

\$1.50 June 1980

Special Speaker Issue

HIGH FIDELITY

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6 Top Speaker Designers Sound Off

Tests of New Popular-Priced Speakers from \$165 to \$199

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NEW ELECTRONIC DESIGN ANTIQUATES SO-CALLED "HIGH SPEED" TECHNOLOGY.

Since its inception in the 1960's, there's been a lot of debate as to whether "high speed" is just a lot of fast talk or whether quick rise times and high slew rates are effective in lowering distortion.

Now Pioneer's latest technology brings an end to the heated "high speed" debate. Because Pioneer's new Non-Switching Amplifier design has been recognized as a most significant technological advance. It produces distortion levels so vanishingly low (.005%), its sound purity and specifications are comparable to the very best most expensive power amplifiers.

In fact, further study of Pioneer's new Non-Switching technology will show why "high speed" has become obsolete.

NO MATTER HOW FAST YOUR AMP, IT'S STILL BEHIND THE TIMES.

The truth is, "high speed" is just a fancy name recently given to an electronic technology that dates back nearly two decades. The terms slew rate and rise time were around when most amps had vacuum tubes and transistors were rarities. In fact, the only thing new about the terms slew rate and rise time is their recent abuse.

THE HIGHER THE SPEED, THE BIGGER THE CON.

Kenwood, Sansui, and other manufacturers of high fidelity components boast that their units offer higher fidelity because they offer higher slew rates than the competition.

A slew rate of 200 volts per microsecond ($v/\mu s$) and a rise time of $0.85 \mu s$. do indeed sound impressive. They are at least three, four and sometimes even up to 10 times faster than those found on most of today's equipment.

But the truth is you no more need rates like this to get superior high fidelity reproduction of music than you need to be an Olympic weight-lifter to turn the page of this magazine.

HIGH SPEED GOES NOWHERE FAST.

To understand why "high speed" is really "all talk and no action," you must first understand what's meant by slew rate and rise time.

Slew rate is the maximum rate of change or slope of a signal measured in volts per microsecond. Like miles per hour, it's a rate of how

fast something is traveling. And in this case that something is the musical signal.

All it takes is a simple calculation to show what slew rate would be necessary to handle the most extremely demanding musical signal.

Let's assume 20,000 hertz to be our musical analog with a peak value of 40 volts which will deliver 100 watts of power into 8 ohms.

The steepest part of the wave, where the slew rate is greatest, is at the zero crossing point. The slope at this point is the derivative of the sine wave with respect to time (dt):

The waveform is $40\sin 2\pi ft$; and taking its derivative,

$$\frac{d(40\sin 2\pi ft)}{dt} = 2\pi f(40 \cos 0)$$

$$= (2)(\pi)(20,000)(40)(1)$$

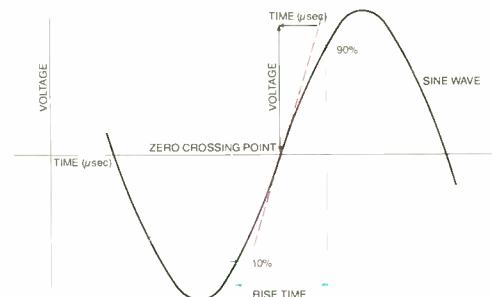
$$= 5.0 \times 10^6 \text{ volts/sec.}$$

$$= 5 \text{ volts}/\mu\text{sec (slew rate)}$$

So this extreme case signal only has a slew rate of 5. And if the power was increased to 400 watts, the slew rate would only double.

A slew rate of 200 volts per microsecond like Kenwood boasts, only adds one thing to your amp. A high price tag.

Rise time is the time it takes for a signal to go from 10% to 90% of its peak-to-peak value.

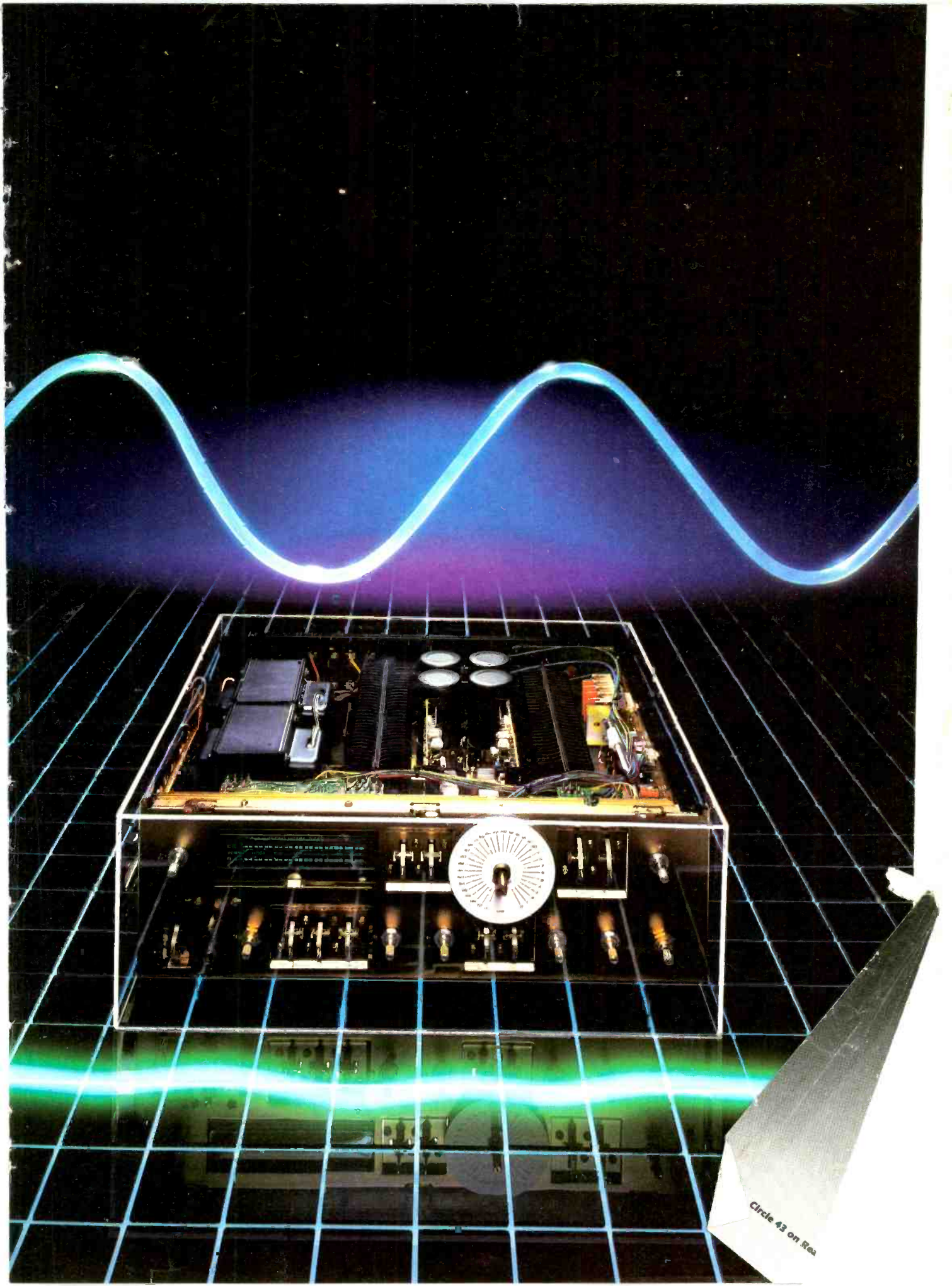


Another simple calculation will show the rise time necessary to handle a 20,000 Hz. sine wave.

The arcsin of -0.8 is the angle at which a sine wave is at 10% of its peak-to-peak value and +0.8 when it's at 90% of its peak-to-peak value.

$$\sin^{-1}(-0.8) = -53.13^\circ$$

$$\sin^{-1}(+0.8) = +53.13^\circ$$



Circle 43 on Rea

The New Shape of Sound

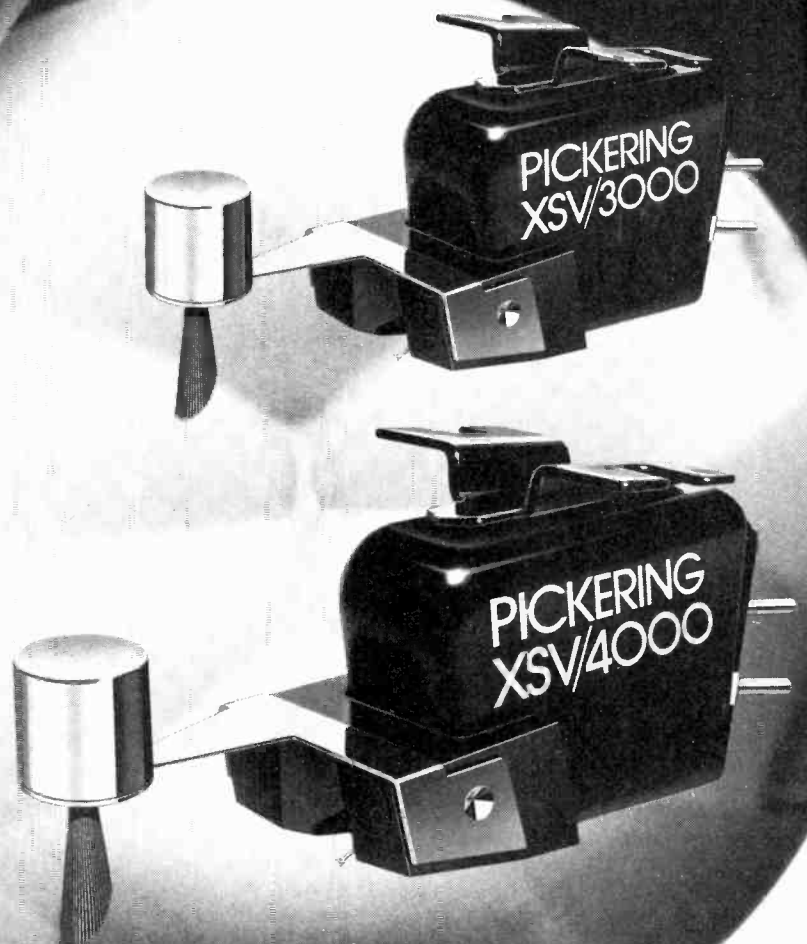
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Fidelity to What?

A colleague berates me for the April editorial, or at least its headline: "Too Much High Fidelity?" (note the sneaky question mark). You may remember that I was complaining about all the sonic garbage that one hears on contemporary recordings because producers, in order to get "presence," mike the performers too "tightly." As a result, a record buyer often spends his money for a recording of hands sliding up fingerboards, feet manipulating pedals, and lips sucking in air—the very sounds the finest musicians spend years practicing to tame. But how, the complainant asks, can there be too great fidelity to the musician's performance? If that is how he plays, that's the way you should hear it, right?

Let's mike this question a little tighter. Take Jascha Heifetz, for instance. Heifetz, it is generally accepted, was in his prime the finest violinist qua violinist in memory, perhaps in history. Besides other facets of his incomparable technique, his clean, brilliant tone was the ideal toward which generations of violin students strove.

It's a good thing they never heard him up close. When Heifetz "dug in" to the music he was one of the noisiest performers ever to draw horsehair against catgut. Close up, his scratch could almost drown out the notes. But Heifetz wasn't projecting up close, he was projecting into the audience where, by the miracle of his technique, all one heard was that clean, brilliant tone vibrating with passion. And what was this miracle? Basically the phenomenon that the higher frequencies are absorbed and muted to a greater extent than the lower frequencies as they traverse the air, and since the highs dominate the violinist's extraneous noises, they simply dissipate before they get far into the audience. Similarly, if contemporaries' reports are true, Walter Gieseking's famous ethereal, "half-sounded" tone in his recordings of the 1930s resulted from his producers' moving the microphones far enough away from him and his piano to avoid picking up all his grunts and groans.

Why, if the noise generated at the point of musical origin in concert (by the musician or his instrument) is acceptable, does it become intolerable when generated at the point of musical origin in your living room (by the speaker)? Primarily because in your living room the noise has not had the space to dissipate. But then, would you want Heifetz to perform, live, in your living room (even if he didn't tone down his performance to fit its smaller size)? You bet! Just to see his wizardry would be rewarding enough. You'd enjoy his tuning up, his clearing his throat, his rosining his bow. But you wouldn't want a recording of all that, at least not if you preferred the music he could produce to the evocation of his—pardon the expression—"presence."

Tight miking of singers also presents problems. What one producer calls the "marvelous character" of the voice comes through splendidly, but so do the singer's deficiencies. To take the edge off the tight-miked deficiencies, the producers do the same thing they do with instrumental recordings; through the marvel of electronics, they add echo.

Getting back to the original complaint, okay, my apologies. It's not a question of too much high fidelity, but of *what* is being reproduced so faithfully. High fidelity begins with the composer's conception. The next step, at least in traditional music, is how he commits the concept to paper. This is followed by a performer trying (or not) to be faithful to the notes and their implications. Only then do high fidelity recording and reproduction take over. Offhand, I can't remember any scores calling for the amplified sound of a guitar rubbing against corduroy pants.

Leonard Marcus

Technics

Everyone knows what Technics direct drive does for performance and accuracy in our turntables. That's why 73 of the top 100 radio stations that use turntables use Technics direct-drive turntables. Now, for only \$330*, you can record your cassettes with the accuracy of Technics direct drive. And that says a lot about the Technics RS-M45.

So does its tape transport system. Especially when you consider what the RS-M45 has going for it: An FG servo DC direct-drive capstan motor. And while 0.035% wow and flutter can tell you a lot about our direct-drive performance, the world's only limited 3-year motor warranty† tells you a lot more.

Equally impressive are the RS-M45's solid controls. They not only make switching from one mode to another simple and accurate, they also put minimal strain on the tape transport system.

And to put minimal strain on you, there's the optional RP-9645 remote control unit. With it, all transport functions, as well as record mute, can be operated from your easy chair.

Just as special are the RS-M45's fluorescent VU meters with auto-reset peak hold. They're fast, electronic and highly accurate. You'll also like Dolby[®] NR and a S/N ratio of 68 dB.

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[Vivian] Perlis:

Charles Ives Remembered [An Oral History]

Ives was also an innovator in business. Insurance was a hard-hitting, competitive trade. Many of his ideas have now become basic, and the success of Ives and Myrick Co. was due to the daring with which both partners applied them to the selling of life insurance.

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The secret of Onkyo.

Let Onkyo transport you to a world beyond electronics... to a world of more perfect sound. Where you'll hear music of such stunning purity and sensual richness, that you'll forget you're listening to an audio system.

That's the secret of Onkyo... and Onkyo's dramatic success. The unique ability to take you several steps beyond pure technology... to experience more exciting sound. And you'll find it in all our components... including all four of our new receivers.

The Onkyo TX-7000 Quartz-Locked AM-FM Stereo Receiver is an outstanding example. Both its power amplifier and FM sections are rich with important new design concepts.

The TX-7000's power amplifier provides two major innovations never before present in a stereo receiver. The first is called Super-Servo and it totally eliminates the sonic "ghost signals" common to DC power amplifiers. As a result, each instrument and voice sounds purer and more individually real...

regardless of volume level. Perhaps for the first time, you'll experience stereo with true depth, spaciousness, and a remarkably discernable third-dimension.

The second innovation

is Linear-Switching which lets us provide Class A amplifier sound quality with Class B power efficiency. Crossover distortion is significantly reduced. And output power is very highly efficient... 90 watts per channel with no more than 0.02% THD.*

The TX-7000's FM section is also clearly superior... picking up weak stations noiselessly and strong stations without distortion.

A unique Human Touch Sensor automatically controls the Quartz-Locked system for more reliable and convenient operation... releasing the system instantly when it senses your touch on the tuning knob... engaging it again as your fingers leave the knob.

Special circuits also monitor both channels... detecting and cancelling out sound distorting FM signal noise. Other circuits cancel out appliance noise.

Digital FM readout... separate bass, mid and treble controls... 2-way tape dubbing facilities... and dozens of other important features are all found in the TX-7000. And the TX-7000 is just one of four new receivers from Onkyo.

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While a lot of companies were calling their flashing lights and elaborate memory systems "break-throughs," JVC was exploring ways to make cassette recordings sound better.

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The KD-A33, for \$299.95,* is a perfect example. Naturally, it's metal-compatible, as are all eight decks in JVC's line. But more important, it delivers everything that metal promises: stunning clarity, especially with high-energy musical transients. Very low distortion. Superb deep-bass extension. Accurate frequency balance.

How do we achieve this kind of fidelity? It's mainly in our heads.

SA heads. Comprised of a sendust alloy in a laminated structure, these JVC heads were the first to take advantage of sendust's electromagnetic and physical superiority, while avoiding the high-frequency limitations of conventional sendust. So they're perfect for recording and erasing metal tape, as well as any other kind of tape.

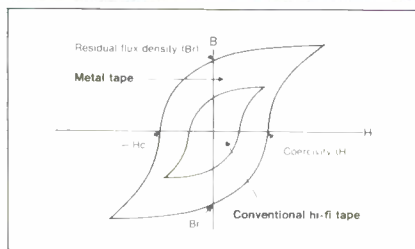
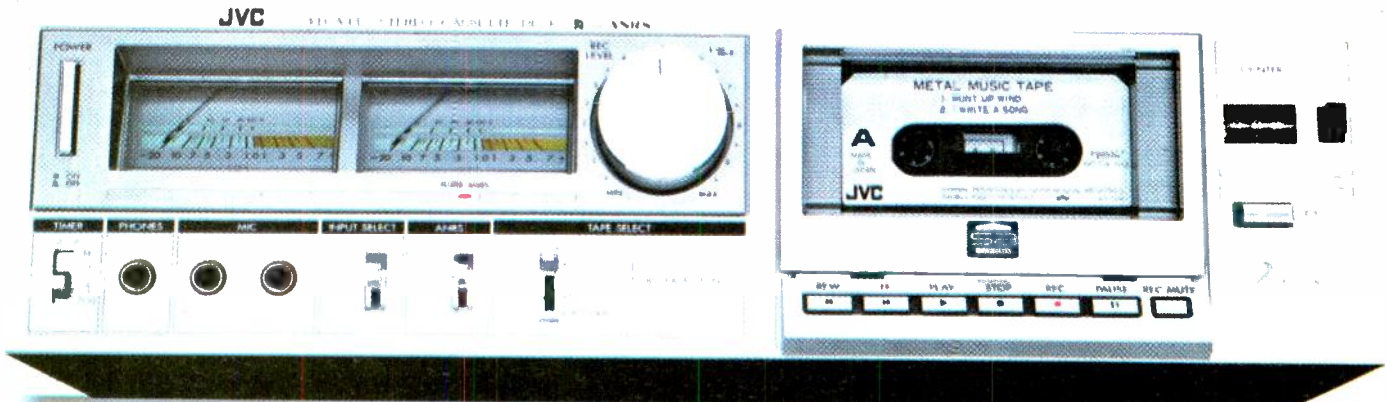
Our Super ANRS contributes a lot of fidelity, too. Years ahead of its time, Super ANRS combines noise reduction and headroom extension. That means improved dynamic range with both metal and non-metal tapes.

We also offer the professional convenience of full-logic, solenoid controls. Unlike stiff, mechanical switches, solenoid controls are activated by a light touch. And you can switch directly from mode to mode (like "record" to "rewind") without damaging the tape or the deck itself. The KD-A33 also provides accurate VU meters with readings to +7 dB and provisions for optional remote control.

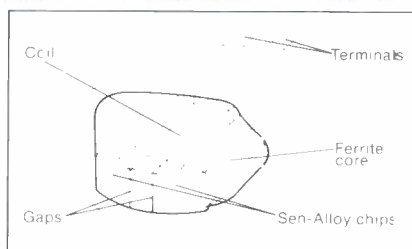
The specs are no less impressive. Frequency response is an honest 30-16,000 Hz ± 3 dB. When you use Super ANRS, it will sound even wider because of added high-frequency headroom. Wow and flutter are 0.04% WRMS. Signal-to-noise ratio is 70 dB with ANRS in.

Metal-compatible KD-A33 cassette deck

*Manufacturer's suggested retail price.



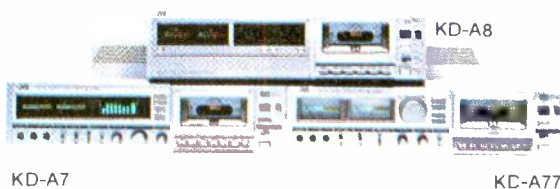
Hysteresis curves: metal vs. conventional tape



2-Gap SA erase head

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Just dial this toll-free number for the location of your nearest JVC dealer. (In New York State, 212-476-8300.) While you're there, you can also check out our KD-A7, metal-compatible deck with built-in spectro peak indicators, for \$499.95.* Our KD-A8, with a built-in B.E.S.T. computer. Or any of five other JVC decks that were built with only one goal in mind—to give you quality cassette performance for your dollar.



KD-A7

KD-A77

JVC

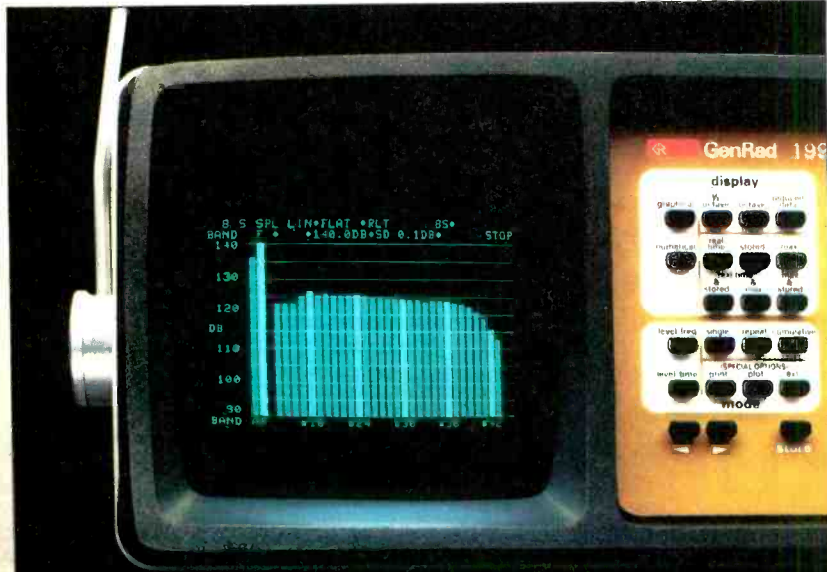
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Is it live, or is it
MEMOREX



The GenRad 1995 Integrating Real-Time Analyzer measured signals from a Nakamichi 582 cassette deck. Input signal source was "pink noise" at 0dB (200 nanowebers—standard record level). If you'd like a copy of the test results, please send a self-addressed, stamped business-size envelope to the address below. Ask for the GenRad Test.

... performance in a
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THE AUTOPHILE

Car Stereo for the '80s

The spotlight's on features and size

by Robert Angus

Voluntary guidelines on how to measure and advertise the power output, distortion, and other performance characteristics of car stereo equipment went into effect on January 1, just before manufacturers took the wraps off their 1980 models. The result is considerably less emphasis on power and less talk about specifications.

Not that the components themselves have changed very much—except that many of them are smaller than last year's equivalents and even more crammed with features. What has happened is that last season's 40-watters and 100-watters are this season's 10-watters and 40-watters, in line with the adaptation of FTC guidelines to cover car stereo equipment as well as home components. Last year manufacturers used "music" or "peak" power for ratings and combined the output of the channels to arrive at figures well in excess of those for many home models. A four-channel amplifier putting out 10 watts per channel of "music power" became a 40-watter, for example.

Detroit's smaller X-body cars are partly responsible for the shrinking effect. They require smaller audio systems that still contain all the necessary selling ingredients, plus such extras as radio pushbuttons, higher amplifier power (in real watts), and more knobs, LEDs, and sliders. But that's only part of the story. The rapid pace of technology makes this kind of condensation possible, and it is evident in smaller components that are made for installation in standard cars but that do much more than last year's counterparts.

For the traditional audio buff, the big news remains the growing number of high fidelity equipment manufacturers that are getting into car stereo for the first time. Newcomers include Kenwood, Sony, Aiwa, Avid, Cerwin-Vega, and Atec Lansing. And while they have been laying their plans, and established car stereo makers like Sparkomatic, Clarion, Alpine, Kraco, and Audiovox have been beefing up their own offerings, Detroit has not been idle.

Up until a few years ago, three-quarters of the sound equipment in American cars had been installed by the audio manufacturers. The birth of true

mobile high fidelity systems about two years ago caused that figure to decline, and the car makers have responded by improving the quality and performance specifications of their audio extras. GM's Delco division, Ford, and Chrysler are beginning to offer power amps and equalizers of their own—in some cases not just to buyers of new cars, but to owners of older models as well.

Again, X-body cars are surely behind the design of smaller components from Sanyo, Clarion, Craig, Pioneer, Alpine, and some of the other leading names in the auto sound field. Typical models are Sanyo's FT-C8, the Pioneer KP-1500, and, in a special mount, the Clarion PE-751B. The Sanyo, priced at \$130, has an auto-reverse cassette deck

with a scanning system to locate the next selection on the tape, an FM section with an FET front end and phase-lock-loop multiplex decoder, and an AM radio. Pioneer's version sells for \$10 less but lacks auto reverse; it has a stereo FM/AM tuner with a muting circuit and power antenna activator. Further up the price scale, at \$390, is Clarion's model, a 10-watter whose FM tuning section contains an IC chip that reduces noise and balances selectivity and sensitivity automatically and continuously in use. This ultrathin auto-reverse cassette deck has Dolby, among other features.

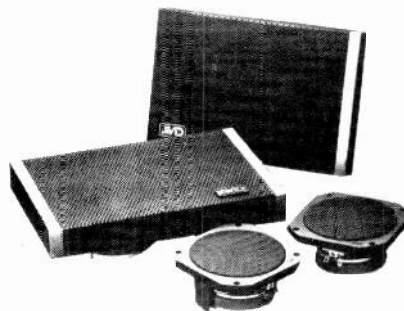
Concord claims a major technological breakthrough with its Dynamic Compliance amplifiers, which are designed to measure speaker performance and to adjust output to compensate for any deficiencies. Alpine's Model 7308 (\$700) probably represents the epitome of big performance in a small package—a tiny head-end unit that combines a 6-watt (per channel, sine wave) power amp with a pushbutton-operated stereo FM/AM tuner and metal-tape-ready cassette deck. Tuner frequency reads out digitally; there's a music sensor system and seek-and-scan feature in addition to Alpine's gear-drive cassette eject mechanism.

The new kids on the block—Sony, Kenwood, Avid, Aiwa, et. al—bring plenty of goodies with them. Twenty come from Sony alone: one AM/FM and one FM-only tuner, four cassette decks (two with built-in amps), four amplifiers, and ten speaker models, some with amplifiers. The most expensive amp is the XM-1 pulse-width-modulation unit with an output of 70 watts per channel and a price tag of \$300. Kenwood's offerings include three in-dash cassette/radio combinations, ranging in cost from \$270 to \$450; a tuner/deck cassette, Model KRC-721 (\$400); two speaker systems; and a series of underdash separate components. A feature of Kenwood's FM tuners is an automatic noise-reduction circuit that constantly monitors and adjusts FM reception. Aiwa's first car stereo products include two auto-reverse cassette decks, the 5-watt CTR-2040 and the 7-watt CTR-2060, which has noise suppression and auto eject; and the SC-16Y speaker, a three-way rear-deck air-suspension system rate handle 30 watts.

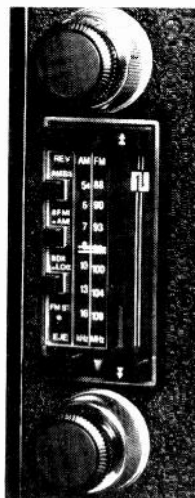
Avid's auto sound debut of five speaker systems, ranging up to \$275. At the low end (\$ pair), are both the RD-5, a 4



Kenwood KRC-511



Avid Ten-Plus system



Sanyo FT-C8 designed for vertical mounting in new X-body cars.

**WHAT'S
HAPPENING
ON THIS PAGE
SHOULDN'T
HAPPEN
ON YOUR
RECORDING
TAPE.**

IT'S WORTH IT.

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It's called print-through.
And if you think it interferes with your
reading, you should hear what it does
to your listening.

It happens on tape that has low
magnetic stability. Music on one
layer of the tape is transferred to
music on an adjacent layer, causing
an echo.

At Maxell, we've designed our
tape for superior magnetic stability.
So what's happening to the opposite
page won't happen to your music.

You see, we believe you should only
hear the music you want to hear.

Nothing less, and nothing more.

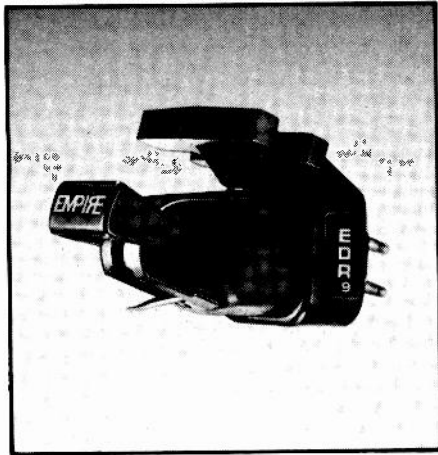


IT'S WORTH IT.

Maxell Corporation of America, 60 Oxford Drive, Moonachie, N.J. 07074

Circle 33 on Reader-Service Card

Empire's EDR.9 The Phono Cartridge Designed for Today's Audiophile Recordings



Direct-to-Disc and digital recording have added a fantastic new dimension to the listening experience. Greater dynamic range, detail, stereo imaging, lower distortion and increased signal-to-noise ratio are just a few of the phrases used to describe the advantages of these new technologies.

In order to capture all the benefits of these recordings, you should have a phono cartridge specifically designed to reproduce every bit of information with utmost precision and clarity and the least amount of record wear.

The Empire EDR.9 is that cartridge. Although just recently introduced, it is already being hailed as a breakthrough by audiophiles, not only in the U.S., but in such foreign markets as Japan, Germany, England, France, Switzerland and Sweden.

At \$200, the EDR.9 is expensive, but then again, so are your records.

For more detailed information and test reports, write to:

Empire Scientific Corporation
1055 Stewart Avenue
Garden City, New York 11530

EMPIRE



on Reader-Service Card

Continued from page 11

wide-range door-mount woofer, and the 6-by-9 Model 1 woofer with whizzer, 20-ounce magnet, magnetic cooling fluid, and high-temperature voice coil. Model Ten incorporates a 6½-inch woofer and 1-inch soft dome tweeter on a chassis designed to fit into a 6-by-9 or 4½-inch round cutout. A pair of Model Tens (\$225) plus a pair of RD-5s comprise the Model Ten-Plus, which costs \$275.

ADS, one of the first companies to produce high fidelity components for cars, also becomes one of the first to produce a subwoofer for cars. The 7-inch driver has an independent electronic crossover and is designed for rear-deck mounting. Packed in pairs, the subwoofer is suitable for use with virtually any full-range car speaker. Price was not available at press time but is expected to be less than \$200. At the same time, ADS has stripped down its Model 10 Acoustic Dimension Synthesizer time-delay system to fit in a car. The Model 5 requires two additional channels of amplification and is designed to reproduce the acoustics of large or small halls in your vehicle.

Altec Lansing likewise offers a car subwoofer, the SW-1. At \$220, it is designed to fit a 6-by-9 rear-deck cutout and cover 50–150 Hz. The company also makes a full-range 6-by-9 unit, the 6X9-4A (\$80), the TKI 3-inch tweeter (\$35), and the SKI 5¼-inch midrange (\$50). Cerwin-Vega has two new mobile speakers: The CS-18 is a 6-by-9 system for rear-deck mounting, complete with filters to prevent acoustic interaction between the drivers, and the DC-5 is a fully enclosed two-way system using a 5-inch woofer and dome/horn combination high-frequency driver.

The established manufacturers obviously could not afford to remain idle. From Sparkomatic come the SK-6950 and SK-650 SPX series four-way 100-watt sets (\$100 for a pair of 6-by-9s, \$70 for a pair of 6-inch round door-mount models). There are six models from Panasonic: two Sound Pump 100 units, a 6-by-9 and a 5¼-inch; two 4-inch flush-mount full-range speakers; the EAB-030, a 3½-inch round front speaker, costing \$10; and the EAB-050, a 5-inch round super-thin speaker with a waterproof cone, priced at \$22.50. Grundig has added three speakers with high power-handling capacity: the Model GLA-1230 (\$20), the GLA-1640 (\$25), and the GLA-1845 (\$27.50). And then there's Jensen's eighteen-model Series 1 family of speakers, ranging in price from a 3½-inch front-mount system for \$15 to

three Triaxials, each for \$60. Others in the series are a 6½-inch coaxial model with a profile less than 2 inches deep, a 4½-inch coaxial, and a group of dual-cone speakers.

"Hi-Comp" is the magic word at Audiovox, where it means a \$1,000 "ultimate" auto sound system—well, ultimate for 1980, anyway. It consists of an HCM-0010 electronically tuned AM/FM multiplex receiver with an auto-reverse cassette deck; an HCE-750 semi-parametric graphic equalizer with five slide-bar response controls and biamping capability; a 120-watt four-channel power amplifier, Model HCB-830; and the HCS-362 6-by-9 three-way speaker system. The price includes installation, as well it might.

Spectron, a company that plans to specialize in high-technology car stereo components, has four offerings: a \$329 60-watt power amplifier, and a \$65 line driver designed to drive it from non-component radios and tape decks, a \$209 preamp and three-band equalizer, and an electronic crossover for use in biamplified sound systems, priced at \$179. Magtone's line culminates in the Model 4100, a five-band equalizer/preamp (\$240). Fujitsu Ten's new products include the Model DP-644 AM/FM cassette combination, with 16 watts per channel and an auto-reverse tape deck (\$150). Its Model DP-7874 is a tuner/cassette/preamp priced at \$170 and featuring auto reverse, a four-way fader, and adjustable control shafts. And the SSB-4B37 is a miniature acoustic-suspension speaker system, whose aluminum housing measures 9 by 5 by 6¾ inches and contains a 4-inch woofer and 1-inch high-frequency driver (\$75).

Finally, there are three new cassette decks from Blaupunkt, all with auto reverse: the CR-4000 manually tuned radio/deck with a 7-watt four-channel amplifier and sendust playback head (\$344); the New York Stereo CR with radio and 20-watt quadriphonic amplifier (\$438); and the four-channel CR-5001, 14 watts per channel, with stereo FM/AM digital tuner and clock (\$450).

So, while 1980 may be remembered as the year in which X-body cars taxed the ingenuity of engineers in Japan to come up with ever smaller electronics and speaker systems, luxury cars, vans, and other kinds of vehicles were not neglected. Somewhere out there are an equalizer and subwoofer, a digital time-delay system, and a booster amp that will perform wonders in your Lincoln, VW Rabbit, or Jeep Wagoneer. **HF**

JBL'S NEW L150: ITS BOTTOM PUTS IT ON TOP.

JBL's new L150 takes you deeper into the low frequencies of music without taking you deeper into your budget.

This short-tower, floor-standing loudspeaker system produces bass with depth, power and transparency that comes incredibly close to a live performance.



A completely new 12" driver was created for the L150. It has an innovative magnetic assembly the result of years of research at JBL. It

uses a stiff, heavy cone that's been coated with an exclusive damping formulation for optimum mass and density.

And it has an unusually large 3" voice coil, which aids the L150's efficiency and its ability to respond to transients



(peaks, climaxes and sudden spurts) in music.

There's even more to the L150's bottom—a 12" passive radiator. It looks like a driver but it's not. We use it to replace a large volume of air and contribute to the production of true, deep bass. Bass without boom.

If you're impressed with the L150's lows, you'll be equally impressed with its highs and mids. Its powerful 1" high-frequency

dome radiator provides wide dispersion throughout its range. And a 5" midrange transducer handles high volume levels without distorting. The maximum power recommended is 300 watts per channel.

The L150's other attributes include typical JBL accuracy—the kind that recording professionals rely on. Maximum power/flat frequency response. High efficiency. And extraordinary time/phase accuracy.

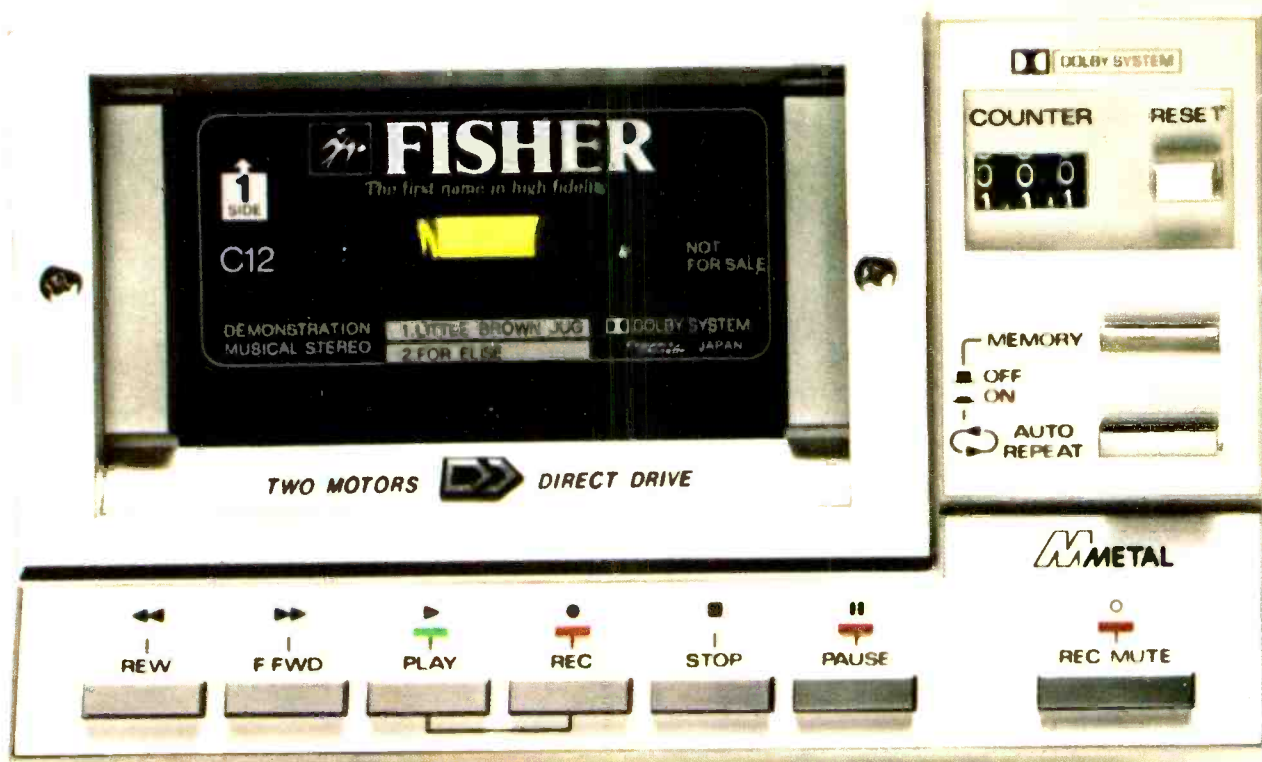
Before you believe that you can't afford a floor system, listen to an L150. While its bottom is tops, its price isn't.

James B. Lansing Sound, Inc., 8500 Balboa Boulevard, Northridge, CA 91329.

FIRST 
**WITH THE
PROS.**



The new



Direct Drive and solenoid controls in a new cassette deck.

Here is the very latest cassette deck technology. The new Fisher DD300 Cassette Deck has direct drive tape transport for lasting, unvarying performance, feather-touch solenoid electronic controls for superior operation and metal tape compatibility for an incredible amount of engineering packed into a Fisher cassette deck.

Direct Drive tape transport.

The rugged capstan on the DD300 is directly driven by a high-torque 18-pole brushless, coreless DC flywheel motor, optimized for the critical record and play transport functions. It glides silently at a steady 360 RPM. And, it eliminates the problems of conventional high speed DC brush motors and drive belts. Wow and flutter are down to an amazingly low 0.04%. A separate motor is provided for fast forward and rewind. No compromise.

Feather touch electronic controls. Goodbye to the old "clunk-clunk" of

manual controls. A feather-light fingertip touch sets the DD300 in motion. An IC logic circuit actuates the solenoid transport function for instant, silent, positive action. LED's light up to continuously display what functions are in operation.

Metal tape compatibility. If you want to try the new metal particle tape you've been hearing so much about, the DD300 is ready. Get set for an astonishing improvement in signal-to-noise, dynamic range and a frequency response of 30Hz-18kHz \pm 3dB. Get set, too, to make recordings that rival studio-produced tapes.

FISHER

Studio-Standard by **FISHER**

DD-300



OUTPUT LEVEL

TIMER STAND-BY

DOLBY NR

TAPE SELECT

INPUT SELECT

MIC



PHONES



REC OFF PLAY



MPX ON OFF



METAL NORMAL FeCr CrO₂ EQUIPMENT



LINE MIC



LEFT MONO



RIGHT

Drive coils provide pulsating magnetic field to propel flywheel.

Sensing coil between driving coils and flywheel magnet continuously monitors speed in DC servo circuit.

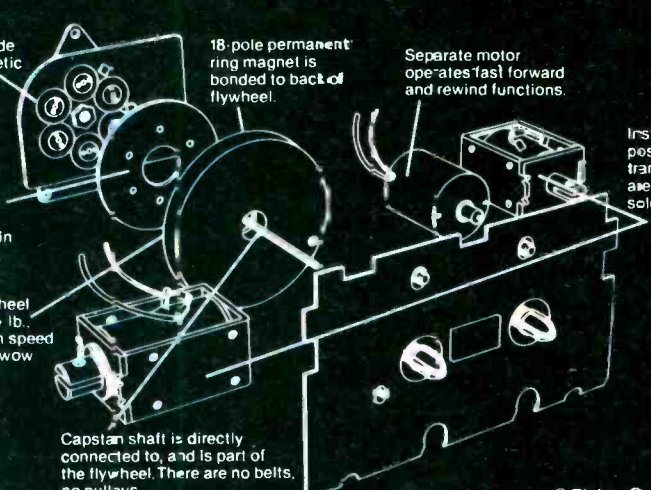
Dynamically-balanced flywheel weighs over 1/2 lb., helps maintain speed accuracy, low wow and flutter.

Capstan shaft is directly connected to, and is part of the flywheel. There are no belts, no pullays.

18-pole permanent ring magnet is bonded to back of flywheel.

Separate motor operates fast forward and rewind functions.

Instant, silent, positive tape transport functions are operated by solenoids.



It's what you'd expect from the new Fisher. We don't have the space to list all the other features of the new Fisher DD300. Features that are indicative of the high technology of the new Fisher. We invented high fidelity over 40 years ago. And we've never stopped innovating. If you're ready for the latest cassette deck technology, see the new DD300 at your Fisher dealer.

Fisher Corporation, 21314 Lassen Street, Chatsworth, CA 91311



FISHER

The first name in high fidelity.®

© Fisher Corporation, 1930

IN THE PURSUIT OF AN ILLUSION

Artists and high fidelity manufacturers share a common objective: we each seek to create an illusion.

For the artist, the illusion is one of dimension: of space, form, time.

For the high fidelity manufacturer, an equally exacting challenge: we seek to create the illusion of *reality*.

And that, by way of introduction, brings us to a new series of Epicure speakers.

The 1.0, 2.0 and 3.0 Series II are the result of our determination to overcome problems once considered too subtle or "tricky" to tackle.

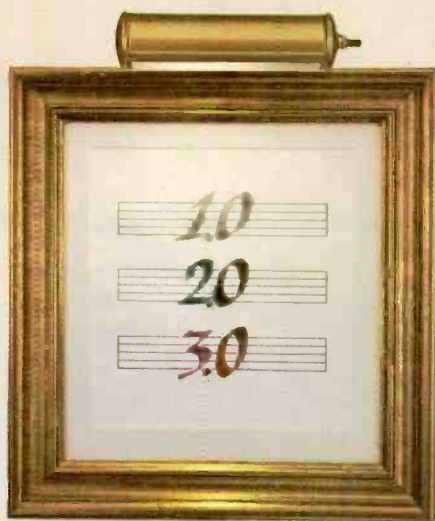
Thus they extend state-of-the-art as it relates to such diverse and, heretofore, intransigent problems as coloration, dynamic range and power handling limitations and stereo imaging.

1.0

Epicure is renowned for outstanding smaller speakers. The 1.0 is our new performance standard.

Like the 2.0 and 3.0 Series II, it has a unique Acoustical Loading Sphere tweeter, devised to reinforce high frequency performance without causing erratic response or dispersion patterns.

The speaker also boasts a new high



efficiency, high power capacity, low distortion bass driver and an advanced crossover. Its mechanically inert cabinet reduces coloration and diffraction.

2.0

Our second step toward a more convincing illusion, the 2.0 employs a unique dual suspension passive radiator that extends deep bass response without distortion.

Cabinet-induced coloration is virtually eliminated by the bonding of multi-

ple layers of a high density damping compound to the interior surfaces of the cabinet. Diffraction is controlled through the use of absorptive foam on the front baffle.

When you listen to the speaker, you'll hear sound produced by drivers. Not by the structures that support them.

3.0 Series II

The product of literally years of research, the 3.0 Series II is our highest achievement in sound reproduction.

The 10" bass driver has a heavy duty 2" voice coil and a special magnetic structure that controls distortion at high power levels. The midrange driver employs high viscosity ferro fluid damping which also increases power capacity. Its ALS tweeter is mounted in a housing that eliminates diffraction and preserves the stereo image.

Finally, its special cabinet and damping treatment provide the drivers with an ideal acoustical environment.

Three new speakers from Epicure, each providing a more convincing illusion of reality. Listen to them, and we think you'll be convinced as well.

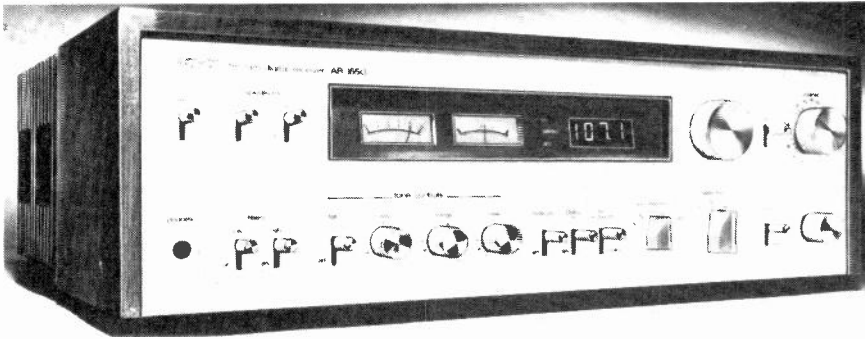
For a technical explanation of our new speakers, write for our brochure.

EPICURE



1.0 stand is optional

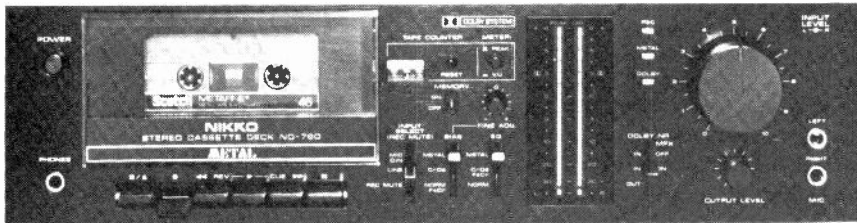
High Fidelity News



Do-it-yourself receiver

The AR-1650 is Heath's latest and most technologically advanced AM/FM receiver kit. The unit features a digital frequency readout, signal-strength and center-tune meters, and a system to correct mistuning automatically. It also contains defeatable bass, midrange, and treble controls. Rated power of the receiver is 125 watts (21 dBW) per channel into 8 ohms, with less than 0.05% total harmonic distortion from 20 Hz to 20 kHz. With an anodized black front panel, the AR-1650 costs \$799.95; with a natural aluminum panel, the price is \$779.95.

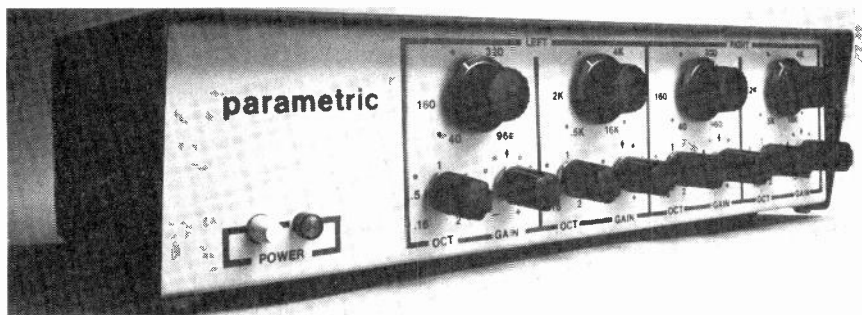
Circle 143 on Reader-Service Card



Nikko's debut deck

Nikko Audio's first entry in the cassette recorder field is the ND-790, a two-head, metal-ready deck. Among its features are dual LED recording meters that can be switched into VU or peak-hold modes, three-position bias and EQ switches with fine bias adjust, and memory rewind. The ND-790, designed to fit in a standard EIA rack mount, costs \$330.

Circle 146 on Reader-Service Card

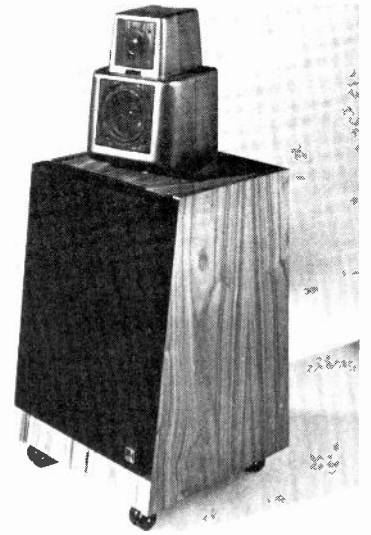


Parametric kit from Phoenix

A low-cost stereo parametric equalizer, Model P-94-S, is available by mail from Phoenix Systems. Two bands of continuously adjustable EQ cover a frequency range of 40 Hz to 16 kHz independently in each channel. A special

Continued on Page 20

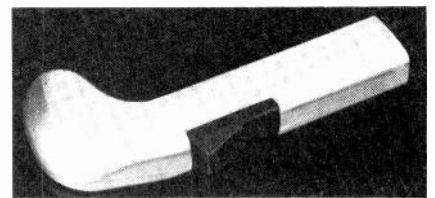
◀ Circle 18 on Reader-Service Card



KEF update

After several modifications, the Model 105 speaker from KEF carries the suffix Series II. The new system contains a self-powered electronic protection circuit that prevents damage to the drivers and crossover network by reducing input to a safe level should peak voltage levels become too high. KEF says an improved bass-loading technique results in efficiency comparable to a bass-reflex system and reduced low-frequency coloration. The 105 Series II costs \$1,100.

Circle 135 on Reader-Service Card



Cleaning/destat combo

Audiotex has introduced the hand-held RC-2000, said to neutralize static charges while removing dust from records. The trigger-operated device directs a stream of positive and negative ions onto the record surface while several rows of nylon bristles, surrounded by a silk velvet pad, sweep dust and dirt from the grooves. No liquids need be used with the RC-2000, which costs \$24.95.

Circle 140 on Reader-Service Card

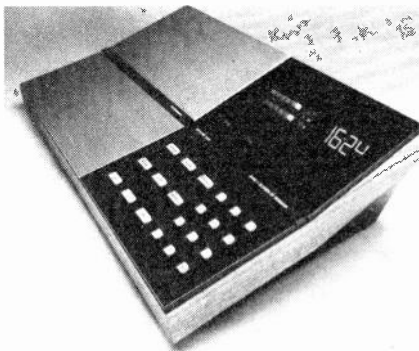
High Fidelity News



A preamp, by Zeus!

Zeus Audio Systems' Model 8444 preamp was designed for use with electric instruments but is said to work equally well with acoustic instrument transducers and as a line-level effects booster. It also serves as an impedance matcher with low-impedance guitars. Powered by a 9-volt battery, the preamp has separate volume and tone controls. Conveniently sized for on-the-road musicians, the 8444 sells for \$29.95.

Circle 138 on Reader-Service Card



Taping in time

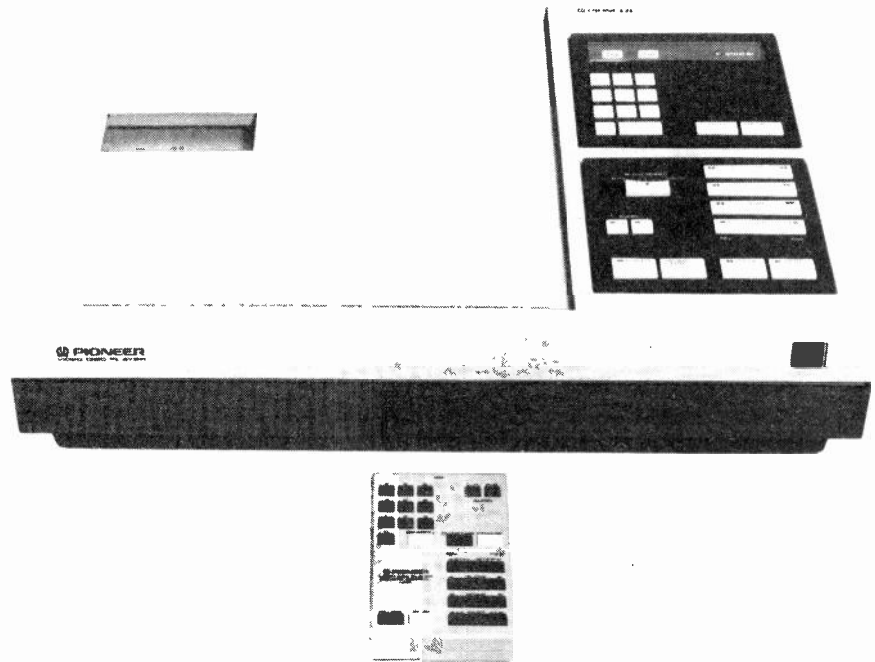
Real-time tape plotting, allowing the recordist to tell how much tape has been used in minutes and seconds, highlights Bang & Olufsen's Beocord 8000 two-head cassette deck. An automatic music-search system can locate desired program material with real-time input entered via a front-panel keyboard. Other features include a built-in timer for unattended recording, automatic head demagnetization, and headphone socket with volume control. The cassette holder and secondary controls are concealed beneath the hinged aluminum panel at the left of the keyboard. The Beocord 8000 costs \$995.

Circle 145 on Reader-Service Card

Continued from Page 19

volume-compensation circuit trims boost and cut when you adjust bandwidth settings. Rated frequency response is 3 Hz to 100 kHz, +0, -1 dB, with all gain controls set flat. In kit form, the P-94-S sells for \$99; an assembled version is available for \$150.

Circle 137 on Reader-Service Card



Pioneering in Video

U.S. Pioneer has announced delivery of the first of its consumer-oriented video disc players, the VP-1000, which matches both the technology and the major capabilities of the Philips/Magnavox players but in a slightly trimmer package. Thus Pioneer, which has been building such players for the industrial market for some time, becomes the first "independent" to join Magnavision in offering hardware for the MCA DiscoVision optical discs. And, like Magnavision, the new brand will be made available on a market-by-market basis: Included in the initial round, to begin this month, are Minneapolis/St. Paul, Dallas/Fort Worth, Madison, Wis., and Syracuse, N.Y. Pioneer says it will add four market areas every sixty to ninety days until national saturation is complete—sometime in 1981, about the same time as Magnavision's.

The features of the VP-1000 include freeze-frame, frame-by-frame advance, and indexing, and all are duplicated on an optional remote control. Pioneer, in keeping with its heritage, lists the audio specs for the player: Frequency response is rated as 40 Hz to 20 kHz, harmonic distortion as less than 0.3% at 1 kHz (for 75% modulation), and A-weighted S/N ratio as better than 55 dB (below 100% modulation). Dual sound (stereo or bilingual) is built into the system. In anticipation of better things to come, the player has a back-panel jack for a PCM digital adapter (though system, price, and date appear to be anyone's guess for the present), since digital audio-only discs may well use the same player to achieve much better specs than the essentially analog-FM audio plus picture technology DiscoVision can provide. (Philips already has proposed such a laser-scanned audio disc, of course, but not using its Magnavision players.) Selling price of the VP-1000 is placed at \$749, plus \$50 for the remote control.

Circle 147 on Reader-Service Card

More on Page 22



Unmasking AudioMagnetics



It's time we took the blindfold off and revealed who's really producing the best tape in the world. High Performance. High Performance II. Tracs.

AudioMagnetics.
You can tell it's a winner
blindfolded.



FREE CASSETTE! Mail Coupon NOW!

Buy one High Performance or High Performance II cassette and receive one FREE. Simply send the printed outer sleeve of a High Performance or High Performance II cassette package along with the cash register receipt. We'll send you an identical cassette FREE. Please check one. C-60 C-90

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

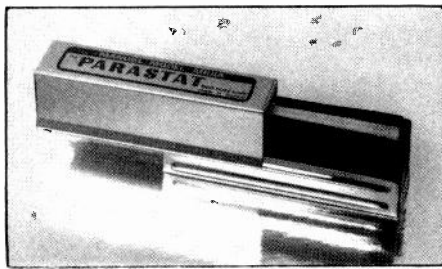
CITY _____

STATE _____

ZIP _____

WHERE PURCHASED (STORE) _____

This coupon must accompany request. No facsimiles accepted.
Limit one per customer. OFFER EXPIRES AUGUST 1, 1980. Mail to
AudioMagnetics Corp., P.O. Box 66, Dept. FC, Irvine, CA 92716



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

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

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

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

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

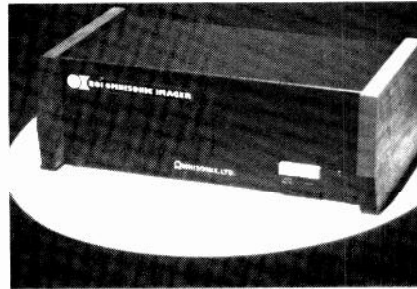
So when you want the best, ask for the original. The Parastat, by Cecil Watts.

Cecil & Watts Ltd

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

Circle 16 on Reader-Service Card

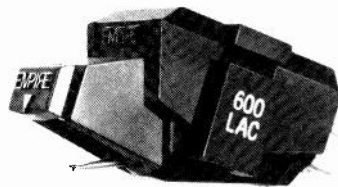
High Fidelity News



Enhance your image

Omnisonix Ltd. has introduced the Model 801 Imager, an add-on signal processor that is claimed to create a "three-dimensional" sound field with a two-speaker setup. Unlike other such processors, the Model 801 does not demand rigid speaker placement for its effect to be heard; in fact, the company claims that a realistic stereo image can be obtained with the speakers placed side by side. The Imager, which can be accommodated in the tape monitor loop of a receiver or preamp, costs \$149.95. preamp, costs \$149.95.

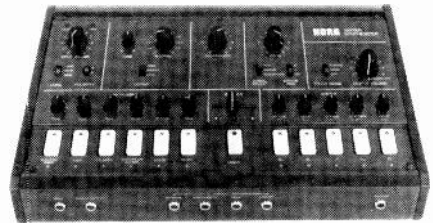
Circle 136 on Reader-Service Card



New Line from Empire

Dubbed the Dynamic Interface Series, Empire's line of phono pickups has been redesigned from the styli up. Each of the six new cartridges features reduced mass, samarium-cobalt magnets for higher output, a stylus lock apparatus, and a simplified headshell mounting system. At the top of the series is the 600LAC, which has an inertially damped tuned stylus assembly and a tapered cantilever of aluminum coated with vaporized boron for better damping of mechanical resonances and improved tracking, according to Empire. The 600LAC is priced at \$175; the rest of the line ranges from \$40 to \$125.

Circle 141 on Reader-Service Card



A one-man-band machine

The performing guitarist can become a virtual one-man band with Korg's X-911 guitar synthesizer, claimed to be the first such device with preprogrammed voices and separate variability for each of the presets. Among the instrument effects that can be achieved singly or in any combination are tuba, trumpet, violin, and flute. Envelope generators and filters process normal and fuzz guitar for polyphonic effects. Portamento, infinite sustain, variable interval, and synthesizer-cancel functions are controlled by a footswitch. The X-911, which also has a three-position octave switch for extended range, is priced at \$550.

Circle 139 on Reader-Service Card



Arm yourself

The direct-drive Model 3001, says ADC, fills the need for a reasonably priced, high-quality turntable capable of accepting a variety of universal-mount tonearms. The two-speed (33 and 45 rpm) unit incorporates a brushless DC motor and Hall-effect speed control circuitry. Pitch is variable over a $\pm 5\%$ range at each speed. The base, made of a high-density synthetic material called Synergite, and rubber isolator feet comprise the compliance system. The 3001 is priced at \$249.95, and an optional dust cover is available for \$39.95.

Circle 144 on Reader-Service Card

More on Page 24

Circle 55 on Reader-Service Card ▶


The continuing story of TDK sound achievement.

Part One.



Music has gone through many transitions. Its rhythms, tones and forms have changed dramatically. As have the means of reproducing it. From the first wax cylinder to today's music machine: the TDK cassette.

TDK pioneering in ferrite technology began over forty years ago. This led TDK engineers to develop microscopic particles which, through their long shape and uniform size,



could translate magnetic energy into flawless sound. By 1968 TDK had created TDK SD, the world's first high fidelity cassette. In 1975, TDK created a revolution. Super Avilyn. Ultra-refined gamma-ferric oxide particles were bombarded with cobalt in a proprietary ion-adsorption process. The resulting TDK SA cassette had higher signal to noise. Higher coercivity. Low noise. A maximum output level superior to anything heard before. Overnight, TDK SA became the high bias reference.

TDK has a philosophy of sound. A belief that total performance is the outcome of a perfect interplay between the parts. It all begins with *Part One*, the TDK tape. Magnetic powder is first converted into TDK magnetic material in the form of a coating paint or binder. On a giant rotary press and in a dust-free atmosphere, jumbo rolls of tensilized polyester are coated evenly with TDK binder. The tape rolls are edited and leader is inserted at precise intervals. Surgically sharp knives then cut the tape into predetermined widths. The edges perfectly straight. All along the way, TDK tape undergoes thousands of checks. It's polished to micron smoothness to give better head contact, increase sensitivity and maintain stable output. TDK binder, recently improved, packs more particles on the tape surface. And the whole process is done automatically. Controlled by a central computer brain. From

the very first, TDK tape runs true. And so does the sound.

The TDK story will unfold in future chapters. You'll learn about other key parts and their sound synergy in a TDK cassette. And you'll draw only one conclusion. Music is the sum of its parts.



 **TDK**
The machine for your machine

High Fidelity News

Word power

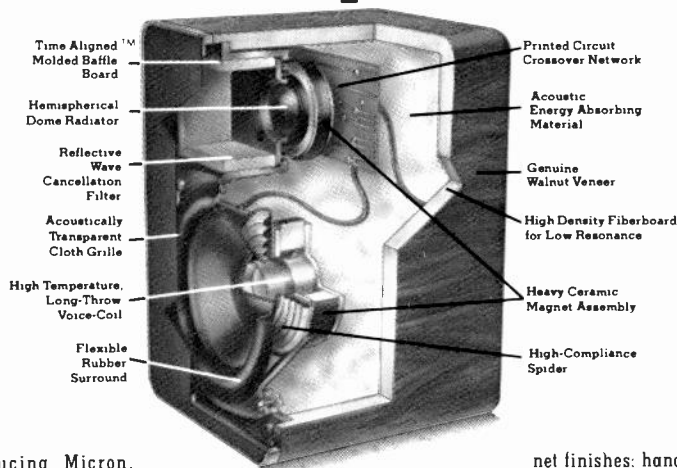
In case you hadn't noticed, a whole area of musical audio electronics has grown up very rapidly over the last decade or two. Until recently it had little recognition and no unity, and—both as a result and as a cause—it is easiest to define in terms of what it isn't. It isn't home entertainment or studio gear or

even musical instruments as such, though it certainly interacts with each of these. Well, late in the '70s it acquired its own trade organization, one whose name aptly defines what the field is: Creative Audio and Music Electronics Organization, or Cameo for short. The thirty-odd companies it represents manufacture or distribute the gear used on-stage (and often in the studio) by to-

day's musical technocrats—everything from fuzz boxes to power amps, from wah-wah pedals to subwoofers, from mikes to mixers.

The field itself is not the only thing that Cameo has defined. Its recent publication "The Cameo Dictionary of Creative Audio Terms" (\$5.95 postpaid from Cameo, 10 Delmar Ave., Framingham, Mass. 01701) does a nice job of standardizing a verbal interface between the musical and technical interests involved. A certain amount of studio jargon and audiophile in-talk is included, but the primary aim is to help the electronics-dependent musician cope with the pertinent terms. If you think an effects bus is a conveyance, you'd better get a copy.

The First Perfected Small Speaker.



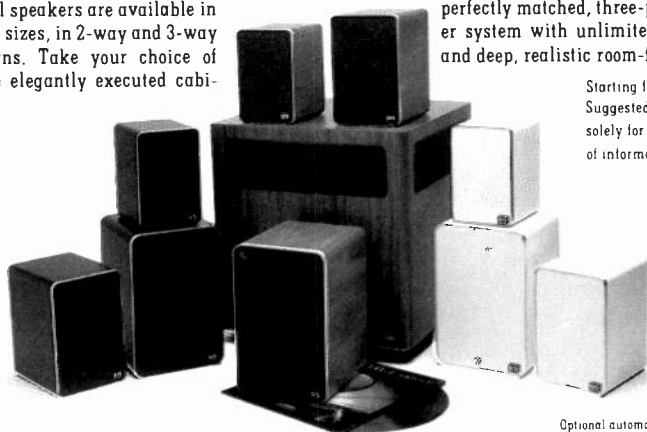
Introducing Micron. The first perfected small speakers that look as good as they sound. They're the only small speakers with exclusive Time-Align™*, eliminating fuzziness, distortion and listening fatigue. Micron small speakers are available in three sizes, in 2-way and 3-way designs. Take your choice of three elegantly executed cabi-

micron™

net finishes: hand-rubbed genuine walnut veneer, textured jet black or glazed white—with tasteful, matching cloth grilles.

For the ultimate in sound reproduction, The Bass-Extender™ may be added to create a perfectly matched, three-piece speaker system with unlimited flexibility and deep, realistic room-filling bass.

Starting from \$125 each
Suggested retail value
solely for purpose
of information

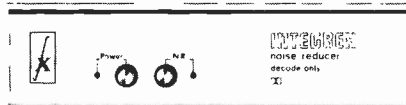


Optional automotive mounting bracket available for all models

General Sound
"Quality without Compromise"

MICRON and The Bass Extender are trademarks of General Sound. 2434 S 24th St. Phoenix, AZ 85034
Exclusive Canadian Distributor: H. Roy Gray Ltd. Toronto, Canada

*TM E.M. Long & Associates



More about Integrex

The rarity of add-on Dolby decoders has, for several years, been bemoaned by readers who want to hear encoded FM broadcasts or open-reel tapes. So we were delighted to discover and review (in September 1979) the model offered by Integrex in England and imported by KM Associates of Newton, Massachusetts—and dismayed to discover, recently, that KM no longer handles Integrex and evidently had failed to fill some readers' orders. We have spoken to Avi Kramer, who founded KM. Those who have been unable to make contact with his company at the Newton address can reach him at his current home address: 345 East 93rd St., Apt. 8E, New York, N.Y. 10028.

In the meantime, a new U.S. distributor has taken over the Integrex Dolby products: Integrex, Inc., P.O. Box 747, Havertown, Pa. 19083. If that post office box number suggests further hassles, don't be alarmed. The founder of this company is Bob Tucker, long a respected executive with Dynaco, in which role many readers may have encountered him at high fidelity shows over the years. **HF**



Now there are two approaches to low THD.
Ours gives you better sound.

Harman Kardon introduces low negative feedback design for inaudible TIM distortion.

For the last few years, audio manufacturers have been rushing to bring you newer, lower THD levels in their amplifier sections. And every year, they've accomplished this the simplest way they could. By adding negative feedback, a form of electronic compensation.

Unfortunately, this "cure" for THD — typically 60-80dB of negative feedback — creates another form of distortion. Transient Intermodulation Distortion, or TIM, which does far more to degrade the music than THD.

At Harman Kardon, we lowered THD the right way. With a unique circuit design (U.S. Patent #4,176,323) that lets us use just a fraction of the negative feedback typically used.

The result is our new hk700 series High Technology Separates. Built around our low negative feedback amp/preamp combination that delivers a crystal clear, totally transparent 65 watts per channel. You can also choose from a full-featured digital tuner, a phase locked analog tuner, and the most advanced cassette deck on the market.

The world's first cassette deck with Dolby* HX.

Our new metal cassette deck goes beyond metal. It features the all new Dolby HX circuitry for an extra 10dB high frequency headroom and an astonishing 68dB signal-to-noise ratio. With Dolby HX, even an inexpensive tape can perform like a premium metal tape. And a premium metal tape sounds unbelievable.

Our new separates look as good as they sound. Each measures a mere 15" wide x 3" high. As you can see, they stack beautifully.

We suggest you audition them. But only if you're serious. Once you hear the difference low negative feedback can make, you'll never settle for anything less.

(For the location of the Harman Kardon dealer nearest you, call toll-free 1-800-528-6050 ext. 870.)

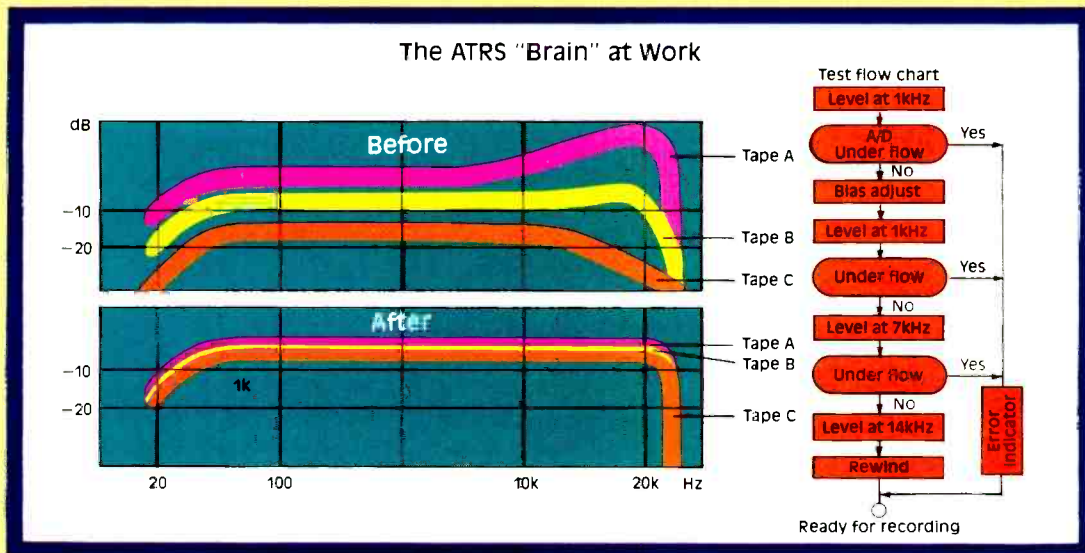
*Dolby and the double-D symbol are trademarks of Dolby Laboratories Inc.

harman/kardon

55 Ames Court, Plainville, NY 11803
In Canada, E.S. Gould Marketing, Montreal.

The brain.

Hitachi puts it in charge of sensitivity, bias and EQ.



ATRS (Automatic Tape Response System)

The ATRS brain is a sophisticated microcomputer that's built into the Hitachi D-5500M Cassette Deck. Because there are hundreds of different tapes on the market, ATRS was designed to match bias and EQ settings to the precise characteristics of each one you use.

Press the test button while in record and in 20 seconds ATRS carries out six calibration functions. It also has three individual memories for the test results of the three tapes you use most frequently.

The D-5500M adds to that little miracle of technology a few more Hitachi firsts. Like full IC logic detachable control block that doubles as a wireless infrared remote unit. A direct-drive Unitorque™ motor (0.028% WRMS wow and flutter). And a close-gap R&P three-head system.

The Hitachi D-5500M Cassette Deck with ATRS. It never stops thinking about your music.



HITACHI

The New Leader in Audio Technology

Hitachi Sales Corp. of America
401 West Artesia Boulevard
Compton, California 90220

DIRECTIONS

To solve these puzzles—and they aren't as tough as they first seem—supply as many of the Output words as you can in the numbered dashes following the Input. Unless otherwise specified in the Input, the Output consists of one English word. "Comp." means compound, or hyphenated, word.

Transfer each letter to the square in the diagram that bears the corresponding number. After only a few correct guesses you should begin to see words and phrases emerging in the diagram, which when filled in will contain a quotation related to music, recordings, or audio.

The words in the quotation are separated by darkened squares and do not necessarily end at the end of a row.

Try to guess at these words and transfer each newly decoded letter back to its appropriate dash in the Output. This will supply you with further clues.

A final clue: The source of the quotation—the author and his work—will be spelled out by the first letters in Output, reading down.

The answer to HiFi-Crostic No. 54 will appear in next month's issue of HIGH FIDELITY.

Solution to last month's HiFi-Crostic appears on page 6.

H 1	W 2	B 3		K 4	E 5	T 6	N 7	S 8	A 9	W 10	F 11		T 12	Q 13	O 14
G 15	C 16		A 17	F 18	R 19		Q 20	I 21	B 22	F 23	T 24	E 25	R 26		K 27
W 28	A 29	W 30	X 31	B 32	Y 33	R 34		S 35	J 36		K 37	C 38	I 39		A 40
Q 41	R 42	N 43	Q 44	F 45	W 46	V 47		B 48	D 49	Y 50	M 51	I 52		C 53	A 54
J 55	O 56	H 57		V 58	W 59	Q 60		X 61	I 62		Y 63	R 64	Q 65	A 66	T 67
W 68	G 69	V 70		A 71	G 72		B 73	Q 74	J 75	P 76	K 77	R 78		N 79	C 80
	U 81	F 82		A 83	B 84	T 85	I 86		O 87	G 88		R 89	K 90	G 91	
C 92		T 93	R 94	J 95	L 96	A 97	I 98		F 99	U 100	B 101	N 102		D 103	E 104
	H 105	G 106	P 107		Q 108	C 109	S 110		F 111	K 112	G 113		Y 114	K 115	X 116
	R 117	A 118	C 119	S 120	I 121	H 122	B 123	D 124	E 125	N 126	M 127	L 128	W 129		F 130
R 131	Q 132	Q 133	E 134	W 135	G 136	L 137		G 138	V 139	G 140		R 141	B 142	N 143	A 144
C 145		G 146	Q 147	D 148		I 149	F 150	Q 151	H 152	A 153		J 154	T 155		M 156
R 157	B 158	W 159	E 160		Q 161	M 162	V 163	X 164	S 165	U 166	A 167		K 168	P 169	F 170
B 171		R 172	M 173	C 174	L 175	I 176	J 177	G 178	D 179	N 180		V 181	K 182	S 183	
V 184	R 185		A 186	H 187	C 188		N 189	I 190	F 191	W 192	Q 193	E 194	H 195		A 196
M 197	O 198	B 199	J 200	L 201		R 202	F 203	C 204		Y 205	L 206		S 207	Q 208	B 209
A 210	V 211	1212	R 213	F 214	C 215										

by William Peterson

INPUT

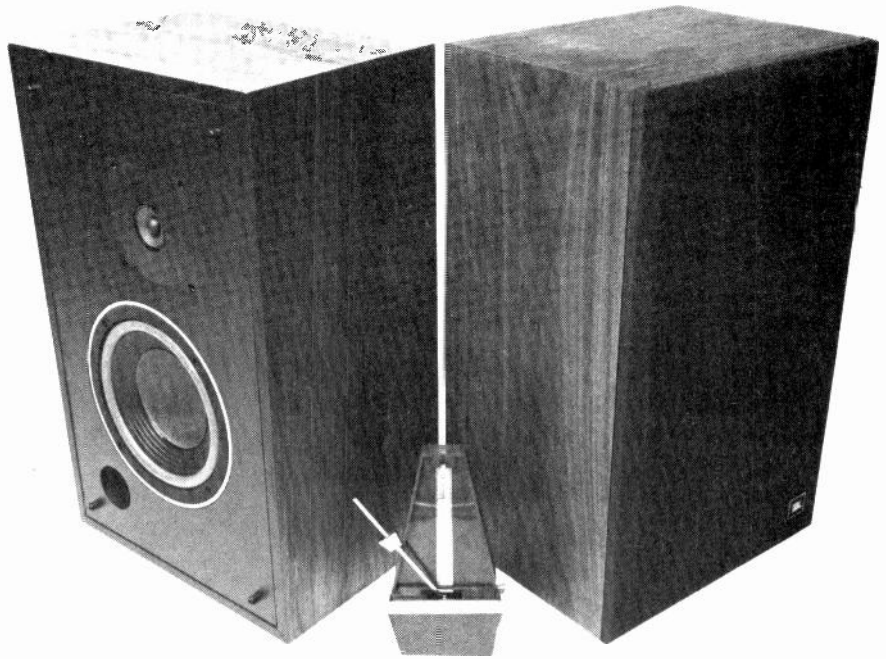
- A. American organist/composer (1827–1913): "Emancipation" (full name)
- B. Hans Sachs, et al. (Ger.)
- C. See Word E. (2 Ger. wds.)
- D. Copland ballet
- E. With Word C., Richard Strauss opera (2 Ger. wds.)
- F. Johann Strauss operetta (2 Ger. wds.)
- G. Vivaldi composition (2 wds.)
- H. English baritone (full name)
- I. "La _____," Offenbach operetta (2 Fr. wds.)
- J. Published version of a musical or literary work
- K. Liszt composition for piano and orchestra (Ger.)
- L. Exact thing called for (slang)
- M. Indicating an option
- N. Italian composer (1879–1936): "Rossiniana"
- O. Gypsy soprano in "Carmen"
- P. "Tu l'as dit, _____, tu m'aimes"—Valentine and Raoul duet
- Q. Norwegian song composer (1859–1912): "De 1,000 hjems sange" (full name)
- R. Kálmán operetta (3 wds.)
- S. Jazz pianist Gambrell; drummer Moore
- T. Brecht poem set to music by Orff (Ger.)
- U. "Le _____ David," Honegger dramatic psalm
- V. Aria in Act III of Word B. (2 Ger. wds.)
- W. Copland's spring
- X. " _____ over a Lost Penny"—Beethoven
- Y. Romanian folksong

OUTPUT

- 210 83 97 167 17 186 66 71 54 196 40 118 9 144 29 153
- 48 158 84 209 199 32 22 171 142 73 123 3 101
- 119 16 109 215 145 174 38 92 204 53 188 80
- 124 49 148 179 103
- 25 5 134 104 160 125 194
- 82 45 23 111 191 150 11 170 214 99 18 203 130
- 91 69 146 72 15 88 178 136 140 113 138 106
- 187 122 57 152 1 105 195
- 149 121 52 176 86 212 39 21 98 62 190
- 55 75 177 95 200 154 36
- 77 112 168 90 115 37 27 182 4
- 96 128 201 175 137 206
- 173 162 156 127 51 197
- 143 102 180 126 79 7 189 43
- 161 56 147 44 132 14 198 87 108
- 169 107 76
- 13 151 20 193 65 41 133 208 74 60
- 34 157 131 141 26 64 185 78 202 42 94 172 117 213 89 19
- 8 120 207 183 110 35 165
- 67 6 93 12 24 155 85
- 166 100 81
- 211 181 139 163 58 184 70 47
- 68 192 28 59 10 30 129 2 159 46 135
- 31 61 164 116
- 50 114 205 33 63

New Equipment Reports

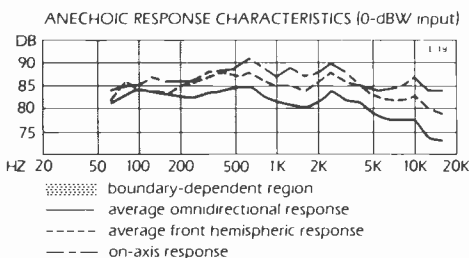
Preparation supervised by Robert Long, Peter Dobbin, and Edward J. Foster. Laboratory data (unless otherwise noted) supplied by CBS Technology Center or Diversified Science Laboratories.



JBL Model L-19 loudspeaker system, in wood enclosure with American black walnut veneer finish. Dimensions: 13 by 21 inches (front), 10 inches deep. Price: \$180. Warranty: "limited," five years parts and labor. Manufacturer: James B. Lansing Sound, Inc., 8500 Balboa Blvd., Northridge, Calif. 91329.

A Dandy Little JBL

JBL Model L-19 loudspeaker



AVERAGE OMNIDIRECTIONAL OUTPUT
(250 Hz to 6 kHz)
82½ dB SPL for 0 dBW (1 watt) input

CONTINUOUS ON-AXIS OUTPUT (at 300 Hz)
108 dB SPL for 20 dBW (100 watts) input

PULSED OUTPUT (at 300 Hz)
121 dB SPL for 33 dBW (2,000 watts) peak

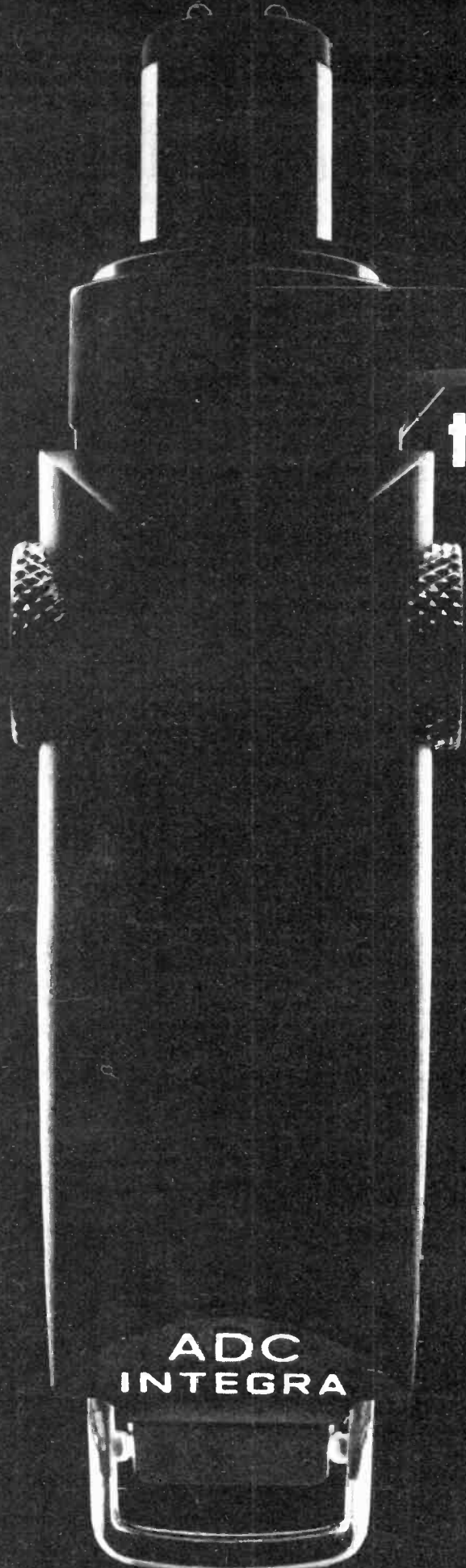
"NOMINAL" IMPEDANCE 5.5 ohms

APPROX. TWEETER CONTROL RANGE (re "flat")
+4 dB above 3.5 kHz, see text

Few companies have lasted as long as JBL or been as consistent in product design. There may be a relationship between those two facts. Radical change, in our experience, is more likely to result from past or threatened failures than from technological miracle-working, and JBL's evolutionary advance has seldom been radical. The L-19, for example, is a very good ported two-way system; without breaking any new ground, it manages uncommonly attractive sound at moderate price. We wish all "breakthroughs" had equally sterling virtues.

The ported bass means relatively high efficiency for the given box size—a traditional attribute of the company's speakers—though it certainly is not exceptionally high at 82½ dB of output for the 0-dBW input of the CBS Technology Center sensitivity test. The L-19 went unfazed through the continuous-tone test and did not begin distorting badly until the pulsed 300-Hz signal was hitting 2-kilowatt peaks and the sonic output had exceeded a deafening 120 dB. Power transfer characteristic is not quite linear in this region; about 2 dB of compression shows up in the CBS test. JBL rates the speaker efficient enough to deliver moderate listening levels from 10 watts (10 dBW) of input, though it requires another 10 dB (or 100 watts total) if transients are to be handled cleanly in reproducing demanding program material at high listening levels; it goes on to suggest that when the speaker is driven harder your ears will complain before the speaker does. The data and our listening tests second these assessments.

CBS measured response with the continuously variable control in its median position, marked 5 on a scale from 0 to 10. Arithmetic notwithstanding, this is hardly the median of audible adjustment, since the 0 position essentially disables the tweeter; response is down by 30 dB (with respect to the 5 setting) by the time frequency reaches 5 kHz. The upper half of the adjustment range is far more gradual and useful. We liked the results best with the control set somewhere between 5 and 7; wide open, it gives the sound too much "edge" for our tastes, while anything below 5 quickly makes it muffled and tubby. But once we settled this matter, we found the sound not only very well balanced, but also unusually well integrated,



The advantages
of owning
an ADC Integra

VS

the disadvantages
of owning
anything less

Keep count. There are quite a few. First, the Integra is a totally integrated headshell/cartridge. It upgrades your tonearm by lowering its effective mass by as much as 50%! That's a big advantage. No matter what turntable you own. So is Integra's unique vertical tracking angle adjustment. Without it, you're compromising at best. With it, the Integra gives you the optimum match for the vertical tracking angle record companies use to cut their masters. There's also Integra's overhang dimension adjustment. It's simple. To set the optimum offset angle all you do is release the adjustment lock. Adjust. Then re-lock. No more nuts. No more bolts. No more hassles. But there are more Integra advantages. Like Integra's precision molded carbon fibre (verses our competitors molded plastic) body. It not only reduces mass dramatically, it virtually eliminates low frequency signal loss and flexing. But the biggest advantage of all has to be the fact that all those other advantages are available in three different ADC Integra models. One for every kind of budget. All for one kind of sound... devastating. If you'd like to hear more, call Audio Dynamics Corp. toll-free (800) 243-9544 or your ADC dealer.

ADC
INTEGRA

ADC INTEGRA

Report Policy: Equipment reports are based on laboratory measurements and controlled listening tests. Unless otherwise noted, test data and measurements are obtained by CBS Technology Center, a division of Columbia Broadcasting System, Inc., and Diversified Science Laboratories. The choice of equipment to be tested rests with the editors of HIGH FIDELITY. Samples normally are supplied on loan from the manufacturer. 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; HIGH FIDELITY, CBS Technology Center, and Diversified Science Laboratories assume no responsibility for product performance or quality.

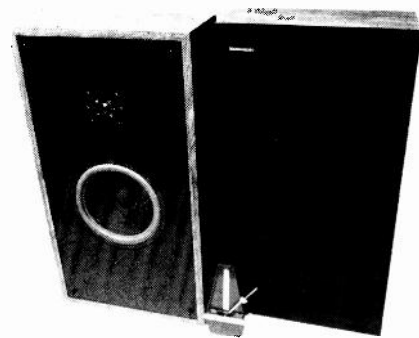
exhibiting relatively little sense of crossover "break." Though the bass is not supertight (we don't remember a JBL in which it is), we judged it very good, with a pleasing roundness.

Harmonic distortion proves very well controlled in the lab's tests. With the 0-dBW (1 watt) input, it stays below—generally well below—½% from under 100 Hz up, with the more intrusive third harmonic lower than the second in the deep bass. At the higher level (100 dB SPL at 300 Hz), the second harmonic rarely exceeds 1% (and then only marginally) above 100 Hz, while the third harmonic never does. The lab's oscilloscope photos show tone bursts to be very well reproduced. Impedance averages about 8 ohms (JBL's rating) across the band, falling below 6 ohms both in the midbass (around the CBS "nominal" rating point) and in the treble (around 5 kHz) and rising to just over 16 ohms near 1.5 kHz and just over 32 at the upper bass resonance (near 60 Hz). The curve thus is neither particularly flat nor particularly wayward; its general lie is low enough to make the most of typical transistor amps but too low to permit safe paralleling of speakers with many such amps.

Overall, we find this a very attractive speaker. Like the L-110 (test report, July 1979), we find it steeped in JBL tradition, yet distinctly updated. The tradition is embodied both in the ported design and in the basic likability of the sound; the modernity in the greater accuracy than was once associated with the company's plush but highly subjective virtues. The midrange does not have exaggerated "presence," nor is the bass allowed to get boomy, though detractors once considered these characteristics of "the JBL sound." Perhaps we can sum it up by saying that this is a California speaker even a Bostonian can love—particularly if he's on a budget.

Circle 134 on Reader-Service Card

The Bostonians Are Coming!



Boston Acoustics A-100 loudspeaker

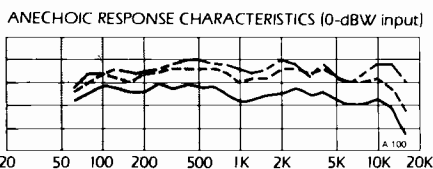
Boston Acoustics Model A-100 loudspeaker, in wood case with wood-grain vinyl finish. Dimensions: 16½ by 30½ inches (front), 8 inches deep. Price: \$170; optional 1½-inch base, \$15 per pair. Warranty: "limited," five years parts and labor. Manufacturer: Boston Acoustics, 130 Condor St., E. Boston, Mass. 02128.

The A-100, least expensive of Boston Acoustics' premier line, addresses several of the dilemmas of modern loudspeaker design with very encouraging results. Its total volume approximates that of the classic 2-cubic-foot bookshelf speaker, and the two-way acoustic-suspension design likewise suggests familiar models, but the A-100 abandons all pretense of fitting on a shelf. It is made specifically for the floor placement that, of necessity, many so-called "bookshelf" speakers assume in the listening room. The low optional stands are not the acoustic necessity that they might otherwise be—either to decouple the woofer from the floor or to angle the tweeter up toward the listener.

The speaker's quasiplanar form results, in part, from designer Andy Petite's desire to minimize the influence of the floor and other room boundaries on bass response. The woofer itself is relatively high—about a foot off the floor. The tall cabinet also permits placement of the tweeter at ear level for normal on-axis listening; the expanse of baffle around the tweeter keeps cabinet edges more than a half-wavelength away from the radiating source to minimize diffraction. In theory, such a use-optimized design should need no balance controls, and the A-100 has none. It does have a tweeter fuse in a back-panel recess along with screw-post lead connections.

Examining the data from CBS Technology Center, we were immediately struck by the smooth response curves—including an unusually gradual bass rolloff even beyond the bottom of our curves—and the very well-controlled impedance curve. The relatively low and consistent impedance plus the reasonably high efficiency (for an acoustic-suspension system) make the A-100 a relatively easy load for an amplifier to drive to solid output levels. In the continuous-tone test, it easily accepted the 20-dBW (100-watt) input; tone bursts drove it beyond a hefty 117 dB of output.

At moderate listening levels, second and third harmonic distortion average less than 1% throughout the midrange and deep into the bass. At loud levels (100 dB SPL at 300 Hz), midband distortion figures rise somewhat but never exceed about 5% for the second or 2% for third harmonics. In the region handled by the ferrofluid-cooled tweeter (say, above 1.5 kHz), distortion is exceptionally low, particularly the harsh-sounding third harmonic, which averages only about 1/10 of



■■■■■ boundary-dependent region
 ——— average omnidirectional response
 - - - average front hemispheric response
 . . . on-axis response

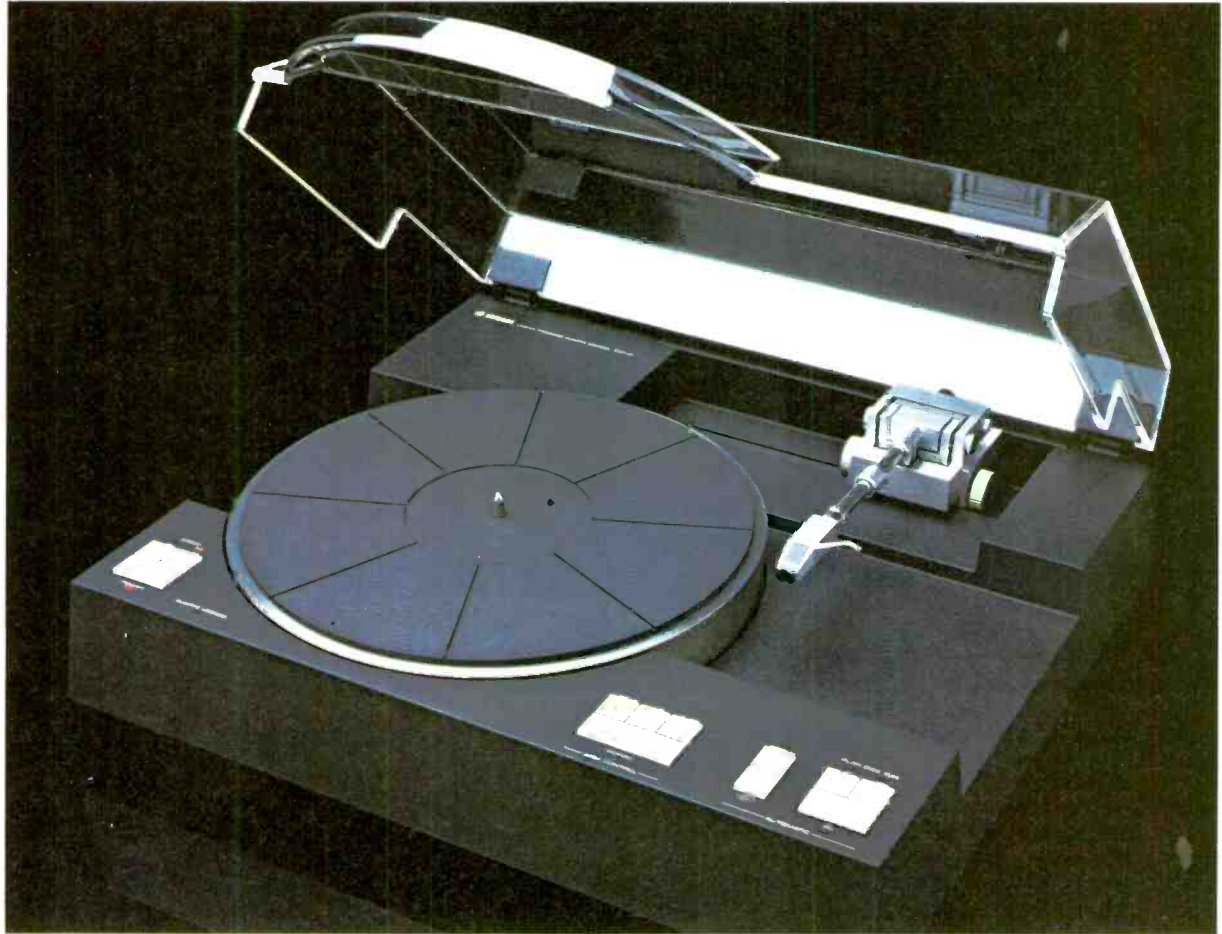
AVERAGE OMNIDIRECTIONAL OUTPUT
(250 Hz to 6 kHz)
83 dB SPL for 0 dBW (1 watt) input

CONTINUOUS ON-AXIS OUTPUT (at 300 Hz)
109 dB SPL for 20 dBW (100 watts) input

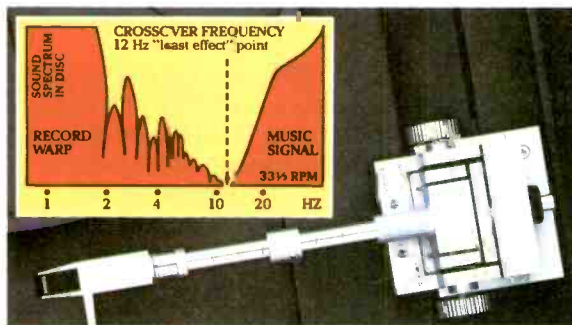
PULSED OUTPUT (at 300 Hz)
117½ dB SPL for 28½ dBW (710 watts) peak

"NOMINAL" IMPEDANCE 5.5 ohms

Yamaha's PX-2 linear tracking turntable. A class of one.



Yamaha's new PX-2, the flagship of a remarkable new series of turntables from Yamaha, is destined to become the new standard of the audio industry. It is a masterpiece in the art of music reproduction. Totally in a class by itself.



One of the major performance advancements on the PX-2 is Yamaha's unique optimum mass straight tonearm assembly. This design concept is Yamaha's direct challenge to the industry trend of low-mass tonearms. Among the most significant benefits of optimum mass is that it specifically addresses two of the most critical elements of music signal tonal quality — tonearm resonant frequency characteristics and high trackability with a wide range of cartridges. Tonearm mass is such a critical element in sound reproduction (especially in the low and high frequency ranges) that Yamaha has designed this optimum mass tonearm to insure its resonance frequency is at the "least effect" point. (See graph.) As a further benefit, the vast majority of available cartridges can be effectively

matched with the Yamaha tonearm. Even MC types.

But the optimum mass tonearm is only one factor that puts the PX-2 in a class by itself. There's much more. Like an extraordinary 80dB S/N ratio, with incredibly accurate tangential tracking — constantly monitored by an opto-electronic sensor. The PX-2 is also a study in durability with its solid, anti-resonant monolithic diecast aluminum base. And the combined effect of the hefty platter and the heavy-duty DC motor depresses wow and flutter to below 0.01%.

Yet with all this performance, the PX-2 is deceptively easy to operate. All the microprocessor-activated controls are easily accessible — without lifting the dustcover.

The balance of the turntables in our new line (the P-750, P-550, P-450 and P-350) all incorporate this same optimum mass tonearm philosophy. Each will set new standards for performance per dollar invested.



Visit your local Yamaha Audio Specialty Dealer for a personal test of our remarkable

PX-2 and the other superb turntables in our new series. You'll hear music that's truly in a class by itself.

For more information write us at Yamaha, Audio Division, P.O. Box 6600, Buena Park, CA 90622.

*Yamaha cartridges shown (MC-1X and MC-7) on both models are optional.

The new Sansui G-4700.



A double-digital receiver with all the right numbers.

Digital readouts and digital circuitry. Great specs. And the best price/performance ratio in the business. All the right numbers. That's the new Sansui G-4700. Just look what we offer:

Double-Digital Design: The front panel of the G-4700 has a bright electronic digital readout that shows the frequency of the station you've selected; and behind the front panel is one of the most advanced tuning systems in the world.



Sansui's patented Digitally Quartz-Locked Circuit uses a precise quartz crystal time base to keep your station locked in, even through many hours of listening or if you turn the receiver off and back on again.

Conventional quartz-controlled receivers use analog phase comparison circuits that can become inaccurate because of harmonic interference. Our system uses a new LSIC (Large Scale Integrated Circuit) digital processor that actually counts the vibrations of the quartz crystal to compare to the tuned frequency. The frequency is perfectly locked in the instant you find the station you want.

With this unique Digitally Quartz-Locked system, the G-4700 delivers high sensitivity (15dBf, mono); a better signal-to-noise ratio (75dB, mono);

and a better spurious rejection ratio (70dB).

DC power amplifier: Power is ample for almost any speaker made, with 50 watts per channel, min. RMS, both channels driven into 8 ohms from 20 to 20,000Hz with no more than 0.05% THD.

And the wide bandwidth DC power amp circuit responds quickly to transient music signals for the most accurate and pleasing music reproduction. What you hear is clean and sharp, just the way it was recorded.

Electronic LED power meters: Don't worry if your present speakers can't handle 50 watts. The array of fast-acting LED's (Light Emitting Diodes) on the Sansui G-4700 lets you monitor and control the output level so you don't damage your speakers.

Electronic tuning meters: Two fluorescent readouts help to zero-in on each station with accuracy and ease. Both the signal strength and center-tune indicators operate digitally for precise station selection, and the nearby LED verifies that the quartz circuit has locked in your station.

Superb human engineering: A full complement of genuinely useful knobs, switches and jacks gives you complete control over what you hear and how you hear it.

Ask your authorized Sansui dealer to demonstrate the G-4700. Listen to the music. You'll love what you hear. Look at the numbers. You'll love what you see.

SANSUI ELECTRONICS CORP.

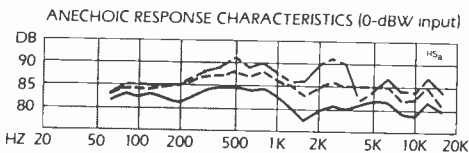
Lyndhurst, New Jersey 07071 • Gardena, Ca. 90247
SANSUI ELECTRIC CO., LTD., Tokyo, Japan
SANSUI AUDIO EUROPE S.A., Antwerp, Belgium
In Canada: Electronic Distributors

Sansui

A Bookshelf Beauty from Infinity



Infinity RS, loudspeakers



..... boundary-dependent region
 — average omnidirectional response
 - - - average front-hemispheric response
 - · - on-axis response

AVERAGE OMNIDIRECTIONAL OUTPUT
 (250 Hz to 6 kHz)
 82¼ dB SPL for 9 dBW (1 watt) input

CONTINUOUS ON-AXIS OUTPUT (at 300 Hz)
 108 dB SPL for 20 dBW (100 watts) input

PULSED OUTPUT (at 300 Hz)
 123½ dB SPL for 35½ dBW (3,500 watts) peak

"NOMINAL" IMPEDANCE 3.8 ohms

APPROX. TWEETER CONTROL RANGE (re "flat")
 +0, -2 dB above 4 kHz

APPROX. MIDRANGE CONTROL RANGE (re "flat")
 +0, -3 dB, 2.5 to 5 kHz

1% at both levels. Oscilloscope photos show a virtual mirror image in the 300-Hz pulse, while that at 3 kHz is almost as good.

We are very impressed with the sonics of the A-100, especially in light of its affordable price. A pair of them provide a seamless stereo image that matches the smooth-sounding response, and they do not require listeners to stay in one "sweet spot." The overriding impression is of warmth and accuracy, rather than drama and surrealism. Bass reproduction is well defined and solid. The midrange—where many two-way speakers show marked anomalies as the woofer is forced to operate beyond its capacity—sounds open and natural. Voices, one of the acid tests of accurate midrange, emerge uncolored and believable. The treble is sweet and transparent. All in all, it's a very impressive beginning, and we expect to be hearing a lot more from Boston Acoustics.

Infinity Model RS, loudspeaker system, in wood cabinet with oak-veneer finish. Dimensions: 14 by 25 inches (front), 11 inches deep; tweeter can be rotated for either vertical or horizontal placement. Price: \$199. Warranty: "limited," five years parts and labor. Manufacturer: Infinity Systems, Inc., 7930 Deering Ave., Canoga Park, Calif. 91304.

Infinity Systems has earned an enviable reputation for some fairly exotic and very expensive loudspeakers, but it also has consistently shown a willingness to incorporate the results of its research in the design of less costly models. The RS, a midpriced bookshelf system, mirrors this approach in the mating of Infinity's proprietary electromagnetic induction tweeter (Emit) with a polypropylene woofer. Few American companies make use of this cone material developed by the BBC; polypropylene meets all the well-known criteria for constructing a woofer with minimum coloration: rigidity, light weight, and resistance to heat and humidity. Infinity also uses it for the 10-inch driver's unique dust cap, which is tapered to resemble a missile nose cone.

In keeping with the nominal "bookshelf" format, which implies horizontal placement, the designers provided for 90-degree rotation of the Emit tweeter to maintain accurate high-frequency distribution since the slotted design delivers a wider coverage angle in its horizontal plane than in its vertical plane. Amplifier connections are made via the usual spring-loaded connectors in a recess on the back panel, which also holds MIDRANGE and TWEETER controls and a fast-blow tweeter fuse. Physical construction seems neat and sturdy, while the handsome oak veneer gives the speaker a solid, furniture-quality look and an overall impression of careful craftsmanship.

Data from CBS Technology Center reinforce that impression. The RS, came through the continuous-tone test with no sign of strain and repeated the feat on the pulse test, where the driving amplifier gave its all without inducing excessive distortion. Since the speaker is fairly efficient for an acoustic-suspension system, output levels were hefty in both of these tests. These numbers indicate a speaker of wide dynamic range, capable of playing at very loud levels.

Impedance values are well controlled, though we would hesitate to operate two pairs from any but the most stable of high-powered amps; the nominal 3.8-ohm impedance falls at 130 Hz. The curve, which rises above about 14 ohms, drops to about 3 ohms near 3 kHz—and even a little lower at the extreme top of the range, where very little musical energy is to be found. Thus, while the load presented to the amplifier is relatively consistent, its "lie" is on the low side, making the most of the extra 4-ohm output from typical amps, but inhibiting paralleling of speakers. What Infinity calls the MIDRANGE control alters response slightly in what we would call the treble—between about 2 and 5 kHz. The TWEETER control also has only slight effect on the perceived sound.

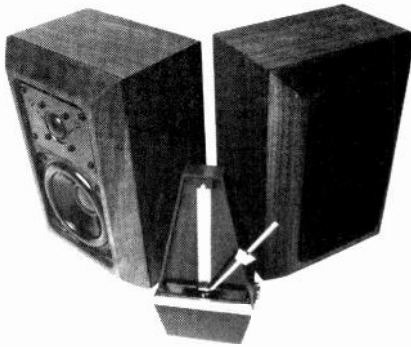
With very few reservations, we judge the RS, to be an admirable and likable speaker. Its tonal range and lack of "boxy" coloration make long-term listening quite pleasurable. Bass is pronounced but not overpowering and melds neatly into the rich, warm midrange region. The transition to the tweeter is not as smooth; some listeners noted a slight dissociation of upper partials from their fundamentals, and others mentioned a slight steeliness on some string and percussive sounds: The distortion figures are almost all below 1% throughout the midbass and lower treble range at 0 dBW (1 watt); only a hair more third harmonic and an average of about 1% second appear at the higher test level, though distortion rises quite rapidly in the region around 4 kHz. Pulses are very well reproduced in oscilloscope photos: What hangover there is at 3 kHz is suppressed

altogether within a few cycles. The audible transient behavior confirms the excellence of the photos.

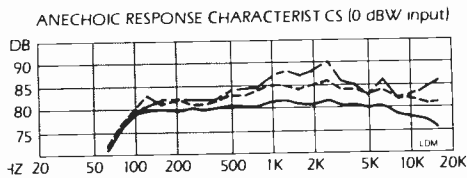
Stereo imaging of the RS_a is particularly fine, with a forward, gutsy sound that many pop music listeners appreciate and an almost tactile sense of details that should please the more classically minded. Overall, we would say that Infinity has done an admirable job, combining new materials and careful craftsmanship into a speaker system that does not tax an audiophile's budget.

Circle 132 on Reader-Service Card

A Handsome Minispeaker



Design Acoustics LDM loudspeaker



..... boundary-dependent region
 ——— average omnidirectional response
 - - - - - average front hemispheric response
 - · - · - on-axis response

AVERAGE OMNIDIRECTIONAL OUTPUT
(250 Hz to 6 kHz)
80½ dB SPL for 0 dBW (1 watt) input

CONTINUOUS ON-AXIS OUTPUT (at 300 Hz)
102 dB SPL for 20 dBW (100 watts) input

PULSED OUTPUT (at 300 Hz)
114½ dB SPL for 22½ dBW (1,650 watts) peak

"NOMINAL" IMPEDANCE 3.9 ohms

APPROX. HIGH CONTROL RANGE (re DIRECT)
+2 dB above 5.5 kHz

APPROX. MIDRANGE CONTROL RANGE (re DIRECT)
+1 dB, 2 to 12 kHz

Design Acoustics Model LDM loudspeaker, in wood enclosure. Dimensions: 7½ by 11½ inches (front), 5½ inches deep. Price: \$175. Warranty: "limited," five years parts and labor. Manufacturer: Design Acoustics, Inc., 2426 Amsler St., Torrance, Calif. 90505.

The LDM designation stands for low-diffraction miniature, according to Design Acoustics, and reinforces the fact that the enclosure's beveled front edges are more than a cabinetmaker's nicety. The company's first speaker—celebrated in its corporate logotype, a pentagon inscribed within a decagon—was dodecahedral and thus approximated the proverbial no-diffraction pulsating sphere by keeping the angles between adjacent surfaces as obtuse as possible without abandoning the economies of flat-panel construction. And miniature the new design obviously is. Like other minis, it easily fits on a bookshelf; the LDM also may be hung on a wall via the screws and antivibration pads that are supplied with it. And among its pleasantest features is the real wood cabinetry; this is one mini that doesn't look like auto sound brought in out of the cold.

Its two-way driver complement uses a domed tweeter and a small, long-throw woofer. There are two switches on the back panel, one for "midrange" (though what little measurable effect it has lies only above 1 kHz) and one for the "highs" (which influences much the same frequency range, though most of its effect lies toward the top of that range), each offering two options: OMNI and DIRECT. According to the owner's literature, the DIRECT settings produce the flatter response (and CBS Technology Center made its measurements this way), while the OMNI settings are intended to compensate for the falloff toward the edges of the polar pattern when the speaker is aimed away from the listening area in relatively dead rooms.

Listening in the more normal fashion—on the speakers' axes and in a reasonably reflective room—we preferred the DIRECT option and found some boxiness and harshness in OMNI, as indeed we should expect, given the design intent. In listening to the normal setup we considered the sound smooth and well focused through the midrange and highs, very slightly boxy in the midbass, and weak in the deep bass, lending a somewhat shallow quality overall. This is, of course, not unusual for a mini; the wonder is that so small a speaker can remain acceptable at all to such low frequencies.

Also understandable in a mini is the relatively high distortion that the lab measured in the bass range. At the 0-dBW level, distortion generally is under ½% in the midrange and above; the third harmonic does not exceed 1% until frequency falls below 70 Hz, but the second rises rapidly below about 250 Hz. At the higher test level, the third harmonic remains mostly below 1% down to around 200 Hz, but the second is over 10% below that frequency and averages about 1% above it. Still, the LDM took the full 20-dBW input of the continuous-tone test without flinching and accepted pulses that brought its output to a respectable 114 dB SPL before excessive distortion.

The impedance curve is quite smooth, rising only to a hair over 8 ohms at bass resonance, sinking only a hair below 4 ohms at the rating point (around 250 Hz), and staying between 8 and 16 ohms from 1 kHz up. Obviously you will have to choose an amp that can handle 2-ohm loads if you plan to parallel pairs of LDMs from it. And since efficiency is fairly low (as it must be with so small an enclosure), the amp should not be a skimpy one even if you will be using only one speaker pair.

Tiny speakers that, like the LDM, deliver good sound are commonplace today, however startling they may have been only a few years ago. What sets the present model apart, essentially, is its handsomeness. If you want a mini—meaning, in part, that you have a space problem and are willing to give up some bass response in order to solve it—but don't want it to look like part of a factory public-address system, here is a prime contender for your vote.

Circle 133 on Reader-Service Card

More on Page 37

Circle 50 on Reader-Service Card ▶

The facts are stacked for Sony's metalists.

Metal's mellow. Metal sings. Metal soars in frequency response and rockets the dynamic range upwards.

The new metal tapes are a multi-decibel boost to serious ears. But it takes a very special cassette deck to give you this higher-fi.

Two special "metalists" from Sony: The new TC-K65 and the new TC-K55II.

Head Facts

Sony's new Sendust & Ferrite heads in our new decks are uniquely composed of ideal electro-magnetic properties to give you maximum performance with any tape. Regular-fi, chrome, FeCr or metal.

Sendust, Ferrite and a head gap spacer of extremely hard quartz are engineered together for a mirror-like surface, long head life, sharp gap edges and no asymmetrical wear.



Two-Motor Facts

A linear-torque BSL (Brushless & Slotless) motor precisely maintains the all-important capstan speed. And an FG Servo-controlled motor drives the supply and take-up reels.

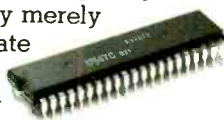
The BSL motor, in a major design breakthrough, has no slots to cause uneven torque distribution.



Microcomputer Facts

Sony's new microcomputer logic control lets you speed through any operation sequence by merely pressing the appropriate feather-touch bar.

This digital technology in each of our



decks even allows you to record at any moment during playback.

Other Facts

Other distinguished features: The TC-K65 has a Random Music Sensor (RMS) that lets you preprogram any desired selections in any desired order.

A computer-like display signals your selections in bright LED lights. Clearly revolutionary LED Peak

Meters display recording and playback levels with sixteen digits per channel. These new meters "hold" peak levels and respond instantly for truer recording.

The TC-K55II utilizes two large VU meters, and a five-element LED display indicates peak levels for more accurate recording.

The new Sony TC-K65 and the new Sony TC-K55II. The facts are in.



SONY

For those who take recording seriously

The 580 Series

From the economical 580M to the universally acclaimed 582, a 580-Series recorder is not an average cassette deck. It rises above mediocrity. It is designed for the *serious* recordist—for the person who insists upon the perfection that comes from individual calibration of each tape and the self-contained oscillator and metering that make this possible. With exclusive Asymmetrical, Dif-fused-Resonance, Dual-Capstan Transport, flutter and modulation noise cease to be problems. And Nakamichi's Double Slot Guides and Tape-Pad Lifter assure perfect tracking and absolute signal stability—so stable as to cause STEREO REVIEW to exclaim of the 582: "What we found astonishing... was that this was the first deck... in which the response was identical (within ± 0.1 dB) whether the test tapes were played in the normal forward direction or turned over and played on side two." Unique Direct-Flux erase head, metal-tape compatibility, and IC logic with remote and unattended operation are common to all 580-Series recorders.



580M 2-Head Cassette Deck
Special narrow-gap Sendust record/play head—the pinnacle of combination-head performance: 20 to 20,000 Hz ± 3 dB with less than 1% THD sets this recorder apart from the crowd! Dolby* calibration for each channel and each tape.



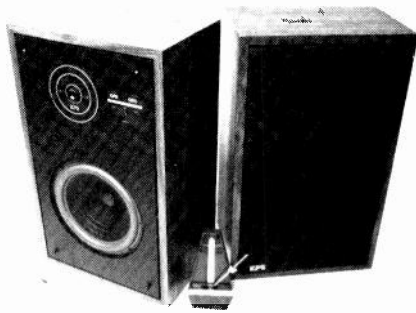
581 Discrete 3-Head Cassette Deck
Discrete 3-Head technology highlights the 581. S/N more than 66 dB—20 to 20,000 Hz with under 0.8% THD. Dolby* and bias adjustments with built-in 2-frequency oscillator assures Nakamichi performance with any quality tape.

582 Discrete 3-Head Cassette Deck
Acclaimed by every leading reviewer, the 582 is the ultimate recorder for the serious audiophile. With three discrete heads and full off-tape monitoring, the 582 has become the recorder on which experts evaluate tape!

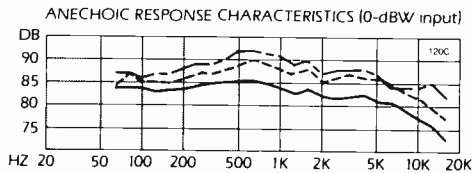


*Dolby is the trademark of Dolby Laboratories

For more information, write to Nakamichi U.S.A. Corporation, 1101 Colorado Avenue, Santa Monica, CA 90401



Epicure Products EPI-120C loudspeaker



······· boundary-dependent region
 ——— average omnidirectional response
 - - - - - average front hemispheric response
 - · - · - on-axis response

AVERAGE OMNIDIRECTIONAL OUTPUT
 (250 Hz to 6 kHz)
 83½ dB SPL for 0 dBW (1 watt) input

CONTINUOUS ON-AXIS OUTPUT (at 300 Hz)
 102 dB SPL for 13¼ dBW (23.5 watts)

PULSED OUTPUT (at 300 Hz)
 116 dB SPL for 27¼ dBW (595 watts) peak

"NOMINAL" IMPEDANCE 4.3 ohms

APPROX. TWEETER CONTROL RANGE (re "flat")
 +0, -5 dB above 2 kHz

A Spartan Sparkler from EPI

EPI Model 120C loudspeaker, in wood cabinet with vinyl finish. Dimensions: 15 by 25 inches (front), 10½ inches deep. Price: \$165. Warranty: "limited," five years parts and labor. Manufacturer: Epicure Products, Inc., 1 Charles St., Newburyport, Mass. 01950.

The last time we reviewed an EPI speaker (October 1977) we found the two-way Model 200 "simple, basic, and musical ... with not a very fancy price tag." Despite rampant inflation, the Model 120C—another two-way acoustic-suspension system—deserves much the same description and is priced even lower. It incorporates a 10-inch woofer with the familiar EPI 1-inch inverted-dome tweeter. A three-position tweeter attenuator is mounted on the front baffle and is marked at 0, -3, and -6 dB points; spring-loaded connections for signal leads are in a recess on the back of the enclosure. Construction seems sturdy and the finish (albeit in vinyl) makes an attractive appearance with the grille in place.

Tests at CBS Technology Center disclose moderate efficiency and power-handling capabilities: The 300-Hz continuous-tone test produced complaint from the speaker at 13¼ dBW (23 watts). The output at that point—102 dB SPL—was far louder than you're likely to want in most rooms, however, and in pulsed-power tests the 120C withstood peaks 14 dB higher. Impedance lies between 4 and 16 ohms throughout the audible range except for a slight excursion above 16 at bass resonance.

Third harmonic distortion figures are exceptionally low, averaging out to well below ½% in the midband and dropping down to a fraction of that at treble frequencies at both moderate and loud test levels. Second harmonic distortion figures show a similar pattern, though their overall lie is higher in the midband, averaging about 1% and 4% at moderate and loud listening levels, respectively. In tests of its ability to reproduce pulsed waveforms, it shows virtual mirror images of 300-Hz tone bursts and only the most minor reflections with 3-kHz pulses.

From its well-articulated bass to its somewhat bright high end, we consider the 120C a well-balanced and basically smooth reproducer. When we experimented with the tweeter control, we found the "-3" setting a little less aggressive than "0" if, perhaps, a little throatier in coloration in our somewhat live listening room. There is a spacious, full quality to the 120C's stereo imaging, with more depth accuracy than usual for a speaker of this genre. Add to all this its inflation-defying price, and it becomes an unusually desirable model.

Big Sound On a Budget



Cerwin-Vega HED Model U-10 loudspeaker, in wood case with wood-grain vinyl finish. Dimensions: 13½ by 25½ inches (front), 11¼ inches deep. Price: \$170. Warranty: "limited," five years parts and labor. Manufacturer: Cerwin-Vega, 12250 Montague St., Arleta, Calif. 91331.

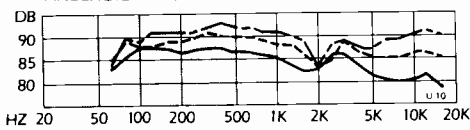
The HED rubric stands for High Energy Design, which may, for some listeners, characterize the company's immemorial stance. Cerwin-Vega and rock grew up together, so to speak, and the prodigious output that has been a standard feature of C-V's public demonstrations went hand-in-hand with the requirements of rock at a time when many other companies had yet to realize what sort of thermal strain was being applied to their speakers in the field. But the HED series is not intended for would-be Woodstocks; it is a relatively inexpensive group of thoroughly domesticated designs, with the U-10 second from the top in the compactness/inexpensiveness race.

If big sound suggests big power, forget it where the U-10 is concerned. As the data from the CBS Technology Center anechoic chamber show, it neither needs nor likes high input levels. Before the full 20 dBW (100-watt) continuous-tone input was reached, for example, distortion had become excessive; but the output at the 18¼-dBW onset of excessive distortion already had reached a sound pressure level of 111 dB—which is very loud indeed for any sort of sustained tones in music reproduction—because the sensitivity (85 dB SPL for a 0-dBW input) is unusually high for a system of this size. Similarly, the maximum peak power accepted in the pulse test fell far short of the kilowatt range we often encounter, but the output still reached 115½ dB SPL.

The harsh third harmonic stayed below 1% from 50 Hz up in the low-level (0-dBW) test and exceeded that figure (rising to a maximum of 3%) only in the crossover range around 2 kHz, where the apparently high distortion can be attributed

Cerwin-Vega HED Model U-10 loudspeaker

ANECHOIC RESPONSE CHARACTERISTICS (0-dBW input).



..... boundary-dependent region
 ——— average omnidirectional response
 - - - - - average front hemispheric response
 - · - · - on-axis response

AVERAGE OMNIDIRECTIONAL OUTPUT
 (250 Hz to 6 kHz)
 85 dB SPL for 0 dBW (1 watt) input

CONTINUOUS ON-AXIS OUTPUT (at 300 Hz)
 111 dB SPL for 18% dBW (75 watts) input

PULSED OUTPUT (at 300 Hz)
 115% dB SPL for 23% dBW (240 watts) input

APPROX. TWEETER CONTROL RANGE (re "flat")
 +0, -6 dB, 3 to 20 kHz

in part to a dip in the fundamental against which the harmonics are compared. The second harmonic, in particular, shoots upward in this relatively narrow range; otherwise, it averages under 1% throughout the audio range at 0 dBW. At the higher test level (for 100 dB SPL of output at 300 Hz), the second harmonic averages about 2% through the bass and into the midrange, dropping well below this figure at higher frequencies except in the crossover region, where values are above 10%—though, again, fundamentals are attenuated in this region.

Given the company's association with rock reproducers and the drift from rock to disco in the pop charts, we had wondered whether we would find in the U-10 the boomy "superdisco" bass that is being cultivated by some speaker manufacturers in search of pop markets. If that's what you want, you'll have to put the speaker in a corner to induce a boom; placed out in the room, its low end is relatively smooth though somewhat soft-focused in reproducing the detail of bass lines. Listener assessments throughout the range seemed to depend to some extent on musical preferences; the speaker was judged to have a pleasant punch and forwardness for pop, a certain boxiness in carefully miked classics. Some listeners noted a bit of steeliness in string tone without the aggressiveness at the top end that often goes with it. This could be related to the anomalies noted in the crossover region or to broadening of the pulse waveform in the lab's 3-kHz tone-burst test. In that test some reflections could be seen on the oscilloscope, but at so low a level that we would give the U-10 high marks for controlling reflections.

The want of consensus among our listeners and the individual personality of the speaker force the conclusion that this is a model you must audition for yourself—that no characterization on our part is likely to match the reactions of a wide spectrum of music lovers. In our view its properties do best by the musical and recording values associated with pop, but even that generalization is subject to dispute.

Circle 131 on Reader-Service Card

Manufacturers' Comment

We invite rebuttal from those who produce the equipment we review. The comments printed here are culled from those responses.

Amber Series 70 power amplifier, March 1980. The existence of high-order harmonics after the model is switched off is due to its massive 64,000-microfarad power supply (which is much larger than that of any competitive unit). Although the output is "clipping" as the power supply drains, the power levels involved are minuscule and can in no way affect speakers, regardless of the frequencies being produced. The amplifier itself does not produce any unusual or harmful turnon transients. All preamps and associated equipment should provide their own turnon muting, as does our Preamp One. In general, audiophile power amps do not contain this relay, and most serious listeners routinely activate their preamp first and deactivate their power amp first.

Peter A. Barthelson
Amber Electronics, Inc.

HF replies: We still are concerned, on the basis of our experience with the Series 70, that unless the signal source is turned off before the amp, the

latter's "massive" capacitance will continue to deliver high-level signals to the speakers with increasing shift toward the highs as distortion increases. Muting, which we do find in many of the "audiophile power amps" we test, would prevent any turnoff strain on tweeters (however unlikely it may be to result in outright failure) and result in more elegant operation.

Shure SC-39ED phono cartridge, February 1980. Your review states, "Microscopic examination of the tip shows polish to be about par among fixed-coil models we have tested, though not as fine as CBS has encountered in some more expensive moving-coil models." This statement can be most misleading to the cartridge user.

An ordinary microscopic examination of a stylus tip gives no clue as to the degree of polish in the important areas where it contacts the record groove walls, which amount to considerably less than 1% of the total surface of a typical diamond tip. There is an understandable tendency to assume that a positive correlation exists between the polish of the major surfaces of the diamond and that in the contact areas. This tendency is undoubtedly why some cartridge manufacturers see to it that the body of the diamond is highly polished; it is a fairly easy task to polish the large

flat surfaces of the popular square-section diamonds, for instance. Polishing the critically contoured surfaces in the groove/tip interface region is not as straightforward, however, and it is not unusual to find a higher polish on the body than at the points where it would be beneficial. Furthermore, too much polish on the body can inhibit the integrity of the mechanical cement bond with the stylus shank, resulting in an ill-performing, loose, or missing diamond. The employment of the scanning electron microscope (SEM) or some other sophisticated optical technique is required to adequately determine the polish that has any effect on stylus performance.

The diamond tips specified for the SC-39 series are specially processed to achieve a very high polish in the all-important contact region. This allows the professional recording engineer to play back his lacquer masters without harming them. There is also a significant benefit in broadcast and disco applications where "cue-burn" surface-noise buildup due to excessive backcuing (especially with 45-rpm records made from polystyrene or less-than-virgin vinyl) is greatly reduced.

Fred J. Karlov
Electromechanical Development
Shure Brothers, Inc.

KLH loudspeaker, January

NOW...A TAPE GUARANTEED TO OUTPERFORM MAXELL, SCOTCH, MEMOREX, BASF, TDK, AMPEX, SONY

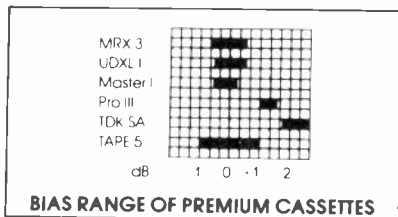


ORIGINALLY MADE FOR STUDIO AND BROADCAST USE

The "establishment" tape companies make some quite respectable products, but their tapes aren't as fine as the decks they're used with. (We like "metal" tape but can't find a good reason to pay \$9-\$15 for a C-90.) So we've introduced TAPE 5 to fill the need for an ultra-high-performance cassette at a reasonable price. A true mastering tape, TAPE 5 was originally sold only to studios and broadcasters, but now we've made it available to the public through mail order.

WIDE-LATITUDE MAKES TAPE 5 A GOOD MATCH FOR YOUR DECK

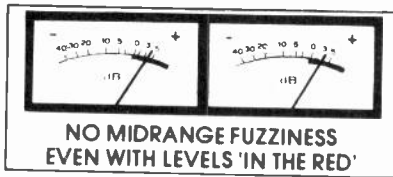
By hyping "color" (Sony), "tape of the stars" (Ampex), "truth" (Scotch), and "high octane" (Maxell), these companies are avoiding the big issue of tape incompatibility, a factor that can measurably — and audibly — affect the actual performance of **your** deck. Since each tape deck manufacturer adjusts the bias settings of its machines differently, one brand's "normal" and "chrome" settings usually differ from another brand's "normal" and "chrome" settings. This means that bias adjustments are hardly ever a perfect match for a tape. Also, your deck's bias changes as its components age. With a bias mismatch, tape complains by distorting and losing frequency response.



But with TAPE 5 WIDE-LATITUDE® cassettes, there's no incompatibility problem because a generous (2 dB) leeway around standard bias is **built-in**. So we can **guarantee** that your deck and TAPE 5 will be a good team.

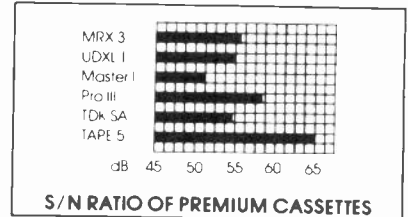
COMPARE THESE SPECS & FEATURES

Since TAPE 5 was intended for professional use, it's loaded with features the pros insist on. Like pre-stretched polyester film base, precision-torqued 5-stainless-steel-screw styrene case, teflon slip sheets, high-accuracy pins, guides, and rollers, non-abrasive gamma ferric oxide coating, and never any annoying dropouts or splices. The result of a mirror-polished tape surface and quality-controlled assembly is a superior product. TAPE 5 has tested out **better** than TDK AD and SA, the Maxell UDXL series, Scotch Masters, Ampex Grand Master, the BASF Pros, Memorex MRX3, and other premium cassettes. Listen for yourself. With TAPE 5, you'll hear clarity and transparency of highs that you've never before been able to get onto a



cassette. Even with recording levels "in the red," you won't get any fuzziness in the midrange. TAPE 5's major specifications **exceed** those of the above tapes. Signal-to-Noise Ratio is an astounding 64.4 dB, so

quiet that there's no objectionable tape hiss even when you don't use Dolby® Maximum Output Level at 3% THD is 6.7 dB. (These first two specs are essential to making good tapes for your car stereo.) Wow and Flutter measure .042%. At 0 dB input, IM Distortion is 1%. Attainable Frequency Response is 30-18,000 Hz, ± 1.5 dB. And bear in mind



that these figures were achieved with conventional record and playback heads using the widely-accepted DIN testing standards.

50% SAVINGS DIRECT-FROM-MANUFACTURER PLUS 5-YEAR WARRANTY

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1980. Computer control differs from motional feedback by isolating the feedback mechanism from the amplifier and loudspeaker. This avoids loop instability, enabling the KLH computer-controlled speakers to be used with any amplifier or receiver. These KLH speakers can be combined with remote speakers, with the computer switched out. This compromises their low-frequency performance, but the application is noncritical by definition. Rear speakers in a derived rear-channel format (e.g., Hafler, or driven by a separate amplifier) may be used; we have operated KLH-1s with Hafler-connected rear speakers of very limited low-frequency power-handling capacity without problems.

The lights on the electronics unit are intended as aids to establishing correct connection of the computer. Their operation does not indicate that signal processing is occurring, as your review implies. Nor does the KLH-3 have a "hump" at 100 Hz, a region below the boundary-dependent region of the measuring room.

In the past, small speakers have

suffered from limited low-frequency response and output capacity, so it is easy to treat them as inherently inferior to large speakers. However, small speakers are inherently less colored than larger speakers, other things being equal. Furthermore, they are more easily placed in the best positions the room affords, because they are small and inconspicuous. Placed on a shelf, especially near a wall, any speaker with reasonable low-frequency output must produce an irregular frequency response, and the lack of smoothness may well be judged "heavy," as you say in your report.

R. Frank Jones
Product Development
KLH Research and Development

Onkyo's TA-2080— An Addendum

The figures at the right were prepared for the April issue, as part of our report on the Onkyo TA-2080 cassette deck. Somewhere in the process the page went astray, and the material did not ap-

pear in the published report. Since our comments on the deck were based in part on these data, they represent corroborative detail more than essential information. But to make the record complete and to facilitate comparisons with other decks, we publish them here. And we apologize to any readers who may have tried making such comparisons from the incomplete data originally presented.

Onkyo TA-2080 cassette deck (additional data)

ERASURE (333 Hz; re DIN 0 dB)	
Type 2 ("chrome") tape	> 78 dB
Type 4 (metal) tape	69½ dB

CHANNEL SEPARATION (at 333 Hz)	51¼ dB
--------------------------------	--------

SPEED ACCURACY	0.5% fast at 105, 120, & 127 VAC
----------------	-------------------------------------

WOW & FLUTTER (ANSI/IEEC weighted peak)	average	maximum
	playback	± 0.06% ± 0.08%
	record/play	± 0.07% ± 0.09%

SENSITIVITY (re DIN 0 dB; 333 Hz)	line input	100 mV
	mike input	0.30 mV

MIKE INPUT OVERLOAD (clipping)	10.5 mV
--------------------------------	---------

OUTPUT (from DIN 0 dB)	1.23 V
------------------------	--------

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And like all the Satin cartridges, it features a unique user-replaceable stylus that you can change in seconds, like a common cartridge. The stylus is a perfectly formed diamond, with Satin's

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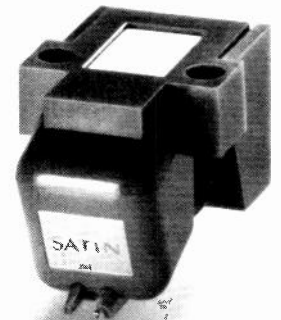
No transformer or pre-preamp.

And, of course, the high-output 117Z uses Satin's ultra-thin 10-micron aluminum ribbon coil and high energy magnet so you don't need an expensive noise-prone pre-preamplifier or transformer like most other moving coil cartridges. The 117Z connects directly to any quality amp, preamp or receiver.

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Letters



Amps: Do They All Sound the Same?

The March issue of HIGH FIDELITY exploded in my face as I scrutinized Michael Riggs's "How to Buy an Amplifier" and Daniel Shanefield's "The Great Ego Crunchers: Equalized Double-Blind Tests." What's this, coming from quaint old HF? After years of doodling around with the idea of adopting some kind of credible stance against the encroaching radicalism of the "golden ears," you have launched an all-out counteroffensive.

While HF's move is cause for no little rejoicing—perhaps now the audio world will be prompted to take significant action to settle the "can we hear it?" question—these articles make too brutal contentions. If Mr. Riggs and Mr. Shanefield would, in extended sessions, listen to the different amps and preamps in a proven reference system, they would experience something of a revelation. Or if, as I suspect, they are incapable of hearing the differences—anyone who has been exposed to enough live music in a concert hall, and who is otherwise reasonably perceptive, should be able to do it—then they will say, "I don't hear the difference, so it doesn't exist." And they will go on hog-tying and blindfolding unsuspecting volunteers for their scientific tests.

Tony Biancardi
Monroe, Ga.

Michael Riggs's article advised, "Forget about [distortion levels] below 0.5%." In the age of the 0.005% amplifier, this sounds like heresy. Fortunately, you published Daniel Shanefield's article in the same issue. Although his methods seem valid, his results tend to support the inaudible-0.5% theory. Of course, experiments cannot prove that something *cannot* be heard. What we need is some scientific proof that 0.5% distortion *can* be heard.

The Detroit-area high fidelity club to which I belong has been conducting double-blind tests for three years. We too have been unable to prove that differences between any two well-designed amplifiers are audible. We have proven the audibility of some things, such as absolute phase coherence. In the course of our testing, many of us have become convinced that small amounts of distortion from a good amplifier are inaudible in music. As a result, ef-

forts to improve our own sound systems are in the areas of speaker placement and type, room acoustics, and source material.

David L. Clark
Livonia, Mich.

I am at once delighted and embarrassed by Michael Riggs's excellent article: delighted by its sheer common sense, embarrassed because his recommendations match almost exactly those I make in a little book we're publishing soon, *High Fidelity for Music Lovers*. I hope I won't be accused of plagiarism.

There are minor differences. Mr. Riggs flatly suggests not bothering with distortion of less than 0.5%, whereas I suggest 0.1 to 0.5% on the ground that you can now hardly buy an otherwise suitable amplifier with more than 0.1% distortion. I'm a little more specific about maximum power, because the music lover I'm addressing wants to reproduce orchestral (100 dB SPL) peaks, not those of the rock concert (115 dB SPL or more). And I wish Mr. Riggs hadn't endorsed, at least by implication, the more than thirty-year-old error that causes the preamp to load a 0.7-henry cartridge with 47,000 ohms. The circuit isn't that of a constant-k filter, and the industry standard is simply and unequivocally wrong, as half a page of fairly simple mathematics proves beyond dispute. But in general Mr. Riggs speaks sooth.

C. F. Kerry Gaulder
President & Chief Engineer
Source Engineering
Wilmington, Mass.

If inferences that I make from the Shanefield article on double-blind testing of audio components are correct, they are likely to shake the very foundations of what the audio "experts" have long maintained. He reported that only minor audible differences exist between power amplifiers of widely varying reputations and that those differences can be wholly compensated for—to the point of eliminating them altogether—merely by inserting an appropriately adjusted multiband equalizer into the circuit.

After reading the article, I was left wondering whether the reported results can be replicated using a panel of listeners whose ears are sufficiently trained to hear the differences that may exist. The selection of the panel is crucial, since no one has said that all audio buffs have "golden ears." (All the article tells about the jurors is their number, sex, and age range, and one is left

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with the impression that possibly none of them could be termed "expert listeners.")

A final point. It is true that "several small-circulation magazines" espousing the "golden ear point of view" have often disagreed about specific components. However, it is also true that these publications have often shown remarkable consensus. To emphasize the diversity in thinking while neglecting to mention the cases of agreement may give a misleading impression.

Henry J. Pratt
Birmingham, Mich.

I found Daniel Shanefield's article instructive but reserved in its conclusions. The implication of his argument is apparent: The advice of those who urge that this amplifier sounds discernibly better than that one is so much bunk. The only way for his arguments to be contradicted is for the opposition to volunteer to submit their ears and claims to fairly designed and administered double-blind tests. In no other way can their credibility be sustained.

James C. Dick
Ferndale, Mich.

Daniel Shanefield's contention that,

"since an equalizer was able to make two supposedly very different amplifiers sound alike, frequency response appears to be the only significant difference factor" is so absurd, and unscientific, that it should not have been granted credence by being published in your journal. To illustrate: Imagine two amplifiers, one with 0.01% distortion (of whatever kind), a second with 0.002%. Very critical ears could hear a difference. Now feed each through an equalizer that has 10% distortion; the difference, 10.01 vs. 10.002%, would be inaudible for it is no longer a factor of 5:1, but of 1.0008:1. Maybe not all equalizers have 10% distortion, but what they do have is a full order of magnitude more than that of any half-decent amplifier, consequently invalidating Shanefield's "scientific" methodology.

Of my two sets of speakers, one pair measures flatter in my 13-by-33-foot living room than the other, but because the latter has a significantly greater dynamic range, it always sounds better and more accurate.

William Allin Storrer
Columbia, S.C.

I cannot believe you allowed the Shanefield article to be printed without first asking a "golden ear" of high position,

such as Harry Pearson of *The Absolute Sound* or Peter Moncrief of *International Audio Review*, if he cared to submit a rebuttal.

Enid Lumley
Hollywood, Calif.

Mr. Shanefield replies: Without testing everyone in the world, I can't prove that *nobody* can hear a difference between any pair of equalized amplifiers. However, I have demonstrated that a large percentage of so-called golden ears cannot hear a difference between amps that they claimed they could hear. I showed this by testing those three "believers" mentioned at the top of page 60 in my article. All three claimed to be typical golden ears and had purchased select amplifiers for their own home systems. Besides this small sample, I have tested other such people, and over the last six years I have written to professional and amateur audio groups in Massachusetts, Michigan, Idaho, Canada, and England, suggesting that they run similar tests. They have done so, and they have all reported the same results, both in print and in correspondence. *Never* has anyone passed a careful double-blind test of amplifiers

Continued on page 46

Control your reality.

Let's face it. Nobody has to tell you what sounds good. You know what you like to hear. But sometimes that can be a problem. You're listening in a room with poor acoustics, bad speakers, or inferior program source quality. You need some way to control the sound so you can hear the music the way you like it.

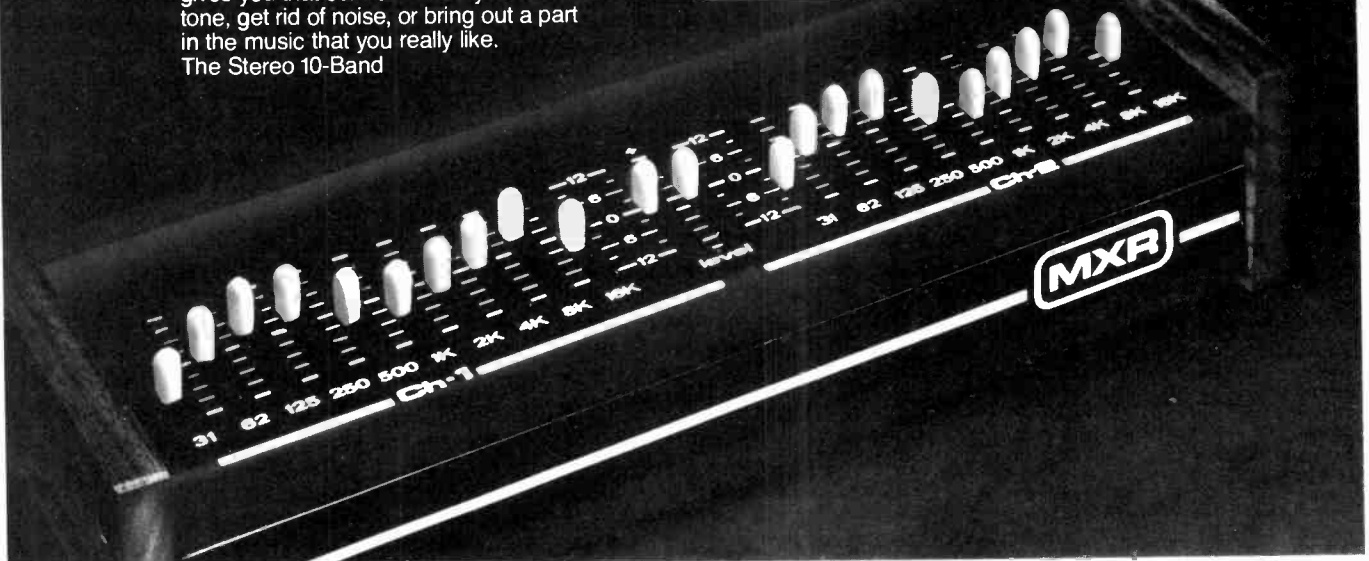
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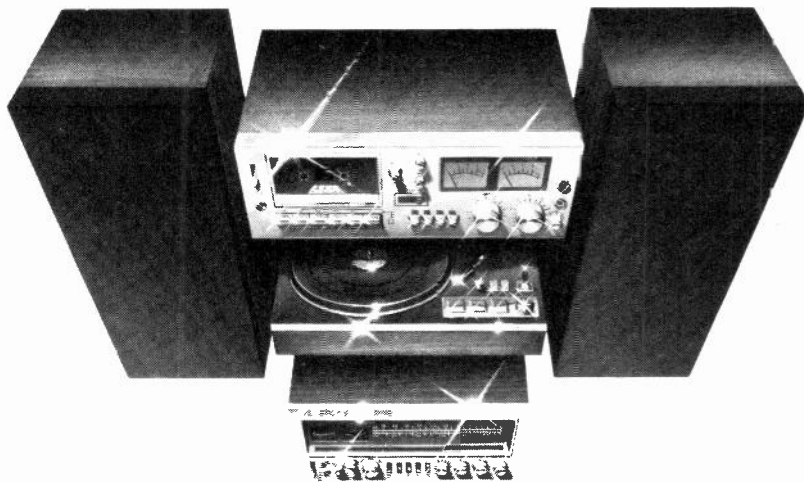


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Continued from page 44

when frequency responses were closely matched.

These results have reached a level of significance where the burden of proof now rests on the shoulders of the golden ears—proof that we should not scoff at them for ignoring random frequency-response effects and for sheer imagination. Tests conducted by several groups indicate that the audible effects of TIM, reserve power, vacuum tubes, and Class A operation in power

amplifiers are probably insignificant in ordinary home high fidelity systems. Regarding preamps and phono cartridges, my early results indicate the same thing, but I haven't seen enough independent test results to make a strong statement about them.

As for Mr. Storrer's comments, most consumer-grade equalizers are specified to 0.05% distortion or better, not 10%. And the low-TIM or vacuum-tube-type amplifiers that many golden ears tend to like usually

have about the same 0.05% distortion, not 0.002%. (The latter ultra-low value is ordinarily achieved by large doses of negative feedback—a no-no among the golden ears.)

But the most relevant point is one that I made in the table on page 60: Recordings *already* contain far more distortion than an equalizer might add to a home playback system. Typical recordings contain total harmonic distortion of more than 1%, including about 0.05% higher-order harmonics. Also, the recording studio uses both NAB equalization and de-equalization in the master tape recorder; further EQ is done to suit the recording engineer's personal taste during mixdown; RIAA equalization takes place during disc cutting, etc. So you're getting equalization whether you want it or not!

Regarding dynamic range and other such aberrations, loudspeakers are much weaker links in the overall audio chain than amplifiers and equalizers are. (Of course it is assumed throughout this discussion that the amp in question has enough power for whatever listening levels are called for, with speaker inefficiency and room absorption being taken into account. For most situations, this turns out to be less than 30 watts per channel, surprisingly enough, although there are exceptions to that rough guideline.) I am not claiming that two speakers can be equalized to become indistinguishable, as amplifiers can. But frequency response certainly appears to be important in speakers as well.

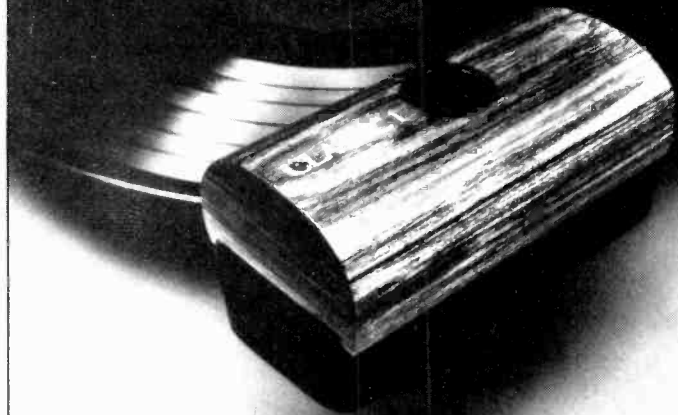
Classical Recording's Future

I want to take strong exception to the statement, made by an anonymous source and quoted in Allan Kozinn's article "Predictable Crises of the Classical Record Business" [April], to the effect that classical recording may cease when the "rock-and-roll generation" reaches positions of executive authority in the recording industry.

May I point out that the current generation of executives grew up in the jazz era, when the term "jazz" was roughly the moral equivalent of "rock-and-roll," as that term is pejoratively used? In other words, there was no more reason to expect they would support classical music than that the present generation will. We must also consider the question of who will become executives. Those who spend their time liquefying their eardrums with disco and power pop, those who can hardly put more than three words together coherently, those whose only goal in life is to be cool? These people seem unlikely candidates. As usual, executives will come from the ranks of the

Continued on page 49

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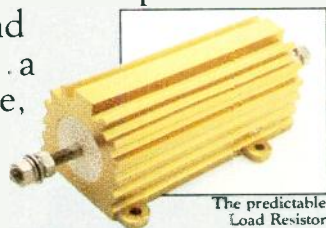
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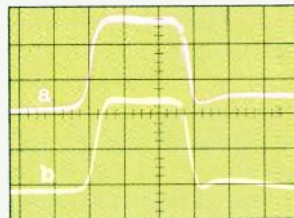
They use a load resistor instead... a static, predictable, unchanging representation of the dynamic, unpredictable, ever-changing loudspeaker. As a result, specs can't tell you how well an amplifier is going to handle your loudspeakers. SAE has researched this problem and developed a test which actually measures the amplifier while it drives a loudspeaker.

Chart I shows the response of our all new 250



The predictable Load Resistor

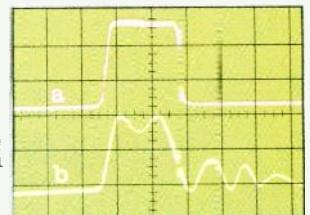
watt/channel* 2401 Dual High Resolution Power Amplifier under conventional tests and under SAE's new "real world" tests. As you can see, this amplifier



SAE 2401 Driving:
a) a load resistor b) a loudspeaker

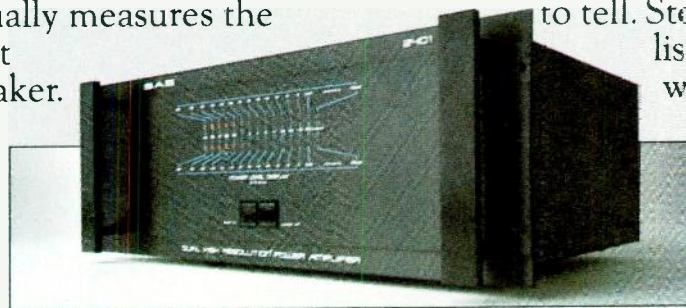
performs much the same whether connected to a load resistor or a loudspeaker. It really listens to your speaker's needs.

Chart II shows how a conventional amplifier attempts to handle the same situation.



Conventional Amplifier Driving:
a) a load resistor b) a loudspeaker

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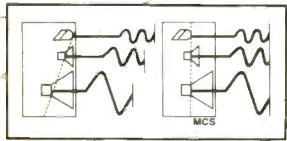
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educated. If these ranks at our university are typical, there is still substantial interest in fine arts among people twenty to thirty years old. Our radio station programs about twenty hours of classical music per week, and we are currently planning a fund-raising classical marathon.

Classical music has always been the province of an educated and affluent minority. Unfortunately, those who play loud music while cruising the streets in their hotrods tend to attract more attention. To assume they represent the musical tastes of all youth is an insult. I hope the companies will not believe these lies and use them as an excuse for ending unprofitable support of the fine arts.

Daniel Smith
Classical Coordinator
Station KUGS-FM
Western Washington University
Bellingham, Wash.

I have just finished reading "Predictable Crises in Classical Music Recording." This is quite trenchant on the economic side, but what about repertory? The classical record buyer is more composition-oriented than performer-oriented. Once he has one or two recordings of an old warhorse, he is out of the market for that work. Yet record companies keep issuing new performances of works that have been recorded often enough before—not just once or twice, but fifteen times.

I would like to read a review of one of these that begins: "Here we have another recording of an often-recorded work. While it is true that it offers a slightly different interpretation from the previous versions, this reviewer believes that the principal reason that it was made was performer and corporate egotism. One cannot help but regret that the money for this recording was not spent for some worthwhile work that has not been recorded."

Charles N. Hubbell
Kenmore, N.Y.

Massenet, Mahler, and Everest

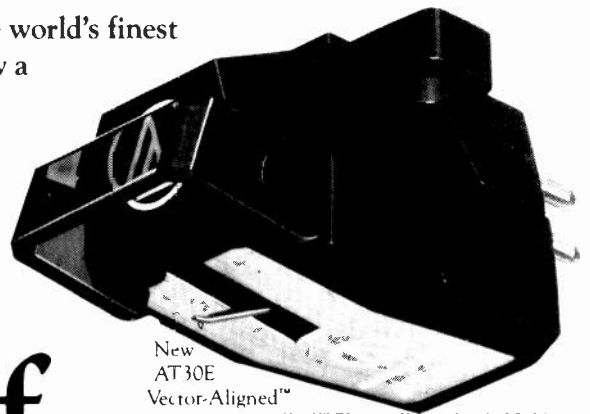
Now hold on there, Peter G. Davis! To the contrary, Everest's two-record set of Massenet's *Don Quichotte* ["Massenet en Masse," April] is still alive and well in its catalog. For us opera buffa fans, this sparkling (though spotty) version is good listening.

Turning the page in that issue, I dug Abram Chipman's in-depth study of Mahler conductors much as I dig Mahler. And (as long as we're hearing it for Everest), there is a passel of fine interpretations of Gustav's works on the Everest label.

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The rest of your system will sing its praises!



New AT30E Vector-Aligned™ Dual Moving MicroCoil™ Phono Cartridge \$125.00

The subtle, yet unique characteristics of moving coil cartridges have had their admirers for years. A top-quality moving coil cartridge exhibits remarkable sonic clarity and transparency. This performance can be attributed to the very low mass, and low inductance of the tiny coils used to sense the stylus motion.

But until now, moving coil cartridge popularity has been limited by three major problems which seemed almost inherent to moving coil designs.

1) It seemed impossible to make a user-replaceable stylus assembly without compromising performance; 2) most moving coil cartridges exhibited relatively low tracking ability due to rather stiff cantilever mounting systems; and 3) output of the cartridge was below the level needed for commonly available amplifier inputs.

Introducing the new Audio-Technica AT30E and the end to all three problems! Our design approach is simple and direct. Rather than locate the coils in the cartridge body, they are integral with the stylus assembly. If the stylus becomes worn or damaged, the entire moving system, coils and all, is simply unplugged and replaced, just like a moving magnet cartridge. Large, gold-plated connectors insure loss-free connections so vital at the low voltages generated by a good moving coil cartridge. The result is easy field replacement with no penalty in terms of performance.

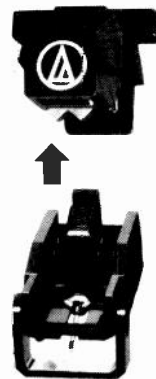
Careful research indicated that good tracking and moving coil design were indeed compatible. By controlling effective mass and utilizing a radial damping system similar to our famed Dual Magnet™ cartridges, we have achieved excellent tracking ability throughout

the audio range. Compliance is individually controlled during manufacture of each assembly to optimize performance. This extra step, impossible with most other designs, coupled with our unique radial damping ring, insures excellent tracking of the high-energy modulation found in many of the top-quality recordings now available.

Each coil is located in the ideal geometric relationship to reproduce "its" side of the record groove. This Vector-Aligned™ design assures excellent stereo separation, minimum moving mass, and the highest possible efficiency. It's an exclusive Audio-Technica design concept and a major contributor to the outstanding performance of the AT30E.

We can't take credit for solving the low output problem. The AT30E output is similar to many other fine moving coil cartridges. But an increasing number of amplifiers and receivers are featuring built-in "pre-amplifiers" or "head amplifiers" to accommodate moving coil cartridges directly. Thus the new systems buyer can make a cartridge choice based on sonic characteristics rather than on input compatibility. In addition, Audio-Technica offers the Model AT630 Transformer for matching to conventional amplifier inputs.

The new Audio-Technica AT30E Dual Moving MicroCoil Stereo Phono Cartridge. With the introduction of this remarkable new design, every important barrier to full enjoyment of the moving coil listening experience has been removed. Progress in sound reproduction from the leader in advanced technology – Audio-Technica.



User-removable stylus assembly

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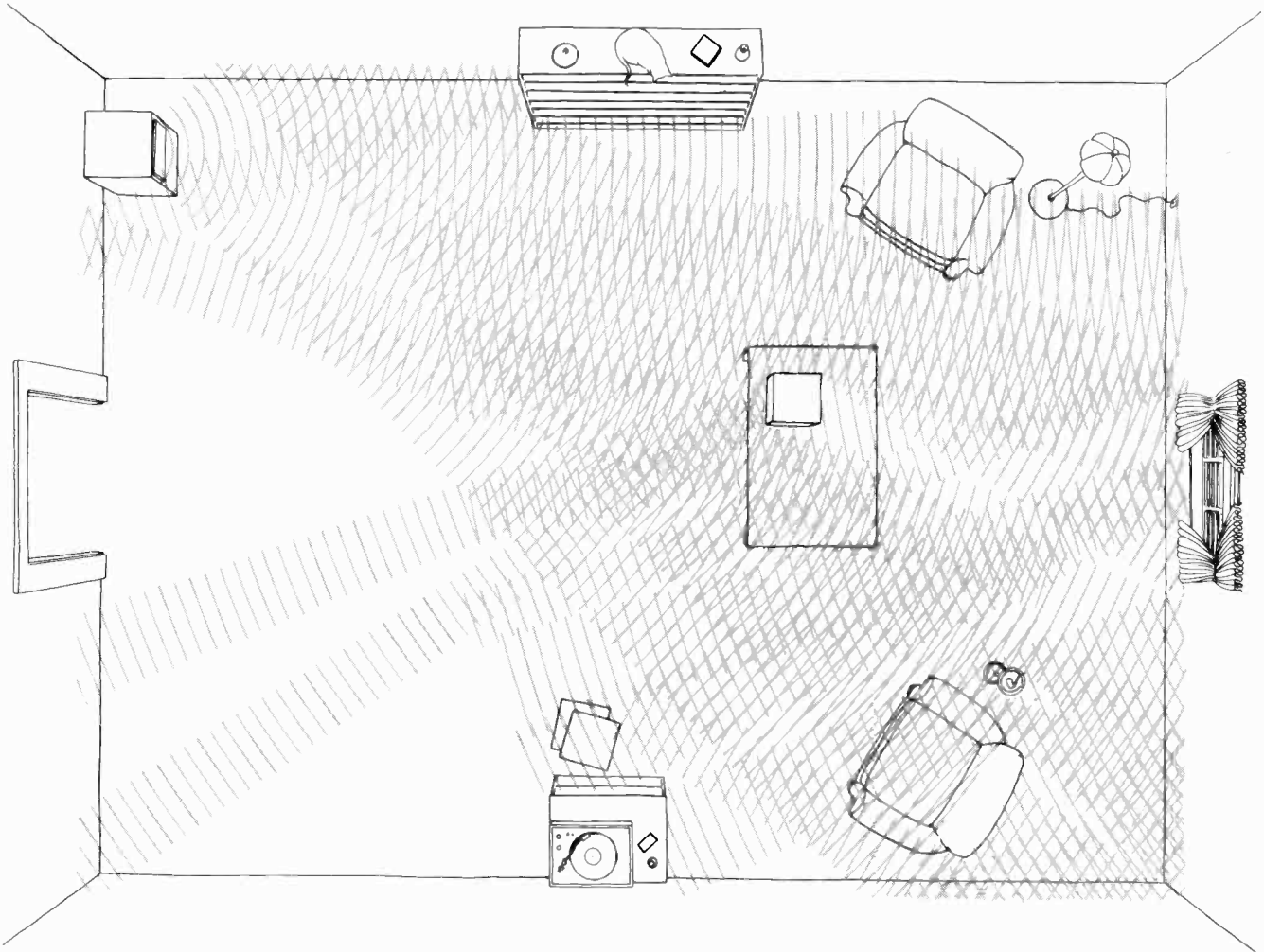
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AUDIO-TECHNICA PROFESSIONAL AND HOME PRODUCTS FOR BETTER SOUND



Designs for Living with Loudspeakers

Six experts talk about sound propagation, speaker measurement, and listening rooms.



Because the sound of any loudspeaker will be altered by the acoustics of the listening room, particularly by reflections off the boundary surfaces (walls, floor, ceiling) near the speaker, finding the correct position for your loudspeakers is a time-consuming task involving inevitable compromises between sonics and decor. Should manufacturers take account of room/boundary effects in the design of loudspeakers—hypothetically making your job easier—and if so, how? For some answers, *HIGH FIDELITY* invited six astute students of speaker behavior to a roundtable discussion during last November's Audio Engineering Society convention in New York. Participating in this exchange were:

Roy ALLISON, president of Allison

Acoustics, whose research into the effect of room boundary reflections on a speaker's bass and low-midrange output has been influential among speaker designers.

RAYMOND COOKE, managing director and founder of KEF Electronics Ltd., England, one of the first manufacturers to use digital computers, both in designing speakers and in matching drivers in production.

MARK DAVIS, researcher in psychoacoustics at Massachusetts Institute of Technology. In an article in our June 1978 issue, "What's Really Important in Loudspeaker Performance?", Davis cited evidence that a speaker's sound depends mainly on its frequency response and radiation pattern, *not* on distortion, phase coherency, exotic dia-

phragm materials, etc.

TIM HOLL, vice president of engineering at Teledyne Acoustic Research, in charge of AR's loudspeaker design.

DANIEL QUEEN, a Chicago-area consultant in acoustics and president of Daniel Queen Laboratories, who is the designer of a cylindrical speaker system featuring a uniform horizontal 360-degree radiation pattern.

JOHN WAWZONEK, marketing manager and former head of the Acoustic Products Design Group at Bose Corporation. He has taken part in numerous experimental studies of recording and playback acoustics. Bose loudspeakers use strong wall reflections for spacious imaging.

PETER MITCHELL, moderator of this discussion for *HIGH FIDELITY*, is a Boston-

area audio consultant and writer and current president of the Boston Audio Society.

HIGH FIDELITY: Let's begin with the central question. Is it reasonable to design speakers for a certain placement relative to the boundaries of a room—even when such placement may be impractical in many rooms? Is it feasible to dictate to the consumer where he must place his loudspeaker?

Wawzonek: I think there simply is no choice, considering that a speaker's response will vary from 6 to 12 dB from place to place within a room. You either have to design for a particular position or build in some controls, and we've done both with different speakers in our line.

Holl: I agree. In recent years our loudspeakers have been designed to compensate for the effects of room boundary reflections at low frequencies. Basically, the idea is that we should produce a loudspeaker that will perform at its optimum in real listening rooms.

Allison: I'm happy to have these gentlemen join me in recognizing the influence of room boundaries on loudspeaker power output, and I expect that many more will in the coming years. It seems to me that the sensible thing for a consumer to do is to decide where he wants to put loudspeakers in his room—mounted on a wall, on the floor, in a corner, or away from all walls—and then buy speakers designed to be used there.

Holl: Of course, we cannot dictate to a consumer where to place his speakers. But rather than make a speaker that isn't accurate anywhere in the room, we would like to make a speaker that is at least correct in *some* positions in the room and tell the consumer what these positions are—and what he can do to rectify the error, at least to some extent, if it is moved away from these places.

Allison: Advice of that kind from the manufacturer is very valuable, and it's not often given.

Wawzonek: All of our speakers are designed with some placement constraints, and with the Bose 901 there are specific recommendations: The speaker has to be a certain distance from the back wall and from the side wall. There's another part to this issue, however: Where can you sit and still get good stereo balance? You don't want to be confined to the center line between the two speakers. So we take advantage of the reflec-

tions to make the balance between the two speakers more uniform from place to place within the room.

Queen: Because loudspeakers are used in real rooms there will be room reflections, no matter what you do. If the reflected sound is not commensurate with the original, then the speaker will not be accurate or natural-sounding, no matter what its radiation looks like on axis or in a power-averaged response. So the radiation pattern has to be given a great deal of attention; in fact I strongly suspect that many of the things that are being attributed to time alignment may actually have more to do with the resulting radiation patterns.

Cooke: We certainly don't think that the room can be ignored, but neither can the first-arrival sound from the speaker. If the objective is to reproduce a natural sound as closely as possible, then it's inadmissible to do anything that tinkers with the direct sound. Room boundary effects imply an element of time delay, and you cannot correct for delayed effects and maintain naturalness by messing about with the amplitude/frequency response. A comfortable sound is not necessarily natural.

HF: There seems to be a transatlantic difference in emphasis here. In the U.S., manufacturers tend to encourage that loudspeakers be placed close to a wall, which makes the effects of boundary reflections rather obvious, and we regard the total-output power response of a speaker as a more important parameter than its first-arrival spectrum. British designers and reviewers concentrate more on the first-arrival spectrum and tend to encourage users to place the speakers in the middle of the room, away from boundaries so as to minimize the importance of reflections. Any comment on this disparity?

Holl: I don't think that's the case any longer, at least with our own design work at AR. We believe that the first-arrival sound is extremely important. How to relate it to effects of reflections is somewhat more difficult. At low frequencies the effect of the time delay is inconsequential. If a speaker is placed close to a boundary surface, even the direct first-arrival sound is affected by the reflection, as first shown by Roy Allison. We should separate the two room boundary effects: the ones that produce delayed reflections, and those that alter the first-arrival sound.

Cooke: Agreed. The reason why there's a large "pull 'em away from the wall" brigade in England is that the effects of middle- and high-frequency reflections are not easily resolvable without intricate time-delay compensation. Therefore, rather than muck up the reproduction completely, we pull the loudspeakers away from the wall a sufficient distance to mitigate the worst effects of the reflections.

Queen: And if the user has to put a speaker near the wall, he might want to do something to make that wall more uniformly reflective.

Holl: If we pay attention to treatment of the cabinet surface and to the placement of the mid- and high-frequency radiators in the cabinet, they are not going to reflect off the wall behind the speaker. We do recommend that speakers not be too close to adjacent side walls.

Cooke: We say to consumers that the side-wall reflection is the most important; try to get at least a meter away from the side walls. The back wall is certainly not as important.

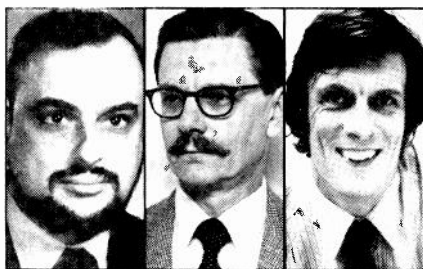
HF: Is the side-wall reflection important because of frequency response or because it affects stereo imaging?

Cooke: Both.

Queen: I once thought that the first-arrival direct sound was the determinant for localization, imaging, and spectral balance, and I set up some experiments at Northwestern University to try to prove it. But it just didn't seem to work that way; early-arriving reflections were also important. In many cases, and with many speakers, some of the reflections actually are higher in level than the first-arrival sound and influence the sound more.

A loudspeaker is designed to have a flat response on axis, but some manufacturers do not pay sufficient attention to what is happening off axis, distorting stereo localization cues, and so on. The radiation pattern varies with frequency, and this type of defect is different at various frequencies in many speakers, further confusing the localization. So I would dispute the idea that we only have to be concerned with the first-arrival sound.

Allison: I try to design my speakers to produce flat power output, to behave in each part of the frequency range like a section of a pulsating sphere, and to have a symmetrical radiation pattern.



Davis, Allison, Holl

In 1964-65 Ted Schultz of Bolt, Beranek, and Newman [acoustical consultants] set up an ingenious experiment to address the question of localization and perceived frequency response in concert halls. He separated the sound into "early"—that is, the direct first-arrival sound plus the first 50 milliseconds of reflections—and sustained reverberations or "late" sound. His finding was that the early sound determined the localization but had very little to do with the perceived frequency balance. He could cut off the bass completely in the early sound, for example, and as long as the later sound had adequate bass the listeners perceived a balanced sound.

This is consistent with the fact, demonstrated by Arthur Janzen during the '50s and corroborated by others through the years, that the perceived frequency balance of a speaker correlates extremely well with the total-power output of the speaker in the room and has little to do with the first-arrival sound, except in speakers with very high directivity. This is because all of the energy from the loudspeaker, emitted in all directions, goes into the reverberant field of the listening room.

Wawzonek: We have the most extreme radiation pattern, designed so that the early reflections are the major part of the sound and the direct sound is a lesser part. The total energy that comes from the loudspeaker is what then determines the timbre of the sound. I don't know where the idea of flat total-power radiation first turned up, but we used the term in our literature in 1968, when the original Bose speaker appeared.

HF: If flat power radiation is accepted as a good thing, how badly do you alter the first-arrival sound while maintaining flat power response before the sound starts to sound bad?

Wawzonek: That's a hard question to answer. There are limits, of course; realistically it's not an issue.

HF: So the first-arrival frequency

Radiation patterns are not only important, they may be everything.—*Davis*

Decide where you want to place your speakers, and then buy ones designed for that use.—*Allison*

We cannot dictate to a consumer where to place his loudspeakers.—*Holl*

response is irrelevant.

Cooke: Rubbish. If you put a very simple sound source such as a human voice either in free space or in a large concert hall, there's no way that you can distort the frequency content of that voice without coloration immediately becoming apparent. If you replace the voice with a small loudspeaker having similar directional characteristics, the same thing applies. If you now bring the walls of the concert hall together until they represent a small listening room, the same thing still applies; if you mangle the direct sound, it will be immediately apparent.

Davis: Because you are varying both the power response and the direct sound.

HF: Let's ask the converse question, Mr. Cooke. If you are designing for a flat first-arrival response, how bad could the speaker's total-power response get before you start caring about it?

Cooke: We take a rather pragmatic approach. Years ago everybody thought the most desirable thing was a flat axial frequency response. In recent years the flat power response thing has been heavily stressed, particularly in Scandinavia. This was thought—erroneously, I think—to be the main criterion and resulted in the production of some exceedingly bad loudspeakers. The pragmatic approach that was developed in England, largely by the BBC, is very simple: It doesn't really matter what the frequency response of the loudspeaker is. What is important is the subjective appraisal—whether the reproduced sound is a reasonable facsimile of what you hear in the studio. And it turns out that the frequency-response curve that you get, either as measured axially or on a total-power spectrum basis, varies according to the size of the enclosure and the directional characteristics of the speaker. There's no one right curve or way of specifying the frequency re-

sponse. If you take the ability to reproduce a natural sound in a natural way as your criterion, what you find is that the measured frequency response, either on-axis or total-power response, will vary from one speaker to another according to its shape and size. So if you make a little speaker with curved sides and a big speaker with flat surfaces, both capable of reproducing sound naturally, when you come to measure them objectively they could well have differently shaped response curves.

HF: So it's not true that either a flat first-arrival response or a flat power response curve is necessarily the right thing to have; what you want depends on other parameters?

Wawzonek: Such as its radiation pattern, which is why we never publish frequency response curves.

HF: This puts reviewers who seek objective data in a difficult situation.

Davis: Even if first arrivals and long-term power output are the same for a big speaker and a little speaker, they won't sound alike.

HF: They sound different because of the size and shape of the cabinet and because of the number, sizes, and locations of the drivers; and these things matter primarily because they affect the radiation pattern?

Davis: Yes. So we need to look at how these factors affect the radiation pattern, to develop technology to vary the pattern, experiment with exotic radiation patterns, etc. There is a lot more to what you perceive about a loudspeaker's sound than simply its spectral balance. If we equalize a Bose speaker so that its pink-noise response in a room is the same as that of a KEF speaker, they still won't sound anything like each other—and we would like to know why. The direction, amplitude, timing, and frequency of sounds arriving at your head all influence your perception. If we had control over each of the variables, we could find out how each affects the per-



Wawzonek, Cooke, Queen

Speakers with adjustable spatial properties will eventually be common.— *Wawzonek*

If you mangle the direct sound, it will be immediately apparent.— *Cooke*

I would dispute the idea that we only have to be concerned with the first-arrival sound.— *Queen*

ception of the sound, and then we could specify the speaker design or put controls on the speaker to allow the user to adjust it for himself.

Queen: The loudspeaker that I have designed has been made to have a completely circular radiation pattern at all audio frequencies. This assures that, at any frequency, the direct sound will always arrive at the listener at a higher amplitude than any reflections. Therefore you don't get a situation where the sound at one frequency is localized at the loudspeaker and the overtone an octave higher is heard 45 degrees away, smearing the stereo image. Had the laws of physics allowed present technology to achieve this in a directional speaker, we would have produced a directional speaker.

Allison: I don't know of any studies addressing the question of what kind of radiation pattern a loudspeaker ought to have. It has been my experience that the wider the pattern, the more natural it sounds in reproducing music. A further point on stereo imaging: It's important that the two loudspeakers have symmetrical radiation patterns.

Cooke: If you start trying to encourage reflections and make use of them, one of the great problems is achieving symmetry in the room. If you lack symmetry in your reflecting surfaces, your stereo image has gone to glory. But we've got to be careful what we mean by "stereo image": Are we talking about the stereo image conveyed only by the information in the recording, or are we talking about creating a pseudo stereo image derived from reflections?

Allison: I don't see a conflict. Reproducing the image the record producer put in the groove is based primarily on the first-arrival information.

Wawzonek: We can't substitute something in place of the stereo image. But as the signal passes through the transducer we can alter the image, spread it out beyond the space occupied

by the speakers, because we think that's a desirable thing to do.

Cooke: This is where we in England come to grief in trying to follow what's going on in America. We listen to the really excellent drama productions that we get from the BBC. With a couple of good loudspeakers in a reasonably damped, symmetrical room, you are looking out onto a stage with lots of action going on in precise, high-definition stereo. But when you use a multidirectional loudspeaker, a man speaking sounds as though he's standing in the vestibule of a railway station. As we talk about what properties we are trying to incorporate in our loudspeakers, we ought also to talk about what we are sacrificing—or are not prepared to sacrifice. I think most British manufacturers stand on the premise that one should not sacrifice a speaker's ability to reproduce one voice naturally in a room.

Davis: That's a good argument for making speakers with an adjustable radiation pattern.

Wawzonek: I think adjustable spatial properties (which we're starting to provide now) will eventually be a common thing.

Davis: Radiation pattern has a drastic effect on imaging. I once did an A/B comparison between monophonic sound reproduced through a stereo pair of speakers vs. the same mono sound through a single central speaker. In the anechoic chamber the phantom central image produced by the stereo speakers was essentially indistinguishable from the middle speaker, but in a room the phantom image sounded much more reverberant than the middle speaker. So radiation pattern is not only important in imaging, it may be virtually everything.

HF: Because of the reflections off boundary surfaces that result from off-axis radiation?

Davis: Yes.

Holl: There's a more basic thing to consider. If you have a different fre-

quency response from left and right speakers at the listening position, there's no way this can give a good stereo image. Thus our desire for vertically aligned drivers, to get uniform horizontal sound distribution in the listening area.

Cooke: It's for the same reason that we've gone to computer selection of stereo pairs of drive units.

Davis: Now it seems that, if you suppress early reflections, you will improve imaging. If reflections don't arrive until, say, 20 milliseconds after the first-arrival sound, the listener will have that time to lock onto the image before being confused by scattered sound. So it may be desirable to design speakers to deliver a clear first arrival and a minimum of other arrivals for several milliseconds.

Cooke: I believe that.

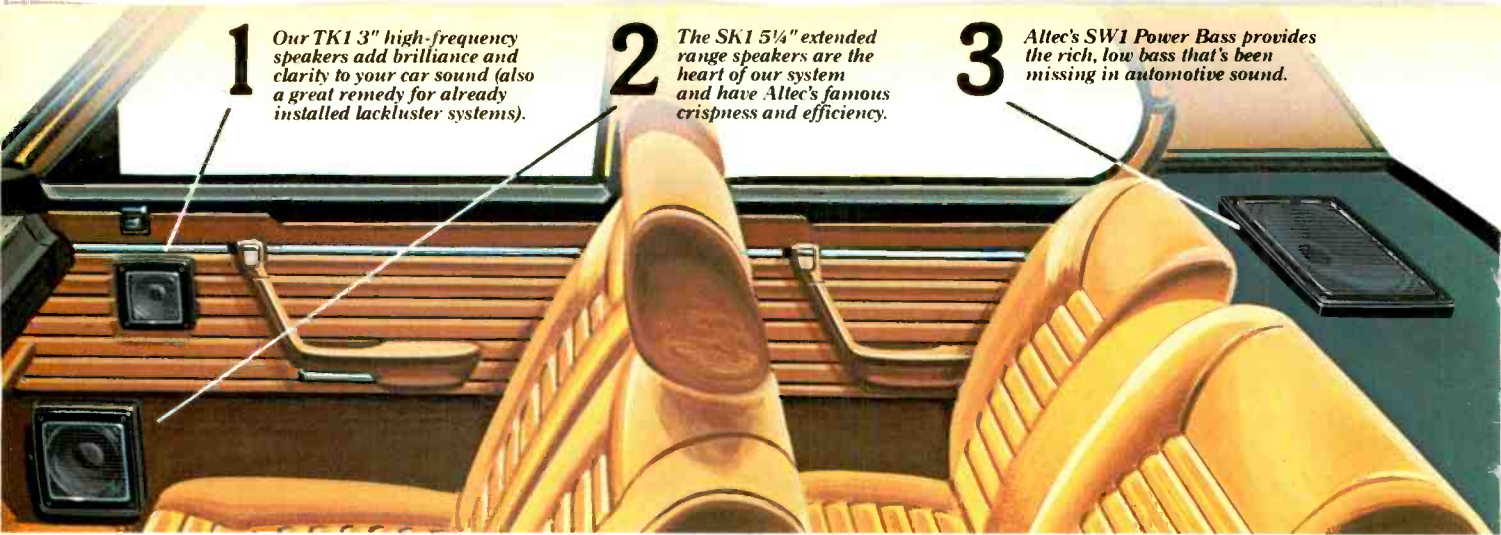
Holl: I agree.

HF: This is the "live-end/dead-end" principle used in many recording studios. Surfaces near the speaker are made absorptive to suppress early reflections, while the listener's end of the room is made reflective so as to produce a uniform sound field.

Queen: However, in controlled experiments in an anechoic chamber in which we introduced various delays up to 10 milliseconds between arrivals, we did not find that the delay altered the way in which reflections affect localization. I think that, if your reflections are uniform with frequency, you don't have a problem.

HF: We seem to have general agreement that a speaker's radiation pattern is important, at least because of its influence on reflections and imaging. What should the radiation pattern be for ideal behavior?

Davis: I don't know, and I don't think anyone else knows. We need studies to find out what radiation patterns work especially well, or which ones people like, and then maybe we can find out why and design speakers accordingly. **HF**



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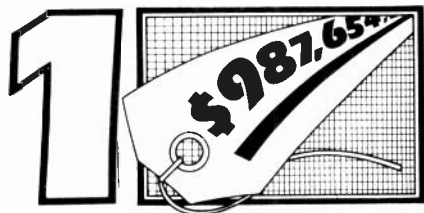
Seven Myths of Speaker Buying

by Peter Dobbin

There is only one right way to buy a speaker: with your ears. The process is demanding and complex, and you'll probably tire of the chase long before you've sampled even a small percentage of the available models. Yet, time-consuming as they are, the basic prescriptions for the prospective buyer—namely, to take your own records to the dealer for demonstration and to make careful A/B comparisons with the reproduction levels matched to compensate for differing speaker efficiencies—are as true now as ever.

But speaker shoppers exhibit one symptom that usually goes untreated, judging from comments by readers and by dealers HIGH FIDELITY has spoken with. Buyers often mistrust their own hearing and fall back on half-understood theory and dimly remembered recommendations to make their choice. Says one dealer, "Many customers are so insecure about their taste and afraid of appearing foolish that they start by distrusting us. When we try to correct their assumptions about speakers, they become certain that we're trying to deceive them. As a result, the less they know, the more they profess to know. It can be frustrating and costly—for us and them."

Obviously we can't readily change the way you approach the subtle challenge of absolutely honest listening, but we can address some of the myths that can distract you from your aim:

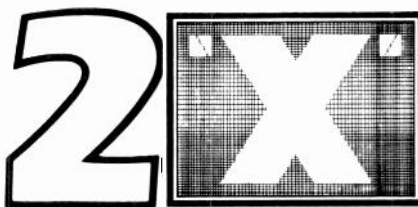


Speaker systems are grossly overpriced.

Generally speaking, there is a larger markup on speakers than on audio electronics and turntables, but the bulkiness of speakers entails overhead that eats up some of what would have been profit for the dealer. In comparison

with many consumer items—clothing and cosmetics, for example, where the profit margin may be close to 200%—speaker profits are not overly inflated; rarely are they more than 50%.

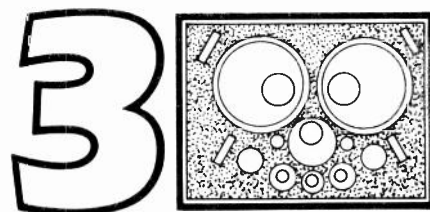
When you do plunk down, say, \$300 for a nationally advertised speaker, you're obviously paying many costs that are not immediately evident in raw materials. The most common complaint, perhaps, centers around the use of particleboard instead of solid wood for the enclosures. But the economics of using the cheaper material are obvious, and use of solid wood doesn't guarantee a better-sounding speaker. Particleboard can be made much denser than solid wood, and it performs quite well as speaker enclosure material. Any large cabinet will resonate, however, and these resonances can be controlled by careful internal bracing and damping; success in this respect can be judged only by listening, of course. If you have a taste for "natural ingredients" rather than vinyl-clad particleboard, good compromise can be had in any of the speakers made of particleboard but finished in fine wood veneer.



Dealers' house-brand speakers are a better buy than brands advertised nationally or internationally.

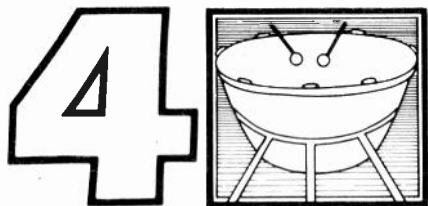
Though house brands are a rather mixed bag, some useful generalizations are possible. When you purchase a house brand or unbranded speaker, you have no idea what you're really getting. Often it is designed with more care for cost than for quality; you can't assume that a system that looks similar to familiar

models at fancier prices delivers similar performance. When a salesman starts extolling the attributes of the house-brand speaker, get ready to do some dispassionate comparative listening before assuming virtue (beyond price) in the mystery box. And if you politely inform the salesman that you'd like to make A/B comparisons among a variety of speakers and he resists, you should consider seeking another dealer.



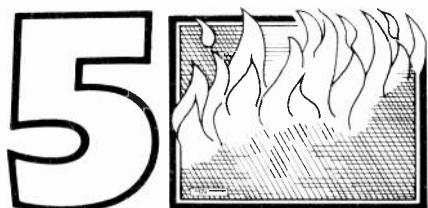
The more drivers a speaker system contains, the better it will sound.

This is probably the most prevalent of all the myths, and the one that causes the most customer confusion. The more drivers a speaker contains, the more crossovers it usually requires. Without careful design, the multiplicity of drivers and crossovers can create as many problems as it solves. A properly designed two-way system (woofer and tweeter) may well have far fewer anomalies in response, phase behavior, and stereo imaging than a similarly priced three- or four-way system. A well-designed multiway system, on the other hand, limits the frequency range each driver must reproduce and should achieve optimum individual and ensemble performance. Crossover networks add their own distortion, phasing problems, and expense, but they are a necessary evil until someone invents a true full-range single-element transducer with the dynamic range required to fill a listening room—and at an affordable price. In terms of value, a well-designed two-way system is very hard to beat, and adding drivers tends to raise the price more than the performance.



The bigger the box, the bigger the bass.

Like other myths, this pearl consists of a grain of truth covered by an accretion of misunderstanding. Size alone is no indication of the quantity or—more importantly—the quality of low-frequency reproduction. With the development of acoustic-suspension (sealed box) enclosures in the '50s, it became relatively simple to get good bass response from small enclosures. The tradeoff, however, was decreased efficiency. And a number of other tradeoffs are available, even with ported systems. So all you can say is that a bigger box would mean bigger bass if all other considerations were the same, which they definitely are not.

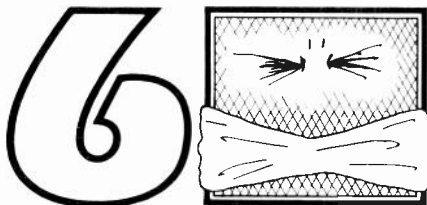


A speaker with a high power rating is less likely to burn out than one with a lower rating.

Again, it's just not that simple. Most damage occurs when a low-power amplifier is forced to drive a speaker to high volume levels. Protracted clipping of the signal, even though most of its original energy lies in the midrange and below, introduces odd-order harmonics in the tweeter range, where the driver's ability to dissipate heat is relatively re-

stricted. Thus you can destroy a tweeter with signals that don't harm the other drivers. A super-powered amp feeding even the lowest-rated speaker, however, is not likely to cause any damage in any sort of normal use.

Manufacturers differ in what they view as minimum and maximum power levels, and therefore their suggested amplifier power ranges can't necessarily be compared. Some maximum figures reflect the power that will result in high volume levels before the onset of unacceptable distortion, others the power at the onset of driver destruction. Also, some manufacturers give the rating in continuous power levels and others specify peak levels. The continuous-tone and pulsed-power figures in HIGH FIDELITY's test reports can help in this respect.



Foam grilles muffle sound; hard-edged frame grilles diffract sound.

That depends on whether the grille has been taken into consideration in the overall design: what kind of grille is employed and the relationship of its parts to the drivers' placement. If, for example, the grille absorbs some sound (most absorb very little), the tweeter output can be adjusted through choice of driver or crossover design to compensate for it. The acid test is how the system sounds with the grille on. Unfortunately, many dealers have taken to demonstrating speakers with it off, which could result in an overbright high end—a quality that may attract attention in the showroom but defeats the intent of a good design. When auditioning speakers, ask that the grille be left on and check for

poorly controlled reflection or diffraction by listening for sharply defined transients and precise stereo imaging.

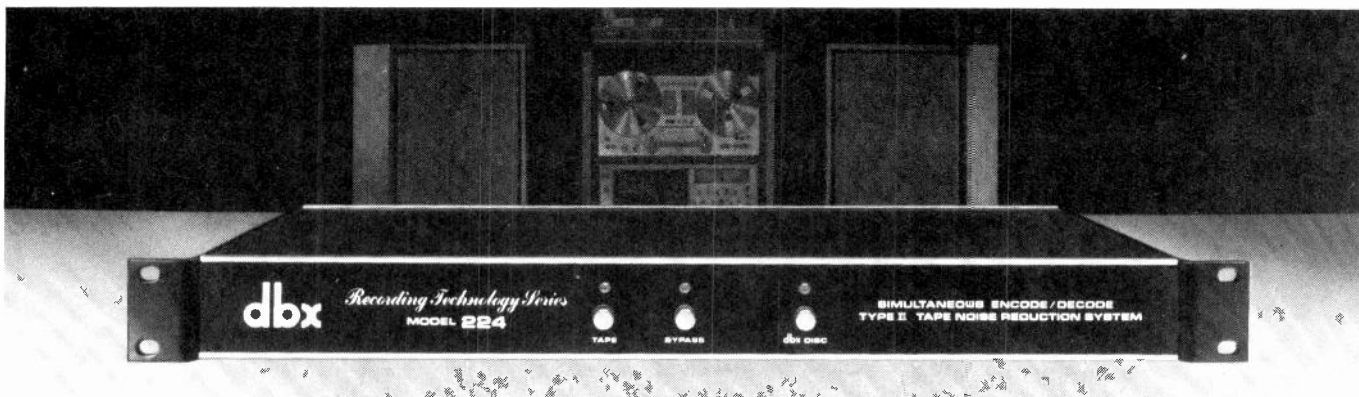
Incidentally, it was probably the habit among dealers of giving demonstrations without grilles in place that sparked the trend toward brightly colored driver diaphragms and other cosmetic conceits that add nothing to the sound. Even if you like looking at vibrating woofers, chrome trim rings, and natural wood finishes, it's wiser to use a speaker with the grille on, since it limits the possibility of damage to the drivers.



When budgeting for a stereo system, the speaker should take the biggest bite.

The logic of this "truism" rests on the assumption that the more you spend for a speaker, the better it will sound. If you decide that a \$100 model sounds as good to your ears as one costing \$400, what point is there to spending the extra cash? Also, any speaker is far less likely to fail over time than electronics, turntables, or tape decks.

So assess your priorities carefully in regard to all of these points and then listen for the properties you want in your speakers. Be warned, however: The ability to make fine sonic discriminations has to be learned, and too great an emphasis on price or too hasty a choice may result in the purchase of a speaker whose charms quickly fade as musical tastes and hearing become more sophisticated. It all comes back to a willingness to listen carefully and without prejudice before you buy. Remember that it's your ears alone that need be satisfied by your choice. **HF**



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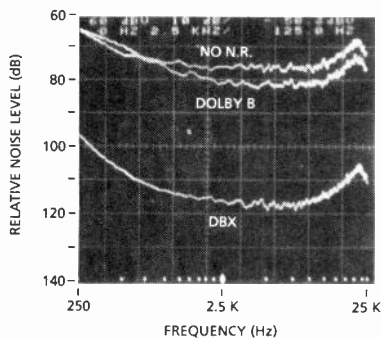
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Dolby reduces noise by only 10dB at best, and only in the high frequency range. dbx virtually eliminates tape hiss, reducing it by more than 30dB across the entire frequency range. (Unretouched laboratory photograph. Data from "The Importance of Dynamic Range," Audio Magazine, January, 1980. For a copy of the article, write dbx.)

The Dolby[®]** system you've been putting up with certainly doesn't. It only reduces tape noise by 10dB at the most, and only in the high frequency range.

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ble distortion or changing the tonal character of the sound.

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Well, the Model 224 gives you the capability to record an unprecedented 85dB on open reel and 80dB on cassette.

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MAKING GOOD SOUND BETTER



The Trouble with Orchestras

Last June composer/conductor Gunther Schuller welcomed students to the Berkshire Music Center (better known as Tanglewood), where he is artistic director, with a speech that shook the classical music world. The former president of the New England Conservatory (and now president of the National Music Council) eschewed the usual innocuous generalities in favor of alerting the young musicians—mostly postgraduates headed toward symphonic careers—to the evils and pitfalls they would likely encounter in their professional lives.

Taking as his point of departure Tanglewood founder Serge Koussevitzky's dictum that as musicians "we must not use music, we must serve it," Schuller with "no great pleasure" warned that, in U.S. orchestras, joy "has

gone out of the faces of many of our musicians. Apathy, cynicism, hatred of new music abound on all sides. Unbelievably, we have developed the art of reading [music] to such a high level of technical competence that we are in imminent danger of no longer needing our ears except for the crudest of note repairs. We have accomplished the ultimate musical ingenuity (or is it indignity?): We have learned to transform musical performing into a reading, visual skill, eliminating the very thing for which music exists—hearing.”

Schuller bemoaned the fact that the term “professional symphony musician” has begun to conjure up images of performers who are “embittered, disgruntled, bored, who have come to hate music. . . . As I travel around the country guest-conducting various orchestras, it is often former students, who once had that shine in their countenance when they heard or made music, who long since have lost that spiritual identification with music.”

The blame for the “cancer” that has spread through all but a handful of American orchestras, Schuller insisted, falls on the unionization, or at least the union mentality, of our orchestras; on music directors, absent more often than not, whose ensembles play second fiddle to their careers; and on the consequent filling of the artistic vacuum by nonartists—boards and orchestra managements. “Consider that, in thousands of pages of musicians’ union bylaws, federal as well as local, no matter what city, you will look in vain for any mention of the word ‘art,’” he said.

These rules “concern themselves exclusively with money, with time, with durations of rehearsals and inter-

missions; in short, with ways of achieving an ever-increasing maximum of financial gain for an ever-decreasing minimum of effort and a minimum of product. Many American ensembles are now down to three rehearsals a week, regardless of the difficulty of the program.

“Or consider the spectacle of musicians getting up from their chairs and walking off the stage in the middle of a phrase—even in the middle of a note—because the clock has struck 4:30 or 5:00. How *dare* we interrupt music in such a brutal fashion? It is an insult to our calling, an indignity that we visit on the work of a master for whose sake we went into music in the first place, and whose genius may be greater than all the talents in such an orchestra put together.”

Once a young extra horn player with the New York Philharmonic in the mid-1940s, Schuller recalled the players’ resistance to the rare performances of Mahler symphonies, many of his fellow brass players assailing them “as an imposition and an unwanted evil. . . . Now as I talk to my colleagues around the country, particularly in the top ten orchestras, they are already bored with Mahler. From hate to boredom in forty years!”

“We used to think years ago that the cynicism of symphony musicians was explicable by reason of their status: as underpaid and held in low esteem as a profession by society. But now that many musicians’ salaries are relatively respectable, . . . things are even worse than before. Indeed, the cynicism is worst in precisely those orchestras that enjoy the highest standard of living.”

Recording? Television? Schuller called these “two of the remaining areas

of pride left—and, of course, there is extra money for that too. But . . . notice when a given passage or solo is done, how quickly the instrument goes into the lap. No participation in the music, . . . no listening to what else is going on. . . . And the ears are functioning only enough to insure playing relatively on time and relatively in tune.”

Schuller complained that orchestras have become too successful as businesses: “Their techniques of survival are now those of the American corporation, including the full panoply of managerial and public relations accouterments,” implying that selling a product is often more important than the quality of the product itself. He went on to decry the problems created by “absentee musical directors and orchestras run not by artists, but by committees.

“We must solve these problems before it is too late, for we have in the last fifty to sixty years created and built in this country—starting with the Stokowskis, the Koussevitzkys, the Reiners, the Toscaninis, and Mitropouloses, and their respective orchestras—the finest technical orchestral instruments in the world. But we are about to throw the baby out with the bath water if we don’t address our energies and talents to the ills that threaten to compromise us.

“In a world that certainly seems to have gone completely insane, the arts are becoming ever more precious. When I look around me, or when I contemplate the daily barrage of depressing news, I cling to the notion that perhaps music and the other arts represent a rare refuge for us all—if we can but preserve their purity.”

We asked Schuller to expand on the subject for our readers.

by Gunther Schuller

Since making those remarks, I have been overwhelmed with declarations of support. Never in my professional life have I done anything that has elicited such a strong and positive reaction. And the reaction has come from *all* levels and categories of musical society, including those I had singled out and those directly related to the issues: board members, managers, rank-and-file musicians, union members and officials, and conductors. Apparently, what I articulated

had been festering just below the surface for some time, waiting for someone to express it publicly.

Now all of this may come as a shock to the average concert-goer, who, from the perspective of the second balcony, sees only the “glamorous” side of concert life. That person might well ask: Why such dissatisfaction, such bitterness, such cynicism among musicians? And, of course, the answer brings us to the other side of the argument. Musi-

cians can justifiably point to a whole catalog of evils as the root causes of their plight, and one could easily write an article on that subject alone. Suffice it here to touch upon some of the major problems that have remained largely undressed.


There is, to begin with, the historical fact of the tyrannization of several generations of orchestral players by the great conductor-tyrants of the past: Toscanini, Reiner, Stokowski, and Szell and

Leinsdorf in their earlier years, to name only the more famous (infamous?). They had absolute control over the lives of their musicians in human, social, and economic terms, and they consistently abused it. Small wonder that a generation or two of musicians developed a deep-rooted fear of and hatred for "the conductor." Inevitably, they, with help from their unions, rebelled against the many inequities of such dictatorial control.

The exploitation of musicians by tyrannical conductors is largely a thing of the past. But old wounds have hardened into tough scars. The adversary relationship between musicians and conductors still persists, smoldering under the surface and liable to emerge at the slightest provocation regardless of the conductor's disposition; he is simply "the enemy." In addition—and there is, alas, also much justification here—musicians regard most conductors as mediocre and unworthy of their respect, ranging from dull to downright incompetent, and likely to have been chosen for political or personal reasons rather than for musical, inspirational, or leadership abilities.

Symphony musicians have other "natural enemies" as well: the management and the board of trustees. The former generally carries out the policy and economic directives of the latter, but local variations in the relationship between the two may make for varying degrees of responsibility. In most negotiations, the management finds itself more or less automatically, though not always wisely, on the side of the board. But the most crucial "blame" often falls to the board alone for its choice of the conductor or music director. As the musicians see it, the person with whom they have to spend 90% of their professional lives is chosen by lay people who often have no idea how to select the "right" conductor. Musicians argue, therefore, that it is the incompetence of trustees and management in making decisions, compounded by a whole series of inherited inequities, that has caused them to rise up aggressively against their "tormentors," seeking decent living conditions and some influence on a: equity in the major decisions that affect their futures.

A study of both history and human nature teaches that evil on one side usually begets evil on the other. Thus the never-ending cycle of action, reaction, and counterreaction that has character-

 *Players' ears are functioning only enough to insure playing relatively on time and relatively in tune.*

ized labor-management relations throughout the industrial age. The tragedy of this process is that it institutionalizes the adversary relationship, thereby lessening the hope of breaking the cycle. The wounds on both sides become deeper, and each reaction arises out of an increasing well of bitterness, resentment, and frustration. All of this sociological paraphernalia is particularly inappropriate, and it seems to me unnecessary, in the arts.

If the symphony orchestra is to survive, musicians, management, and the trustees must collaborate seriously on their *collective* future, must develop a respectful, serious, substantive dialogue rather than yell at each other from entrenched positions. They must work out a common future based on a common process (and progress) that will deal realistically with the real "common enemy": those millions of people in our society—and their political representatives—in whose lives "classical" music plays no part whatever. *That* is the real dilemma! And as long as the three parties continue to beat each other over the head in a kind of fratricide, the old dictum "divide and conquer" threatens to prevail.


The sorry annual spectacle of orchestras on strike, with all the attendant bad publicity and generally woeful misrepresentation in the press, has to stop! We in the arts are altogether too vulnerable in this society to kill each other off year after year and hope to survive in the long run. As long as unions, orchestra committees, and members of ICSOM [the International Conference of Symphony and Opera Musicians—the voice

of the classical orchestra player within the musicians' union] go to battle only for the immediate, short-term goals of better pay for fewer hours, shorter rehearsals, and correction of other real or perceived inequities without also considering the long-range questions of artistic progress, of how to generate greater support for their "product," of how to effect more widespread musical literacy in our society, no real progress can be made on the real problems.

The achievements and accomplishments of ICSOM over the years have been well noted and appreciated, and it is clear that at times tough, aggressive tactics are the only approach that will work with recalcitrant managements and apathetic boards. But insofar as the ICSOM approach has concerned itself almost entirely with short-term improvements mostly of a financial or "working condition" nature, it has fallen short of the mark. There are higher and better goals to which it, along with the unions, might also direct itself.

Most symphony musicians regard such goals as none of their concern. For example, some years ago, musicians and unions launched a drive for full employment and a fifty-two-week year, not in itself a reprehensible goal—indeed, a perfectly normal aspiration. Many orchestras got what they wanted. The only trouble was that they had given no thought to the harrowing question of *how* the managements were to fill those fifty-two-week seasons: Where would the concerts, the fees, the income to support that policy come from? All too typically, the musicians' position was: "Let management figure it out. That's not *our* concern."

Some are beginning to see now that it *was* their concern, or should have been. What managements were forced to do to honor those demands was to grab at any kind of concert or gig that came along. The so-called "runout concerts"—sometimes three a day in acoustically atrocious high school auditoriums or shopping centers, preceded and followed by exhausting bus trips, the whole venture often artificially generated by state or federal subsidies—have become the bane of the musicians' and managements' existences. They are most often an indignity to the profession, let alone the art. (That such concerts often provide the first contact with classical music for people in outlying areas is, of course, a

 *Musicians regard most conductors as mediocre and unworthy of their respect.*

positive factor. But at what price of wear and tear on the orchestras and their morale?)

I have taken musicians to task for their cynicism and apathy, but if pushed to name the one party most responsible for our present dilemmas, I would have to finger the boards. Not that there is anything inherently wrong with the American system of a lay board working with professional management and personnel; it's just that the system has been woefully abused. Out of sheer ignorance or arrogance, many boards have time and again made lamentable decisions: bad choices of conductors; stubborn refusals to accommodate the professional dignity of musicians in terms of salary, working conditions, or social benefits; failure to acknowledge the real prob-

lems. And too often, they carry out their functions in an elitist, nineteenth-century, social-tea-amidst-potted-palms manner.

One of the more disconcerting examples of board behavior occurred recently, when Michael Gielen was chosen as the new "musical director" of the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra. Gielen is a fine, intelligent conductor, but the method by which the choice was made was outrageous. The selection was made by two or three trustees after seeing Gielen at only one concert—and that with the Detroit Symphony. He had never appeared in front of the Cincinnati Symphony and thus was totally unknown to the orchestra, most of the trustees, and the Cincinnati public. Not only was this the kind of affront that musicians quite

understandably might resent, but it put the fate of an orchestra and the cultural welfare of an entire city in the hands of a couple of not very well informed citizens. In addition, it is clear that almost no consideration was given to American conductors, a theme so effectively investigated by John Rockwell in two recent *New York Times* articles.

What is most strenuously needed is the education of the trustees. Wealth, a position of power and influence, and a vague love of music as an "entertainment" or a "social grace" can no longer be the major criteria for board membership. We should have obligatory training courses for prospective trustees, every bit as tough and demanding as those to which musicians are subjected.

One of the most serious problems



Two of the last remaining true music directors resigned their long-held posts last season: Eugene Ormandy (left), who guided the destiny of the Philadelphia Orchestra since 1938, and Maurice Abravanel, who turned the provincial Utah Symphony into an orchestra of international renown after becoming its conductor in 1947.



There are some positive examples of superb music directorships. Take the case of Maurice Abravanel, whose tenure of more than thirty years as conductor and music director of the Utah Symphony ended just last season. Abravanel developed the Utah Symphony into not only a first-rate orchestra, but one with exceptionally high morale and a very positive attitude and work ethic. He maintained a point of view: about the orchestra as a musical instrument, about repertory, about the place and function of the orchestra in both the musical and the general community. As a result the Utah Symphony developed a style and a

distinct personality that it and the community could be proud of. Salt Lake City could identify with it as most places identify with their sports teams. One tangible bonus was a long-term recording contract that brought the highly praised recordings of the Utah Symphony to the rest of the world.

But Abravanel went further. Fully realizing his role as an "educator" of the orchestra, the audience, and the greater community, he developed excellent relationships over many years with the state legislature and with city officials, seeking their support—and getting it. And as a kind of fallout of his efforts, support

began to come in for all kinds of other arts organizations—theater, ballet, museums, education in the arts—so that Utah and Salt Lake City have some of the finest performing groups and arts institutions anywhere in the United States.

What Abravanel achieved should be a lesson to us all. But such things take time to achieve, and time is precisely what few people are willing to give to anything anymore. Artists and musicians and conductors want instant fame, instant careers, instant success, without putting in the time and effort that such results require.


facing the modern symphony is that of the absentee music director. Jet travel has afforded the possibility of simultaneous directorships, and conductors have shamelessly indulged themselves, taking on as many as three or four orchestras and, in one case some years ago, even five. Since boards have generally not been wise or strong enough to resist such temptations, many orchestras have become directionless, amorphous aggregations with no personality, style, or point of view. Their season is often a mere stringing together of programs—usually of the classical hit-parade variety—that permits no artistic growth of either the orchestra or the conductor, much less of the two *together*.

Time was when such growth—the orchestra learning from its conductor and vice versa—was held in high esteem. The subtle process of feeding off one another artistically is absolutely essential; no great orchestra was ever developed without such cross-fertilization. But such symbiotic relationships cannot develop overnight or during the infrequent intervals between a conductor's lengthy absences.

Many orchestra musicians are content with the annual round-robin of guest conductors and without specific directorship. But they are dead wrong. In the long run such an approach breeds complacency and an uncritical attitude. And it leads to confusion, since there are no particular performance criteria to aspire to, or to the development of a facile skill in following all conductorial comers regardless of quality. At worst, it leads to a kind of group arrogance, with the orchestra deciding how things shall be played, in default of genuine leadership. And it leads, finally, to an uninvolved, businesslike attitude: Just let me play the notes, and don't bother me with stylistic niceties and all that artistic crap.

This philosophy of nonleadership and nonresponsibility, usually promoted by precisely those musicians who have become most cynical and apathetic—often unfortunately the real leadership of an orchestra—is in turn welcomed by many managements and boards, since it makes the job of finding and keeping a music director that much easier.


Ideally, a music directorship is a full-time commitment, not only to the orchestra, but to the community, one that cannot be measured necessarily by

 *Wealth, power, and a vague love of music as a "social grace" can no longer be the major criteria for orchestra board membership.*

how many weeks a conductor is actually on the podium. In some of the major orchestras, music directors conduct as few as 11 or 12 out of 30 weeks, in some a few more, and in some rare cases slightly more than half the season. Whether the conductor knows it or not, and likes it or not, he is the prime music educator of the community. Through his programs and artistic decisions, his musical and extramusical (including financial) concern for the orchestra, his commitment to the orchestra as an institution and the building of its audience, or through his default in these matters, he either educates well or educates poorly. If the latter, he is not a good music director, even though he may be a good conductor; he only takes and doesn't give.

Some conductors argue that, with the growing power of orchestra committees, they cannot be true music directors anymore, but become mere figureheads. Hiring and firing are largely in the hands of the ensemble itself, and programs and soloists are determined or heavily influenced by management to suit the box office. A board will quickly descend on any conductor who harbors notions of adventurous programming. These conductors ask, perhaps rightly: "What is there for me to be music director of?"

With the trend toward absentee music directors, another deplorable trend developed: the placing of more and more artistic/musical decision-making in the hands of the managements. *Artistic* decisions should not be made by *nonartists*. Period. They can be

 *Why do musicians let the very thing to which they dedicated their lives become the object of their hatred and cynicism?*

arrived at in collaboration and consultation with nonartists, but not made solely by them.

This sorry trend may have run its course, however. While two of the few remaining great music directors vacated their posts just last season—Ormandy in Philadelphia and Abravanel in Utah—Giulini seems determined to take on a real directorship, with all its attendant responsibilities, in Los Angeles. And elsewhere, there seems to be a growing realization that the indulgence of conductors and their Fifty-seventh Street agents has gone on long enough, that artistic direction and administrative management are not interchangeable.

It would not be difficult to go on citing other orchestral problems and inequities, large and small. But the implied questions remain: Why must these inequities, real or imaginary, lead to cynicism and apathy? Are bitterness and divisiveness the only possible reactions to these problems? And even more profound: Why do musicians let the very thing to which they have dedicated their lives—music-making—become the object of their hatred and cynicism? Why must one loathe the making of music and music itself?

One clear sign that the malaise infecting our symphonies is no deep dark secret is that, in increasing numbers, young musicians are turning away from the orchestra as a career. They pursue careers in chamber music, teaching, freelancing, or even outside the music profession rather than face a life of regimentation and apathy in a typical symphony orchestra.

It needn't be so, of course. There are many orchestral musicians who do not let their art, or their love for it, be negatively affected. Though such musicians are not often loudmouths and not, as a group, aggressive or belligerent, neither are they naive or cowardly. They simply have the ability to rise above the sometimes petty issues. While they, too, may fight for better conditions, they will not let that become their sole or overriding motivation.

In any case, it is not a question of one group being pitted against another. What is needed is working together. The symphony orchestra is too fragile and vulnerable an institution in a basically apathetic society and a hostile economic environment to survive internal divisiveness much longer. **HF**

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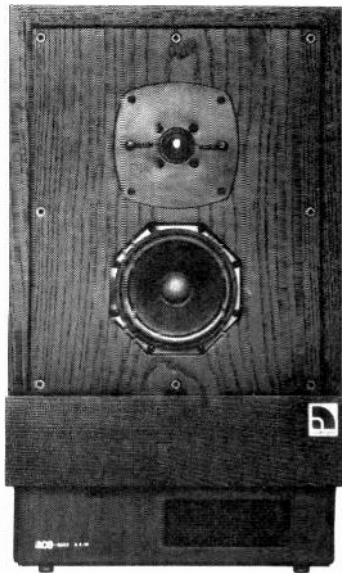
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Behind the Scenes



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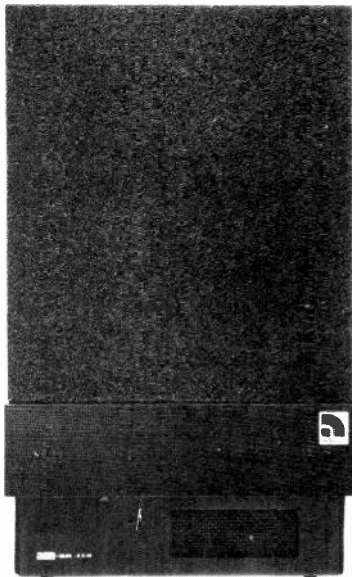
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As reported in April, Deutsche Grammophon has recorded Wagner's *Parsifal* digitally. In fact, for all its public denials, Polygram has been carrying out a fairly extensive program of dual recording—analogue and digital tapings of the same sessions—though with no definite plans for digital release, since it was not convinced that present digital technology offers much improvement over its typical product. Now, however, there are such plans. DG's first digital release, anticipated for September, will be Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte* with—as in the *Parsifal*—Herbert von Karajan conducting the Berlin Philharmonic. Francisco Araiza will be featured as Tamino, Edith Mathis as Pamina, José van Dam as Papageno, and Gottfried Hornik as Sarastro.

Also from DG, more Mahler symphonies: Karajan has completed the Ninth and next takes up the demanding *Symphony of a Thousand*, No. 8. Claudio Abbado, meanwhile, has wrapped up the Sixth, started last year, and the Fifth with the Chicago Symphony. He will probably record the First with the Chicago as well, but his Third will feature the Vienna Philharmonic, as did his Fourth. While in Chicago, Abbado also recorded two violin concertos, Bruch's First and Mendelssohn's, with young Israeli violinist Schlomo Mintz.

Eugen Jochum, whose Beethoven is reviewed in this issue, has recorded Bach's Mass in B minor for EMI with the Bavarian Radio Symphony. Soloists are Helen Donath, Brigitte Fassbaender, Claes H. Ahnsjö, Roland Hermann, and Robert Holl. Jochum is also continuing his new Bruckner symphony series on EMI with the Dresden State Orchestra; the Seventh is due for release this month, and sessions were recently concluded for the Fifth.

Nonesuch, which recently promised to begin recording "west of the Hudson," has signed the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra and conductor Gerard Schwarz for two recordings: One will contain works for strings by David Diamond, Irving Fine, Samuel Barber, and Elliott Carter, and the other, Schoenberg's Chamber Symphony, Op. 9, and Five Pieces for Orchestra, Op. 16. The company plans still more Schoenberg, the Quartet No. 2, with the Sequoia Quartet and soprano Bethany Beardslee. Filling out that disc will be Mel Powell's *Little Companion Pieces*, commissioned by Beardslee specifically to partner Schoen-

berg's unusually scored "quartet."

Not that Nonesuch has forsaken the East Coast. It has announced a joint venture with the New York City Opera, a digital recording of the original-cast production of *Silverlake*, directed by Harold Prince. The adaptation of Kurt Weill's 1933 opera *Der Silbersee* uses Hugh Wheeler's libretto, based on George Kaiser's original text, and additional lyrics by Lys Simonette, a former Weill assistant, who incorporated incidental music from other Weill works into the production. Joel Grey heads a cast that includes William Neill, Jack Harold, Elizabeth Hynes, and Elaine Bonazzi. The release is scheduled for the fall.

Readers of Robert Morgan's John Cage review in this issue may be curious about the Tomato label. Though so far it has generally limited its classical recordings to contemporary repertory, it now plans to enter the "standard" field. A series of digital releases throughout the summer and fall will feature pianist João Carlos Martins playing the music of Bach. Also in the fall Tomato will begin a series of digital recordings of Chopin piano works with a three-disc set of the nocturnes played by Arturo Moreira Lima.

On the analog front, it will issue the Austrian record company Amadeo's production of the complete Beethoven piano sonatas performed by Friedrich Gulda, an acclaimed set of thirteen discs also available through Musical Heritage Society. Other recordings will include more Cage and works by Philip Glass.

London Records' latest opera projects include another in Charles Mackerras' Janáček series, *From the House of the Dead*, this time with an all-Czech cast headed by Peter Dvorský. And sessions have been completed on Bellini's *La Sonnambula*, with Joan Sutherland, Luciano Pavarotti, Nicolai Ghiaurov, and Richard Bonynge conducting the National Philharmonic Orchestra.

Among London's orchestral projects are the Beethoven violin concerto, with Kyung-Wha Chung and with Kiril Kondrashin leading the Vienna Philharmonic, and Richard Strauss's *Alpine* Symphony with Sir Georg Solti conducting the Bavarian Radio Symphony for the first time on records. André Previn has also recorded the *Alpine* with the Vienna Philharmonic, launching a Strauss series for Angel. **HF**

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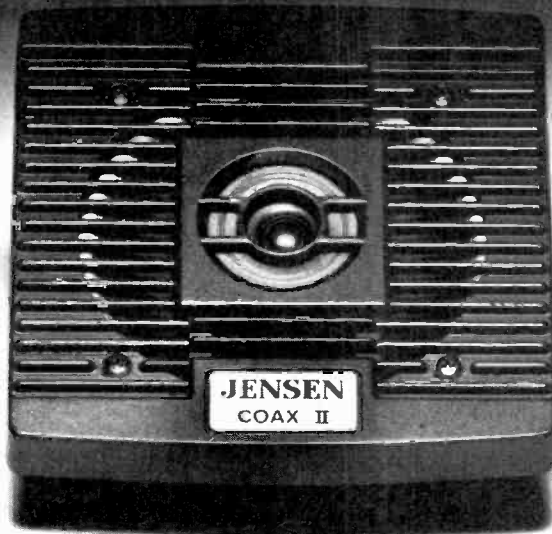
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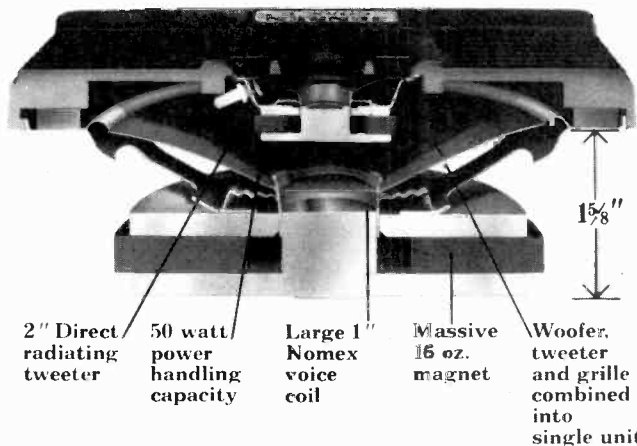
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Record Reviews

Switched-On *Brandenburgs*

Bach on the synthesizer: The Carlos-Elkind team tackles the rest of the concertos.

by Kenneth Cooper



Wendy Carlos—a Stokowski, Fox, Leonhardt, *Star Wars*, disco, and Vivaldi mélange

What can a synthesizer do for Bach? The switched-on team of Wendy (né Walter) Carlos and Rachel Elkind has given us a generous sampling over the years with various releases, now culminating in a complete compilation of the world's most colorful and indestructible concertos. The reorchestrations are adept and brilliant, and the performances chug cheerfully along through delightfully realized passages: the long string of solos in the first movement of No. 3; the stereo playfulness in No. 6; the percussion effect created to relieve Carlos' boredom in the Menuet of No. 1 and the Beechamesque piccolo doubling in the neighboring Polacca; the occasional gross "harpichord" arpeggios; the striking imitation of recorders and trumpets; and especially the out-of-style wows in the violin part in such places as the Andante of No. 2. Indeed, it is where Carlos parts company with Bach that the proceedings really come to life, and a question infinitely more stimulating than the first comes to mind: What would Bach have done with a synthesizer?

We know what Bach's test of a new organ must have been like. In his son Philipp Emanuel's words, "He would say in

jest, 'Above all I must know whether the organ has good lungs,' and, to find out, he would draw out every speaking stop and play in the fullest and richest possible texture. At this the organ builders would often grow quite pale with fright." There was a good deal of fright in 1968 when Carlos stepped in to fill a spot Bach has left frustratingly blank, the "missing" slow movement of No. 3. Her original cadenza ("Switched-On Bach," Columbia MS 7194) not only made exciting use of the instrument, but for a moment paralleled the fantasy, wit, and even the parody of Bach's thought. This old "unsatisfactory" cadenza has been replaced in the new set by a stale attempt to reconstruct what Bach might have played, sitting "at the harpichord and improvising a little, but certainly not for very long." A rationale is offered for the substitution: "In 1968, it seemed to us that the stylistic inconsistency of our cadenza was fun. . . . It was an attempt to show off the paraphernalia of the synthesizer in a way that perhaps needed to be done in 1968 but that is now not only redundant, but also crude." Alas, some of the fun has gone out. And when Carlos says, almost apologetically, "Sometimes I get carried away, doing

more ornamentation than appears in the score," I only wish she had taken a more distant and adventurous trip.

Although I find the sounds of the synthesizer nowhere near as colorful or varied as Bach's orchestration and a definite dehumanizing influence on the *Brandenburgs* (something like the way a Juilliard student plays before his teacher tells him to go out and live a little), I must confess amazement at how much personality Carlos has managed to convey. The virtuoso performances and the technical accomplishments of the electronics and engineering are astonishing without a doubt, but more impressive is the fact that a musical interpretation is evident throughout. The style is a mélange of Leopold Stokowski, Virgil Fox, Gustav Leonhardt, *Star Wars*, and disco influences, with the old Vivaldi "freight car" manner providing the basic motor impulse.

Some of this motor sound is undoubtedly intrinsic to the present state of the synthesizer: Legato is difficult to achieve. Carlos has indeed "learned to successfully play *legato* lines," but mostly in slow movements. (Even so, the instrument has a long way to go before it effaces memories of the oboe playing of a Henry Schuman or a Ronald Roseman in the Adagio of No. 1, for example.) In the fast movements the lack of legato takes its toll. Sure, we want that buoyant, nonlegato bass line and well-articulated passagework; but if no slurs or relative lengths of notes or different sorts of attacks are used to help the listener hear which groups of notes belong together, we have to agree with W. S. Gilbert: "When every one is somebodee, then no one's anybody!" Consequently, although every note in every part is clear, the polyphony is not always easy to follow. Scientific precision is not the same as musical clarity.

These *Brandenburgs* can be switched on with pleasure, but don't switch off the old turned-on "Switched-On Bach."

BACH: *Brandenburg Concertos* (6), S. 1046-51.

Wendy Carlos, synthesizer [Rachel Elkind-Tourre, prod.] COLUMBIA M2X 35895, \$11.98 (two discs). Tape: M2T 35895, \$11.98 (two cassettes).

Concertos: No. 1, in F; No. 2, in F; No. 3, in G [from MS 7194]; No. 4, in G [from MS 7286]; No. 5, in D [from M 32659]; No. 6, in B flat.

Streamlined Beethoven

Jochum's career as a Beethoven conductor points up the effect recordings have had on interpretation.

by Harris Goldsmith

Composers have always been able to revise their music after hearing it performed, and artists could always step back from the easel for a more objective look; but until recently, the re-creative musician had no such way of assessing his work, from the outside, so to speak. The advent of sound reproduction has changed all that. At first, recordings were regarded as novelties; they were not easily made, and primitive techniques were unable to capture music with any verity. But today, virtually all professional musicians have been formed or re-formed by the phonograph.

Habitual reliance on recordings has pretty consistently produced what Virgil Thomson once called "streamlining" in performance style. Certain values are almost always strengthened: clarity of texture, strictness of meter, forward continuity, and in general, a concern for detail. Significantly, Toscanini's interpretive style underwent its biggest change in the early 1940s, precisely when NBC started to systematically transcribe his weekly broadcasts. It is common knowledge that he used these air checks in the preparation of subsequent concerts. Those familiar solely with late Toscanini are often surprised at the elasticity, and even looseness, of some of the performances that survive from earlier days, when he recorded only occasionally.

Toscanini, admittedly, was an extreme case, because his high-strung, impetuous temperament was especially prone to the pursuit of greater discipline and perfection. But even more genial artists (such as Bruno Walter), and more capricious ones (Wilhelm Furtwängler and pianist Wilhelm Kempff), were similarly affected by the recorded media. Furtwängler was invariably more reserved at recording sessions than in the concert hall. Walter's American-made records from the '40s are far more extroverted than his Vienna Philharmonic and London Symphony discs from the '30s. (His Columbia Symphony performances from the last years of his life are even clearer and less flexible metrically, although by then extraneous factors—lessened energy and declining physical control—had begun to take their toll.) Kempff recorded the Beethoven sonatas and concertos several times; the later recordings all tend toward greater gency and forward direction,

sometimes to the point of sounding tight and perfunctory.

Eugen Jochum, born in 1902, is old enough to have begun his professional career in the manner of most older-generation German Kapellmeisters, working in provincial opera pits and building his symphonic repertoire in relative isolation, outside the glare of international publicity. But he is also young enough to have survived well into the age of recording, his impressive natural gifts and years of experience making him an esteemed musical elder statesman. As with Toscanini, Walter, Furtwängler, and Kempff (and one could add Karl Böhm, a musician of similar age and background), Jochum's artistry has been modified by the phonograph.

His output of Beethoven recordings is equaled only by Karajan's. He recorded three of the symphonies—Nos. 3, 7, and 9—on Telefunken 78s, and those were joined by mono LP editions of the Fourth (DG) and Fifth (Epic). Remakes of the *Eroica* and the Seventh launched his first complete cycle—a mix of mono and stereo DG discs featuring two orchestras (Nos. 1, 5, and 9 with his own Bavarian Radio Symphony, the balance with the Berlin Philharmonic). In 1970, Philips released a Concertgebouw cycle to commemorate the Beethoven bicentennial, and the Angel release now completes Jochum's third cycle. (Nos. 3–6 of the Angel cycle have already been noted in these pages; the Seventh has also been issued separately, and the rest will presumably follow.) Five symphonies from the DG cycle remain in the active catalog (Nos. 1, 2, 4, 5, and 8, on Quintessence), as does the entire Philips cycle (Festivo). Unfortunately, the early Telefunken performances, never released here, are long out of print and highly inaccessible.

With due allowance for various orchestral styles and divergent engineering techniques, the evidence of these different versions points overwhelmingly to the conclusion that Jochum's style underwent its biggest transformation—from Furtwänglerian meditation to a more extroverted (and, at times, surprisingly Toscanini-influenced) tautness—in the decade that separates the DG and Philips readings. Those would undoubtedly be the very years in which he began to listen frequently to his own recordings and to those of others.

The use of Furtwängler and Toscanini as guideposts is, to be sure, simplistic and a bit misleading. Even in his earliest performances, Jochum never hauled tempo about as Furtwängler frequently did; nor does even his most stringent work suggest the ferocity and driving energy that typifies Toscanini. He was and remains a centrist, though one who has moved from left of center to a position considerably to the right of center. Despite his reputation as a Bruckner specialist and his stereotype as a neo-Furtwänglerite (it is worth remembering that Furtwängler's own performances of Bruckner were fast-moving and notably free of the mannerisms often associated with his style), Jochum is *not* the typical Teutonic musician; the stereotype rests chiefly on his earlier recordings.

Jochum's direction consistently shows imagination and refinement. As with most conductors of his generation, he is no purist in matters of instrumentation, but his adjustments are modest and, more often than not, beneficial to clarity. A few mannerisms—the arbitrary use of ritards and commas to delineate structural joints—that persist in his most recent performances smack of arbitrary provincialism. Also mildly unsettling is his habit of running scherzo movements and finales together with no breathing space; Paul Henry Lang, reviewing the 1970 Philips edition, blamed the tape editors, but the practice reappears here and must be the conductor's doing.

Jochum's Bavarian First (Quintessence PMC 7128) has a bluff, hearty quality, accentuated by close, full-bodied reproduction that makes even the pianissimos sturdy. The two later readings (Festivo's is on 6570 103) are faster, tauter, and

BEETHOVEN: *Orchestral Works.*

Kiri Te Kanawa, soprano*; Julia Hamari, alto*; Stuart Burrows, tenor*; Robert Holl, bass*; London Symphony Chorus* and Orchestra, Eugen Jochum, cond. [John Fraser, Christopher Bishop, and John Willan, prod.] ANGEL SZH 3890, \$71.84 (eight 5Q-encoded discs, manual sequence).

Symphonies: No. 1, in C, Op. 21; No. 2, in D, Op. 36; No. 3, in E flat, Op. 55 (*Eroica*) [from S 37410, 1978]; No. 4, in B flat, Op. 60 [from S 37529, 1979]; No. 5, in C minor, Op. 67 [from S 37463, 1978]; No. 6, in F, Op. 68 (*Pastoral*) [from S 37530, 1978]; No. 7, in A, Op. 92 [from SZ 37531, 1979]; No. 8, in F, Op. 93; No. 9, in D minor, Op. 125*. Coriolan Overture, Op. 62 [from SZ 37531, 1979]. Leonore Overture No. 3, Op. 72b [from S 37529, 1979]. Fidelio Overture, Op. 72c [from S 37463, 1978]. Egmont Overture, Op. 84 [from S 37410, 1978].

virtually identical to each other; no finer Firsts exist. The latterly acquired Toscanini influence is particularly discernible here, in the opera buffa feathery lightness of the violins in the winged finale. The Minuetto is slightly sedate, but its rhythm is buoyantly sprung. First- and last-movement repeats are heeded in all three versions, but not the spurious da capo in the third movement.

The Quintessence Second (PMC 7109) is the most pronounced example of Jochum's earlier style, with its lingering first-movement introduction and slow, overtly affectionate treatment of the Larghetto. (The Berlin string tone is especially ravishing in its cantabile there.) The Festivo version (6570 168) is more straitlaced and toughly incisive but still full of graceful pointing. The new Angel, similar in style to the second performance, takes third place; the conductor's control is still admirable, but everything sounds paler, blander, and less energetic. Jochum's diminishing vitality? The London Symphony's less committed playing? Angel's disappointing mastering? It's hard to know where to place the blame. The first-movement repeat is observed in all three cases.

In his 1957 review of Jochum's first LP *Eroica*, C. G. Burke found it—by virtue of its then stunning sound and its balanced, uneccentric first movement—the best version available. The conductor's approach has changed little in the intervening years, save for the introduction of the first-movement repeat in the two later recordings (Festivo's on 6570 088). Angel has remastered its performance for the boxed set, and it sounds a bit fuller now. But unfortunately, the tape-editing lapse in the scherzo (where bar 381 in duple time seems to have been erroneously inserted in place of the triple-meter bar 123 both times around) has not been corrected. Other interpretations have more cataclysmic sweep, but Jochum's judicious blend of muscle and lyricism stands up well; Angel provides a handsome bonus, a refined, smartly paced *Egmont* Overture.

The Quintessence Fourth (PMC 7139) is still impressively rich. Of particular interest is the hushed aura Jochum conjures up with a pronounced ritard in the final section of the first-movement development. Both of the later versions forgo that Furtwänglerian effect, maintaining the basic pulse and providing sharper articulation. Here I favor the Angel over the Festivo (6570 174) for its milder character and less caustic string tone. Both newer accounts replace Quintessence's *Leonore* Overture No. 2 with *Leonore* No. 3 (and *Leonore* No. 1 as well on Festivo); the substitution is symbolically appropriate,



Eugen Jochum
Not the typical Teutonic musician

for the conductor's style has changed here in the same way that Beethoven's reworking of the overture differs from his earlier try: Some poetry and inspiration have been sacrificed in the quest for simplicity and structural logic.

Jochum's two earlier Fifths (Quintessence PMC 7078 and Festivo 6570 166) are, like the Angel version, coupled with the *Fidelio* Overture. While all three performances are excellent, the Concertgebouw reading sounds slightly genteel alongside the others. The pronounced ritard in the motto at the end of the first movement bothers some listeners more than it does me, but Jochum obviously knows what he wants. The main differences in the LSO performance occur in the finale: the addition of the exposition repeat and a slightly slower but more incisive account that makes this the best of the three. Angel has again remastered the performance for the set, with generally fine results, except for a patch or two of serious distortion that did not occur on the single-disc version.

I like the latest *Pastoral* even more now than I did on first hearing. There are some idiosyncratic ritards (not the usual ones from the bassoons in the first-movement development), but the deliberate tempos are otherwise firmly maintained, making this account more vigorous and purposeful than the Dutch version (Festivo 6570 159). Jochum secures a particularly warm, mellifluous sonority from the LSO, and EMI's reproduction (the same stampers are used as on the single disc) is at its best—much more vivid and closely detailed than Philips'. As before, Jochum omits the first-movement repeat but takes the one in the "Peasants' Merrymaking."

The new Seventh is disappointing; the first and last movements are deficient in

control and rhythmic edge, and the Allegretto plods. The performance is further bloated by a full quota of repeats. (The very slow third-movement trio becomes particularly tedious the second time around, with repeats dutifully observed.) The crisper Festivo performance (6570 102), with only the necessary repeats, is vastly superior. But alas, in bypassing the Angel Seventh, one sacrifices a superb *Coriolan*. Jochum's approach, while slower, is unexpectedly similar to Toscanini's 1953 recording in its strength and simplicity; he even adheres to Toscanini's practice of adding timpani strokes to the string bass at measure 220 (as Beethoven himself does earlier, in the exposition of the same passage).

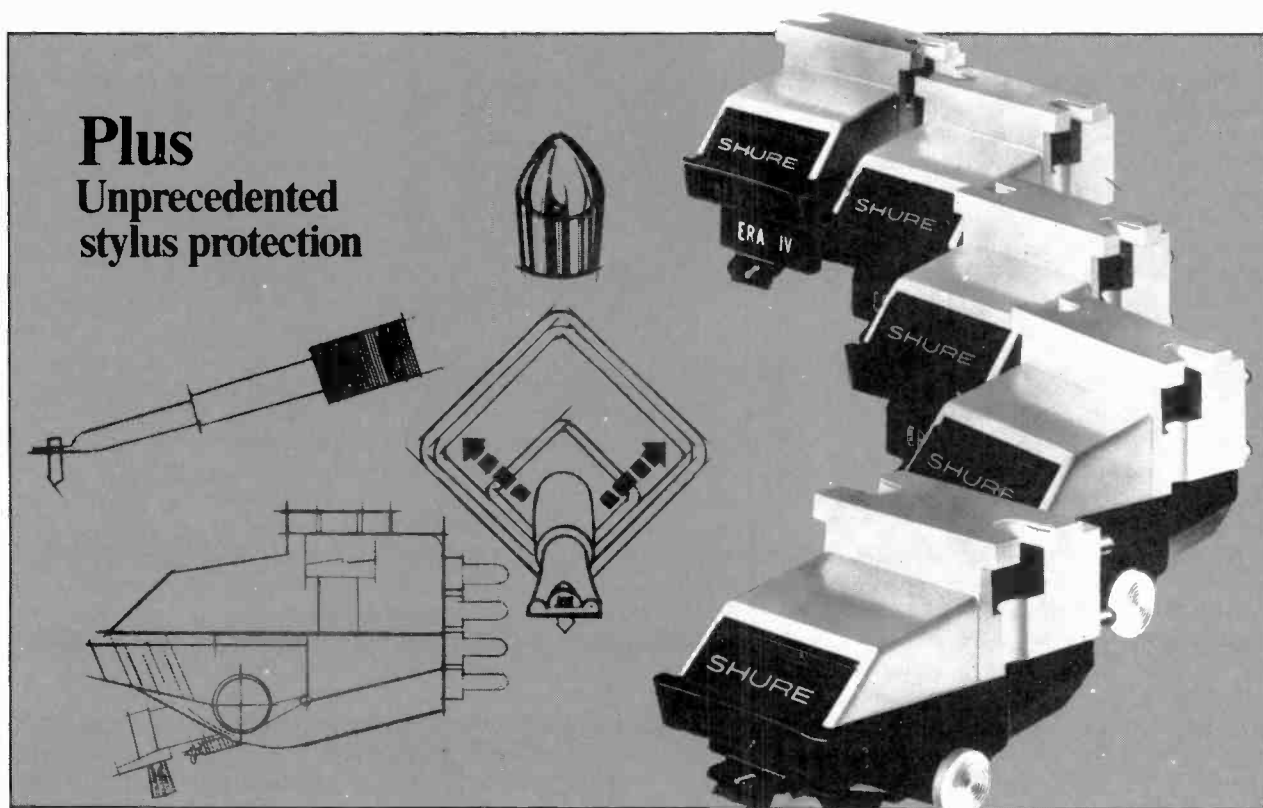
Both of Jochum's later Eighths are more animated in pace and more stringent in inflection than was his first account. The Angel and Festivo (6570 103, with the First) readings are very much in the Toscanini manner—reasonably fast, though not quite so savage as the 1977 Karajan, the Casals, or the Scherchen. Angel's less conservative balance better realizes the timpani thwacks and humorously misplaced accents in the satirical minuet, but otherwise the Angel and Festivo are of equal, and formidable, excellence. The billowing bass here in no way obscures the conductor's compact linearity.

In general, I suspect that the Angel versions were recorded in longer takes and with less finicky tape editing. The advantages and disadvantages of such an approach are particularly telling in the Ninth Symphony, where the performance has a few tiny blemishes. The horns in the scherzo are slightly unkempt; there are occasional uncertainties in ensemble; and the conducting is sometimes impatient. Yet the new reading, very similar in essence to the older one (Festivo 6570 189), is a bit more exciting and expansive. The timpani are more forthrightly registered in the scherzo, and the string recitatives in the finale are more operatic and communicative. Sad to say, Jochum still favors only a first repeat in the scherzo, but his pacing is exemplary throughout. The Angel vocal quartet scores over its Festivo counterpart, and the choruses are about equal.

Unfortunately, Angel's mastering in this symphony is all too reminiscent of its bad old ways: The sound is gray and muddy, dynamics are constricted, and the luminous highs of the Fifth, Sixth, and Eighth are lacking. (Moreover, Side 14 of the review copy, containing the first movement of the Ninth, was seriously defective.) Even more worrisome, in fact, all the new items, apart from the Eighth, show signs of technical backsliding in contrast to Angel's recent improvement in processing.

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Cologne Musica Antiqua—individuality for Bach's problematic *Offering*

BACH: Brandenburg Concertos. For a review, see page 67.

BACH: A Musical Offering, S. 1079.

Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields, Neville Marriner, cond. PHILIPS 9500 585, \$9.98. Tape: 7300 708, \$9.98 (cassette).

Cologne Musica Antiqua, Reinhard Goebel, dir. [Andreas Holschneider, prod.] ARCHIV 2533 422, \$9.98. Tape: 3310 422, \$9.98 (cassette).

COMPARISONS:

Münchinger/Stuttgart Ch. Orch.

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The final session of last November's American Musicological Society meeting was enlivened by an extraordinary paper on Bach's *Musical Offering* by Ursula and Warren Kirkendale. They attempted to disprove the notion that the work is a miscellaneous collection of items for which there exists no definitive order. They proposed that Bach modeled his sequence, with meticulous detail, on a treatise by Quintilian, the *Institutio oratoria*. Correspondences were found between Bach's treatment of individual canons and Quintilian's descriptions of

the sections of an oratorical discourse; every part of the *Musical Offering* was made to fit some part of Quintilian's theory of oratory.

Is the idea credible? Bach certainly knew of Quintilian's work. (A note by Bach's most friendly Leipzig rector, Johann Matthias Gesner, in an edition of Quintilian, gives us a vivid and sympathetic portrait of Bach's work as an organist and conductor.) And the connection between music and rhetoric was eagerly investigated by many of his contemporaries, especially those connected with Mizler's Society of Musical Sciences (which Bach joined in June 1747, and for which he wrote the six-part canon that anticipates the techniques of the *Musical Offering* canons). But as the Bach scholar Christoph Wolff pointed out in a deflating little reply to the Kirkendales' paper, it is very strange for the principles of continuous rhetorical discourse to be applied to a multimovement work. Is it likely that Bach would have published the work in such an essentially practical form (with pages designed for convenient performance, not in a precise order) if this complex theory lay behind it? Certainly, many of the connections suggested by the Kirkendales go too far—some provoked open laughter in the hall—but we have not heard the last of an idea that sheds new light on the preoccupations of Bach during the fascinating last decade of his life.

Two new recordings show that the response of performers to this music can be

as varied as that of scholars. The performances could scarcely be more different: The Cologne Musica Antiqua's is a highly individual interpretation by a bare minimum of players (two violins, flute, viola da gamba, and harpsichord) using original instruments; the Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields uses the full resources of string orchestra with soloists (though woodwind is sensibly limited to flute) to provide a version with the familiar, easily acceptable sonority of modern instruments. Neither is perfect, but one is clearly preferable.

Both groups logically frame their accounts with the two *ricercare*s, beginning with the three-part and ending with the six-part. Musica Antiqua uses harpsichord for both; the Academy uses organ for the three-part and soloists, expanding to full band, for the six-part. Yet the proper instrument for the three-part (which is probably a version of the improvisation Bach played to Frederick the Great on his Silbermann piano) is surely the fortepiano; indeed with its sighing chromatic thirds and winding, expressive lines, this seems to me to be one of the first great pieces of piano music. On the other hand, when the magnificent six-part *ricercare* is played on the keyboard—Henk Bouman of Musica Antiqua does so with remarkable freedom and waywardness—its intricacies are perhaps apparent only to the performer, who feels them under his fingers; it is reasonable to transfer the music to strings. But Marriner attempts a particularly awful kind of "ex-

- B** Budget
- H** Historical
- R** Reissue
- A** Audiophile
(digital, direct-to-disc, etc.)

Critics' Choice

The most noteworthy releases reviewed recently

BACH: Brandenburg Concertos, S. 1046-51. Aston Magna, Fuller. SMITHSONIAN RECORDINGS 3016 (2), Dec.

BACH: Keyboard Works. Verlet. PHILIPS 9500 588, April.

BARTÓK: Piano Concertos Nos. 1, 2. Pollini, Abbado. DG 2530 901, Feb.

BEETHOVEN: Missa Solemnis, Op. 123. Bernstein. DG 2707 110 (2), Jan.

BEETHOVEN: Piano Sonatas Nos. 21, 31. Goldsmith. MUSICAL HERITAGE 4005, March.

BERG: Lulu. Stratas, Boulez. DG 2711 024 (4), March.

BRUCKNER: Symphony No. 5. Munich Philharmonic, Kempe. ODYSSEY Y2 35243 (2), May.

COPLAND: Piano Works. Smit. COLUMBIA M2 35901 (2), May.

HAYDN: Armida. Norman, Burrowes, Dorati. PHILIPS 6769 021 (3), March.

HAYDN: Quartets, Opp. 71 and 74. Amadeus. DG 2709 090 (3), May.

HINDEMITH: Mathis der Maler. Fischer-Dieskau, Kubelik. ANGEL SZCX 3869 (3), Feb.

JANÁČEK: The Makropoulos Affair. Söderström, Dvorský, Mackerras. LONDON OSA 12116 (2), May.

MAHLER: Symphony No. 9. Philadelphia, Levine. RCA ARL 2-3461 (2), April.

MASSENET: Don Quichotte. Ghiaurov, Crespin, Bacquier, Kord. LONDON OSA 13134 (3), April.

MASSENET: Werther. Kraus, Troyanos, Plasson. ANGEL SZCX 3894 (3), April.

MOZART: Don Giovanni. Raimondi, Maa-zel. COLUMBIA M3 35192 (3), Feb.

MOZART: Symphonies (11). Academy of Ancient Music, Schröder, Hogwood. OISEAU-LYRE D 169D3 (3), May.

SCHUBERT: Piano Sonata in B flat, D. 960. Kraus. VANGUARD VSD 71267, April.

SHOSTAKOVICH: Song Cycles. Bogacheva, Nesterenko. COLUMBIA/MELODIYA M2 34594 (2), April.

SIBELIUS: Violin Concerto. SCHNITTKE: Concerto Grosso. Kremer, Rozhdestvensky. VANGUARD VSD 71255, March.

STRAVINSKY: The Wedding; Histoire du soldat. Levine. RCA ARL 1-3375, March.

TANEYEV: Oresteia. Belorussian State Opera, Kolomizeva. DG 2709 097 (3), May.

TCHAIKOVSKY: Violin Concerto; Sérénade mélancolique. Perlman, Ormandy. ANGEL SZ 37640, March.

VLADIMIR HOROWITZ: The Horowitz Concerts 1978-79. RCA ARL 1-3433, Jan.

THE RECORD OF SINGING, VOL. 2. EMI ODEON RLS 743 (13), May.

pressiveness" here by building the music up, adding instruments to produce a giant crescendo. The soloists play nicely and cleanly, but the entry of the full strings (especially the basses) is like a cloud of stereophonic cotton wool. I prefer the all-out romanticism and large-scale fervor of Karl Münchinger's reading to this uneasy compromise.

Much of Marriner's interpretation seems not to have been very deeply considered. Too many of the canons plod along without any feeling for their dancelike rhythms—the second of the canons on the royal theme, for two violins in unison, is unbearably ponderous. (Musica Antiqua does this with ideal lightness, bows skating across the strings.) The wonderful "per tonos" canon, which gradually modulates upward, needs no extra assistance to make its progress supremely exciting; but Marriner adds string tutti and a flute, maintaining the détaché, insistently bowed style that drains so much of the life from baroque phrasing. (Musica Antiqua here uses just violin and harpsichord, losing some of the effect; three "sustaining" instruments are needed to realize the powerful suspensions and dissonances.) Marriner's solutions to the problematic canons, and to questions such as where to end the perpetual canons, are almost invariably conventional—they follow David's edition or the suggestions of the New Bach Edition.

The Cologne players, however, have clearly thought about these questions, and the results are interesting. They often opt to end a perpetual canon unexpectedly, in the middle of its repeat. And in the two canons headed "Quaerendo invenietis," they offer curious solutions: two different ones in the first case, out of the possible four offered in the old Bach Gesellschaft edition. (The New Bach Edition has only one, certainly the most convincing.) In the second case, a four-part canon for which Bach gives just one line of music with both treble and bass clefs, the predictable solution can, of course, be heard on Marriner's recording: i.e., three successive entries in the treble, completed by a final entry in the bass. But Musica Antiqua, perhaps following Leonhardt (MCA/Seon 67007), plays it thus: first entry, harpsichord in the treble; second entry, harpsichord in the bass; third entry, violin; fourth entry, violin. (The sleeve annotator, otherwise good, doesn't realize this.) It's also possible, of course, to have two entries in the treble and two in the bass.

The contrast between these versions may be heard in the trio sonata. Marriner, who here has instrumentation clearly specified for him, has his players produce a nicely rounded, well-paced, conventional account. Musica Antiqua adopts a man-

nered, jerky, breathy style, more rococo than baroque. This is disconcerting, but it points up the "modernity" of the slow movements; Bach, to please Frederick the Great, attempted to write in a consciously new manner. Like the rest of Musica Antiqua's version, this is a stimulating interpretation, with which it is possible to disagree—much more interesting than Marriner's performance, which is solidly reliable but in the end stilted and unperceptive.

I would continue to recommend Hannoncourt's account, but I think the Musica Antiqua has outclassed the quite similar Leonhardt recording. For fans of the massive baroque, Münchinger is still the best; Marriner will satisfy only those in search of an awkward compromise between old and new styles. N.K.

BEETHOVEN: Orchestral Works. For a review, see page 68.

BEETHOVEN: Trio for Violin, Cello, and Piano, No. 7, in B flat, Op. 97 (*Archduke*). * HAYDN: Sonata for Piano, No. 50, in D.*

H Solomon, piano; Henry Holst, violin*; Anthony Pini, cello*. [Walter Legge, prod.] ARABESQUE 8032, \$6.98 (mono). Tape: 9032, \$6.98 (cassette). [From HMV originals, recorded 1943* and 1946*.]

Now here's a curious state of affairs: Arabesque chides HMV at this late date for having been so closemouthed about Solomon's identity when these recordings were first issued but then fails to identify the excellent violinist and cellist both on the cover and in the annotations, listing them only on the record label! Henry Holst was first violinist of the Philharmonia String Quartet; the wartime forerunner of Walter Legge's orchestra; Anthony Pini, if memory serves, also played in the quartet but is better known as a soloist. (He recorded the Elgar concerto with Van Beinum and the London Philharmonic.)

In America, this *Archduke* was overshadowed by RCA's 1941 Heifetz/Feuermann/Rubinstein edition—just as the fine earlier version by Sammons/Squire/Murdoch on British Columbia had to yield to Thibaud/Casals/Cortot (now available on Seraphim 60242). The playing is exquisitely chaste and classical, though perhaps without the emotional magnetism of those other collaborations. Repeats are omitted in the first two movements, and the restored sound retains an inordinate amount of surface scratch. (I suspect the metal parts were no longer available for this transfer, forcing HMV's brilliant A. C. Griffith to use noisy wartime pressings for his source material.)

Once you get past the interference, the sound has excellent presence and fidelity for its time.

The Haydn sonata is considered easy and often is assigned to students. Solomon's sprinting tempos and excellent finger control reveal the work as a bona fide masterpiece. The disc is worth acquiring for this jewel alone. The dubbing is superb, with all the considerable vividness of the originals. H.G.

BERNSTEIN: *Serenade**; *Fancy Free*.

Gidon Kremer, violin*; Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, Leonard Bernstein, cond. [Günther Breest and Hanno Rinke, prod.] DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2531 196, \$9.98 [recorded in concert].

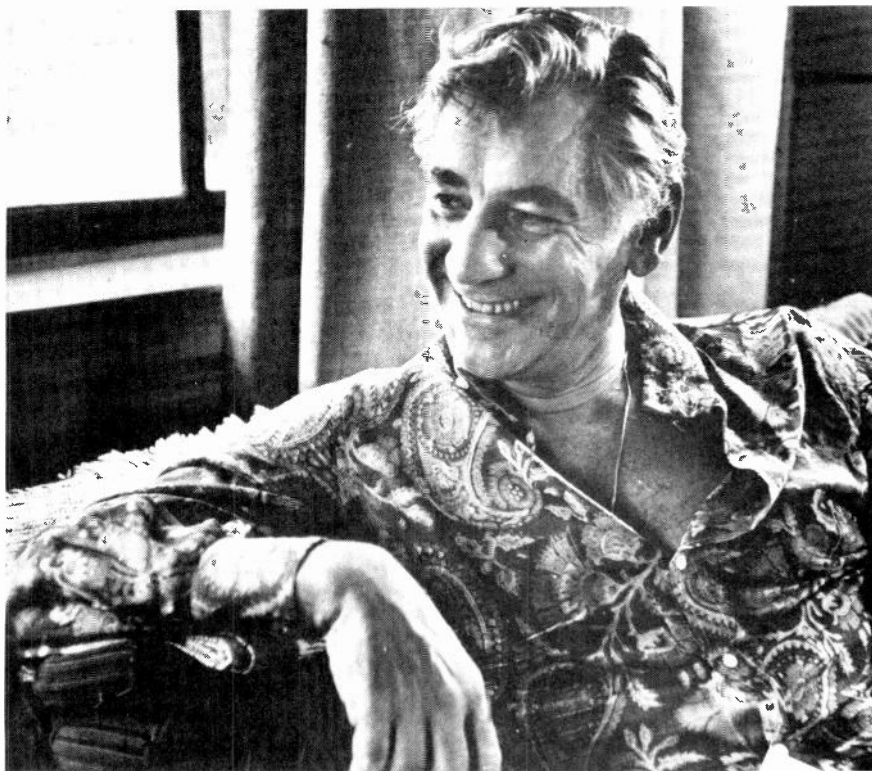
BERNSTEIN: *Fancy Free*.* **CHÁVEZ:** *Daughter of Colchis*.†

RH Ballet Theater Orchestra, Leonard Bernstein, cond.*; Orquesta Sinfónica Nacional de Mexico, Carlos Chávez, cond.†. [Tom Null, prod.] VARÈSE SARABANDE VC 81055, \$8.98 (mono) [from DECCA DL 6023* and 7512†, 1952].

Bernstein's *Serenade* (after Plato's *Symposium*) for solo violin, string orchestra, harp, and percussion is a substantial work running more than thirty minutes that deserves better than its present obscurity, as this superb live recording conclusively demonstrates. Commissioned by the Koussevitzky Foundation, it was first performed on September 12, 1954, in Venice's famed Teatro la Fenice by the Israel Philharmonic with the composer conducting and with Isaac Stern as solo violinist. Here Bernstein's melodramatic personality is successfully held in check. The music is terse, dry, and witty—something like an excellent Chablis.

The Israel Philharmonic has always been a favorite of Bernstein's, and vice versa. It frequently responds to him with greater enthusiasm than do other orchestras with bigger reputations, and that is certainly the case here. The Israelis outplay his New York Philharmonic, which made the only other modern recording of the work, with violinist Zino Francescatti (Columbia MS 7058). And soloist Gidon Kremer, one of the best of the young virtuosos, does a marvelous job with this piece, which sounds for all the world like a chip off the old Stravinsky at times. The very early Stern/Symphony of the Air version (still available as *Odyssey Y 34633*) now is only of historical interest.

The disc also includes a wonderfully unbuttoned performance of *Fancy Free*, Bernstein's first big Broadway smash. The 1944 ballet, choreographed by Jerome Rob-



Leonard Bernstein—a witty *Serenade*, an unbuttoned *Fancy Free*

bins and later the same year expanded into the full-scale musical *Wonderful Town*, is generally known only in fragmented form. This version was recorded live except for "Big Stuff," the piano blues with which the ballet opens. The pianist and vocalist in that studio recording is Bernstein himself, sounding appropriately smoky and relaxed. (You can almost see the cigarette drooping from his lips.)

By coincidence, Varèse Sarabande has just reissued the recording of the ballet released by Decca as a 78-rpm album in 1947. Made on June 2, 1944, at the time of the original Ballet Theater presentation, it was Bernstein's first studio recording as a conductor. "Big Stuff," sung by Billie Holiday, was recorded nearly two years later. The 78s were transferred to a ten-inch LP in May 1952, and it was from that disc that the reissue was processed.

The new Deutsche Grammophon release sweeps the original *Fancy Free* into the dustbin of recording history, but Varèse Sarabande's Chávez side proves surprisingly interesting. *Daughter of Colchis* was commissioned in 1943 by the Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge Foundation in the Library of Congress as a dance score for Martha Graham, who used it for a successful ballet called *Dark Meadow*. The original was written for a chamber ensemble. In 1947, Chávez arranged the music for full symphony orchestra in five movements and re-

stored the original title. In that form, it was recorded on 78-rpm acetate discs by the Mexican label Anfon and released as an LP in the U.S. by Decca in 1952.

Daughter of Colchis is one of Chávez' most approachable and likable scores—alternately powerfully eloquent and lyrically sweet. There is very little of the primitivism that characterizes so many of his Mexican, folk-influenced compositions. What with its great thematic unity, classical balance, and melodic eloquence, this music deserves another hearing. I.L.

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

Salvatore Accardo, violin; Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, Kurt Masur, cond. PHILIPS 9500 624, \$9.98. Tape: 7300 729, \$9.98 (cassette).

BRAHMS: Concerto for Violin, Cello, and Orchestra, in A minor, Op. 102*; Variations on a Theme by Haydn, Op. 56a.

Salvatore Accardo, violin*; Heinrich Schiff, cello*; Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, Kurt Masur, cond. PHILIPS 9500 623, \$9.98. Tape: 7300 728, \$9.98 (cassette).

BRAHMS: Concerto for Piano and Orchestra, No. 1, in D minor, Op. 15.

Misha Dichter, piano; Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, Kurt Masur, cond. PHILIPS 9500 410, \$9.98. Tape: 7300 618,

Continued on page 76

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A Cage Survey Reveals Remarkable Variety

by Robert P. Morgan

There is a tendency to respond to mention of John Cage as though he represented a single, narrow, and decidedly extreme compositional point of view. But in fact, in more than forty years of writing music, he has covered a remarkably wide range of approaches. There is, of course, consistency and logic to his entire development: He has always favored an "objective" and "detached" compositional attitude; and accordingly, he has always relied on a set of external "controls" of one kind or another to assist in the structuring of his works. (The particular form these take may vary from a series of mathematical proportions to some sort of chance operation.) The actual musical result, however, has differed widely from one stage of his development to the next, and these three offerings, which contain music from three of the past four decades, afford an excellent opportunity to experience the diversity of his output.

The 1940s, the decade in which Cage's first major compositions began to appear, are best represented, with some short works from 1942-43—*A Room* (in versions for both regular and prepared piano), *She Is Asleep* (in two parts, one for voice and prepared piano, the other for twelve toms), and *Totem Ancestor* and *And the Earth Shall Bear Again* (both for prepared piano)—plus two extended works, the *Sonatas and In-*

CAGE: Various Works.

Jay Clayton, voice*; Paul Price Percussion Ensemble*; Joshua Pierce, piano, prepared piano, and cond. [Heiner Stadler, prod.] TOMATO TOM 7016, \$8.98.

A Room (piano); *A Room* (prepared piano); *She Is Asleep**; *Seven Haiku*; *Totem Ancestor*; *Two Pastorales*; *And the Earth Shall Bear Again*.

CAGE: Sonatas and Interludes; A Book of Music*.

Joshua Pierce and *Maro Ajemian, prepared pianos. [Heiner Stadler, prod.] TOMATO TOM 2-1001, \$10.98 (two discs, manual sequence).

CAGE: Etudes australes.

Grete Sultan, piano. [Heiner Stadler, prod.] TOMATO TOM 2-1101, \$11.98 (two discs, manual sequence).

terludes for prepared piano (1946-48) and *A Book of Music* for two prepared pianos (1944). As this listing suggests, Cage wrote most of his music at this time for prepared piano. And listening to these pieces, one is struck by his genius in "inventing" this new instrument, an idea that originally arose out of a practical consideration: how to gain access to a complex array of percussive and instrumental timbres without the space and expense entailed by a large ensemble. By placing such objects as screws, bolts, and strips of rubber at strategic points on the strings (all precisely specified), Cage succeeded in transforming an essentially monotimbre instrument into one of remarkable sonic variety. And the music he conceived for the new medium suits it perfectly. Or perhaps one should turn this around and say that in these pieces Cage prophetically anticipated the idea of the post-World War II serialists that a work's timbre should be uniquely constructed for the requirements of the music's structure.

All of these compositions use relatively few "sounds" manipulated in complex ways through a set of rhythmic proportions expressed in a series of numbers. The effect is largely rhythmic, yet fascinating patterns of melody and timbre result as if by chance from the calculated rhythmic permutations. Above all, these works show impressive musicality; they are not just interesting studies or experiments, but arresting sonic statements, unusually attractive pieces that make only modest demands upon the listener. Considered almost hopelessly "far out" in their day, they now appear surprisingly tame, although they have not lost their decidedly exotic quality, owing both to the gamelanlike effect of the prepared piano and to the hypnotic character of their static, highly repetitive structures. As Candy Cohen points out in her liner notes, the link with such latter-day "minimalists" as Philip Glass and Steve Reich is unmistakable.

The 1950s are represented by *Two Pastorales* (1951) and *Seven Haiku* (1952), both for unprepared piano. This was perhaps Cage's period of greatest stylistic change. The durational proportions of the earlier works remain but are no longer expressed in terms of a small, regular, and constantly recurring unit. They now define extended temporal segments expressed solely by the spatial layout of the score (i.e., so much space on the page represents so much time). And although relatively few sounds are still employed, they no longer occur over and over in complex, motoric rhythmic patterns, but are sprinkled thinly—and now literally "by chance," their occurrences determined by *I Ching* operations—throughout the designated tempo-



John Cage—from prepared piano to stellar distances

ral spans. The latter define the largely silent underlying structure. In what appears to be an extreme extension of Weberian point-illism, the sounds appear isolated in musical time and space. The distances between events are so great that one can no longer make linear connections. And that is the whole point, for what Cage wants us to do is to savor the inherent characteristics of each sound, free of any "imposed" relationship to the other sounds. The frame of silence that surrounds each event thus takes on considerable expressive import. One must listen to these works in a way quite different from that most Westerners are accustomed to; but if the right gear is found, the kind of microscopic musical scrutiny and contemplation they invite offers real rewards.

Although no music from the 1960s is included, there is one major work from the decade just past: the *Etudes australes* of 1974, a gigantic collection of thirty-two pieces for piano, only half of which is presented here. (Tomato promises the second half in the near future.) Cage's earlier durational proportions have now been completely abandoned, yet there is still an underlying "control"—the *Atlas australis*, a book of star maps charted from the perspective of Australia. Richard Kostelanetz' liner-note description of the compositional process warrants quotation: "Cage first placed a transparent grid over these maps. By a complicated process involving decisions made with the aid of his favorite sixty-four-choice Chinese chance manual, *I Ching*, Cage marked the locations of certain stars on the transparent paper. These were transferred to music staves arranged in groups of four—an upper and lower clef for the pianist's right hand, and a second set of . . . clefs for the left hand. Since the resulting array of dots might impose impossible demands upon the performer, Cage played the notes himself to make sure that his score could

indeed be physically executed."

The result is a series of intense, largely dissonant and disjunct musical statements, all overly similar. There is a great deal of sonic activity, with very few points of silence; here the listener wants to make linear connections. Yet, since all events are determined either by chance or by actual stellar "distances," in themselves completely amusical, such connections are not forthcoming. Interesting effects of timbre are created by the depression of certain piano keys, held down with rubber wedges, allowing the strings to resonate sympathetically, thus supplying a kind of veiled drone or pedal point. But this hardly sustains enough interest to carry the listener through the vast expanses of the work. Here Cage's method fails him, at least from a specifically musical point of view.

He would no doubt respond that the "musical point of view" is only one of many possibilities; and perhaps there does exist some other, more mystical level of aural comprehension where this work can achieve its desired effect. Nevertheless, it is very disappointing heard in conjunction with so many of his pieces that really do work *as music*.

Taken as a whole, these albums forcefully demonstrate the provocativeness of Cage's ideas, both musical and philosophical. And they go far to explain why he enjoys an uncontested position as one of the major musical forces of the century.

The performances are very good indeed, although Grete Sultan could have brought a little more variety to the *Etudes australes*, in which many compositional decisions are left to the performer (including all dynamics, articulation, and tempos). In such cases it is difficult to know whom to praise or blame, and this may be one of the work's essential problems. The sound is quite good, although one disc contained a lot of surface noise.



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Continued from page 72

\$9.98 (cassette).

Garrick Ohlsson, piano; London Philharmonic Orchestra, Klaus Tennstedt, cond. [Suvi Raj Grubb, prod.] ANGEL SZ 37568, \$8.98.

BRAHMS: Concerto for Piano and Orchestra, No. 2, in B flat, Op. 83.

Misha Dichter, piano; Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, Kurt Masur, cond. PHILIPS 9500 414, \$9.98. Tape: 7300 619, \$9.98 (cassette).

COMPARISON—Piano Concertos:
Serkin, Szell/Cleveland Col. MG 31421

More and more, Salvatore Accardo impresses as the violinistic counterpart of Maurizio Pollini: As with his piano-playing compatriot, a formidable technique is put at the service of penetrating but severely objective musicianship. Of themselves, Accardo's "white" sound and patrician detachment might seem too pale for Brahms's violin concerto, but the weight and glow are handsomely supplied here by Kurt Masur and his forces. This is a successful cross-pollination of two different traditions, with conductor and orchestra complementing the violinist's volatile classicism with a more staid classicism of their own and the soloist providing an incisive edge to what might otherwise have been a mite dour and drably Germanic. The same chemistry that worked in Beethoven (Philips 9500 407) and Bruch (Philips 9500 422/423/589/590) is equally successful here.

The vibrato-laden oboe playing at the start gave uneasy expectations for the second movement solo, but they proved groundless. The playing is everywhere of the highest order; this is Brahms with purity and tapered line—an account purged of calories but not of intellectual or emotional substance. Accardo's performance has something in it of vintage Szigeti: a succinct delving to the heart of the matter, with plenty of bite and tension in the phrasing. Joachim's cadenza is used in the first movement. The Philips coproduction with East German VEB Deutsche Schallplatten is first-class. In every way, this is one of the finest editions of this demanding work, providing a perfect foil to the dark, vigorous recent version by Krebbers and Haitink (Philips Festivo 6570 172, April).

Young German cellist Heinrich Schiff shares Accardo's patrician leanings, and together they form a strong partnership for the double concerto. Their approach is of chamber music dimensions, with delicate interplay and nuanced chiaroscuro. Again, Masur and his orchestra, with their smooth solidarity and exceedingly slow tempos, provide a hefty tonal mass that nicely sets off the soloists' spare, etched



Salvatore Accardo
To the heart of the matter

lines. The upshot is a sound, distinctive reading of Brahms's last orchestral work. Philips' older version (6500 137), however, with Szeryng and Starker taking a similarly lean and refined viewpoint, profits from a somewhat more militant and more effectively paced rendering of the orchestral part by the Concertgebouw under Haitink.

Masur's *Haydn* Variations are disciplined and monochromatic; after a procession of slow tempos (Variation No. 2 is especially deliberate), the great chaconnelike finale dampens what it should uplift. Toscanini's sublime 1936 New York Philharmonic version (very nearly matched by his 1952 Philharmonia performance, Cetra LO 511) lingers in the memory, but Böhm (DG 2536 396), Boult (Angel SZ 37648), Jochum (DG 2530 586), Giulini (Seraphim S 60335), and Karajan (DG 2707 018) have all provided excellent modern versions.

Misha Dichter's way with the piano concertos is poised, elegant, and conservative. In the angry outpouring of the D minor's first movement, the phrases flow admirably and tempos are well chosen, but the approach is too cool and bland. Though the Adagio seems more appropriate thus treated, the prevailing detachment and polish again dilute the communicative impact. And so it is with the rondo: The movement begins admirably, but Dichter, like Arrau and many others—and unlike Fleisher (Od-

yssey Y 31273) and Serkin—underplays the buoyant ostinato accompaniment to the second theme, causing the music to lose impetus. In its basics, this interpretation resembles Lupu/De Waart (on London, recently deleted).

The same reserve is better applied to the Second Concerto. Dichter's bejeweled tone in the opening is reminiscent of Solomon's with Dobrowen (Turnabout THS 65071), although that performance, along with several others, puts rhythmic values in sharper focus. The reproduction, which seemed a trifle gray and generalized in the First's massed brass and timpani, has the violins surging impressively here, but the sober characteristics are again evident.

Heard immediately afterward, the closer, more astringent EMI sound—faithfully conveyed in a typically improved Angel mastering—has a cleansing effect. There is something of Szell in Klaus Tennstedt's leadership here—a certain acerbic thrust to the strings, a burr and clarity to the brass, a restive, almost ruthless, quality even in moments of repose. It isn't pretty or particularly supple, but many will like its masculine boldness.

Garrick Ohlsson's approach is similar but less sophisticated: He plays the figurations honestly, with accuracy and big sonority, but doesn't shape or nuance them as do Serkin, Fleisher, and Gelber (Advent cassette E 1052). Ohlsson's triumphant double octaves in the first-movement development, backed by eruptive timpani, are spectacular; but, in truth, my attention began to wander long before his prosaic, directionless Adagio.

Among the many excellent editions of the piano concertos, Columbia's economical packaging of the splendid Serkin/Szell readings is an ideal starting point. H.G.

CHAVEZ: Daughter of Colchis—See Bernstein: Fancy Free.

EPSTEIN: Night Voices—See Walton: Façade.

GRETCHANINOV: The Lane, Op. 89—See Mussorgsky: The Nursery.

GRIEG: Olav Trygvason: Operatic Fragments, Op. 50; Landkjenning, Op. 31.

Toril Carlsen, soprano; Vessa Hansen, mezzo-soprano; Asbjørn Hansli, baritone; Oslo Philharmonic Chorus, London Symphony Orchestra, Per Dreier, cond. [James Burnett, prod.] UNICORN RHS 364, \$10.98 (distributed by Euroclass Record Distributors, Ltd., 155 Avenue of the Americas, New York, N.Y. 10013).

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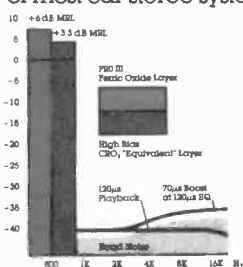


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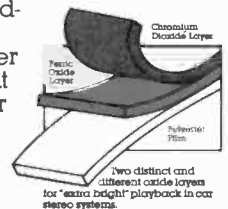
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Very few music lovers realize that Edvard Grieg, master of the miniature, was once involved in an attempt to create an epic opera that, if completed, might have done for Norway what Smetana's *Bartered Bride* had done for Czechoslovakia. His collaborator was Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson (1832-1910), poet, dramatist, novelist, political and social leader, nationalist, and winner of the 1903 Nobel Prize for literature; the subject of their aborted project was Olav Trygvason, King of Norway from 995 to 1000 A.D. Olav was the stuff of leg-

endry. After having spent some years as a boy in Russia, he sailed the Baltic with the Vikings in his youth and arrived in England with the Danish armies in the early 990s. In 994, he was converted to Christianity by a hermit in the Scilly Isles and returned home the following year, determined to convert his pagan countrymen to his newfound religion.

In July of 1873, Bjørnson sent to Grieg (with whom he had previously collaborated) the first three scenes of *Olav Trygvason* and promised that he would soon

send more. The composer set to work immediately at white heat and, after finishing the music, implored the librettist to fulfill his promise. Nothing came—Bjørnson was busy with other things. A year later, still waiting for more of the libretto, Grieg had turned to composing the incidental music for Ibsen's *Peer Gynt*. Bjørnson, under the misapprehension that Grieg was writing an opera with *Peer Gynt* as libretto, took offense, and a series of misunderstandings ensued. In May 1876, Grieg wrote to him, "Don't refuse me what I now beg for: Give me an outline of the plot of *Olav Trygvason*—but soon, at once. Good God, while I write this the longing to buckle down at last grows to active passion. And it is well that all this time has passed, for I have become another man and see differently and better. Dear man, do what I ask." But it was too late. The estrangement did not end until late in 1889, when the three scenes were publicly performed for the first time. The saga of the unfinished opera can be appropriately concluded with the words Bjørnson spoke when, in 1906, he unveiled the monolith on Rikard Nordraak's grave in Berlin: "That which does not come at the right time never comes."

Altogether, Grieg composed about thirty-five minutes of music for *Olav Trygvason*. The first and shortest scene takes place in a Norwegian pagan temple shortly after Olav's return. A priest invokes the old gods; a woman sings to them gently; a chorus supports both with interjected reiterations of the words, "Hear us! Hear us!" The scene ends with a purely choral section that grows steadily in intensity. The second scene is dominated by the wild incantations of a sibyl, who proclaims that it is not enough to invoke the gods—runes must be carved to protect the people from "the evil man, he who comes from the south," and the gods who will follow in his wake. The priest and the people light holy fires and consecrate the drinking horn, derisively shouting that if Olav emerges from the fires unscathed, they will believe him. The final scene, in which the Norse gods are honored with dancing and sacred games, ends in a wild, whirling presto.

The music for these colorful scenes is astonishingly brilliant and inventive. Its fresh harmonies are due in large part to Grieg's skillful use of antique modes—the priest sings in the Lydian, the sibyl uses the Phrygian, throughout there are appropriate touches of the Dorian and Mixolydian. In addition, there is an angularity to the melodic lines that is most unusual. All is heightened by extremely colorful instrumentation.

Olav Trygvason has become a fixture

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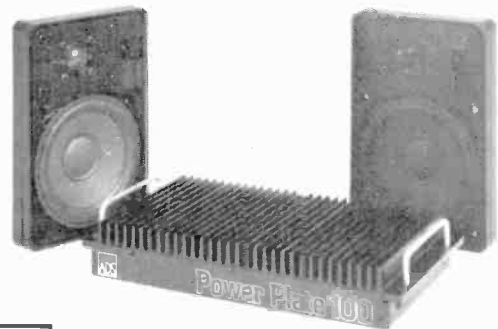
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in the Norwegian repertory but is virtually unknown outside Scandinavia. This is a pity, since not only is it well worth knowing, but it imparts to our image of Grieg an unfamiliar epic dimension. This recording leaves little to be desired technically—chorus and orchestra are first-rate, and the soloists are quite acceptable.

The filler, *Landkiening*, is a setting for baritone, chorus, and orchestra of another Bjørnson poem relating to the saga of Olav. The text treats his emotions as he sights the land of his birth after long absence. In 1872, there was a fund-raising drive in Christiania (as Oslo was called then) to help in the restoration of Trondheim Cathedral. Bjørnson contributed the poem, and Grieg quickly supplied the music in the form of a rousing, virile tune. In 1881, he drastically revised the work, giving it much grander dimensions; it is in this form that it is heard here.

This is a cherishable disc that will not soon be supplanted. I.L.

HAYDN: Sonata for Piano, No. 50, in D—See Beethoven: Trio for Violin, Cello, and Piano.

KOECHLIN: Piano Works.

Boaz Sharon, piano. ORION ORS 79332, \$7.98 (Orion Master Recordings, 5840 Busch Dr., Malibu, Calif. 90265).

Paysages et marines, Op. 63; *Les Heures persanes*, Op. 65: No. 4, *Matin frais dans la haute vallée*; *Pastorales* (12), Op. 77.

Charles Koechlin (1867–1950) is remembered today as the teacher of many contemporary French musicians and as the orchestrator of Fauré's *Pelléas et Mélisande* and Debussy's *Khamma*. He is nearly forgotten as a composer in his own right. This record—which claims to be the first ever devoted to his piano music—adds significantly to his tiny discography.

All the music here was completed between 1915 and 1920. *Paysages et marines* consists of a dozen evocative mood paintings parallel to Debussy's preludes, the similarities extending to certain details of the keyboard writing as well. The style and manner are uniquely Koechlin's, characterized by an idiosyncratic development of harmonically based polytonality (he was, among French composers of his time, the first to advocate this, and later, serialism) The fourth piece of the sixteen-section suite *Les Heures persanes* is an eerie and beautiful bit of Eastern exoticism. The twelve pastorales, by contrast, are more traditional harmonically and hark back to an earlier world of dance and song forms. Ravel, Satie, and even Bartók's *For Children* come to mind.



Edvard Grieg (c. 1903)
An epic opera aborted

Orion has been making a specialty of such intriguing and unhackneyed repertoire. Even if Boaz Sharon plays with more enthusiasm than finesse and his (self-engineered) keyboard recording is somewhat brittle, there's a good measure of good music on this disc, and that's reason enough to take notice. A.C.

LISZT: Etudes de Concert (5); Réminiscences de Don Juan.

Jorge Bolet, piano. [Peter Wadland, prod.] OISEAU-LYRE DSLO 41, \$9.98. Tape: KDSLCL 41, \$9.98 (cassette).

LISZT: Piano Works.

Horacio Gutiérrez, piano. [Suvi Raj Grubb, prod.] ANGEL SZ 37477, \$8.98.

Sonata in B minor. *Années de pèlerinage*: First Year: *Au bord d'une source*; Second Year: *Sonetto del Petrarca* No. 104. *Transcendental Etude* No. 10. *Mephisto Waltz* No. 1.

The differences between Bolet's Liszt and Gutiérrez' may be simply the differences between generations: Bolet, now in his middle years, takes an expansive approach and soothes with his caressing tone; the younger Gutiérrez is more of an activist, who practically pursues his listener.

I recall Bolet's 1959 RCA recording of some of the *Transcendental Etudes* (not the same as his later complete edition on Ensayo-derived CRL 2-0446, also deleted) as being restive in a manner similar to Gutiérrez' present playing, but twenty years of experience (and a flattering ambience and breadth to the sound) have lent balance and

repose to his art. He suggests points rather than hammering them home with poking jabs and crushing blows. Despite an occasionally effete touch, the playing is handsome.

Gutiérrez' manner resembles that of other young Lisztians, such as Ivan Davis and Craig Sheppard: tightly coiled phrases projected with a glinting, biting, focused sonority. His virtuosity is as impressive as Bolet's and a good deal more spectacular. One can admire the dazzling, imaginative brilliance and color, but ultimately, spasmodic activity is no substitute for steady, logical drive. The emphasis on trivial detail segments the phrasing, and the hard, glaring tonal insistence is wearing. Whether the offering is a vignette (*Au bord d'une source*) or an epic (the B minor Sonata), the strenuous activity shows little meaningful direction. The *Mephisto Waltz*, incidentally, is given in a mildly touched-up version, with a few inner voices changed and a reworked final cadenza.

Two recordings linger in the mind to show what is lacking in both of these: Leon Fleisher's account of the B minor Sonata (Epic, deleted) was as terse, "modern," and brilliantly detailed as any but had a succinctness and cohesiveness that elude Gutiérrez; and Harold Bauer's 1942 account of *Un Sospiro*, with its ardent, uncluttered melodic sweep, contrasts instructively with Bolet's slightly precious reverse accents. Bauer played with at least as much freedom, making many rhetorical points along the way, but did so with more direct emotion.

Both Angel and Oiseau-Lyre provide superb sound, but I prefer the ripeness of Bolet's disc to the brilliance of Gutiérrez'. H.G.

MARTINŮ: Symphony No. 2*; Fantaisies symphoniques*.

Czech Philharmonic Orchestra, Václav Neumann, cond. [Zdeněk Zahradník* and Pavel Kühn*, prod.] SUPRAPHON 1410 2096, \$8.98 (SQ-encoded disc).

Musical history usually records a stylistic turn by pinpointing a leader—a Monteverdi or a Schoenberg—around whom gather disciples who implement the new movement; the younger faithful are many and varied, but there are few real masters. This is as it should be. We would suffocate if everyone developed into a giant, so we welcome and enjoy the minor figures who make our weekdays happy, while we save the Sundays for the geniuses. Often, however, the prestige of a movement overwhelms a musician who has real talent but insufficient force to assert his own qualities; his work consequently

shows internal contradiction despite external conformity. Bohuslav Martinů, a good if facile Czech composer, is an example. He is said to be the Czech representative among the leaders of the *nuove musiche* of the first half of the twentieth century, but the claim is palpably exaggerated. Moreover, this is not really Czech music; beneath the French veneer, it is eclectic and derivative.

After studying in Prague, Martinů went to Paris and became enamored of French Impressionism and Post-impressionism, which thereafter dominated his music. But this French idiom is seldom becoming to foreigners, especially to the non-Latin East Europeans. A French composer—say Jean Françaix, or even half of *Les Six*—can prattle along nicely without saying anything, but in a foreigner's hand the soufflé collapses, as these two symphonies prove. Martinů, a better composer than those French musicians, got lost in the imitation, for what he retained from his Paris years was merely the decorative element, the rustling, murmuring sound of the French Impressionist orchestra; underneath there are many echoes from many regions, though the Czech tone is never quite lost.

The first movement of the Second Symphony is put together from small entities that work toward miniclimages. In the Andante, folk (or folklike) melodies give the music more backbone, but we also hear many of the old symphonic clichés. The Poco Allegro is really a fin-de-siècle scherzo bedecked with French orchestral confection. When distant accents from Dvořák's and Smetana's home do make themselves heard, a conflict arises between the syncopated East European rhythms and the mincing and often evasive orchestration. The *Fantaisies symphoniques* (also designated as Symphony No. 6) sound more like a pantomime score, episodic rather than the "well-balanced three-movement structure" the somewhat hysterical (anonymous) notes proclaim; there is much ado but little substance. Though this music is pleasant enough, a little goes a long way. The performances are good. P.H.L.

MUSSORGSKY: The Nursery.*
 PROKOFIEV: The Ugly Duckling, Op. 18.*
 GRETCHANINOV: The Lane, Op. 89.*

Elisabeth Söderström, soprano;
 Vladimir Ashkenazy, piano. [Richard Beswick* and James Walker*, prod.] LONDON OS 26579, \$8.98.

Though more than a hundred years old, the seven songs that comprise Musorgsky's cycle *The Nursery* (1868-72) still sound astonishingly original. The first song, "With Nanny," plunges us immedi-

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ately into Mussorgsky's utterly individual imaginative world, in which music is free from conventional formal restraints and becomes the direct expression of event, developing feeling, and sudden action. All the inflections of a child's excited speech, all the contours of a child's volatile emotions, all the details of a child's brightly colored universe are implied through what, in effect, is less a song than a scena—a freely shaped dramatization of a single incident in the guise of a monologue. The piano accompaniment shows a comparable harmonic and melodic boldness and provides the text with emotional resonance, narrative punctuation, and illustrative amplification.

In all the songs an auditor is implied, and in three of them a response is actually forthcoming. Distinguishing between the voices in a convincingly natural way is tricky, but Elisabeth Söderström proves, once again, a consummate vocal actress, almost a disease. Especially admirable is her handling of "Riding on a Hobby-Horse," where she imitates with perfect musicality the sounds of a child hopping around the room and then the comforting voice of his mother after he has hurt his foot.

By comparison with *The Nursery*, Prokofiev's *Ugly Duckling*, a long and touching narrative about the eventual triumph of beauty, is more introverted, less memorably dramatized. As for the songs of Gretchaninov, they do not aspire to dramatic boldness at all, making their effect principally through their moving lyricism. In "The Wind's Lullaby," No. 5 of *The Lane*, a firm, fresh singing tone is implied, and here the Swedish soprano sounds overextended. But in the recital as a whole there is little conventional lyricism, and in the vivid musical projection of Mussorgsky's and Prokofiev's texts she is superb and quite charming.

VLADIMIR ASHKENAZY, Söderström's superior in technique, is her equal in artistry. In *The Nursery*, above all, they create an unmistakable sense of complete artistic accord.

The recording is good, though the surfaces of my copy were noisy. Texts and translations are furnished. Highly recommended. D.S.H.

PUCCHINI: Suor Angelica.

- CAST:
- Suor Angelica . . . Joan Sutherland (s)
 - Suor Genovieffa . . . Isobel Buchanan (s)
 - Suor Osmina . . . Marie McLaughlin (s)
 - Nursing Sister . . . Janet Price (s)
 - First Alms Collector . . . Elizabeth Gale (s)
 - Second Alms Collector . . . Hannah Francis (s)

- A Novice . . . Miriam Bowen (s)
- First Lay Sister . . . Helen Walker (s)
- La Zia Principessa . . . Christa Ludwig (ms)
- Mother Superior . . . Anne Collins (ms)
- Sister Monitor . . . Elizabeth Connell (ms)
- Mistress of Novices . . . Enid Hartle (ms)
- Suor Dolcina . . . Della Jones (ms)
- Second Lay Sister . . . Doreen Walker (ms)

Finchley Children's Music Group, London Opera Chorus, National Philharmonic Orchestra, Richard Bonyngue, cond. [Richard Beswick, prod.] LONDON OSA 1173, \$8.98. Tape: OSA5 1173, \$8.95 (cassette).

COMPARISON:

Scotto, Horne, Maazel/New Phil. Col. M 34505

London's new recording of the centerpiece of Puccini's operatic triptych bears a curiously complementary relationship to its direct rival on Columbia. On the latter the title role is characterized in permissively full detail by Renata Scotti; it is also beautifully sung, except for the high Bs and Cs, which are uneasy and even unpleasant. On the other hand, Columbia's Principessa Zia (Marilyn Horne) lacks conviction, and Lorin Maazel's conducting is both slow and purposeless—though he shows a gratifying willingness to allow Scotti to take her role at the speed and with the rhythmic emphasis she needs for its proper realization. On London we have something like the opposite: a heroine weak in characterization but (except for the climactic high B flat of "Senza mamma") gloriously secure above the staff; an excellent Principessa Zia; and a conductor who shows admirable command of the score—though he dawdles irresolutely in two crucial sequences, the soprano's one aria, "Senza mamma," and the mezzo's big scene that precedes it.

At this stage of her career, Joan Sutherland shows few signs of vocal decline, except for a certain loss of substance and security in the middle register, and that only on certain occasions. Unfortunately, November 1978, the date of this recording, was one of those occasions, and the soprano finds it hard to do any sort of justice to the "narrative," as distinct from the "ecstatic," aspects of the role. The latter are prodigiously vocalized, the former weakly. The passage in which Suor Angelica responds with growing anxiety to the news that a coach has arrived at the convent—beginning "Ah! ditemi, sorella, com'era la berlina?"—is little more than a blur of consonants. Moreover, Sutherland's response to verbal meaning, crucial in *verismo* opera, is insufficiently lively. In "Senza mamma," in every respect the least satisfactory part of her performance, she is unable to offer the sense of dramatic assurance and emotional

progression that alone can bring the part to life. Here Scotto is at her most distinguished.

In the work's ecstatic pages, like those that end the opera, Sutherland is without a single recorded peer—I refer not only to Scotto, but even to Katia Ricciarelli (RCA ARL 1-2712) and especially to Renata Tebaldi (London OSA 1152) and Victoria de los Angeles (Angel, deleted). In her final "O *Madonna, salvami!*" her voice streams up to a high C of remarkable power and beauty. This aspect of her performance does not, alas, suffice to create a persuasive and moving portrayal of Puccini's heroine.

As the antagonist, Christa Ludwig shows complete mastery of the dramatic situation, suggesting all the necessary inflexibility and determination, though not, like Horne, to the point of melodrama. Ideally the part calls for a contralto rather than a mezzo, but Ludwig, in excellent voice, summons a dark, baleful timbre that, were the conducting not so slow, would doubtless make yet a stronger impression.

Isobel Buchanan copes easily with the high-lying role of Suor Genovieffa and is much fresher in the middle range than Ileana Cotrubas, her Columbia counterpart, though when it comes to phrasing and enunciation she is still a relative novice.

The other sisters, all somewhat unidiomatic in Italian pronunciation, are hardly more than acceptable if no worse than Maazel's equally British ensemble. Apart from the lapses already mentioned, Richard Bonynge's conducting is lively and shows a sensitive regard for orchestral color. The sound is vivid. An Italian/English libretto is furnished.

All in all, despite the drawbacks of Horne and Maazel, I would go back to the Scotto performance for the greatest illumination on records of this touching work. D.S.H.

RIMSKY-KORSAKOV: Scheherazade, Op. 35.

John Georgiadis, violin; London Symphony Orchestra, Yevgeny Svetlanov, cond. [Ronald Kinloch Anderson, prod.] ANGEL SZ 37555, \$8.98. Tape: 4ZS 37555, \$3.98 (cassette).

R Henrik Fridheim, violin; U.S.S.R. Symphony Orchestra, Yevgeny Svetlanov, cond. MUSICAL HERITAGE SOCIETY MHS 4096, \$5.95 (\$4.45 to members). (Add \$1.25 for shipping; Musical Heritage Society, 14 Park Rd., Tinton Falls, N.J. 07724.) [From MELODIYA/ANGEL SR 40112, 1969.]

B R Concert Arts Orchestra, Erich Leinsdorf, cond. SERAPHIM S 60329, \$4.98. Tape:

4XG 60329, \$4.98 (cassette). [From CAPITOL SP 8538, 1961.]

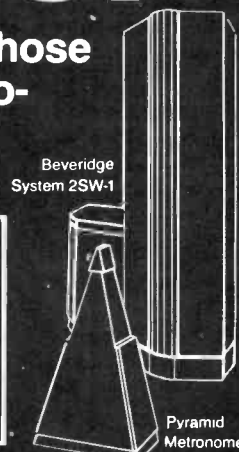
The ultimate goal of 1,001 recorded *Scheherazades*—to match the number of tales with which the eponymous Sultana diverted the cruel Sultan Schariar—is still far off, but new versions and reissues appear constantly.

In March 1970, I praised Svetlanov's distinctively Russian original release, and it now seems more interesting than ever. By way of comparison, his new British recording reflects a decade's technological progress; the sound is warmer and richer, and engineer Neville Boyling avoids the Russian engineers' often unnatural spotlighting of violin and woodwind solo passages. Moreover, the London Symphony's far more refined tonal qualities contrast markedly with the Russian orchestra's characteristic coarseness of timbre and overresonant brasses. The mature Svetlanov is also more assured, in tighter control of both himself and his players; he is even more expansively broad in the big moments. (This version supplants the 1975 Rostropovich, Angel S 37061, as the slowest overall to date.) Only the lack of the final touches of magisterial lucidity and fairy tale magic keeps this from ranking among

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the best recordings—those by Haitink (Philips 6500 410, March 1974), Ansermet (London CS 6212), Beecham (Angel S 35505), and Reiner (RCA Red Seal LSC 2446).

And yet something has been lost as well. In the admirable MHS remastering, the reissue is still arresting for its fierce vitality, and its sonics, despite all their coarseness, blaze more incandescently than ever. To the best of my knowledge, the original distinction of this account remains unchallenged: It was and is the only all-Russian (conductor, orchestra, engineers) *Scheherazade* to have been released here. As such, it's in a class by itself and, with all its faults, surely the most rewarding budget-priced version.

It receives scant competition from Leinsdorf's overvehement and heavy-handed reading with the Hollywood Concert Arts Orchestra and a violinist still unidentified. (Could it have been the late Felix Slatkin?) The early stereo engineering is still notably robust, but it wears less well than in some of the other Seraphim reissues from that era. Everything here is just too harsh for comfort. R.D.D.

ROBB: Songs (13).

Donna McRae, soprano*; Eugene Ives, baritone**; George Robert, piano; Darrel Randall, oboe*. *OPUS ONE 48*, \$4.98 (Opus One, P.O. Box 604, Greenville, Maine 04441).

Teclote**; Tears**; I Am Very Old Tonight**; What Is This Glory*; Snowy Mountain**; Requiem**; Tragedy**; Better Banditree**; To Elektra**; The Shepherdess**; Good Night, My Love**; Richmond Hill**; The Drivers**.

SIEGMEISTER: Madam to You*; The Face of War*; Quartet for Strings, No. 3 (On Hebrew Themes)*.

Esther Hinds, soprano; Alan Mandel, piano.* Primavera String Quartet.* [Carter Harman, prod.] *COMPOSERS RECORDINGS SD 416*, \$7.95.

The John Donald Robb sampler includes thirteen selections from his stage works, song settings, and folksong collections, which evidently (the liner notes are incomplete on this count) date from about 1953 through 1977; despite their diverse origins, the songs are stylistically quite consistent. Robb, now eighty-eight, writes in a completely tonal and rhythmically straightforward idiom that can be described as ultraconservative, melodic, and eclectic if you like it or unoriginal and anachronistic if you don't. Here, for example, we have a one-minute piece, "Tragedy," which begins with a nearly direct quote from Schubert's "Die Forelle" but ultimately sounds more like Gilbert and Sullivan (as does "The Drivers"); a Christmas song, "What Is

This Glory," which derives its holiday spirit by brushing ever so slightly against the tune of many a familiar carol; and "I Am Very Old Tonight," which has a gorgeously melismatic middle section that brings to mind the fifth of Villa-Lobos' *Bachianas brasileiras*. Yet, however obvious and wide-ranging the allusions, Robb's settings are so sensitive and so beautiful that I can't imagine anyone reacting strongly against them, even if they sound more like products of the mid-nineteenth century than of the mid-twentieth.

Soprano Donna McRae and baritone Eugene Ives, singing a side each, turn in winning performances to the sturdy accompaniment of pianist George Robert. In three of the pieces, oboist Darrel Randall contributes winding, atmospheric obbligato lines that contrast nicely with McRae's voice.

Elie Siegmeister, while also generally numbered among today's more conservative composers, *does* write music that is immediately identifiable as the product of the mid-twentieth century. But in one of the two song cycles that make up the first side of his new CRI disc (part of his 1978 award from the Academy of Arts and Letters), that very modernism stands as a barrier between composer and listener.

Madam to You (1964) chronicles the trials and triumphs of Alberta K. Johnson as she battles a census taker, a minister, her daughter, a rent collector, a fortune-teller, a "numbers" solicitor, and even death. Based on a set of Langston Hughes poems, this is a witty collection to which Siegmeister's piano accompaniments, wonderfully played here by Alan Mandel, provide just the right upbeat and offbeat jazzy ambience. The problem is the vocal line, full of what I can only describe as semideclamatory phrases built on "wrong note" intervallic leaps that come off sounding more artificial than expressive; curiously, I found myself wishing I could hear the piano part by itself, without the vocal. *The Face of War* (1966), also to poems by Hughes, is quite similar. But this set, one of Siegmeister's antiwar protests, is grimmer; the harshness of the vocal line—reflected in an often ominous piano part—finds some justification in the subject matter and seems to make more sense. Soprano Esther Hinds sings both cycles with true conviction.

Siegmeister's Third String Quartet (1973) is a much happier affair. Incorporating fragments of four traditional East European Jewish themes into his own partly tonal and partly atonal language, he has devised a work that is obligingly idiomatic for string players and exciting for listeners. It has the strong lyricism and rhythmic drive that distinguish many of his recent instru-

mental works, and at times it calls to mind the Shostakovich Piano Trio No. 2, Op. 67, a work built of similar materials. The second movement does not evoke the "image of upside-down rabbis and enchanted *chassidim* sailing through the air" that the composer's liner notes suggest (à la Chagall); but the work has a magical energy of its own, and it receives a delightfully enthusiastic performance from the Primavera Quartet.

Both discs are well recorded and flawlessly pressed. A.K.

SCHUBERT: Quartet for Strings, No. 15, in G, D. 887.

Juilliard Quartet. [Steven Epstein, prod.] COLUMBIA M 35827, \$8.98. Tape: MT 35827, \$8.98 (cassette).

SCHUBERT: Quintet for Strings, in C, D. 956.

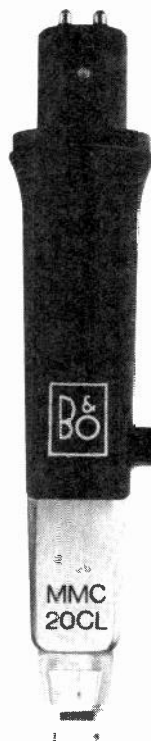
LaSalle Quartet, Lynn Harrell, cello. [Rainer Brock, prod.] DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2531 209, \$9.98.

Bulgarian Quartet, Roland Pidoux, cello. MUSICAL HERITAGE SOCIETY MHS 4118, \$5.95 (\$4.45 to members). (Add \$1.25 for shipping; Musical Heritage Society, 14 Park Rd., Tinton Falls, N.J. 07724.)

Josef von Spaun, one of the friends in Schubert's circle of writers and artists, stated that "we shall never make a Mozart or a Haydn of him in instrumental and church composition, but in song he is unsurpassed." That opinion is still widely held, though it is quite clear that, next to Beethoven, Schubert was the greatest instrumental composer of his age. His chamber music is somewhat uneven, mainly because much of it comes from his early youth; but his mature works in the genre are genuine masterpieces, outstanding even in the prodigious harvest of the Viennese school.

In order really to appreciate Schubert's art, which is wedged between high classicism and early romanticism, we must first of all avoid using the criteria of either of those periods. His works manifest an entirely personal style that is defined by his unsurpassed melodic invention; his formal designs; the wide range of his harmonies; his concept of sound, especially ensemble sound; and his contrasting dynamics. As a song composer, he fell from heaven fully grown; not so as a chamber composer. He grew up in a congenial musical family fond of chamber music and began by supplying works of his own to the family quartet, in which he played the viola. Between 1812 and 1815 he contributed at least ten quartets, of which Mozart and Haydn were the godparents, though even in these youthful works his personality shines through. The

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first of the great works dates from his twenty-third year, 1820: the grim, passionate, and powerful single movement (*Quartetttsatz*) in C minor. It was followed by incomparable masterpieces: the wistful and longing A minor Quartet, the highly dramatic D minor (*Death and the Maiden*), and the final one in G, Op. 161, recorded here.

Composed within ten days in 1826, the last quartet is almost a musical self-portrait, the constant juxtaposition of major and minor depicting the young man's struggle with life and its unclear but threatening end. Dynamics change rapidly, at times rising to symphonic intensity. The development is stormy, yet everywhere there are sudden reassuring moments. The second movement, in E minor, begins ingratiatingly, but after a while the sky becomes clouded and the sharp rhythms of the first movement return; the end is peaceful. The same contrasts appear in the scherzo, with its charmingly simple trio, and in the finale, which begins in the dark minor and ends in smiles.

The Quintet in C was probably composed in Schubert's last year; the manuscript is lost, but a copy was discovered in 1850. Despite a fullness of sound that is almost orchestral, it is true chamber music. One hardly knows what to admire more, the wealth of ineffably beautiful melodies, the bold harmonies, the magnificent sound pictures (with two cellos instead of the usual two violas), or the animated expressiveness of the music and its intensity of communication. There are points in this work, especially in the bewitching Adagio, where verbal analysis falls short, and one must simply surrender to the mystery of the creative mind. Here only the performers are qualified to "speak."

The LaSalle Quartet, augmented by cellist Lynn Harrell, rises to the occasion, bringing out the contrast between pure chamber music and symphonic climaxes without forcing the latter. (Crescendos are never premature.) Passionate outbursts are powerful, lyric passages warm. The heavenly slow movement undulates gracefully; the wild orchestral scherzo is full of élan—one can really hear the horns; the finale is light, the first violin dancing over the ensemble. I only wish that Walter Levin, the accomplished first violinist, were not so addicted to sliding. The Bulgarians who play the same quintet are good instrumentalists, but theirs is only a decent workaday performance.

The Juilliard Quartet is another matter; its performance of the G major Quartet is altogether convincing and superbly professional. Vehement tuttis are never driven, and this agitated work is interpreted with rare taste and insight. P.H.L.

SIEGMEISTER: Song Cycles (2); Quartet for Strings, No.3—See Robb: Songs.

STRAUSS: Die ägyptische Helena, Op. 75.

CAST:

Helena	Gwyneth Jones (s)
Aithra	Barbara Hendricks (s)
First Servant	Betty Lane (s)
Hermione/First Elf	
	Dinah Bryant (s)
Second Elf	Patti Dell (s)
Second Servant	Glenda Kirkland (ms)
Third Elf	Maria Cimarelli (a)
Fourth Elf	Katherine Grimshaw (a)
The Omniscient Mussel	
	Birgit Finnilä (a)
Menelaus	Matti Kastu (t)
Da-ud	Curtis Rayam (t)
Altair	Willard White (bs)

Kenneth Jewell Chorale; Detroit Symphony Orchestra, Antal Dorati, cond. [James Mallinson, prod.] LONDON OSA 13135, \$26.94 (three discs, automatic sequence).

Writing to Richard Strauss on September 19, 1923, Hugo von Hofmannsthal observed that "there is, in any case, no German artist who does not become more heavy-handed over whatever he does than he ought to be." In his next letter, a few days later, he has noticed where the shoe fits: "Over *Die Frau ohne Schatten* we both became too heavy-handed." The subject under discussion is the current Strauss/Hofmannsthal opus, *Die ägyptische Helena*, and both are determined that things will be different this time: "The style must be easy-flowing, on occasion as nearly conversational as the Vorspiel to *Ariadne*... never so heavy as in the opera in *Ariadne*," writes the poet, while Strauss for his part frequently mentions the use of spoken dialogue to keep things moving.

The road to *Helena* was paved with the best of intentions, obviously. Hofmannsthal had in mind a drama of marriage: How, after the long and terrible war caused by her elopement with Paris, did Helen of Troy restore her marriage with Menelaus to the point at which we see them, sunnily reconciled, in the fourth book of the *Odyssey*? This filling of the gap in legend and literature was meant to be modern in spirit, but in the end it turned out to be a good deal more pretentious than John Erskine and dramatically very cumbersome, for a number of *dei ex machina* were added to set up the successive stages of the reconciliation—not only additional characters, but also a pair of potions that inevitably recall the first act of Wagner's *Tristan*. At the end of the second and final act, these transparent devices pile up in a con-

fusing clot of actions and counteractions that cloud rather than clarify the central action.

Furthermore, this stuff did not stir Strauss to any original compositional response; most of the time, he spun out music in a style he found comfortable—essentially the style defined by the Chrysothemis episodes in *Elektra* and the opera seria in *Ariadne*. Perhaps if his poet had in fact achieved something closer to the intended lightness, Strauss would have made more of an effort to invent, say, a more formal version of the *Ariadne/Intermezzo* conversational tone, but instead Hofmannsthal's elaborate language soon put all thoughts of spoken dialogue to flight.

There are residues of the original conception here and there. The two acts open precipitously, without formality; the first starts with a sudden complex of motives whose significance only becomes apparent gradually, during the act, while the second plunges right into Helena's rapturous "second honeymoon" aria. The music for the elves of the sorceress Aithra, who deceive Menelaus in Act I, is clever, without quite achieving the menacing tone that seems needed. The funeral music for Da-ud, though obviously inspired by Beethoven's *Eroica*, builds to interesting and glacial dissonances. Some of Helena's music, including that second-act aria, exploits the soprano voice to considerable effect.

But there are many empty pages. The first encounter of Menelaus and Helena rises to a duet climax of extreme conventionality; the off-stage Orientalism for Altair's house musicians makes Salome's Dance seem a paragon of subtle invention; the cloying accents of Da-ud's song to Helena are (as Strauss admitted to Fritz Busch) nothing more than kitsch; Menelaus' departure for the hunt with Da-ud sounds like a small-beer version of Wotan's ferocious exit in the second act of *Die Walküre*; the final orchestral peroration is stupefyingly bland and banal. At too many points, Strauss has failed to make plausible contact with the action. (He did, in fact, encounter a severe compositional block at the entrance of Altair, and it shows.)

Premiered in Dresden in 1928, *Helena* quickly made the rounds: Vienna, New York (the only post-*Rosenkavalier* Strauss work staged there until after the Second World War), Berlin, Munich, Zurich, and so on. It wasn't really a success, and soon threatened to drop from sight. After Hofmannsthal's death, the stage director Lothar Wallerstein and the conductor Clemens Krauss, feeling that the problem lay in the second act, proposed a new sequence of events, to which Strauss adapted his music, but this so-called "Vienna version" of *Hel-*

ena (first unveiled at Salzburg in 1933) made little further headway. Since World War II, only Munich and Vienna have cultivated it, with limited success (the 1956 Munich production, with Leonie Rysanek in the title role, was probably the best), and America has heard only concert versions: Thomas Scherman conducted one in New York in 1967, and Antal Dorati led the present cast in performances in Detroit and New York just prior to this first recording, which reverts to the original Dresden score.

This is not a particularly distinguished affair, I'm afraid, continuing the downturn in the quality of recorded Strauss that I noted in connection with *Die schweigsame Frau* last October. Despite hard work and earnest efforts, the Detroit Symphony is not the kind of band to do justice to Strauss's elaborate and refined scoring, and the tutti are often rough in ensemble and unpleasant in tone. Preoccupied with playing the notes, the orchestra doesn't manage much variety of dynamics; the result is consequently often monotonous, even though Dorati keeps things moving most efficiently.

Similar comments might be offered about much of the singing. The single substantial pleasure is offered by Barbara Hendricks as Aithra; her pure, silvery sound is always perfectly tuned, her diction is clear and largely correct, and she has a nice sense of the character as a kind of "Helen of Troy groupie" that is not at all inconsistent with the libretto. More briefly in evidence is the solid alto of Birgit Finnilä, the voice of the telesthetic Omniscient Mussel that keeps Aithra up to date on the outside world.

Gwyneth Jones, who sang Helena in the 1970 Vienna production, is now so erratic of intonation and tonal quality that little of her work here is easy to enjoy. Hearing her at the New York concert, one hoped that she might achieve greater consistency in the recording sessions, but that seems not to have happened. Matti Kastu's tenor is about two sizes too small for Menelaus, and he is so preoccupied with putting out some kind of sound to match Strauss's characteristically optimistic tenor writing that he can make very little of words, phrasing, or rhythm. (In truth, this part can hardly ever have been well sung, certainly not by Taucher in Dresden, Graarud in Vienna, or Laubenthal and Kirchoff at the Met, though possibly by the young Lorenz, Taucher's alternate at Dresden, and probably by Franz Völker in Salzburg, to judge by some pirated excerpts of his singing in a Vienna *Frau ohne Schatten* of that year.)

Willard White's basically firm voice is strained by the high notes of Altair's part, and Curtis Rayam isn't really the kind of

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supersweet tenor that Da-ud's writing wants. (Strauss at one point threatened to make this a travesty part, but was dissuaded by the irate Hofmannsthal; the young Peter Anders would have been about perfect.) The various elves, servants, and chorus are reasonably efficient.

In sum, then, a provincial performance of a substantially flawed opera, one whose best—or, at least, most immediately appealing—qualities are likely to emerge only in a rendition of considerable sheen and vocal glamor. London's forceful, un-gimmicky recording (concert style, without any stage effects) only makes more conspicuous the performance's flaws, I fear. The libretto includes a new translation, not entirely accurate—but then its few errors don't matter greatly amid so much obscure verbiage.

(A more consistent example of Strauss's later Grecian vein is *Daphne*, set to a less imaginative, indeed more ponderous, libretto by Josef Gregor, and Strauss collectors may be pleased to note the reappearance on DG's Privilege label of the excellent 1964 recording with Hilde Gueden, James King, and Fritz Wunderlich, conducted by Karl Böhm: 2726 090, \$13.96—not quite the bargain it seems, since no libretto is included this time around, nor do the publishers, Boosey and Hawkes, list any but a German-only version for \$2.50.) D.H.

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 DG ARC-2533424; /3310424
Goldberg Variations for Harpsichord, S.988
 Gibbons 2-Titanic 30/1
English Suites (6) for Harpsichord, S.806/11
 Argerich (piano) (No. 2) † Partita 2; Toccatas DG 2531088; /3301088
Italian Concerto in F for Harpsichord, S.971
 Pinnock † Solo Hpsi Con.; Partita S.831
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Partitas (6) for Harpsichord, S.825/30
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 Argerich (piano) † English; Toccatas
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Suites (4) for Orchestra, S.1066/9
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 Wilson, Schwarz, LA Ch. Orch. † Tele-
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Toccatas for Harpsichord, S.910/16
 Argerich (piano) (S.911) † English; Partita
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Trio Sonatas, Instrumental
 LA Baroque Players (S.1037) † Fasch;
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Bluebeard's Castle, Op. 11
 Varady, Fischer-Dieskau, Sawallisch, Ba-
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 L. Slatkin, St. Louis Sym. † Grieg:Peer
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 Levine, Chicago Sym. 4-RCA CRL4-3425
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 Schubert:Rondo D.608 Orion 79337
COPLAND, AARON
Danza de Jalisco, for 2 Pianos (1963);
Dance of the Adolescent (from Dance
Symphony)
 Trenkner & Pleshakov † Moscheles;
 Vaughan Williams:Intro. Orion 79343
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 Zinman, Rotterdam Phil.
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Trio Sonata in G
 LA Baroque Players † Bach:Trio Son.
 S.1037; Fesch; C. Stamitz Crys. 703
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Peer Gynt Suites Nos. 1 & 2, Op. 46, 55
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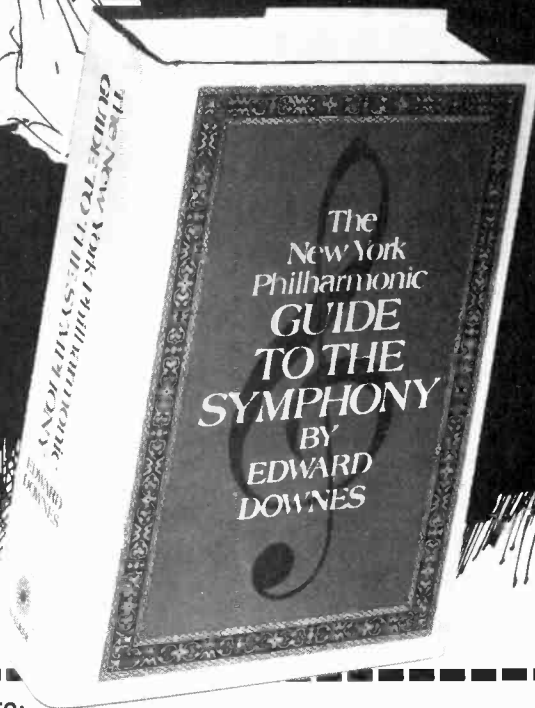
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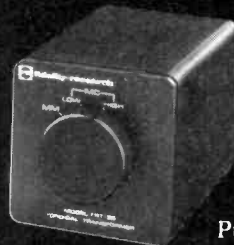
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ords (his *oeuvre* has not even been cataloged fully), but if more performances of the quality presented here are forthcoming, his position in the hierarchy of musical chic may well be in for rehabilitation.

The Telefunken anthology points up Telemann's considerable stylistic range within a single medium, and the alternation of treble stringed instruments (violin, treble viol, and violino piccolo) accentuates the variety. (Of the pieces recorded here, incidentally, only three were published during the composer's lifetime: One is from a set of six trios that appeared in Frankfurt in 1718, another from the *Esercizi musicali*, and the third was printed in *Der getreue Music-Meister*.) The music is consistently charming, and the performances with original instruments are mercifully free of the "sewing machine baroque" that so often destroys this kind of music. Indeed, the interpretations achieve something like an ideal balance of elegance and electricity, and the recorded sound is thoroughly lifelike. S.C.

WALTON: Façade I; Façade II.

Cathy Berberian and Robert Tear, speakers; various instrumentalists, Stuart Bedford, cond. PETERS INTERNATIONAL PLG 135, \$9.98.

WALTON: Façade.* EPSTEIN: Night Voices.†

B Janet Bookspan, speaker; various instrumentalists*; Boston Boy Choir, MIT Symphony Orchestra†; David Epstein, cond. CANDIDE CE 31116, \$4.98.

WALTON: Façade.

BR Hermione Gingold and Russell Oberlin, speakers; various instrumentalists, Thomas Dunn, cond. [Israel Horowitz, prod.] MCA WESTMINSTER MCA 1401, \$4.98 [from DECCA DL 10097, 1964].

What, more *Façades*? Before anyone becomes too excited by the prospect, I hasten to explain that there is nothing completely new here. *Façade* was originally a miscellany, a collection of Edith Sitwell settings whose number and order and contents often changed between performances. The first private performance had fewer poems (and was set for fewer instruments) than the version we know today; the first public performance at the Aeolian Hall in 1923 was longer; and the revised version of 1926, with Sitwell and Constant Lambert as narrators, added some and replaced no fewer than ten settings, making twenty-five. Only in May 1942 was the usual selection of twenty-one numbers established, and even then the order was different from that published in 1951. So from a group of more than forty Sitwell settings, the composer finally authorized a sequence of

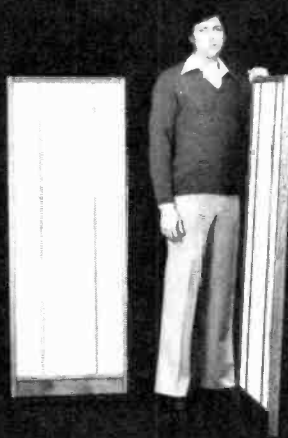
seven times three, firmly fixed in order (reminiscent of *Pierrot lunaire*).

Interest has occasionally been sparked in the unpublished numbers. One, "Herodiade's Flea," appeared as a supplement to the handsome facsimile published by Oxford University Press. But it was not until 1977, the year Walton turned seventy-five, that an effort was made to bring them to public attention—in lieu, it must be said, of any very recent outstanding works by the composer. And so the English Bach Festival (which has never confined its attention

to Bach) promoted a nice little concert in a posh London livery hall in March 1977 and had Richard Baker (the English television news reader and host of a popular radio program) read seven of the unpublished *Façade* numbers plus a new one; Charles Mackerras conducted the music. A larger public heard the same selections three months later, when the London Sinfonietta included them in its Walton birthday concert.

The saga was not quite over, for, according to OUP, "while reading proofs [of

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the newly revived numbers] later the same year, Walton decided to reject three of the numbers, substitute three new ones, and radically to rework and reorder the music." So what prefaces the conventional *Façade* on the Peters disc, a product of OUP's quite new record department, is a group of eight Sitwell settings—five familiar to those who attended the 1977 concerts, three that might be recalled only by those with long memories from the 1920s—lasting twelve minutes. (This definitive *Façade II* was performed at the 1978 Aldeburgh Festival.)

Which, you may well feel, is a lot of fuss about not very much. Yet, though the additions do not substantially change any judgment about the work, they are attractive: a skittish, tangy 6/8 for "Came the Great Poppingay," little gusts of wind for 'Jane, Jane, Tall as a Crane," a typically acerbic "March," "Madame Mouse Trots" with just a flash of percussion, a weary stut-ter for "The Octogenarian," a quiet ostinato for "Gardener Janus," saxophone and flute solos around the waltz of "Water Party," and another 6/8 frolic, crisp and perky, for "Said King Pompey."

Performances on the new Peters version are satisfactory, though not bursting with life; I prefer Cathy Berberian's forward, crisp reciting voice to that of Robert Tear, who sounds rather wet. The playing of the ensemble under Steuart Bedford is crackling and witty; the acoustic is drier than on the other recordings here.

I came to this version only after encountering Janet Bookspan's new recording of the "standard" *Façade*, and this is a performance that challenges all notions of how it should sound. She reads with an eye and an ear for sense, not merely for rhythm. Most narrators (beginning with Sitwell herself) have treated the words as pure sound, placing them precisely on their notated beats and making them sound like a surreal succession of disconnected syllables. Bookspan, on the other hand, plays fast and loose with the rhythms in order to give the wonderfully strange images and stories a chance to communicate themselves to the listener. And though it goes against the most 'authentic' performing tradition imaginable, that of the librettist and composer themselves, I think she is quite right. The instrumentalists, conducted by David Epstein (whose atmospheric *Night Voices* provides the disc's filler) supply the precision; Bookspan overlays the words with a keen feeling for the conflicts between sentence structure and the written notes. Where she is less successful is in the 'meaning'—she sometimes reads into the verse "Silly" in the couplet "Daisy and Sylvia" and "Silly" does not mean stupid, but the first of the two girls, who kissed



Alexander von Zemlinsky
A distinctive voice

in 'Like the goose-king's feathered daughter kissed' has a vulgarity here that is implied neither by words nor by music. Part of this stems from Bookspan's large-scale, public delivery, which sounds as if it were intended for a concert hall; a recording surely provides an ideal opportunity for an intimate delivery of the verse.

That style of performance is provided in the classic account by Hermione Gingold and Russell Oberlin, now reissued by MCA. Indeed, Oberlin's voice is quite unearthly; its desexed, fluting tones provide a perfect contrast to Gingold's knowing, down-to-earth drawl. I cannot pretend that, either on this recording or on the Bookspan, I like the version of English-American that is used, but there are fewer jarring moments on this delectable and tasteful record than on Bookspan's more innovative and adventurous attempt. MCA's sound wears well, and the ensemble performance under Thomas Dunn is neat if not exactly sparkling.

These recordings prompt a couple of thoughts about Walton and *Façade*. The witty, dessicated style of the music has prompted many comparisons with the satirical style of *Les Six*; but it was a more perceptive commentator, I think, who linked their 'musicalness' of sound to earlier French music, to Debussy and Ravel. Add to that the Stravinsky of *L'Histoire du soldat*, the strongest single influence behind the work, and you have a composition that is not essentially satirical, but rather tender and witty, and very much in love with the styles it gratefully picks off. *Façade* is brilliant; but the effect of its success on Walton's composing career seems in retrospect to have been disastrous. The fine First Symphony, viola concerto, and slightly less successful violin

concerto and the postwar string quartet take us to 1947; there has been little since that can be regarded as important. What Wilfred Mellers called the "depressingly well-meaning, self-conscious Elgarizing" of Walton's music has become increasingly evident. It is ironic that, while Michael Tippett, for example, has become ever more searching in the works of his later years, Walton had to celebrate his seventy-fifth birthday by returning to a youthful triumph of forty years before. N.K.

ZEMLINSKY: Quartet for Strings,
No. 2, Op. 15.

LaSalle Quartet. [Rainer Brock,
prod.] DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2530 982,
\$9.98.

Until quite recently, Alexander von Zemlinsky was principally a footnote in other composers' biographies. He taught Arnold Schoenberg, who described him as "the person whom I thank for practically all my knowledge of technique and the problems of composition," and Zemlinsky's sister Mathilde became Schoenberg's first wife. He also taught Alma Maria Schindler before her marriage to Gustav Mahler, who had already, in 1900, presented Zemlinsky's *Es war einmal* at the Vienna Opera. (Alma's diary reveals that she was on the point of "giving herself" to Zemlinsky when she met and fell for Mahler.) He conducted the music of Schoenberg, Berg, and Webern; Schoenberg thought him "the best conductor alive." (Zemlinsky recorded for Telefunken and DG during his years at Berlin's Kroll Opera—things like Mozart overtures and Smetana's *Vltava*, but so far I have actually heard only some aria accompaniments, from which little can be gleaned about his accomplishments in this line.) His *Lyric Symphony* was the source of a quotation in Berg's *Lyric Suite*, which was—at least publicly—dedicated to Zemlinsky.

Hard facts about the man turn out to be elusive: E.g., some sources give his birth and death dates as, respectively, October 4, 1872, and March 16, 1942, others advocate October 14, 1871, and March 15, 1942. The latter dates seem to be favored by the most recent and apparently most knowledgeable writers, including Lawrence A. Oncley, author of a dissertation on Zemlinsky's music. Oncley also clarifies the date of the Second String Quartet, somewhat muddled in the liner notes of DG's recording: it was composed between July 20, 1914, and March 12, 1915. Though Zemlinsky may have intended to dedicate the piece to Schoenberg, no published edition, either prewar or postwar, bears any dedication whatsoever. As for the first performance, which the DG annotator ascribes to the Rosé Quartet in

1924—well, according to the book DG published with the LaSalle recordings of the Schoenberg, Berg, and Webern quartets (2720 029), Zemlinsky's Second was played by the Feist Quartet in June 1919 at one of the concerts of Schoenberg's Society for Private Musical Performances. (From Berg's correspondence with his wife, it seems that there may have been a still earlier performance, as well as a reading at Alma Mahler's house in 1916.)

Be all that as it may, the Second Quartet is an impressive token of Zemlinsky's skills: a strongly profiled, absorbingly written, richly textured piece, in a four-movements-in-one format that recalls Schoenberg's First Quartet. The musical fabric is less dense than Schoenberg's, though the frequent use of double-stopping makes for a generally full sound. Rhythmic detail is often complex, with several instruments subdividing the beat in different ratios, but the fundamental pulse is regular and never in question. Transitions between formal elements are expertly made, as in the overlap effect when the scherzo sinks down in the cello and seems to persist under the brief trio.

Harmonically, too, this is simpler music than Schoenberg's—blander, one is tempted to say of the slow material, which does not escape a certain sentimentality that both Mahler and Schoenberg, in their different ways, managed to avoid when in a similar vein. If the piece has a musical (as distinct from expressive) weakness, it is the failure of the tonal plan to depart significantly from the central D minor/major until the "fourth movement." But it remains a work of considerable imagination and should stimulate interest in Zemlinsky's distinctive voice. This is the LaSalle Quartet's home ground, stylistically, and it plays superbly, with lustrous tone, great rhythmic vitality, admirable ensemble and character; it deserves our thanks for a significant exhumation, as do the DG engineers for the rich, natural sound.

While we await the LaSalle's promised recordings of the other three mature Zemlinsky quartets, inquisitive listeners are directed to Italia ITL 70048 (distributed by Peters International), which contains an effective performance of Zemlinsky's *Lytic Symphony* (1922), an evocative song-symphony to poems of Rabindranath Tagore. Don't expect another *Lied von der Erde*, for the composer's method and purpose are different from Mahler's. In some quarters, Zemlinsky is currently being touted as "Mahler's true successor," the purpose of the argument evidently to discredit Schoenberg; more interesting, if more difficult, would be a serious attempt to define the similarities and differences of the three



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men. For that, to be sure, we will need to know still more of Zemlinsky's music. Fortunately, the availability of recordings such as these means that we can consider such questions on our own, and no longer have to take on faith someone else's perhaps tendentious words. D.H.

Recitals and Miscellany

THOMAS MURRAY: Organ Recital.

Thomas Murray, organ of the Immaculate Conception Church, Boston. [Lincoln Mayorga, prod.] TOWN HALL 5 23, \$7.98 (Sheffield Town Hall, P.O. Box 5332, Santa Barbara, Calif. 93108).

ELGAR: Sonata in G, Op. 28.
FRANCK: Prelude, Fugue, and Variation, Op. 18. GADE: Three Tone Pieces, Op. 22.

Nearly ten years ago Thomas Murray recorded two Franck works (Town Hall 5 11) on the 1863 Hook organ in Boston's Immaculate Conception Church. The condition of the organ was precarious, but the sounds were still such as to attract national attention to an instrument of enormous beauty and importance. Now that it has been completely restored, the organ clearly bears comparison with the work of the best nineteenth-century European builders (Willis and Cavaillé-Coll); indeed, I would not hesitate to list it among the real landmarks in the history of organ building. The individual stops are of surpassing beauty, and yet everything balances and blends exceptionally well. The foundations are both warm and transparent, the reeds exciting but civilized, and the upperwork (fifteen ranks of mixtures on the Great alone!) crowns the ensemble magnificently.

Nobody loves this instrument more than Murray, who provides a stunning demonstration here. The Elgar sonata, in particular, comes off with marvelous élan, its kaleidoscopic changes of color being handled with exquisite sensitivity. And in the three pieces by the nineteenth-century Danish composer Niels Gade, Murray's intense account reveals music of real distinction. I would have preferred much more rhythmic flexibility in the Franck—without it the sequential figurations sound trivial, and the glorious lines lose some of their poetry—but in general Murray's technical control and polish are most admirable.

His previous recording was apparently made from some distance in the nave, but the new one captures the sound from the perspective of the console. Though one occasionally hears a bit of clatter from the action, the almost tactile realism of the re-

corded sound (with especially solid bass) makes this one of the most exciting organ records within memory. Bravo! S.C.

Theater and Film

10. Music from the original film soundtrack.

Composed and conducted by Henry Mancini. [Joe Reisman, prod.] WARNER BROS. BSK 3399, \$7.98. Tape: M 53399, \$7.98 (cassette); M 83399, \$7.98 (8-track cartridge).

LEGRAND: The Umbrellas of Cherbourg: Symphonic Suite. The Go-Between: Theme and Variations.

London Symphony Orchestra, Michel Legrand, cond. [Paul Myers, prod.] COLUMBIA M 35175, \$8.98. Tape: MT 35175, \$8.98 (cassette).

Both Henry Mancini and Michel Legrand spearheaded and benefited from the trend some twenty years ago toward incorporating the inflections of popular music and jazz into the stylistic armamentarium of serious film scoring. (Of course, there had been earlier pioneering efforts by Leith Stevens, Elmer Bernstein, and Franz Waxman.) Although both have since demonstrated a capacity for more ambitious fare—notably, Legrand in *Ice Station Zebra* and Mancini in *Visions of Eight*—they have also continued to produce excellent work in the vein with which they have become virtually synonymous.

The score for 10 is Mancini's best in years—superior even to his frolicsome *Who Is Killing the Great Chefs of Europe?* of a year or so ago. Apparently his less intensive schedule in recent years has allowed him to concentrate on his real forte: the creation of sinuously haunting and alluring melodic lines. This score contains three absolutely ravishing tunes that are worked directly into the film's action by being ascribed to its protagonist, a Marvin Hamlisch-like tunesmith seen in the act of composing. Appallingly, in this era of pathological pop and disco-dreck, such splendid melodies will not even get a hearing in the mass market.

The main title offers a solo piano line whose casual and insinuating chordal progressions call to mind a Herman Chittison or Ellis Larkins meditatively tickling the keyboard in one of those ill-lit Gotham *boîtes* that figure so prominently in the older pop-culture's iconography of urban decadence and sophistication (though the film takes place in sunny California and touristy Mexico). The remainder of the disc is filled out with a continuous, undifferentiated swatch of disco party music (de rigueur

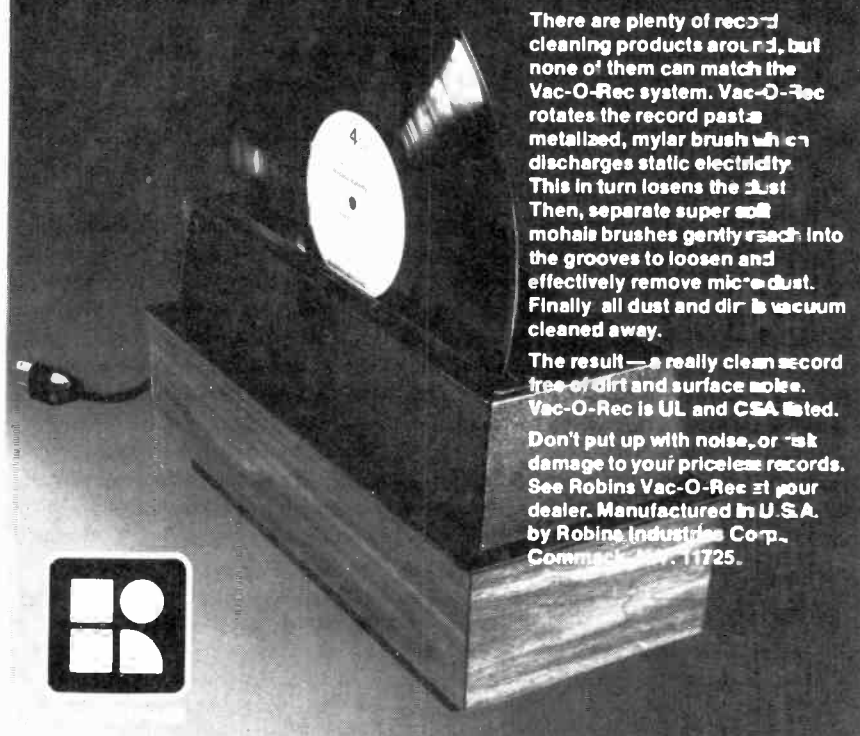
these days) and a quiet dance-band arrangement of Ravel's *Bolero*, which serves as one of the principal erotic shibboleths in this film's witty, trenchant account of the battle between sex and age.

Legrand has been one of the most inexhaustibly fertile and irrepressibly Ariel-like talents in international jazz and pop for nearly a quarter of a century. He masters all aspects of constantly changing vernacular idioms instantly, it seems, but behind the facility and high jinks one senses an urge to break out of the restricting molds of commercial music and address a larger canvas, as witness his various collaborations with librettist/director Jacques Demy. *The Umbrellas of Cherbourg* is the most acclaimed, though not necessarily the most cinematically compelling or musically vital (a distinction reserved for the much more inventive and diversified *The Young Girls of Rochefort*). Nevertheless, a purely orchestral treatment of this beloved "pop opera"—in which the plot moves forward entirely through continuous vocalizing—was long overdue.

Legrand's orchestrations are rich, smooth, and full of his peculiar panache, particularly in the alternately silken and piquant writing for strings, woodwinds, and brass, and yet there is nothing crass or false in his approach. The "suite" is really a single-movement tapestry that follows the story line closely, introducing all major themes, together with subtle transitional passages, in proper sequence. And the London Symphony responds to Legrand's brilliant and musicianly leadership with one of its most sympathetic and infectious performances on recent film recordings. This version of the score nicely supplements the original soundtrack, still in print (Philips 616).

Unfortunately, the second side is far more conventional. Although Legrand's rather austere music for Joseph Losey's *The Go-Between* contributed mightily to its atmosphere of mystery and morbid curiosity as well as bridged the gaps within its complex narrative construction, this symphonic elaboration of a couple of very spare choralelike motifs into a lengthy set of variations sounds flat, tedious, and pedantic. Legrand seems to have been so intimidated by the "seriousness" of his project that he created a neoclassical display of technical craft without a redeeming hint of his puckish humor, lyrical spontaneity, or sense of picturesque instrumental color. This work would have been much more provocative as a Legrandesque *aperçu* of the "third-stream" school; in his next large-scale effort, he should not make the fatal error of turning his back on his fertilizing jazz roots. P.A.S.

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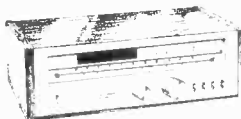
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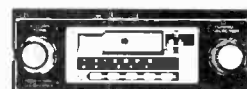
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The Tape Deck

BY R. D. DARRELL

New and wonderful: Arabesque
 Caedmon, the spoken-word label, has launched its bold venture into music recording, and few classical record series have made a debut so arresting, kaleidoscopically varied, and provocative. Arabesque's first twenty-one programs, "mid-priced" at \$6.98 per disc or simultaneously released cassette (plus \$1.00 for a libretto, where pertinent), strikingly reflect the expertise and extraordinarily catholic tastes of veteran connoisseur/discographer/producer Ward Botsford as well as Caedmon's long-established artistic and technical standards.

Novel packaging is the most startling feature of the tape editions: Both single- and multiple-cassette programs dispense with the usual plastic containers in favor of pocketbook-sized folded cardboard "boxes." Besides the obvious cost savings, the advantages of this ingenious design include provision for printed notes and, with two-cassette sets, optimum utilization of space. And while it is more wasteful of space with one- and three-cassette packages, it still provides added protection against pilferage from dealers' shelves.

Arabesque, drawing mainly from overseas EMI sources, features three main types of material: resurrected monos of exceptional historical interest; significant stereo recordings once, but no longer, in the Capitol/Angel and RCA Red Seal catalogs; and, in the largest proportion (twelve releases), stereo programs never before available in this country except as imports. I will postpone attention to the first two categories in order to concentrate on some of the appetizing attractions in the third. And I give pride of primacy to two singles.

A first-ever is the belated appearance of Beecham's wonderful 1957 Delius *Songs of Sunset*. Its release was approved only after the conductor's death (1961) by his widow, and even then it was issued abroad only in mono, which does less justice to the incomparable Delian magic than stereo now does. It is coupled here (9026; no texts) with the last (first in stereo) of Sir Thomas' many recordings of another masterpiece for chorus and orchestra, Borodin's *Polovetsian Dances*—more electric in astonishingly vivid 1956 sonics than ever before.

Perhaps even more enticing, since it hasn't been released previously, is an Italian RCA recording (c. 1970) of an intimate "Bach after Midnight" clavichord program (9044). Denis Vaughan's loving perform-

ances on a fine Thomas Goff instrument of nine preludes from *The Well-Tempered Clavier*, two slow movements from C.P.E. Bach sonatas, and miniatures from Anna Magdalena Bach's Notebook were once scheduled for American release, but the anticipations aroused by his 1972 HF article about the recording were never satisfied—until now.

Four large-scale vocal works fill such aching gaps in the domestic catalogs that several received HF reviews in their imported-disc editions. Herbert Blomstedt's 1977 Dresden recording of Beethoven's opera *Leonore*, the 1805 original version of *Fidelio* (9043-3L, i.e., three cassettes, two boxes, with libretto), provides illuminating insights into the work most of us have known only in its revision—one in which (as discussed in the April 1978 review) something was lost as well as much gained. The late Hans Schmidt-Isserstedt's authoritative Mozart *Idomeneo* of 1972 (9054-4L; HF, August 1973) is more complete (including the composer's revisions) than any other version currently available. And if I'm less impressed by Sir David Willcocks' 1974 Haydn *Creation* (9039-2; inexplicably no libretto or notes), blame my bias against the soloists' British-oratorio style of singing. Chorus and orchestra are fine, and this seems to be the only modern recording in English aside from Waldman's (MCA discs, 2-10001). Finally (for now), there is Willy Mattes' 1967 Lehár *Das Land des Lächelns* (9055-2; in German, with dialogue; no libretto by publisher's prohibition), which I, as annotator, am disqualified from evaluating. I can, however, cite the December 1973 review of the imported EMI Odeon disc edition.

New and promising: Spectrum

Another of today's enlightened connoisseur/producers is Daniel Nimetz, responsible for the imaginative programming of the first releases from Spectrum (division of Uni-Pro Recordings, Inc.). Originally issued on a "society" basis at \$4.50 each (write Spectrum, Harriman, N.Y. 10926, for details), they are now also available from selected dealers at \$7.98 per musicassette; the excellent production includes (Glory be!) at least brief program notes.

Nicholas Jackson's aptly named "Art of the Harpsichord," Vol. 1 (SC 204), is outstanding both for the enchanting tonal qualities of Rubio's replica of a 1770 Taskin instrument and for its absorbing Couperin program: Louis's D minor Suite and

François's Eighth Suite and pieces from *L'Art de toucher le clavecin*. Of technical interest is the processing of this superb recording from an extremely good master without Dolby—a daring decision that for once proves justified.

Novel selections distinguish the Richard Boldrey/Elizabeth Buccheri "Romantic Music for Piano/Four Hands" (SC 213): unfamiliar early Wagner, Liszt, and Georges Onslow, plus a more distinctive Balakirev suite (a recording first?). Then there is a delightful program calculated to convert nonspecialist listeners who think they hate medieval and Renaissance music: "Gesellschaftsmusik from Austria, c. 1500" (SC 207). There are representative songs and dances by such notables as Finck, Hofhaimer, Isaac, and Senfl, along with the more obscure Thomas Stoltzer and Stefan Mahu—all played with irresistible relish by the Viennese Musica Antiqua Ensemble under Bernhard Klebel. The vivid recording captures all the acerbities of the period instruments: fiedels, krummhorns, bombards, etc.

"New" and cheap: CMS/Summit

Around the end of 1978, SCHWANN began listing musicassettes (as well as discs) from CE (Classical Excellence), Euphoria, and CMS/Summit, but only the last has sent review copies. Its tapes are bargain-basement-priced at \$4.98 each, and they are obviously not aimed at the connoisseur market: The artists are mostly unknown or little known in this country, and the recorded performances are rough and ready. But the processing is quite acceptable save for the absence of Dolby. There are no program notes. Choose with care from the extensive catalog available from CMS Records, 14 Warren St., New York, N.Y. 10007.

I thought little of Georg Richter's routine Mussorgsky *Pictures* and Bald Mountain with the London Symphony (SUM X 41021) and less of Ewa Maslaczynska's eisegetic Chopin recital on an unpleasantly hard-toned piano (X 41032). But Emanuele di Pareira's Neapolitan singers and orchestra are engagingly enthusiastic and brightly recorded in the Vivaldi Gloria and *San Lorenzo* Concerto (X 45069). And Hans-Jürgen Walther's Pro Musica Symphony injects high-voltage excitement into favorite Chabrier/Dukas/Enesco "Showpieces" (X 41064), crowned by a poetically evocative version of the lovely Chausson tone poem, *Viviane*, Op. 5. **HF**

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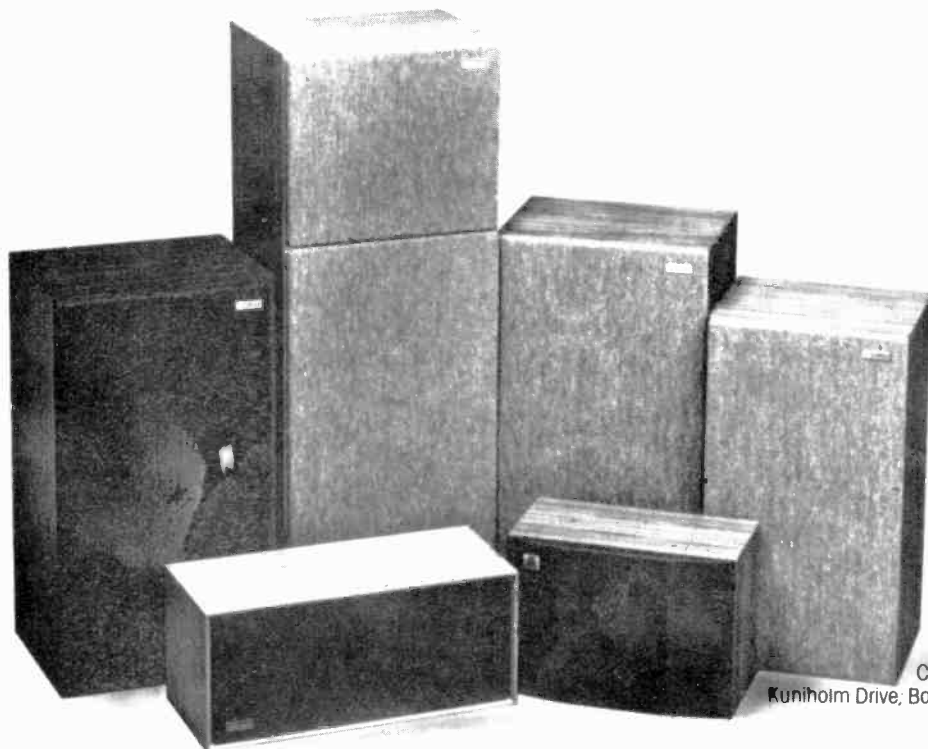
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BACKBEAT[®]



Eddie (left) and author Fred Miller discuss a piece on the bassist's new LP

Everybody's Favorite Bass Player – Eddie Who?

by Fred Miller

He was Charles Mingus' favorite bass player. "One of the finest jazz bass soloists I've ever played with," says Chick Corea. Right now, he's probably the most-recorded jazz bassist in the country, having worked with such top names as Corea, the Brecker Brothers, Bill Evans, Joanne Brackeen, Ralph Towner, and Jack DeJohnette for virtually every label in the genre. This is not the story of a studio musician who is finally coming into his own as a jazz artist. He doesn't play electric bass and rarely gets called for jingles or backup work on pop sessions. He is first and foremost a jazz performer, as active in clubs and concerts as he is on record.

Located within walking distance of many of New York's major jazz clubs, Eddie Gomez' large, sun-filled Greenwich Village apartment serves as an oasis amid the frantic musical world of the city. We met there one afternoon last March, in the company of his three "big basses," as he calls them, dozens of houseplants, and a huge, sprawling record cabinet.

Eddie is very much a native New

Yorker. He first played bass at Booker T. Washington Junior High School and then went on to study with Fred Zimmerman at the High School of Music and Art, both public schools. At the time, Zimmerman was the principal bassist with the New York Philharmonic. "He was the most important person in my musical life," says Gomez, "because of the way he felt about the instrument and because he had a real artistic aura about him. When I went to a lesson, it was like stepping into another world—all feeling and magic." Though Eddie discovered jazz as a teenager (he still has the first record he bought—Red Garland and with Art Taylor and bassist Paul Chambers), he continued studying classical technique with Zimmerman. By the time he had finished high school and spent three years at Juilliard, however, he had decided that the jazz life was for him.

He started by playing weddings, backing singers at such places as the Playboy Club, and finally working his way into small jazz clubs. Among the first "names" he played with were Jim Hall and the

Gerry Mulligan Quartet, and it was Mulligan who eventually led him to his longtime employer, friend, and "school," Bill Evans. "We were at the Village Vanguard sharing the bill with the Bill Evans Trio," recalls Gomez. "Bill asked me to sit in with him, but I was so awestruck I couldn't even talk to him. Later, he called and asked me to go on the road, and, as it turned out, he liked my playing and asked me to stay on. This was in 1966. The first couple of weeks I was so nervous, I hoped people wouldn't notice me, but I was elated at finding myself where I wanted to be. After a while I began to realize I had a place, a particular voice that was me. I felt like I was really learning. I'd turn around and see Bill Evans and Philly Joe Jones, and I'd think, 'Wow, this ain't a bad school!'"

It was when the Evans Trio recorded an album at the Montreux Jazz Festival in '67 that the word on Eddie got out. Miles Davis asked him to play with the band that included Herbie Hancock, Wayne Shorter, and Tony Williams. "I did some work with them after Ron Carter



left but what I really wanted to do was to play a lot of solos." Gomez says. So he decided to stay with Evans, since "he let me play a lot—chorus after chorus. It takes a lot of solos to be able to develop a clear statement."

He has always been far more interested in expressing himself as fully as any horn or piano player than in fulfilling the traditional bass player's role: "The common conception of bass playing has to do with being the foundation of the band, the timekeeper, and playing sonic relief from the horns. We owe a great debt to guys like Milt [Hinton, who got his start with Cab Calloway's big band in the early '30s] and George [Duvivier, long considered one of jazz's finest bassists]. They have tremendous diversity and are unfailingly swinging on every note, but they don't get out and solo the way the younger guys do." Eddie credits Scott LaFaro, who also played with Evans for several years, with having opened the bass up as a solo instrument (LaFaro died in a car accident in 1961 while in his twenties.) "When he soloed, it was like a beautiful accompaniment to just living... breathing."

Gomez' solos are equally distinguishable, not only for what he does with melodic line and improvisation, but also for the unique animal-like sound of his bowing. It is a primal language, a lyrical, intimate, and natural sound that communicates a warm sensuousness and affects even the most jaded listener. He is also apt to step outside of "perfect" intonation from time to time—a device that can lead to disaster in lesser hands—reaching for a naturalness of sound, a humanness of expression. He makes more of the extreme high registers of the instrument than anyone before him, and his playing is notably free of clichés—the gliss to the downbeat, four to the bar, eighth note triplet descending to root type of stuff. He'll sooner leave an open space than rely on stock phrases, the better to create tension or interest for the listener. His use of double-stops, too, is limited to where they are totally appropriate for the texture of the music. Some of his solos literally have the quality of a human voice (He attributes this in part to the fact that his mother used to sing to him as a child.)



This isn't a gimmick, it's a peculiar combination of technique with an ability to verbalize his thoughts and ideas on his bass. His message is, well, friendly—free of the arrogance of some fusion players, free of the self-protective shield of the how-many-notes-per-second beboppers, and full of fresh ideas and surprises.

In 1977, having played with the Evans Trio for ten years, Eddie decided it was time to branch out: "I loved working with Bill, but after all that time I was beginning to think of myself as 'Bill Evans' bass player," and thought that a lot of other people were of the same mind. It was just time to get out on my own." This also meant less time on the road and more at home with his friend Maria, his mother, and his fifteen-year-old son.

Of course, once word got out that he was back in town, the requests for recording dates came pouring in. But Eddie is selective: "When I record, I like to be on projects where what I do is necessary to the direction of the music, not just where they need a bass player. I like to have time, and I like to be on creative projects where the ideas are clearly laid out, whether it's in musical notation, words, or just clear feelings of what's supposed to happen."

As a producer and engineer, I've worked with Eddie in many contexts from a Broadway-cast album to some serious jazz dates. As for the basics, his timing is impeccable, his ability to fall "in sync" with a drummer legendary. But it's his soloing that makes him a sure bet for a great record.

The first album I made with Eddie was guitarist Jack Wilkins' first for the Chiaroscuro label. We had assembled a startlingly good band: Eddie on bass, Randy Brecker on flugelhorn, DeJohnette on drums, and Wilkins on acoustic and electric guitars. It was to be primarily a quartet album, but Wilkins insisted on doing one tune, Corea's *500 Miles High*, as a duet with Gomez. The recording procedure was slightly unorthodox. Rather than laying down the rhythm tracks first, Eddie would play his solo track while Jack played rhythm on acoustic guitar, then Eddie would play rhythm on the



bass while Jack soloed on electric. And it worked. *Downbeat* praised the album, "Merge," for its "vigorous inventiveness." In *The New York Times* John Wilson wrote, "both bowing and plucking. . . Mr. Gomez played lead lines and developed solos that carried much more imaginative melodic and rhythmic variety than one usually hears from a bassist."

From a producer's standpoint, doing full justice to Gomez on record is not always easy. Fortunately, he has been working of late with Manfred Eicher for the ECM label. "I think he makes the right decisions," says Eddie. "He has been accused of not making jazz records [he avoids the standard head-solo-solo-solo-head form in favor of the recorded composer/performer's particular vision] and of not liking black musicians, but he puts out beautiful records. He's a real producer, in that he knows where his artist is, and he tries to steer you toward certain feelings that he thinks you want on record. For some people, that's too much—they don't like to be told or guided. But I feel that's what a producer is for."

Eddie is not particularly difficult to work with in any case: "In a situation where I'm asked to contribute, I like to give it everything I have—to really contribute to the creative goings-on. I'll do whatever it takes to make it work."

He brings that attitude to every context. He recently worked with progressive jazz pianist Joanne Brackeen at Bradley's in Greenwich Village and in the studio on her Tappan Zee/Columbia record "Keyed In," produced by Bob James. "He's incredible," says Brackeen. "I've never played with anyone who has his abilities as a soloist, and a pianist couldn't ask for a better partner." In a less traditional, "free" jazz gig with guitarist John Abercrombie, saxophonist Pete Yellin, and drummer Tony Lupo, Eddie sounded as if he was born to the idiom—no music, no chord symbols, no restrictions of any kind. Corea's "Friends," a truer jazz album than some others Corea has released, called for a bass soloist with "personality" on his instrument. So, Chick called Eddie. And so did Ralph Towner for "Batik" and "Old Friends, New Friends," Evans for "I Will Say Goodbye." McCoy Tyner, flutist

Jeremy Steig, Dave Liebman, Claus Ogerman, Jack DeJohnette. And the list keeps growing.

Though Eddie is tremendously popular in the jazz world, he hasn't yet achieved the high public profile of, say, Stanley Clarke or Jaco Pastorius. Given his emphasis on "making a statement" via soloing, I wondered if he was aiming for that kind of image: "Recognition is important from the people you respect and from the audience you nurture," he replied. "At this point, I'm getting the recognition I always wanted. As far as the 'limelight' is concerned, it's kind of a shot in the dark for me, and I didn't give twenty years of my life just for that. I'm serious about being commercial, though, and the album I'm working on now with Jeremy Steig is a step toward that."

The fact that Gomez plays "big bass," rather than electric, has also kept him outside of the commercial mainstream. "It seems that there's a guitar orientation with Jaco and Stanley, since they play electrics, and I like that whole thing. . . getting out there and being sexy, being theatrical, provocative, visual. But I'd like to do that with the big bass, to have some youth attached to the instrument. Right now it has a kind of elitist image. I like the electric bass, but for me, I can't begin to express myself on it, and that's really the whole ball game."

As for the instruments themselves, Gomez has three. "I have a Dutch instrument from about 1700 made by Kuyper. It's Milanese style, with violin-type corners and I mostly play it at home. Then there's a Czech instrument from about 1900 that was originally a five-string. It's a good orchestral instrument, and I've made lots of records on that one. The other bass is just from the 1940s, but it has a real good sound. It records well, and it bows pretty well, too. It doesn't have the deep, sensuous sound of the big [Czech] one, but it provides a good balance for different kinds of work."

Gomez is currently "being commercial" via his collaboration with Steig for the European CMP label. Designed to appeal to a wide audience, the personnel includes drummer DeJohnette, percussionist Nana Vasconcelos, and such "studio-

wise" musicians as drummer Steve Gadd and keyboardist Mike Nock. The recording was done in New York's top studios (including the Electric Lady, Blank Tapes, and House of Music) and mixed by veteran engineer David Baker. An early listen revealed that they have succeeded in coming up with an accessible sound that is never overly "slick" and retains the essential improvisatory ingredients.

When he's not recording, Gomez is virtually all over the map in clubs and concert halls. During his stay with Evans, and in subsequent concert tours with DeJohnette's New Directions group, Davis, Tyner, et al., he has covered the major American jazz spots as well as quite a few in Europe. We spoke about the relative merits of live appearances: "I hate clubs where all you can hear is glasses clinking or the phone or drinks being mixed. That really drives me crazy. But there's that element of spontaneity that allows an audience to be themselves, to yell or scream or respond however they like. I like the Village Vanguard—it has a wonderful playing feeling. The Bottom Line is almost too big, but that room has something about it—maybe it's the sound—that makes it good to play in. In a concert, you know they've come to see you and they want to hear every note, but you take something away from the audience in that setting—the spontaneity and intimacy."

Eddie is particularly sensitive to those two qualities—both as a person and as a musician. And that, combined with pure technical ability, is why everyone wants him for records and nightclub dates. Whatever his artistic direction may be, he remains the premier bassist in jazz. Standing five feet six, hauling his "big bass" along Seventh Avenue to a gig, he reminds me of the mouse that roared—quietly. As his longtime friend and collaborator Jack Wilkins says: "Eddie's an authentic original. He's got it all." ♪



Home Video Fever: High Tech in the Living Room

by Ira Mayer

Financial considerations aside, today you could conceivably be the proud owner of a seven-foot television screen, a two-way cable that would enable you to talk back to your TV set (in Columbus, Ohio, you could even ring the gong on *The Gong Show*), a deep-dish satellite antenna in your backyard that would pick up stations across the country and around the world, and, of course, a video cassette recorder (VCR), a black-and-white or color video camera, and a video disc player. The question is—and it's one that has the entire communications industry, pardon the expression, buzzing—what would you watch? The fare could range from Peruvian folk dancing to abstract sci-fi images set to the latest Top 40 hits, *Saturday Night Fever* and the unexpurgated *Deep Throat*, Bolivian soccer matches, the 6 o'clock news from Tokyo, 1980's Rose Bowl, or your roommate's surprise birthday party.

Technologically, the home video future is here. And, though there are still quite a few legal and production snags to be straightened out, it's only a matter of time before today's film, concert, dance, and theater fan need go no farther than his living room for the same top-quality entertainment he treks downtown for now.

It is estimated that 1.2 million video cassette recorders and 10,000 video disc players are currently in use in American homes and that, in 1979, owners of these machines purchased some 32 million video discs and blank and prerecorded cassettes. Both VCRs and disc players hook up to standard television sets, and one of the three disc players (two are still in prototype) already offers a stereo audio track that connects to home playback systems. Though the older VCR format gives users the option of recording off the air (and doing so automatically, in case you're out for the evening) and of creating and playing back home video tapes, the

newer disc players offer exceptional visual clarity and definition, and are potentially easier to mass-produce software for.

The two VCR systems currently competing for dominance of the U.S. market are Sony's Beta and Matsushita's VHS (video home system). Both are widely available in audio, video, appliance, and department stores. Though only Sony's professional U-Matic VCR now offers stereo audio here, with improved broadcasting standards and the promise of television stereo (already available in Japan), home models will no doubt follow suit eventually. Most of the consumer Beta and VHS machines sell for less than \$1,000 with the discounts and rebates that are frequently available, and some industry observers predict that within five years they will retail for as little as \$500. Relatively current feature films in both formats go for from \$40 to \$100.

The three disc players, like the two VCR formats incompatible with one another, are Magnavision (originally developed jointly by Philips and MCA and marketed through the Philips-owned Magnavox Corporation), the JVC/Matsushita VHD (Video High Density) system, and RCA's SelectaVision. Magnavision is being test-marketed in Atlanta, Seattle, and Dallas, with national distribution predicted for early 1981. It utilizes a laser beam to read the audio video data on each side of a twelve-inch disc. (The standard version holds half an hour of program material per side, and the extended-play disc contains up to one hour per side.) List price for the machine is \$775, and discs range from \$6 for instructional pro-

A fourth player, manufactured and distributed by DiscoVision and Pioneer, goes into test market this month. Software for the unit will include "stereophonic musical performances," to be acquired and created through a new subsidiary, Pioneer Artists. For more on the Pioneer developments, see page 20.

gramming to \$25 for feature films.

The RCA SelectaVision model more closely resembles a traditional phonograph—a capacitance-reading stylus travels through a groove—though video grooves are much smaller than audio grooves. It too plays one hour per disc side and is promised for national distribution by the first quarter of next year. RCA says it will carry a list price of under \$500, with feature films costing about \$15 and video music, educational, and documentary discs selling for less. The first SelectaVision units will be mono, in order to keep the price down. But subsequent models will have stereo capability, according to RCA. The audio quality of the demonstration model I heard was poor.

JVC/Matsushita predicts that its system will also be available in 1981. It is similar to SelectaVision: It is a contact system that utilizes a stylus, it will cost about \$500, and playing time is about one hour per side. The size of the disc is smaller than RCA's, however—roughly ten, as opposed to twelve, inches. JVC's parent, the Victor Company of Japan, has entered into an agreement with Thorens-EMI Ltd. to develop and manufacture the VHD player and associated software.

Clearly, the technology is here. But the people selling it have a major problem to solve: What does the public want to watch? It appears that feature films and X-rated fare will be all they can get on the retail level "until such time as the market demonstrates it can support creativity," says one programming vice president who prefers to remain nameless. At present, few software manufacturers seem willing to create any new programming specifically for home video. "The cost of television quality video programming is astronomical," continues our anonymous source. "When you're creating for commercial television you have a guaranteed

sale. We don't know if there's a market for original home video programming yet—and no one is prepared to lay out the dollars to find out."

Current indicators give little cause for optimism about such a market. According to a spokesman for one major East Coast audio, video, and record retail chain, blank video tapes typically outsell prerecorded ones 20 to 1, and total camera sales are marginal. That's a fairly clear indicator that most VCRs are used for taping off the air, for playing back rented cassettes, or for copying tapes borrowed from friends. A recent Gallup poll tells us that, with the exception of teenagers, most people watch the programs they record only once. So "time shift" at the moment seems to be the primary use to which such units are put.

Since VCR users watch the programs they record only once, is there any reason to believe they would want to watch original material more often? And, if not, why would they buy it in the first place? (MCA president Sid Sheinberg does point out that "we don't know how often a record purchaser listens to an album. Just that hasn't held back the record industry.") But for manufacturers, it's not just a question of whether to lay out the dollars. Because none of the systems are compatible, the next question becomes *where* to put those dollars. And the legal ramifications, too, specifically as they relate to royalty structures, are cloudy.

Warner Bros. recording artist Todd Rundgren recently spent \$150,000 of RCA's money to create a *Close Encounters*-ish video interpretation of Tomita's recording of Holst's *The Planets*. Rundgren is looked upon as a leader and innovator in video music programming, yet even he lends support to the manufacturer's point of view: "I don't believe the video disc will ever become a realistic art form for a musical artist like myself. The video disc will be the last place an artist's work will be seen—after network TV, syndication, satellite, and cable. Nobody has the confidence in any one system to make the kind of investment that would be necessary to create a video-music art form."

Yet that viewpoint seems a bit extreme if one looks at video technology in

historical perspective. Whenever any new communications medium develops it initially turns to older media for its content. At first, film was theater on celluloid; television was radio with pictures. And there are already people, Rundgren among them, investing on their own or getting record company assignments and experimenting with original music programming.

Record companies are somewhat schizophrenic in their approach to home video music. For the past several years their artist contracts have contained the phrase, "for sight and sound . . . now or to exist," thereby covering themselves for in-store promotional video cassettes and for unforeseen or anticipated audio and video technological developments. Yet while they have been stockpiling limited amounts of video on their artists—mostly performance tapes, sometimes more elaborate productions—none is equipped to create full-fledged programming. Nor, for the most part, will they allow artists to go outside the label to do so.

The schizophrenia was illustrated by RCA's representatives at the *Billboard* Music Video Conference last year. "A record company must begin today to anticipate its role as a video production house," the label's president, Robert Summer, told the audience. Yet the next morning Steve Kahn, head of RCA's in-house video production arm, told the same audience, "We are a marketing company. We are not in the film and video business. Video music is a marketing tool for audio music—an alternative to air play."

Still, there are specific home video music plans for the proposed RCA SelectaVision catalog. In addition to its deal with Rundgren, RCA has entered into an agreement with Don Kirshner (producer of *Rock Concert* for NBC-TV) to produce music video, "some of which," according to the company, will be original. It does not comment on what the rest will be—one assumes Kirshner will repackage some of *Rock Concert*'s footage. Given the audio quality of the SelectaVision prototype, the combination doesn't look to be overwhelming. More significantly, RCA has en-

"I don't believe the video disc will ever become a realistic art form for a musical artist like myself."
—Todd Rundgren

Statistics show a 1000% growth of video piracy in the last five years.

tered an agreement with its traditional rival CBS, whereby the latter will manufacture and distribute software for Selecta-Vision. Sy Leslie, head of CBS Video Enterprises, projects that product will be available to consumers by 1982. Some of it will be new material, some purchased, and some licensed.

Stanley Gortikov, president of the Recording Industry Association of America, an industry lobbying group, insists that the hardware manufacturers are ignoring the two major constituencies that will determine the success or failure of home video: consumers and retailers. Polls indicate that consumers expect to be able to buy video software at the outlets where they now buy records. Retailers, Gortikov says, will be overburdened with stocking multiple configurations of the same titles, creating space, inventory, and financing problems.

There are other elements to consider. The cable companies say they want to provide the kind of exposure for video music that radio provides for albums and singles. But the music industry is especially wary of that in light of the growth of home video and record piracy. Statistics show a 1,000% growth of video piracy in the last five years. (A video cassette of *Coal Miner's Daughter* was pirated and showcased—for a fee—within days of its commercial release.) "At a moment when the record industry faces a tremendous challenge with the recording of discs off the air," said MCA's Sheinberg at the conference, "I can only say, 'Beware of Greeks bearing gifts.' I don't know a surer way to disaster than our video programming being available on cable. If that is the case, then we should go into the blank-tape business."

Yet perhaps the biggest problem hampering the development of original programming for home video—and affecting music in particular—is a legal one. Feature-film video cassettes and discs are considered "submarket" uses in the same way that television showings of movies are, and so the royalty rates are more or less established. For record albums, there are no such precedents. The American Federation of Musicians feels that, "audio records are audio records and cannot be

converted to video" without negotiating a new contract. "Our objective is new product since we already have residual rights on old material." Others point out that, even when the AFM situation is worked out, there will be producers, writers, and various other individual and guild parties to contend with. (Rights for such video works as Blondie's *Eat to the Beat* and Ron Hays's *Odyssey* were negotiated on a project-by-project basis.)

Will the video disc's lower cost, finer quality, and as Rundgren put it, "familiarity factor" (similarity in size and shape to LPs) wipe out the home video cassette market? Even MCA and RCA don't seem to think so. In a speech delivered last July, Fred Silverman, president of RCA's parent corporation NBC, projected that by 1988 video cassette recorders would be in 15% of U.S. homes and video disc players in 20%. MCA has also entered the prerecorded video cassette business just in case, and it has had enormous manufacturing problems with disc software. Of the 260 titles it has been licensed to issue, only about 100 have been made available, and there are reports that the rate of defectives runs as high as 30%, with consumers waiting as long as six months to receive replacement discs. Magnavox has had problems on the hardware end too, though it has entered into an agreement with IBM and the Japanese-American audio manufacturer Pioneer, and the combined technological know-how of the resulting joint venture (called DiscoVision Associates) should help. RCA says it will enter the market next year with 200,000 disc players and 300 titles. Given the space-age technology of the machinery and potential problems with the discs, that sounds overly optimistic.

Other systems are competing in the European and Japanese markets. One of them, made by BASF, features a 99-day advance recording capability—compared to the U.S. machines which can be set to record only from 1 to 7 days ahead. What soap opera fan wouldn't relish the promise of taking a three-month vacation and never missing an episode? ☘

ITA Seminar: The Race to the Future

San Diego is a popular convention retreat, its coastal site and light industry yielding temperate weather and clean air. But during the first weekend in March, dark storm clouds and muggy gusts of wind swept down from the north, carrying with them a salty tang that permeated the hotel lobbies of Harbor Island. Nature provided an appropriate atmosphere for the convention that filled those hotels, for the dominant topic of discussion at the tenth Annual International Tape/Disc Association (ITA) seminar was home video.

Over sixty speakers (from Art Buchwald to Motion Picture Association president Jack Valenti) addressed themselves to video cassette technology, video discs, satellite transmission, and interactive computerized video. Although all 433 businessmen, analysts, and observers agreed video's future was bullish, they just couldn't agree on how, where, or when that future would reveal itself.

For instance, on the subject of VCRs, delegates heard projections for the format's long market life, particularly in light of its time-shift capability. But we also learned of a mitosis among rival formats, which can only lead to rapid obsolescence. To the original rivalry between VHS and Beta, new—and incompatible—configurations have been added. Several manufacturers have been looking into Longitudinal Video Recording (LVR), and Philips unveiled its Video 2000, which ups the stakes in the running-time battle by providing for eight hours of playing time. The half-inch home VCR tape standard was challenged by Funai's new quarter-inch Compact Video Cassette (CVC). The cassette itself is the size of its conventional audio counterpart, and the player is smaller and lighter in weight than others on the market.

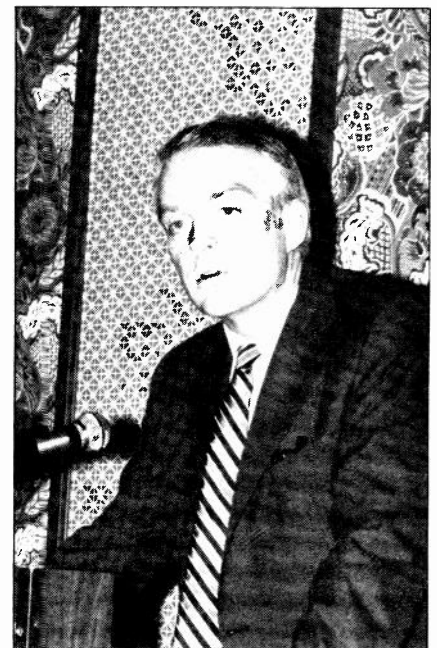
Video discs are likewise proliferating, the two prominent systems being



Pfannkuch—Bell & Howell



Valenti—MPAA



J.J. Reilly—DiscoVision

MCA's optical-reflecting Magnavision and RCA's SelectaVision contact-capacitance format. Since DiscoVision's founding late last year, Universal-Pioneer has introduced a player that is compatible with the Magnavox-distributed Magnavision units currently being test marketed. Magnavox' Ken Ingram repeatedly emphasized both systems' stereo audio capability and random-access and freeze-frame features.

RCA attended the seminar in the wake of its software pact with CBS. And early in the sessions, the company's consumer electronics chief, Jack Sauter, raised the stakes further by announcing a new agreement between SelectaVision and Zenith, heretofore RCA's chief consumer electronics rival in the U.S.

RCA's alliances—as well as its strategy of maintaining lower prices for players and discs and of forgoing the test-market stage in anticipation of a full-fledged national rollout in early 1981—significantly narrow Philips/MCA's early lead. Furthermore, SelectaVision's programming development has been sparked by major acqui-

sitions from United Artists and Paramount, among others, and stereo has been promised in the system's second-generation units.

Additional manufacturers discussed plans to enter the video disc arena. Days before ITA started, JVC/Matsushita promised the introduction of their contact-capacitance disc system sometime during '81. The JVC/Matsushita Video High Density system (VHD) is—you guessed it—incompatible with all the others, using a disc about ten inches in diameter. Sony revealed tentative plans to go ahead with an industrial unit of its optical-reflecting system. But the impending format battle, along with Sony's lack of an adequate disc catalog, led the Beta/VHS inventors to delay market plans.

While the VCR and disc manufacturers carried on their respective battles, a potential rival to both emerged in discussions of cable, pay-TV, satellite, and other forms of electronic video distribution. Bell & Howell video-products division president Bob Pfannkuch outlined the coming decade's growth of those technologies as a development that could outstrip the

reach of discs and cassettes combined. With cable's "narrowcast" programming for varied and specific audiences, and with such developments as video print distribution (Teletext, Antiope, and other directory systems are already ushering in the video "page") and two-way interactive systems (which allow viewers to talk back to their sets), consumer software may eventually be rendered irrelevant in many respects.

Finally, observers predicted that music would be a major force in new video software, except that no one really knows how such programming will be financed, produced, or accepted. Film studio involvement has mushroomed over the past sixteen months, from the initial lone entry of 20th Century-Fox via its acquisition of Magnetic Video Corporation to the current activities of all nine major studios.

Whither video? Clearly to the forefront of mass media. When and how remains to be seen.

SAM SUTHERLAND

Sex and Love and Rock 'n' Roll

by Stephen Holden

“D a ya think I’m sexy?” Rod Stewart teases in one of the signature songs of the disco era. On the cover of the greatest-hits album containing the single, Stewart is dolled up in pink satin, his bleached-blond hair gleaming, his eyes lowered, as though he’s waiting for the right woman to throw him down on the bed. That woman might be the super-charged hooker that Donna Summer impersonates on “Bad Girls,” as she caterwauls for some “hot stuff.” Who would have thought even a decade ago that a passive male sex homb and an aggressive hooker would become pop icons? Though eroticism has always been central to pop, only recently did it become so explicit, with “hot stuff” replacing “happily ever after” as the ultimate panacea.

The sexual revolution in pop began, of course, in the mid-Fifties with rock & roll and Elvis Presley’s humps and grinds. Before that, mainstream pop reached its predominantly female audience with yearning love songs and dreamy mood music. These dominated the airwaves during and after the Second World War, when Frank Sinatra and Doris Day were the quintessential white American voices. “The girl that I marry will have to be as soft and as pink as a nursery,” Sinatra crooned, while “nice” Doris Day confessed to harboring a mystical “secret love.” The prerock couple slow-danced to songs filled with images of stardust, rainbows, and moonlight. Sex, these songs implied, wasn’t an aggressive animal activity, but the ineffable fusing of two souls in a quasi-religious ceremony.

Rock & roll came as a rude male challenge to this promlike atmosphere of sexual sublimation. Presley’s gyrations and macho sneers brought a phallic con-

sciousness to pop that was truly scandalous in its day. He and his disciples changed the male love god image from a sophisticated, Continental ladies man to a sweaty American stud with a heart of gold. Yet although real sex became possible, the price of indulgence was the consciousness of sin and the burden of guilt.

Sixties pop did away with the guilt. Whereas the previous decade had dwelt endlessly on whether or not to go steady and the ability of teenagers to experience “real” love, Beatlemania ushered in a spirit of “anything goes”: sex was fine if carried out in a spirit of affectionate, hip camaraderie. In this climate, women could finally express their needs directly. Aretha Franklin demanded “respect,” while Janis Joplin advised “get it while you can.” And because of the Beatles’ vast popularity and cuddly, “unisex” image, being a musician finally lost its sissy connotation completely (even Elvis was called effeminate in 1956), allowing teenage boys to participate freely in the fantasy world of pop.

This masculinization process was a major cause of rock’s phenomenal commercial growth. With the Rolling Stones and Led Zeppelin, the electric guitar became as much of a phallic symbol as the car, and playing in a rock band as typical a male puberty rite as team sports. The aggressive “heavy metal” style of rock that defined pop’s masculinity was the aural antithesis of the dreamy mood music of the Fifties.

The Seventies witnessed macho rock & rollers sneering at singer/songwriters as “wimpy” and, at the other end of the spectrum, the arrival of disco’s orgiastic fantasy world (seen by many to

be as escapist as Fifties love songs). But disco demanded that everyone be glamorous and sexually gifted, and maybe all that pressure was just too great. Certainly much new wave rock is a reaction to disco’s soft-core heaven. Instead of the in-and-out thrust of the disco beat, new wave dance rhythms are up-and-down jerky, almost klutzy. Instead of the bump, it’s the pogo. The lyrics frequently express a fear and loathing of sex to the point of arrogant contempt: “I don’t want to be your lover / I want to be your victim” pouts Elvis Costello in *The Beat*, while the Ramones opt out of sex completely by being “se-dated.” Even slicker new wave acts like the Knack and Blondie expose the irony of sex roles. Posing as a comic-book doll, Blondie’s Debbie Harry sends up the role of sex siren, while the Knack struts a leering misogyny. By eroticizing the grotesque and the seedy, punk styles rebel against the chic consumer ethic that disco exalted.

Most recently, the emergence of a new strain of female hard-rockers (Heart, Pat Benatar, etc.) suggests that pop is continuing to grow cynical, from all sides. Whereas sexual freedom was once the crux of a revolution, now the nihilist fringe of the new wave questions whether the revolution was worth it. What is the value of erotic love in a world that, according to the Sex Pistols, has “no future”? When the Clash rails against “phony Beatlemania,” it is also railing against the failure of the love generation’s romantic optimism. Even diehard wimps like the Bee Gees sense the profound deflating of romantic expectations, now that people have gained sexual freedom: “Nobody gets too much heaven no more,” they lament. It’s hard enough just “stayin’ alive.”



Lockie the lone Cowboy



The Isleys: Ronald, Marvin, Chris Jasper, Ernie (top); Randy and Kelly

**Cowboys International:
The Original Sin**
Dennis MacKay, producer
Virgin VA 13138
by **Steven X. Rea**

"The Original Sin" is a classic case of art vs. artifice, authenticity vs. affectation. Mining the art-rock turf staked out by Roxy Music, and aping the oblique stratagems of Roxy cofounder Brian Eno, Cowboys International comes up all style and little substance.

For all intents and purposes, Cowboys International is singer/composer Ken Lockie. Since the LP was recorded last fall, the band—Terry Chimes on drums, Jimmy Hughes on bass, Evan Charles on keyboards, and Rick Jacks on "aquarium guitars" (according to the liner notes)—has virtually dissolved; only Charles and Lockie remain with a newly aligned outfit. Lockie sings in a flat, deadpan voice, the same kind of emotionless

delivery that marks that of fellow British electro art-rockers John Foxx and Gary Numan. The mesh of sound isn't as layered with synthesizers here as it is with those two; instead, Cowboys International opts for the more fluvial fancies of Eno's solo albums: spacey tape-loop guitars (*Thrash, Pointy Shoes*), tinny toy piano and Japanese-style plucked strings (*Hands*), percussion that sounds like Ping-Pong balls bouncing in an echo chamber (*The 'No' Tune*), and so on.

For the most part, it all adds up to naught. *Here Comes a Saturday*, with its crisp, combative beat in stark contrast to Lockie's ambivalent vocals, is an exception. So is the title track, a foppish, upbeat reworking of Devo's *Uncontrollable Urge*. And *M(emory) 62* has its moments, mainly an intro and outro that sport something akin to an electronic raspberry.

Catchy moniker notwithstanding, Cowboys International—at least in this incarnation—is a cold, austere inconsequen-

tiality, totally devoid of the wry warmth and satirical grace that elevate Eno's (stylistically) similar work beyond mere cleverness.

**The Isley Brothers:
Go All the Way**
The Isleys & C. Jasper,
producers. T-Neck FZ 36305
by **Crispin Cioe**

The Isley Brothers have been around so long and have made seminal contributions to so many phases of r&b and rock over the last twenty years, that sometimes one forgets their uniqueness. On the surface, "Go All the Way" contains no radical departures from their last LP, "Winner Takes All," with the almost even mix of latter-day barrelhouse party music and delicately shaded love ballads. With repeated listening, however, the Isleys' latest reveals an acute sensitivity to the most recent developments in black pop music.



Greg Kihn Band: Lynch, Wright, Kihn, Carpenter



Loretta—buried in goop

which they have seamlessly woven into their sophisticated bedrock-funk style.

The six Teaneck, New Jersey brothers debuted at Washington D.C.'s Howard Theater in 1957, and their early material, on a variety of labels, literally defined modern party dance music. Even on Berry Gordy's Motown production line, they came up with one of that label's best single cuts ever, *This Old Heart of Mine*. But since forming their own company in the '70s and adding younger brothers Marvin on bass and Ernie on drums and guitar (his Hendrix-inspired solos continue to develop and add dimension) the group has homed in on a sound that is distinct and inseparable from their material.

Unlike many funk groups today who opt for synthesizer-heavy, artificially induced production scenarios, the Isleys' dance tracks generally feature a natural ambience on instruments and voices that, while state-of-the-art acoustically, is also strongly in the tradition of classic black party music from Louis Jordan through Jr. Walker. On this album, *Pass It On (Parts 1&2)* captures that irresistible spirit best, building on a telepathically intense interplay between Ernie's foot-bass drum and Marvin's surging, resonant bass. On the ballad side, *Here We Go Again* and

Don't Say Goodnight (It's Time for Love) acknowledge the recent resurgence of the "old style" vocal group sound (like that of the Whispers and Ray, Goodman & Brown). Of course, Ronald's classic tenor voice never left Loveland in the first place. On *Don't Say Goodnight*, his pleading falsetto alternates with Ernie's gentle wah-wah guitar puffs to create both a tribute to an updated masterpiece of the American soul ballad. The musical territory the Isleys work may be familiar and somewhat traditional, but they cover the bases with such grace and energy that they are still at the top of the league.

**The Greg Kihn Band:
Glass House Rock**

Matthew King Kaufman & the Greg Kihn Band, producers. Beserkley BZ 10068
by Don Shewey

Though one of the San Francisco Bay Area's most popular acts and easily the best band in Beserkley's stable of lovable oddballs, the Greg Kihn Band has never really set the rock world on fire, and it isn't likely to start with "Glass House Rock." The album, Kihn's fifth, adheres to the combination that he has favored since

his debut: Beatlesque-harmony pop, sunny Californian ballads, and guitar-driven rock. The alternation of flavors—from a hard, haunting story-song like *Castaway* to the lovely, Byrds-like *Anna Belle Lee*, from a respectable remake of Gene Pitney's hit *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance* to the ringing, romantic pop of *Serenade Her*—will appeal to fans of, say, early Hall and Oates or Sutherland Brothers and Quiver.

But on his last few albums, Kihn has leaned more toward hard rock. And although *Things to Come*, with its frantic tempo and stop-and-go momentum, makes for a nifty rave-up, tunes like *The Only Dance There Is* and *Night After Night* force him to forsake his boy-next-door sincerity (his secret weapon as a singer) for a rather routine rock shout. It's a shame, because Kihn's straightforward pop songs are catchy and more substantial than most—you don't feel foolish when you find yourself singing them as you stroll down the street. Still, despite the erratic quality of his albums, I always look forward to hearing the next of Kihn.

Loretta Lynn: Loretta
Owen Bradley, producer

MCA 3217
by Lisa Harbatkin

Quite obviously, "Loretta" has been neatly timed to coincide with the release of *Coal Miner's Daughter*, Loretta Lynn's filmed biography. But the uninitiated who buy it as a result of having seen the movie will assuredly wonder what all the fuss is about.

The combination of a unique voice and quality material propelled Lynn to the top of the country charts some twenty years ago. For the past five years, however, her solo efforts have been moving steadily in a popped-up crossover direction, and "Loretta" goes just about all the way. Her unmistakable phrasing and clear sweet soprano, both country to the core, are herein buried under an avalanche of mushy strings and oozing backup vocals. The arrangements, though competently

rendered by Nashville's finest sidemen, would do for anyone.

The songs vary from insipid crooners like *It's Too Late to Love Me Now* to one near-nonsensical medium rocker called *Naked in the Rain*. Three tunes do merit attention, though all are sabotaged by their arrangements: *I've Got a Picture of Us on My Mind*, J. D. Miller's classic *It Wasn't God Who Made Honky Tonk Angels*, and *The Fool Wouldn't Listen*, reminiscent of early Kristofferson. None of the material is Lynn's, and people who remember *They Don't Make 'Em Like My Daddy Anymore*, *Fist City*, *Your Squaw Is on the Warpath*, and, of course, *Coal Miner's Daughter*, know what they're missing. It's not just that this isn't country music, it's bad music.

Smokey Robinson: Warm Thoughts
William "Smokey" Robinson,
producer. Tamla T8367M1
by Don Shewey

Smokey Robinson's solo career proceeded pretty quietly until the single *Cruisin'* took off early this year. Now, with "Warm Thoughts," it ought to make an even bigger noise. The album is Tiffany's at Tamla—elegant gems everywhere you look. The highlight is Side 2's opener, *Melody Man*. Cowritten, coproduced, and arranged by Stevie Wonder, it compares a woman to an intricate, sophisticated song; the breathless melodic transitions and tricky, almost subliminal Latin rhythms are as effortless as they are dazzling. The cut that follows, a dreamy, expansive number called *What's in Your Life for Me*, should join the ranks of torchy soul ballads alongside *Since I Fell for You* and *Let*

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It Be Me.

Robinson is a prolific songwriter, a superior craftsman, and a clever lyricist. His down-to-earth romanticism locates the urgency in potentially too-cute sentiments like *Into Each Rain Some Life Must Fall* and *Let Me Be the Clock* ("for the time of your life"). What's more, his beautiful, languorous falsetto—the voice that has influenced a whole generation of singers, men and women, black and white—has improved with age: ten to fifteen years after producing a string of hits with the Miracles (*I Second That Emotion*, *Tracks of My Tears*, etc.), he sounds better than ever. Since disco has relaxed its hegemony over black music, there seems to be a revival of mellow, more vocal-oriented r&b. Perhaps this trend will return Smokey Robinson to the limelight, where he belongs.

Boz Scaggs: Middle Man

Bill Schnee, producer

Columbia FC 36106

by Steven X. Rea

"Middle Man" is the Disco Generation's answer to '50s Music for Young Lovers—slick, syrupy, romantic pop songs spiked with some uptown swagger and some funky, synthesized cool. It is Scaggs's famed "Silk Degrees" without sparks—no *Lido Shuffle*, *Lowdown*, or *Harbor Lights*, just tenuous attempts to invoke their memory.

If you've heard Lou Rawls's TV jingle for Colt 45 malt liquor, then you've heard the melody of the opening track, *JoJo*. (Scaggs wrote all nine songs here.) Just add a bevy of cooing girl singers, a thick dross of strings, synthesizer and horns, *et voilà*. The instrumental backup, provided by the same basic "Silk Degrees" band (mostly Toto), is unarguably professional; on ballads (*You Can Have Me Anytime*, *Isn't It Time*), on the South American-flavored *Simone* (wherein Scaggs rhymes "moon," "perfume," and "June"), and on rockers like *Breakdown Dead Ahead* the playing is perfect—and heartless.

Since his days with the Steve Miller Band, Scaggs has sung with an easy, scraggly kind of style. It has been his calling card, so much so that he abandoned his guitar to concentrate on singing. Now,



Scaggs—come back, Ray Coniff

even his voice is wavering. On the title track, he sounds weird and whiny, singing in a kind of semifalsetto that leaves skidmarks all over the track's tough rock guitars. On the following number, *Do Like You Do in New York*, he awkwardly struts through what sounds like little more than a slowed-down, funk-up version of the Bee Gees' *Jive Talkin'*.

Scaggs has made two milestone albums in his career: An unheralded self-named solo debut on Atlantic, full of bluesy rock aggressiveness and spooky ballads, and "Silk Degrees," a precise, passionate synthesis of rock, soul, and disco that was the epitome of blue-eyed soul. Viewed in that perspective, "Middle Man" is a great disappointment.

Bob Seger & the Silver Bullet Band: Against the Wind

Bob Seger, Punch, the Muscle Shoals Rhythm Section & Bill Szymczyk producers. Capitol SOO 12041

by Sam Sutherland

Bob Seger's growth as a singer and songwriter suggests a pilgrim's path through rock, one traveled slowly but steadily, often diverging from the commercial mainstream while holding fast to

certain emotional and musical compass points. Seger's protagonists remain recognizable variations on a central rock Everyman, their sensibilities tracing an equally constant theme—the passage from innocence to experience.

Those are classic elements, but no more so than Seger's musical palette, which has long drawn on blue-blooded rock models from Chuck Berry to Dylan and the Stones. Where the Detroit native varies from his idols (with the possible exception of Berry, who also focused on life-sized joys and frustrations, rather than romantic melodrama) is in the emphatic fallibility of his characters. Even where his more uptempo, ribald songs justify a lustier narrative voice, we sense the hard knocks behind his rasping delivery; for all the fiery vitality he commands from his music, he nearly always conveys an underlying wistfulness.

"Against the Wind" sustains that vantage point without revising the sound or substance of its most recent predecessors, "Night Games" and "Stranger in Town." And given his own Silver Bullet Band's crisp attack and the faithful fire of the Muscle Shoals Rhythm Section, which again alternate as Seger's backing, that stylistic constancy can only be viewed as a



Seger—the passage from innocence to experience

victory, not a lack of contemporaneity. Like those albums, too, the new one spans uptempo rockers and moody, meditative ballads and draws strength at a canny midpoint between. Like Jackson Browne, Dylan, and a handful of other writers, Seger has mated the narrative ballad's structure and thematic gravity with the tumbling momentum of rock, charging midtempo songs with a double-time undertow or darkening his fast rave-ups with sudden glimpses of melancholy.

That's not to suggest he has become dour. Humor remains a major feature of his writing, serving to underscore his sense of commonality with his audience. As such, his songs are influenced as much by rock as by folk music's tale-telling techniques. Here the approach yields sly double entendres (*The Horizontal Bop*) and comically street-wise anecdotes (*Betty Lou's Gettin' Out Tonight*), as well as sobering fables (*Fire Lake*, a panoramic, multicharactered view of unraveling relationships and brooding restlessness) and mature love songs (*You'll Accompany Me* and the title song).

The instrumental support is consistently sharp-edged and stylistically coherent, despite the alternation in personnel and the trio of producers and studios.

Production is clean and spacious without burnishing away the grit essential to Seger's vocal appeal.

The Shouters:
Roots of Rock 'n' Roll, Vol. 9
Bob Porter, reissue producer
Savoy 2244 (two discs)
by Crispin Cioe

The era of the blues shouter in America, about 1945-56, set the stage for all rock & roll that followed. It was also the somewhat bleak and foreboding age of *film noir* in Hollywood, and this two-album set eloquently shows how the music reflected the times with its brooding admixture of gritty gospel roots and deadpan acceptance of postwar modern urban reality. By way of example, the nickname of one of the shouters here is H-Bomb Ferguson.

These singers were all recording for the independent labels Savoy and National, and while only Nappy Brown reached the prominence of r&b's biggest stars like Wynonie Harris and Roy Brown, all of them had distinctive, highly developed styles. Gatemouth Moore, emerging from the Southwest's big-band tradition, combines fluid phrasing with a crystal-

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Rachel Sweet—emotion seems irrelevant

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clear tenor, even when wailing his trademark tune, *I Ain't Mad at You*. Chicago Carl Davis (brother of famed jazz sax player Eddie "Lockjaw" Davis, who plays on some of these cuts) follows the rougher blues vocal tradition of Eddie "Cleanhead" Vinson, while shouter Eddie Mack has a hoarsely emotional delivery that prefigured the electric Chicago blues of the '50s. H-Bomb Ferguson, very much in the Wynonie mold but with a great set of pipes all his own, specialized in live-wire performance stunts (like rolling around on the stage floor while singing) and equally graphic lyrics. This was a guy who could wing every last drop of meaning from the simple phrase, "Squeeze me, baby." Nappy Brown, with his quirky vocal affectations, scored some pop crossover hits with such tunes as *There'll Come a Day*, also featured here. His incredible gospel-trained voice cut through any and all material like a knife.

Tremendous instrumental backups and solos lace through these songs. Baritone saxist Harry Carney, on leave from

the Ellington band, adds further class to the Gatemouth tunes, while guitarist Mickey Baker is a supremely funky foil for Eddie Mack's growling delivery. Especially noteworthy is tenor saxist Purvis Henson (still active in New York City), who contributes several moving and expressive obbligatos and solos to the Ferguson sessions.

Whenever possible, producer Bob Porter (with the aid of engineer Rudy Van Gelder) has remastered these songs from the original tapes, and the sonics here are often far better than on the original 78s. This is a classic r&b collection.

Rachel Sweet:
Protect the Innocent
Martin Rushent & Alan Winstanley, producers
Stiff/Columbia NJC 36337
by Jim Farber

On her excellent debut album, "Fool Around," seventeen-year-old Rachel Sweet came off as a sort of Little Eva in aspic. She delivered the aura of mid-

Sixties female pop singles in the style of Eva's *Do the Locomotion* with eerie perfection. In the same package were some mysterious ballads and a haunting country version of Elvis Costello's *Stranger in the House*. On "Protect the Innocent," she defiantly trashes historical allusions, her promising country approach, and any other subtleties. Instead she delivers hyperkinetic hard rock with a crispness that bolts out of the speakers and lifts you off the ground. The album is a vocal tour de force, drawing more attention to Sweet's technical skill and the songs' surging hooks than to emotional content.

But subtlety is hardly the point here. On the most daring number, Graham Parker's *Fool's Gold*, Rachel most eloquently makes credible emotion seem irrelevant. While Parker used the song as a desperate admission of enslavement to the Biblical Golden Calf, she sings it as if shopping for gold trinkets at K-Mart. On other frenzied numbers, like *Tonight*, she rants Ethel Merman-style melodies that magnetically pull the needle back for repeated listenings. She slows down a bit on *New Age*, revealing a torch voice that puts Linda Ronstadt's more sonorous moments to shame.

Sweet also pens three fine numbers here, including *Tonight Ricky*, a campy parody of Rickie Lee Jones. Songs like this make me want to take little Rachel into my arms and give her a great big, embarrassing corny hug.

The Tourists: Reality Effect

Tom Allom & Dave Stewart, producers
Epic NJE 36386

by Sam Sutherland

The Tourists borrow visual and musical detail from the current new wave / power pop axis but draw equally from avant-garde and revivalist sources. In fact, without the hammering 4/4 emphasis and the occasional flurry of reedy Farfisa sixteenth-notes, the best songs on "Reality Effect" are cut from classic '60s rock cloth.

Unlike other purveyors of reworked Merseybeat, the Tourists downplay the sunnier, punched-up romance of the first British invasion. They focus instead on a cyclical, hypnotic rock lyricism exemplified by the Byrds' American hybrid of folk and

rock & roll. Modal harmonic contours shape both playing and singing. Vocalists Ann Lennox (who also provides rich keyboard textures on synthesizer, organ, piano, and harpsichord) and Peet Coombes (lead guitarist and principal writer) eschew rock's snarl for a more fluid, melodic ap-


proach. Jangling guitars, spacious choral suspensions, and cascading bass accents complete the classic ensemble sound.

The best material ranges from stately alienation (*It Doesn't Have to Be This Way*) to a galloping, rockabilly spare-
Continued on page 115



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Robin Lane & the Chartbusters: Folk/Rock Revisited

by Steven X. Rea



Robin Lane & The Chartbusters

Joe Wissert, producer
Warner Bros. BSK 3424
by Steven X. Rea

These days, the '60s are being mined for all they're worth. Merseybeat has been rediscovered and re-energized by a horde of new wave power poppers. Stax/Volt variations were interpolated by Elvis Costello into "Get Happy." Psychedelic music, ushered in with the acid reveries of the Beatles, is being explored again by the likes of Johnny-Rotten Lyndon, the Psychedelic Furs, and a host of other new British bands. Even rock-steady, the '60s sound of tiny Jamaica, is enjoying a massive comeback, thanks to acts like Madness, the Selecter (sic), and the Specials. So it's no surprise that one of the '60s'

most significant developments—folk/rock—should also be resuscitated and assimilated into the music of the '80s. Enter Robin Lane & the Chartbusters.

This Boston-based quintet actually incorporates two closely related '60s genres. One is folk/rock, best exemplified by the twelve-string Rickenbacker-driven Dylan songs of the Byrds. The other is the "San Francisco Sound" (which itself evolved from a folk and blues tradition), particularly as explored by women-fronted groups: Jefferson Airplane, Big Brother & the Holding Company, and It's a Beautiful Day. It's difficult to pinpoint the San Francisco Sound, but some of its trademarks were a more fluid, exploratory guitar tone, and hollering, blues-edged vocals.

But while these are the most evident elements in Robin Lane's songs—she wrote or cowrote all of the LP's eleven tracks—"Robin Lane & the Chartbusters" is far more than a '60s music-appreciation course. After three years on the Boston club circuit, Lane released a homemade single on her manager's label, Deli Platters. The song, *When Things Go Wrong*, garnered heavy airplay on East Coast FM stations and, of course, brought offers from several major labels. As the opening cut on her debut album, it should again find its way to the airwaves in short order. Guided by guitarists Asa Brebner and Leroy Radcliffe (both one-time members of Jonathan Richman's oddball rock aggregation, the Modern Lovers), Lane's raspy, emotive voice utters a simple, unforgettable chorus hook: "Ooo Eee lli, you're hard to satisfy." (Boy, does that look stupid in print!) Lane's mel-

ancholy message is punctuated throughout the song by busy riffing guitars and spurred to its midtempo beat by the uncomplicated bass-and-drums tandem of Scott Baerenwald and Tim Jackson. *When Things Go Wrong* is a three-minute-and-fifteen-second gem.

Producer Joe Wissert has recorded the Chartbusters at their basic, unassuming best. Having produced, among others, Boz Scaggs's lush "Slik Degrees," Helen Reddy, and Earth, Wind & Fire, he is to be complimented for exercising restraint: no studio tricks, little or no overdubbing. The mix is spare and clean, and Lane's voice is upfront, where it belongs.

Her thematic turf is forlorn and forsaken love; the titles alone tell the story: *When Things Go Wrong*, *It'll Only Hurt a Little While*, *Don't Cry*, *Without You*, *I Don't Want to Know*. The compositions vary from brisk, boppy folk-rock to gutsier, blues-based rockers. (Some, like *It'll Only Hurt a Little While*, evoke the early Stones, whose songs were frequently covered by San Francisco groups.) On *Don't Cry*, the guitars echo that trebly Byrdsian twang, while the backup harmonies of Baerenwald, Brebner, and Radcliffe also ghost the Byrds. Jackson's drumming is suitably spry, relying on the top end of the kit to give the song bounce. Lane's voice is especially sweet here—almost coy. By contrast, *Why Do You Tell Lies* features a tough, ragged vocal supported by burrowing, furtive rhythms. *Many Years Ago* gallops along, Jackson's drumming crisp and bustling. *Kathy Lee* and *Don't Wait Till Tomorrow* close the record, both tunes rampant with Brebner and Radcliffe's trenchant six- and twelve-string expositions.

Though Lane resides in Boston and is flanked by four "Bosstown" boys, the singer/songwriter/guitarist grew up on the West Coast, her roots firmly planted in folk/rock soil. On "Robin Lane & the Chartbusters," she has married a sanguine West Coast naiveté and a feisty East Coast urgency. That translates to head and heart and body and soul, which is one reason why this album doesn't stop sounding good. ♪

Continued from page 113
ness (*Everywhere You Look*). There is also a confident cover of Dusty Springfield's classic 1964 single, *I Only Want to Be with You*, updated with a heavier drum sound, syncopated handclaps, and Coombes's chordal, rock-roots guitar solo. Elsewhere, the band's vocal harmonies suggest the mixed choral sound of such British folk-rockers as Fairport Convention or even Steeleye Span (*The Loneliest Man in the World* and *So Good to Be Back Home Again*) while retaining the Tourists' more pointedly rock-inflected instrumental framework.

Producer Tom Allom has applied a refined aural finish, emphasizing the spaciousness of the band's sound while letting the music's more raucous elements hold their own. If the Tourists' indebtedness to earlier sources sometimes threatens to engulf their personality, "Reality Effect" is, on balance, a satisfying debut.

Van Halen: Women and Children First

Ted Templeman, producer
Warner Bros. HS 3415
by Sam Graham

Strap yourselves in, you refugees from the adult contemporary wasteland, and prepare for a sonic blitzkrieg the likes of which hasn't been heard since—well, since Van Halen's last album. Nothing new wave about these boys, or even old wave. Tidal wave is more like it.

Producer Ted Templeman may have been a little overenthusiastic when, in a recent interview, he called guitarist Eddie Van Halen "the best musician around since Charlie Parker." But Van Halen is a monster, with more chops than a woodsman and an attack like a locomotive on its way downhill and just under control. The group also boasts vocalist David Lee Roth, a strutting, macho poseur who specializes in raps like "I like the way the line runs up the back of your stockings . . . No no no, don't take 'em off, leave 'em on . . . Yeah, that's it, a little to the right" (*Everybody Wants Some!!*). Roth isn't much of a singer—his one real trademark is an overused, high-pitched scream—but he obviously loves his role, and that makes it fun for the listener as well.

Despite its relentlessly primitive approach, Van Halen does pull off some surprises here. It essays some subtle rhythmic moves (odd time signatures for one), and there's even an acoustic number—*Could This Be Magic?*—replete with bottleneck guitar and goodtimey vocal. It's a

lot more reminiscent of the Lovin' Spoonful than Blue Cheer, but don't let that fool you. If your idea of bliss is Neil and Barbra cooing *You Don't Bring Me Flowers* on the Grammys, this album should be avoided. Flowers, hell—Van Halen is out for blood.



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Count Basie: The Count
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by John S. Wilson

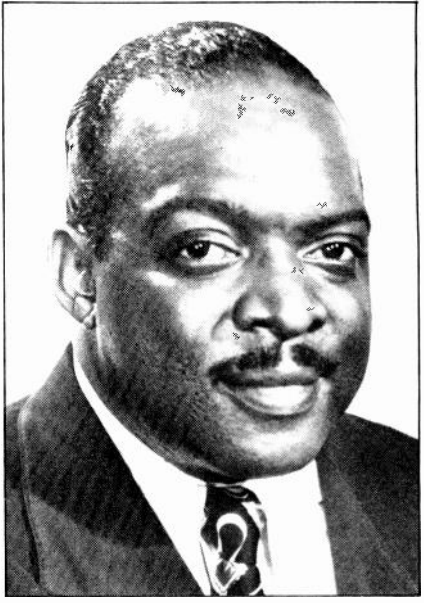
This set covers the Basie band's recordings from March to November, 1939 minus all those featuring Lester Young (which can be found on Columbia's "The Lester Young Story," Vols. 3 and 4). It is an interesting mixture of top-drawer Basie (*Rock-a-Bye Basie*, *Jump for Me*) and the routine pop of the moment (*You and Your Love*, *Moonlight Serenade*) that was a necessary evil for all bands at the time. With the absence of Young, "The Count" puts more emphasis on the singing of Jimmy Rushing (whose primary instrumental associate was trombonist Dicky Wells, rather than Young) and Helen Humes (*If I Could Be with You*, *Sub-Deb Blues*) and shows Buck Clayton to be the second most consistently valuable soloist in the band at this point.

Also here is Buddy Tate's memorable recorded debut with the Basie band, *Rock-a-Bye Basie*. In all, it's an interesting cross-section, serving to fill out the Basie picture that Columbia is building through its Lester Young reissue series.

Ornette Coleman & Charlie Haden: Soapsuds, Soapsuds
John Synder, producer
Artists House AH6 (Artists House, 40 West 37th St., New York, N.Y. 10018)
by Don Heckman

The musical association between Ornette Coleman and bassist Charlie Haden stretches back to a remarkable 1958 ensemble that also included Paul Bley, Billy Higgins, and Don Cherry. It would be sheer understatement to say that they understand each other creatively, and it is the intense, nonverbal communication flowing between them that makes "Soapsuds" a fascinating record, despite some misjudgments in direction.

Coleman restricts himself to tenor saxophone and trumpet. That's both good and not so good: good when he's on tenor; less so when he picks up the trumpet. He somehow sounds almost exactly the same (except a fourth lower) on tenor as he does on alto; unlike other players



Count Basie circa 1940

who come to mind, he does not change style with instrument.

The essence of his music—a kind of loose, riffing style that seems at first to be familiar and connected and then, without warning, moves into the outer limits—is most peculiarly and unexpectedly applied to the theme music from *Mary Hartman Mary Hartman*. One can barely imagine why the melody, a totally undistinguished piece of campy schmaltz, appealed to the Coleman musical psyche. In any case, its statement at the beginning and end of the cut is totally unrelated to the Coleman-Haden improvisation that takes place in between.

Haden's sole compositional contribution, an impressive line titled *Human Being*, produces a far better inter-relationship between given material and improvisation. Coleman's impromptu flights have almost always had more to do with feelings and attitudes than with specific chord cadences, rhythmic patterns, etc. Haden's melody (and perhaps title) evokes a roiling, twisting, turning excursion around the horn that rates among Coleman's more interesting improvisations.

Soapsuds and *Sex Spy* most closely approach the famed Coleman music of the past. The former rumbles and roars, starts and stops in weird, off-the-wall boppish fashion before it settles into a long, improvisational conversation highlighted by Haden's James Bond-ish augmented fifths and double stops.



Scott Hamilton

On *Some Day*, the Coleman trumpet makes its only appearance, and his mastery (if that's the right word) of the instrument has improved over the years. He plays the moody, somewhat chromatic melody with a certain primitive, Miles Davis-like eloquence. But when he moves into the improvisation, any real sense of musical significance gets tossed to the fishes.

Despite my reservations about the final track, "Soapsuds"—like virtually all of Coleman's recorded outings—turns the mind around, forces one to hear in a slightly new way. It is, to be sure, a bit laid-back, a bit passive-sounding for musicians who once were so much in the revolutionary vanguard. But it's still well worth the price of admission.

Scott Hamilton & Warren Vaché: Skyscrapers

*Carl E. Jefferson, producer
Concord Jazz CJ 111
by John S. Wilson*

For the past couple of years, Scott Hamilton and Warren Vaché have been following roughly parallel career paths: Both are young jazz musicians who, instead of taking the usual contemporary mainstream route, have built on the styles of the '30s, '40s, and, in Vaché's case, '50s. They have now reached the point of being less consciously derivative. Vaché, in particular, has achieved such mastery on his trumpet and flugelhorn that he

tosses off fascinating, unexpected glides and leaps with seeming ease.

"Skyscrapers" was recorded in July of 1979 when Vaché had already reached a new plateau and Hamilton was moving toward one. It is interesting to hear them in transition, but the real joy of this album is the two players' bigger-than-usual surroundings. The nine-piece group reaches out successfully toward the sound and feeling of the combos that made 52nd Street famous. Contributing to this are some light, riff-based arrangements with the Basie touch by Buck Clayton and Nat Pierce, and George Masso's vital, swinging ballad settings. These are kicked along by Joe Temperley's baritone saxophone and Norman Simmons on piano, Chris Flory on guitar, Phil Flanigan on bass, and Chuck Riggs on drums.

The presence of Harold Ashby on tenor sax creates a bit of confusion since both he and Hamilton have a strong Ben Webster attack. The liner notes imply that Ashby plays only as part of the ensemble, yet some of the—presumably Hamilton—solo work could easily be taken for Ashby's. There is no mistaking Masso's robust, slippery trombone, however. It is a striking, contrasting brass-mate to the warm singing tone that Vaché uses all through the set.

Erwin Helfer and Friends: On the Sunny Side of the Street

*Howard Mandel, producer
Flying Fish FF 210
by John S. Wilson*

Blues and boogie pianist Erwin Helfer has been playing in the Chicago area for over two decades, refining a primitive blues style to a polished art. And although he gets top billing on "On the Sunny Side of the Street," one of his "friends" generates most of the interest. Soprano saxophonist Clark Dean herein makes his recorded debut, playing on three selections and leaving the listener hungry for more.

Though Sidney Bechet has virtually disappeared as a soprano saxophone influence (possibly because no one has a prayer of emulating his fierce intensity), Dean has obviously derived his warm, singing qualities from Bechet's precepts. But he is a much gentler musician than Bechet: His way of lifting a phrase or falling into an incipient growl quietly implies

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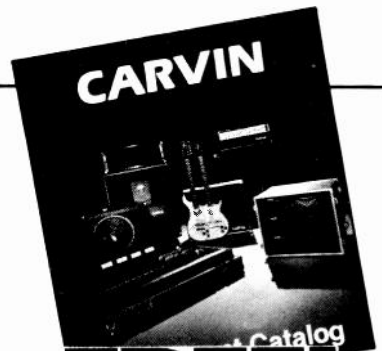
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Continued from page 117
 what his model would have delivered with clamor. His solos on Duke Ellington's *I've Got It Bad* are beautifully translucent, sparkling with dancing lights. Toward the end he spreads out as though he were going to meet Bechet, but instead he settles into his own more modest groove. Dean seems to be a miniaturist, creating some charming images within a narrow range.

Helfer shows off his bag of traditional blues figures on his own *Stella* (written for Mama Yancey with whom he plays regularly), reproduces a classic on Avery Parrish's *After Hours*, and builds a heavy, rolling rent-party drive on *Chicken Shack*. But he is frequently at a loss on popular songs, especially those tunes that Dean plays and on his own thin and unconvincing solo version of *There'll Be Some Changes Made*. He is much happier in his blues role, particularly as an accompanist. Unfortunately, "friend" Jeanne Carroll's heavy, sometimes blatant singing needs more support than he can give her.

Carmen McRae:
I'm Coming Home Again
Vic Chirumbolo, producer
Buddah B2D 6501, (two discs)
by John S. Wilson

Side 1 of "I'm Coming Home Again" may be the first definitive presentation of the completely realized singer that Carmen McRae has become in the past two or three years. Her voice sounds



McRae—great voice, bad set

strong and positive with a slightly grainy texture. Her phrasing is deliberate and perceptive, as she probes her material and then projects it with provocative emphases and inflections. Mario E. Sprouse's arrangements are simple and uncluttered, and the solos by Freddie Hubbard on trumpet and Hank Crawford on alto saxophone are directly complementary to the overall mood. In short, everything works.

But Side 2 is a disaster. McRae tries to invest some feeling into the dull, tuneless, draggy songs, but there is nothing there. The same can be said of Sides 3 and 4. There are a few spots of interest—a springy Buster Williams bass solo, an occasional victory for McRae or Crawford over Sprouse's molasseslike arrangements—but beyond that, the material simply sounds like filler. Neither of the two cuts of *Mr. Magic* is worth including, and one of them takes up a tedious fourteen minutes. After a strong McRae vocal on *New York State of Mind*, Hubbard comes in for a bristling trumpet solo, only to ramble on and drift off inconclusively. McRae is never heard from again, creating the impression that she left in the middle of the piece.

Instead of spreading things out indiscriminately over four sides, producer Vic Chirumbolo should have used the first side and the better parts of the other three to make one excellent disc.

Spyro Gyra: Catching the Sun
Jay Beckenstein & Richard

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Spyro Gyra—the secret weapon is melody

Calandra, producers. MCA 5108
by Crispin Cioe

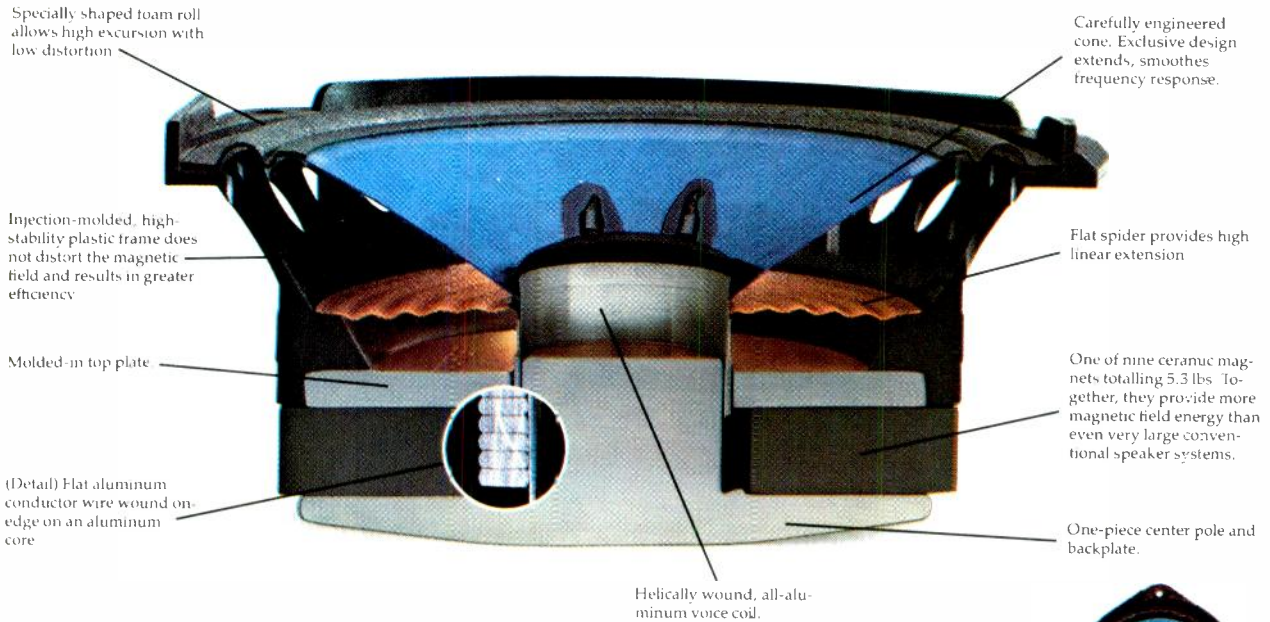
This is Spyro Gyra's third album in only two years, and the pop/jazz instrumental group is already one of today's most successful. Although its music is an unabashed hybrid of rock, Latin, funk, and mainstream jazz, it cleverly avoids the derivativeness that plagues most current jazz mélanges by means of its deceptively simple approach.

The real key to Spyro Gyra is melody. Saxophonist and principal composer Jay Beckenstein is an inveterate and dedicated melodist who is not afraid to let his songs reflect the band members' diverse musical backgrounds. *Percolator*, for instance, starts in solid, familiar sixteenth-note funk territory, then moves into a salsa-flavored bridge with bassist Will Lee sliding easily into long, quarter-note lines before returning to the choppy funk rhythms. *Laser Material* begins with a flashy trombone and synthesizer falloff, followed by another broken-field funk melody, all of which ends in an angular pattern built on successive perfect fourths. The first notes of Randy Brecker's slithering trumpet solo emerge from this chart like spurts from a newly

tapped offshore oil well. It's a tribute to the clear visions of Beckenstein and the band's other core members that they can use session players like Brecker and guitarist John Tropea without losing one ounce of Spyro Gyra's personality.

On the softer songs, which sometimes hover dangerously near the edge of saccharine sweetness, the group's arranging and compositional skills really take off and fly. *Catching the Sun* is built on keyboardist Tom Schuman's adaptation of the classic Booker T. organ riff from *Slim Jenkins' Place*, over which Beckenstein's feathery but firm alto delicately dances. Textures thicken as the band picks up and develops the sax theme and then shifts into another pretty Latin-tinged groove, replete with marimba and steel drums by Dave Samuels. Throughout, the sax constantly and subtly reworks the original melodic motif without losing its thread, holding together the various rhythmic excursions like a Metroliner speeding through differing landscapes. This stunning ability to touch on different styles without sounding watered down and still emerge with a strong musical identity to boot is what makes the Spyro Gyra trip one worth taking.

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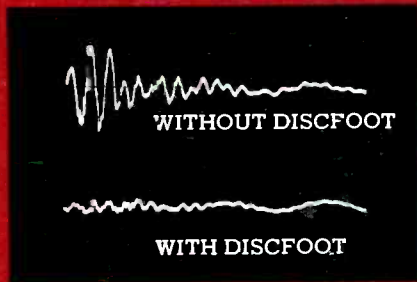
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The Telling Test

The oscilloscope photo shows the output of two identical audio systems on the same shelf with their styli contacting the platters. The shelf is being struck by a rubber mallet. The top trace shows a turntable with absorptive "replacement" feet. The lower trace shows a DiscFoot System operating in conjunction with the existing turntable feet. Note the dramatic (tenfold) improvement in shock and feedback isolation.

The DiscFoot System contains four isolation feet, four platform caps, four furniture-protecting sheets and four special damping pads (to adapt DiscFoot units to certain turntables.) Additional single DiscFoot units are available for turntables weighing over 22 lbs. The system costs \$22.

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