances than graceful motion; to him they are portraits with human characteristics. But this pictorial composer gives us mainly his own self. Couperin's construction is seemingly loose, the technique capricious, because the pictures follow one another as they occur to him, yet order reigns here. André Pirro called Couperin "the sum of French music," an opinion that was tacitly arrived at much earlier by none other than J. S. Bach.

Alan Curtis selected the pieces he plays on these three discs from the first two of Couperin's four volumes of harpsichord music, each *ordre* being preceded by a prelude taken from the supplement of Couperin's celebrated treatise on

harpsichord playing. It makes for an excellent and varied anthology. For a long time these pieces were considered pleasant *hors d'oeuvres*, useful to pianists for the beginning of concerts. Today, with the rehabilitated harpsichord, their full grandeur is revealed. For these little pieces indeed have grandeur and depth that is inseparable from the instrument for which they were composed. Curtis is fully aware that while the airiness and delicacy of the melodies, drenched in embellishments, conjure up the rose-colored landscape of the rococo, the purple peaks of the baroque are still visible. These melodies can also be turbulent and throbbing. Another thing that Curtis knows, and knows well, is that the much discussed embellishments are not mere trimming but inlay work, an essential—even structural—element calling for responsive nuances in rhythm and timing. Nor should this music be played exactly as notated, for rhythmic *inégalités* are a particular French trait. In this sensitive playing we notice that passing tone can have many different meanings according to the context. Curtis' phrases are alive, his general articulation is refined and flexible, and he makes the part-writing translucent. Good taste and a thorough-going familiarity with the style govern everything. The wide range of Couperin's imagination is followed faithfully, from the suave and soft genre pieces in the Fourth *Ordre* in F to the weighty and grave pieces in the Sixth in B minor, which ends with an almost violent *Passacaille*. The instrument used, a French harpsichord from Couperin's time, is magnificent: the bass is resonant, the higher registers brilliant, and its attractive sound is well recorded. Wilfred Mellers' notes are first-class. All of this adds up to an artistic achievement.

**COUPERIN: Prelude 1 and Ordre 3, in C minor; Prelude 2 and Ordre 2, in D minor; Prelude 3 and Ordre 1, in G minor; Prelude 4 and Ordre 4, in F; Prelude 5 and Ordre 5, in A; Prelude 6 and Ordre 8, in B minor; Prelude 7 and Ordre 6, in B flat; Prelude 8 and Ordre 12, in E minor.** Alan Curtis. harpsichord. Vox SVBX 5448, \$9.98 (three discs).

of the earlier work toward the highly personal style which emerged in a definitive form in the String Quartet of 1951. The *Etudes and a Fantasy* already show the interest in problems of texture and ensemble so characteristic of Carter's later music. The Henze Quintet, written in 1952, dates from a period when the composer was still trying out various compositional approaches in an attempt to form his own musical personality. This piece is from his twelve-tone phase, but the formal organization is so stiff that the end result seems more like a parody than anything else. (In hearing the work for the first time, I was struck by the idea that surely this would be the kind of music Hindemith would have written if he had used the twelve-tone system.)

To see what advances have been achieved in the performance of this kind of music, I suggest you listen to the recording of the Carter *Etudes* made by the members of the New York Woodwind Quintet (all of whom are excellent musicians, incidentally) who gave it its first performance, still available on a Composers Recordings disc. It is almost like listening to a different piece. R.P.M.

**CHOPIN: Etudes, Opp. 10 and 25 (complete).** John Browning, piano. RCA Red Seal LSC 3072, \$5.98.

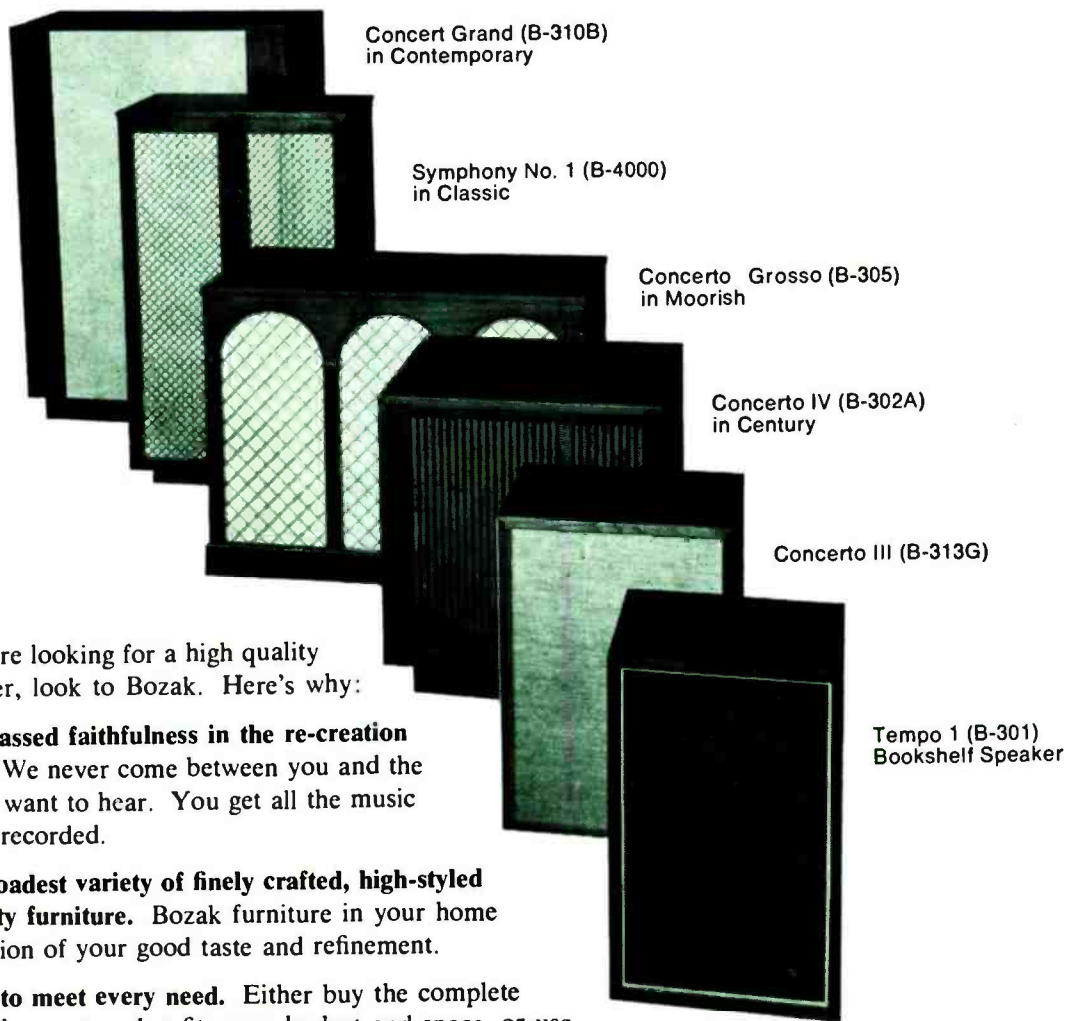
Anyone who can negotiate the treacherous Chopin Etudes as efficiently as Browning does here has every right to be regarded among the "elite" of pianists; I happen to prefer the "pica" performances of Harasiewicz (World Series) and Anievas (Seraphim) to these—and the "hand-written" versions by Támás B-Vásáry (DGG) to all of them!

For all their obvious expertise and pianistic (as opposed to interpretive) resourcefulness, there is something terribly typewriterish about Browning's approach here. First of all, his pianistic address is terribly slick, methodical, and technically oriented. In the rapid numbers, his smooth fingers are characterless and mechanical: speed for speed's sake. In the more ruminative essays where it is impossible to hide behind mere fluency, Browning sounds terribly "uptight": his rubato is stiff and almost apologetic—indeed, in the E major, Op. 10, No. 3, actually tortured.

Tonally, as well as aesthetically, Browning's work here just rubs me the wrong way: his sonority, while beautifully focused, is polished with a hard veneer and the result is a thin, hard slickness. His fingers rarely slip, but when a minute unevenness does manifest itself as in, say, Op. 25, Nos. 2 and 6, the prevailing militaristic discipline of his performances makes the lapse seem much more consequential than it in fact is. The other three versions mentioned above have similar minor technical blemishes, but the expressive qualities of the music are more to the fore and the defects are less noticeable. Indeed, Vásáry's, the least technically perfect of the lot, is by far the most communicative and interesting from an expressive standpoint.

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Viewed objectively, Browning's accomplishment here is considerable . . . unfortunately, I find it impossible to be objective about such subjective, poetic music!

H.G.

**DONIZETTI: Roberto Devereux.** Beverly Sills (s), Elizabeth; Beverly Wolff (ms), Sara; Robert Ilosfalvy (t), Roberto; Kenneth MacDonald (t), Cecil; Peter Glossop (b), Nottingham; Don Garrard (bs), Raleigh; Gwynne Howell (bs), A Page; Richard van Allen (bs), A Servant; Ambrosian Opera Chorus; Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Charles Mackerras, cond. Westminster WST 323, \$17.94 (three discs).

Donizetti has dominated the current bel canto revival by sheer weight of numbers—a total of seventy operas as opposed to Rossini's mere thirty-eight and Bellini's ten. Having been exposed to about twenty of Donizetti's stage works, I can speak only from a relatively limited experience; but judging from their intrinsic quality and frequency of production, just three of the composer's heretofore neglected serious operas seem to be catching on—*Anna Bolena*, *Maria Stuarda*, and *Robert Devereux* (the latter two, oddly enough, both dealing with the tribulations of Queen Elizabeth, and *Anna Bolena* with those of her parents).

And now here is *Roberto* in a handsomely produced recording built around the considerable talents of Beverly Sills. Much of the music here should come as something of a revelation to those who only know *Lucia* and were slightly disappointed with RCA's *Lucrezia Borgia*, hardly one of Donizetti's best efforts. Except for one serious flaw, the libretto by Salvatore Canimarano (better known for his text to Verdi's *Il Trovatore*) is a strong one: the action is concise, building surely to a powerful climax. Unfortunately, while drawing a forceful three-dimensional portrait of the troubled Queen, Canimarano neglected to give much character to the rest of the cast. Elizabeth stands out in stark relief: her public role as England's ruler contrasted with her private feelings for the traitorous Roberto (Earl of Essex) forms the crux of the drama—each scene in which she is involved comes pulsing to life with some of Donizetti's most striking and expressive music. But Roberto himself is a whining, passive figure, always on the defensive. His beloved Sara, Duchess of Nottingham, does little but wring her hands and bemoan her cruel fate, while the Duke of Nottingham is the familiar Outraged Husband and Betrayed Friend, a stock in trade of countless Italian operas. *Roberto Devereux*, then, is very much a one-character affair: *Lucia* may be essentially a vehicle for the coloratura, but at least Edgardo and Enrico have identifiable personalities and interesting reactions.

Donizetti was understandably hard put to bring these dull figures to life. Each has at least one moment to shine but the music never gets much beyond the conventional. Take the Sara/Roberto duet that ends Act I, for instance: this jogging

"Addio" could just as easily be expressive of a happy meeting as a sad farewell. And Roberto's final cabaletta is not so much undistinguished as its swinging, sanguine tone is totally inappropriate for a man about to be led to the block. Whenever Elizabeth appears on the scene, though, the opera takes on a different flavor altogether. Her two big arias are both splendid examples of how dramatically relevant the cavatina/cabaletta formula can be in the hands of a master. In Act I, Elizabeth awaits Roberto's return from Ireland: at first she dwells upon her love—a soft, ingratiating cavatina; and then, just before Roberto's entrance, the music picks up in tempo and intensity as the Queen decides whether to treat him as an errant lover or a treasonable subject. In the final scene, while Roberto meets his fate offstage, Elizabeth is at first tempted to stay the execution; when she realizes that it is too late, she launches into one of Donizetti's most extraordinary and original cabalettas, first accusing Sara and Nottingham of forcing her hand and then gradually becoming obsessed with a vision of Roberto's headless corpse and the realization of her own guilt in the tragedy. It's a powerful finale, and the cabaletta's large intervals and spiraling melodic line describe the Queen's moment of truth as vividly as anything in Bellini or early Verdi. No less fine are the extended interview with Roberto in Act I and the entire second act, a virtually through-composed scene culminating in Elizabeth's furious signing of Roberto's death sentence.

Westminster has not stinted on their recording and it's a pleasure to report that the performance is first-class in almost every respect. Beverly Sills is probably better equipped to do justice to this music than any other soprano presently specializing in the bel canto repertory. Every note gets its full share of musical and dramatic meaning: the florid passages seem to grow logically and inevitably from the basic melodic line and we always feel the presence of a live, involved character. From the soft, feminine, beautifully sustained *piano* singing of her first aria, there is no question about Elizabeth's intimate feelings, and the impression is enforced by the breathless tone and pliant coloratura of the cabaletta. Later, in the duet, the Queen questions Roberto about his political betrayal and his private betrayal; Sills distinguishes clearly between the two—at first imperious and impersonal, later anguished and insistent. Again in the final number Elizabeth's irreconcilable roles, as woman and queen, coalesce into the stuff of true tragedy as interpreted by this great singing actress. There are moments when Sills asks a bit too much of her essentially lyric instrument: the big pronouncements and sudden rages during the Act II council scene do not always carry sufficient weight or authority. But on the whole this is a performance to be savored time and again for its dramatic sensitivity, innate musicality, and sheer vocal beauty.

Although the other roles do not offer much rewarding material, each is in good hands. Beverly Wolff is especially



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fine as Sara, using her full, warm mezzo to good effect and extracting more character from the part than one might have thought possible. Robert Ilosfalvy and Peter Glossop possess big virile ringing voices of undeniable quality, though they both tend to be rather stolid, unimaginative singers. The chorus is excellent and Charles Mackerras' incisive accompaniments prove him to be sympathetically in tune with the idiom. The only unfortunate aspect of the production is the sound, which is stifled, boxy, and, during the large ensembles, insufficiently defined: a further aggravation on this score is the bothersome amount of pre-echo, particularly on Side 4. Hopefully Westminster will be able to eliminate this on later pressings. The album comes with a profusely illustrated booklet containing a complete text and translation as well as several interesting articles on the background and music of the opera by William Ashbrook. P.G.D.

**GRIEG: Peer Gynt: Incidental Music.** Patricia Clark, soprano; Sheila Armstrong, soprano; Sydney Errington, viola; Ambrosian Singers; Hallé Orchestra, Sir John Barbirolli, cond. Angel S 36531, \$5.98.

**GRIEG: Suite "From Holberg's Time," Op. 40; Last Spring, Op. 34, No. 2.** **WIREN: Serenade for Strings, Op. 11.** English Chamber Orchestra, Johannes Somary, cond. Cardinal VCS 10067, \$3.98.

**GRIEG: Norwegian Peasant Dances, Op. 72 ("Slatter").** Vladimir Pleshakov, piano. Orion ORS 6908, \$5.00.

**GRIEG: Lyric Pieces, Opp. 43 and 54 (complete); She Dances, Op. 57, No. 5; Brooklet, Op. 62, No. 4; Wedding Day at Trolldhaugen, Op. 65, No. 6.** Liv Glaser, piano. RCA Victrola VICS 1465, \$2.98.

These four records offer a variety of music by Edvard Grieg, running the gamut from the most familiar to the virtually unknown. Portions of the *Peer Gynt* music have long figured as staples of the popular symphonic repertory, but the *Slatter* are seldom encountered on piano recital programs.

Allowing for his somewhat individual approach, Barbirolli's way with the *Peer Gynt* is every bit as satisfying as Beecham's: Sir John is a bit softer in timbre, somewhat heavier in texture, and without the rhythmic bounce of Beecham, but he never violates the score. In his virtually complete presentation of the incidental music, Barbirolli employs the services of two adequate sopranos, an excellent violist, and a superb chorus and orchestra. If you want to hear the *Peer Gynt* music intact and in a sequence that follows Ibsen's masterpiece, this is an important record.

The *Holberg* Suite, only a little less familiar than the *Peer Gynt* concert suites, stands as a somewhat more successful independent work. As an explicit evocation of an "ancient" style, the *Holberg* Suite adopts the bare bones of the baroque idiom in its simple binary struc-

tures and written-out embellishments, but this formal mold contains music that is distinctly of a Romantic character. The juxtaposition here of Grieg's *Holberg* Suite with the *Serenade for Strings* by the conservative twentieth-century Swedish composer Dag Wirén (born 1905) is an apt one. For Wirén's music shares with its companion piece certain baroque reminiscences, though tempered in this case with a slight neoclassic harmonic astringency. Johannes Somary, a specialist in baroque music, brings a touch of that style to these pieces without destroying Grieg's characteristic Romantic sentiment. In the *Last Spring*, however, he succumbs completely (and inevitably, I fear) to the saccharine music.

In his youth Grieg was a very able pianist and composed idiomatically for the instrument throughout his career. Though his popular Piano Concerto has overshadowed his shorter keyboard works, these vignettes are in fact musically superior and more characteristic of this composer. Grieg was, in the last analysis, a master of small forms. Though the composer's identification with the folk music of his country may seem rather bland and ingenuous when compared with the more idiomatic recreations of Bartók or Ives, there can be no doubt that his native heritage was an important source of inspiration. The *Norwegian Peasant Dances* (a more correct translation of *Slatter* than the term "Folk Dances" on Orion's record cover) here include sixteen short pieces of considerable charm and vitality. They were composed in 1902, rather late in Grieg's career. Vladimir Pleshakov plays them skillfully and with fine rhythmic point.

Grieg composed some 187 short pieces for piano, and the ten books of *Lyric Pieces* contain many of his most popular melodies. To a modern ear, the *Slatter* provide greater novelty and possibly more musical interest, but there is no denying the appeal of such pieces as *Wedding Day at Trolldhaugen* and *To the Spring* in their original settings as opposed to the rather saccharine orchestral translations. Liv Glaser, a young Norwegian pianist, is temperamentally and technically well equipped for this music and her performances are completely satisfying. P.H.

**HAYDN: Sonatas for Piano: No. 33, in C minor; No. 50, in D; No. 62, in E flat.** Alexis Weissenberg, piano. RCA Red Seal LSC 3111, \$5.98.

These three Haydn sonatas make an attractive and varied set. They range in style from the relatively early *Sturm und Drang* C minor Sonata of 1771 through the rococo elegance of the D major Sonata (1780) to the great sweep of the E flat Sonata (1794)—Haydn's final contribution to the genre and a work which anticipates many of Beethoven's early "innovations."

Unfortunately Weissenberg's performances do not reveal the essential character of any of these works. He seems to view all three in nineteenth-century terms, a fact made evident in virtually every aspect of his readings. There is, for ex-





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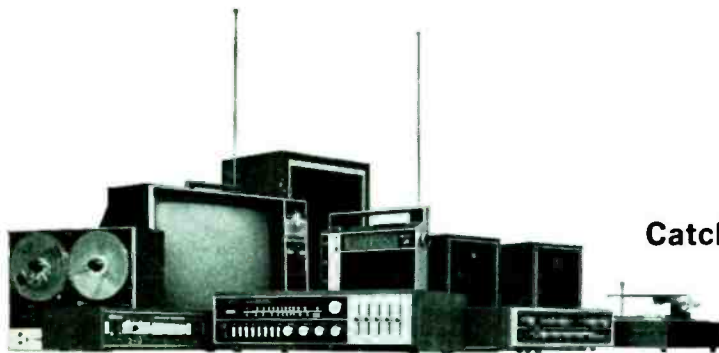
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ample, much too frequent use made of the sustaining pedal, a concomitant of his one-dimensional conception of the texture: individual components are obscured for the purpose of achieving a smooth, generalized surface sound. As a result, the contrapuntal factor—so crucial to the life of this music—is largely lost; important motivic elements either emerge as little more than figurations or are simply drowned in a sea of undifferentiated textures. Tempos are also erratic and the excessive use of rubato tends to undermine the forward momentum. Finally, the miscalculations continue right down to the smallest details, such as rhythmically displaced ornaments and, in one spot (the Largo of the D major Sonata), an octave doubling of the bass line. One has the impression that Mr. Weissenberg is sim-

ply not satisfied with the pianistic effect of this music as it stands. If that is the case, O.K.—but then why bother to play it at all? R.P.M.

**HENZE: Quintet for Winds—See Carter: Eight Etudes and a Fantasy.**

**KODALY: The Ruins; Songs from Karad; Tavern Song; The Peacocks—See Poulenc: Quatre petites prières Saint-François d'Assise.**

**KRAUS: Funeral Cantata for Gustave III of Sweden.** Joan Marie Moynagh, soprano; Kerstin Meyer, mezzo; Ragnar Ulfung, tenor; Kim Borg, bass; Clarion

Concerts Chorus and Orchestra, Newell Jenkins, cond. Cardinal VCS 10065. \$3.98.

I have remarked before in these columns how little the so-called Classic era is known. To be sure, we know our Haydn and Mozart—but the rest? Now comes Newell Jenkins, the indefatigable digger-upper of forgotten music, with an exact contemporary of Mozart—Joseph Martin Kraus, a German who settled in Stockholm. This highly literate man, well regarded in his time, praised by Haydn and Albrechtsberger, is but a name in the dictionary to us, yet this recording shows that he is a musician of consequence. The *Funeral Cantata for Gustave III* (whose assassination at a masked ball furnished the story for Verdi's opera) is a dark, mournful work full of cries of pain and anguish. The arias are well turned, the choral writing is excellent, there is a remarkable solo quartet and a sturdy choral fugue. Kraus does exhibit some mannerisms that show that he was touched by the Storm and Stress movement, and one wishes for a few more measures at the end of some of the arias which seem to stop abruptly, but one's attention is always engaged. Now that the Swedish Academy is publishing Kraus's music, perhaps we shall hear more of it.

The performance is decent, though a little more variety in the dark hues and a little more incisiveness would have been desirable; at times the music simply moves from spot to spot. Of the singers, soprano Moynagh wobbles a bit, mezzo Meyer more so, but tenor Ulfung and bass Borg are quite good, and the sound is fair. P.H.L.

**LADERMAN: Quartet for Strings, No. 2. BRUNSWICK: Quartet for Strings; Seven Trios for String Quartet.** Isidore Cohen and Hiroko Yajima, violins, Samuel Rhodes, viola, Robert Sylvester, cello (in the Laderman); Felix Galimir and Hiroko Yajima, violins, Samuel Rhodes, viola, Fortunato Arico, cello, Julius Levine, bass (in the Brunswick). Composers Recordings CRI 244, \$5.95.

Ezra Laderman's second quartet is a fine, big, grandly scaled, and magnificently lyrical work involving a highly original variation on the serial principle. It is beautifully played and well recorded.

Mark Brunswick's quartet is short, brisk, and very much to the point. It uses the double bass instead of the cello and manages to achieve considerable plasticity in spite of the tonal gap thereby created. Brunswick's *Seven Trios for String Quartet* are also short, often lyrical rather than brisk, and equally to the point. They employ the instruments of the string quartet in various trio combinations. The performance is vigorous, the recording somewhat harsh. A.F.

## New Ivesian Discoveries by Alfred Frankenstein

The rather odd title of this disc, "New Music of Charles Ives," is explained by a subtitle claiming that the seventeen works presented here have not previously been recorded. Actually, one or two of them *have* been, on discs long since withdrawn, but that is a very minor matter. The main thing is that some masterpieces are made available here in superb performances, superbly recorded.

The first side is devoted to sacred music—Ives's settings of Psalms 14, 54, 25, and 135, and a very short *Let There Be Light*. Psalm 25 is the most important of these works: it is a great, huge piece, full of magnificent inventions, including a 12-tone row set down and employed twenty years before Schoenberg invented the term. Psalm 135, which uses brass in addition to chorus and organ, is also a major work. The other two psalms, it seems to me, are more admirable for their ingenuities than their expressiveness.

The second side of the record is given over to secular choral music and solo songs, with orchestra or piano. Only Ives would write pieces for chorus and symphony orchestra less than ten bars long, and only on records is one likely to hear them; but *Duty* and *Vita* are among the most rewarding things on this disc.

*Walt Whitman* provides exactly the "barbaric yawp" you would expect from Ives in setting that poet—it is his only music for a Whitman text. His choice of poets was very strange. On this disc it includes not only Whitman but Byron, Emerson, Kipling, Longfellow, and the tediously platitudinous Robert Underwood Johnson, who was a great favorite of the

composer's. There are also several pieces with texts by Ives himself, including a most entertaining choral song of praise to nature in its various moods and modes, a setting that ranges from musical comedy to horrendous dissonance, all in a few lines.

At the end of the second side are nine solo songs covering the extremes of Ives's career from 1901, when he could write an extremely conventional but extremely beautiful thing like *The Children's Hour*, to 1921, when his songs—polytonal, full of wild leaps and skips and slam-bang piano parts—became all but unsingable and unplayable. These songs are sung by two members of Gregg Smith's choir—Adrienne Albert, a mezzo with a small, heartbreakingly lovely voice and exquisite musicianship, and William Feuerstein, who is described on the jacket as a baritone but sounds like one of the half-dozen greatest tenors you ever heard in your life. His style is like Charles Bressler's; and he helps mightily to explain how Gregg Smith can field so fine a chorus. Many records of Ives's songs are now available, but few can compare in quality with these.

**IVES: Let There Be Light; Psalm 14; Psalm 25; Psalm 54; Psalm 135; Walt Whitman; Duty and Vita; On the Antipodes; The Last Reader; Luck and Work; Like a Sick Eagle; Tolerance; Incantation; The Pond; At Sea; The Children's Hour; The Rainbow.** Adrienne Albert, mezzo; William Feuerstein, baritone; Raymond Beegle, organ; Texas Boys Choir; Gregg Smith Singers; Columbia Chamber Ensemble, Gregg Smith, cond. Columbia MS 7321, \$5.98.





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**MENDELSSOHN: A Midsummer Night's Dream: Incidental Music.** Hanneke van Bork, soprano; Alfreda Hodgson, soprano; Ambrosian Singers; New Philharmonia Orchestra, Rafael Frühbeck de Burgos, cond. London OS 26107, \$5.98.

What one really wants, I suspect, is a recording of the complete *Midsummer Night's Dream* by a first-class group of actors with the incidental music falling where it was intended in the action. The hitch, of course, is that records are international, and, although you may buy an opera in a language you don't speak, a play is a different matter. Sales on the Continent would be poor.

What we are offered here is the entire incidental music with the songs and choral passages sung in English but with the dialogue omitted. If your primary interest is Mendelssohn's music, this is splendid. But we must not forget that Mendelssohn had no performances such as this in mind, and much of his music was intended to accompany spoken lines in the play. It does so very well, even if a German translation is used. London thoughtfully provides all the missing dialogue on a leaflet, and, if you like, you can recite it yourself, starting with "How now, spirit! whither wander you?" This way we have a sort of add-a-part disc, but with missing actors. Read the lines against the music and you will see that Mendelssohn has taken their poetic rhythm into account and offers an effect similar to counterpoint, even if the words are spoken rather than sung.

So get yourself a cast, for this record is much too good to dismiss casually. (Indeed, one reason for leaving out the dialogue may be to make the record useful to those dramatic groups that have their own available actors.) Frühbeck has the light touch, the rhythmic zest, the sense of fantasy, and the ear for the well-blended sonorities this music requires. Within a few bars he has us caught in his evocation of night and the mysterious wood where the wee folk and mortals meet. The brief vocal passages are nicely done, and stereo is used with an appreciation of moonlight and magic. R.C.M.

**MILHAUD: Cantate "Les deux cités"; Cantate de la paix—See Poulenc: Quatre motets pour un temps de penitence.**

**MILHAUD: Le Carnaval d'Aix; Concerto for Viola; Concerto for Percussion.** Carl Seemann, piano; Ulrich Koch, viola; Fauré Daniel, percussion; Orchestra of Radio Luxembourg, Darius Milhaud, cond. Candide CE 31013, \$3.98.

*Le Carnaval d'Aix*, which fills the first side of this record, is a piece for piano and orchestra that Milhaud produced in 1927 as a vehicle for himself as soloist with orchestra on an American tour. Since he does not regard himself as a piano virtuoso (although he is musically the most communicative pianist the writer of these lines has ever heard), he arranged one of his own old ballet scores

to accommodate an obbligato part for the keyboard instrument. The ballet was on a *commedia dell'arte* subject and the music is full of Italian color except in the eleventh of its twelve short movements, which is a tango entitled "*Souvenir de Rio*." Milhaud called the new version *Le Carnaval d'Aix* because that town in Provence is his birthplace and is, in his opinion, the most delightful spot on earth. In Aix he feels no pains. The score is high-spirited, tuneful, full of color and splash; and it is everything that the composer meant it to be in this delectable recording.

The Viola Concerto was composed for no less a soloist than Paul Hindemith. It is actually a piece of chamber music, since the accompanying orchestra consists of fifteen soloists. It is short, silvery, dynamic, and one of the less impressive achievements of its composer. The Percussion Concerto is one of his best, but it is not well recorded: the solo part is given insufficient relief from the general mass of orchestral sound. Or do you have to see this concerto as well as hear it? The soloist manages about fifteen instruments, and the logistics and choreography of his effort are a wonder to behold.

A.F.

**MOZART: Idomeneo. Margherita Rinaldi, Pauline Tinsley, George Shirley, Ryland Davies et al.; BBC Chorus and Symphony Orchestra, Colin Davis, cond. For a feature review of this recording, see page 75.**

**POULENC: Quatre motets pour un temps de penitence; Laudes de Saint-Antoine de Padoue. MILHAUD: Cantata "Les deux cités"; Cantate de la paix.** Jocelyn Chamoin (s), Mauricette Millot (s), Jeanine Collard (ms), Jean-Jacques Lesueur (t); Stephane Caillat Vocal Ensemble, Stephane Caillat, cond. Music Guild MS 870, \$2.98.

**POULENC: Quatre petites prières Saint-François d'Assise; Laudes de Saint-Antoine de Padoue; Chanson à boire; Clic, clad, dansez sabots. KODALY: The Ruins; Songs from Karad; Tavern Song; The Peacocks.** John Carter (t), John Rudzinsky (t), Ralph Dial (t), Donald Gray (b), Marshall Moss (b), David Jackson (b); Whikehart Chorale, Lewis E. Whikehart, cond. Lyrichord LLST 7208, \$5.98.

"I have always had a great liking for the cantata form," Darius Milhaud has written, and the Music Guild album presents us with two of his efforts in this genre. Both are settings of verse by Paul Claudel, whose friendship with Milhaud resulted in a number of other successful collaborations. *Les deux cités*, dealing with the cities of Babylon and Jerusalem, does not achieve the turbulent intensity of *Les Choëphores*; nonetheless, it emerges as one of the master's most cherishable, rewarding productions. Scored for a mixed chorus of children and men, it maintains the conservative expressive boundaries characteristic of most music written for children's voices—but what

wonders it works and what variety it achieves within these limitations!

Anything about Babylon is always an invitation to orgy; but this music shuns the religious-movie-soundtrack ambience that ultimately cheapens another work depicting the same neighborhood, William Walton's *Belshazzar's Feast*. The work opens with stiffly declaimed, accelerating chords, with the words foretelling the evil city's impending doom. The effect is that of grandeur. But the grandeur does not sprawl. It is contained. It is kept almost in a miniature perspective, like the toy-sized castles in old paintings.

Milhaud's Gallic restraint is only half the story. A great melodist, he relaxes in the middle movement and spins out a luminous part for solo alto (here performed with bejewelled poise by Jeanine Collard). The languorous, richly tuneful atmosphere of this section gets longer, more elaborate treatment in the one-movement *Cantate de la paix*.

The three Poulenc cycles included on these records will come as a revelation to those familiar only with the composer's secular work. For the most part, they are neither nimble nor languorous. Rhythmically severe, their main interest comes from a densely conceived harmonic development. Their monolithic stateliness may at first dismay those expecting their old friend Francis the relaxed, urbane, witty *bon vivant*. Only stay with them, though. With each repeated hearing, they yield increasingly more. The penitential motets are closest to the worldly Poulenc, with lesser reliance upon a constant procession of stern chords, more use of independent phrases, while in the last two sections, there are decided echoes of the old boulevard languor.

One of the cycles, the joyous, more extroverted *Laudes de Saint-Antoine de Padoue*, is written for male chorus only. The all-male Whikehart singers and the male contingent of the Caillat Ensemble both perform it, and the result is an interesting contrast. Both give excellent performances, the Caillat weaker in its tenor voices but more musically sinuous, the Whikehart producing a far more vibrant, fresher sound and giving the more exuberant interpretation.

The Whikehart album contains one miscalculation. Following the sublime Saint Anthony cycle is *The Peacocks* by Kodály—and, in the words of Hamlet's friend, it follows hard upon. Not a terribly inspired piece to start with, it seems even less so through this juxtaposition. Imagine a concert of angels suddenly followed by the local college glee club singing a sentimental ditty. Same effect. The other Kodály pieces make a better impression, though not as strong as the folksong group on Angel with a girls' choir. Lyrichord's liner notes make an incomplete attempt at providing translations. Music Guild makes no attempt at all—a lapse that proves especially grievous in the Milhaud/Claudel works.

J.H.

**PROKOFIEV: Chose en soi—See Shostakovich: Sonata for Piano, No. 1, Op. 12.**

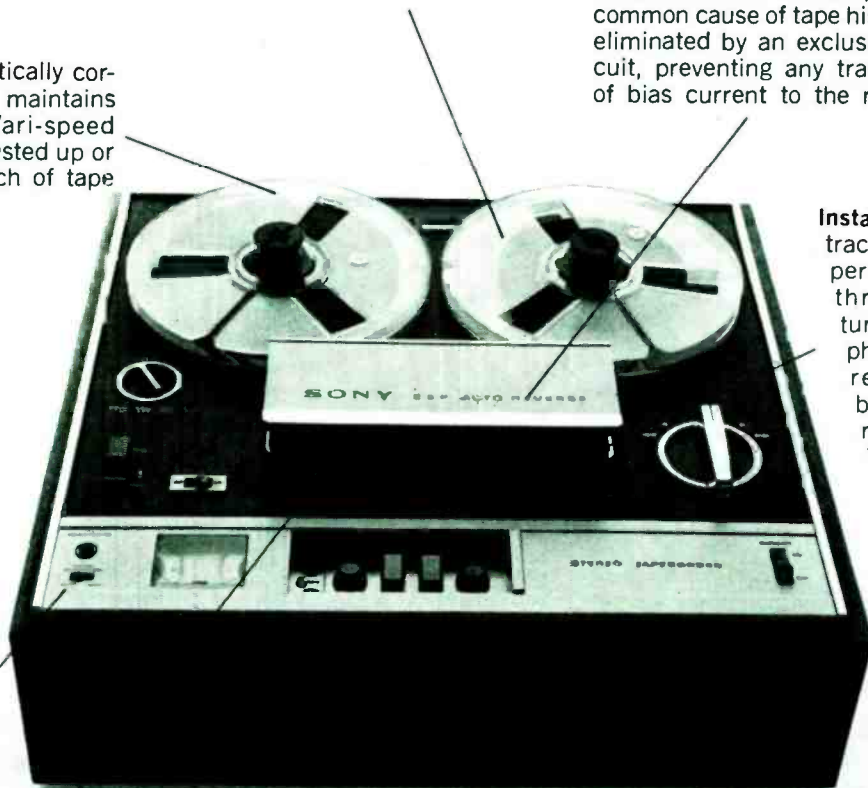
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**REICH: It's Gonna Rain; Violin Phase.** Brother Walter, vocalist (in *It's Gonna Rain*); Paul Zukofsky, violin (in *Violin Phase*). Columbia MS 7265, \$5.98.

Both these works of Steve Reich employ a technique which he describes as "the process of gradually shifting phase relations between two or more identical repeating figures." In *It's Gonna Rain* the identical repeating figures are taken from the speech of a black street evangelist. The treatment given them first makes one acutely aware of the speaker's great range and beauty of inflection, which is very close to song—and becomes song in the innumerable repetitions to which Reich subjects it on his tape; then as the repeated words shift in phase, new words, new rhythms, new polyphonic effects of all kinds emerge. By the time the piece has ended, speech has been completely transformed into abstract sound.

The total effect in *It's Gonna Rain* is magnificent; not as much can be said, so far as this pair of ears is concerned, for *Violin Phase*, which employs a similar technique on a purely instrumental basis. For me, at least, this work adds up to a tedious and unrewarding experience.

A.F.

**RIMSKY-KORSAKOV: Scheherazade, Op. 35.** Henrik Fridheim, violin; U.S.S.R. Symphony Orchestra, Yevgeny Svetlanov, cond. Melodiya/Angel SR 40112, \$5.98.

One test I have for the nth recording of a standard symphonic favorite (after listening carefully with a miniature score in hand) is this: does it avoid boring me in a relaxed, noncritical rehearing for enjoyment only? Svetlanov's *Scheherazade* is one of the few among the twenty or more currently available versions which passes this test and the performance makes a distinctive impression both by its generally deliberate, broadly expansive interpretative approach and by its robust, unmistakably big-auditorium stereoism. The U.S.S.R. Orchestra is admirably disciplined and unexpectedly eloquent here: Fridheim's solo violin is appropriately spellbinding and only in the last movement does Svetlanov lose his cool by pressing too hard and failing to realize the climax's potential grandeur.

However, I do miss some inner-voice and percussion details in the wondrously spacious but less than perfectly transparent recording, and the rich romanticism of the reading itself tends to obscure the naive, child's fairy-tale charms that to my mind give this work its most irresistible appeal. Therefore, I reluctantly have to rank Svetlanov's *Scheherazade* a grade or two below the very best versions by Ansermet, Beecham, and Stokowski. Nevertheless, this is a fine reading in its own right and particularly valuable as the sole edition currently available that is not only played and recorded by Russian musicians and engineers but is quintessentially "Russian" in feeling.

R.D.D.

**ROREM: Poems of Love and the Rain; From an Unknown Past; Four Madrigals.** Beverly Wolf, mezzo; Ned Rorem, piano (in the *Poems*); Modern Madrigal Quartet (in *From an Unknown Past* and *Madrigals*). Desto DC 6480, \$5.98.

*Poems of Love and the Rain* is a most ingenious and entertaining song cycle. Eight poems are given two quite different and contrasting musical settings. The first versions are sung straight through until we reach an *Interlude*, of which only one version exists. After that, we go back through the eight poems in the second settings.

The settings themselves remind often of French song and of Rorem's devotion to Poulenc, but the more dramatic, dissonant, and declamatory ones (of which there are several) take off from the Ives of *General William Booth Enters Heaven*. The *Interlude*—a song without accompaniment followed by a long postlude for the piano alone in virtuoso style—is quite magical in effect. One of the better aspects of the cycle is that you can't remember what the first setting of any of the poems was like while you are hearing the second, and that keeps you guessing.

The quartet of vocal soloists hasn't interested composers much since Brahms wrote his *Liebeslieder* waltzes, but Rorem handles that ensemble most delightfully, with humor, deftness, and a generally light but masterly touch. The seven part-songs of *From an Unknown Past* (so called because the authors of the poems are anonymous) seem to have been conceived for the solo quartet. The *Four Madrigals* (texts by Sappho) were written for mixed chorus but are a lot more effective as sung by the Modern Madrigal Quartet, whose members are Lois Winter, Helene Miles, Philip Olson, and Michael Stewart.

A.F.

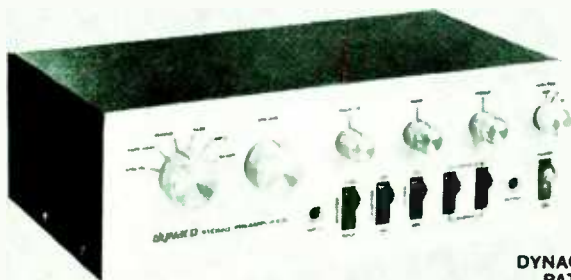
**SCHUBERT: Impromptu, D. 899: No. 1, in C minor; No. 2, in E flat; No. 3, in G flat; No. 4, in A flat.** SCHUMANN: *Carnaval, Op. 9.* Nelson Freire, piano. Columbia MS 7307, \$5.98.

The first solo disc by Nelson Freire to be released in this country does not quite answer any questions that might have been raised by his recent two-record album of concertos with Kempe and the Munich Philharmonic. Both of the performances issued here were in fact recorded in Germany several years ago when the youthful South American-born virtuoso was patently at an early stage in his burgeoning career.

Of the two items, Freire's Schubert is decidedly more successful than his Schumann. He tends to let his emotions go every which way in the C minor piece, but still manages to suggest a goodly measure of its heroic architecture. The ensuing E flat benefits from the pianist's patently brilliant fingerwork, and also displays forward motion and an instinct for harmonic planning. In the G flat Impromptu, Freire is culpable on the grounds of using a corrupt text which alters a few of Schubert's harmonies. Otherwise, he plays the piece rather well,

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observing the double alla breve meter, and admirably resisting the tendency to dawdle over the arching phrases. In the final Impromptu, Freire negotiates the notes with admirable efficiency, but displays symptoms of immaturity by striving for glitter and chrome-plating. A more seasoned artist (say, Curzon or Schnabel) would know how to temper the rippling passagework in a more long-breathed, less hypertense manner.

Although the overside *Carnaval* leaves little doubt that a superb technician is at work, I find Freire's interpretation rather flashy and insipidly mannered. He engages in salon mannerisms that impede the music's flowing continuity and fragment its rhythmic pulse. I thought that such idiosyncrasies as making a flustered *accelerando* on the last chords of the *Marche des Davidsbündler contre les Philistins* fizzled out with Badura-Skoda and am genuinely sorry to see such inanities getting a new lease on life. Moreover, Freire further weakens the musical logic by omitting even such *de rigueur* repeats as the ones in *Reconnaissance* and the opening of the aforementioned *Marche*. Of the several young artists who have recently recorded *Carnaval*, Grigory Sokolov (on Melodiya/Angel) is by far the most natural and genuinely communicative performer.

I found the pick-up rather uncomfortable and close up, but through the unpleasant plangency, it is apparent that Freire's tone per se is colorful and attractive. Perhaps Freire's next release will demonstrate his abilities as they are now. H.G.

**SCHUMANN: Carnaval, Op. 9—See Schubert: Impromptu, D. 899.**

**SHOSTAKOVICH: Ballet Suites: Nos. 1, 2, and 3. Bolshoi Theater Orchestra, Maxim Shostakovich, cond. Melodiya/Angel SR 40115, \$5.98.**

Shostakovich *fills* returns with a second release in what apparently will be a series of recordings of his father's music—this time with the first complete stereo version of the inexplicably neglected ballet suite trilogy of the early Fifties. I write "inexplicably," because the jaunty rhythmic zest, irresistible tunefulness, and disarming sentiment of this music should have made it a popular favorite years ago. Yet there have been only a couple of mono recordings in the past, and currently Kostelanetz' 1966 Columbia disc, "The Light Music of Shostakovich," includes only five short excerpts from the suites.

Happily, the conductor knows exactly what his father had in mind—a partly satirical but mainly warm-hearted evocation of old-fashioned theatrical dance music—and he makes the most of the music's zest and schmaltz. And if the rich, warm stereoism can't disguise some coarse orchestral playing, there is no lack of enthusiasm in these symphonic "pops"

*Continued on page 103*



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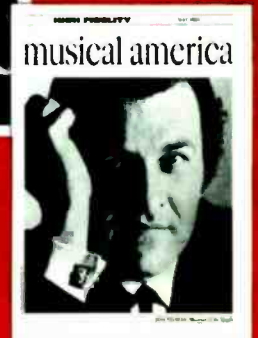
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## DOES OPERA HAVE A FUTURE?

Continued from page 65

dition of a masterpiece, decadence begins anew. Above all, not a hint of swallow-it-it's-good-for-you, or of tastes-just-like-candy. Eyeball to eyeball. Just let them see that opera is a particular way of communicating feelings that cannot quite be expressed any other way.

4) Pure research. It is carried on by even quick-grab industries, and in all divisions of the sciences and humanities. But not in music theater, despite the fact that this moment's entire meaning resolves itself into a search for new forms and techniques—new scenic and other visual possibilities, the uses of audio-visual equipment integrated with live performance, the many variations of the performer/audience relationship, and what each implies. If you think it's a waste of money because it's not related directly to the income structure, ask the drug companies how new products and packaging are developed, and whether or not it pays off. This research would take place in a true laboratory/workshop located at the company's central headquarters, and allied to a training program for regional talent. For that matter, the company's major productions at its central headquarters would no doubt be given in a theater of free-space design, where the essential relationship and juxtapositions could be easily and quickly altered. Otherwise—no mutation.

It will be objected that a company whose principal activities do not produce box office income cannot pay its bills. But for any opera company, paying the bills is a matter of fund-raising in any case; a traditional company (except for two or three of the largest) that meets 35% of its budget at the box office is doing well. A company of the new type would naturally investigate ways of improving this proportion. Besides, when it comes to fund-raising, an organization that reaches many people on many levels, and which aspires to true community citizenship, has a far better chance, a far more legitimate call on a wider range of sources, public and private, than a club for *aficionados* of the Continental past.

Opera is not dead, but it is at a dead end. To feel our way out, we must at least start with the admission that among the infinite possibilities of theater-through-song, those so far settled upon are not necessarily representative merely because they are pervasive.

We ought also to acknowledge that in our democracy, at this desperate juncture, any theater that asks for public attention, support, or respect should in turn be a truly public theater. We cannot believe in the relevance and necessity of art and yet choose to hold it to ourselves.

In our opera there can be no tolerance for camp, no indulgence for weariness of purpose, no condescension or cynicism. We must have it tough and sinewy, not pudgy and effete; joyful, not gigglesome; open and direct, not closeted and rarefied. If it reveals our place and time and sings our revelations, it will be the opera we seek: opera as opera.

Edgar Degas, Cabaret Scene in the W. A. Clark Collection of the Corcoran Gallery of Art



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# Chamber Music from Marlboro

by David Hamilton

ALTHOUGH WE TEND to think of chamber music as a single category, the term in fact covers music made for very different social purposes and, consequently, music that is drawn to very different measures. One of its aspects is, of course, music for the connoisseur, a tradition that runs from the eighteenth century to the present day—an aspect that distinguishes the subtlety of means and ends appropriate to the small gathering of highly cultivated listeners from the more accessible styles directed at the larger concert-hall public.

Another type of chamber music, however, is that which we might call "music for the home," in which the composer accepts the relatively modest resources of the amateur performer and seeks to produce skillfully made pieces for the pleasure and edification of the player and his social circle. The line between this and the first category is not always easy to draw, but it is clear that there is a vast difference between, say, Beethoven's Sonata for Piano Duet and his late string quartets—a difference that has to do with things other than simply Beethoven's stylistic development in the intervening years.

This second tradition has withered in the twentieth century, down to a category scornfully regarded as "pedagogical music." Even though there are some fine contemporary works within the range of the amateur, the sad fact is that the number of amateur performers has now dwindled to a point where publication of such music is hardly feasible economically—a far cry from the nineteenth century, when the profits from works like Brahms's *Hungarian Dances* were sufficient to underwrite the publication of his "serious" chamber music. The major villain has been, of course, the phonograph, and one of the consequences has been that we tend to lose sight of the distinction between these two genres of chamber music. Much music written for the use of amateurs does not stand up well under the "distancing effect" of the concert hall; rather, it may positively demand the indulgence that arises from an intimate setting and the participation of friends or, to consider related sub-categories, the distractions of good food and drink or an attractive dancing partner. It is not that the music is any less well made, rather that it is purposefully made to a lower level of density and concentration as befits its social purpose. I suspect that when we dress this music up in white tie and tails and sit solemnly in a concert hall listening to it, we are earning some gentle ridicule from its composers as they look down from Parnassus.

These reflections are only in part induced by a new series of records from Marlboro, most of which are in fact devoted to major works, quite unperformable by amateurs. What set the train of thought in motion, however, was the presence on these records of two little

Mozart sonatas, products of the composer's eighth year. These are perfectly competent pieces, but of no special interest to anyone but the scholar—and any Mozart scholar would certainly be capable of reading them at sight in his head. I can easily imagine that Miss Carmirelli and Mr. Serkin might enjoy playing them through on a summer afternoon and were I in the neighborhood, I wouldn't mind eavesdropping—but I am more than a little surprised to see these trifles turn up on records in such company. Naturally they are well played, but there really isn't anything in the music that calls on the special gifts of these performers—no sow's ear out of which to make a silk purse, just plain household cotton.

All this may sound like carping, but the point I'm trying to make is simple: the appropriate thing to do with music like these sonatas is to *play* it, not to sit around listening to it, especially on records. Incidentally, these particular sonatas are really piano sonatas with an optional violin part; if you don't happen to have a fiddler conveniently at hand, the piano part sounds fine all by itself. And, on the other hand, if you also happen to know a cellist, he can join in on the bass line (although it doesn't really sound terribly well—too much coloristic variety in proportion to the slender musical thread).

When it comes to the chamber music of Schoenberg, to be sure, we need recordings, not only because few of us can play it ourselves, but because it isn't played often enough anyway. After forty years, though, it does seem that these pieces are beginning to become part of the "standard" repertory, and their inclusion in the Marlboro series is most encouraging. Both are pieces of considerable wit, balanced deftly between classic models and expressionistic sensibility. Leon Kirchner is a pupil of Schoenberg's, and his performances have an assurance and fluency that are most convincing. I would like a more forceful presence at the piano in Op. 29 and there are rough edges here and there, but also much virtuoso execution and musical understanding.

Among the other works on these discs, I commend to your attention the Boccherini Quintet, an exceptionally skillful example of his work, played with some roughness but also with great style, and the Beethoven Variations. These latter are based on an unpromisingly enigmatic theme, but blossom into some brilliant piano writing. Serkin is in magnificent form, and the erratic fiddling is only a minor distraction, since the keyboard is usually the center of attention.

The Beethoven Trio, Op. 87 (dating from 1794 despite the opus number), is rather by the book, but is elegantly played; this approaches the borderline of background music. Schubert's set of variations on *Trockne Blumen* is a different case, a self-conscious "virtuoso vehicle"

that doesn't quite come off, perhaps because we resent some of the transformations inflicted upon the song: can the man who wrote the *Schöne Müllerin* really have been able to turn this eloquently pathetic song into a jaunty little march? No doubt Schubert never thought of this as a problem, and flutists probably don't either. At any rate, Paula Sylvester plays very musically, if with occasional breathiness of tone, and you won't hear the piano part played much better than this.

That leaves the Brahms Serenade, which I fear is not a very satisfactory performance. This is an odd piece to begin with, preoccupied with Brahms's beloved two-against-three metrical games and, often, with curiously little else. At Casals' tempos, the longer measures (6/4 and 12/8) tend to break in half, and the general effect is soporific in the extreme.

These records come in plain sleeves, with titles and performer credits; notes for each disc are being prepared but were not available with the review copies. The sound is mostly good, becoming a bit boxy for the larger ensemble in the Brahms, and distorting slightly on high flute notes in the Schubert. At least part of the recordings were made in concert, for there is applause at the end of some. The audiences are remarkably quiet throughout, and even Casals is less vocal than on other occasions.

**BRAHMS:** Serenade No. 2, in A, Op. 16.

**MOZART:** Sonatas for Violin, Piano, and Continuo: in A, K. 12; in F, K. 13. Marlboro Festival Orchestra, Pablo Casals, cond. (in the Brahms); Pina Carmirelli, violin; Rudolf Serkin, piano; David Cole, cello (in the Mozart). Marlboro Recording Society MRS 1, \$6.50.

**SCHOENBERG:** Suite, Op. 29.

**BOCCHERINI:** Quintet for Strings, in F minor, Op. 42, No. 1. Chamber ensemble, Leon Kirchner, cond. (in the Schoenberg); Pina Carmirelli and Jon Toth, violin; Philipp Naegele, viola; Fortunato Arico and Dorothy Reichenberger, cello (in the Boccherini). Marlboro Recording Society MRS 2, \$6.50.

**SCHOENBERG:** Serenade, Op. 24.

**SCHUBERT:** Introduction and Variations, Op. 160. Chamber ensemble, Leon Kirchner, cond. (in the Schoenberg); Paula Sylvester, flute; Rudolf Serkin, piano (in the Schubert). Marlboro Recording Society MRS 3, \$6.50.

**BEETHOVEN:** Trio for two Oboes and

English Horn, in C, Op. 87; Variations for Violin, Cello, and Piano, in E flat, Op. 44. John Mack and Joseph Turner,

oboes; Patricia Grignet, English horn (in Op. 87); Hidetaro Suzuki, violin; Ronald Leonard, cello; Rudolf Serkin, piano (in Op. 44). Marlboro Recording Society MRS 4, \$6.50. Available from Marlboro Recording Society, 1430 Spruce St., Philadelphia, Pa. 19102.

performances. They are further distinguished by occasional first-rate solo bits, like Viktor Elston's spellbinding oboe playing in the tender Romance (Suite No. 1) and hauntingly nostalgic Elegy (Suite No. 3). R.D.D.

**SHOSTAKOVICH: Sonata For Piano, No. 1, Op. 12; Aphorisms, Op. 13; Five Preludes, Op. 2; Three Fantastic Dances, Op. 5. PROKOFIEV: Chose en soi, Op. 45b.** Vladimir Pleshakov, piano. Orion ORS 6915, \$5.00.

This is the most important release of Shostakovich's music since Morton Gould recorded the Second and Third Symphonies over a year ago. With this recording of the First Piano Sonata and the ten *Aphorisms*, all but one of the pieces belonging to Shostakovich's important "experimental period" (the inexplicably rarely performed opera, *The Nose*) have been put on discs. The Preludes from Op. 2, which are the earliest Shostakovich works ever to be recorded, have never been available before, while the three *Fantastic Dances* are new to the domestic catalogue. The Prokofiev *Chose en soi* too is a bit of a rarity, although it is available elsewhere.

The First Sonata, a work that does not immediately identify itself as typically Shostakovich, is both original and eclectic. In its rhythmic and contrapuntal structure, it owes a great debt to Prokofiev and Hindemith. Harmonically, however, the Sonata borders on atonality, with the major-seventh interval and a linear chromaticism reminiscent of Busoni (such as in the latter's Second Piano Sonata) providing the principal harmonic framework. For all its borrowings, however, I know of no other work that sounds exactly like this Sonata. It is a one-movement piece, but can easily be divided into three sections. The first is composed of several contrasting themes that are later brought together simultaneously in a quasi-development section that would seem to call for a three-handed pianist. This is followed by an almost surrealistic episode written in a kind of *Nachtmusik* style rarely used by Shostakovich (other examples include one of the entr'actes deleted from the original *Lady Macbeth* opera and the second movement of the Second Piano Sonata). The final section is quite short and brings back the first theme in a virtuosic setting that is Scriabinesque in nature.

Although they range in character from elegiac to Webernesque (in the Canon), the *Aphorisms* are, as a whole, much more characteristic of Shostakovich's later, rather hollow piano style. The Etude and the *Dance of Death* are particularly unmistakable. There is a fair amount of experimentation in the *Aphorisms*, which were written in 1927, including the barless score in the Nocturne and the use of harmonics in the *Marche funèbre*. But it is the rhythmic language that is particularly interesting, from the extreme fractionalization in the Canon to

the polyrhythms of the *Dance of Death*. Musically more original than the First Sonata, the *Aphorisms* are somehow curiously lacking in the former's substance and impulse.

Although there is no indication on the record jacket or in the Russian score as to the origin of the five Preludes recorded here, they are quite obviously early Shostakovich, and the only conclusion to draw is that the composer selected five of the eight Op. 2 Preludes (1919-20) for publication, and for some reason withheld the remaining three. Although strongly derivative, they are charming vignettes, and the fifth presents a theme that Shostakovich later used in his Eleventh Symphony. The three *Fan-*

*tastic Dances* have a bit more depth and owe much to Prokofiev, although Satie's first *Gnossienne* keeps popping into my head every time I hear the opening March.

Vladimir Pleshakov's interpretations are best in the *Aphorisms* (although what happened to the trill at the end of the last piece?), weakest in his decidedly unidiomatic approach to the Sonata. If ever there was an unromantic work of music, it is Shostakovich's First Sonata, whose opening section in particular is built around an extremely strong rhythmic pulse. Pleshakov's constant rubatos—I don't think he plays a straight triplet in the entire piece—are consequently quite frustrating, especially in

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the multiplanar development section, which is played nowhere near up to tempo. On the other hand, Mr. Pleshakov quite effectively delineates the various themes most of the time, and he brings off the final section with considerable vigor. The recorded sound is generally quite adequate. R.S.B.

**STRAVINSKY: Piano Music: Four Etudes, Op. 7; Three Movements from Petrushka; Ragtime; Piano-Rag-Music; The Five Fingers; Sonata; Serenade in A; Tango; Circus Polka.** Beveridge Webster, piano. Dover HCR-ST 7288/9, \$5.00 (two discs).

This is the most complete collection we have had to date of Stravinsky's piano music. It lacks only two trifles from the period of the first World War—the sardonic *Souvenir d'une marche boche* and a little *Valse pour les enfants*—while including the composer's piano versions of *Ragtime* (originally for chamber group) and the *Circus Polka* (composed for the Ringling Brothers Circus Band). By comparison with Noel Lee's single-disc Nonesuch collection (H 71212), it adds only the *Petrushka* transcription and the little *Five Fingers* pieces, a Stravinskian parallel to the *Mikrokosmos* of Bartók.

Webster's playing is very musical, if lacking the ultimate virtuosity required by the early Etudes and the wilder passages of *Petrushka*. I would prefer a shade or two more of rhythmic bite and coloristic variety, such as can be found in Charles Rosen's recording of the two most important works, the Serenade and Sonata (Epic BC 1140), but Webster's lightness of touch (both physical and figurative) is valuable at many points, and decidedly more welcome than Lee's heavyhandedness.

Unfortunately, the recorded piano tone is very shallow and bass-shy, doing less than justice to the playing. One bothersome question: like some other recordings of the *Petrushka* arrangement, this one shows variants—in fact, more than usual—from my copy of the published score; is there a textual problem here? D.H.

**TCHAIKOVSKY: Concerto for Piano and Orchestra, No. 1, in B flat minor, Op. 23.** Gary Graffman, piano; Cleveland Orchestra, George Szell, cond. Columbia MS 7339, \$5.98.

Here is Columbia's answer to RCA's recent Browning and Ozawa version of the Tchaikovsky perennial. While I fear I may have been a trifle hard on that reading when it appeared, this new one, for all its stylistic similarity, makes a more vibrant first impression. The present disc also features a razor-sharp, ultraclean virtuoso who prefers his Tchaikovsky with crew-cut economy rather than with wild-and-woolly emotionalism. For all that, Graffman's keyboard approach, though not notably more coloristic than Browning's, is rather more impressive. The big octave roulades have

demonic weight, whereas Browning's had a tendency to sound thin and hard. Likewise, in the more lyrical sections, Browning's beautifully balanced, controlled placement of every chord made me uncomfortable in its aura of calculated, clinical refinement and emotional reserve; Graffman's way is no less controlled, but somehow less slick. Though neither Browning nor Graffman wear their hearts on their sleeves, Graffman gives a more full-blooded reading. There is a parallel similarity between Messrs. Szell and Ozawa. Both obtain detailed, technically punctilious, spirited orchestral frameworks for their respective soloists, but there is more weight and incisive thrust to be found in Szell's leadership. He is less graceful but more vibrant than Ozawa.

These are fine differences, of course, but somehow they add up. Where Browning/Ozawa for all their intelligence and expertise seem too objective and *raffiné*, Graffman/Szell give a modern approximation of the great old Horowitz/Toscanini performance (still very much available as RCA LM 2319). The new Columbia edition is, to my mind, the Concerto's best modern recording. H.G.

**WEIGL: Quartet for Strings, No. 5, in G, Op. 31; Five Songs for Soprano and String Quartet; Three Songs for Alto and String Quartet.** Patricia Brooks, soprano; Betty Allen, alto; Iowa String Quartet. Composers Recordings CRI 242, \$5.95.

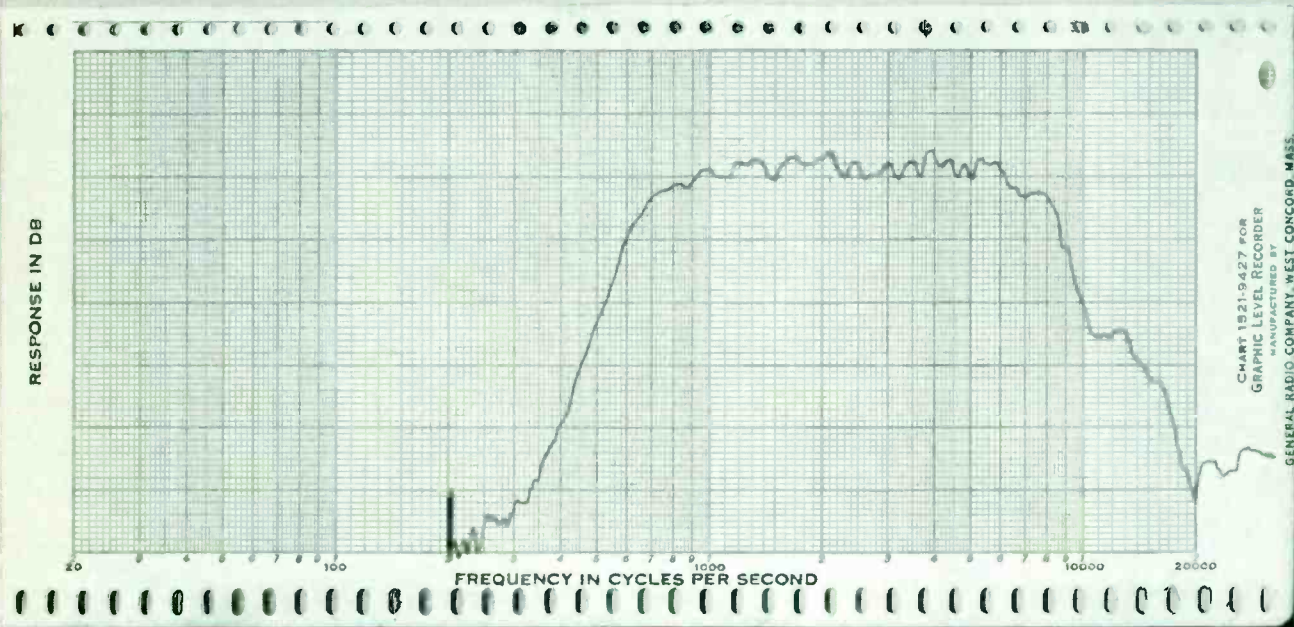
If you accept the thesis of Leonard B. Meyer (in *Music, the Arts, and Ideas*), we are living in a period in which several musical styles co-exist and the composer has the option of writing in whichever best suits what he has to say. The value of a Weigl work, in that case, is quite independent of its style. Weigl's idiom was that of the Central Europe he knew as a young man, the musical speech of Richard Strauss and Gustav Mahler—the latter was Weigl's boss and mentor at the Vienna opera. The best of these songs could easily be mistaken for lesser works by these composers; they are the works of a cultured professional musician who has the common misfortune of not being a genius.

Listen to the *Regenlied* or *Sommers Tod* and the difference between an effective song by a lesser talent and genuinely inspired work becomes clear. The vocal performances are good. Neither Miss Brooks nor Miss Allen seems completely at home projecting a German text, but the actual sounds—the clear, bright Brooks soprano and deep velvet of the Allen alto—are lovely.

The best movement in the quartet is the *Larghetto*, which at least suggests what a Mahler string quartet might have been like. The Iowa Quartet tends, on occasion, to hurry through passages where greater insight (rather than speed) would seem the prime consideration, and, as recorded here, its tone is rather hard. What would really be interesting is Weigl, not from Iowa, but a first-class Viennese group. R.C.M.

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**WIREN:** Serenade for Strings, Op. 11—  
See Grieg: Holberg Suite.

**XENAKIS:** Polla Ta Dhina; St/10-1-080262; Akrata; Achorripsis. Children's Chorus of Notre Dame de Paris (in Polla Ta Dhina); Paris Instrumental Ensemble for Contemporary Music, Konstantin Simonovitch, cond. Angel S 36656, \$5.98.

*Polla Ta Dhina* is a setting of a chorus from the *Antigone* of Sophocles in the original Greek. The children sing it throughout on one note while the orchestra makes marvelous stormy sounds like the finale of Rimsky's *Scheherazade* with all the wrong notes. The other pieces on the disc are for chamber orchestra or wind instruments. Like everything by Xenakis, they are composed according to abstruse mathematical principles, the discussion of which in the jacket notes makes no sense whatsoever, especially since it was written or translated by someone who is unaware of the basic principles of English grammar.

The sounds that Xenakis gets out of an instrumental ensemble are magnificent (especially when it is made up of such magnificent instrumentalists as those of the Simonovitch ensemble) and his deployment of these sounds has a tension and edge like that of Varèse at his best. But on listening to a group of his works at a single sitting one becomes acutely aware of the fact that they are totally devoid of musical form, whatever form they may possess in a purely mathematical sense. There is an old French proverb which runs, in English, "the heart has reasons which reason does not know," and the same is true of the ear. A.F.

**ZANDONAI:** Francesca da Rimini (excerpts), Magda Olivero, Mario del Monaco, et al.; Orchestre National de l'Opéra Monte Carlo, Nicola Rescigno, cond. For a feature review of this recording, see page 77.

## recitals & miscellany

**AMERICAN WIND SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA:** "Contemporary Music for Wind Orchestra." **PENDERECKI:** Pittsburgh Overture. **MAYUZUMI:** Concerto for Percussion and Wind Orchestra. **BADINGS:** Armageddon. American Wind Symphony Orchestra, Robert Austin Boudreau, cond. Point Park College KP 101, \$5.95. Available by mail from Point Park College, Pittsburgh, Pa. 15222.

Robert Austin Boudreau is a young man who obviously possesses or can command considerable sums of money. According to the jacket notes provided with

this record, his American Wind Symphony Orchestra has given an eight-week season of concerts every summer in Pittsburgh for the past thirteen years, followed by a tour (length unspecified) of Ohio River towns. The concerts lay heavy stress on new commissioned works.

This recording—apparently the first Boudreau has issued—was submitted for review with the published scores of the three works it contains. The listing in the back of the scores shows that the American Wind Symphony Editions, published by Peters, contains seventy-three different works by forty-six different composers, all but four of them contemporary. Removing the six works by the four historic figures, it turns out that Boudreau has commissioned at least sixty-seven pieces of music for his ensemble.

Unfortunately the list reveals a very heavy emphasis upon composers like Robert Russell Bennett and Robert McBride, who are more celebrated for the superficial effectiveness of their music than for its substance. The same emphasis is apparent in the three works on this disc. The Penderecki piece is, in fact, nothing but color effects, without even a pretense at substance. The effects are stimulating and entertaining, but—to make the kind of analogy the writer of these lines detests—listening to it is like trying to make a meal, or even a snack, out of those variously seasoned salts which the spice companies put out to sprinkle discreetly on salads.

The Mayuzumi piece is the only one of the three which is entirely satisfactory. It is very tuneful and brilliant and swaggers along somewhat in the manner of a Shostakovitch finale. It makes no pretense and attains none.

The Badings is the longest of the three works. It uses an immense palette of colorful resource, with its electronic sound, its wind instruments, and its solo soprano voice, and it nearly justifies its means. Badings has always been particularly imaginative and interesting in his handling of tape, and *Armageddon* is no exception to his rule, but the piece blows up entirely at the end, when the soprano—hitherto a wordless wind instrument—suddenly begins to scream bloody murder and yelp melodramatically on the text of the *Dies Irae*. T. S. Eliot was probably wrong, and the world will doubtless go out not with a whimper but a bang: even so, it will still have to do better than that.

Performances throughout reveal a very high degree of virtuosity and the recording is eminently satisfactory. A.F.

**E. POWER BIGGS:** "The Organ in Sight and Sound." E. Power Biggs, organ and spoken commentary. Columbia KS 7263, \$6.98.

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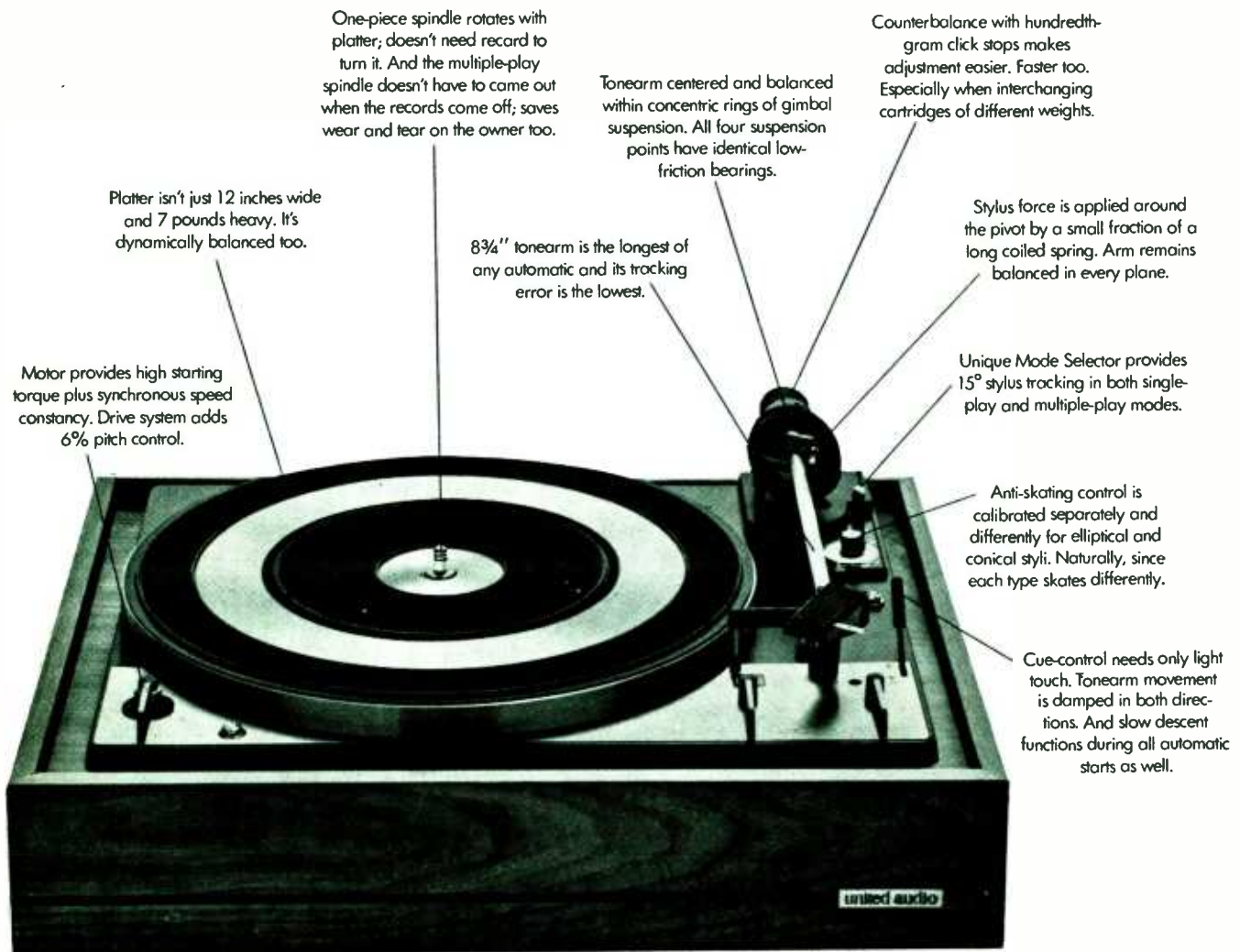
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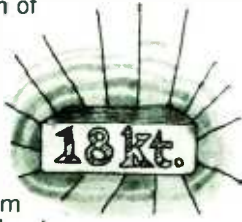
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has always sought to teach us something about organs and organ music as well as to entertain us. Hence this recording and accompanying booklet, which carefully set down his ideas on the organ in language directed toward the layman and the organist whose knowledge of the instrument is limited.

We know that Biggs favors a return to classic principles in organ building, but it is perhaps not so well known that he was one of the first in this country to popularize the trend which started in Europe in the '30s. Biggs is probably more responsible than any other single person for the tremendous awakening of interest in the historic instruments of Europe and for the current attention being given the classic organ here. Even today, with the movement well established, Biggs's ideas are still remarkably progressive for a man of his generation.

Actually this entire production is simply a remake of a set titled "The Organ" (DL 5288) which Columbia released in 1958. The recorded examples are all new (taken from several of his recent recordings), but the recorded commentary takes basically the same tack, and the booklet contains very little material that was not in the earlier release. The core of both booklets is an extended and detailed article on organ design by D. A. Flentrop, a well-known contemporary Dutch organ builder. Articles by Albert Schweitzer and John McClure, which appeared in the earlier set, have been deleted here, and even the Flentrop article has been slightly cut. Both booklets contain many drawings and photographs of famous organ cases and consoles from around the world.

The recording itself consists of a spoken commentary (delivered in Biggs's inimitably dry and cultured British lisp) interspersed with 110 four- to eight-measure musical snippets or individual organ tones, played on historic instruments built by Schnitger (Zwölle, Alkmaar, Cappel, and Lüdingworth), Müller (Haarlem and Amsterdam), Silberman (Arlesheim), and several others. Also included are modern classic instruments built by Metzler in Zurich, Fisk (Memorial Church at Harvard), and, of course, Biggs's own Flentrop at the Busch-Reisinger Museum in Cambridge, Massachusetts. The musical fragments are too short to recommend this disc as a reference source for organists and builders interested in comparing these famous instruments; besides, the record is not banded, so finding a particular example tends to be rather difficult. The somewhat rambling commentary takes us through a brief history of the organ and the parallel development of organ building and organ music, culminating in the early eighteenth century with Arp Schnitger's organ at Zwölle and Bach's organ music. A description of the component parts of an organ leads us to the *raison d'être* for the whole piece: a lucid explanation of why an organ *must* have tracker action, slider chests, low wind pressure, unnicked pipes, etc.

Frankly, it's a bit difficult to see what kind of an audience Biggs is aiming at with this set. Anyone who needs to be

told the names of the keyboards and the families of tone available to an organist cannot be much interested in the subtleties of classic voicing and mechanical action . . . and vice versa. If it sounds like your cup of tea, however, the set is well put together—the Flentrop article in particular will be of general interest and should be required reading for every organist and organ builder. C.F.G.

**GERALD MOORE:** "A Tribute to Gerald Moore." **TRAD.:** Malaguena (arr. Nin); Panxolina (arr. Halffter)—Victoria de los Angeles, soprano. **BACH:** Cantata No. 29: Gedenk' an uns (arr. Powell)—Leon Goossens, oboe. **STRAUSS, R.:** Hochzeitlich Lied, Op. 37, No. 6; Weisser Jasmin, Op. 31, No. 3—Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, baritone. **WEBER:** Theme and Variations, Op. 33—Gervase de Peyer, clarinet. **MAHLER:** Frühlingmorgen; Scheiden und Meiden—Janet Baker, mezzo. **FAURE:** Elégie, Op. 24—Jacqueline du Pré, cello. **WAGNER:** Träume—Elisabeth Schwarzkopf, soprano. **RAVEL:** Habanera; **DEBUSSY:** La fille aux cheveux de lin (arr. Hartmann)—Yehudi Menuhin, violin. **TCHAIKOVSKY:** Don Juan's Serenade, Op. 38, No. 1; At a Ball, Op. 38, No. 3—Nicolai Gedda, tenor. **DVORAK:** Slavonic Dance in G minor, Op. 46, No. 8—Daniel Barenboim, piano. All selections with Gerald Moore, piano. Angel S 36640, \$5.98.

This record was first issued in England last summer to honor Gerald Moore's seventieth birthday, and the first thing to be said is that the birthday boy plays marvelously throughout. He has a fair bit of work to do, in fact, for at least some of these selections were obviously chosen to let him show off—e.g., the Weber piece with its two solo variations for the piano.

Except for the Debussy arrangement which Menuhin plays, none of the "assisting artists"—somehow, that phrase seems correct in this context—has previously recorded these works with Moore (or, in most cases, with anyone else). Since they are all in characteristic current form, your reaction to these performances will probably match your feelings about their recent work. My particular favorites are the Weber, an attractive jaunt for Moore with De Peyer at his fluent best; Janet Baker's Mahler (although I wish she had let the last note of *Scheiden und Meiden* fade out as Mahler requests); Gedda's second Tchaikovsky number, sung in an affecting soft grey tone (the *Serenade* is perhaps excessively hearty); and the Slavonic Dance, played with brio and excellent ensemble (Moore takes the treble part, Barenboim the bass). The Strauss songs, probably first recordings, are a bit scoopy; they will doubtless turn up again in Dieskau's Strauss survey now in progress. Despite some loss of quality at the top of the staff, Schwarzkopf's *Träume* is very lovely in a reserved sort of way. The Spanish songs are beautifully done by De los Angeles, but they're rather thin.

Among the remaining instrumental items, Menuhin's Debussy transcription

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needs more tonal polish to be really effective, and perhaps Miss Du Pré's Fauré is a shade too fervent. Goossens plays a rather peculiar arrangement: a soprano aria with oboe obbligato has been rewritten to assign the soprano part to the oboe, the original oboe material to the piano. Since the oboe and soprano share basically the same melodic stuff, it is not the reassignment that makes problems, but rather the loss of linear contrast: it's too bad one of Moore's soprano friends couldn't have joined in a more authentic version. **D.H.**

**MAX RUDOLF: "Twentieth-Century Orchestral Showpieces." WEBERN: Passacaglia, Op. 1. DALLAPICCOLA: Variazioni per Orchestra. SCHUMAN: New England Triptych. MENNIN: Canto for Orchestra.** Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, Max Rudolf, cond. Decca DL 710168, \$5.98.

This is a wonderful record. It contains four works, three of major quality, superbly played and recorded. The Webern, for all its formal rigor, is a masterpiece of lyrical expression in the post-Tristan, post-Straussian vein. It has been recorded several times before, but never with such rich effect, orchestrally and otherwise, as here. The Dallapiccola is, of course, a twelve-tone work, but that doesn't say very much. Where Webern descends harmonically from Wagner and orchestrally from Mahler, Dallapiccola descends in both respects from Debussy. The presence of these two works on the same side of the disc is a remarkable demonstration of the miraculous fact (which we take for granted every day) that an ensemble can utterly transform itself in sound and phrase-sense, given the music of first-class composers, a first-class conductor, and first-class personnel.

Of the two American works on the flip side, the Schuman is the longer and the more important. It is based upon three works of the eighteenth-century Boston composer, William Billings, reworked by Schuman into a short symphony. Billings was the most independent composer of his age; his scorn for the "rules" was unbounded, but Schuman nevertheless adds some devices to his music which neither he nor anyone in his age could conceive, especially in the matter of modulation. Schuman's second movement, based on Billings' famous round, *When Jesus Wept*, is particularly beautiful.

Mennin's *Canto* is a very short, vigorous piece on which its composer's reputation will neither live nor die. **A.F.**

**STAFFAN SCHEJA: "Romantic Swedish Piano Music." LARSSON: Sonatine No. 1. STENHAMMAR: Three Fantasies. WIREN: Ironical Miniatures. RANGSTROM: Legends from the Lake Mälaren.** Staffan Scheja, piano. RCA Red Seal LSC 3119, \$5.98.

The jacket of this disc is nothing more than a crude promotional stunt. What we see is a large picture of Mr. Scheja—quite handsome in a mod sort of way

and all of nineteen years old—and the following critical blurb: "... Staffan Scheja... a pianistic god who made Stockholm's teen-age girls come to the concert hall." One begins to get the picture—nothing about his musical abilities, only his attraction for Scandinavian teeny-boppers! This kind of promotion is, of course, deplorable from any standpoint but particularly unfortunate in that it does a great disservice to Mr. Scheja, who is actually an accomplished young pianist. Although I find it difficult to judge him purely on the basis of these performances—the music is undemanding on both a technical and conceptual level—he nevertheless indicates that he may well develop into a real talent.

As for the music itself, the title turns

out to be largely a smoke screen. Two of the pieces—the Sonatine by Lars-Erik Larsson (written in 1936) and the *Ironical Miniatures* of Dag Wirén (written in 1942) are about as far removed from the romantic temperament as is imaginable. Both, in fact, are undistinguished essays in neoclassicism à la Prokofiev—a development which took as its point of departure a reaction *against* romanticism. The pieces by Wilhelm Stenhammar (1871-1927) and Ture Rangström (1884-1947) are, I suppose, "romantic" in that both are written in a nondescript, totally styleless mid-nineteenth-century vein (although they were composed in 1895 and 1919 respectively); but the first work is clearly only a youthful exercise and the second is simply dilettantish. **R.P.M.**



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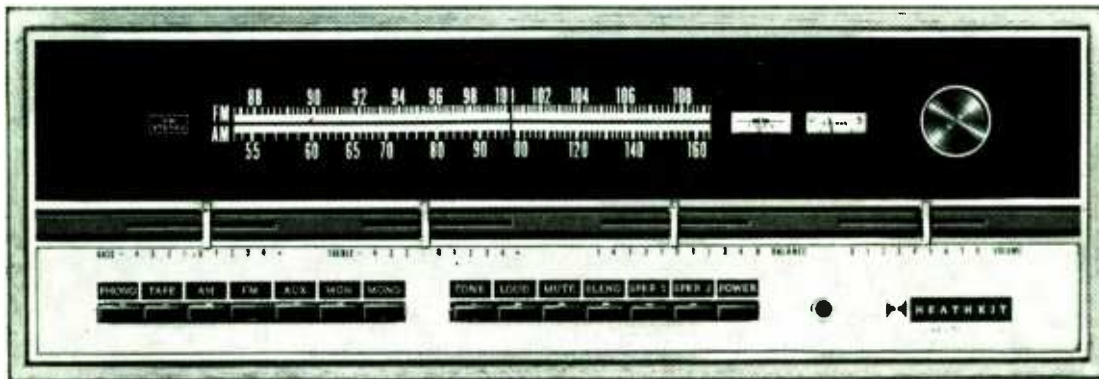
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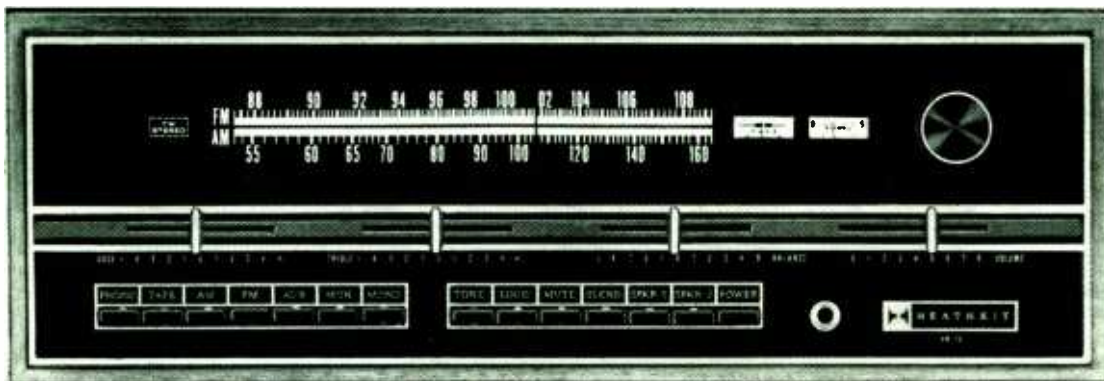
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# in brief

✓ **BACH:** Cantatas: No. 211, Schweigt stille, plaudert nicht ("Coffee Cantata"); No. 212, Mer hahn en neue Oberkeet ("Peasant Cantata"). **Rotraud Hansmann**, soprano; **Kurt Equiluz**, tenor; **Max van Egmond**, bass; **Concentus Musicus, Nikolaus Harnoncourt**, cond. Telefunken SAWT 9515, \$5.95.

**BEETHOVEN:** Serenade, Op. 41. **SCHUBERT:** Introduction and Variations on "Trockne Blumen," Op. 160. **Keith Bryan**, flute; **Karen Keys**, piano. Lyricord LLST 7215, \$5.98.

✓ **BRAHMS:** Variations on a Theme by Haydn, Op. 56b; **BIZET:** Jeux d'enfants, Op. 22. **Arthur Gold** and **Robert Fizzdale**, pianos. Odyssey 32 16 0334, \$2.98.

✓ **RAMEAU:** Les Indes galantes: Suite. Collegium Aureum. RCA Victrola VICS 1456, \$2.98.

**RIMSKY-KORSAKOV:** Symphony No. 2, Op. 9 ("Antar"). **GLIERE:** Red Poppy, Op. 70: Dance of the Russian Sailors. **IPPOLITOV-IVANOV:** Caucasian Sketches, Op. 10. Utah Symphony Orchestra, **Maurice Abravanel**, cond. Cardinal VCS 10060, \$3.98.

**RODRIGO:** Concierto de Aranjuez; Fantasia para un Gentilhombre. **Narciso Yepes**, guitar; **Orquesta Sinfonica R.T.V. Espanola**, **Odon Alonso**, cond. Deutsche Grammophon 139440, \$5.98.

✓ **ELECTRONIC MUSIC:** "Volume IV." **WILSON:** Cetus. **SMILEY:** Eclipse. **MALOVEC:** Orthogenesis. **RUDNIK:** Dixi. **HELLERMAN:** Ariel. **MAZUREK:** Bozzetti. Turnabout TV 34301, \$2.98.

**FREDERICK SWANN:** "The Organs of the National Shrine, Washington, D.C." **JACOB:** Festal Flourish. **COUPERIN, F.:** Récit de tierce en taille. **ALAIN:** Postlude pour l'office de Complines. **BACH:** Passacaglia and Fugue in C minor, S. 582. **FRANCK:** Chorale in B minor. **REGER:** Ave Maria. **COOK:** Fanfare. **Frederick Swann**, organ. Westminster WST 17154, \$5.98.

These two lighthearted works are essentially one-act baroque operettas and here's where Telefunken scores over the competing Archive and Nonesuch versions. **Hansmann, Van Egmond, and Harnoncourt** give us first of all broad, humorous, and *believable* characterizations as well as superior vocalism, instrumental finesse, and pointed leadership. A joyous release on all counts. C.F.G.

Alfred Einstein observed of these Schubert variations that "it is depressing for any lover of Schubert to see a song of such unique intensity and restraint subjected to a virtuoso treatment and transformed eventually into a triumphal march—a sacrilege which no one but Schubert himself could have been allowed to commit." The Bryan/Keys duo enters into the proceedings with gusto. The Beethoven is an adaptation, with the blessing of the composer, of his 1796 trio Serenade, Op. 25. Musically it is quite a bit more interesting in the earlier form, but if you want the flute in the spotlight, these performers make good use of the opportunity. Don't forget, however, the fine Rampal version on Vox, which is even livelier. R.C.M.

The performances here are as fine as one would expect from this brilliant team. The Bizet work positively scintillates and shimmers with gentle color under their sympathetic ministrations. The Brahms is appropriately more solid in sonority, more regal in mien. Gold and Fizzdale possess enough brilliance and virtuosity to give the orchestral version a serious challenge, and the reproduction is first-rate. H.G.

*Les Indes galantes* has been favored previously by two such "suite" collections, but both were considerably shorter than the current offering. For the Rameau connoisseur, then, this record is a must, since much of the music will be new to him. The Collegium Aureum's performances are immaculately stylish and full of incisive vigor. The rich and articulate recording acoustic contributes to an irresistible (and generous) sampling from a masterpiece. C.F.G.

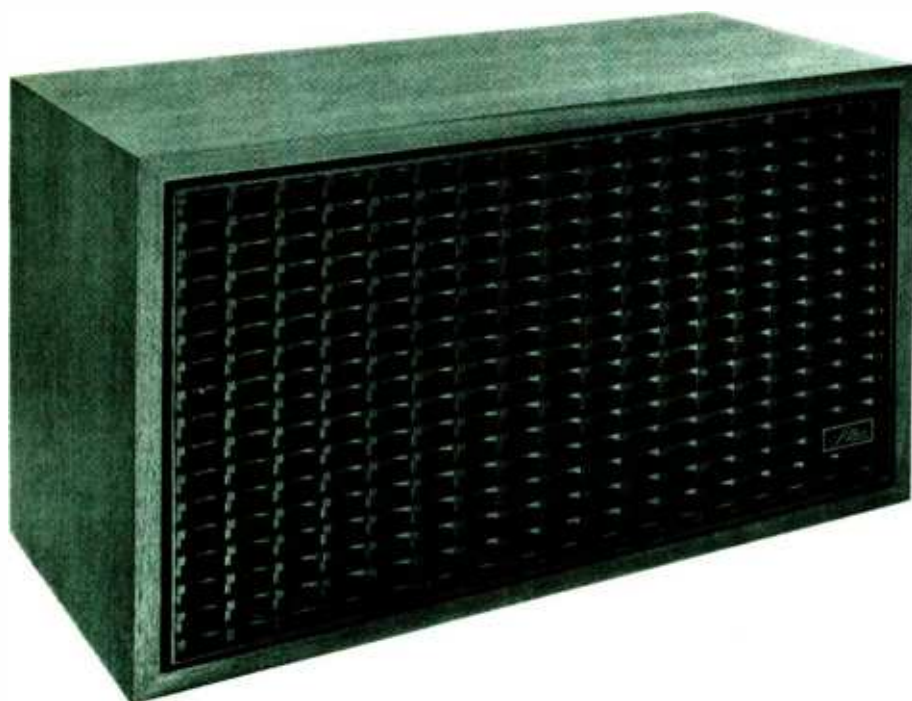
In HF, September 1968, I suggested that the Gould/RCA version of Rimsky's fascinating oriental fairy tale was characterized by a sultry harem atmosphere. Abravanel's exoticism, on the other hand, is that of a primly Victorian parlor in an Istanbul suburb. He and his men read the score neatly and prettily with scant awareness of its blazing color and dramatic potential. The recorded sonics too are sweet and warm, but neither distinctively transparent nor vital. The over-all lack of forcefulness is similarly debilitating in both filler items. R.D.D.

✓ **Narciso Yepes**, who is recording these hardy perennials for the second time (with a change of label and orchestra), is a *gentilhombre* himself, and plays both pieces with calm, unpressured assurance. The performances don't have the flair, intensity, or excitement of **John Williams'** sessions with the Philadelphia and the English Chamber Orchestra; in fact, Yepes sometimes sounds simply dutiful in his care and seriousness. Rodrigo cries out for color and virtuosic abandon, but he doesn't get them here. S.F.

This disc contains the prizewinners in what is said to be the first competition for electronic composers ever held anywhere—the event took place at Dartmouth in the spring of 1968. The judges were Milton Babbitt, Vladimir Ussachevsky, and George Balch Wilson, and they did a beautiful job. Indeed, it is difficult to see how they managed to arrange these six pieces in a hierarchy from fifth honorable mention to first prize. They are all superb, and except for some odd orchestral sounds in the Mazurek, each handles the idiom with remarkable inventiveness, intelligence, and integrity. A.F.

Frederick Swann, organist of New York's famed Riverside Church, played the dedication recital of these new organs in the National Shrine in 1965. In this, his first recording on the instruments, he gives us a random selection of rather uninteresting recital pieces, accurately but unimaginatively performed. Bach's Passacaglia and Fugue is played in a traditional manner with a wide variety of registrations; however, there are several more exciting performances available, most of which are played on more attractive instruments than this harsh and basically colorless Möller. C.F.G.

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**RAVEL:** *Daphnis et Chloë*. Chorus of the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden; London Symphony Orchestra, Pierre Monteux, cond. Stereo Treasury STS 15090, \$2.49 [from London CS 6147, 1959].

Monteux's *Daphnis* is the first recording of the complete ballet to be offered at a budget price. As far as this critic is concerned, the prospective purchaser need pay no more for the best reading currently listed on any label. Munch's performance on RCA has its supporters and his subjective, theatrical presentation of the score does make more of an immediate, visceral impact.

Monteux, on the other hand, approaches *Daphnis* in a relaxed, lyrical mood, savoring each wisp of melody, each beautifully balanced texture, each emotional climax like an experienced wine-taster nursing a vintage Moselle. There is nothing effete about this performance, however: beneath the luxuriant surface is a hardy muscular sinew that propels the music along a logical course and provides a sturdy base for the conductor's sophisticated jewel-like surfaces. This superior interpretation is further enhanced by lush and spacious sonics.

**TIPPETT:** *A Child of Our Time; The Midsummer Marriage; Ritual Dances*. Elsie Morison (s), Pamela Bowden (c), Richard Lewis (t), Richard Standen (bs); Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Choir and Orchestra (in *A Child of Our Time*); Orchestra of the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden (in the *Ritual Dances*), John Pritchard, cond. Argo ZDA 19/20, \$11.90 (two discs) [from London OSA 1256, recorded in 1958].

The assassination in 1938 of a Nazi official by a young Jewish refugee in Paris was the direct inspiration for Michael Tippett's oratorio *A Child of Our Time*, which the composer completed in 1941. It is clearly a work of high purpose and Tippett (who, as usual, supplied his own text) has elaborated on the incident to give it a more universal, almost mystical significance. The first part deals with the general malaise of a society that could foster such an event ("Man has measured the heavens with a telescope, driven the Gods from their thrones"). Part II zeros in on the dramatic action of the tragedy and the final section offers the hope of healing through self-knowledge ("I would know my shadow and my light").

The music is quite extraordinary, typical of Tippett in that one can virtually hear the sweat and labor that it must have cost the composer simply to get the notes on paper. Yet partly for that

reason (and one could say the same of Beethoven) as well as for Tippett's profound emotional response to his materials, the work is an immensely moving experience. This composer's music and his texts contain a curious sense of naiveté and, at times, an almost obscure complexity—a combination that produces a fascinating effect. Here one notices this quality in the simple Bachian plan of the oratorio, with its surprising yet oddly affecting use of the Negro spiritual/chorale, coupled with the formal plasticity of the separate numbers and the lean but characteristically tortuous orchestral writing. The *Ritual Dances* that fill Side 4 here are taken from Tippett's 1955 opera *The Midsummer Marriage*, his most elaborate and richest score to date, and very probably a masterpiece.

Since Tippett is so sparsely represented in the American catalogue, it's good to have this recording back in circulation. The performance is a bit bloodless for such a passionate work but it will do for the present; the *Dances*, on the other hand, are superlatively played.

**VERDI:** *Macbeth*. Leonie Rysanek (s), Carlo Bergonzi (t), Leonard Warren (b), Jerome Hines (bs), et al.; Chorus and Orchestra of the Metropolitan Opera, Erich Leinsdorf, cond. RCA Victorla VICS 6121, \$8.94 (three discs) [from RCA Victor LSC 6147, 1959].

This recording of *Macbeth* is a faithful replica of the Met's 1958 production—minus those hideous "interludes" devised to cover the scene changes (wisely abandoned after the first season). The opera's reappearance on Victorla is happy news, for it is far superior to London's rival version, a performance badly disfigured by Thomas Schippers' butcher-block cuts and Nilsson's unidiomatic *Lady Macbeth*. Rysanek, too, runs into vocal problems with her characteristically weak, hollow tones in mid-range, but her dipped-in-venom portrayal and soaring upper register offer potent compensations.

*Macbeth* was Leonard Warren's last, and in many respects, most finished Verdi portrait: the baritone's wide-ranging, robust voice fills out the line splendidly and his imaginative impersonation creates a vivid picture of the guilt-ridden king. Bergonzi's sensitively shaped Macduff and Hines's brooding Banquo are further pluses, while Leinsdorf's smartly paced, atmospheric accompaniments leave little to be desired. The effective stereo staging is more pronounced here than on later RCA efforts and the over-all sonic ambience has a dank, cavernous quality which I find wholly appropriate—it rather puts me in mind



of Orson Welles's infamous 1949 film with its swirling mists and moisture-drenched chamber walls.

**WEBER: Oberon (excerpts).** Ingrid Bjoner (s), Erika Köth (s), Hetty Plümacher (ms), Jess Thomas (t), Herbert Brauer (b); Bamberg Symphony Orchestra, Wilhelm Schüchter, cond. Cardinal VCS 10063, \$3.98 [from Euro-disc 70829, 1964].

Despite a few inspired pages, Weber's *Oberon* never reaches the inventive heights of its predecessor, *Euryanthe*, let alone the ever-fresh *Der Freischütz*. A group of recorded highlights would have been a reasonable proposition, though, and it's a pity that this disc turned out so poorly. Jess Thomas sounds perfectly awful in Huon's music—he makes hash out of the difficult coloratura in "Von Jugend auf" and, elsewhere, his work is forced and unmusical. Nicolai Gedda sings both the tenor arias recorded here to much better effect in a recent Angel disc. Ingrid Bjoner makes a respectable stab at "Ozean, du Ungeheuer," but her performance hardly matches the available competing versions ranging from Flagstad to Callas. There is some fine orchestral work from Schüchter and his men in the Overture, but even here one can readily find superior readings. No texts or translations are provided and Cardinal has credited Erika Köth with the part actually sung by Hetty Plümacher.

**LILY PONS: "Opera Recital."** Lily Pons, soprano; various orchestras and cond. RCA Victrola VIC 1473, \$2.98 (mono only) [from various RCA Victor originals, recorded between 1930 and 1940].

This is a far more satisfactory representation of Lily Pons's recorded work than Odyssey's recent "Gala" reissue dating from the late Forties. The coloratura's best discs were made for Victor during the early days of her American career and here we can sample the freshness of her voice as it must have sounded when she first set Met audiences on their ears in 1931. The two *Rigoletto* arias, Lucia's *Mad Scene*, and Lakmé's *Bell Song* originate from that era and few other versions can rival them for note-by-note accuracy and technical security. It's all pretty bland and impersonally "charming" of course, but that too seems to have been part of the Pons mystique.

The other items here were recorded on March 7, 8, and 9, 1940. The quaintly sung Handel, Pergolesi, and Grétry arias (accompanied by something called The Renaissance Quintet) are best passed over quickly to the real meat of these sessions: Blondchen's "Durch Zärtlichkeit," from Mozart's *Abduction* (sung in French), the *Shadow Song* from *Dinorah*, "Je suis Titania" from *Mignon*, and Rimsky-Korsakov's *Hymn to the Sun*. While the roulades and flourishes are trotted out for display rather like a coloratura fashion show, the vocalizing, for all its dated mannerisms, is impeccable.

PETER G. DAVIS

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**Re-exploring the Past.** Now that the disc and tape representation of the standard repertory has apparently reached the saturation point many companies, in an effort to tempt collectors with musical novelties, are turning to overlooked minor works by major composers as well as equally ignored major works by minor composers. A fine example of the latter category is an F minor Piano Concerto, written around 1840 by Adolf von Henselt—a composer remembered nowadays only by an occasional performance of a song or piano miniature. The Concerto has recently received not one but two new disc recordings, and Raymond Lewenthal's version with the London Symphony under Charles Mackerras has promptly appeared on tape. This is the first release in a projected "romantic revival series," and as a companion piece for the Henselt, Lewenthal has appropriately selected Liszt's *Totentanz* in an edition arranged by the pianist from the composer's various versions of the work (Columbia MQ 1121, 7½-ips reel, \$7.98). A younger stepsister to the Chopin Concerto in the same key and a slightly older stepsister to Schumann's in A minor, Henselt's Concerto has many of the same charms, plus bravura potentials, which Lewenthal exploits with grandiloquent gusto. The somber Liszt showpiece is even better adapted to his romantic virtuoso talents, however, and with the help of extremely robust stereoism he succeeds triumphantly in convincing me that few if any recordings of the shorter more familiar version do full justice to Liszt's grim imagination.

Two Russian string quartets, Tchaikovsky's No. 1 and Borodin's No. 2, both in D, do not exactly fit in the category of neglected works by major composers; but too often these pieces are remembered only from the hit melodies contained in their slow movements (respectively the *Andante cantabile* and *Notturmo*). In any case, the Tchaikovsky hasn't been available on tape since the 1957 Curtis/Sonotape was deleted long ago and the Borodin never has been taped before, to the best of my knowledge. The Drolc Quartet plays the blandly mellifluous early Tchaikovsky work with almost excessive expressivity and rich sonorities which are further enhanced by luscious, quite close recording. In the more piquantly colored and more vivaciously animated Borodin Quartet these romantic qualities are less cloying, and the Drolc four's deftness and lyricism are shown to better advantage here (Deutsche Grammophon/Ampex L 9425, 7½-ips reel, \$7.95).

Dipping further back into the baroque/

classical transition period, Jacqueline du Pré and Sir John Barbirolli offer the first recording of the G minor Cello Concerto by Mathias Georg Monn, a long-forgotten Austrian who was quite a stylistic innovator in his time (1717–50). Little trace of the composer's daring remains for modern ears—at least in the present meandering, overly loving reading. But both soloist and conductor (and the glowingly warm engineering too) are heard to better advantage in the coupling, a welcome if belated first tape edition of the more spirited Haydn Cello Concerto in D, Op. 101—a familiar work long attributed to Anton Kraft. The tape is filled out with a sentimentalized cello/organ transcription of the *Adagio* from Bach's *Organ Toccata* in C, S. 564 (Angel Y1S 36580, 3¾-ips reel; also 8-track cartridge and cassette editions, \$6.98 each).

**Duplications With a Difference.** Since we already have four tapings of Mahler's first symphony (Solti's for London is tops in my book, with Kubelik's DGG version a close second), another, even by the renowned Philadelphians, might seem superfluous. I can only be wholeheartedly enthusiastic about the sonic beauty and power of what is for me the most impressive recording yet made in the Academy of Music; the performance itself (which I find too emotional and hard driven) is strictly for Ormandy fans. But —Ormandy is the first on tape to include the rediscovered *Blumine* movement, and the orchestra, especially the silver-toned trumpet soloist Gilbert Johnson, plays it entrancingly. So Mahlerian specialists, at least, will find this version a must. But no one is likely to forgive the miserly editor who insisted on saving a little tape (in the reel and cassette editions) by putting the first minute or so of the fourth movement on the end of the "A" side instead of beginning this section on the "B" side (RCA Red Seal TR3 1007, 3¾-ips reel; also 8-track cartridge and cassette editions, \$6.95 each).

Another Strauss-Waltz program—especially of such hackneyed favorites as the *Blue Danube*, *Emperor*, *Vienna Blood*, *Artist's Life*, and *Voices of Spring*—would under ordinary circumstances be just about the most unexciting new tape of the year. But Leonard Bernstein pulls off a real miracle in making his first venture into this repertory both genuinely exciting and deeply satisfying—even to the most demanding connoisseur of Viennese authenticity. His blend of verve and taut control is further enhanced by his first-rate playing from the New York Philharmonic and by a bril-

liantly expansive recording. Indeed the only flaw here is the relatively minor one of insufficient acoustical warmth to match the radiant glow of the performances themselves (Columbia MQ 1155, 7½-ips reel, \$7.98).

**World Series Debut Reels.** The Philips World Series catalogue previously has been represented on tape only in some of the gigantic Astrostereo programs and a few French cassette importations. This interesting line would be welcome in Ampex-processed open-reel releases at any price, but particularly so at the moderate tariff of \$5.95 per single reel, \$9.95 per double-play reel. The choice of repertory to inaugurate the new series is admirable, especially in the first two piano recital programs. One of these is Constance Keene's memorable performance of all twenty-four Rachmaninoff preludes, originally released on discs under the St/And label in 1963, now appearing as a welcome tape first (F 2006, 3¾-ips double-play reel, \$9.95). The other is a 1966 Liszt program by György Cziffra: *Polonaise No. 2*, *Sonetto 123 del Petrarca*, *Fantasia* and *Fugue* on B-A-C-H, the *Un Sospiro*, *Tarantello*, *La Leggerezza*, and *St. Francis Walking on the Waves*. This Hungarian virtuoso's previous disc and tape recordings have often struck me as excessively mannered, but he is in his bravura element with Liszt, and his uncommonly fine-sounding piano is recorded with thrilling authenticity in this release (X 9005, 3¾-ips reel, \$5.95).

I also relished—as I always do—Maurice André's sensitively controlled and colored trumpet playing, this time in a program transferred from a disc release of 1967, which includes the familiar Leopold Mozart Concerto in D; Vivaldi's P. 406 Concerto in B flat originally for oboe and violin; a D minor Concerto arranged from Albinoni church-sonata movements; and Telemann's Concerto in F minor originally for oboe. André's exhilarating solo work is spiritedly accompanied by the Rouen Chamber Orchestra under Albert Beauchamp; and the recording is clean and honest, if minimally stereoisitic (X 9049, 3¾-ips reel, \$5.95). And I was bewitched—despite my purist objections to romantically expressive singing and organ accompaniments in Gregorian Chant performances—by the expansively soaring voices and cathedral ambience in the Easter music program by the Benedictine Monks of the Abbey of St. Maurice and St. Maur, Clervaux, Luxembourg (X 9004, 3¾-ips reel, \$5.95).



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**JEFFERSON AIRPLANE: Volunteers.** Hard rock quintet. (We Can Be Together; Good Shepherd; The Farm; Hey Fredrick; Wooden Ships; five more.) RCA Victor LSP 4238, \$4.98. Tape:  TP3-1033, 3 $\frac{3}{4}$  ips, \$6.95;  P8S-1507, \$6.95;  PK-1507, \$6.95.  
**ROLLING STONES: Let It Bleed.** Hard rock quintet. (Love in Vain; Midnight Rambler; Live With Me; Country Honk; Monkey Man; four more.) London NPS 4, \$4.98. Tape:  X 70167, 3 $\frac{3}{4}$  ips, \$5.95;  I 7167, \$5.98;  M 72167, \$5.98.

The days of the Big Hype seem to be over at last. We had to go through ostentatiously simple albums by Dylan and the Beatles, but it finally seems possible for a group simply to put out the best work they can without worrying whether it has a new angle or is sufficiently avant-garde. Now it just has to be good.

The Stones and the Airplane—who are possibly the best groups in Britain and the States, respectively—have each appeared with new releases that build, solidly and unpretentiously, on their former achievements. "Let It Bleed," especially, is a no-nonsense excursion into deep hard rock. The Stones have never sounded more together, despite more shifting of personnel than is usual on their records. They show how much can be achieved with a tight, dense group sound.

The Airplane's approach is less concentrated but nearly as powerful. Both groups have talented instrumentalists, but the Airplane has always been more willing to allow extended expression than the Stones. Though the soloists have somewhat less space to stretch out than on the last couple of outings, the playing, especially by guitarist Jorma Kaukonen (certainly one of the two or three best in pop music), is more disciplined and intense.

Both groups happily continue the growing tendency to invite talented cohorts from other groups. Al Kooper, among others, turns up with the Stones, while Jerry Garcia and Steve Stills lend the Airplane a hand, and pianist Nicky Hopkins adds depth to both albums.

Two very fine records. J.G.



**FRANK KINSEL: At Home.** Frank Kinsel, vocals and guitar; rhythm accompaniment. (Gamer; Long Tall Sally's Sister; Sunni; twelve more.) Epic BN 26492, \$4.98.

In most cases where liner notes are replaced by worthless free-flow words by the artist they give neither information nor a sense of the writer. But here is the printed message of young debut guitarist/singer/writer Frank Kinsel: "There I was

in the middle of the grey on beige Fifties and my older brother was diggin' Etta James singing *Roll With Me Henry*. . . . There was some kind of a beginning for me in music as an expression, feeling, or movement at that time. It was the only way out, or in. It was either tan shoes and a clean smile or beer and a '50 Merc. Rhythm-and-blues groups were a way of life and every party had a basement group composed of four or five dudes who could carry on the most

"Detroit, I remember you. . . . I sang songs for a while there; some were about you and some were about me, then I moved West.

"California and San Francisco were like a new energy source that I hadn't felt before, so I stayed and wrote and sang and experienced . . . and came up with ideas to record. . . .


"This is a rather short summary of where I have been for a while. If it seems incomplete, fill it in with your own life. Have a good day."

That's how Frank Kinsel sounds—intelligent, warm, direct, simple, and pleased. He completes his thoughts.

Kinsel's songs are well written and underlined with good humor. Like his melodies and lyrics, his guitar playing is less studied than instinctively musical and appropriate. The same applies to his strong, fresh, pleasant voice. In short, Kinsel is in touch with himself.

We hear more than a few significant debut albums these days, but rarely does one sound as comfortable as this one does. The album title is apt. Congratulations to Frank Kinsel and Epic. M.A.



**THE ARRANGEMENT.** Music from the soundtrack of the film. Composed and conducted by David Amram. Warner Bros./7 Arts 1824, \$4.98. Tape:  4WA-1824, \$5.98.

Composer David Amram doesn't seem to be crazy about film scoring. The liner states that "*The Arrangement* is Amram's first feature film score in seven years—part of his deliberate plot to escape the doldrums of the 'background music writer syndrome.'" Maybe Elia Kazan, the film's writer-director, talked him into it. This is their fourth joint effort. The first was a play, *J.B.*, then a film, *Splendor in the Grass*, then another play, *After the Fall*.

*The Arrangement* is not my kind of arrangement, and probably I will not see the film. But like all worthwhile scores, this one stands up healthily on its own in album form.

*Anatolia*, presumably a love theme, reflects Amram's close association with what is called serious music, as do several other tracks. *Blue Tomorrow*, on the other hand, breathes beautifully of the ballad world of jazz arranger Gil Evans. There are several moments of Turkish-



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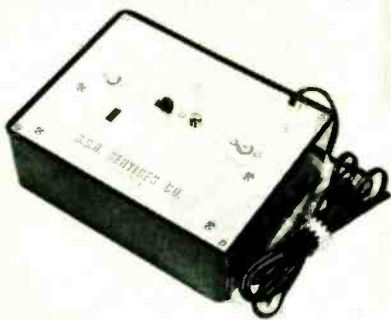
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type 7/4. Then there is a pretty, '50s-oriented, jazz-edged ballad called *Love Is Never Out of Style*. Unfortunately, music is continually moving out of style—but then, so is the world so well and wearily described in Kazan's hit novel.

One wishes that David Amram saw more to filmscoring than its function as background music, for when a score is good, it has a far more valuable substance. Consider, for instance, its accessibility and wide public relevance as compared with that of contemporary classical music. Consider how many people in Iowa have been moved by the music of Hank Mancini, and how few have heard of Stockhausen. Not writing filmscores may or may not be David Amram's loss. Certainly it is ours, for this score is one of the most engrossing and appealing cases of the background music writer syndrome to be heard in some time. M.A.



**JOHNNY WINTER: Second Winter.** Johnny Winter, vocals, guitar, and mandolin; Edgar Winter, keyboards and alto sax; Tommy Shannon, bass; John Turner, percussion. (Memory Pain; I'm Not Sure; Miss Ann; Fast Life Rider; Johnny B. Goode; six more.) Columbia KCS 9947, \$5.98. Tape: Ⓢ BO 0838, \$7.98; Ⓣ 16 BO 0838, \$7.98.

Johnny Winter's second album for Columbia is a remarkable improvement over his first. An established star now, he no longer has to show off his technical expertise—which is formidable—at the expense of musical expression. His playing and singing are stronger, surer, and far more personal than they have been on any previous release (or, for that matter, in any of the live performances that I've heard). He is still more expressive on rock than blues and he leaves something to be desired as a songwriter. For the most part, the album's highlights are the rock numbers from the '50s, but Winter's amazing re-interpretation of Dylan's *Highway 61 Revisited* is worth the price of admission all by itself.

The appearance of brother Edgar on the album is a pleasant surprise; he seems strongest on organ, but he's OK all around. Sidemen Shannon and Turner again turn in solid support; it is a curiosity that they are both so much better on record than live.

Winter probably long ago repaid Columbia's financial expression of faith in him: now he's beginning to prove he's got it as an artist too. J.G.

**PENTANGLE: Basket of Light.** Pentangle, vocals and rhythm accompaniment. (Hunting Song; Lyke-Wake Dirge; Train Song; six more.) Reprise 6372, \$4.98. Tape: Ⓢ 4RA-6372, \$5.98; Ⓢ 8RM-6372, \$6.95; Ⓣ CRX-6372, \$6.95.

If a listener can't sense something of a group's quality, fine or gross, in the first few bars of music, then the group is either not ready to record or not worth recording.

With England's Pentangle, one knows immediately that something special is happening. Their sound is both literate and musical. Much of its distinctiveness derives from its lead singer, Miss Jacqui McShee, whose sound is simultaneously ethereal and personal.

The Pentangle has another interesting twist. Its bass player, Danny Thompson, plays not a Fender electric instrument but an old-fashioned upright string bass, thus bringing rock electronics around to a full circle. What's more, Thompson plays with beautiful strength. Other members are Terry Cox (drums), Bert Jansch (guitar and banjo), and John Renbourn (guitar and sitar).

For all the Pentangle's attunement with today, their charm is tied in with tradition: Old English Rock. *House Carpenter* is an "American Southern ballad derived from the English folksong, *The Daemon Lover*." It features banjo, sitar, hand drum, upright bass, and Miss McShee's clear, old-world soprano. Not only does the unlikely combination work, it also comes out as rock. Don't ask me how. *Light Song* is a theme commissioned by the BBC for their first color drama series (*Take Three Girls*). Its tempos vary between 5/8, 7/8, and 6/4, and are performed with a smoothness heard only from first-rate musicians.

The Pentangle is surely one of England's most sophisticated and satisfying pop groups. M.A.



**THE BYRDS: Ballad of Easy Rider.** John York, bass and vocals; Gene Parsons, drums, guitar, banjo, and vocals; Clarence White, lead guitar and vocals; Roger McGuinn, synthesizer, guitar, and vocals. (Ballad of Easy Rider, Jesus Is Just Alright; It's All Over Now, Baby Blue; eight more.) Columbia CS 9942, \$4.98. Tape: Ⓢ 8C-1128, 3 3/4 ips, \$6.98; Ⓢ 1810 0810, \$6.98; Ⓣ 1610 0810, \$6.98.

This is not going to be a very objective review. I've been nipped out on the Byrds since I was thirteen when *Mr. Tambourine Man* first came out. I heard it a few times on teen-throb radio and dug it. Then one night, while I was doing my homework, my mother called me to come into the other room to see "a funny-looking group called the birds who are playing a Bob Dylan song on TV." So I went in and looked and was instantly captured by the Byrds's freedom and magic.

Only Roger McGuinn remains from the original group, but the new Byrds are more Byrds than ever before. Their performance has surpassed the peak of perfection reached three years ago by the old group of Roger McGuinn, David Crosby, Chris Hillman, and Mike Clark. Country has become a fluent ingredient in the group's style—not just country playing, but also a freer, looser attitude. At the same time, the group is tighter instrumentally and more versatile. And they're back to singing in joyous/sad four-part harmonies.

"Ballad of Easy Rider" is a wonder-

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ful album. The Byrds are into so many different things at once here that at first it may be a little hard to get your bearings. There is some experimentation, but the Byrds have always experimented. The difference is that where the Byrds used to be musical space scientists and their albums had flowing cosmic overtones, they are now musical farmers or social workers (though that was always there too). Regardless of the diverse styles that influenced this disc, it is a folk album—down to earth, of the people, and of the land. This is a lasting album, as virtually all their records are, and it is the most professional work they've done to date.

Go to a Byrds concert the first chance you get. If you open up to them, you may find yourself laughing or crying or maybe both. Meanwhile get "Ballad of Easy Rider" and see what they can do for you from a recording studio. C.C.



**LAURINDO ALMEIDA AND RAY BROWN:** Bach Ground. Laurindo Almeida, acoustic guitar; Roy Brown, acoustic bass; unidentified drummer. (Brazilian Greens; Fughetta II and IV; Conversa Mole; eight more.) Century City CCR 80102, \$4.98.

If you're as disheartened as I've been with all the vanilla albums Laurindo Almeida has been talked into recording at Capitol in recent years, this album is going to gas you. For in many places (*Pega Joso*, for one) this is the still-remembered Almeida of the Bud Shank/World Pacific days when everything was young and foolish and retrospectively dear.

Mr. Almeida has never struck me as a particularly Brazilian guitarist. It's difficult to categorize his style after you say he's very good. But even that has been all but buried after Capitol's successful campaign to turn him into Mr. Background Music.

But not here, folks. The reason behind it all is bassist Ray Brown, who is a good influence on Almeida. Aside from being the best bass player you'll ever hear, Brown is, as they say, straight ahead. While lesser bassists play devious musical games for carefully justified reasons, Ray Brown just plays, always right, always dead on. Almeida responded, and returned the compliment.

Bach wrote some of the tunes, Almeida and Brown wrote the others. You'll be able to tell who did what in the first bar. But no matter who dominates the track, the lovely thing is that Almeida and Brown have brought out the best in one another in an unabashedly tasteful and relaxed album. I feel perfectly safe in suggesting that you jump on it. M.A.

**THE GUESS WHO:** Canned Wheat. Burton Cummings, vocals, keyboards; rhythm guitar, flute, and harmonica; Randy Bachman, lead guitar and sitar;

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CIRCLE 11 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

Jim Kale, bass guitar; Garry Peterson, percussion (Old Joe; Key; No Time; Laughing; Undun; four more). RCA Victor LSP 4157, \$4.98. Tape: P8S 5074, \$9.95 (twin pack, with "Wheatfield Soul").

The Guess Who are an infuriating group. One minute they are shredding your cochlea with choice bits of rock-and-rolling; the next minute they are piling on some inept and/or tasteless heap of noise. They must be doing something right, of course, because they've had two big hits—*These Eyes* and *Laughing*—and on *Canned Wheat* (which is their second album) they've stopped imitating people like the Doors. On the other hand, they still take themselves much too seriously, especially as instrumentalists—the percussion solo on *Key*, for example, is awful. And their choice of material—*Old Joe* and *Of a Dropping Pin*—is often less than shrewd.

Still, when they are hot they are as strong as almost any mainstream pop group going. The first side of *Canned Wheat* features top-notch rock, well played, well programmed, and altogether exciting. With the demise of the Buffalo Springfield and the Lovin' Spoonful and the enervation of groups like the Bee Gees and the Buckingham, it is reassuring to have the Guess Who sitting there trying to make honest music out of teeny-rock. Everyone else is trying to sell you the Brooklyn Bridge. J.G.

**GLASS PRISM:** Poe Through the Glass Prism: Unidentified personnel. (The Raven; Beloved; Alone; seven more.) RCA Victor LSP 4201, \$4.98. Tape: P8S 1492, \$6.95.

It's not such a bad idea, really: Edgar Allen Poe set to rock. Poe probably would have enjoyed rock-and-roll. So RCA gets a gold star for album concept. What happened after that is a bit disorienting.

There are indications that everyone was quite serious about this project. One can almost see the group in the studio awaiting the cue from the engineer, Poe manuscripts held high (pardon unfortunate choice of word) and proud. Did they cut the instrumental tracks first and dub in the vocals, or was it all one mad stimulating together happening?

The Poe poems are fine to read again (they're printed on the jacket because you can't hear them), though many seem to have been chosen more for brevity than importance. The music leaves a little something to be desired. The little something is musicality. The tunes are bravely tuneless, built mostly on one-chord riffs which allow the "lead singer" to punt in a quick line, then a vocal echo from the group (*Eldorado*), another line, a fuzz-tone guitar break, and out on "Yeah yeah" (*A Dream*). The give-it-all-you-got track is, of course, *The Raven*, whose melody is primarily one note (as *The Conqueror Worm* and others), using accidentals (I use the

word in the musical sense, but one can't help but notice . . .) as they are needed grammatically. All this inspiration has the support of a lost organist and an overwhelmed drummer.

There is a great distance between an idea and its successful execution. The Glass Prism took on far more than they could handle and they never came near the goal. Either there was no one around who realized it or the group wouldn't listen. But then, ineptitude is its own reward, right? M.A.

**MILTON NASCIMENTO:** *Courage*. Milton Nascimento, vocals and guitar; Eumir Deodato, arr. and cond. (Tres Pontas; Bridges; Catavento; seven more.) A & M SP 3019, \$4.98.

Those of us already hooked on Brazilian music should get together and send A & M producer Creed Taylor a thousand roses for his efforts at getting unknown Brazilian artists on record in this country. Such efforts are tricky as well as courageous: it cannot be easy to produce music which is both commercial and honestly Brazilian. Of all such attempts, Taylor's productions come closest to success.

This album features Milton Nascimento, a deeply talented young Brazilian singer/composer/guitarist. While Nascimento's singing is stronger and more outgoing than that of most male Brazilians, he manages to get the same intimacy heard in the soft vulnerable sound of Jobim and Gilberto. As for his songs, they soar with a beauty and emotionalism bred into Brazilians as into no other culture. They haunt.

I don't think Brazilian songs work with English lyrics. Almost all such marriages are financial hustles in which the Brazilians lose, producing words that range from disappointing to unbearable. A rare exception occurs here on a song called *Bridges*, with lyrics by Gene Lees. Nascimento is a bit hesitant in English (even that charms me) and the lyric is chopped up to make room for a segment in Portuguese. (Fortunately it's printed in the notes in proper order.) Despite these troubles, both singer and song are terribly moving.

The orchestrations are by another Brazilian giant, Eumir Deodato, who contributes much of the album's warmth. There is a Brazilian-made album on which Nascimento performs many of these songs. Its feeling is superb, but like other albums made in Brazil, the music is sabotaged by poor engineering. Anyway, you can't get it here.

You can get this, and you should. For all its partial solutions to very real problems, this is a brave and beautiful representation of a huge talent and the culture that produced it. M.A.



**PAT WILLIAMS:** *Heavy Vibrations*. Pat Williams, arr. and cond.; chorus, Howard Roberts, cond. (Get Back; Son of a

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CIRCLE 46 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

Preacher Man; Don't Leave Me; seven more.) Verve 6-5075, \$4.98.

I like where Pat Williams is at. This is his third big-band album and from here, it's the best, with its fluid playing and imaginative charts. Williams' choice of material, this time out, is as solid and right as are his treatments.

*Joy, Joy* (by Edwin Hawkins, as in *Oh Happy Day*) features a knockout gospel choir directed by Howard Roberts and two wild singers named Shirley Garrett and Milt Grayson. Miss Garrett is heard again on my favorite track, *River Deep—Mountain High*. Driving songs such as these gracefully melt into gentler moments, as the *Variations on an Autumn Theme* from Williams' film score for *A Nice Girl Like Me*. There's also a swing version of a *Ponteio* written by Brazil's Edu Lobo, and occasional bits of Lennon/McCartney and Nilsson.

In all, this album is an all-purpose gas, and you should buy it. M.A.

## jazz



**BLUE ANGEL JAZZ CLUB:** Jazz at Pasadena '68. Vol. 1: George van Eps, guitar; Clancy Hayes, vocal and banjo; Dick Cary, peck horn; Matty Matlock, clarinet; Stan Wrightsman, piano; others. Vol. 2: Joe Venuti, violin; Roger Kellaway, piano; Betty O'Hara, valve trombone; others. Available from Blue Angel Jazz Club, 2089 Pinecrest Drive, Altadena, Calif. 91001, \$5.50 each.

The preservation and continuation of jazz seems more and more to be falling to the hands of enthusiastic amateurs. As time passes and older jazz styles are retired to commercial oblivion, it has often been amateur or semipro musicians who continue playing in a style that no longer provides a living for professionals. And to complement this trend we find amateur recording men putting out jazz played by pros that the commercial disc companies either ignore or lack the imagination to produce and promote.

On the East Coast, two advertising men—Bill Weilbacher and Dan Kanter, who admire Jimmy Rushing and the old Basie band—staged such a successful jazz party with Rushing and some Basie veterans a few years ago that, the second time around, they recorded the party and are now in business as Master Jazz Recordings. On the West Coast, two hot medics, Dr. William MacPherson and Dr. George Tyler, organized the Blue Angel Jazz Club on much the same basis: the club gives jazz parties which are recorded and the recordings are then put on public sale.

The club's party, held at the University Club of Pasadena in December 1968, is the source of these two LPs and they are amazing—not only for the consistent quality of the performances but for the variety of styles that the club managed to bring into a single bash. For sheer groove-by-groove jazz quality and range, I doubt if an LP side exists that can match Side 1 of Volume 2 of this set. It opens with a magnificent display of Joe Venuti's dazzling jazz violin technique on an extended treatment of *Almost Like Being in Love*; this is followed by a lovely melodic ballad composed by Dick Cary and played beautifully by a most impressive valve trombonist, Betty O'Hara; the side closes with an incredibly brilliant development of *Stella by Starlight* by Roger Kellaway. That really covers the jazz spectrum—from Joe Venuti of the '20s to Roger Kellaway of the '60s plus an unknown (to me) but very welcome talent in Miss O'Hara. The second side includes a charming unaccompanied performance of *The Blue Room* by guitarist George van Eps, Matty Matlock's warm clarinet version of *Do You Know What It Means to Miss New Orleans*, and a couple of well-structured large combo arrangements by Dick Cary on *Blues My Naughty Sweeties Give to Me* and *Save It Pretty Mama*—the latter with one of Cary's delightfully gruff peck horn solos.

One side of Volume 1 is devoted to a Clancy Hayes recital with choice accompaniment by Abe Lincoln, trombone, Jackie Coons, mellophone, and Cary. The communicative quality that Hayes can project in person, and which is not always evident in his formal recordings, shines all through this relaxed, informal session. Van Eps makes a second appearance on the other side of this disc, play-

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ing a graceful *Moon Glow* with warmly melodic piano assistance by Stan Wrightsman—a performance that is sandwiched between enthusiastic but scarcely distinguished attacks on a pair of Dixieland warhorses, *Fidgety Feet* and *Wolverine Blues*, by an assorted nonet.

With twenty-two musicians on hand, these recordings could have turned into haphazard turmoil. That they have come out with a superb balance of freedom and precision indicates that Drs. MacPherson and Tyler and the Blue Angel Jazz Club know what they're doing.

J.S.W.



**OTIS SPANN: Sweet Giant of the Blues.** Otis Spann, piano and vocals; Tom Scott, tenor saxophone and flute; Louie Shelton and Mike Anthony, guitars; Max Bennett, bass; Paul Humphrey, drums. (Sellin' My Thing; I'm a Dues Payin' Man; Hey Baby; five more.) *Bluestime 9006*, \$4.98.

Bob Thiele has given this Otis Spann disc a strong, glittering metallic sound that is completely in keeping with Spann's driving attack on piano and the clear, penetrating shout in his voice. Add to this Tom Scott's jumping and aptly strident tenor sax and you have a blues record that virtually leaps out of the speakers at you.

Spann is one of the great blues pianists, a tremendously forceful musical personality who built much of the momentum of Muddy Waters' band when he was Muddy's pianist. He comes on equally strong as a singer. Both facets are brilliantly showcased here, backed by a strong rhythm section. Spann starts the set at a furious pace with a throwback to his Muddy Waters days, *Got My Mojo Working*, then settles into a solid groove that rolls inexorably through the disc.

The sparkling zest that Spann establishes in his singing is picked up and extended in remarkable fashion by Scott whose ability to squawk through a set of chicken riffs without becoming corny adds tremendously to the pungent quality of the performances. Using as versatile and knowledgeable a saxophonist as Scott in this context is a brilliant touch and raises the set well above even a normal Spann collection.

J.S.W.

**BARNEY BIGARD-ALBERT NICHOLAS.** Barney Bigard, clarinet; Ray Nance, trumpet; Juan Tizol, valve trombone; Ben Webster, tenor saxophone; Duke Ellington, piano; Jimmy Blanton, bass; Sonny Greer, drums (A Lull at Dawn; Lament for Javanette; "C" Blues; five more). Bernard Addison and His Rhythm: Freddie Jenkins, trumpet; Albert Nicholas, clarinet; Joe Turner, piano; Bernard Addison, guitar; John Kirby, bass; Adrian Rollini, drums; Kirby Walker and Jasper Thomas, vocals (Toledo Shuffle; Nothin' But Rhythm; four more). The Little Ramblers: Ward Pinkett, trumpet and vocal; Albert Nicholas, clarinet; Jack Russin, piano; Danny Barker, guitar; Joe Watts, bass; Sammy Weiss, drums (Tap-Room Special; Ev'rything Is Okey Dokey). RCA Victor LPV 566, \$4.98. (mono only).

Barney Bigard's soft, velvet clarinet tone is probably sufficiently well known through his work with Duke Ellington to give an immediate recommendation to the eight pieces he plays in this collection. And those familiar with the performances, which include some of Bigard's most gorgeously lush solos, will need no further encouragement to get the record. They will, however, find a magnificent bonus in the eight relatively unknown Albert Nicholas sides that make up the rest of the disc—not only for the work of Nicholas, an able, polished New Orleans clarinetist, who plays well throughout the set, but for the revealing performances by pianist Joe Turner.

Turner (not to be confused with the blues shouter of the same name) has spent almost all of his career in Europe and is practically unknown, except as a name, to most American jazz followers. He gallops through these pieces playing in a stride style that would have been worthy of Fats Waller. Six of the eight pieces, those attributed to Bernard Addison and His Rhythm, are completely in the vein of Fats Waller and His Rhythm, with Turner's Waller-like piano, Addison's driving guitar (à la Al Casey with Waller), and some (but not all) of the vocal interjections of Kirby Walker and Jasper Thomas. These two singers are closer to Wingy Manone in sound but occasionally project Waller's ebullient spirit. This is a marvelously lively band with a very surprising drummer—Adrian Rollini, best known as a bass saxophonist and vibraphonist.

J.S.W.

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## in brief

**HAPPY ENDING.** Music from the film. United Artists 5203, \$4.98.

A mostly beautiful new film score by Michel LeGrand, featuring a lovely ballad, *What Are You Doing the Rest of Your Life?* (lyrics by Marilyn and Alan Bergman who, with LeGrand, wrote *Windmills of Your Mind*) superbly sung by Michael Dees, who deserves to be famous. M.A.

**CREEDENCE CLEARWATER REVIVAL: Willy and the Poorboys.** Fantasy 8397, \$4.98. Tape: ●● X 8397, 3¾ ips, \$5.95; ● X 48397, \$5.98; ● M 88397, \$6.95; ● M 58397, \$6.95.

*Fortunate Son* gets my vote as last year's best single. Also included are *Down on the Corner*, *Cotton Fields*, and *Midnight Special*. Better all the time. J.G.

**BREAD, LOVE, AND DREAMS.** London PS 566, \$4.98.

Basically a folk trio—two girls and a guy, but rock influenced—Bread, Love, and Dreams bow pleasantly with a collection of their own tunes. I thought the good-timey stuff was best. Donovan fans will like the record. J.G.

**FIFTH AVENUE BAND.** Reprise 6369, \$4.98. Tape: ● 4RA-6369, \$5.98; ● 8RM-6369, \$6.95; ● CRX-6369, \$6.95.

An excellent young rock group from New York in a bright, happy, all-together album. Bravo. M.A.

**LEVITT & McCLURE.** Warner Bros./7 Arts 1807, \$4.98. Tape: ● 4WA-1807, \$5.98.

Another fine new entry: two young singer/writer/guitarists from Encino, California with a devotion to and honest talent for country music with city shadings. Highly musical. M.A.

**ROXY.** Elektra EKS 74063, \$4.98. Tape: ● M 84063, \$6.95; ● M 54063, \$6.95.

Apparently Roxy is to be Elektra's new teeny-rock group. They are solid, entertaining, sort of a rougher Crosby, Stills, Nash, and Young. Lead singer Bob Segal

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Original Bluebird recordings Glenn Miller and Orchestra. \$15,500. Write to Records, 25 New Brunswick Avenue, Matawan, New Jersey 07747.

rini is a promising songwriter. Strong debut. J.G.

**STEVE MILLER BAND: Your Saving Grace.** Capitol SKAO 331, \$4.98. Tape: ● 8XT 331, \$6.98; ● 4XT 331, \$5.98.

This album is rising in the charts, and deserves to be. The group is one of the strongest, grittiest, most together entries in rock. If your kid has taste, buy it for him. M.A.

**PETER IVERS' BAND with YOLANDE BAVAN: Knight of the Blue Communion.** Epic BN 26500, \$4.98.

An interesting mishmash of rock, jazz, and classical. The writing and playing of leader Peter Ivers, whose ax is the harmonica, has been heavily influenced by the blues. Miss Bavan is also in fine fettle. Curious. J.G.

**EASY RIDER.** Dunhill DSX 50063, \$4.98.

To underline what he hoped was the relevancy of his film *Easy Rider*, Peter Fonda selected some representative contemporary music for the soundtrack: included are selections by Steppenwolf, the Byrds, the Holy Modal Rounders, Fraternity of Man, Jimi Hendrix, the Electric Prunes, and Roger McGuinn (Smith substitutes on the record for the Band who were too snotty to allow themselves to be included. Up against the wall, Band!) J.G.

**BEAR FACTS.** Century City Records 70101, \$4.98.

It's not bad enough that *Gentle Ben* clutters up TV. Now its stars have made an album which tops the show for banality. None of them can sing, the songs are dreadful, and no one involved has the remotest idea that music has changed in the past fifteen years. M.A.

**LAWRENCE REYNOLDS.** Warner Bros./7 Arts 1825, \$4.98.

A debut album based on and including Reynolds' recent hit single, *Jesus Is a Soul Man*. Both the single and album proclaim young Reynolds one of the warmest and best country talents to come out of Nashville. M.A.

**THE BOX TOPS: Dimensions.** Bell 6032, \$4.98. Tape: ●● 6032, 3¾ ips, \$5.95; ● 6032, \$6.95; ● 6032, \$5.95.

Lead singer Alex Chilton is the Box Tops and a superb rock shouter. *Sweet Cream Ladies* seems to be about black prostitutes. What does WMCA think about that? J.G.

**ROBBIE BASHO.** Blue Thumb BTS 10, \$4.98.

Steel string guitarist Basho is on some euphoric trip which seems to fascinate him. Trouble is he doesn't play very well. He's not exactly pretentious; rather, he goes nowhere with *Great Significance*. The album cover gets bad-taste-of-the-year award: two nude young ladies, one black and one white, who look like they can hardly wait till the stupid photo session is over. M.A.



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## AUDIO EQUIPMENT PROFILE

"Every once in a while we come across a product which so clearly stands out in its class that we must evaluate it relative to much more expensive equipment, otherwise only superlatives would be found on this page. The fact is that Astrocom/Marlux has produced a terrific tape deck. . . ."



High praise indeed from the notoriously tough uncompromising equipment reviewers of Audio! Our dealers will be pleased to give you a copy of the complete Audio review and demonstrate today's outstanding buy in tape recorders—the Astrocom/Marlux 407.

# ASTROCOM | MARLUX

Oneonta, New York 13820

CIRCLE 5 ON READER-SERVICE CARD  
[www.americanradiohistory.com](http://www.americanradiohistory.com)

*An Industry  
Breakthrough  
Sherwood  
Model SEL-100*

# Professional Belt-Drive Automatic Turntable



**Rumble Specifications:**  
—42 dB Unweighted (NAB)  
—58 dB CBS/RRL Weighting

No other automatic turntable manufacturer can equal these rumble specifications. Why? Because the Sherwood SEL-100 is the *only* professional *belt-drive* automatic turntable available; and a belt-drive mechanism isolates the motor from the turntable better than conventional "rubber-idler" drives, hence, lower rumble. It's no wonder, then that our competitors avoid stating rumble specifications in their ads.

*(Conventional test records cannot be used to test the SEL-100 rumble, since measurable rumble exists in their grooves. The only pressing which we have found to be adequately rumble free for this test is the new DIN45544 #LAB 030 produced by Carl Lindström, Berlin, Germany.)*

But, low rumble is only the beginning. Here are other exclusive innovations.

**EXCLUSIVE:** Escapator-action record lowering. Record is carefully, slowly lowered (not dropped) to a stationary turntable—the gentlest treatment of your records imaginable.

**EXCLUSIVE:** When belt-drive motor (No. 1) rotates the platter, power is off to arm-cycling motor (No. 2) which is totally disengaged. When arm-cycling motor (No. 2) lowers the record, power is off to belt-drive motor (No. 1) so that platter is stationary.

**EXCLUSIVE:** Beam-of-light tone-arm trip. At end of record, a photo-electric light-beam circuit starts the "change" motor; no mechanical trip linkage to strain your cartridge's very-compliant stylus.

**EXCLUSIVE:** Floating arm/turntable suspension; no other automatic has this effective isolation system.

**EXCLUSIVE:** Combination automatic/manual spindle; no secondary removable spindle to get lost.

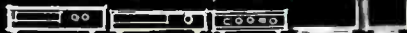
**EXCLUSIVE:** Largest tone arm of any automatic, 9½ inches from pivot to stylus; lowest tracking error.

The SEL-100 also has hydraulic-damped cueing, intermix two speeds (33-45 rpm), manual play, very low flutter and wow, anti-skats, etc. See your Sherwood dealer or write us for complete specifications and literature.

Price *with* brushed aluminum case—only \$149.50.

**SHERWOOD**

ELECTRONIC LABORATORIES, INC.



INNOVATORS IN FINEST QUALITY TUNERS / AMPLIFIERS / RECORDERS / SPEAKERS  
4300 North California Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60618

CIRCLE 65 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

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