

Harry Kleir reports:
TOKYO AUDIO FAIR

14276

Stereo Review®

FEBRUARY 1977 • ONE DOLLAR

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Boston Pops

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of the
Year
Awards**

Test Reports

- Advent 300 FM Receiver
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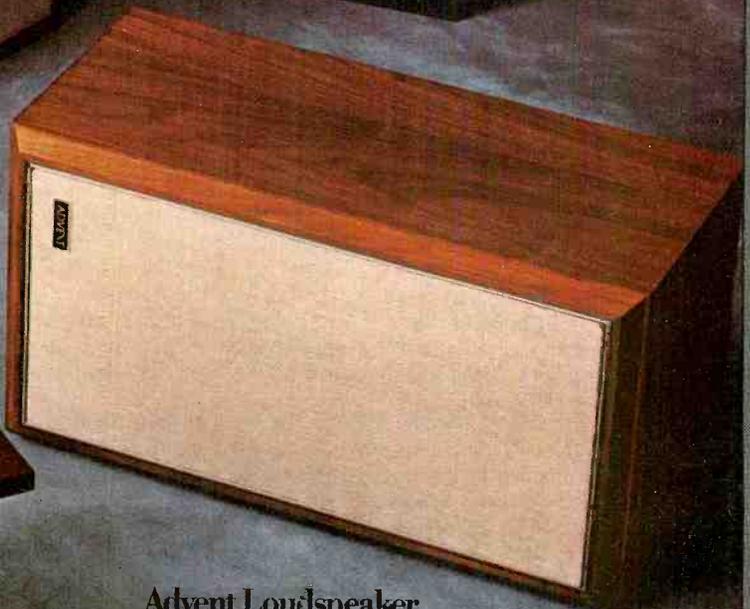
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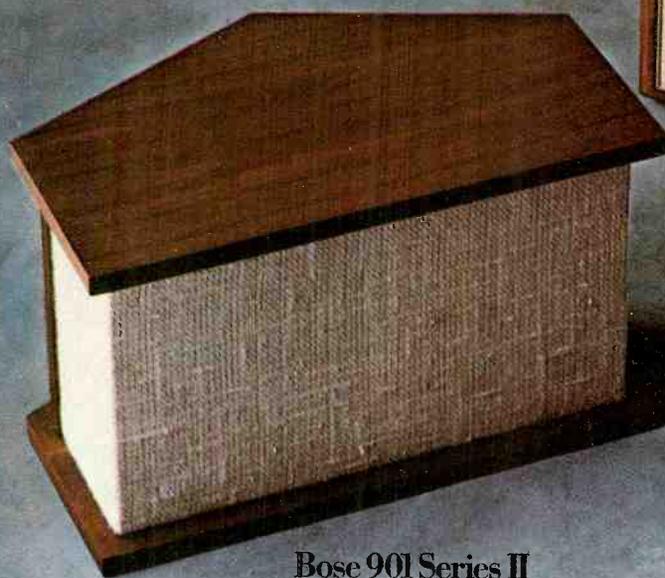
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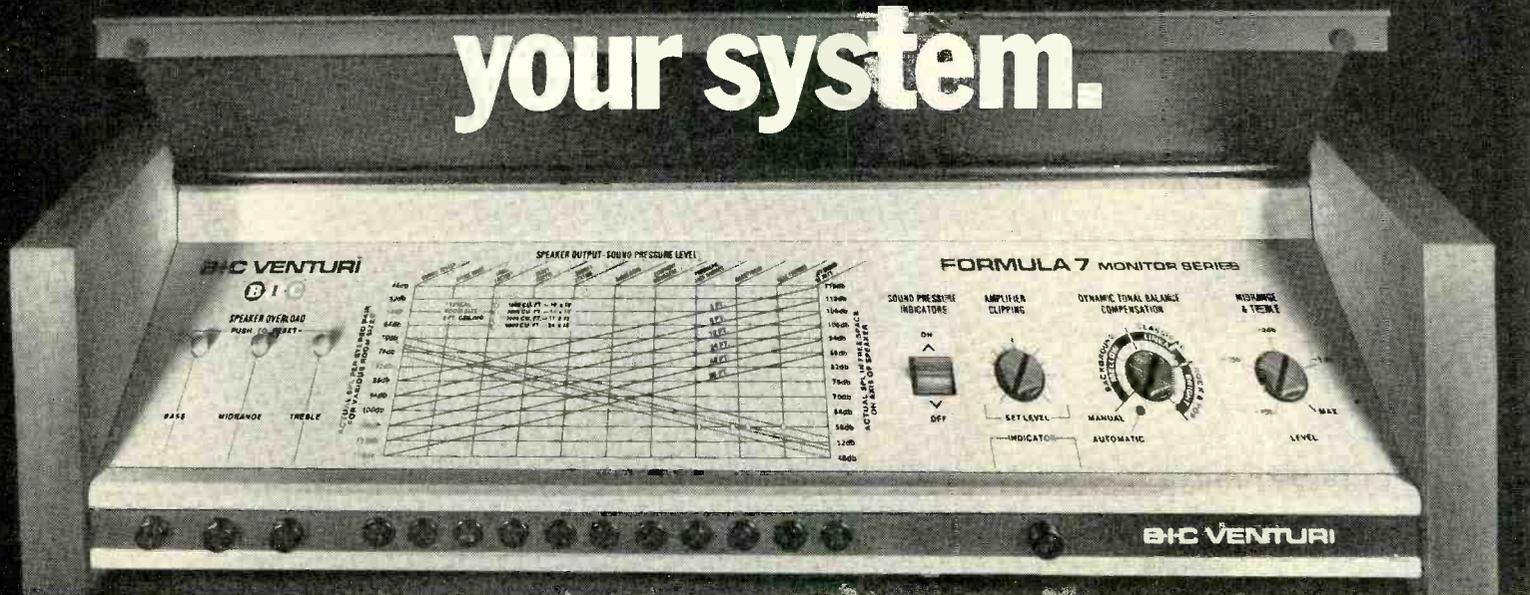


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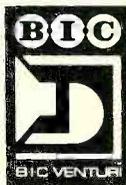
The chart interprets the readings, and relates them to the size of room and the listening distance.

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CIRCLE NO. 10 ON READER SERVICE CARD

FORMERLY HI FI/STEREO REVIEW

Stereo Review®

FEBRUARY 1977 • VOLUME 38 • NUMBER 2

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COVER: Caricature of Arthur Fiedler by Al Hirschfeld

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Editorially Speaking

By William Anderson



SEED MONEY, ETC.

I think it was W. H. Auden who said that the poetical nature thrives on natural disaster, that it exults in the flood, thrills to the thunderstorm, and embraces the hurricane. I have a friend (he must be very poetical) who agrees: he lives impractically astride the San Andreas fault and swears that the imminence of a disastrous earthquake lends his life a certain edgy uncertainty, a piquant, zestful fatalism that quickens the blood, lightens the step, and sharpens the mind.

I am quite prepared to believe that there are those (I'm not one of them) who delight in dwelling thus on the lip of the abyss, otherwise why would all those poets continue to work for the Metropolitan Opera? Though each succeeding year's budget looks more and more like a petition in bankruptcy (the 1976-77 season's deficit is over \$12 million), they continue to hang on, not exactly filled with hope but rather, like New York's Mayor Beame, hoping *against* hope and, in a strange way, thriving on it. Myself blessed with a sanguine nature, I rather doubt that this tottering

mendicant of the arts will be allowed to topple—there are too many jobs involved, and the spectacle would seriously unbalance our international cultural posture, leaving us to cut a *brutta figura* in the eyes of (gasp!) Moscow and other capitals in a way we haven't had to talk ourselves out of since Sputnik.

One of the reasons I think so is the announcement in early December of a "matching grant" program (an earlier, less urbanized society would have called it "seed money") involving U. S. Pioneer Electronics Corp., their 2,500 authorized dealers throughout the country, the general public, and the National Endowment for the Arts. Between them, in a formula yet to be worked out, Pioneer and the National Endowment will match every dollar contributed with three more; the goal is \$100,000 in donations, \$400,000 for the Met. A long way from \$12 million, but it's a start.

As the National Endowment's Nancy Hanks makes clear in the announcement to the press, this is an excellent example of business and government working together in an

area of joint concern; nourishing our cultural heritage is as much government's business as safeguarding the political one, and no one needs a diagram to trace the relationship between the world of music and that of audio. Avery Fisher's staggering precedent (how much is it now, \$15 million?) with the New York Philharmonic aside, it is to be hoped others in the industry will find Pioneer's example worth emulating, even at the risk of spoiling the fun of a few poets or Russians.

TECHNICAL Editor Larry Klein is just back (see his report in this issue) from Japan, whence all our hi-fi blessings lately flow. He returned with lots of news and a few electronic souvenirs, but most interesting to me was a little something he picked up from SAE in Los Angeles: an electronic pulse-noise suppressor (otherwise known as a disc "de-popper and de-ticker"), a typically American solution (a length of haywire) to a typically American problem (dealing with the low quality that is one of the by-products of mass production). Our Japanese brethren may be amused by these gadgets because they don't need them, but we do. There are several on the market, and there will be more coming unless domestic disc quality improves. None of them are what you would call cheap, and it is interesting to speculate how many pennies per disc spent at the right places in American pressing plants would make such stop-gaps redundant. Never fear—the irony gets even sweeter: these machines work so well that they will make it possible for record quality to deteriorate even further. Perhaps I'd better add that I'm not *advocating* that.

CHANGE, as every philosophical wit will in time remind you, is the only constant in life. At STEREO REVIEW the game of changing musical chairs is played *largamente*, but a chair is occasionally vacated: the antically lovable Steve Simels is surrendering his this month to answer the siren call of television writing. Production Editor Paulette Weiss, with sinuous grace, has already slipped into it. She will begin stamping the Pop Beat with her own personality next month; you're in for a treat.

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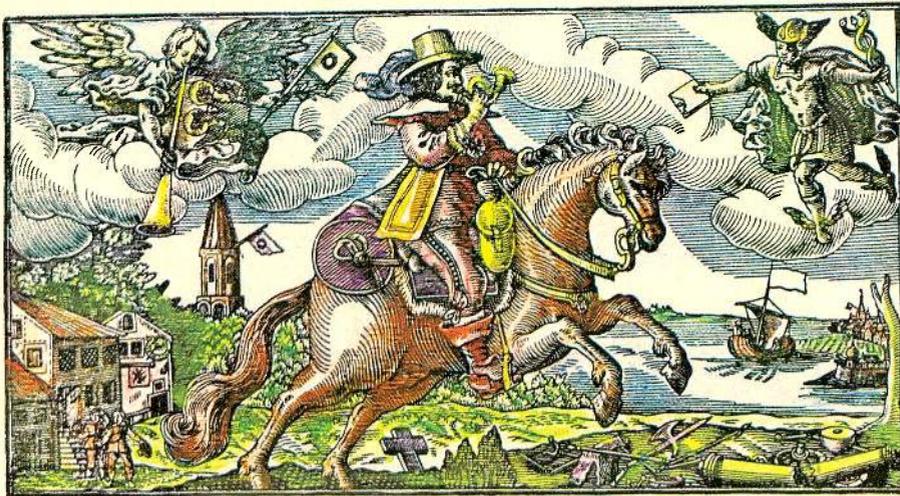
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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Montreal Olympics

● A lot of us, I think, enjoyed the Olympic Games of last summer at Montreal. Among the enjoyments of the Olympics I would certainly include the music, written mostly by the late Canadian composer André Mathieu, together with Victor Vogel, and arranged by Art Phillips. It was stunning, exciting, and really contributed to the games.

Others who feel as I do will be happy to know that the music is available on a Canadian Polydor disc (2424 124), which is distributed in the United States by Peters International, 619 West 54th Street, New York, N.Y. 10019. The list price is \$7.98.

PHILIP DAVID MORGAN
Saint James, N.Y.

The Music Editor adds: Those who watched the Olympic Games on television and were attracted by the fanfare that opened each session should know that it does not form a part of the music mentioned above. It is, in fact, a work by Léo Arnaud called Olympic Fanfare, part of a larger piece called Bugler's Dream. It is available on record performed by the Concert Arts Symphonic Band under the direction of Felix Slatkin, Angel S-36936.

Buyer's Guide

● I've been striking a 90 per cent batting average lately by buying what Joel Vance dislikes. Although this technique has made me go broke, I've now a collection of records that I really enjoy. I don't know anything about art, but I know what I will like, thanks to JV's reviews.

JERRY CHAPMAN
DeKalb, Ill.

Hm. That makes Joel Vance about 90 per cent effective.

More on Mahler

● Please advise Paul Samuel that it should be *de mortuis nil nisi bonum*, not *bene* as it appeared in his December letter. And, while we are at it, another good notion is *de gustibus non disputandum est*. I happen to like Mah-

ler's music very much, but I do not feel that everyone else should. I would have scant respect for a critic who tempered his judgment to conform to the current feelings of the majority. Of course, I concede that R. D. Darrell was unprofessionally intemperate.

CHARLES J. SHEEDY
Woodhaven, N.Y.

Heloisa and Astrud

● In reference to Chris Albertson's review of Stan Getz's recent album "The Best of Two Worlds" in December: the reason Astrud Gilberto's name does not appear on the album or liner notes is that *she doesn't sing on the album*. All the English vocals on this album are by Heloisa Buarque de Hollanda, who does a very creditable job. It is my understanding that Astrud Gilberto has not sung on a Getz album since the live album in 1968 or 1969 which introduced Gary Burton on vibes.

CHARLES J. MALEMUD
Port Jefferson Station, N.Y.

Mr. Albertson replies: Mr. Malemud is probably right. I checked with Columbia Records, and they would neither confirm nor deny that Ms. Heloisa Buarque de Hollanda is the vocalist. Thus, Ms. Gilberto may well have made her last album with Getz in 1968 or 1969—but no such album "introduced" Gary Burton, who began recording as a leader in 1961 and with Getz as early as 1963.

Steeleye

● A million thanks from a long-time Steeleye Spaniac for the faithful attention you have paid to each one of their recordings, the latest being Eric Salzman's review in the December issue. I stumbled on the Span at a Procol Harum concert a few years ago in Pittsburgh, and Maddy Prior and the group's extraordinary vocal abilities sent me on a wild hunt for any of their recordings I could find. Seeing and hearing them do *Gaudete* from "Below the Salt" was orgasmic! They just stood there in a line with hands cupped over their ears and did this glorious *a cappella* vocal. I urge anyone who hasn't yet heard Steeleye Span to go out

and buy some albums and listen to something really "solid" in folk-rock. If getting the imports means a trip to England—*do it!*

GARY SALAMONE
Pittsburgh, Pa.

Opera Cats

● Every month when I receive STEREO REVIEW, I look at the regular columns first because I always want to see the new pictures of the columnists even before I read them. I am a cat lover, so naturally I was fascinated by the picture at the heading of "The Opera File" in December, showing William Livingstone with a group of most unusual-looking cats climbing over his record collection (is that a good idea?). They are unlike any others I have ever seen, and I'd like to know what kind they are, what color they are, and all about them.

MARY ANN PALMER
Portland, Ore.

Mr. Livingstone replies: They are Korats, a rare breed from Thailand. Silvery grey all over, they have very short hair. The eyes of young Korats are gold-colored, but they turn green in maturity. My tomcat, in the foreground of the picture at the column head, is Ernesto Leogrande, named for a character in Is That You, Miss Blue?, a novel by M. E. Kerr. At his left is his mate, Gioconda. Their three kittens, all females, are Laura, Cieca, and Gemma di Vergy. There are about two thousand Korats in the United States, where the breed is promoted and protected by the Korat Cat Fanciers Association. Literature on the breed can be obtained for 50¢ from the president of the association, Miss Catherine Barclay, 324 North 76th Street, Boulder, Colo. 80303.

Critic's Candor

● I applaud Noel Coppage's review of Dylan's "Hard Rain" (December). It is rare that such a revealing exposé of a critic's motivating perceptions appears in print. I don't agree with his conclusions, but I appreciate the opportunity to get outside my own manner of perceiving things and into someone else's. Will Peter Reilly be so bold?

STEVE CORWIN
Monmouth, Ore.

All writing, except perhaps laundry lists, is autobiographical, and the real Mr. Reilly can often be glimpsed fleetingly through the prose thicket as he slips easily from metaphor to metaphor.

Record Rating

● I'm afraid to even read your record reviews any more, for one day I fear this is what I'll see:

NEARLY EVERY RECORD THIS MONTH. All pop recordings and one hillbilly bluegrass record. ALL LABELS, assorted prices.

Performance: **Terrible, terrible**

Recording: **Excellent to like cosmic, man**

All records this month were so bad that we couldn't even bear to take off the shrink wrap. One record, however, was good: "The Inbred Mountain Boys," and it was "good old nose-

(Continued on page 8)

The A-400.

“It should start designers at other companies rethinking many of the truisms of their craft.”*

We went to a front-loading design for the A-400 not to make it pretty, but to make it more functional. *High Fidelity Magazine* called it “...the most thoroughly satisfactory front-loading well design we have yet tested: practical, easy to use, unencumbered by ‘extra’ mechanisms that are potential troublemakers.”*

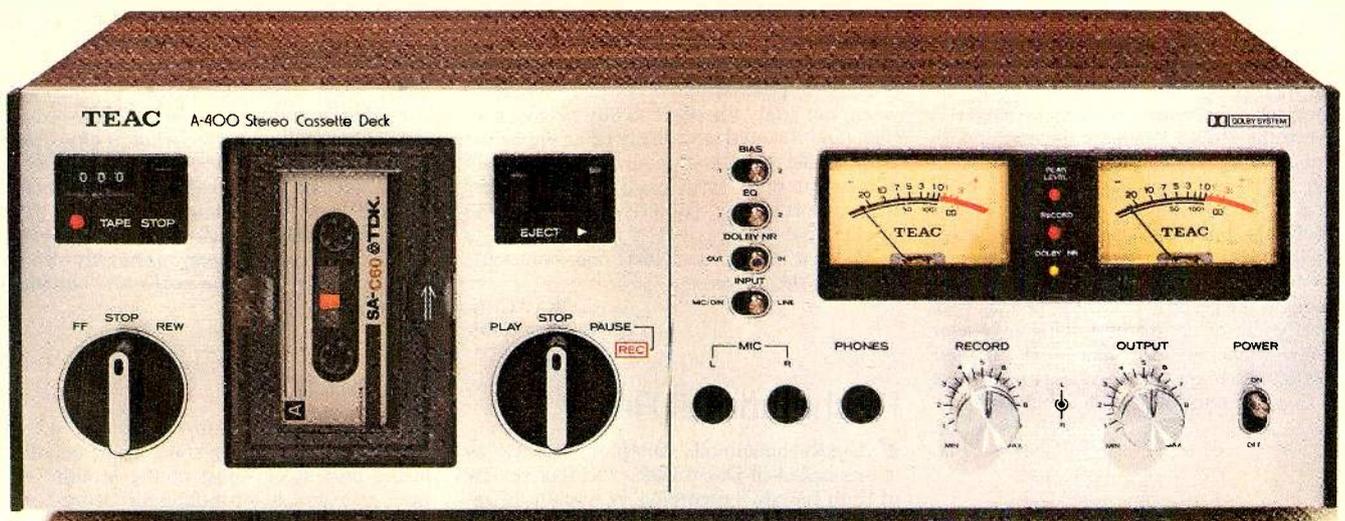
Proven reliability. And typically TEAC performance. Whether you want the twang of a country guitar or the smoothness of a slap bass, the mellow sound of a ballad or the thrilling power of an opera, audition the A-400. You'll agree with the critics. It *is* something to think about.

**High Fidelity Magazine*, May 1976.
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pickin' music." indeed a refreshing change from any of the utter trash from at least one year back. C.A., N.C., P.K., P.R., J.V.

The rest of the magazine remains typically superb, but a little more of the old objective view could be observed by the "record-raters." Joel Vance's poem on the new Aerosmith album in November was unnecessary, for example.

GAYLE W. RARESHEID
Lorain, Ohio

Otello

● In November Letters, John Clifton wisely requests a new complete recording of *Otello* with Carlo Bergonzi singing the Moor. For the past twenty-five years we have endured the coarse shouting and bawling of some and the overblown histrionics and exaggerated melodrama of others who have attempted to "sing" this greatest of tenor roles. Neither approach can begin to suggest the grand humanity of *Otello*. With Mr. Bergonzi's innate musicianship, dramatic sensitivity (and restraint!), noble expression, and his now thicker and darker sound, he would be an outstanding *Otello*. I, too, strongly urge Philips Records to record Verdi's greatest work with Carlo Bergonzi, Montserrat Caballé, Piero Cappuccilli, and, of course, conductor Lamberto Gardelli.

THOMAS R. WILSON
Downers Grove, Ill.

● John Clifton might have mentioned that José Carreras has a more beautiful sound today than Carlo Bergonzi, and John Leone could have suggested that Jussi Bjoerling was also a pillar of the Metropolitan Opera despite their great praise for Carlo Bergonzi in November Letters. Nevertheless, I believe that Mr. Bergonzi surpasses even Carreras and Bjoerling because of the way he sings. His beautiful line, highly intelligent phrasing, and limitless breath control leave all others in the shade. A new *Otello* with Mr. Bergonzi would be most welcome.

GEORGE KILENS
Bayside, Wis.

Little Trips

● First, Steve Simels gave us Bruce Springsteen, then Patti Smith, and more recently he drooled all over Warren Zevon in August's "Best of the Month." What's the matter with this man? Has he no taste?! The aforementioned may have been different, may even have provided a moment's interest amongst the Velveeta, but they were never consistently good. And it was immediately obvious to those among us who swallowed Simels' line and bought the records that these people were not really interested in entertaining anyone or in even producing "art" but were on their own little trips to nowhere. At least I still have Noel Coppage and Paul Kresh to believe in.

W.A. HILL, JR.
Tallahassee, Fla.

Monkees

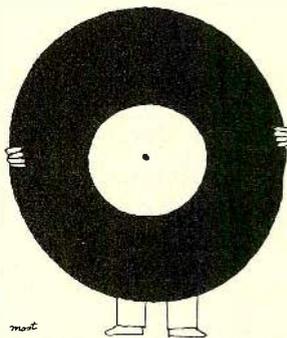
● In reply to Noel Coppage's review of the Monkees' "Greatest Hits" in November, I would have to agree that the music is pretty simple, but I'd rather listen to old "bub-

blem" music than disco or the so-called "rockers" like Robin Trower, Montrose, Kiss, and hundreds of other groups like them. The Monkees' music brings back a lot of good memories when the only things I had to worry about was if the Tigers would win the pennant and if I'd ever reach sixteen. If Noel is using his album to strike matches on, do me a favor: have him send it to me so I won't have to buy one and worry about whether I'll be able to make my car payment!

JOHN FOSTER
Fairgrove, Mich.

Homemade Rock

● Although I cannot answer the exact question Steve Simels poses in his November column, "What's Playing in Peoria?", I can tell him how to find out what's playing in Louisville. WLRS, the local FM rock outlet, has just issued the "WLRS Homemade Album"



with twelve original performances by local rock outfits for only \$1.25. Copies are available from WLRS-FM, 800 South Fourth Street, Louisville, Ky. 40203.

W. GEOFFREY ROMMEL
Pewee Valley, Ky.

Disc Quality

● I am becoming increasingly disgusted with the deteriorating quality of record albums. It is a rare occasion when I am lucky enough to buy an album without audible defects and warpage. A few years ago I was a prolific record buyer, purchasing two or three albums a week, but lately I hesitate to buy even one album (and it would most likely be an import, at that). In the meantime, record companies will continue to profit from less discerning buyers who, unfortunately, comprise the bulk of the market. Nevertheless, it is a consolation to know that they have lost one minuscule source of their revenue.

RAY CHIN
Los Angeles, Calif.

Rachmaninoff Rarity

● The Rachmaninoff "D Minor Prelude," as it was called in David Hall's October review of Ruth Laredo's recording, is actually an *untitled* piece dated November 14, 1917, of which I gave the first performance from a manuscript facsimile in 1962 (a copy I had sent Van Cliburn for that purpose after his Russian trip was lost). Since then I have performed it a number of times together with

Fragments (November 15, 1917). This is another example of a publisher's misnomer. Rachmaninoff had written twenty-four preludes, one in every key, and had chosen other titles for all subsequent piano works of this kind. The piece in question was finally published only last year.

NOEL FARRAND
Canon, N.M.

King Bhumibol

● Joel Vance's review of "Bill Cosby Is Not Himself These Days" in the October issue contains an inaccurate and rather negligent statement. His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej has been reigning in Thailand with great wisdom and fortitude for thirty years and will undoubtedly continue to do so for many years to come. Referring to His Majesty as the "former" King of Thailand is certainly in poor taste, and I feel an apology from Mr. Vance is in order. The fact that there are very few recordings of His Majesty on the saxophone is a great loss to all of us who have had the pleasure of listening to him "live."

P. THIENPRASIT
Chiangmai, Thailand

Product Evaluations

● Although Mr. Hirsch's fine review of our state-of-the-art 2000Z phono cartridge in the October 1976 issue was accurate as far as it went, the testing procedures used did not allow the cartridge to realize its full potential. Specifically, the tests were conducted in a tone arm that was not fully state-of-the-art. In general, it seems valid to test an advanced product such as the 2000Z in an equivalently advanced tone arm. In that way, a truer evaluation of the product itself can be made. This approach would be beneficial to your readers as it will tell them the best that can be expected from the product. Standardization of the tone arm in cartridge evaluation would also allow for better comparison between different models and brands. Let's keep in mind that we are all in search of *high* fidelity—not average fidelity.

NORMAN LEVENSTEIN
Empire Scientific Corp.
Garden City, N. Y.

Larry Klein replies: We agree—so long as the cartridge manufacturers let us know—so we can let our readers know—what, if any, deterioration in performance might be expected when certain parameters of their recommended tone-arm performance depart from that which they consider ideal. The problem is, I fear, that almost everyone has his own notion of what a "state-of-the-art" anything consists of.

Erratum

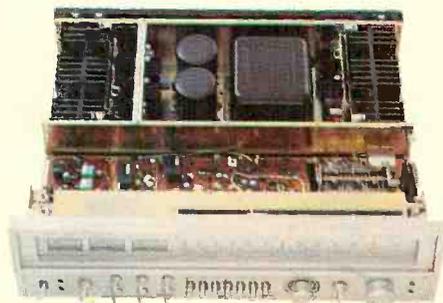
● We apologize to our readers and to London Records for the mistake in the headline, in the December "Best of the Month" section, erroneously attributing Sir Georg Solti's new recording of *Carmen* to Deutsche Grammophon. The headline *should* have read: "London Records' New *Carmen* Goes Straight to the Head of the Class." Now, class, repeat after me: "London Records' New *Carmen*" —Ed.



FISHER INTRODUCES THE WORLD'S FINEST RECEIVER.

This headline from any other manufacturer might sound like just so many words. But, it's by Fisher, the company that started the high fidelity industry back in 1937. And the company who introduced the very first AM/FM stereo receiver 18 years ago.

In a sense, we've been building the RS1080 for 40 years . . . researching, engineering, inventing, and refining our technology to finally develop what is surely the world's finest receiver at any price.



Our RS1080 is rated at an enormous 170 watts per channel, minimum RMS into 8 ohms, from 20 to 20,000Hz with no more than 0.1% total harmonic distortion. There is lots of pure, clean power to give you lots of pure, clean sound at any listening level. But power is only part of why the RS1080 is the world's finest.

Tuning. Precise, accurate tuning is a *must* for FM listening. And the RS1080 includes 3 separate tuning meters: signal strength, center-of-channel, and most



important, a multipath meter with phase-locked-loop circuitry.

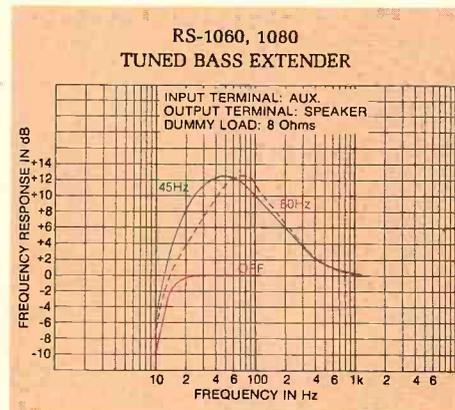
FM Dolby. For the ultimate FM listening experience, the RS1080 has built-in, factory calibrated FM Dolby decoder circuitry. This feature lets you hear the full dynamic range of Dolby broadcasted music. Another *must* if a receiver is designed to be the world's finest.

Other state-of-the-art features and specifications include 8-gang tuning, 1.7 μ V FM sensitivity, plus all the front panel controls and rear panel input/output jacks you'll ever need.



Bass Extender. A major exclusive feature of the RS1080 not found in any other receiver is our bass extender and bass range level control. At a flip of a control you can boost bass response up to 12dB at either 45 or 80Hz. Electrically tuned circuits assure sharp roll-off characteristics, and a tremendously

noticeable improvement in bass response without muddying-up the mid range or increasing hum or rumble. The result is a truly sensational improvement in sound quality in your listening room with any speaker system.

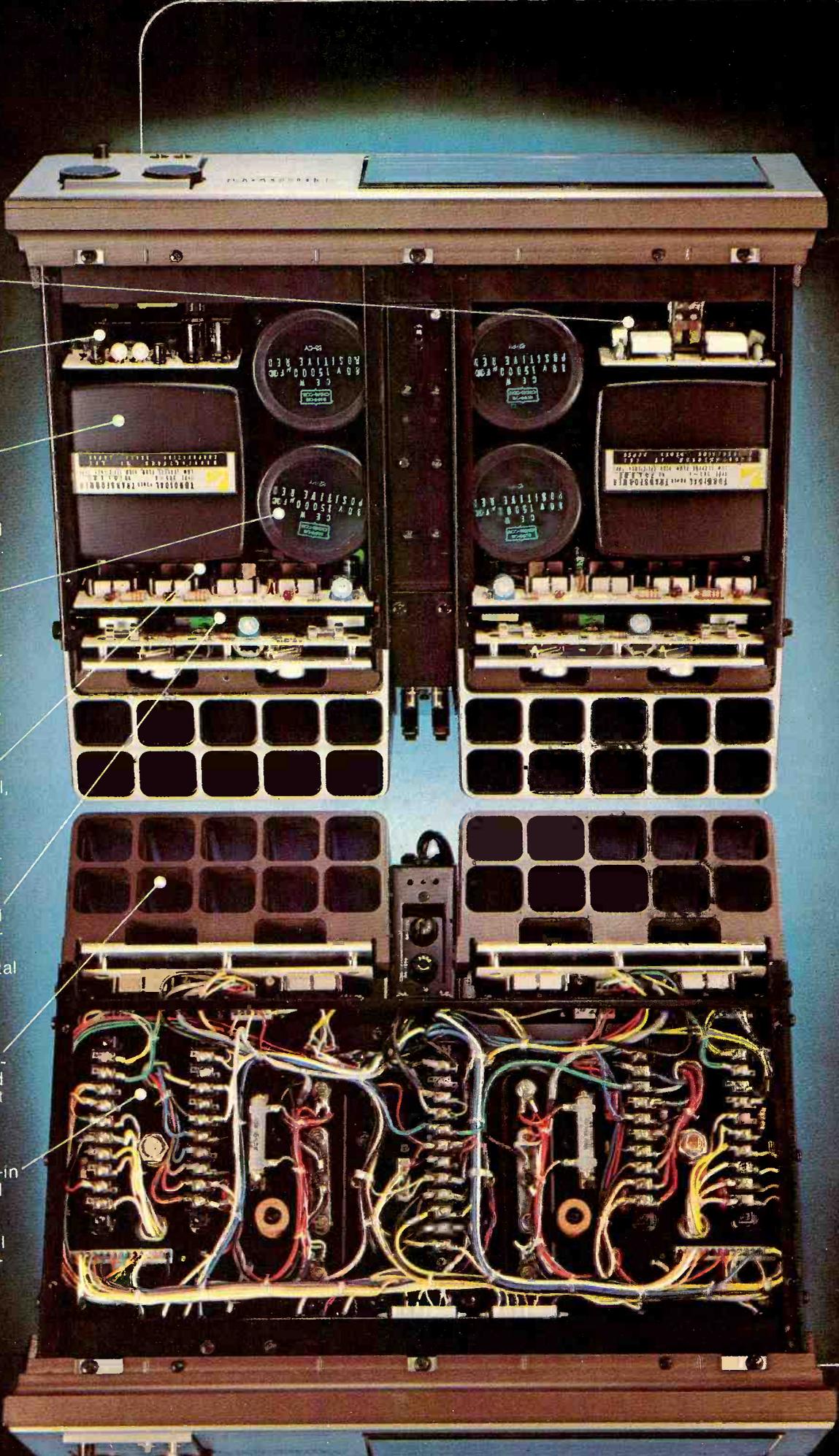


Sure, maybe some late-comer audio manufacturers have good receivers on the market, but at Fisher, we are convinced that our RS1080, priced at \$900*, is the world's finest. Look at and listen to the Fisher 1080. Available at fine audio stores or department store audio departments.

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FISHER

The first name in high fidelity.



Plug-in circuit board incorporating turn-on/turn-off muting and speaker-protection components.

Plug-in printed circuit board controlling front-panel power readouts.

Each channel's hermetically-sealed toroidal power transformer is designed for maximum efficiency and lowest possible hum leakage. The transformers are designed and manufactured by LUX.

The four filter capacitors have a specified capacitance of 15,000 microfarads each, double the value found in many other high-power amplifiers. This assures high-power stability under continuous large-signal conditions.

Plug-in drive stages, separate for each channel, built onto high-reliability circuit boards. Mirror-image construction optimizes lead-length to adjacent inputs and outputs.

Output transistor terminal board. The output transistors themselves are mounted on a 1/4-inch metal plate, integral with the heatsinks for maximum thermal conduction.

Massive sand-cast honeycomb heatsinks designed to provide maximum heat dissipation.

Cabled harness wiring with terminal strips, plug-in circuit board sockets and direct point-to-point wiring, each used as appropriate to the overall design. This flexible construction approach optimizes layout and facilitates servicing.

LUX power amplifiers are designed to provide more than merely x watts per channel.

If your interest in a power amplifier is based primarily on its dollar cost per watt, you're not likely to give much initial thought to a LUX. We don't compete in that simplistic power game. Our concerns are with every aspect of amplifier design and construction—to assure your continuing satisfaction throughout what you can expect to be a very long period of ownership. If you share these concerns, you may then find the LUX approach to have special significance and value well beyond purchase price. Especially when it comes to sonic excellence.

As *Radio-Electronics* neatly put: "There is much we still don't know about what makes one amplifier sound better than another—but LUX seems to have found some of the answers, at least."

These solutions now exist because the research that LUX audiophile/engineers conducted went far beyond the obvious questions about amplifier design to those subtle but sonically significant aspects of high-power circuit design usually bypassed or ignored by conventional thinking, test techniques, and instrumentation.

For example, ordinary protection circuits can introduce audible and unpredictable distortions when activated by certain types of loudspeaker loads. These are not disclosed, let alone cured, by the usual test procedures. LUX's solution: four separate sensing circuits sophisticated enough to distinguish the electronically subtle differences that can occur between

normal high-level output signals and abnormal voltage/current conditions.

Models M-4000 and M-6000 have fully independent power supplies employing separate toroidal power transformers for each channel. These allow the full wattage potential and signal-handling stability to be individually realized by each channel even under continuous large-signal drive conditions. Massive honeycomb heatsinks provide the thermal dissipation necessary for overall reliability and long-term performance stability.

The LUX difference goes beyond this. Every power amplifier undergoes an extensive series of tests at our New York facilities. This assures that each unit will match or exceed fourteen different published specifications. A Performance Verification Certificate attesting to the specific measurements obtained is packed with each unit. (Your dealer also has a copy and another stays with LUX as a permanent record.)

With all this in mind, plus the features and specifications listed below and the revealing internal views at left, your selection of a power amplifier can best be made only at one of our carefully selected audio dealers where LUX and other fine components can be compared and evaluated. Assuming that you have the ability to distinguish the sometimes subtle—sometimes obvious—differences among high-power amplifiers, we'll be pleased to await your considered judgment.

Luxman M-4000 Power Amplifier. 180 watts per channel minimum continuous power, both channels driven simultaneously into 8 ohms. Total harmonic and intermodulation distortion no more than 0.05%. Frequency response: 5-50,000 Hz, ± 1 dB. Signal-to-noise ratio: 108 dB. Features include: separate power supplies for each channel, including output and drive stages. Two meter power-output display in combination with LED peak-output indicators reveal dynamic range of program material. Output level set by precision potentiometer with 1-dB click stops. \$1,495.00.

Luxman M-6000 Power Amplifier. Similar features and specifications, except 300 watts per channel. \$2,995.00.



LUX Audio of America, Ltd.

200 Aerial Way, Syosset, New York 11791 • In Canada: White Electronics Development Corp., Ontario

Results of extensive comparative tests yours for the asking.

What is perhaps the most exhaustive tests of power amplifiers and preamplifiers ever made was recently conducted by Stereo Sound, Japan's leading audio publication. Among the many Japanese and American-made products tested were the Luxman M-4000 power amplifier and the C-1000 preamplifier. With permission of the publisher, we have translated and reprinted the complete report. We shall be pleased to send you a copy upon written request.

*"I am the dancer,
watch me move
Wind to a feather,
any heart that I choose."†*



**Introducing the little Baron.
Dedicated to the
exquisite joy of music.**

The little Baron is our finest technology in a loudspeaker that is remarkably beautiful and reasonably priced. But it's something else. It's a room filled with lovely music. It's a little girl dancing. It's fun. And a lot of happiness.

The little Baron. About \$600 the pair.

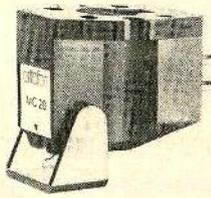
For technical information, write to KLH Research & Development Corp. 30 Cross St., Cambridge, Mass. 02139. Or, better yet, visit one of our fine KLH dealers.



30 Cross Street. Cambridge, Mass. 02139

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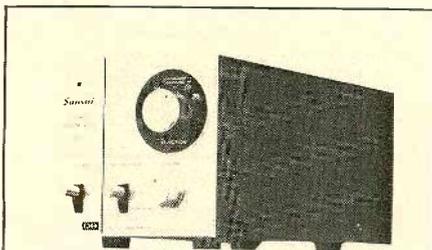


Ortofon Moving-coil Phono Cartridge with "Fine-line" Stylus

□ Joining the SL 20 E and SL 20 Q in Ortofon's line of moving-coil phono cartridges is the new MC 20, the company's finest such pickup for the playing of stereo and matrixed four-channel recordings. The MC 20 is equipped with a "fine-line" diamond stylus presenting an edge radius of 8 micrometers and an elongated vertical contact span. Frequency response is 20 to 20,000 Hz ± 1 dB and stereo separation is 25 dB at 1,000 Hz. The cartridge is designed for a load impedance of 47,000 ohms, and with Ortofon's STM-72 transformer or MCA-76 pre-preamplifier it has an output of 3.5 millivolts for a recorded velocity of 5 centimeters per second.

Compliance is 25×10^{-6} centimeters per dyne laterally and 15×10^{-6} centimeters per dyne vertically. The stylus has an equivalent tip mass of 0.5 milligram and the range of recommended tracking forces is 1.5 to 2 grams. The MC 20 weighs 7 grams. Price: \$120. The MCA-76 cartridge pre-preamplifier costs \$170; the STM-72 transformer is \$37.50.

Circle 115 on reader service card



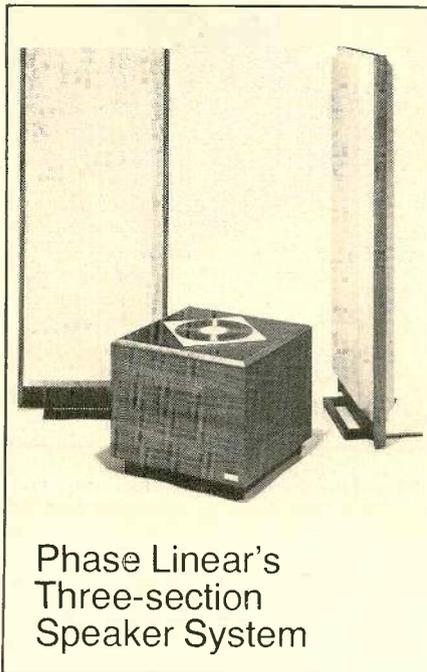
Sansui's New Vario-matrix Decoder

□ The latest form of vario-matrix decoding for QS matrixed four-channel recordings is now available in Sansui's QSD-2, an add-on unit designed to be inserted in the tape-monitoring loop of an audio system. The QSD-2 is a single-band device (unlike the three-band QSD-1) said to provide 20 dB of separation

between adjacent channels and 30 dB between diagonally opposite channels. A function selector has positions for standard QS decoding, four-channel synthesization of two-channel programs, straight-through two-channel reproduction, and for a "phase-matrix" circuit appropriate for the decoding of SQ material.

The QSD-2 has a frequency response of 20 to 30,000 Hz and distortion of less than 0.1 per cent at 1,000 Hz. Rated maximum output is 5 volts at 0.5 per cent total harmonic distortion. The principal decoding and synthesizing operations are carried out by four integrated circuits. The unit measures 5 x 4 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 11 $\frac{3}{8}$ inches. Approximate price: \$140.

Circle 116 on reader service card



Phase Linear's Three-section Speaker System

□ The Andromeda III, Phase Linear's first loudspeaker, is a stereo system consisting of a single bass cabinet functioning below 100 Hz, a pair of outboard panels for the higher frequencies, and an electronic control/equalization unit (not shown). The system is electrodynamic with passive crossover networks, and it involves twenty drivers in all: two 12-inch woofers in the vented bass cabinet and—in each panel—two 8-inch low-frequency drivers, two 4-inch mid-range drivers, and five 1-inch cone tweeters. The tweeters are mounted vertically, radiating into the apexes of diffusion elements that provide horizontal omnidirectionality. Crossover frequencies for the Andromeda are 100, 500, and 3,500 Hz. Overall frequency response is 24 to 20,000 Hz ± 3 dB.

The electronic control unit contains equalization for the bass cabinet as well as frequency contouring controls and unique circuitry intended to enhance the transient response of the tweeters. There is also "spatial imaging"

circuitry (switchable) that provides for recovery and special processing of ambient information in the program material to enhance the sense of space. The control unit is meant to be installed between the preamplifier and amplifier of a sound system or in the tape-monitoring loop. Harmonic and intermodulation distortion are less than 0.25 per cent and signal-to-noise ratio is 100 dB. The system requires an amplifier with a rating of at least 50 watts per channel; it will accept 350 watts per channel of musical material. The two floor-standing panels measure 24 x 63 x 5 inches; the bass cabinet is 24 inches square and 22 inches high. Both are finished in walnut. The electronic control unit is 7 x 2 x 5 inches. Price of the complete system: \$1,185.

Circle 117 on reader service card



New Kenwood Receiver Has Twin Power Supplies

□ At 160 watts per channel continuous into 8 ohms, 20 to 20,000 Hz, the Model KR-9600 is the top of Kenwood's present receiver line. Each of the two channels has its own completely separate power supply, ensuring fully independent operation. Harmonic and intermodulation distortion are both 0.08 per cent or less at rated output. Signal-to-noise ratios are 80 dB for the two phono inputs and 95 dB for the high-level inputs.

The KR-9600's FM section has a usable sensitivity of 1.6 microvolts, a capture ratio of 1.3 dB, and alternate-channel selectivity of 83 dB. AM suppression is 60 dB and spurious-response rejection is 115 dB. Stereo separation exceeds 37 dB from 30 to 15,000 Hz, with harmonic distortion rated 0.15 per cent in mono and 0.2 per cent in stereo.

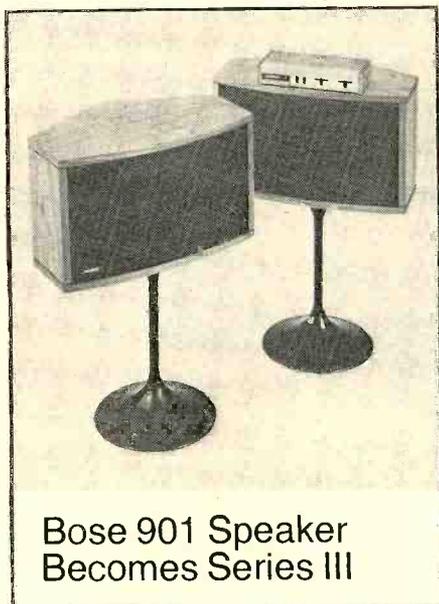
The KR-9600 has four front-panel meters for power-output level (one for each channel), FM channel center, and FM signal strength. This last meter can be switched to indicate the percentage of modulation of an incoming FM signal. The power-level meters have two scales calibrated up to 3 watts and to 200 watts; they are switchable between these sensitivities by means of a pushbutton. There are tone controls for bass, treble, and mid-range (defeatable by a front-panel switch), two degrees of switchable loudness compensation, and a front-panel microphone jack with its

(Continued overleaf)

New Products latest audio equipment and accessories

own mixing control. Up to two tape decks are accommodated, with dubbing possible from either one to the other. The two phono inputs have different sensitivities and overload points for best match to the phono cartridges being used. Approximate dimensions of the KR-9600 are 23 x 6 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 16 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches. The front panel has two functional grab handles. Price: about \$750.

Circle 118 on reader service card



Bose 901 Speaker Becomes Series III

□ The latest evolution of the Bose 901 stereo speaker system, called the Series III, retains the Direct/Reflecting principle and many of the other characteristics of the original 901 design, but it is based on entirely new construction. The enclosure is now a one-piece plastic molding (with decorative walnut panels on the exterior) that provides a semi-isolated acoustic chamber for each of the nine drivers. The chambers are coupled to three tapered cylindrical structures ("Reactive Air Columns") serving as vents; these are said to control low-frequency excursions of the driver cones and their interaction, and to contribute to the very-low-frequency output of the system.

The drivers themselves are also new, incorporating unique molded-plastic frames and other assemblies manufactured to considerably tighter tolerances than heretofore. A direct benefit of all this is a substantial increase in efficiency. According to the manufacturer, the Series III requires less than one-third the amplifier power of the previous 901 system to achieve the equivalent output level.

The electronic equalizer used in the Series III has also been redesigned. It now incorporates a continuously variable high-frequency control with a range of approximately ± 5 dB at 20,000 Hz and a mid-bass control operating over roughly the same range between frequencies of approximately 100 to 250 Hz. The equalizer retains a switch that reduces output

below 40 Hz, as well as tape-monitor facilities to replace those its installation takes up.

Overall, the Series III has a nominal impedance of 8 ohms. Minimum recommended amplifier power is 10 watts per channel, although the system can be driven safely with amplifier powers up to 250 watts per channel. The equalizer has an input impedance of 60,000 ohms, a signal-to-noise ratio of 85 dB, and harmonic distortion of less than 0.1 per cent at a 1-volt output. Dimensions of each speaker unit: approximately 21 x 12 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 13 inches. The equalizer measures 11 x 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 5 inches. Price of the entire 901 Series III system, less stands: \$749.

Circle 119 on reader service card



B.I.C.'s Top-of-line Automatic Turntable

□ The Model 1000 "Electronic" now occupies the top of the B.I.C. turntable line. The two-speed (33 $\frac{1}{3}$ and 45 rpm) design is belt-driven by a 300-rpm motor with electronically governed speed, permitting continuous variation of pitch over a 6 per cent range. A second, independent motor cycles the tone arm. Basic control functions are accomplished through electronic switching, which permits the Model 1000 to be remotely controlled through a choice of two optional control units, one of which is wireless.

Like other B.I.C. models, the 1000 accommodates a stack of up to six records in its automatic mode; a selector control "programs" the turntable for the number of records in the stack. The turntable can also operate in a single-play mode with automatic arm cycling and as a wholly manual player. The tone-arm with low-mass cartridge shell has an anti-skating adjustment calibrated for conical, elliptical, or CD-4 styli. Stroboscope markings surround the edge of the platter which is illuminated by a strobe lamp.

The B.I.C. 1000 has wow and flutter of less than 0.04 per cent (weighted rms) and unweighted rumble of better than -55 dB. The tone-arm tracking-force scale is calibrated from 0 to 4 grams in $\frac{1}{4}$ -gram increments. On the de luxe wood base with dust cover the turntable has overall dimensions of about 17 x 20 x 7 inches. The Model 1000 alone costs approximately \$280. Bases and dust covers

are optional at prices ranging from about \$8 to \$30. Remote-control units cost about \$20 for the cable-equipped version and \$50 for the wireless version.

Circle 120 on reader service card



Front-loading Cassette Deck From Marantz

□ The Model 5020 front-loading cassette deck (\$269.95) represents the budget-price level in the Marantz line. The control panel situated below two large recording-level meters has sliders for input level (separate for microphone and line sources), a master recording-level slider, and pushbuttons for Dolby noise reduction, tape type ("normal," chromium dioxide, and ferrichrome), and for a limiter circuit that inhibits recording levels above 0 dB. The transport is mechanically switched by light-touch levers. In addition to the Dolby noise reduction, the 5020 also has 25-microsecond equalization for the accurate decoding of Dolbyized FM broadcasts.

Frequency response is 45 to 13,000 Hz with "normal" tape, 35 to 14,000 Hz with chromium dioxide, and 35 to 16,000 Hz with ferrichrome, all ± 3 dB. Wow and flutter are 0.09 per cent. Signal-to-noise ratio is 50 dB without the Dolby circuits, 58 dB with. The dimensions of the deck are approximately 17 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 12 $\frac{1}{4}$ inches. A wood cabinet is available as an option for \$35.

Circle 121 on reader service card



Hervic Receiver Has Digital Readout

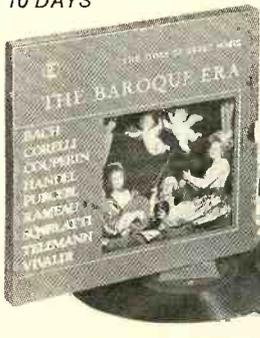
□ An LED (light-emitting diode) numerical display of station frequency is the most prominent feature on the front panel of the new
(Continued on page 16)

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Yes, I would like to examine *The Baroque Era*. Please send it to me for 10 days' free examination and enter my subscription to THE STORY OF GREAT MUSIC. If I decide to keep *The Baroque Era*, I will pay \$19.95 plus shipping and handling. I then will receive future albums in THE STORY OF GREAT MUSIC series, shipped an album at a time approximately every other month, each at the above price and free 10-day trial basis. There is no minimum number of albums that I must buy, and I may cancel my subscription at any time simply by notifying you. If I do not choose to keep *The Baroque Era*, I will return the album within 10 days, my subscription for future albums will be canceled, and I will not be under any further obligation. RAAAG2

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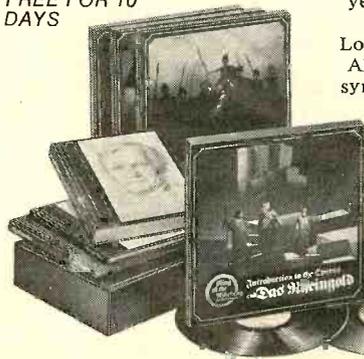
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Unlock the secrets of Richard Wagner's unparalleled music-drama achievement

THE RING OF THE NIBELUNG

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Definitive, unabridged performance of Wagner's four-opera cycle, especially produced for stereo and seven years in the making. Sir Georg Solti conducts the Vienna Philharmonic. Kirsten Flagstad, George London, Birgit Nilsson, Joan Sutherland perform! Along with *Das Rheingold* you receive: complete synopsis; bilingual libretto; three-record commentary on "The Ring." PLUS a three-volume background library: *Richard Wagner* by Robert Gutmar, *The Perfect Wagnerite* by Bernard Shaw, *Ring Resounding* by John Culshaw. Mail coupon today!



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Yes, I would like to examine Part 1 of THE RING by Richard Wagner. Please send it to me for 10 days' free examination and enter my subscription to the complete set of THE RING. If I decide to keep Part 1, I will pay \$29.95 plus shipping and handling. I then will receive Parts 2, 3 and 4 of THE RING, shipped one Part at a time approximately every other month, each at the above price and 10-day free trial basis. There is no minimum number of shipments that I must buy, and I may cancel my subscription at any time simply by notifying you. If I do not choose to keep Part 1, I will return it within 10 days, my subscription for future shipments will be canceled, and I will not be under any further obligation. RFAAR3

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New Products latest audio equipment and accessories

Hervic HR 250 stereo FM receiver. The tuning system is otherwise conventional, with a tuning knob and signal-strength and channel-center tuning meters. The HR 250 employs sliders for all other variable controls including volume, balance, bass, mid-range, and treble. Program sources (selected by pushbutton) include two phono inputs, AUX, and TAPE. A second set of tape inputs and outputs appears as phone jacks on the front panel. Dubbing is possible between the two sets of tape-machine connectors.

Rated at 100 watts per channel continuous into 8 ohms from 20 to 20,000 Hz, the HR 250 has less than 0.1 per cent total harmonic and 0.25 per cent intermodulation distortion at full power. Signal-to-noise ratios are 72 dB for the phono inputs, 85 dB for high-level inputs. The FM section has a usable sensitivity of 1.7 microvolts, a capture ratio of 2 dB, and AM suppression better than 90 dB. Frequency response is 20 to 15,000 Hz \pm 1 dB, and harmonic distortion is under 0.25 per cent. Image, i.f., and spurious-response rejection all exceed 100 dB. Alternate-channel selectivity is 100 dB. The HR 250 has a brushed black-anodized finish. Dimensions are 17 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 5 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 15 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches. Price: \$1,250, with an optional walnut cabinet costing \$44.95.

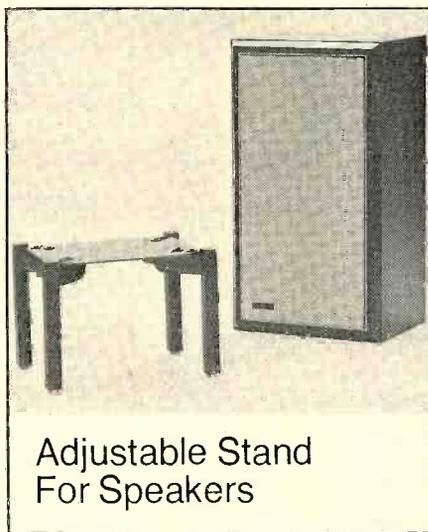
Circle 122 on reader service card



New Parastat Record Cleaner

Elpa Marketing, which distributes Watts record-care products in the U.S., announces a new version of the Watts Manual Parastat, the MK IIB. The Manual Parastat is specially designed for records that suffer from greater-than-average surface contamination by dust, dirt, or residues from record-cleaning substances or other deposits. It is a hand-held "brush" consisting of three active sections: two velvet-clad surfaces to remove loose debris and a central nylon-bristle brush that provides a gentle scouring action when desired. The bristles have an average tip radius of 0.25 mil, which is said to ensure good penetration of record grooves. The Manual Parastat is supplied with a cover and a dust-proof clear plastic container. Price: \$14.95.

Circle 123 on reader service card



Adjustable Stand For Speakers

Support Systems Inc. makes an adjustable support for a vertically installed bookshelf speaker system called the "Speaker Stand." The four-legged assembly stands 10 inches high and can be altered in width and depth by means of simple screwdriver adjustments. According to the manufacturer, the Speaker Stand can be made to fit—and precisely—almost any available bookshelf speaker system with bottom dimensions of 10 x 8 inches or more. Finish is walnut. Price: \$27.50 per pair.

Circle 124 on reader service card



Direct-cut Discs From Audio-Technica

Limited editions of disc recordings made by the direct-to-disc process will be distributed in the U.S. by Audio-Technica. The recordings, manufactured in Canada by Nimbus 9 Productions on the Umbrella label, involve bypassing the usual studio tape recorder and instead applying the output of the recording console directly to the disc-cutting lathe, thereby eliminating any technical limitations in the tape process. The discs will be limited editions, each with its own serial number.

The first U.S. release from Umbrella will be a rock album by the Toronto group "Rough

Trade." The second scheduled release will be percussion performances of ragtime pieces by a group called "Nexus." Later offerings will also include classical works. The discs will cost \$12.95 each. Further information available from: Audio-Technica U.S., Inc., Dept. SR, 33 Shiawassee Ave., Fairlawn, Ohio 44313.



Speaker-system Kit From Speakerlab

Speakerlab manufactures speaker systems that can be bought as raw drivers and crossovers with enclosure plans, as complete kits with veneered cabinets ready for finishing, or as factory assembled and finished products. The company's latest offering is the Model S6, a three-way system with a 12-inch woofer, a horn-loaded mid-range with a mouth area of 44 square inches, and a smaller horn-loaded tweeter. The crossover frequencies are 700 and 5,000 Hz, and the network comes with controls that permit independent adjustment of the mid-range and tweeter levels.

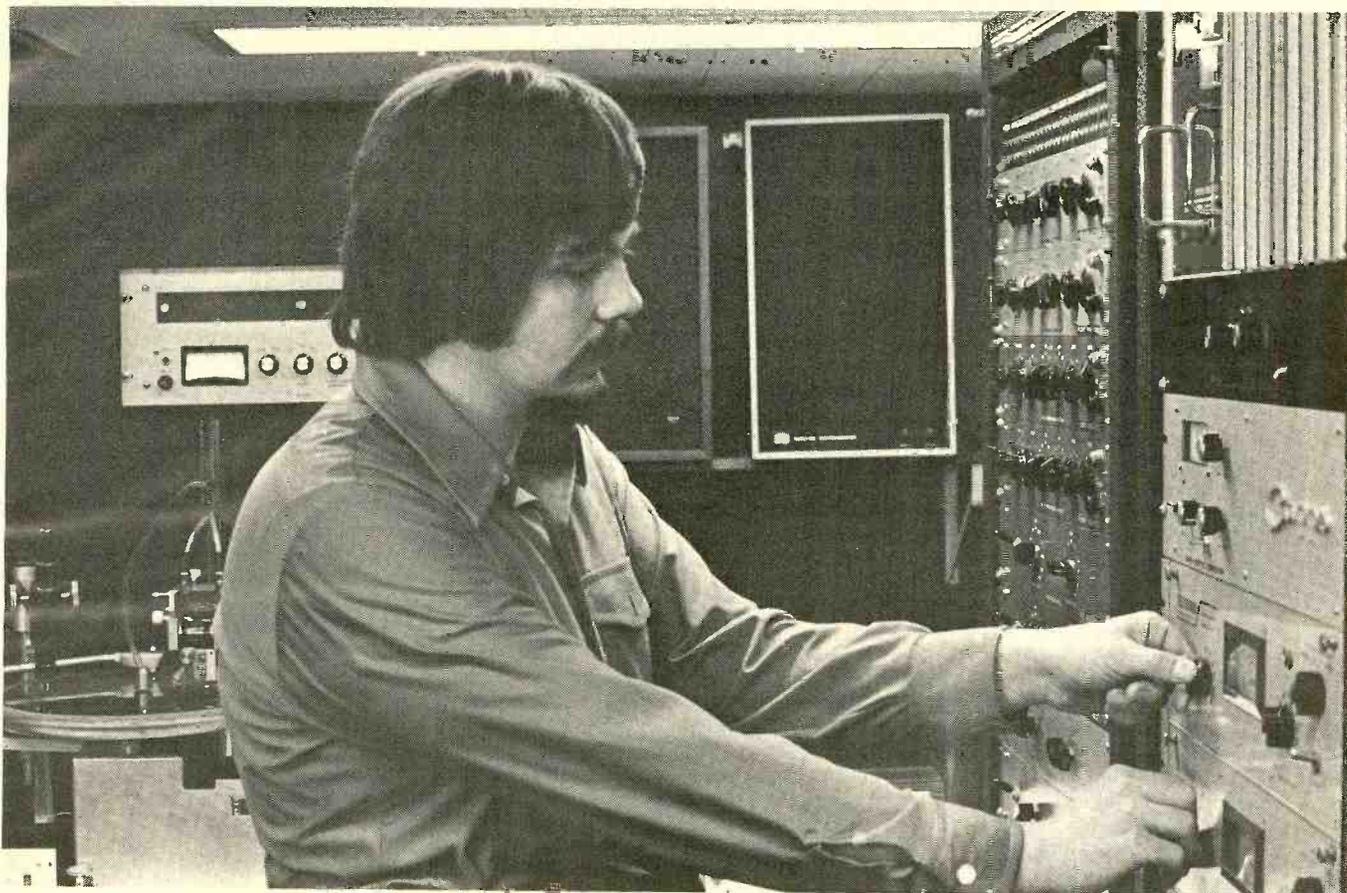
The S6 is said to be drivable by amplifier powers as low as 15 watts per channel. Maximum recommended power is 100 watts per channel. Nominal impedance is 8 ohms. Dimensions of the enclosure are approximately 28 x 16 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 12 inches. As a kit complete with cabinet, grille cloth, fiberglass lining, and finishing oil the S6 costs \$215. The drivers and crossover network together with enclosure plans are priced at \$161. The complete system, finished in walnut and ready to play, costs \$289.

Circle 125 on reader service card

NOTICE: All product descriptions and specifications quoted in these columns are based on materials supplied by the manufacturer.

Recent fluctuations in the value of the dollar will have an effect on the price of merchandise imported into this country. Please be aware that the prices quoted in this issue may be subject to change.

According to TRUTONE RECORDS..“The Stanton calibrated 681 series is our total point of reference in our Disc Mastering Operation”



“Carl Rowatti, Chief Engineer, adjusting the Program limiters prior to cutting a master lacquer”.

Trutone can be described as a family enterprise . . . but what a family! Father Lou Rowatti is the President; Son Carl is Vice President and Chief Engineer; and daughter-in-law Adrienne handles the business end of the operation. They have great pride in their family, in their family's enterprise and in their products. That's why they insist on using the best — always.

Trutone Records in Northvale, New Jersey always uses the Calibrated Stanton Triple-E for A-B comparisons between tape and disc. They also use the Triple-E to check the frequency response of the cutter head (they'll record a 1,000 Hz tone and a 10 kHz tone twice a day to check the condition of the cutting stylus and the high end frequency response of the cutter head).

They make test cuts and play them back, using the Triple-E for reference, as high as 15 kHz all the way down to 30 Hz. Carl Rowatti says “We use the Stanton Calibrated 681 series as our total point of reference in our disc master-

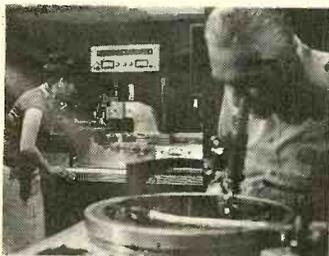
ing operation. Everything in the studio is judged — and we think perfectly judged for quality—with this great cartridge”.

Professionals can't afford to take chances with quality. That's why they depend on Stanton in their operations.

Each Stanton 681 Triple-E is guaranteed to meet its specifications within exacting limits, and each one boasts the most meaningful warranty possible. An individually calibrated test result is packed with each unit.

Whether your usage involves recording, broadcasting, disco or home entertainment your choice should be the choice of the professionals . . . the Stanton 681 TRIPLE-E.

Write today for further information to:
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Plainview, New York 11803



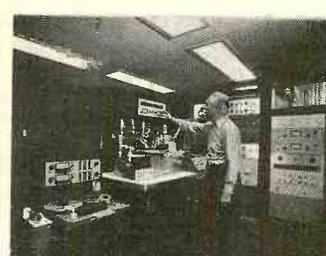
Lou Rowatti inspects a master lacquer. Adrienne checks the lathe.



Carl Rowatti adjusts the pitch computer on the mastering lathe.



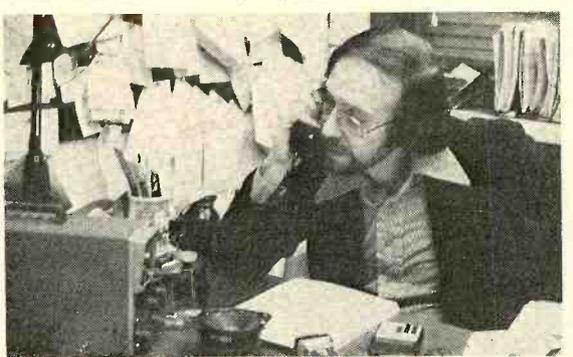
Carl installs the Stanton Calibrated 681 Triple-E on the playback table.



Lou Rowatti (The Prez) adjusting the high frequency limiter in his cutting room.

CIRCLE NO. 44 ON READER SERVICE CARD

By Larry Klein



Speaker Isolation

Q. Like many other apartment dwellers who own hi-fi equipment, I have a little difficulty from time to time with my neighbors. Their main complaint seems to be that the bass notes "come through the ceiling." Do you have any suggestions other than turning down the volume and bass controls?

P. SMALLER
New York, N.Y.

A. First, it will be helpful to understand the nature of the problem before working on the solution. In general, high-frequency sound waves are reflected by hard surfaces and absorbed by soft ones. However, low-frequency sound waves tend to pass through wall panels and floorboards almost as though they weren't there. A substantial thickness (several feet) of sound-absorbent material is needed to absorb (rather than to reflect or pass on) frequencies below 100 Hz or so. In addition, the low-frequency energy usually couples to room surfaces or structural members, and these then serve, directly or indirectly, as transmission paths to adjacent rooms or apartments. There are three ways—aside from your developing an interest in compositions for the solo flute—to get around these problems of acoustical transmission.

Since acoustic tile or cork paneling will not stop the lows, what will? One effective (if somewhat impractical) technique would be to cover your listening-room floor with an inch or two of sand followed by new flooring resting only on the sand (if the new floor is in direct contact with the old floor or the walls, much of the isolation will be lost). The sand would provide decoupling of the bass through inertial and frictional loss. In other words, it would kill the vibration. A layer of tar or concrete an inch or so thick would also be quite effective, but before embarking on such a project make sure that the floor support beams are adequate for the load.

A more practical approach to the bass-transmission problem is to place the speaker on a compliant pad of some sort. A section of 2 inch (or thicker) foam should work well, assuming that it is not compressed excessively by the weight of the cabinet. If you want to get fancier, you might try putting together the foam-sandwich assembly shown in the accompanying sketch. Vibration tends to get

decoupled at the interfaces of disparate materials such as the wood and foam layers shown. This is in addition to the transmission losses in the foam itself. Make sure that the ¼-inch-thick decorative plinth (A) does not touch panel (B) or the floor. The parts labeled (B) and (C) are ¾-inch plywood, and the foam is an inch or so thick.

Although an isolating base will do much to inhibit speaker-to-room-structure (floor or shelf) vibration transmission, it won't do anything about radiated acoustic energy. That is not usually the main problem, however. Note that if the bass reproduction in a particular room is unduly dependent on the coupling of the speaker cabinet's vibration to floor or walls, there may be a slight loss of low-end energy. However, if a permanent peace with nearby neighbors is achieved, that seems to be a small price to pay.

A while back (March, 1975) when I answered a question on studio sound proofing I included some material that may provide additional help to audiophiles with neighbor problems. For a free copy, send a stamped, self-addressed long envelope to: STEREO REVIEW, Dept. SP, One Park Ave., New York, N.Y. 10016.

Philosophical Fidelity

Q. With reference to the comment by Stephen Luzader in a recent issue "... no matter how good a sound system

may be, what emanates from it will not be like real live music." I disagree most soundly. First, music is experiential and need not be "live" to be real any more than a painting is no longer alive after being recorded on canvas. Secondly, I will put my home sound system with Advent cassettes up against "live" any time, and all but the most obtuse would be more than pleased with the totality of the music that is produced. A \$4,000 system is not required; mine cost less than \$1,500, which seems to be about the absolute minimum expenditure to achieve adequate "live" sound reproduction.

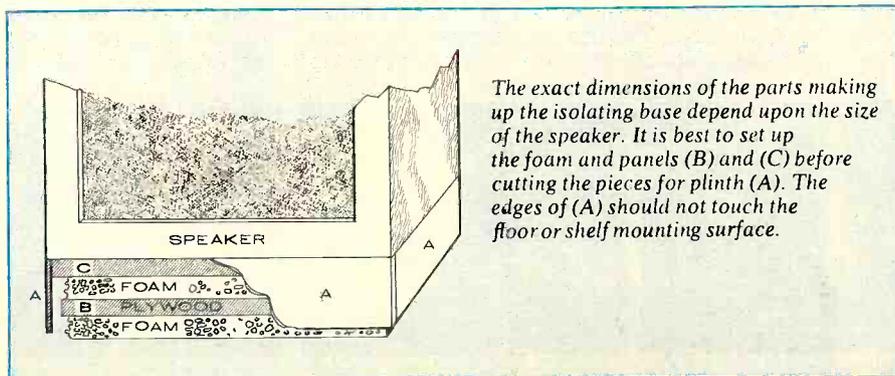
JERARD W. THORNTON JR.
Brownsville, Tex.

A. Far be it from me to put down hi-fi reproduction—or the attempt to achieve it at a reasonable cost—but Mr. Thornton appears to be confused on the semantic level. Let's start with a basic conceptual definition. It seems safe to say that the essential goal of high-fidelity reproduction, expressed as simply as possible, is to make recorded (or transmitted) music sound as though it were being heard live. If that is the goal (and it seems to me it must be), it then becomes valid to criticize an audio system, including the program material, on the basis of how well that goal is achieved.

Mr. Thornton states (1) that anything that exists is "real" and (2) that he gets an enormous amount of pleasure out of listening to his components. Who can argue with either of those propositions? However, they have nothing to do with the case. For example, I'm sure the scores of the compositions Mr. Thornton listens to are available. And it is likely that someone out there derives just as much pleasure from hearing the music in his mind's ear simply from reading the score as Mr. Thornton gets from listening to his system. No one would deny that the musical score is real, but, on the other hand, no one would confuse that score with the "real live music" either.

My general point is that everyone is entitled to enjoy his music in any way he likes with any kind of equipment (or no equipment at all), but once the term "high fidelity" is invoked, then certain agreed-upon—if ill-defined—criteria must be met. In practice, high-fidelity is not an absolute term, for there are obviously varying degrees of success in the simulation of reality. But the illusion of sonic reality is the goal. And if, with my eyes closed, I can't tell whether I'm listening to live or reproduced sound, that's high fidelity!

(Continued on page 20)



Audition free for 10 days Karl Böhm's superb Deutsche Grammophon recording of

Mozart's Six Greatest Symphonies

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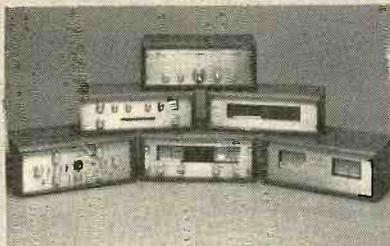
Phase III is a four-way, four-piece system consisting of 20 drivers. The twin five foot panels utilize a precise geometric arrangement of the mid-range and high-frequency drivers designed to generate an ideal

relationship between direct and reflected sound. The bass module, with its two 12" subwoofers, provides an awesome bass response. A separate Electronic Motion Control System provides spatial imaging circuitry, frequency tailoring and

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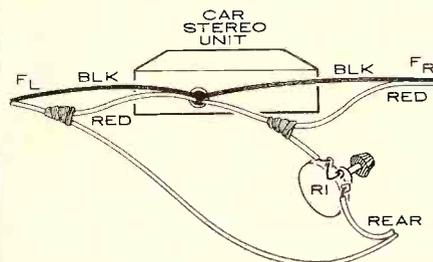


Automotive Rear Channel

Q. I understand that there was an article in Car and Driver magazine that told how to set up four-channel sound in a car that had a stereo FM radio. Do you know anything about it?

H. A. STANLEY
Chicago, Ill.

A. Yes I do, since I was the one who suggested the hookup to C & D after having already installed it in my car several years ago. It occurred to me that my stereo FM radio could provide a synthesized rear-channel using the stereo "difference signal" if I simply ran a pair of wires connected across the two "hot" leads from the front stereo speakers to a separate speaker installed in the rear deck. I wired in the rear speaker, and the results were consistently more impressive than one normally experiences with a difference-signal setup in a home system. This shouldn't have surprised me since, in respect to directionality, stereo itself is also usually more effective in a car than at home.



The wiring for the rear-speaker connections can be tapped in anywhere on the "hot" (usually red) leads going to the right and left front speakers. Most car stereo units will have a plug-in setup for loudspeaker connections.

The sound enhancement achieved by the hookup operates, of course, both for stereo broadcasts and tapes. I have found that "live" recordings such as those of Peter Frampton or Joni Mitchell are particularly impressive since much of the audience reaction seems to come only from the rear speaker, putting the listener right in the center of things. And with large symphonic works, the hall reverberation is reproduced in a surprisingly satisfying way.

The necessary connections are shown in the accompanying diagram. Make sure to use only the two hot leads from the radio/tape player, and avoid grounding either of the leads going to the rear speaker. (Do not use a speaker that has a terminal grounded to its frame). The setup sounds best if the rear speaker plays at the correct relative volume in respect to the front units. You can help ensure this by using an efficient heavy-magnet speaker for the rear. If the sound from the rear is too loud, you can install a 25- or 50-ohm wirewound control (R1) as shown. In my setup, it wasn't necessary.

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

← CIRCLE NO. 35 ON READER SERVICE CARD

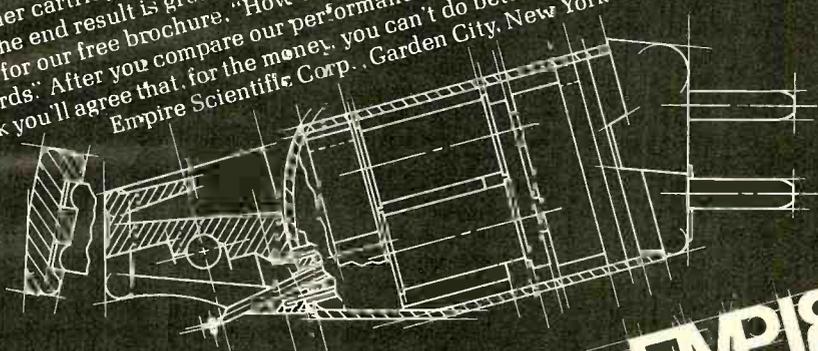
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The end result is great listening. Audition one for yourself or write for our free brochure, "How To Get The Most Out Of Your Records." After you compare our performance specifications we think you'll agree that, for the money, you can't do better than Empire.

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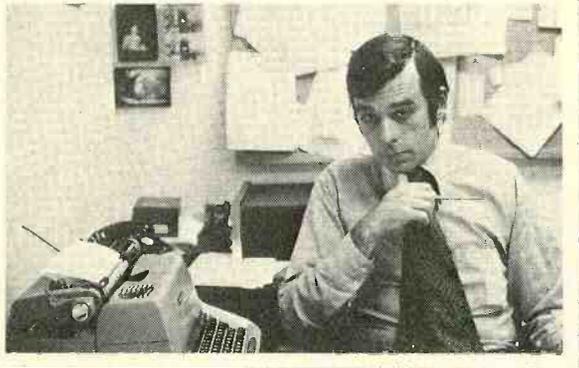
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| MODEL & STYLUS COLOR | 4000 D/III | 4000 D/II | 4000 D/I | 2000Z | 2000 E/III | 2000 E/II | 2000 E/I | 2000 E | 2000 |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| FREQUENCY RESPONSE | 10Hz-50KHz ± 3 db | 15Hz-50KHz ± 3 db | 15Hz-45KHz ± 3 db | 20Hz-20KHz ± 1 db | 20Hz-20KHz ± 2 db | 20Hz-20KHz ± 2 db | 20Hz-20KHz ± 3 db | 20Hz-20KHz ± 3 db | 20Hz-20KHz ± 3 db |
| TRACKING FORCE RANGE | ¾-1¼ gm | ¾-1½ gm | 1-1¼ gm | ¾-1¼ gm | ¾-1½ gm | ¾-1½ gm | 1-2 gm | 1¼-2½ gm | 1½-3 gm |
| SEPARATION: | | | | | | | | | |
| 15Hz to 1KHz | 28 db | 26 db | 24 db | | | | | | |
| 1KHz to 20KHz | 23 db | 21 db | 20 db | 20 db | 20 db | 20 db | 18 db | 18 db | 16 db |
| 20KHz to 50KHz | 15 db | 15 db | 15 db | 30 db | 28 db | 25 db | 23 db | 23 db | 21 db |
| 20 Hz to 500Hz | | | | 25 db | 28 db | 18 db | 15 db | 15 db | 13 db |
| 500Hz to 15KHz | | | | | | | | | |
| 15KHz to 20KHz | | | | | | | | | |
| I. M. DISTORTION @ 3.54 cm/sec | .2% 2KHz-20KHz | .2% 2KHz-20KHz | .2% 2KHz-20KHz | .08% 2KHz-20KHz | .1% 2KHz-20KHz | .15% 2KHz-20KHz | .2% 2KHz-20KHz | .2% 2KHz-20KHz | .2% 2KHz-20KHz |
| STYLUS | 2 mil bi-radial | 2 mil bi-radial | 2 mil bi-radial | 2 x 7 mil elliptical | 3 x 7 mil elliptical | 7 mil radius spherical |
| EFFECTIVE TIP MASS | .4 milligram | .4 milligram | .4 milligram | .2 milligram | .6 milligram | .6 milligram | .6 milligram | .9 milligram | 1 milligram |
| COMPLIANCE | 30x10 ⁻⁶ cm/dyne | 30x10 ⁻⁶ cm/dyne | 30x10 ⁻⁶ cm/dyne | 30x10 ⁻⁶ cm/dyne | 20x10 ⁻⁶ cm/dyne | 18x10 ⁻⁶ cm/dyne | 17x10 ⁻⁶ cm/dyne | 16x10 ⁻⁶ cm/dyne | 14x10 ⁻⁶ cm/dyne |
| TRACKING ABILITY | 32 cm/sec @ 1KHz @ 1 gm | 32 cm/sec @ 1KHz @ 1½ gm | 30 cm/sec @ 1KHz @ 1½ gm | 38 cm/sec @ 1KHz @ .9 gm | 32 cm/sec @ 1KHz @ 1 gm | 26 cm/sec @ 1KHz @ 1¼ gm | 28 cm/sec @ 1KHz @ 1½ gm | 28 cm/sec @ 1KHz @ 1¼ gm | 32 cm/sec @ 1KHz @ 2 gm |
| CHANNEL BALANCE | within 1 db @ 1KHz | within 1 db @ 1KHz | within 1½ db @ 1KHz | within ¾ db @ 1KHz | within 1 db @ 1KHz | within 1¼ db @ 1KHz | within 1½ db @ 1KHz | within 1½ db @ 1KHz | within 1½ db @ 1KHz |
| INPUT LOAD | 100K ohms/channel | 100K ohms/channel | 100K ohms/channel | 47K ohms/channel | 47K ohms/channel | 47K ohms/channel | 47K ohms/channel | 47K ohms/channel | 47K ohms/channel |
| TOTAL CAPACITANCE | under 100 pf/channel | under 100 pf/channel | under 100 pf/channel | 300 pf/channel | 400-500 pf/channel | 400-500 pf/channel | 400-500 pf/channel | 400-500 pf/channel | 400-500 pf/channel |
| OUTPUT @ 3.54 cm/sec | 3 mv/channel | 3 mv/channel | 3 mv/channel | 3 mv/channel | 4.5 mv/channel | 4.5 mv/channel | 7 mv/channel | 7 mv/channel | 7 mv/channel |

Audio Basics

By Ralph Hodges



THE VOLUME CONTROL

THE lowly volume control, one of the simplest parts of an amplifier or receiver, is also one of the most misunderstood. Dozens of misconceptions have arisen and been applied to this little—or big—knob without their having any basis in fact. For example:

- The volume control on my amplifier (or receiver) is turned three quarters of the way up. Therefore the amplifier is delivering three quarters of its maximum power output.
- My amplifier plays as loud at a 12-o'clock volume setting as Fred's does at a 2-o'clock setting. Therefore my amplifier is more powerful (no matter what the specs say).
- With receiver A, I have to crank the volume way up to get the music loud enough. With receiver B, I just touch the control and I'm deafened. Receiver B is obviously much more powerful (again, no matter what the specs say).
- My old speakers blew out when I played them at half volume. My new speakers are rated to have twice the power-handling capability. Therefore I should be able to play them at full volume with no problem.
- I paid \$75 for this state-of-the-art phono cartridge and I have to turn the volume control up much higher than I did with my old cartridge. Obviously I got stung.

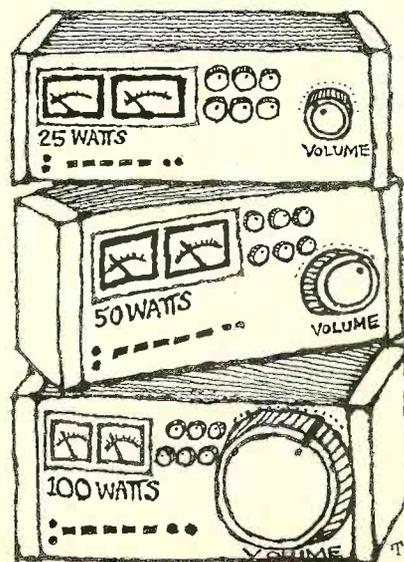
ANY of the above conclusions *could* be true. However, all of the reasoning that led to these conclusions is completely false, because the setting of the volume control simply has nothing to do with any of these matters.

Let's consider an amplifier as a signal-strength multiplier, which is what it really is. For the sake of argument we'll take a hypothetical amplifier that has a multiplication factor (or gain) of 100. Any signal (from a tape machine, let's say) that we apply to its input gets multiplied by 100, and the result is delivered at the output. All of this works very straightforwardly and reliably *up to a point*. That point is the amplifier's maximum power-output capability, which we'll arbitrarily set at 1,000 (not 1,000 watts, just 1,000). Therefore, any input signal up to a value of 10 ($10 \times 100 = 1,000$) is okay, but if the *input* signal exceeds 10 at any time the amplifier can't do its multiply-by-100 trick without going into overload or clipping—which is what normally hap-

pens to an amplifier that is being asked to put out more than it is capable of.

The volume control is merely a rather simple device that adjusts the amount of *input* signal that gets through the amplifier. When it is turned fully up, *all* of the input signal gets through. When it is fully down, *none* (usually) of the input is allowed to pass. For intermediate settings the control admits or inhibits signals to a degree that is determined by the control "taper" chosen by the amplifier's designer. If he wants almost all of the signal passed at the barest upward twitch of the knob, he can select a volume control that does that. If he wants the level to go up smoothly and gradually as the knob is turned, he'll choose another type of control taper. But these choices are only design preferences; they affect the intrinsic operation of the amplifier not one whit.

To refer back to our earlier example, if the input signal level has a value of 10, the amplifier will be delivering its full power at a full volume-control setting. If the input signal is 15, the amplifier will deliver its full power well before the volume control is at maximum. If the input is 5, the amplifier will not deliver its full power no matter where the vol-



ume control is set (but presumably you'll still be able to get the music loud enough to suit you; if you cannot, you probably need a stronger input-signal source, not a more powerful amplifier).

Looking back at the misconceptions we began with, we can see that none of the assumptions made about amplifier power on the basis of volume-control setting is valid. The only measure of an amplifier's power-output capability is how loud it will play (no matter where the volume control is) before the distortion associated with amplifier overload is heard. And if you want to compare amplifiers, the comparisons should be made with the same speakers and (ideally) in the same room, since speakers and rooms differ in their power requirements for a given loudness level.

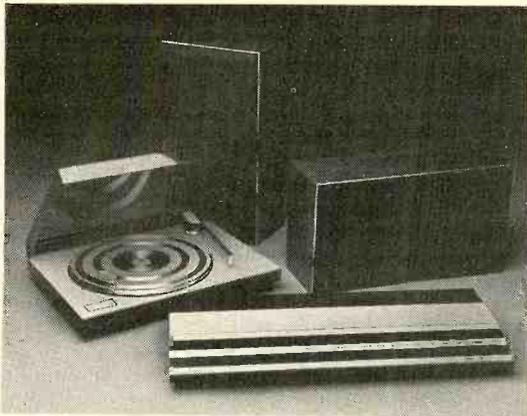
As for the speakers that should be able to withstand "full volume," the assumption is incorrect—and hazardous to the health of your loudspeakers. Doubling the volume-control setting almost never has the effect of doubling the amplifier's power output. In fact, it's impossible to predict exactly what it will do unless you've studied the individual amplifier and the speakers it's being used with. Also, there is no way to determine how much power is actually going to a speaker unless you sit down and measure that power with the appropriate test instruments.

And finally, the phono cartridge in the example above simply provides a weaker input signal to the amplifier and therefore requires a higher volume-control setting to achieve the same loudness. This is a common occurrence. In designing top-quality phono cartridges engineers frequently sacrifice some output level to achieve other characteristics they want more. If you can get the loudness level you want from your cartridge without any marked increase in the electronic hiss you can hear from your speakers, then everything is fine, and you can forget about how high the volume control is set.

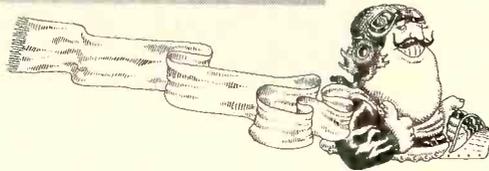
CONFUSION about volume controls doesn't end here, however. Note, for example, that many audio systems have two or more volume controls: one main one and perhaps one or more subsidiary ones on tuners, tape decks, or even on power amplifiers if the system employs a separate preamp. What's to be done with these? Usually the manufacturer of the component offers ample advice in his instruction manual. If he doesn't, here are the general rules:

Volume or output-level controls on program sources such as tuners and tape decks are there primarily for convenience. With them you can match the typical level you get from one program source to that of another (the record player, for example), to permit switching between sources without having to make large adjustments in the main volume setting. Volume (or "gain") controls on power amplifiers are usually set full up. However, if this results in very high sound levels for very small main-volume settings, it may be convenient—and also beneficial for the signal-to-noise ratio—to adjust the power-amp controls for your normal listening levels when the main volume control is about at mid point.

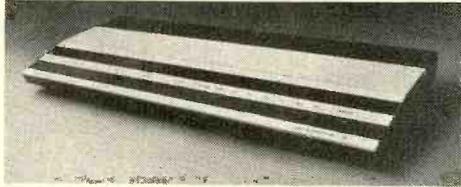
To sum up, if you want to impress some friends with your amplifier, don't show them how loud it can play with a 10-o'clock volume-control setting; that doesn't prove a thing. Show them how loud it can play *period*. And then, please, be kind and turn it down a little.



The Bang & Olufsen Beosystem 1900. It's so simple, most people don't get it.

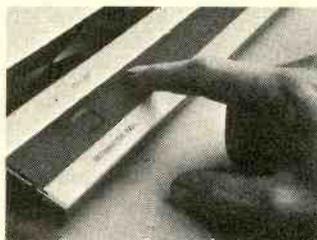
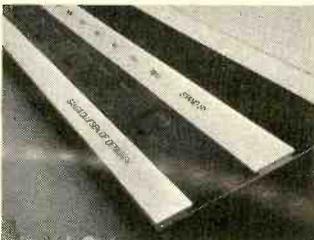


An alternative to the airplane cockpit school of audio design. It's not knobs and dials that make superb sound, it's superb engineering. In the Beosystem 1900, there is almost none of the former, and a great deal of the latter.

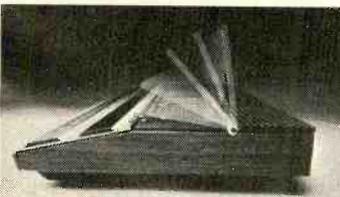


A few cases in point:

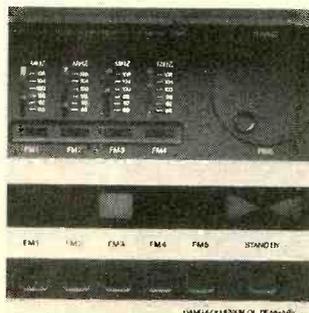
Your finger, the component. With the Beomaster® 1900, you become part of the system. All major controls are electronically activated by a light touch of your finger on the front control panel. The instant you touch it, an illuminated indicator appears for each function; you always know the operational status of the 1900, even in the dark.



For details, look inside. Secondary controls, for bass, treble, and FM tuning, are out of sight, literally—concealed behind an aluminum door that opens and closes in a manner reminiscent of the Starship "Enterprise."



Thanks for the memory. The Beomaster 1900 also allows you one unforgettable convenience. You may pre-set the volume level and pre-tune up to five FM stations. Then, at the instant you want it, you have the station you want, at the level you want. Why clutter your memory when the system has one?

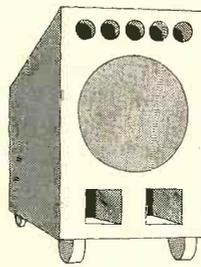


The turntable, taken to its logical conclusion. The Beogram® 1900 turntable's very low mass tone arm and MMC 4000 cartridge work magnificently with each other, because they are *made* to work with each other, by engineers who talk to each other, listen to each other, and design for each other. If that strikes you as overwhelmingly logical, you'd be surprised how other turntables are put together.



A scratched record is forever. (How to protect your investment.) No matter how little you've spent on your record collection, chances are some of it is irreplaceable, which makes it priceless. It makes sense to protect it—the way our MMC 4000 cartridge does with an effective tip mass of only 0.4 milligrams. (A tiny square of this page, this big weighs 1.0 milligram.) This results in a touch so delicate that it's almost impossible to scratch your records while playing them. It also reduces wear considerably enabling your records to continue working well past normal retirement age.

We don't recommend this, but with the MMC 4000 cartridge, it won't hurt.



It's not size that counts. It's performance. Can a speaker small enough to fit on an eight-inch shelf (or unobtrusive enough to hang on a wall) impress your audiophile friends? Yes, if they keep their eyes closed ... and their ears open.

The missing link: Our 100% solution. Phase distortion—a principal villain in speaker performance—was identified in 1973 by Bang & Olufsen engineers. The first practical solution to the problem was presented in London in 1975 to the international organization, the Audio Engineering Society, by Bang & Olufsen engineers.

Today that solution is an integral part of our Beovox® Phase-Link® Loudspeakers (Pat. Pend.)

If a child can operate it, will an adult buy it? Because *usability* is at the heart of the Beosystem 1900's design, it is true that a child can operate it. But only a very sophisticated adult can truly appreciate it. Welcome. Write to us at: Bang & Olufsen of America, 515 Busse Road, Dept. 601, Elk Grove Village, Illinois 60007, we'll be happy to send you our brochure and dealer list.



Bang & Olufsen

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Now you can stop price increases that leave you with less music for your record and tape budget. You can guarantee yourself more music for less money through membership in Discount Music Club.

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happenings in the world of music; concerts, critiques, new releases... special super-sale listings at discounts of up to 73%.

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CIRCLE NO. 12 ON READER SERVICE CARD

Tape Horizons

By Craig Stark



MIXER BASICS

MOST tape decks have provisions for connecting one microphone and/or one high-level ("line") source per channel, and for most purposes this is usually adequate. But what if a particular recording task requires the use of two (or more) mikes for each channel? Or, after you have recorded three synchronized tracks on a four-channel machine, how do you combine them to "mix down" onto the fourth track? In such cases the problem is that you have several more signal-bearing cables with plugs than you have signal-receiving jacks at your recorder's inputs.

Your immediate temptation is likely to be to reach for one or more "Y adapters" (the audio equivalents of the a.c.-line cube taps that let you plug several lamps—or components—into the same socket). True, you can *sometimes* get away with using this handy expedient, as many used to do to get a mono signal from a stereo phono cartridge. More often than not, however, the best use of the simple Y adapter is at those times when you want to feed a single *output* simultaneously to two *inputs*—to make two tape copies at once, for example. In the opposite cases I posed, where several outputs must be fed into a single input, the Y adapter is likely to create problems of level-setting, degraded frequency response, and possibly greatly increased distortion. The better way is to use a device specifically designed for the job: a "mixer."

Mixers provide separate, non-interacting level controls for each input signal (and sometimes a master level control as well), and they come in two basic varieties: active and passive. Passive mixers are inexpensive (usually \$10 or so), as well they should be, for they consist of little more than the volume controls and a few isolating resistors. But where the levels of the signals to be mixed are high enough to tolerate losses of perhaps 6 to 20 dB (in other words, signal strength

drops to between a half and a tenth of its original strength) they are perfectly acceptable. However, the "insertion loss" caused by a simple passive mixer definitely rules it out for use with microphones, since microphone output signals are so weak (typically in the vicinity of one one-thousandth of a volt) that any further loss would simply invite problems with hum and hiss.

Active mixers, by contrast, contain their own amplifying circuits to compensate for whatever losses occur in the mixing network and controls. Customarily they also contain preamplifiers that boost microphone signals up to nominal "line level" (about 1 volt) before mixing them. Thus the mixer bypasses your recorder's own microphone circuits entirely (this is a blessing for many recorders whose mike-input circuits are excessively noisy) and plugs directly into the deck's high-level or "aux" jacks.

A typical mixer might be described as a six-in, two-out unit, meaning that it can handle six signal sources and that it has a two-channel, or stereo, output. In most cases, each of the six inputs could be switched to accept either a microphone or a high-level source. On some models inputs may be permanently "assigned"—that is, put into fixed groups of three "left" inputs and three "right" inputs. A much more flexible and desirable arrangement, however, is one that permits you to make your own channel assignments for each (or at least some) of the inputs. This is usually accomplished with simple pushbutton switching, and most mixers that offer this feature have the valuable capacity of allowing you to feed a single sound source to *both* left and right channels simultaneously. This is of great help to the live recordist, who frequently wants to be able to put a soloist in the center of the stereo spread.

There are a host of other helpful mixer features that I will discuss in upcoming columns.

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Ever since the invention of the recorded disc annoying "clicks" and "pops" caused by scratches, static and imperfections have consistently disturbed the listening pleasure of music lovers.

Now, SAE introduces the unique model 5000, an Impulse Noise Reduction System which eliminates those unwanted sounds with no adverse effect on the quality of the recorded material.

This breakthrough in electronic circuitry is so demonstrably effective that the SAE 5000 is destined to become an essential part of any sound system.

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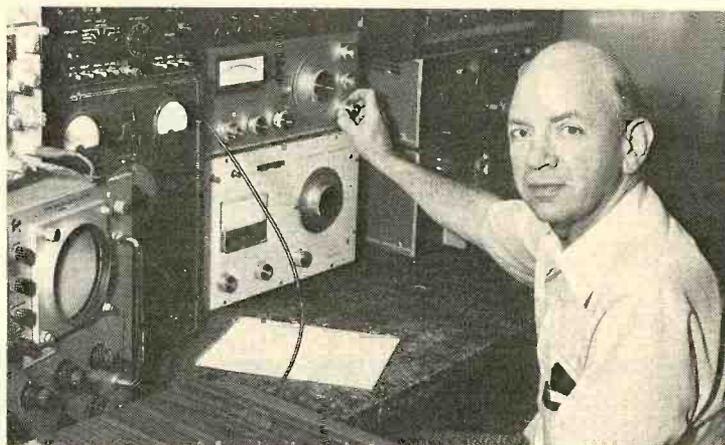
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CIRCLE NO. 39 ON READER SERVICE CARD

Technical Talk

By Julian D. Hirsch



● **A GOOD WORD FOR BUREAUCRACY:** A couple of years ago, the Federal Trade Commission ruling on advertised amplifier-power ratings elicited some rather strong reaction from high-fidelity equipment manufacturers. The precipitating cause was the Commission's "preconditioning" requirement for published ratings: an amplifier had to be operated at one-third its rated power for one hour followed by five minutes at full power, both channels driven, before measurement of its power output and distortion could be made.

Although reasonable warning had been given to the industry by the FTC before the ruling was promulgated, this requirement managed to slip by the engineering departments of most manufacturers until it was too late to do anything about it. The difficulty was that amplifier output stages operating in class B or AB (such as are used in almost all high-fidelity amplifiers and receivers) have to dissipate the greatest amount of heat from their output transistors when operating at about 40 per cent of maximum rated power. Many manufacturers therefore found themselves facing the problem that their amplifiers overheated or blew up when they were subjected to the FTC's "preconditioning," in spite of the fact that these same units had already proved to be reliable performers in home music systems.

Some relief was eventually afforded by a liberalized interpretation of the ruling, but many manufacturers found it necessary to redesign their products (or those scheduled for the next year's line) to include enhanced cooling systems and, in a few cases, to derate their power output slightly to comply with the specifics of the regulations.

Somehow the industry managed to survive the FTC-induced trauma. As a matter of fact, there has been a proliferation of higher-power amplifiers—particularly in receivers, where one would least expect to find them. At the time of the

FTC ruling, receivers delivering over 100 watts per channel were a rarity; today they are fairly common, and there are several available in the 160- to 180-watt-per-channel range. To me, the most impressive thing about this situation is not merely the huge power ratings of these receivers, but the fact that they contain superb, no-holds-barred amplifiers whose power outputs are rated as conservatively as those separate power amplifiers that might sell for the price of the entire receiver.

Having tested a number of these "super receivers" and comparable integrated amplifiers, I can assure you that these are very conservatively rated products, one and all. After their hour of torture, they are usually safe to touch (briefly, though, as they *do* get hot!). Certainly they get no hotter than any of the early vacuum-tube receivers rated at 25 to 30 watts per channel. Furthermore, they do not have to be pampered, and I have yet to experience a failure in such an amplifier. Best of all, manufacturers have not (at least so far) had to resort to cooling fans with their inevitable noise.

Contrary to some dire predictions, the prices of these amplifiers and receivers have not risen appreciably on a dollar-per-watt basis. For the most part they have remained stationary in spite of continuing inflation. It may be that falling costs in other areas have offset the additional costs brought on by the heat-dissipation requirements. Obviously, coping

with the FTC requirements was not beyond the technical capabilities of the manufacturers, and cost increases, if any, have certainly not been severe. And, most important, the specifications have improved, are comparable, and are rigidly adhered to. It is fair to ask whether things would have turned out this way if the FTC had not gotten into the act. I suspect not—at least not to the extent to which things have progressed in the space of two brief years. In the normal course of competition we would surely have seen some impressive upgrading of power-output ratings, but probably not to the point where a receiver that can be lifted by a fairly husky man can deliver upwards of 160 watts per channel across the full audio range, *for virtually any length of time*, with less than 0.1 per cent harmonic distortion.

For this we can thank the FTC, those "bureaucrats" in Washington whose actions raised the average blood pressure of the audio industry by several points (mine included, I freely admit). Today, when you see an amplifier advertised as delivering "100 watts per channel from 20 to 20,000 Hz, into 8-ohm loads, with less than 0.1 per cent total harmonic distortion," you *know* it will do just that, without equivocation. It could not be advertised or sold if it did not. Our laboratory tests since the FTC ruling took effect have indicated 100 per cent compliance with the rule. In addition, the manufacturers' specifications are so conservatively written (to ensure that their amplifiers can meet them) that such equipment would in former times have been advertised as delivering as much as 10 to 20 per cent more power than at present. And we have been effectively freed from the power-rating hanky-panky so prevalent since hi-fi was a pup.

So hats off to the FTC! In all too many cases government regulation has resulted in reduced product performance and increased cost, but in this instance it appears that everyone has benefited.

Tested This Month

Garrard GT55 Automatic Turntable
Advent Model 300 FM Receiver
Pickering XSV/3000 Cartridge
Yamaha NS-5 Speaker System

Equipment Test Reports

By Hirsch-Houck Laboratories

Garrard GT55 Automatic Turntable

THE Model GT55 replaces the well established Zero 100 and its successors at the top of the Garrard automatic turntable line. It has the articulated "zero-tracking-error" tone arm originally developed for the Zero 100, but it is now constructed of magnesium alloy to reduce the arm mass to 14 grams (which Garrard claims is the lowest mass of any pivoted tone arm sold as part of an integrated record player).

The anti-skating compensation is applied, as before, by magnetic repulsion, using ta-

The 4-pound cast nonferrous platter is belt-driven by a d.c. servo-controlled motor operating at 1,000 rpm. The motor speed is electronically controlled and regulated, and the illuminated stroboscope markings under the platter can be viewed through a window on the motorboard while a record is being played. The rubber record mat has concentric rings of raised rubber "dots" that provide good support while contacting a minimum area of the recorded portion of a disc.

The Garrard GT55 can be used as a multi-

rate AUTO lever starts the playing cycle (in MAN the arm can be cued manually, of course).

The fourth lever is the CUE control, which raises the arm when moved to the rear and lowers it when moved to the front. The arm motion is well damped in both directions, and a small knob under the arm adjusts the rate of descent. At the left front of the motorboard is the speed selector (for 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ or 45 rpm) and a vernier adjustment with a nominal range of ± 3 per cent. Both controls operate electronically through the motor servo system.

The key specifications of the Garrard GT55 include a -66-dB (DIN "B") rumble level, 0.05 per cent wow and flutter, and a minimum tracking force of 0.75 gram. An optional mounting base and plastic dust cover are available, as well as a combination de luxe base and cover (BDC-8). Price: GT55, \$249.95; standard base, \$15.95; dust cover, \$9.95; de luxe combination, \$39.95.

● **Laboratory Measurements.** We tested the Garrard GT55 with a Pickering XSV/3000 cartridge installed in its arm. (At first we attempted to use a heavier-than-average cartridge [9 grams] but found that the counterweight could not be moved back far enough to balance it. The counterweight will balance any cartridge weighing up to 6 grams, however, which should be adequate for the majority of cartridges.) The calibration of the tracking-force scale was accurate to within 0.05 gram, and the force on the top record of a stack of six was only 0.1 gram lower than on the first.

For all practical purposes, the "zero-tracking-error" arm lived up to its name. At a 6-inch radius (actually slightly larger than the maximum playing radius of a 12-inch record) we measured an error of about 1 degree, or 0.16 degree per inch. This minuscule error was the *largest* we found over the record surface. Elsewhere, down to a 2-inch radius, the error was zero, or at least below our ability to detect and measure it.

The arm resonance with the XSV/3000 cartridge fell between 6 and 7 Hz, with an amplitude of 11 to 12 dB. The Pickering cartridge is probably more compliant than most, and it has a slightly higher mass due to its integral record brush as well, all of which makes it difficult to assess the contribution of Garrard's arm-mass reduction to the subsonic response of the player system. The arm and signal-cable capacitance to ground was 135 picofarads per channel and 63 picofarads between the "hot" leads of the two channels. The latter could adversely affect the *measured* (but not the audible) channel separation at the highest audio frequencies with some cartridges. However, the measured capacitance of the GT55 appears to be typical of most record players.

The turntable speed could be varied over a ± 3 per cent range at 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ rpm and from ± 5.7 (Continued on page 29)



pered magnets that reduce the anti-skating force as the arm moves inward (since its head offset angle decreases simultaneously, less skating force is created at smaller playing diameters). The ball-bearing arm pivots are said to have 30 milligrams of friction in the horizontal plane and 20 milligrams vertically, measured at the stylus.

An unusual feature of the Garrard GT55 tone arm is the location of its rear portion (consisting of the vertical pivot and the adjustable counterweight) below the axis of the forward portion of the arm. It is so placed to reduce warp wow, which is aggravated in many tone arms by the location of the vertical pivots too high above the disc-surface plane.

The tracking force is adjusted by rotating the counterweight after the arm has been balanced with a cartridge installed. The scale on the counterweight is calibrated from 0 to 3 grams at intervals of 0.25 gram. The anti-skating dial, which has separate scales for elliptical and CD-4 styli, is located next to the base of the arm.

ple-play unit (record changer) by inserting the long spindle provided into the center hole and loading a stack of up to six records of the same size and speed onto it. The edge of the record stack is supported by a post just outside the diameter of the turntable. For single-play operation a short center spindle (it rotates with the records) is used.

The basic operating controls are located at the right front of the motorboard. They consist of four levers. One of these sets the arm indexing diameter for 7-, 10-, or 12-inch records. For automatic operation, and whether a single disc or a stack is loaded on the spindle, the MODE lever is moved to the AUTO position. In this position the arm indexes to the selected diameter, play begins, and the unit shuts off after the last record has been played. Pushing this lever past AUTO to REPEAT causes any record on the turntable to be repeated indefinitely until the lever is released manually. For single-play operation the MODE lever can be set to MAN (manual), which starts the motor. In any mode of operation a sepa-

The Sensuous Speaker.

Yamaha's new two-way beryllium dome NS-500.

A very responsive speaker with a rich, luscious sound. A deeply involving sound. Highly defined, finely detailed.

The NS-500 is created from the same advanced beryllium technology that's made Yamaha's revolutionary NS-1000 Series speakers, in the eyes and ears of many audio experts, the highest standard of sound accuracy. (Specific benefits of Yamaha's beryllium technology have been documented in a paper presented to the 52rd Convention of the Audio Engineering Society.)

With the NS-500, you get all of beryllium's advantages (transparency, detail, and lack of distortion that go beyond the best electrostatic speakers), but at a price roughly half that of the NS-1000. Only \$500 the pair, suggested retail price.

The joy of beryllium.

The ideal dome material for a high frequency driver must respond instantly to changes in amplitude and frequency of the input signal. So the ideal dome material must be virtually weightless as well as extremely rigid.

Beryllium is the lightest and most rigid metal known. Its density is less than two-thirds that of commonly used aluminum, and its rigidity is almost four times as great—thus preventing dome deformation and consequent distortion. What's more, beryllium's sound propagation velocity is twice that of aluminum.

The beryllium dome found on the NS-500's high frequency driver is the world's lightest—about half the weight of one petal of a small sweetheart rose. Which is one of the reasons for this speaker's exceptional sensitivity and response. And for its sensuous sound.

A closer look.

To be able to offer the sophistication of beryllium at a more affordable price, without sacrificing quality of performance, Yamaha designed the NS-500 as a two-way bass reflex system.

This gives the NS-500 a trace more emotion at the low end than the resolutely objective NS-1000. But it also gives the NS-500 more efficiency (91dB SPL at one meter with one watt RMS input). Which means you don't have to invest in the highest powered amplifiers or receivers in order to drive the NS-500 to its full rated output.

For an optimum match with the beryllium tweeter, Yamaha developed a very light, very rigid "shell" woofer. And a special hermetically-sealed air core LC crossover with a carefully selected 1.8kHz crossover point.

As a result of these design parameters, the NS-500 boasts an insignificant 0.03% THD below 50 dB SPL, from 40 Hz to 20 kHz, making it the perfect complement

to Yamaha's state-of-the-art low distortion electronics.

Underneath the sleek monolithic styling of its solidly crafted enclosures, the NS-500 is full of many exclusive Yamaha features and distinctive Yamaha touches of craftsmanship.

But to fully appreciate the beauty of the NS-500, you really should visit your Yamaha Audio Specialty Dealer.

Which brings us to something else.

Something more than just another speaker pamphlet.

Yamaha's *Reference Handbook of Speaker Systems* is a very thorough guide encompassing all aspects of speaker design, performance, and evaluation. Starting with a detailed explanation of speaker design principles, the discussion then turns to a solid base of objective criteria, written in easily understood language, to help you properly evaluate any speaker in any listening environment. Already a much sought-after reference work among audio professionals, Yamaha's *Reference Handbook of Speaker Systems* is available at your Yamaha Audio Specialty Dealer.

At \$5.00 a copy, it's well worth the cost. However, if you clip out the coupon in the bottom corner of this page, take it to your Yamaha Audio Specialty Dealer and hear a demonstration of the exciting NS-500 or any other Yamaha speaker, the book is yours for half the price.

And if you're not familiar with the name of your local Yamaha Audio Specialty Dealer, drop us a line. In turn, we'll send you a free preprint of the Audio Engineering Society paper on Yamaha beryllium technology mentioned above.

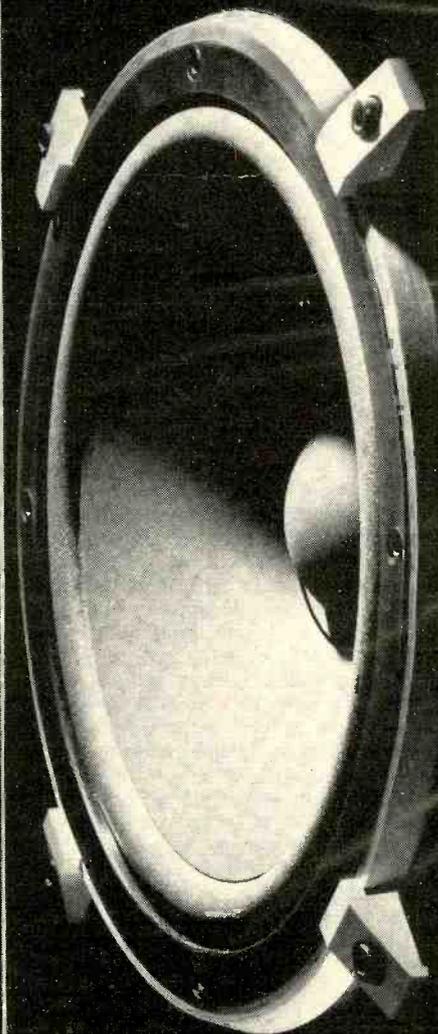
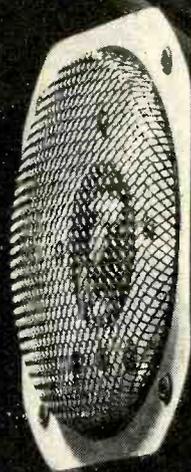


This coupon is worth \$2.50 off the \$5.00 suggested retail price of Yamaha's *Reference Handbook of Speaker Systems*, when presented to any participating Yamaha audio dealer, with a demonstration of any Yamaha speaker system.
Offer expires March 1, 1977. S



P. O. Box 6600, Buena Park, CA 90622

CIRCLE NO. 53 ON READER SERVICE CARD



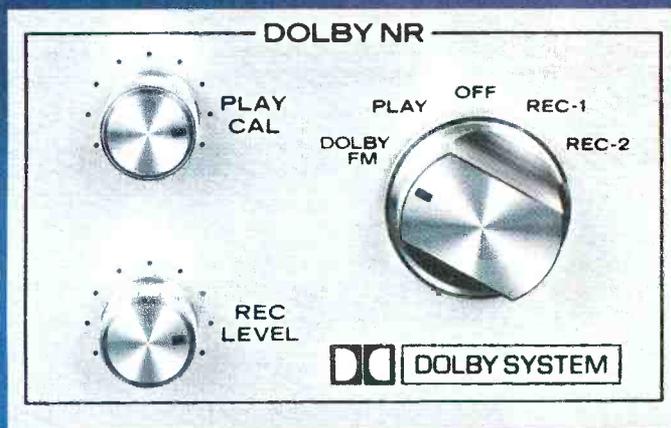
The New Sansui

A receiver is a many-splendored thing. It is not simply a combination of a tuner, preamplifier and amplifier. It is the skillful matching of all the right elements in the most effective and satisfying proportion, which can only be achieved by the teamwork of highly experienced electronics and acoustical engineers.

That's why only a leader like Sansui can consistently offer you the finest receiver available in each category today. Look at the features and the specifications on these pages and you will agree. And, if you haven't listened to a Sansui recently, do. Put yourself at the controls of a Sansui. You'll know what it is like to be in complete command of your musical destiny.

Take Sansui's new top-of-the-line 9090DB, with power and then some. It offers the convenience of a complete built-in Dolby* system to decode Dolby-FM broadcasts

and to add full noise-reduction facilities to any recorder that lacks them. Twin power meters permit instantaneous power monitoring, and convert at a button's touch to Dolby level indicators. Sansui's unique triple tone controls, with switch-selectable turnover frequencies, give you full control over both the ends of the audible spectrum and over the vital "presence" midrange as well. Truly one of the world's finest receivers.



Sansui. The

MODEL 9090DB. (on front page)

AUDIO SECTION

Power Output: 125 watts per channel, min. RMS, both channels driven into 8 ohms from 20Hz to 20kHz with no more than 0.1% Total Harmonic Distortion.

Phono 1, 2: 2.5 mV for full output. RIAA accuracy: ± 0.3 dB, 30Hz to 15kHz. Input impedance: 50k Ω .

Hum and Noise: better than 80 dB (Aux, Tape); better than 70 dB (Phono).

FM SECTION

IHF Sensitivity: 9.8 dBf (1.7 μ V)

Alternate Channel Selectivity: >85 dB

Signal to Noise Ratio: >70 dB

Stereo Separation: >40 dB

Freq. Resp.: 30Hz to 15kHz, +0.5dB, -2.0 dB

MODEL 9090

Two power meters

Triple tone controls with turnover selector

Separate tuning and signal-strength meters

7-position source/dubbing switch

Pre-main jacks

20 dB muting switch

3-system speaker selector

25 μ sec FM output for Colby* adaptor

MODEL 8080DB

Complete built-in Dolby* Noise Reduction

Two power/Dolby-level meters

Triple tone controls

Separate tuning and signal-strength meters

Pre-main jacks with additional preamp

2 phono inputs

20 dB muting switch

3-system speaker selector



The world's most

| SPECIFICATIONS | 9090 DB | 8080 DB | 9090 | 9070 | 6060 | 505C |
|--|---------------------|--------------------|---------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Power Output Min RMS per channel, both channels driven into 8 ohms at rated Total Harmonic Distortion. | 125 watts @0.1% THD | 85 watts @0.1% THD | 110 watts @0.2% THD | 60 watts @0.3% THD | 40 watts @0.4% THD | 30 watts @0.5% THD |
| FM Sensitivity | 9.8 cBf | 9.8 dBf | 9.8 dBf | 10.3 dBf | 10.8 dBf | 11.2 dBf |
| Dolby® Circuitry | Yes | Yes | No | No | No | No |
| Twin Power Meters | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | No |

9090 and 9070 DB, walnut veneer. All other cabinets simulated walnut grain.

*Trademark of Dolby Laboratories, Inc.



8080DB

SANSUI ELECTRONICS CORP.

Woodside, New York 11377 • Gardena, California 90247

SANSUI ELECTRIC CO., LTD., Tokyo, Japan • SANSUI AUDIO EUROPE S.A., Antwerp, Belgium • In Canada: Electronic Distributors

to -4 per cent at 45 rpm. It did not change with line-voltage variations. The flutter (wrms) was 0.09 per cent and occurred principally in the region of 6 Hz. Unweighted rumble was -34 dB, improving to -58 dB with ARLL weighting (note that the DIN "B" weighting curve used by Garrard to derive their ratings will usually give a "better" figure than an ARLL weighted measurement). Surprisingly, in view of the motor's relatively high speed of 1,000 rpm, the rumble was principally in the vicinity of 5 Hz (perhaps because of the proximity to the tone-arm's resonance frequency).

The operation of the Garrard GT55 was smooth and silent. The starting cycle, for a single record or the first of a stack, required about 14 seconds; the change cycle in multiple-play operation took about 12 seconds, which is an average figure for record changers. The cueing system, like that of the origi-

nal Zero 100, was totally free of lateral drift, and ranks in our view as one of the most precise available. The variable cueing descent-rate adjustment, although there is nothing in its markings to suggest that more than a single turn (or less) is required to cover its full range, turns through 5½ complete revolutions (the manual makes this clear). Minimum cueing time was about 4 seconds.

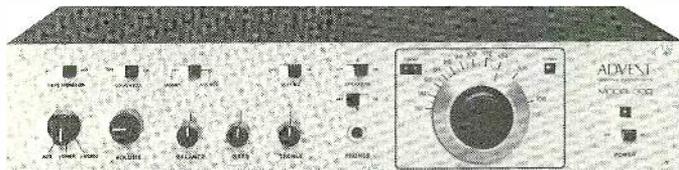
The isolation against externally conducted vibration through the de luxe BDC-8 base and cover combination was about average for automatic turntables. However, entirely removing the plastic dust cover reduced the GT55's susceptibility to vibration-induced feedback appreciably.

● **Comment.** We noted some areas of subjective reaction to the GT55 worth mentioning. In contrast to the wide flat levers of its predecessors, the slender, rod-like control levers

seemed less convenient to operate, and care was necessary—as it is with a number of competitive players—to avoid jarring the unit when operating some of the controls. Also, the styling of the unit did not, to our eyes, properly convey the image of the top-quality player the GT-55 is. However, everything worked perfectly, and with impressive silence and smoothness. Even the anti-skating calibration (which on many players bears little resemblance to the actual compensation required for equally effective tracking of both stereo channels) was accurate by our tests, as we had found it to be some years ago on the Zero 100. Rumble and flutter of the GT55 were consistent with what we would expect from a top-of-the-line automatic record player. In other words, the turntable does just what Garrard claims it will, and it does it very well.

Circle 105 on reader service card

Advent Model 300 Stereo FM Receiver



IN the face of a trend toward stereo receivers whose power ratings, size, and weight rival those of many "super power" amplifiers and whose control panels combine the features of a recording console and the flight engineer's desk on a 747, Advent Corporation has chosen to develop a very basic, high-quality receiver—literally a "no frills" product. The Advent Model 300 is a low-power stereo FM receiver rated to deliver 15 watts per channel to 8-ohm loads with both channels driven, from 40 to 20,000 Hz, with less than 0.5 per cent total harmonic distortion.

The 300 is easily the most compact stereo receiver we have seen. In its black semi-gloss metal cabinet, it is approximately 16 inches wide, 9 inches deep, and 3½ inches high, and it weighs a mere 11 pounds. The tuning dial is a round, silver-finish plate with a concentric black knob that operates a smooth vernier reduction mechanism (similar to the dial used on Advent's Model 400 monophonic FM radio). The dial is framed in a white rectangle together with a red LED STEREO light and two closely spaced LED's that serve as a tuning indicator. As the receiver is tuned through a station, one light comes on brightly and dims as the other begins to glow. When the two are of equal brightness, the receiver is tuned to the exact center of the channel. There is a fourth LED pilot light next to the power slide switch.

Across the lower portion of the front panel are the input selector knob (AUX, TUNER, and PHONO) and the volume-control knob, followed by three smaller knobs for channel

BALANCE and the BASS and TREBLE tone-control functions. The knobs are black with white index lines that make their settings clearly visible even at a distance.

Above the knobs are slide switches for the TAPE MONITOR, LOUDNESS, MONO/STEREO, and FM MUTING functions. Two switches separately activate the two pairs of speaker outputs, and there is a headphone jack on the panel. In the rear of the receiver are jacks for the various inputs and outputs, plus two pairs of jacks, normally joined by removable jumper links, that carry the preamplifier outputs and power-amplifier inputs. Insulated binding posts are used for the speaker outputs and the 300-ohm antenna inputs. A covered phono jack supplies +18 volts to power an accessory such as the Advent MPR-1 microphone preamplifier. Circuit protection is supplied by an a.c. circuit breaker whose red reset button protrudes from the rear of the receiver.

Advent's philosophy holds that a high-quality FM tuner and phono preamplifier need not cost more than a run-of-the-mill design. The major reason for the high cost of many receivers is the heavy-duty power supply and output transistors that go with their admittedly impressive power capabilities. The Advent's actual sensitivity (ability to receive weak stations without excessive noise and distortion) is as high as will ever be needed by the majority of users. The phono preamplifier was designed to be immune to interaction with phono-cartridge inductance, which affects the high-frequency response of many preamplifiers, and to have an effectively negligible noise

level (inaudible under conditions of practical use). In addition, the frequency response outside the audio range—particularly below 20 Hz, where turntable rumble and record warps can produce subsonic overload and muddy the sound—has been sharply attenuated. Advent's high-pass filter, which affects the response by less than 1 dB at frequencies of 20 Hz and above, cuts the output at 4 Hz (the area where warp effects are at their worst) by more than 30 dB.

As for the power output of the Model 300, Advent points out that it can deliver an adequate sound level with speakers of normal efficiency (such as their own) in typical home environments without a sense of strain or audible distortion. The preamplifier output and main amplifier input connections make it a simple matter to use an external power amplifier, retaining the virtues of the receiver's tuner and phono preamplifier. In a four-channel installation, the 300's own amplifier will usually be more than sufficient for the back channels.

The Advent Model 300 is also available as the Model 300/12 for operation from a 12-volt battery in cars, boats, trailers, and the like. An a.c.-operated Model 300 can be converted by Advent for 12-volt operation, though it will then no longer be usable on a.c. without a 5-amp d.c. adapter. Full power and performance of the receiver are available when operating from a 12-volt source. Price: \$259.95.

● **Laboratory Measurements.** After one hour of preconditioning at one-third power output, the cabinet of the receiver was about as warm as it becomes in normal operation. The 1,000-Hz output at the clipping point was 18 watts into 8 ohms, 18.5 watts into 4 ohms, and 11.7 watts into 16 ohms.

The 1,000-Hz total harmonic distortion (THD) with both channels driven into 8-ohm loads was under our measurement limit of 0.003 per cent up to 1 watt output and rose to

(Continued on page 36)

Model 9090 DB



receivers.

5050



5060

music.

distinguished r

MODEL 7070

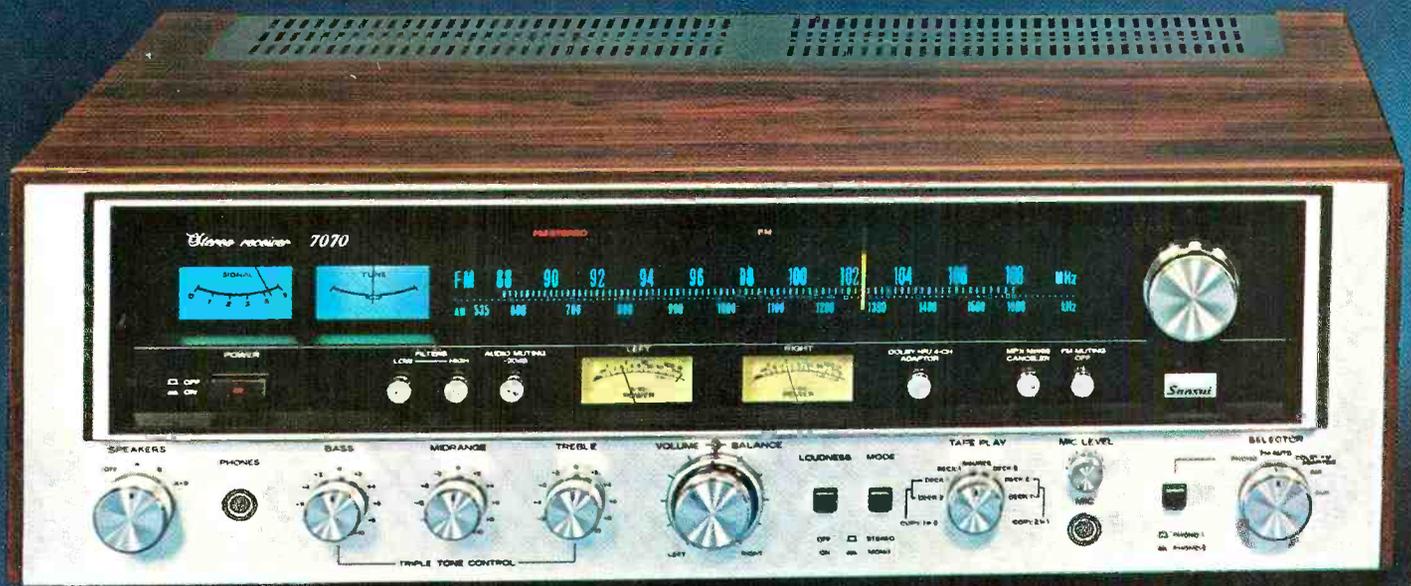
Twin power meters
Triple tone controls
Separate tuning and signal-strength meters
7-position source/dubbing switch
2 phono inputs
20 dB muting switch
25 μ sec. FM output for Dolby[®] adaptor
Mic mixing input with level control

MODEL 5050

Separate tuning and signal-strength meters
25 μ sec. FM output for Dolby[®] adaptor
Mic mixing input with level control
2-system speaker selector
Pushbutton high filter
Mode and loudness switches

MODEL 6060

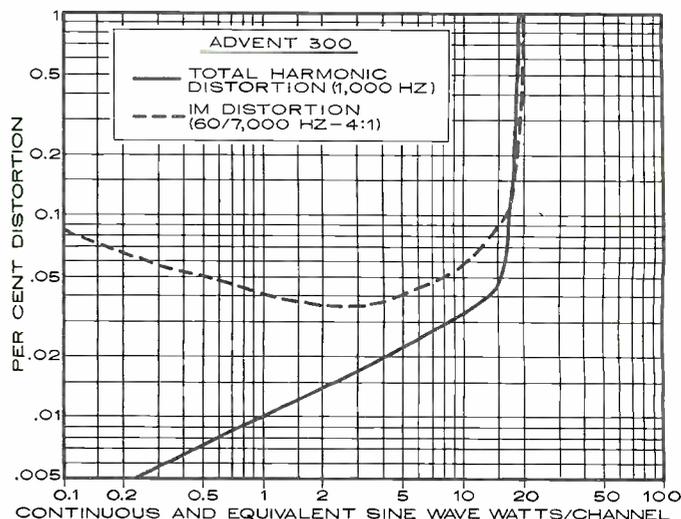
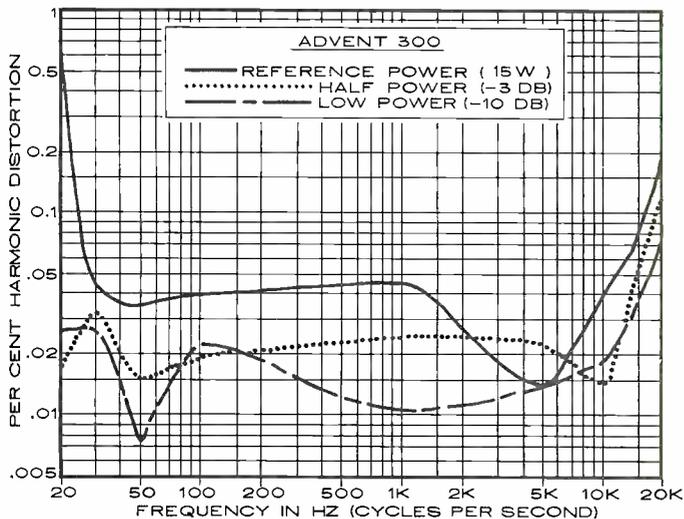
Separate tuning and signal-strength meters
25 μ sec. FM output for Dolby[®] adaptor
Mic mixing input with level control
2-system speaker selector
Pushbutton high/low filters
Mode and loudness switches



7070

Sansui

A whole new world of beautiful r



0.045 per cent at the rated 15 watts. The intermodulation distortion (IM) was less than 0.05 per cent from 0.5 to 8 watts output, rising to 0.09 per cent at 15 watts. It also rose somewhat at lower power levels, reaching 0.085 per cent at 0.1 watt (this reflects the residual noise contributed by the tone-control section, since the power amplifier alone has substantially lower IM at very small outputs).

At the rated power output, the THD was between 0.04 and 0.05 per cent from below 30 to above 1,000 Hz, falling to 0.015 per cent at 5,000 Hz and rising to 0.18 per cent at 20,000 Hz. Although Advent's full-power ratings for the Model 300 do not extend below 40 Hz, we measured its distortion at 0.67 per cent at 20 Hz. At half power and lower levels, the THD was lower still, typically between 0.01 and 0.03 per cent from 20 to 1,000 Hz and about 0.1 per cent at 20,000 Hz.

The RIAA phono equalization was as flat as our measuring equipment (± 0.25 dB) from 50 to 15,000 Hz, and very nearly as good over an extended measurement range of 20 to 20,000 Hz (the low-frequency filter caused a slight rise of about 1 dB at 25 Hz). Measured through the inductance of typical phono cartridges, the phono response changed by no more than 0.5 dB up to 20,000 Hz.

The tone controls had conventional characteristics, with the bass-turnover frequency shifting between approximately 200 and 800 Hz as the control was varied and the treble response hinging at about 2,500 Hz. The maximum control range of about ± 10 dB is more than adequate and helps avoid the risk of exceeding the amplifier's power capabilities. The loudness contours showed a moderate low-frequency boost and a smaller high-frequency boost as the volume-control setting was reduced.

To drive the Model 300 to a reference output of 10 watts, a 0.07-volt signal was required at the AUX input and 1.5 millivolts at the PHONO input. The respective unweighted S/N figures were 72 and 70 dB. The phono preamplifier overloaded at 110 millivolts, a perfectly safe level for any magnetic cartridge of reasonably good quality.

The FM tuner had an IHF sensitivity of 14 dBf (2.7 microvolts, or μV) in mono. In stereo, the IHF sensitivity was 19 dBf (5 μV). More important than this figure is the 50-dB quieting sensitivity, which was 16 dBf (3.5 μV) in mono with 0.9 per cent THD, and 38.5 dBf (46.3 μV) in stereo with 0.5 per cent

THD. The ultimate quieting, at 65 dBf (1,000 μV) input, was 70 dB in mono and 65 dB in stereo, with respective distortion levels of 0.21 and 0.24 per cent. The stereo distortion with out-of-phase (L-R) modulation of the two channels was 0.45 per cent at 100 Hz, 0.21 per cent at 1,000 Hz, and 0.2 per cent at 6,000 Hz.

The FM frequency response was flat within ± 0.6 dB from 30 to 15,000 Hz. The stereo channel separation was more than 50 dB at 1,000 Hz, 30 and 27 dB at 30 and 10,000 Hz, and still a very good 24 dB at 15,000 Hz. The low-pass filter in the tuner output reduced the 19-kHz pilot carrier leakage in the audio output to a good -67 dB without impairing the high-frequency response of the FM section.

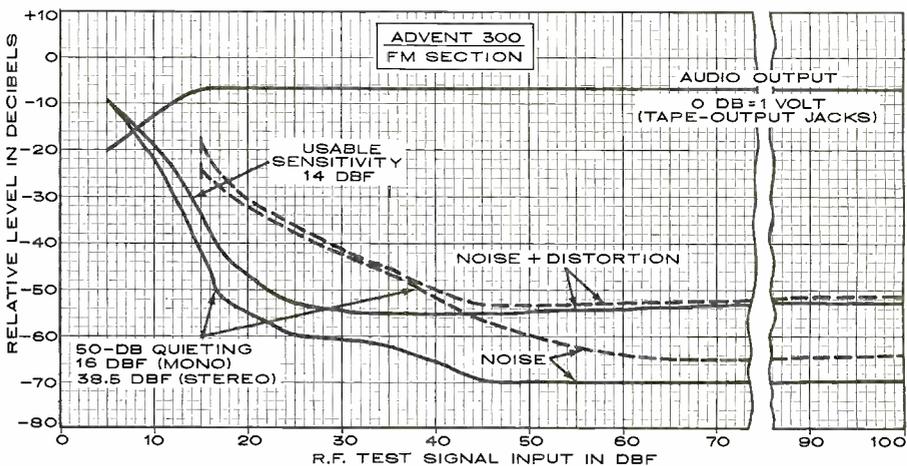
The capture ratio of the tuner at 45 dBf (100 μV) was 1.5 dB with 60 dB of AM rejection. At a higher input of 65 dBf, the capture ratio was nearly the same (1.6 dB), and the AM rejection improved to an excellent 70 dB. The image rejection at 98 MHz was 60 dB, and the alternate-channel selectivity was also excellent at 83 dB. Adjacent-channel selectivity, always much less than the alternate-channel measurement, was 5.5 dB. The muting threshold was set at 24 dBf (9 μV) and the automatic stereo threshold was at 15 dBf (3 μV). The twin-LED tuning indicator was very accurate, providing minimum distortion when the two intensities matched. However, this called for some critical judgment by the user, as compared with the relatively simple task of centering a meter pointer.

Comment. Probably one of the factors contributing to our enthusiasm for the Advent Model 300 was its nearly flawless execution of the "no-frills" concept. We have always admired value engineering of the sort associated with products from Advent and a few other companies, in which a maximum of consumer-benefiting performance and features are provided for a minimum cost. It is relatively easy to make a "super" product if price is no obstacle, but it requires some ingenuity to achieve a high level of performance at a relatively low cost. This is exactly what Advent has done in the Model 300.

An economical approach to product design does have its negative aspects, too. For example, the tuning-dial scale, though quite accurate, is cramped over much of its range and widely spread out at the high-frequency end. Many times we had to guess which station was tuned in since 1 megahertz stations about $\frac{1}{8}$ inch at most points on the dial scale.

The LED tuning indicator, as we have stated, was very accurate. As a matter of fact, it was more precise in its function than most of the meters we have seen on tuners and receivers, as well as being much smaller and probably less expensive. On the other hand, it requires more care than we suspect many users will give it in order to realize the full tuning accuracy of the receiver. Fortunately, a moderate amount of mistuning is not noticeable in use, and we assume that if anyone hears distortion or noise because of mistuning, he will

(Continued on page 38)



Introducing an evolutionary idea. The New Empire 698 Turntable

Great ideas never change radically.

Instead, they are constantly being refined to become more relevant with time.

So it has been with Empire turntables. Our latest model, 698, is no exception. Basically, it's still the uncomplicated, belt-driven turntable we've been making for 15 years. A classic.

What we're introducing is improved performance.

The lower mass tone arm, electronic cueing, quieting circuitry and automatic arm lift are all very new.

The rest is history.

The Tonearm

The new 698 arm moves effortlessly on 32 jeweled, sapphire bearings. Vertical and horizontal bearing friction is a mere 0.001 gram, 4 times less than it would be on conventional steel bearings. It is impervious to drag. Only the calibrated anti-skating and tracking force you select control its movement.

The new aluminum tubular arm, dramatically reduced in mass, responds instantly to the slightest variation of a record's movement. Even the abrupt changes of a warped disc are quickly absorbed.

The Motor

A self-cooling, hysteresis synchronous motor drives the platter with

enough torque to reach full speed in one third of a revolution. It contributes to the almost immeasurable 0.04% average wow and flutter value in our specifications. More important, it's built to last.

The Drive Belt

Every turntable is approved only when zero error is achieved in its speed accuracy. To prevent any variations of speed we grind each belt to within one ten thousandth of an inch thickness.

The Platter

Every two piece, 7 lb., 3 inch thick, die cast aluminum platter is dynamically balanced. Once in motion, it acts as a massive flywheel to assure specified wow and flutter value even with the voltage varied from 105 to 127 volts AC.

The Main Bearing

The stainless steel shaft extending from the platter is aged, by alternate exposures to extreme high and low temperatures preventing it from ever warping. The tip is

then precision ground and polished before lapping it into two oilite, self-lubricating bearings, reducing friction and reducing rumble to one of the lowest figures ever measured in a professional turntable; -68 dB CBS ARLL.

The Controls

Electronic cueing has been added to the 698 to raise and lower the tone arm at your slightest touch. Simple plug-in integrated circuitry raises the tone arm automatically when power is turned off.

A see-through anti skating adjustment provides the necessary force for the horizontal plane. It is micrometer calibrated to eliminate channel imbalance and unnecessary record wear.

Stylus force is dialed using a see-through calibrated clock mainspring more accurate than any commercially available stylus pressure gauge.

A new silicon photocell sensor has been added to automatically lift the arm at the end of a record.

New quieting circuitry has also been added. Now, even with the amplifier volume turned up, you can switch the 698 on or off without a "pop" sound to blow out your woofers.

At Empire we make only one model turntable, the 698. With proper maintenance and care the chances are very good it will be the only one you'll ever need.

EMPIRE



The Empire 698 Turntable

Suggested retail price \$400.00

For more information write:
EMPIRE SCIENTIFIC CORP.
Garden City, New York, 11530.

correct it on the spot. We also noted a slight warm-up drift, lasting a few minutes, in our sample. Although this drift was sufficient to extinguish one of the tuning lights, it was of questionable significance because it could not be heard as an increase of noise or distortion. In any case, if the tuning is set correctly after about 5 minutes of operation, it will remain as set indefinitely.

The Model 300 lacks such refinements as time delays in the turn-on and turn-off cycles to prevent speaker thumps. Of course, with a powerful amplifier these are vital for the preservation of one's speakers. With the Model 300, the "thump" is audible but hardly disturbing, let alone dangerous. The FM muting is good, with enough time lag to permit a quick scan across the band in total silence. There is only a trace of a noise burst when

tuning slowly through a signal, as would normally be done.

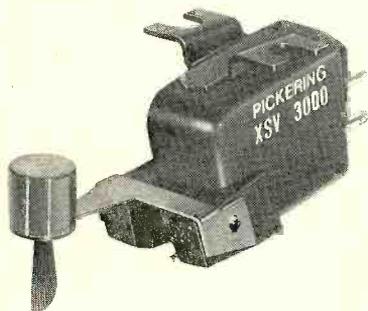
All of which brings us to the question of how a 15-watt receiver sounds in this day of 100- to 200-watt amplifiers and receivers. In a word, great! Critical A-B tests in FM reception between the Advent Model 300 and a receiver with more than ten times its power and three times its price revealed absolutely no audible difference between the two at any listening level within the sound output-level capability of the Model 300 (of course, the other receiver could play much louder). Even that limit is surprisingly loud, despite our use of fairly inefficient acoustic-suspension speakers. Obviously, this is not a receiver one would choose to play music at rock-concert-hall levels, but at somewhat lower volumes it does as good a job as anything we have heard.

The phono preamplifier sounded first-rate, and as a demonstration of its low noise level, at maximum gain only a faint hiss could be heard within a foot or so of the speakers.

We find it refreshing that this caliber of sound, combined with reasonable control flexibility, has been designed into a really small, light package, one whose installation does not call for the services of an Olympic weight lifter or specially reinforced furniture. Although one can buy less expensive receivers, some of which may have a few more watts or a couple of extra features, it is a safe bet that they will be two or three times the size (and weight) of the Advent Model 300, far more formidable for the uninitiated to operate, and will sound no better—probably not as good.

Circle 106 on reader service card

Pickering XSV/3000 Phono Cartridge



DURING the development of the fine XUV-4500Q stereo/CD-4 cartridge, Pickering evolved several new techniques, including a high-efficiency magnetic system and a new stylus shape, that were instrumental in enabling them to achieve their design goals. As often happens with technological advances, they are initially costly, but in time they can be adapted to lower-cost products with an overall uplifting of performance standards.

This was the background for the creation of the new XSV/3000, which heads the rather comprehensive line of stereo cartridges bearing the Pickering name. The internal magnetic structure of the XSV/3000 is quite similar to that of the XUV-4500Q, and externally the two are identical. Much of the credit for the performance of the XUV-4500Q went to its "Quadrangular" stylus (Pickering's proprietary equivalent to the Shibata-shape stylus, which is able to trace very high frequencies while distributing the vertical tracking force over a wide area of the groove wall to minimize record wear). This stylus was also responsible for much of the high cost of the XUV-4500Q.

The XSV/3000 was intended to bring the same order of performance to the playing of stereo (and matrixed quadraphonic) discs at a considerably lower price. To that end, the contours of the Quadrangular stylus were modified and made less extreme since opera-

tion above 20,000 Hz was not required. In the process, the general contour of the stylus' contact with the groove wall was maintained to preserve some of the benefits of a long contact stylus. The new stylus is called the "Stereo-hedron" in recognition of its kinship to the Quadrangular.

The Pickering XSV/3000 is designed to track at forces between 0.75 and 1.5 grams and to have a nominal output of 5 millivolts at a velocity of 5.5 centimeters per second (cm/sec). The replaceable stylus, like those of other Pickering cartridges, has a hinged "Dust-omatic" brush that rides on the record to pick up surface dust. Accessory styli are available for playing mono LP and 78-rpm records. Price: \$99.95.

• **Laboratory Measurements.** In a typical tone arm of good quality, the Pickering XSV/3000 tracked our high-level test records easily at its minimum rated force of 0.75 gram, including the maximum level (100 microns) of the German Hi Fi Institute test record. In fact, the 30-cm/sec, 1,000-Hz tones of the Fairchild 101 record were reproduced as a clean sine wave (a very unusual occurrence in itself) at only 0.5 gram! We used 0.75 gram during our other tests.

With a cartridge load of 47,000 ohms in parallel with 200 picofarads (the nominal rated load capacitance is 275 picofarads), the frequency response rose slightly starting at 7,000

Hz to a maximum of about +3 dB at 20,000 Hz. Overall, it was well within ± 2 dB from 40 to 20,000 Hz, the full range of the CBS STR 100 test record. The channel separation measured 20 to 30 dB up to about 15,000 Hz and remained an excellent 10 to 15 dB at 20,000 Hz. The response changed by less than 1 dB at any frequency when we increased the capacitive load from 200 to 435 picofarads.

The cartridge output, which was identical on both channels, measured 3.45 millivolts at a velocity of 3.54 cm/sec. The 1,000-Hz square-wave response showed a single 50 percent overshoot with ringing at a very low level. The low-frequency resonance in the test tone arm was at 5 Hz, a rather low figure. Since we have no reason to believe that the tone-arm mass was unusually high, it is clear that the stylus compliance of the XSV/3000 is very high and that it should be used in a very low-mass arm if at all possible (although we experienced no tracking difficulties, even with moderately warped records).

The intermodulation distortion, using the TTR-102 test record, was a constant 1.5 percent up to about 24 cm/sec, and the maximum velocity of 27 cm/sec was tracked with only 3 percent IM distortion. The repetition-rate distortion using the 10.8-kHz tone bursts of the TTR-103 test record was typical of many fine cartridges, increasing from 0.7 to 1.8 percent as the velocity increased from 15 to 30 cm/sec.

In a subjective tracking test using the TTR-110 "Audio Obstacle Course-Era III" record, the XSV/3000 showed a slight "sandpaper" quality at the highest level of the sibilance test, but otherwise it did a perfect job of tracking these very high-level passages.

• **Comment.** Judged by its measured performance, the Pickering XSV/3000 clearly belongs at or near the top of the most select group of contemporary phono cartridges. It will track higher velocities at lower forces than any other cartridge we have tested.

In the final analysis, the appraisal of a car-

(Continued on page 40)

Credentials Like These Are Worth Reading



When you're buying speakers, you want to talk specs. And we don't blame you. In fact, we encourage it. Because when you invest your good money in a pair of speakers, you want more than just a pretty cabinet.

Consider the new Jensen Spectrums. These good sounds didn't just happen. They're the result of extensive engineering efforts and exhaustive testing. Testing that ranged from exacting measurements in laboratory "live" rooms and anechoic chambers to in-depth consumer surveys.

Examine our Spectrum Model 540. It's an excellent example of the superb specs you'll find throughout the Jensen Spectrum Series.

The Spectrum 540 is a 3-way, 4 element system that is so efficient it can be driven with as little as 10 watts continuous power. Its maximum power rating is 75 watts continuous.

The woofer is a 12" long-throw, high compliance design. Special acoustic suspension and infinite baffle enclosure give you extremely low distortion. And a high temperature voice coil affords high power handling. Magnet structure weight is a hefty 4½ lbs. with a Gap Flux Density of 10,000 Gauss.

Two 3½" cone midranges give excellent power handling and eliminate break-up in the critical midrange region. Tuned isolation chambers control response at the low end of the midrange spectrum. They also provide acoustical isolation in the cabinet between the midranges and the woofer. An edge damped rim suspension with specially treated molded cone offers sharp, clear, midrange reproduction.

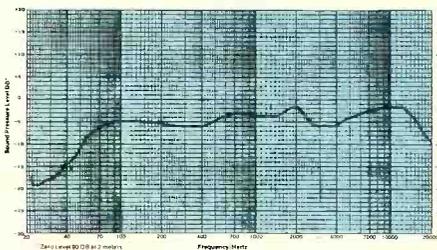
A 1½" Mylar® rear damped hemispherical dome tweeter offers a disper-

sion of 170°. Its large, lightweight voice coil gives high power handling, yet maintains a low mass for good high frequency reproduction.



Tweeter and midrange controls allow you to adjust your Spectrum System to room conditions and listening preferences; controls are front mounted for convenience, continuously variable, calibrated in db attenuation from a maximum, or flat, response.

FREQUENCY RESPONSE



About as flat as you can get... and that's good. The Frequency Response Range is an admirable 25 to 25,000 Hz.

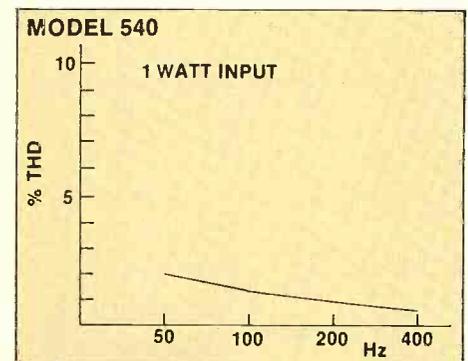
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"Blurring" and "Overshoot" are reduced to a minimum in this acid test of transient response. The Spectrum 540 re-

produces each waveform accurately with low distortion.

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Distortion is kept to a minimum in Jensen Spectrum Speaker systems.

The cabinet is built with solid walnut front moldings and walnut veneer on wood composition panels. All walnut surfaces are hand rubbed for a rich luster and beauty. The baffle is finished in an attractive, durable black pebble grain.

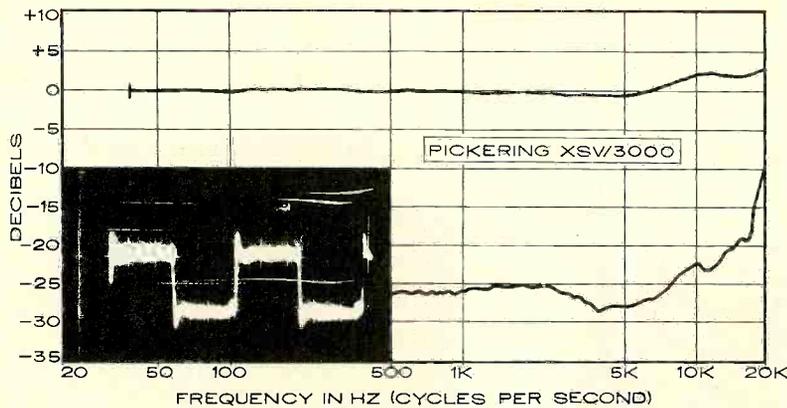
In short, Jensen Spectrum speakers aren't designed to put out the most amount of bass or the most amount of treble. They're designed to put out the right amount. We consider them to be the best speakers we've produced in 50 years. Simply because when it comes to sound reproduction, they're extraordinarily accurate. And that's what specs are all about.

For further information and name of your nearest authorized Spectrum Dealer, write to: Jensen Sound Laboratories, Dept. SR-27 4136 United Parkway, Schiller Park, Illinois 60176.

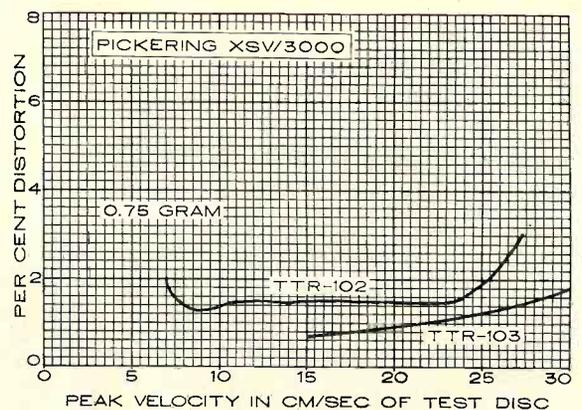
JENSEN

SOUND LABORATORIES

Division of Pemcor, Inc. Schiller Park, Illinois 60176



In the graph at left, the upper curve represents the smoothed, averaged frequency response of the cartridge's right and left channels; the distance (calibrated in decibels) between it and the lower curve represents the separation between the two channels. The inset oscilloscope photo shows the cartridge's response to a recorded 1,000-Hz square wave, which gives an indication of resonances and overall frequency response. At right is the cartridge's response to the intermodulation-distortion (IM) and 10.8-kHz tone-burst test bands of the TTR-102 and



TTR-103 test records. These high velocities provide a severe test of a phono cartridge's performance. The intermodulation-distortion (IM) readings for any given cartridge can vary widely, depending on the particular IM test record used. The actual distortion figure measured is not as important as the maximum velocity the cartridge is able to track before a sudden and radical increase in distortion takes place. There are very few commercial phonograph discs that embody musical audio signals with recorded velocities much higher than about 15 cm/sec.

tridge must come down to a matter of sound quality. To our ears, the XSV/3000 is one of the "sweetest," smoothest-sounding cartridges we have had the pleasure of using. If ever a cartridge merited the adjective "un-

strained," this one does. After our tests revealed its extraordinary high-level tracking ability, we also listened closely for signs of distress when playing difficult records. We heard none. Unless there are some subtle

characteristics of the XSV/3000 that you don't care for, or some in another cartridge that you prefer (tastes differ), we don't see how you can do better at any price.

Circle 107 on reader service card

Yamaha NS-5 Speaker System



THE larger Yamaha speaker systems employ advanced technology, such as beryllium domes, to achieve their high performance goals. Unfortunately, their prices are correspondingly high. In the new NS-5 speaker, Yamaha has attempted to capture the essential qualities of their finest speakers in a unit with a much lower price.

The NS-5, which is manufactured in the United States to Yamaha's specifications, is a compact, two-way acoustic-suspension system whose dimensions of 20¾ inches x 11¾ inches x 11¾ inches deep and net weight of 25 pounds make it a true bookshelf speaker. It

has a 10-inch, long-throw woofer with a 1.5-inch diameter, a four-layer voice coil, a neoprene edge surround, and a 12-ounce ceramic magnet. There is a crossover at 1,500 Hz to a 1-inch tweeter with resin-impregnated soft cloth dome. The crossover network attenuates the tweeter response at a 12-dB-per-octave rate and the woofer response at a 6-dB-per-octave rate.

One of the major goals in the design of the NS-5 was high efficiency, so that the speaker could be used satisfactorily with amplifiers rated as low as 10 watts per channel. Its nominal maximum power is 50 watts, but, as Ya-

maha points out, it can be used with more powerful amplifiers if care is taken to avoid exposing the speaker to high-level transients.

The enclosure, including the speaker board, is finished in walnut-grain vinyl. A black cloth grille normally covers the entire front of the speaker, but it can easily be removed if the room decor is more compatible with a walnut-grain finish. Four flush-mounted plastic receptacles grasp the mating projections on the grille frame and present a finished appearance when the grille is removed.

Both the woofer and tweeter of the NS-5 are mounted flush with the front surface of the cabinet to minimize edge diffraction effects. The level balance between the drivers is set at the factory, and there are no external adjustments. The binding-post terminals are recessed into the rear of the cabinet. Price: \$100.

● **Laboratory Measurements.** The reverberant-field frequency response of the Yamaha NS-5 was notably smooth and free of contour irregularities. The close-miked bass response, almost perfectly flat from 200 to 700 Hz, rose at lower frequencies to a maximum of +5 dB at 50 Hz and fell at a 12-dB-per-octave rate below that frequency. Joining the two curves, we obtained an overall frequency-response curve varying only ± 3 dB from 32 to 15,000 Hz (most of the variation was in the low bass; the response was within ± 2 dB from 75 to 15,000 Hz). (Continued on page 42)

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Warning: The Surgeon General Has Determined That Cigarette Smoking Is Dangerous to Your Health.

Yamaha NS-5 Speaker System . . .

(Continued from page 40)

Yamaha has a distortion specification of 1 per cent or less at all frequencies above 100 Hz with a 3-watt input. Our distortion tests normally cover the range from 100 Hz down, but the distortion at 100 Hz was only 0.6 per cent at 10 watts and 0.22 per cent at 1 watt, tending to confirm Yamaha's rating. At a 1-watt drive level, the distortion reached 1 per cent at 60 Hz, rising to 8 per cent at 30 Hz. At 10 watts input (based on the nominal 8-ohm system impedance) the distortion reached 6 per cent at 50 Hz and 13.5 per cent at 40 Hz. When we drove the speaker to produce a constant sound-pressure level (SPL) of 90 dB at a distance of 1 meter, the distortion level was between the 1- and 10-watt curves down to 50 Hz, but it rose somewhat more steeply at lower frequencies.

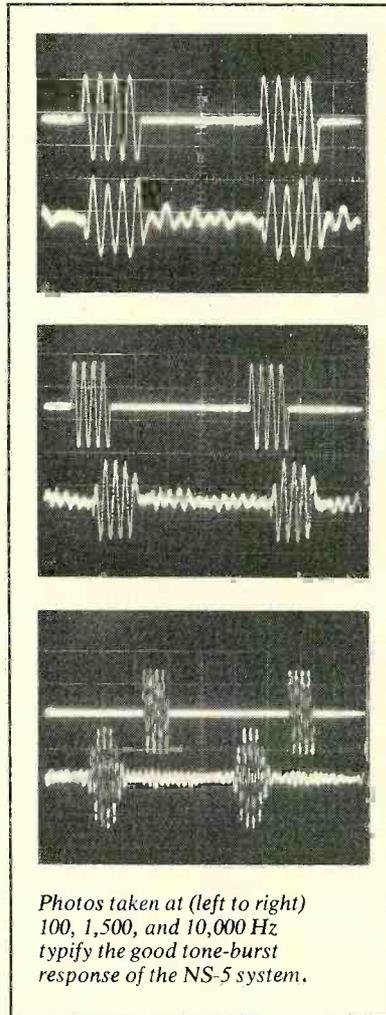
The efficiency of the Yamaha NS-5 was, as claimed, quite high for an acoustic-suspension system. Driving the system with 1 watt of random noise in the octave centered at 1,000 Hz, the SPL at a distance of 1 meter was 92 dB. This is about 3 to 4 dB higher than the output of most acoustic-suspension systems. The impedance of the NS-5 reached its minimum of 5 ohms at 100 and 5,000 Hz and its maximum of 18 ohms at 56 Hz. Over most of the audio range, the impedance was between 5 and 9 ohms.

The tone-burst response was good at all frequencies. Yamaha claims that the characteristics of the drivers and crossover network have been carefully matched to eliminate any response anomalies in the crossover region. There was nothing in our frequency-response measurements to suggest any deleterious effects of a crossover at any frequency, so we carefully explored the 1,000- to 2,000-Hz band with the tone-burst signals (which can often show up any phase or amplitude mismatch between the drivers). We found no evidence of such effects; the 1,500-Hz tone burst photo is typical of the response in that band. Dispersion—as implied by our other test results—was fine.

● **Comment.** Insofar as our measurements can predict sound quality, we would expect the Yamaha NS-5 to have a very neutral, uncolored sound. It came as no great surprise, therefore, to find that this would be an accurate description. From the first, we could hear that it was "all there," without any significant emphasis or lack in any part of the spectrum. This was further confirmed in the simulated "live-vs.-recorded" listening test, in which the NS-5 was able to imitate the live source with high accuracy, especially in the middle and high-frequency ranges. The test does not operate reliably at low frequencies, and we often hear slight colorations in the lower middles that we suspect can be attributed to interactions between the speaker and the room. This is essentially what we found with the NS-5: a trace of warmth in the lower middles, but elsewhere a highly accurate rendition of the "original" sound in an A-B comparison.

It seemed to us that the NS-5 should easily hold its own in a comparison with any of the

several very fine speakers in its price range. Since we did not have any of them on hand, we limited our direct speaker comparisons to several much more expensive units priced between \$150 and \$450. Except possibly in the low bass (and it is by no means lacking in that range, either), the NS-5 generally sounded as good to us as most of the others, and in some respects it seemed to outperform a couple of them. Since we had several speaker systems stacked on top of each other, we noted with interest that it was usually impossible to tell which one of the several fine systems was playing without standing very close to the



Photos taken at (left to right)
100, 1,500, and 10,000 Hz
typify the good tone-burst
response of the NS-5 system.

group. When differences are that slight, we do not consider them to be very significant.

The high efficiency of the NS-5 was evident from the beginning. We drove it from a 15-watt receiver without difficulty, as well as from a 160-watt-per-channel receiver. Although the latter might seem like a risky pairing, we found that the NS-5 delivered such a high volume of undistorted sound with little power input that one would be most unlikely to overdrive it unwittingly in normal listening (watch out for those transients, though!).

Our conclusion is that Yamaha has hit its design target squarely. The NS-5 is a practical, handsomely finished, moderately priced speaker whose sound quality completely belies its modest proportions and price tag.

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We at Altec/Lansing are very proud of our newest and best speaker system, MODEL 19.

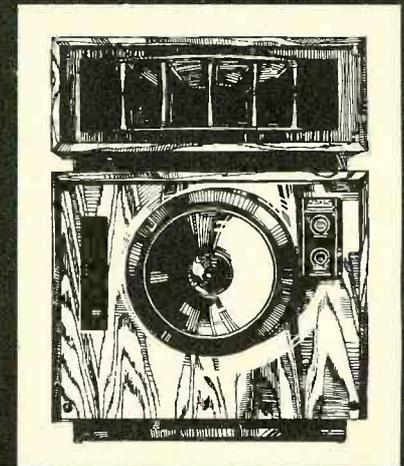
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MODEL 19 is available in oiled oak with removable brown knit grilles or oiled walnut with black knit grilles.

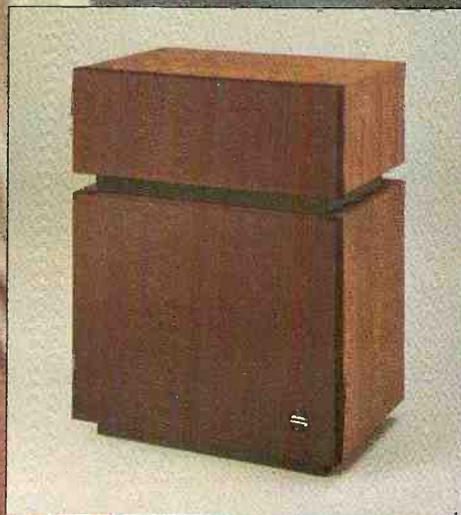
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And whatever touches the senses
touches the soul.*



Model 19



*Speakers for people from
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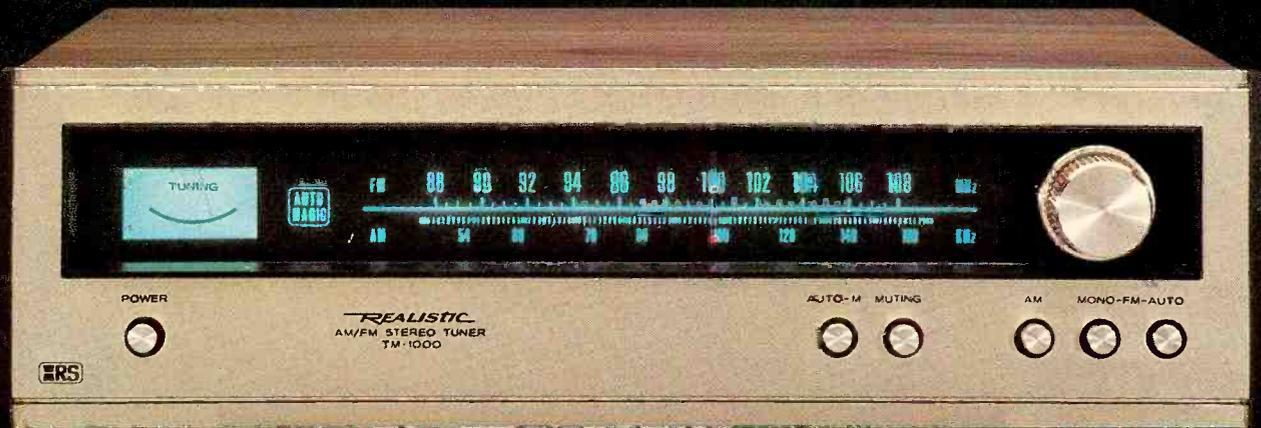
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SA-2000 STEREO AMPLIFIER



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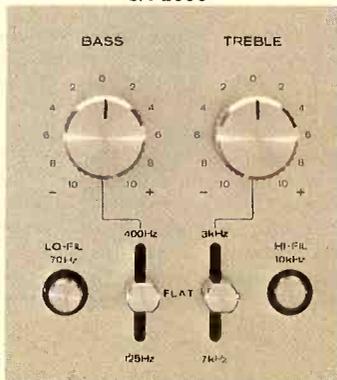


TM-1000 STEREO TUNER

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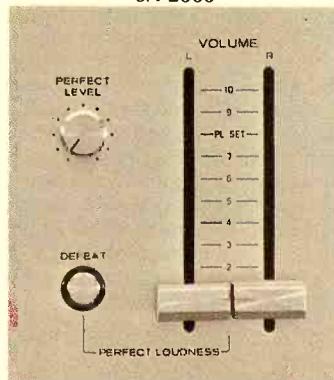
If you think it takes big money to enjoy the versatility and features of a separate tuner and amplifier, then take a look at Realistic® by Radio Shack. We don't play second fiddle to anyone when it comes to either innovation or value. And we'll give you a special package price on that "dream system" you only *thought* you couldn't afford!

SA-2000



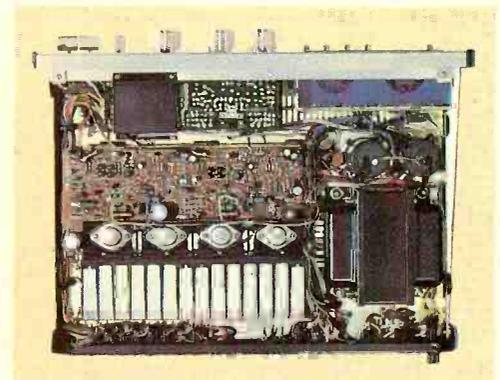
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CIRCLE NO. 37 ON READER SERVICE CARD

Installation of the Month

By Richard Sarbin

FLEXIBILITY, ease of access, and elegance of craftsmanship headed the list of priorities in the building of the highly efficient home audio installation designed and constructed by Hoffman's House of Stereo in Cleveland for Dr. M. Meshginpoosh of Madison, Ohio.

The handsome walnut cabinet is composed of three separate pieces—the center and two side sections—which, although bolted together, can easily be removed independently and transported to another location if need be. Housed in the center portion are Crown SX-700 and Teac 7010SL tape decks and a Switchcraft multiple-source selector. Each of the side sections contains six sub-panels covered in black vinyl which can be cut to accommodate components of varying size. The walnut facing of each of these sections swings open to facilitate the removal or replacement of equipment.

The display of well-chosen, high-performance stereo apparatus positioned within the compartments on the left side of the console includes a Sansui QS-1 four-channel decoder/synthesizer, Marantz 10-B FM tuner, Marantz 15 power amplifier, SAE Mark IIIA pow-

er amplifier, Marantz 7T preamplifier, and an Advent 100A Dolby unit. At the right half of the complex are an SAE Mark 1M stereo preamp, the electronic section of the Teac tape deck, a Lafayette SQ-W four-channel decoder, SAE 2700-B half-octave graphic equalizer, and Crown DC-300 power amp. The two platforms occupying the mid-section of the installation support an Empire 398 turntable equipped with an SME tone arm (left), Luxman D121 turntable with a Formula-4 tone arm (right), Southwest Technical Products CD-4 demodulator, and a Nakamichi 1000 cassette deck. Phono cartridges include the Shure V15-III, Sonus Blue, and Ortofon SL15.

Forming the base of the complete structure are several cabinets and slide-out storage areas that provide ample space for records, tapes, and such useful items as KMAL and Rabco tone arms (they go on the Lux turntable), ElectroVoice microphones, and Koss Pro-4AA headphones. The music, 99 per cent of which is classical, according to Dr. Meshginpoosh, is heard through a pair of Bozak Concert Grand Classics and Dalquist DQ10's.

An elaborate switching system permits the use of each component in combination with any others.

Dr. Meshginpoosh, a native of Iran, is an M.D. specializing in internal medicine and cardiology. He enjoys spending much of his time in his home audio workshop performing equipment checkouts and troubleshooting with test gear assembled from Heathkits. A perfectionist like many serious audiophiles, Dr. Meshginpoosh appreciates the superior quality of his system but asserts that "there is still room for improvement."

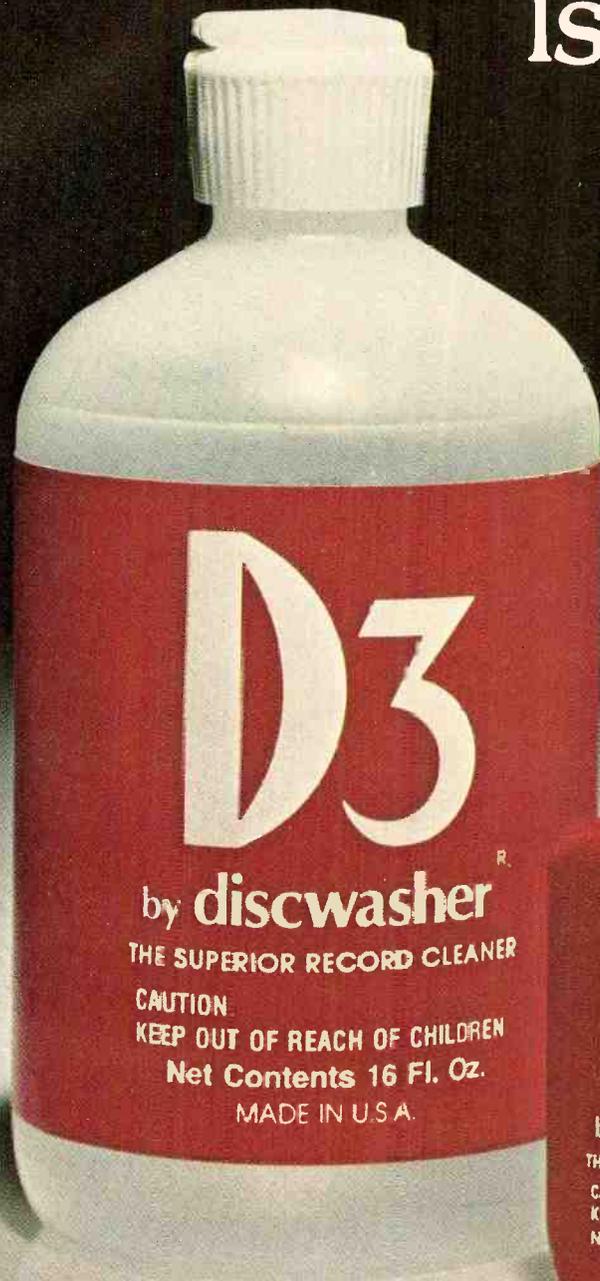
As the letters column indicates, we are pretty much in touch with how our readers are thinking these days, but we'd also like to know how they're *looking*. If you think your audio installation contains a wrinkle or two that might inspire or solve a problem for some others of our readers, drop us a line indicating what your system consists of, include a photo of the setup, and we'll get back to you. Address Richard Sarbin, Installation of the Month, Stereo Review, 1 Park Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10016, including return postage.



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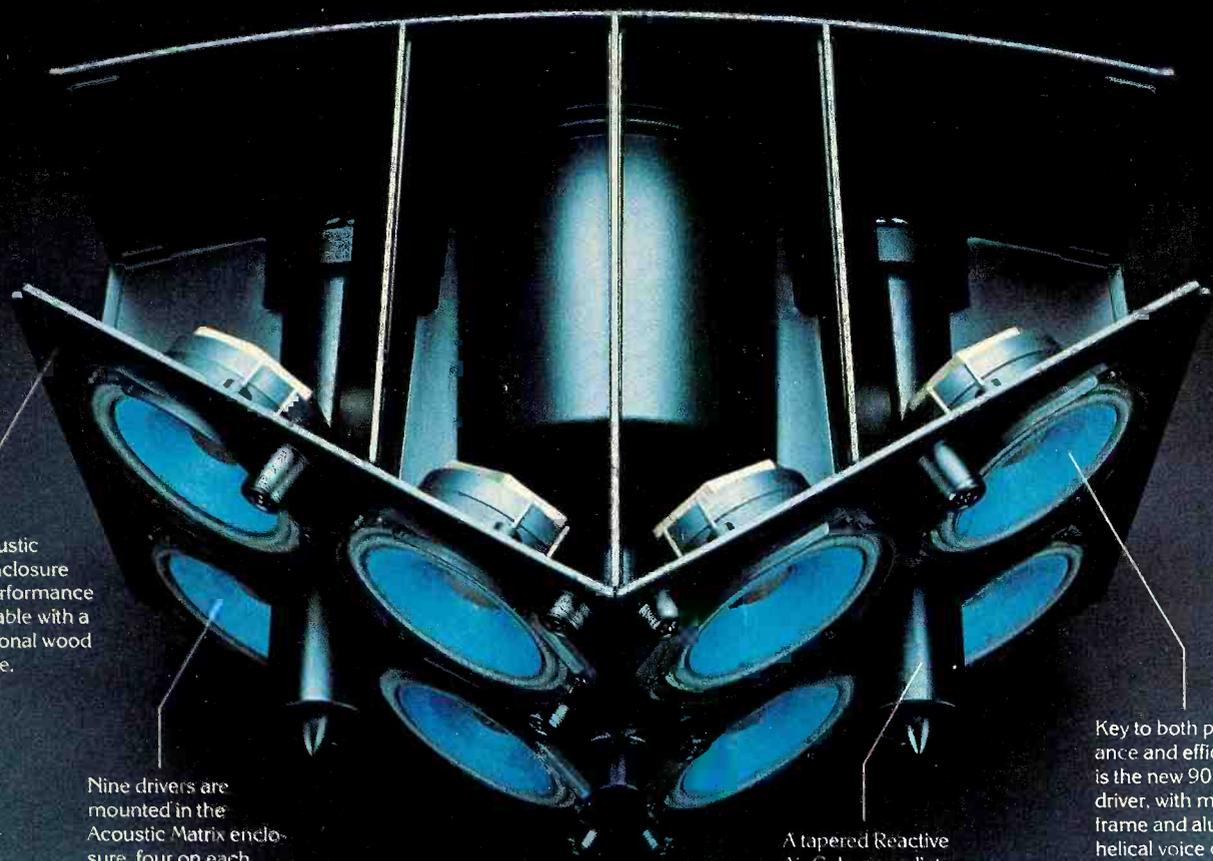
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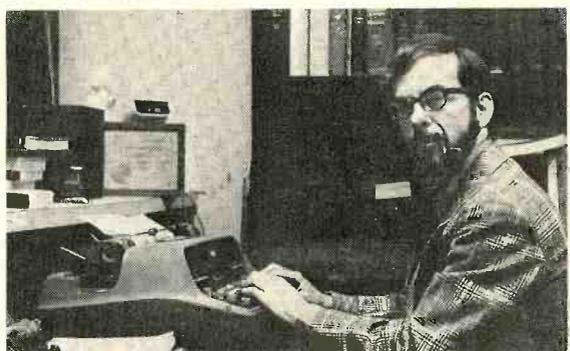


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Going on Record

By James Goodfriend



KEEPING TABS

FOR those whose principal experience of music is through records, the live concert provides a vital balance. For one thing, it enables the listener to compare a performer's concert personality with his recorded one. For another, it is a vital check on the actual abilities of the performer, a way of knowing whether he can duplicate, on a given occasion, the best of which he is capable in the studio. For a third, it keeps one up to date on the accomplishments of performers who may not, for whatever reason, have made recordings in several years. Not too long ago, it would have seemed the height of insolence to have to justify concerts in this way, but times have changed. Some of the most sophisticated and knowledgeable music listeners haven't been to a concert in years.

I have had the opportunity to go to quite a few recently, including ones by Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau (his voice sounded *better* in Carnegie Hall than it has on some recent discs) and the London Philharmonic led by Bernard Haitink (they seemed a first-rate orchestra, with a particularly wonderful viola section and excellent woodwinds). But three concerts in particular—all piano recitals—stand out, not only for their quality, but for the opportunity they provide to supplement the critical coverage this magazine has given over the years to the three artists involved.

THE young Emanuel Ax, who records for RCA, gave a recital in the tiny (it seats about forty—on bridge chairs) ground-floor room of the Bloomingdale School of Music on New York's Upper West Side. It was an indication of the sort of following that Ax has already developed that people came from as far away as eastern Long Island to hear the recital. Ax had a rotten cold, and some of the tempos he chose could rightfully be put down to his desire to get things over with and get home to bed. Even so, it was a fascinating recital.

He began with a Mozart sonata, and none too auspiciously, for, like most *young* pianists, he didn't really know what to do with it. The notes, of course, were perfect, the dynamics reasonable; he did no violence to the music. But he totally missed its *operatic* qualities, the wordless arias and ensembles as well as the drama that lie beneath the surface of the music. A Beethoven *Les Adieux* was considerably better (with a beautifully judged,

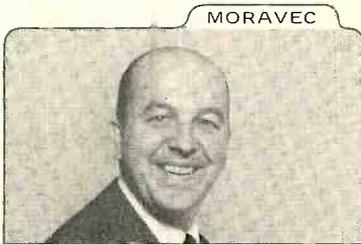
poignant opening), but the Ravel *Valses Nobles et Sentimentales* that followed was on another level of excellence entirely. I had expected his considerable abilities as a colorist to shine here, but what I hadn't expected was the sensuous warmth of the rhythms, the way Ravel's Viennese models glowed through the



AX



BERMAN



MORAVEC

Gallic patina. It was a remarkably fine performance. The Chopin later in the recital showed mostly that, sick or well, Ax is already an excellent "Chopinzee" (as they called them in the old days) and is liable to develop into a great one.

THE Russian virtuoso Lazar Berman gave a recital at Carnegie Hall and, as might have been expected, packed the house. His program was simplicity itself: Schumann's Sonata No. 1, in F-sharp Minor; intermission;

Liszt's Transcendental Etudes (misprinted in the program as the Transcendental Etudes after Paganini, a quite different set); two encores. It was a concert that, among other things, could revise one's comparative opinions of Schumann and Liszt, for the Schumann came across as an almost interminable torrent of notes and afterthoughts, the Liszt as incredibly great and expressive music (my opinion, of course). Schumann's work suffers from its title; lacking the poetic references of *Carnaval* or *Waldscenen*, it leads one to expect more formal drama—and one doesn't get it. Berman gave an impressive display, however, and he obviously likes the piece (he said so afterwards). I could not fault his performance (except for playing the thing at all), and I'm inclined to attribute my boredom to the piece rather than to the player.

Berman, who currently records for both Columbia and Deutsche Grammophon (older records may be found on other labels), made an absolutely stupendous recording of the Transcendental Etudes (Columbia/Melodiya M2-33928). Any doubts that might have existed about his being able to duplicate the feat in the concert hall were put totally aside that evening. He tore up the keyboard and he tore down the keyboard, he buckled the knees of the piano and his fingers wafted over the keys like a summer breeze, and what came out of the whole affair was not so much the greatest technical display anyone has heard for decades, as it was *music*. Some people *need* difficulties. What has happened to Berman since his earliest records is that he has so mastered the complex difficulties of technique that he can search for and expose the personality and the music that lie buried within it—provided they are there. In the Liszt Transcendental Etudes they are indeed there.

THE Czech pianist Ivan Moravec appears relatively rarely in this country. His recordings are available on Connoisseur Society, Vanguard, and Supraphon, and while many of them received lavish critical praise in the past, there have not been too many new ones recently. He gave a recital in Boston's Jordan Hall and a drew a capacity audience that seemed to comprise at least as many record collectors as regular concert-goers. The seriousness of his program—Beethoven, Beethoven, Brahms, Chopin, Debussy, and five encores—might be inferred from the fact that only a single short piece was in a major key.

Moravec is a special kind of pianist, and I know few (if any) of that kind to equal him. He plays lyrically and he plays dramatically, but he is a perfectionist rather than a virtuoso, and his aim is not only to project the mood and sense of a piece, but to let you hear all those things that are in it that you perhaps hadn't heard before. Bass lines, inner voices, harmonic variations, subtle motivic relationships, all come drifting at you simultaneously. Listening to him play is like being immersed in the music; there is no hall, there is no audience; there is no *pianist*. There are only you and the music. His Brahms *Capriccio* was the most poetically analytic performance of that work I have ever heard—and, probably, the most satisfying. His Chopin A Minor *Valse Brillante* will sing its ghostly song in my head for many years to come.

Given the type of pianist he is, Moravec's live performances are very close to his recordings, for they both aim at the same thing. He has, though, if anything, gotten even better with the years.

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The Pop Beat

By Steve Simels



THIS MONTH'S BIG SIX

It's a strange time right now for pop music. Oh sure, lots of interesting things have been going on—the remarkable return of Brian Wilson, the Led Zeppelin film, the second (and I hope the last) Rock Awards TV show, and punk-rock festivals in (where else?) France—but it's hard to get a fix on what it all means. A new sensibility seems to be emerging out of the ashes of the Slowly Sickening Seventies, but there's a vagueness about it, a tentative, slippery kind of feeling that resists analysis. For myself, I find that most of the records I'm listening to now are retrospectives of one kind or another—the Faces' "Snakes and Ladders," a lovely memorial to a band that never really got it together the way they could have; Leo Kottke's "1971-1976"; even the latest reissue of Phil Spector's sublime Christmas Album—and that's got me muddled even more. So, rather than try to make sense of all this, I'm cribbing an idea from Simon Frith, who cribbed it from Charlie Gillet, who cribbed it from God-knows-who. Here is this month's Big Six.

1. Patti Smith Group: "Radio Ethiopia." Before Patti's new album came out, I was fortunate enough to stumble across an excellent live bootleg featuring some of her new songs as well as to catch an unannounced low-profile gig she did at a bar in Soho, and I think I've finally figured out why she gets to me. As knowingly as she comes on, she is really an

innocent. It doesn't matter that most of the criticisms that have been leveled at her are true. Sure, her singing isn't much more musical than Yoko Ono's, her band isn't virtuosic, her poetry is at times laughably overripe—but she's still open enough to fit Smokey Robinson and Dolly Parton in there among the fever dreams. "Radio Ethiopia," different as it is from "Horses," has just as many problems, but she's getting closer to whatever it is she's chasing, and for the moment at least the ride she's taking us on is the most exhilarating one in rock.

2. George Harrison: *This Song* (from "33 & 1/3"). That little old cringe-maker is back, but with a difference. Not only has he shaved his beard and started eating meat again, he seems to have regained both his sense of humor and his songwriting chops. I have not yet heard the whole album, so I will have to restrain my enthusiasm, but on the basis of the single—inspired by his recent loss in court, it's his first rocker in ages, and it works both as a novelty tune and as a love song—George may finally be about to demonstrate that his work with the Beatles was not the fluke the intervening years have indicated it might be.

3. Graham Parker and the Rumour: "Heat Treatment." R-&b lives! No sooner had I predicted that Southside Johnny's passion for Sixties Soul might be contagious than Mr.

Parker and a fine group of refugees from the English pub scene show us that the English have caught it too. The Rumour isn't as flashy as the Asbury Jukes, nor is it as purist, but the groove is similar and "Heat Treatment" might just be the best original white r-&b album since, oh, let's say the Beach Boys' "Wild Honey."

4. Elton John: "Blue Moves." Gosh, but it must be lonely at the top! It seems that it isn't enough for poor Elton that his records sell by the zillions, that he's adored by the pop stars and the fans—those nasty critics just keep picking at him, and it's ruining his breakfast. Insensitive barstids. The odd thing is that although "Blue Moves" is, if anything, even more numbingly turgid than anything he's done previously, it's also, in a peculiar sort of way, the most honest; it is full of the peevish petulance he demonstrated when, in a radio interview, he vented his spleen at a poor New York Times critic who had confessed to being only moderately enthused over his last concert. The Rock Star Self Pity Syndrome claims its least likely candidate. Can Peter Frampton be far behind?

5. Boston: *More Than a Feeling*. This song, of course, has been the left-field smash of the year, coming seemingly out of nowhere from a first album by an unknown group of musicians who have only just quit their day jobs. It really is good: a soaring riff out of Lou Reed by way of Joe Walsh, stunning playing and production, and the best job of adapting the George Martin/Beatles approach to heavy metal that anyone has come up with in ages. Todd Rundgren, not to mention Eric Carmen, must be reaching for the razor blade every time he hears it. But, like most left-field smashes, it's a one-shot. There isn't another song remotely as memorable anywhere on the rest of the album, and, unsurprisingly, the group's singing is as faceless as all the rest of the metal bands'. Still, in a period when imaginative rock-and-roll hit singles are getting harder to find than practicing Druids, it's nice they're around. File with *The Boys Are Back in Town*.

6. Bruce Springsteen: *Rendezvous*. It's been over a year since "Born to Run" put the Bard of Asbury Park on the covers of *Time* and *Newsweek*, and Springsteen, embroiled in a lawsuit with his old manager that prevents him from recording anything new, must be wondering if rock stardom is all it's cracked up to be. He doesn't act like it, though, or at least he didn't during his recent six-night stint in New York. Instead, he put on the most sweeping, ambitious, and deceptively spontaneous show I have ever attended, one that reduced several extremely skeptical friends of mine to actual tears. Two of the new songs he introduced are obviously still being worked out, but the third—a hypnotically compelling teenage lament called *Rendezvous* that is also the most English-sounding thing he has ever done—is clearly the Bruce Springsteen Song for the Ages. No wonder the New York bands resent him so much. Incidentally, he dedicated a tune at each performance to Patti Smith, and actually pulled her on stage during one version of *Rosalita*. If Springsteen is the New Dylan, perhaps this means that Patti is the Baez of the Seventies. Well, why not?—though I admit to being a little uncomfortable still with the idea of Revelations taking place in New Jersey.

GRAHAM PARKER:
the English have
caught it too



8 sound reasons to buy our new receiver. Plus its sound.



Sony's new, more powerful STR-6800SD receiver should get a warm reception. Because it not only looks different from other receivers, it is different.

It has some features found in more expensive separate components—and other features found nowhere else at all.

1. The most-used controls all in one place.

The level control, muting switch, tuning knob and input and tape selectors are all in the upper right-hand corner.

2. A dial pointer that doubles in length when it's close to a station.

Together with the signal strength meter and the center channel meter, this Sony exclusive helps you tune more accurately.

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It guarantees unprecedented accuracy—to within 1/2 db over the whole volume range.

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And MOS FET gives it a very wide dynamic range.

5. Dolby noise reduction system.

So you can benefit from Dolby broadcasting. Instead of being an extra, it's built in—operated from the front panel.

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7. LEC (low emitter concentration) transistor. This Sony exclusive in the preamp phono stage yields tight RIAA equalization, low noise, low distortion and a wide dynamic range.

8. Sony's most powerful receiver. It delivers 80 watts minimum RMS continuous power per channel at 8 ohms from 20 Hz to 20,000 Hz with no more than 0.15% total harmonic distortion. It has a direct-coupled power amplifier with true complementary symmetry output stages.

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them conservatively), add Sony's proven reliability. And you get a receiver that produces a sound that'll make you understand why you have ears.

That's the STR-6800SD at \$600. Or, for less power and a few less features—but no loss of fidelity—the STR-5300SD at \$500 and the STR-4800SD at \$400 (all suggested retail prices).

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THE TOKYO AUDIO FAIR

*A REPORT BY
TECHNICAL EDITOR
LARRY KLEIN*

THE 25th International Audio Fair was held in Tokyo late in October last year. I attended the Fair as the guest of Yamaha, who in the previous week had treated me to a whirlwind tour of their widely dispersed manufacturing facilities, music and recreational camps, furniture and audio display rooms, recording studios, five-story music stores, and more. I saw everything from the foundry casting of Yamaha grand-piano frames to the assembly under microscope of their V-FET power transistors, to say nothing of the non-Yamaha temples, shrines, and craft centers I toured.

Judging that I was properly overwhelmed, disoriented (it's Wednesday; it must be Hamamatsu), and almost—but not quite—recovered from jet lag, my hosts decided it was time to take in the Fair. A projected Sunday visit had to be put off until Monday when an advance check indicated that the premises were wall-to-wall with audiophiles; no one not blessed with X-ray vision or a barbed-wire business suit could hope to see anything but the backs of milling "audiomaniacs," as Japanese sound buffs call themselves.

The Audio Fair took place in two adjoining structures, the main one being a vast geodesic dome. A maze of display booths and rooms was installed on the open floor under the dome, and these

had surprisingly effective sound-isolation properties considering the sound levels that were being employed. I was struck immediately by several differences between the usual U.S. hi-fi show and the Tokyo Fair. For one, there was a remarkable amount of *live* music to be heard in the various display rooms. Yamaha, for example, had built a small auditorium—a "music plaza"—in which they presented a constant stream of performers. The shows were being broadcast simultaneously on FM to an "air check" area outside the auditorium, where they were picked up by tuners and fed to fourteen cassette decks. Show-goers who signed up for the privilege were given a blank cassette and could make their own live recordings (on a Yamaha deck, naturally) of the musical proceedings inside. The other major live-music performance (there were a number of minor ones) at the Tokyo show was presented by Fuji Film. A good part of the audience there was also making recordings (Fuji tape, of course) on a variety of models and brands of cassette decks set up by Fuji.

For the more advanced audiophiles—and Japan seems to be full of them—there were ongoing technical demonstrations. Almost every electronics manufacturer had a test setup designed to demonstrate the virtues of his products by means of graph record-

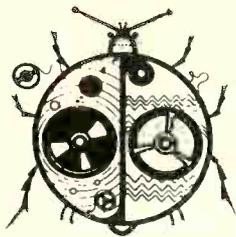
er, meter, and/or oscilloscope. Additional technical information was provided by explanatory wall charts liberally illustrated with schematics, block diagrams, waveforms, and graphs. In short, there seemed to be something for everybody—engineer, audiophile, and music lover.

As is true at any large consumer/dealer audio show, many of the models shown were pre-production prototypes that were not yet available (some of them may never be) in the form in which they were exhibited. And, since the Audio Fair is the place where manufacturers seek to establish or enhance their technical reputations, the emphasis was on high-end, prestigious—one might even say far-out—state-of-the-art products.

MANY, if not most, of the major brand names whose advertisements appear in these pages could be spotted at the Fair, but my purpose in putting together this report was not to catalog the exhibits but to discover breakthroughs, identify trends, and point out interesting approaches to the audio art that haven't yet been widely seen on this side of the Pacific. You may therefore notice the absence of a few famous names whose 1977 product lines have already been discussed (see Ralph Hodges' September report on the Con-



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sumer Electronics Show in Chicago). Lacking an all-seeing eye and seven-league boots, and given the crowds and language difficulties, I may have also overlooked the product that is going to revolutionize the entire audio industry in the next twelve months. If so, we will all learn about it together.

Cartridges & Turntables

Despite the heavy competition from U.S.-made products, many of which are held in high esteem in Japan, the domestic moving-coil (MC) phono-cartridge industry is apparently going strong. Denon, Fidelity Research, Satin, Supex, and Onlife all showed their latest models, most of them available with a variety of stylus-tip shapes. It appears that we will be seeing a variety of new cantilever materials such as boron on the market in the next year or so—the industry is still looking for lower mass combined with greater rigidity. Yamaha, among others, will be serving the MC market with built-in “head” amps (otherwise known as preamplifiers) in some of their new preamplifiers and integrated amplifiers. The purpose, of course, is to provide the extra amplification needed by most MC cartridges without having to use external gain modules or transformers.

Judging by the number of them available, tone arms are a significant component on the Japanese audio market. Brands seldom encountered in the U.S. (Grace, Dynavector, Azden, Saec, Lustre, Denon) were on display as well as the more familiar Stax, Micro, and Audio Technica. If there were any significant technical breakthroughs embodied in these arms, they were not reflected in their external appearance. But they were impressive—all of them looked like precision-tooled devices.

As you might suspect from recent ads, the Japanese are putting some effort into minimizing acoustic feedback and internal vibration in their turntables. There has been, for example, a sudden proliferation of turntable bases that incorporate, or are molded from, high-mass inert materials and are supported by very compliant mounting feet. Such bases were everywhere evident at the Fair, usually with beautiful-looking quartz-lock turntables installed. It appeared that every

company with a single-play manual turntable in their line also had a quartz-controlled, direct-drive model or two as well. One I saw (JVC's) had a digital operating-speed read-out visible in the rim surrounding the turntable platter. I suspect that as far as wow, flutter, rumble, and speed stability are concerned, this new generation of turntables is, as a group, substantially better than the turntable/lathe assembly on which our phono discs are originally cut.

Amplifiers

The super-power amplifier, for years strictly a U.S. phenomenon, had by 1976 become a significant part of the Japanese market. At the Tokyo Fair, virtually every manufacturer showed a power amplifier—or two or three. Most were beautifully styled and adorned with meter readouts and LED decibel-increment indicators. At least one manufacturer (Optonica) showed a 250-watt-per-channel unit with a direct-reading, liquid-crystal, digital power-output indicator (liquid-crystal technology is responsible for those digital watches with the grey segmented numbers—as contrasted with the red ones of light-emitting diodes). The unit also had a high-frequency switching-type power supply that should reduce cost, size, and weight. And Sony was showing a prototype Class-D amplifier—the first, to my knowledge, from a Japanese manufacturer.

Amongst the literature I collected was a folder describing a Denon integrated amplifier with a novel phono-crosstalk cancellation circuit. The text is in Japanese, but from what I can decipher from the curves and block diagrams it appears that the circuit can take a stereo signal with perhaps 20 dB of mid-range separation and enhance it to almost 40 dB. This is achieved by employing a combination of phase shift and channel cross-feed.

Several possibly significant trends in amplifier external design were in evidence. “Cosmetically,” as we say in the trade, the styling has gone strongly to long, low slimline silhouettes. These flat (physically, that

is) preamps, tuners, and integrated amps stack nicely and are available in a choice of black or white—well, not actually white, but a kind of matte silver. There's no question that the pinball-machine look is out; basic black and matte silver are in—and they're beautiful. The long, flat format fitted nicely into installations of the “relay-rack” type at the Fair, but the U.S.-standard 19-inch rack is much too wide for them. Several manufacturers were therefore showing their own mini-racks and cabinets that would accommodate their equipment's 16-inch mounting width. Nakamichi, for one, has a lovely little rack on casters that holds cassette deck, preamp, and power amplifier.

A number of companies, including Lux, were showing vacuum-tube amplifiers whose power-output tubes were unfamiliar—some seemed large enough to have been borrowed from the transmitters of the local radio station. In addition, there were several solid-state, class-A power amplifiers heating up the area and even a switch on some new integrated amplifiers that would convert the output stages from “normal” to class-A operation.

The power-amplifier chassis of one manufacturer (Diatone) sported four large, black cylindrical objects that turned out to be the housings for pairs of output transistors. They were hermetically sealed in freon (or some similar gas-liquid) so that the entire assembly became a rather special kind of heat sink. At the moment, it's difficult to tell whether the major advantage of the technique is cooler transistors or hotter advertising copy.

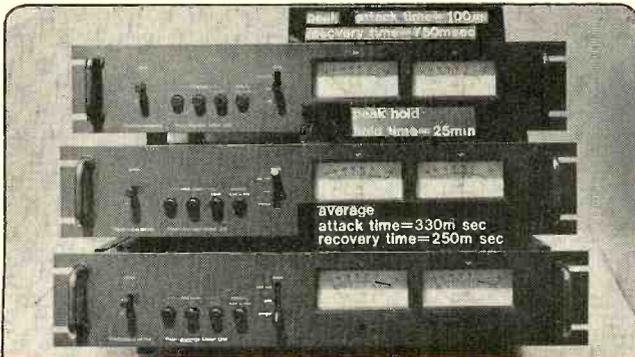
Japan's last generation of amplifiers had distortion figures that in my view were already well below the audible level. This year, as a group, they've “improved” their measurable performance even further. Impressive, but it does make me wonder what they are going to do for an encore five years from now.

Finally, I detected what seems to be a trend toward D-C design in power amplifiers (D-C in this case stands for direct-coupled, meaning the elimination of coupling capacitors that could cause phase shift and low-bass loss—and capacitors also usually suffer

Many live performances at the Fair permitted audiophiles to make on-the-spot recordings. At this one, presented by Fuji, a variety of tape decks were provided, all of them connected to the master mixing console which can be seen at upper left.



Photos by Larry Klein



Among the sophisticated accessories were these peak/average rack-mounting meter assemblies. The three units, with different mode settings, are all responding to the same input.

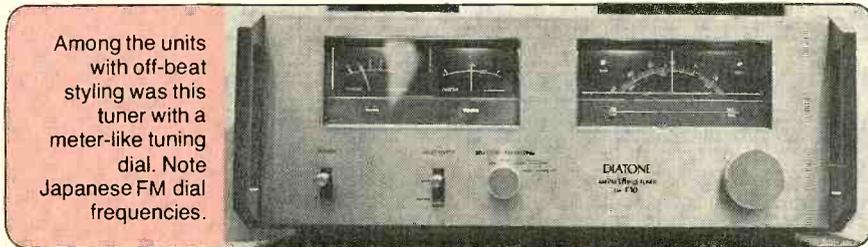


One of the quartz-lock turntables shown was this JVC model incorporating a digital speed readout in the rim surrounding the platter. Pushbuttons provide incremental speed changes.

from long-term deterioration). The D-C design also relates to direct current, in the sense that a true D-C amplifier will "amplify" the voltage of, say, a flashlight battery connected to its input terminals. This characteristic demands that the amplifier circuits be very stable, since a small unwanted d.c. "offset" voltage in an early stage can result in a large distortion-producing d.c. output voltage at the speaker terminals. Several

any design philosophy, but the sound I heard at various speaker displays at the Fair could generally be described as smooth and clean, with a 1-db-per-octave slope centered at 1,000 Hz, falling in the low frequencies and rising in the highs. It's not that the bass was missing; it just seemed to be thin and lacking in "warmth." The highs, however, went way out, cleanly, widely dispersed, and in full measure. Some of the bass lack

ably more entries I missed hearing about. There's no question that the Japanese have the technology—and the interest—to produce state-of-the-art speaker systems. As I see it, the reason we don't have more fine systems coming from Japan is simply that many manufacturers have decided that "speaker sound is a matter of taste"—and they are not sure whose taste to cater to.



Among the units with off-beat styling was this tuner with a meter-like tuning dial. Note Japanese FM dial frequencies.

Tape Machines

The few examples of solid-state memory automation I noted were all devoted to locating selections on cassette and elcaset decks. Some units appeared to be completely programmable, while others simply stopped blank areas between selections and stopped where required. Optonica, for one, provides different degrees of cleverness in their machines: in order of increasing

U.S. companies have had D-C amplifiers for years, but it appears to be big news just now in Japan.

Speakers

From my point of view, the Japanese loudspeaker situation continues to be as confused—and confusing—as it appeared to be during my last visit several years ago. Major segments of the Japanese audio industry continue to hold the view that speaker sound is a matter of taste and, further, that different nationalities have different tastes—after all, they listen to different kinds of music, don't they? To complicate matters even more, they believe that, as far as national speaker "tastes" go, the U.S. market is divided between listeners who prefer "East-coast" sound and those who prefer "West-coast" sound.

Interestingly, the best-selling speakers in Japan itself have varied over the years from compact systems with clean, uncolored sound to large bookshelf units with strong upper bass and peaked upper mid-range—which, oddly enough, parallels rather closely the history of speaker sales in the U.S.

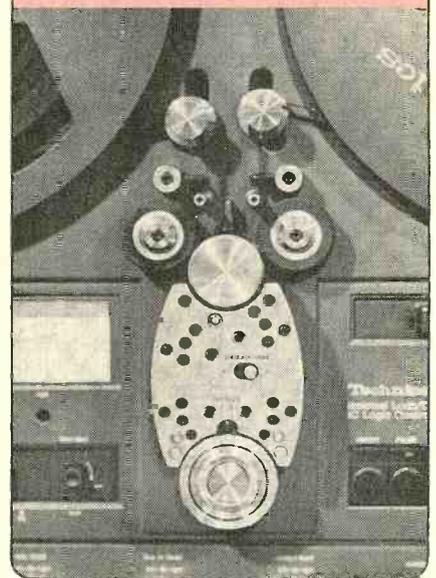
I don't know what it indicated in terms of

might have been caused by the acoustic circumstances of the exhibition hall—there were seldom any heavy structural walls nearby to provide bass reinforcement.

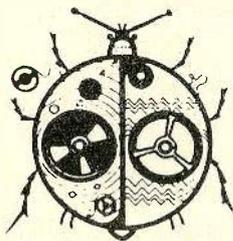
For me, however, the Japanese approach to speaker design still remains in the "inscrutable East" category. And, of course, I'm sure that they are equally puzzled by the goings on in the "mysterious West." For whatever it is worth, however, an engineer in charge of audio matters for the Swedish (!) Broadcasting Corporation recently told me that after extensive technical and listening tests of a large number of samples submitted from all over the world, they chose the Yamaha 1000M monitor speakers for their studios.

Quite aside from any question about the "correctness" of the spectral balance they build into their speaker systems, the Japanese seem to be developing a variety of breakthrough technologies for their drivers. In the past several years we've had Pioneer's tweeters employing a recently developed piezoelectric plastic, as well as Yamaha's beryllium-dome, high-frequency drivers. These innovations are about to be joined by other exotic cone materials, including carbon fiber, boron, and titanium oxide. Pioneer displayed an aluminum-coated beryllium driver, and there were prob-

The novel tape drive on this machine is driven by a quartz-lock circuit. The head-assembly switch converts the playback from four-track to two-track.



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"smartness" you'll find APLD, APFS, or APSS in various decks. These initials stand, respectively, for "Auto Program Locate Device," "Auto Program Find System," and "Auto Program Search System." The descriptive literature is all in Japanese, but the APLD machine has a row of ten numbered pushbuttons that obviously are used to select the desired programs—possibly by counting "spaces"—and perhaps will play them back in some selected order as well. The APFS and APSS machines each have a single on-off button for the special functions. In addition, two of the machines have a SPACE button which presumably places a set amount of time between dubbed selections by advancing the tape a second or so.

Clarion exhibited a neat little cassette machine—no larger than some conventional decks—that you can load with both a recorded and a blank cassette to turn out duplicates. It was a fairly basic machine (no noise reduction or other extra features), and according to my yen-to-dollar conversion chart it was only about \$210.

And JVC came up with a bright—bright red, that is—idea. One of their new cassette decks has a "multi-point peak-level indicator" that consists of five LEDs marked -10, -5, 0, +3, and +6. These operate in conjunction with the deck's standard VU/dB meters. Since the LEDs are peak-reading and have an extended hold time, all you need do during recording is keep the first three lamps lit most of the time and you've avoided both noise and overload difficulties.

Aiwa's approach to the peak-vs.-average-reading meter problem is to provide both—and on one meter face. Each of the two meters has a novel double-needle arrangement, one behind the other. In addition, the machine has the most extensive provisions I've yet encountered for optimizing bias level and equalization for use with just about any cassette tape. Not only are there separate three-position bias and equalization switches, but there are also *three* separate "bias fine adjust" controls. Each of these vernier knobs relates to a particular tape type (LH, FeCr, CrO₂) and is set by using a dual-frequency (400 to 8,000 Hz) test signal. The two test signals are simultaneously recorded on the tape under test and the monitor head provides simultaneous—but separate—readout for each frequency on the meters. Denon and several other companies also had extensive multiple tape-bias/equali-

zation provisions on their units. Technics showed a handsome matte-black, two-section, rack-mounting cassette unit with transport and controls in one section, electronics in another. The machine is obviously intended to compete in the "professional" end of the cassette market.

Considering all the action in the cassette sphere, there were few new elcaset decks to be seen. Technics displayed a black rack model with a separately mounted fifteen-button "program control unit." And Aiwa showed a handsome, but basic, elcaset unit. I was told there were also new machines—which I didn't get to see—from JVC, Toshiba, and Sanyo. There didn't seem to be too much open-reel equipment at the Fair either. Technics, however, displayed their new top-of-the-line professional-style deck with its new isolated-loop drive system. And Pioneer had a very compact 7-inch-reel deck whose styling might bring a nostalgic tear or two to the eyes of the old timers: it looked, in fact, like a nicely updated Magnecord PT6AH.

Sony presented a continuous demonstration of pulse-code-modulation audio recording on a converted (through a special attachment) video tape recorder. It wasn't clear whether Sony intends to market a commercial product soon or whether this was simply a demonstration of what *could* be done. I doubt that the setup is intended for the audiophile market—even the most advanced segment of it—but it is certainly a harbinger of tomorrow's home tape machines.

Accessories

It seems that Japanese audiomanics love to record off-the-air (despite the problems discussed above). They refer to the practice (in English) as "Air Check," and it is a popular enough activity that high-end cassette manufacturers have difficulty selling machines that can't be automatically turned on

My overall impression of the Fair is that the Japanese are really interested in pushing the state of the audio art as far as it will go. That means that every now and then they are going to seem a little off-the-wall, but most of the time their products are right on target. The one area of audio expertise and product know-how that the Japanese have not yet exported to the U.S. in any quantity is program material. The records I brought home turned out to be incredibly quiet, wide-range, and absolutely warp-free. I'm not sure if the U.S. record manufacturers lack the Japanese production technology or simply their attitude. I don't know how it's described in Japanese, but in English the attitude I refer to is called "giving a damn."
—L.K.

by a timer. This, of course, has precipitated a host of really beautiful made-for-recording digital timers. Almost every manufacturer had one—some using a mechanical digital movement, others being totally electronic.

There seemed to be only one digital delay (reverb) system at the show. I didn't get to hear it, and I discovered its existence only when I went through my packet of Optonica literature.

Several manufacturers showed add-on amplifier-output monitoring units employing meters, LEDs, or both. Technics had three of their meter-readout units stacked with their respective mode switches set variously for peak, peak hold, and average. It was fascinating to watch the three meters as they responded differently to the same musical signal.

FM Tuners

It may sound strange, but I didn't get a chance to listen to any FM broadcasts while in Japan, though I saw and heard plenty of FM tuners. By U.S. standards, there are relatively few FM stations even in the major cities. In Tokyo, for example, there are one or two broadcasting very high-quality audio—the NHK chain—as well as several that, according to one engineer, averaged about 200 per cent (!) modulation. The only way to reduce the tuner distortion under such circumstances is to provide the option of switching to a very wide bandwidth—hence the wide-narrow switch seen on many Japanese tuners. In the U.S., however, such a feature isn't that important since the broadcasters have other practical considerations—such as the FCC monitoring of the crowded FM band—that tend to minimize broadcast overmodulation. Given the general state of Japanese FM broadcasting, the exhibitors preferred to demonstrate their equipment using their own low-power, high-fidelity, across-the-room broadcasts.

The lack of widespread FM broadcasts also accounts for the disproportionately high sales of integrated amplifiers and the relatively low sales (compared to the U.S. market) of receivers. However, this has certainly not put any visible damper on Japanese FM-tuner engineering; FM-tuner distortion figures, for example, are being driven ever downward even at the lower-price end of the lines.

Several manufacturers were showing alternatives to the conventional slide-rule tuning dial. Aside from one or two liquid-crystal, digital-readout models, there were FM units (Diatone, for one) that seemed to have two large meter movements—until you noticed that one was actually a *rotary* dial calibrated in megahertz. There were a few other variations on that same theme, almost as though the manufacturers wished to disguise the fact that the device shown was a tuner.

A few of the tuners (Sanyo/Otto) had deviation meters, possibly to alert the user to the gross overmodulation discussed earlier. As with amplifiers, the tuners are undergoing constant technical improvement. Now, if only the sonic quality of the broadcast material would start to improve at an equal rate □

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And a tape that doesn't sound consistently the same, from end to end, from tape to tape, can make you question the stability of the electronics.

If a cassette or 8-track jams, it can suggest some nasty, but erroneous comments about the drive mechanism.

And if a cassette or 8-track introduces wow and flutter, it's apt to produce some test results that anyone can argue with.

Fortunately, we test every inch of every Maxell cassette, 8-track and reel-to-reel tape to make sure



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ROCK-AND-ROLL lyrics have come a long way. They began, perhaps, when the Beatles said they wanted to hold our hands. Now some of the more flamboyant rock groups are on record as wanting to hold other parts of our anatomies.

Rock lyrics have certainly gotten more suggestive with time—when the rock group Bread sings *I Want to Make It with You*, you can be sure they don't mean dinner. And at least some rock lyrics have gotten more grown up—consider nearly any of the literate lyrics written by composers Joni Mitchell

by the same people who write all those greeting cards. You mean there are people who actually sit around and think up those words to those songs?"

Yes, there are, and they do. There is a new breed of professional rock lyricists—the “poets,” if you like, of this generation—who don't perform in concert, who don't make records, who are rarely heard even to hum. What rock lyricists do, simply, is write the words to rock music, but it is a whole lot less complicated to describe than to do. “The one thing you've got to remember,” says one long-time music-biz ob-



and Paul Simon. But today, with record sales reaching into the billions (dollars, that is, not discs), the prevailing style is *formula*, the most important ingredient is the *hook*, that unpredictable, undefinable something that pulls kids off the streets and into the record stores, and any rock lyricist who wants to make it with his bank book had better know the intricacies of both.

“Rock lyricist? Is there really such a person, someone who makes his living writing those words?” a young innocent recently asked me. “I thought they just—you know—made them up as they went along or they were written

server, “is that a person who writes rock words has to come up with hits, hits, and more hits. They have to be dependable, consistent, and contemporary; they have to know how to write what people will buy.”

One of the things people will buy is a song that is attached to lyrics by Gerry Goffin, the dean of American rock lyricists. As a long-time collaborator with music writer-singer Carole King (they collaborated in marriage for some time as well), Goffin has written half of such hits as *Will You Love Me Tomorrow*, *The Loco-Motion*, *Up on the Roof*, *One Fine Day*, *A Natural Woman*, and

scores of others. A quiet man who expresses himself better on paper than he does in person, Goffin now lives in California, where he continues the craft he learned and mastered in New York.

"I write *lyrics*," Goffin says by way of clarification. "I don't write poetry. Joni Mitchell writes poetry. What I do is write the simple lyric. Lyrics have less variety of image and use more conventional language. Lyrics involve getting a hook phrase that people can hold on to. I consider it to be a craft, but it's not hack work. And I know it has its artistic limits."

"I don't think my lyrics have improved any over the years," Goffin says. "I sort of like my old ones better. They were written from the perspective of a younger person with a better, more optimistic outlook on life. My lyrics were happier then. Today, the things I write about apply more to an older person [Goffin is thirty-seven]. I'm going to have to start thinking younger. Today I feel guilty if I haven't written for a while, but it's harder for me now—I'd like to be better."

He pauses and comes up with something full of the cynicism his old lyrics

started out one day to answer an ad for lyricists in a London music-trade paper but changed his mind and threw the letter away. His mother retrieved it and, unbeknownst to Bernie, sent it along. The publishers were impressed and asked him to team up with another correspondent, a young composer named Reggie Dwight—who, as we all know, later changed his name to Elton John. And Bernie Taupin and Elton John went on to change the course of rock-music history.

Today Elton John is so successful he could sing the London phone directory—detractors insist he might as well be doing just that—but what he mostly sings are Taupin lyrics to his own songs. Those lyrics have been described as "rapidly vapid" (Taupin can write dozens of them in a day), filled with surrealistic *non sequiturs*. But, says Elton, "I wouldn't tackle any other lyrics apart from Bernie's. They're special to me. They've always inspired me. If Bernie suddenly said he didn't want to write any more lyrics or that he didn't want to write them for me, then that would be it—the end. I'd just have to stop; there'd be no sense in carrying on."

BERNIE is a little less melodramatic about the whole thing. "If Elton stopped writing, I'd still write lyrics."

Although he's at the top of this particular commercial heap, Taupin says he's not especially at ease. "There's a lot of uncertainty in my writing and some of my ideas are insecure. You can read what you like into my lyrics, view them from many different angles. I like to write songs more ambitious than most."

Some sample Taupin lyrics:

Inside of you I have formed a home,
Outside of you I have cast a dome.
A castle you conceived for me,
This place to rest before I see.²

And,

Oh, Daniel, my brother
You are older than me,
Do you still feel the pain
Of the scars that won't heal?
Your eyes have died, but you see more
than I,
Daniel, you're a star in the face of the
sky.³

Elton again: "I don't know what's going on in Bernie's mind. But I never question his lyrics. I just sing them. That's his part of the fantasy, and I just don't go and say, 'What does this mean?'"

Many music critics, however, would like to know what it all means. They aren't coming up with any quick an-

WHO WRITES ALL THOSE ROCK LYRICS?

BY RICK MITZ

At left, collaborators
Jacob Brackman and Carly Simon.
Photo by Ian Anderson.

When Goffin and King got together in the early Sixties, though, it seemed as if they knew no limits. In just five years they created more than a hundred commercially substantial singles and at least a hundred more that didn't make it. Goffin's lyrics, reflective of the mood of the times, dealt with teen problems and simple emotions. One of his best was *Up on the Roof*:

When this old world starts getting me
down
And people are just too much for me to
take,
I climb way up to the top of the stairs
And all my cares just drift right into
space.¹

would have scoffed at: "You know, I often ask myself if people even *listen* to rock-and-roll lyrics. I'm not so sure they do."

Bernie Taupin isn't so sure either. And so he published a big, glossy book of his lyrics last year to make sure that people would at least *look* at them. They're looking, all right; sales are fine, and Taupin already has a second volume in the works.

Taupin is the superstar among lyricists, and his story is a classic. He

¹*Up on the Roof*, words and music by Gerry Goffin and Carole King; © copyright 1962-3 by Screen Gems-EMI Music Inc. All rights reserved.

²*Birth*, by Bernie Taupin-Caleb Quaye-Davey Johnstone © 1972.

³*Daniel*, by Bernie Taupin and Elton John © 1973.



"I often ask myself if people even listen to rock-and-roll lyrics. I'm not so sure they do."



Rocket Record Co.

"I know my lyrics aren't poetry . . . but success with my lyrics has improved my poems."



Freyman/courtesy Chappell Music

"I don't really like writing. I like having written."

GOFFIN

TAUPIN

SAGER

swers, but Bernie and Elton are coming up with a lot of quick hits. You can barely turn the radio dial these days and nights without coming across a John-Taupin collaboration. They have nine gold singles and twelve gold albums—but they have only eleven *platinum* albums (they must be slipping somewhere).

Even after all the success, Elton and Bernie still work together the way they always did—through the mail. Elton sets the lyrics to music and Bernie hears the whole thing when it's done. They've been known to churn out as many as twenty songs a day that way. But Bernie knows his limitations. "I know my lyrics aren't poetry. But I do write poetry too, and success with my lyrics has improved my poems. It doesn't make any difference if I'm writing in a garret in Finchley or on a beach in the Caribbean, because I've already had my struggles.

"You know," he says, pausing to push one leg under another, "the audience never realizes what it takes to get there. They don't realize the heartaches, they don't realize that you've had to pay your dues. But it's *good* to pay your dues."

AND NOW, of course, the dues are paying him. Just a little work on that and it would sound like a lyric Carole Sager might have written: "You've paid your dues/And now your dues are payin' you." Ms. Sager is another Very Successful Lyricist, and her best work

is heavy with a sensitivity typical of what Tom Wolfe has called "The Me Decade." *Better Days*, *Help Is on the Way*, *Good News*, and *Home to Myself* are just a few of the lyrics she has written with a pop-sociological slant. For example:

Nobody's home when you need 'em
Even after you love 'em and feed 'em
—O Lord
Say do not disturb me
This lady's not home today.⁴

Or,
No more tears left to hide
We have made it through a long and
lonely night.
Better days are on our side,
Oh it looks as though we're doing
something right.⁵

Those are just two of the lyrics she has written with Melissa Manchester, whom she discovered ooh-ooing out of Bette Midler's back-up chorus line, the Harlettes. The list of her other collaborators reads like a *Who's Who* of pop composers: Marvin Hamlisch, Peter Allen, Lucy Simon, Bette Midler, and, a long time ago, Neil Sedaka ("I was Neil Sedaka's 'Hungry Years,'" she quips, referring to a recent Sedaka album title).

Sager's lyrics are perfect for her collaborators and perfect for the times. She is also a very unselfish writer who is quite prepared to merge her own

⁴(This) *Lady's Not Home Today*, by Carole Sager and Melissa Manchester © 1974.

⁵*Better Days (Looks as Though We're Doing Somethin' Right)* © 1975; The New York Times Music Corp. and Rumanian Pickle Works Music Inc.

writing style into the style and personality of the composer.

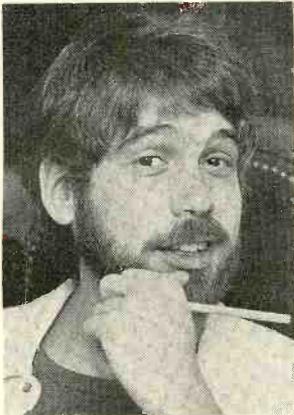
"My roots are on Broadway," she says. "I even wrote a Broadway show, *Georgie*, that flopped. I was depressed for six months after that. The *New York Times* thought my lyrics were pedantic, pedestrian—and a few other p's. But then I recovered and met Melissa."

Her biggest commercial hit has been Manchester's *Midnight Blue* of a year or so ago. But she keeps trying for more. "All artistic points of view aside, if you don't have a hit, then your album becomes a collector's item.

"I'll tell you how to write a hit lyric. Make sure the title appears more than once in the song. Have a structured verse-chorus, something that someone can sing back to you on the second listening. Keep it simple. A radio programmer's got to like it even if he had a fight with his wife the night before. And make sure that the hook of the chorus comes before the DJ picks up the needle.

"But the melody has to get people first, because that's where they *hear* the hook. Even so, without the lyrics some songs would never see the light of day. If a song has already been written a thousand times—about love, hate, fear, all that—I try to write it a little differently. I don't try to be clever and look for strange rhymes for *tomato*. And I'm not Bob Dylan; I've never written political songs. If you can reach out to another person that's enough."

Ian Anderson



"I like lyric writing because it's childlike and it's a puzzle."

BRACKMAN

Sager has a very special, intimate way of working with her collaborators. "Let's say we get together at two p.m. on a Wednesday. Well, then, from two to four we just talk about how we feel, where we're at, what's going on. From that talking, we'll get a common ground for a song that will be honest for both of us. We work together at the piano. I might sing a tune and they might suggest a lyric. We edit each other as we go along. The feedback is immediate. But my lyrics are written for me; they're cathartic and they make me feel better."

But does she like writing lyrics? She has to think a little about that.

"I don't really like writing," she finally says. "I like having written."

JACOB BRACKMAN isn't so sure he likes even that. "I'm very critical about my work," he says. "I'm neurotic about writing lyrics. I always think of things afterward that could have been better."

One thing that couldn't be much better is Brackman's long-time collaboration with singer-songwriter Carly Simon. They met at summer camp years ago and have been friends and co-workers ever since.

"Lyrics are just something I stumbled on," says the thirty-three-year-old Brackman. "I had been writing magazine articles, stories, and essays, and Carly came to me because she needed help writing a lyric for a song. So I wrote it for her. It ended up being her

first hit, *That's the Way I've Always Heard It Should Be*:

But you say it's time we moved in together,
Raised a family of our own, you and me.
Well, that's the way I've always heard it should be,
You want to marry me; we'll marry.⁶

Since that hit, Jake and Carly have been more or less a team—"more when Carly needs help on the lyrics, less when she writes her own or has someone else write them."

Someone else? "I feel bad when she goes to other lyricists," Brackman says. "Maybe she does it to express her independence from me. But then she feels bad when I write for other composers!"

Not only has Brackman written with others, he's written with himself—not music, but a screenplay (*The King of Marvin Gardens*) and a book (*The Put On*). He is also producing films and is now in the midst of his first musical-comedy project. But his heart—and his art—belong to Carly.

"It is, strange, you know, I'm a guy writing for a girl. But I know her really well and I know what will sit well with her. I try to write things for her that she might write for herself."

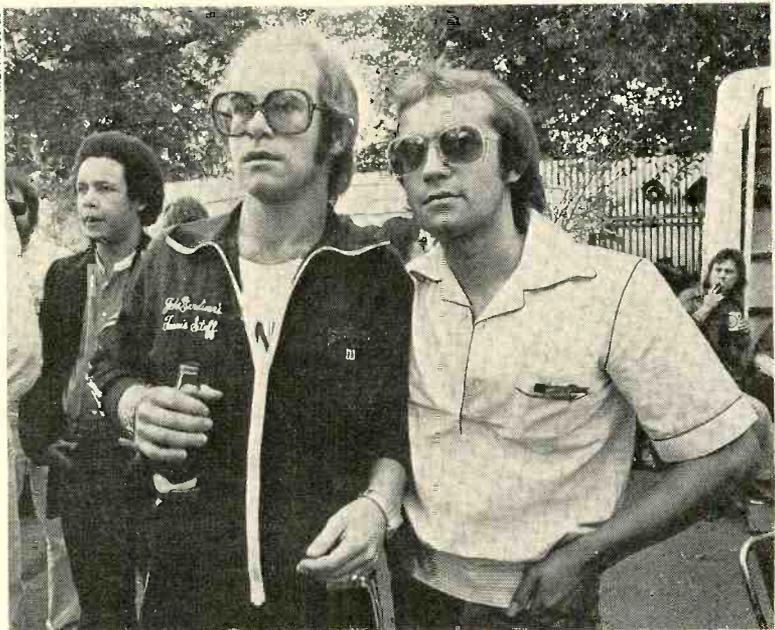
⁶*That's the Way I've Always Heard It Should Be* © 1970 by Carly Simon and Jacob Brackman. Published by Quackenbush Music/Kensho Music, ASCAP.

But Carly alone is not enough of an outlet. "She records only one album a year and maybe uses two or three of my songs. We have the standard fifty-fifty money arrangement most collaborators do, but I can't live off that. I can write more. I'd like to find more people to write with—like Burt Bacharach. I have a whole trunk full of lyrics."

Near the trunk sits a radio, which Brackman listens to a lot. "When I hear one of my songs on the radio, I feel a rush of energy," he says. "I do admire some of my work. I like lyric writing because it's childlike and it's a puzzle. I guess I can write a hit song as well as anyone."

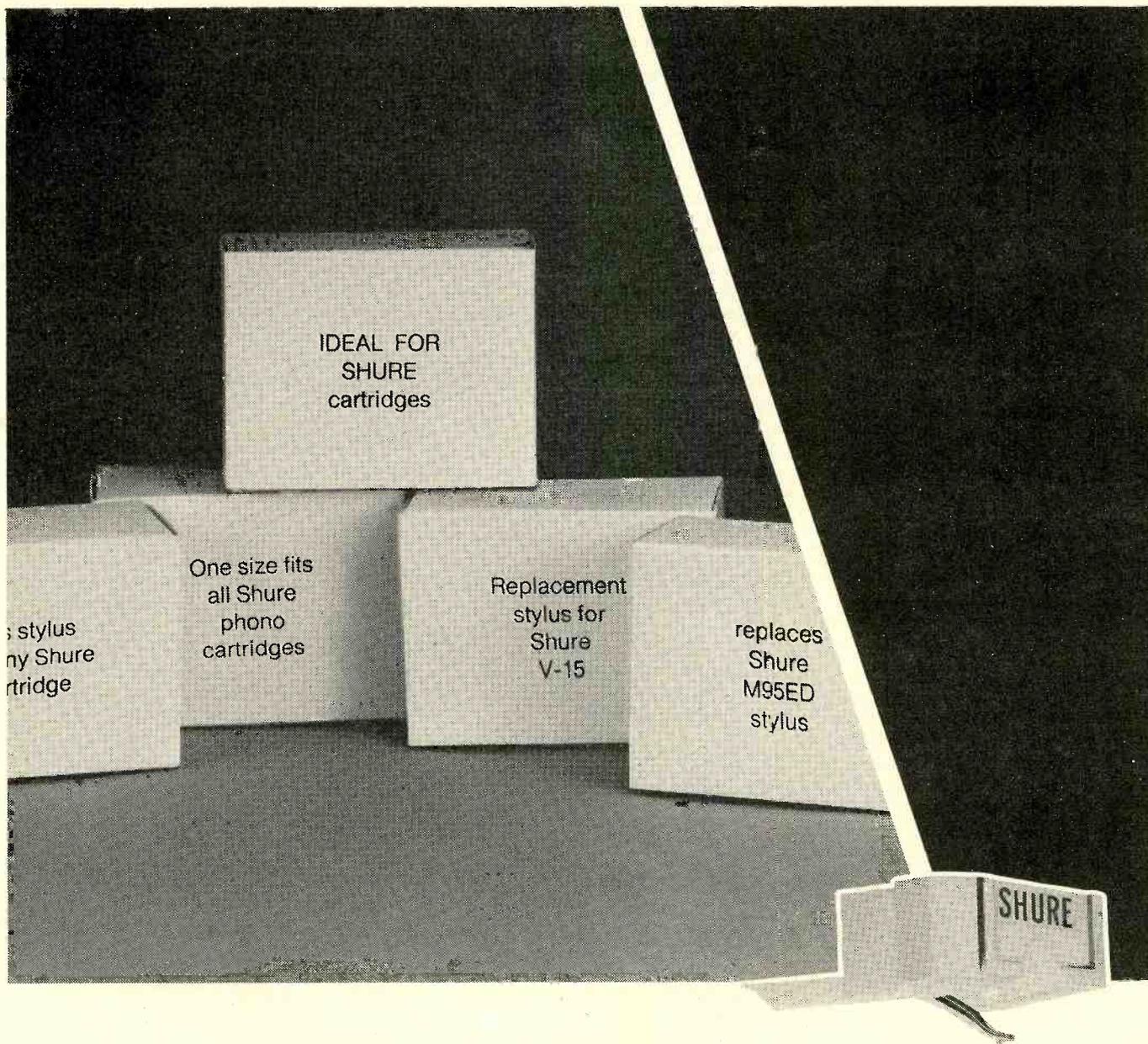
MOST rock lyricists—most successful ones, anyway—agree that writing lyrics isn't exactly high art, but, as Goffin says, it isn't exactly hack work either. It is a commercially valuable craft, and those who practice it best reap a financial and (sometimes) critical reward. And who knows, perhaps those who put into their lyrics a little more than they know they are putting in will win a different, more lasting fame in the future, for their words, more than those of the history books, will be the ones that will tell later generations what it was like to be young in the Seventies. □

MCA Records



"I don't know what's going on in Bernie's mind. But I never question his lyrics. I just sing them."

ELTON AND BERNIE



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Even we were astounded at how difficult it is to find an adequate other-brand replacement stylus for a Shure cartridge. We recently purchased 241 random styli that were not manufactured by Shure, but were being sold as replacements for our cartridges. Only ONE of these 241 styli could pass the same basic production line performance tests that ALL genuine Shure styli must pass. But don't

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CIRCLE NO. 41 ON READER SERVICE CARD

Stereo Review's Record of the Year Awards for 1976

in recognition of significant contributions
to the arts of music and recording
during the 1976 publishing year

THE balloting for these *tenth* annual STEREO REVIEW awards for the outstanding records of the past year brought forth an unusually large number and variety of nominations. If there was any style of music slighted it was not apparent. Granted, most records received only one or two votes, but it was a powerful reminder of just how many fine records came on the market last year that the voting was spread so thin. The interested reader and record buyer, after examining this year's winners and honorable mentions, really ought to go back to the twelve issues that spawned them and see just how many *other* records received unstinting (and well-deserved) praise.

The balloting was done in the usual fashion. Those eligible to vote were the critics and editors of STEREO REVIEW; those records eligible to be voted for were any reviewed by us during the calendar year of 1976, or even, if the review section had unaccountably passed them by, other records actually released during that time. Critics were free to vote for anything that pleased them, within or without their own areas of special interest. But, of course, a critic tends to hear more music that is in his specialty than out of it; the votes, to a degree, reflected that. The standards were and are those of genuine musical and technical excellence, of real contributions to the arts, not of commercial success.

If the voting was biased in any way, it was (other things being relatively equal)

in favor of the newer and younger artists over those already well established and widely appreciated. Of the twelve winners this year, only two, Montserrat Caballé and Joni Mitchell, have received such awards before, while at least four of the winning records were debut discs. The honorable mentions show a little backing and filling, but there is an ample number of previously untouted names there too.

Despite the range of the voting in both number and type of record, the decisions on the winners were clear-cut. Exactly how it came about that so many critics and editors, perhaps despite their own preferences in music, happened to have heard Toots and the Maytals or Montserrat Caballé's new recording of zarzuela arias, for example, and were impressed enough to cast a ballot for one or both of them remains a mystery even around here. Yet, something like it happens each year; the standout records draw attention to themselves like magnets, and somehow they get heard and remembered and voted for.

It is the belief that something like that happens in the marketplace too that keeps good records coming out. It may prove to be unfounded in some cases, but there are enough instances of something of real quality achieving commercial success to inspire us to keep the faith. Faith moves mountains; it also makes records.

—James Goodfriend, *Music Editor*

Record of the Year Awards for 1976

SELECTED BY THE EDITORIAL
STAFF AND CRITICS FOR THE READERS
OF STEREO REVIEW

Honorable Mentions

BACH: *Sonatas and Partitas for Unaccompanied Violin* (Nathan Milstein, violin). DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2709 047.

CHOPIN: *Piano Music* (Emanuel Ax, piano). RCA ARL1-1569.

DR. BUZZARD'S ORIGINAL SAVANNAH BAND. RCA APL1-1504.

GOTTSCHALK: *Piano Works* (Ivan Davis, piano). LONDON CS 6943.

EMMYLOU HARRIS: *Elite Hotel*. REPRIS MS 2236.

HAYDN: *Sonatas Nos. 31, 32, 34* (Gilbert Kalish, piano). NONESUCH H-71318.

JANIS IAN: *Aftertones*. COLUMBIA PC 33919.

KEITH JARRETT: *Köln Concert*. 2 ECM 1064/65.

THE L.A. 4. CONCORD JAZZ CJ 18.

PEGGY LEE: *Mirrors*. A & M SP-4547.

GORDON LIGHTFOOT: *Summertime Dream*. REPRIS 2246.

MENDELSSOHN: *Songs* (Peter Schreier, tenor; Walter Olbertz, piano). DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2530 596.

MESSIAEN: *Quartet for the End of Time* (Tashi). RCA ARL1-1567.

MOZART: *Arias* (Margaret Price, soprano; James Lockhardt, cond.). RCA AGL1-1532.

MARIA MULDAUR: *Sweet Harmony*. REPRIS 2235.

NIELSEN: *Saul and David* (Jascha Horenstein, cond.). UNICORN RHS 343/5.

ROLLING STONES: *Back and Blue*. ROLLING STONE COC 79104.

LINDA RONSTADT: *Hasten Down the Wind*. ASYLUM 7E-1072.

DAVID SANCIOUS: *Transformation* (*The Speed of Love*). EPIC PE 33339.

SCHUBERT: *Quintet in C Major, Op. 163* (Albani Quartet; Thomas Igloi, cello). CRD 1018.

SCHUBERT: *String Quartets No. 9, in G Minor, and No. 13, in A Minor* (Alban Berg Quartet). TELEFUNKEN 6.41882.

BEVERLY SILLS: *Music of Victor Herbert* (Beverly Sills, soprano; André Kostelanetz, cond.). ANGEL SFO-3716C.

PAUL SIMON: *Still Crazy After All These Years*. COLUMBIA PC 33540.

PATTI SMITH: *Horses*. ARISTA 4066.

STRAVINSKY: *Firebird* (Pierre Boulez, cond.). COLUMBIA M-33508.

VERDI: *Il Corsaro* (Lamberto Gardelli, cond.). PHILIPS 6700 098.

Certificate of Merit
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Arthur Fiedler

for his outstanding contributions
to the quality of American musical life



JANE OLIVOR: *First Night*. COLUMBIA PC 34274.



GERSHWIN: *Porgy and Bess* (Lorin Maazel, cond.) LONDON OSA 13116.



MONTSERRAT CABALLÉ: *Music of Spain, Zarzuela Arias* (Montserrat Caballé, soprano; Eugenio Marco, cond.) LONDON OS 26435.



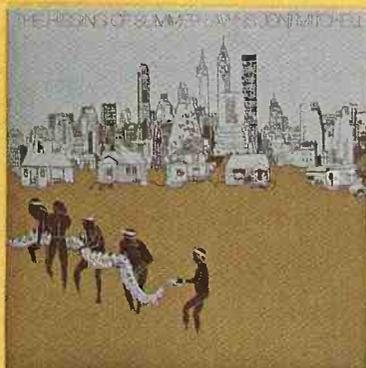
BRAHMS: *Twenty-one Hungarian Dances* (Michel Béroff and Jean Philippe Collard, piano duet). CONNOISSEUR SOCIETY/PATHÉ-MARCONI CSQ 2083.



TOSHIKO AKIYOSHI/LEW TABACKIN BIG BAND: *Long Yellow Road*. RCA JPL1-1350.



SOUTHSIDE JOHNNY & THE ASBURY JUKES: *I Don't Want to Go Home*. EPIC PE 34180.



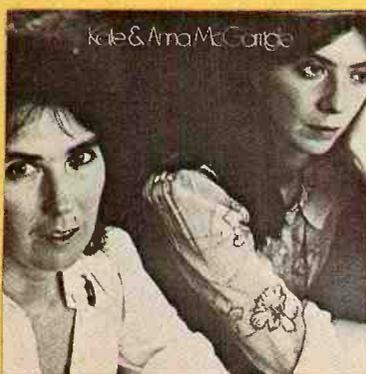
JONI MITCHELL: *The Hissing of Summer Lawns*. ASYLUM 7E-1051.



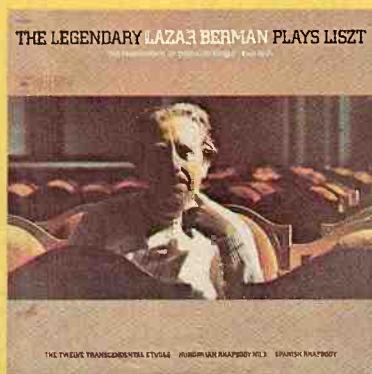
CARLO BERGONZI: *Verdi Arias*. PHILIPS 6747 193.



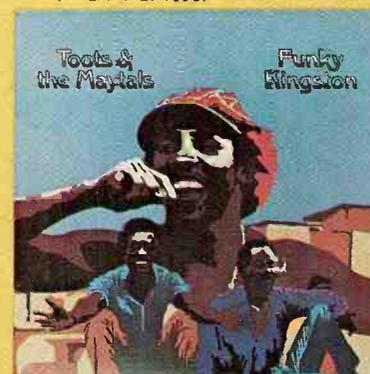
WHEN YOU AND I WERE YOUNG, MAGGIE: *Sentimental Songs of the Nineteenth Century* (Robert White, tenor). RCA ARL1-1698.



KATE & ANNA MCGARRIGLE. WARNER BROS. BS 2862.



LISZT: *Transcendental Etudes; Spanish Rhapsody; Hungarian Rhapsody No. 3* (Lazar Berman, piano). COLUMBIA/MELODIYA M2 33928.



TOOTS AND THE MAYTALS: *Funky Kingston*. ISLAND ILPS 9330.

This is about as simply and as clearly as we can describe this latest achievement by Dual engineers. We could also describe the CS721 as the ultimate expression of the principles that determine the performance of tonearms and drive systems in record playback.

The tonearm is straight-line tubular from pivot to tonearm head, for lowest effective mass and greatest rigidity. It is centered within a true, four-point

The new Dual CS721. It represents everything Dual has learned about turntables.

gimbal in which the tonearm masses pivot at the intersection of both axes. This ensures dynamic balance throughout play, and turntable level is not critical.

Every initial tonearm setting has a special touch of precision.

Stylus overhang is adjustable for optimum horizontal tracking angle. Balance is vernier-adjustable. Stylus force is applied around the vertical pivot and remains perpendicular to the record, even if the turntable is not level. Anti-skating is calibrated separately for all three stylus types and is self-compensating for groove diameter.

In addition to these refinements, the CS721 tonearm has an innovation to be found on no other integrated tonearm: Vertical Tonearm Control. A vernier height adjustment over an 8mm range allows this tonearm to parallel the record with cartridges of any depth and without the use of spacers. Thus, accurate vertical tracking is assured and the effective mass of the tonearm is kept at a minimum. Another benefit: changing cartridges is much easier.

The CS721 direct-drive system is the most advanced today for record playback. It features an all-electronic, low speed, brushless, DC motor with Hall-effect feedback control and a regulated power supply. The motor's field coil design is unique. Two overlapping coil layers, each with eight coreless bifilar-wound coils, achieve a gapless rotating magnetic field. This eliminates the successive pulses of magnetic flux typical of all other motor designs.

Although the CS721 is Dual's most expensive model, it is hardly the most expensive turntable available today. When you make comparisons, as we believe you should, you may ever consider the CS721 underpriced. Not to mention the even less expensive direct-drive CS704, with the same tonearm and drive system but with semi-automatic start and stop.

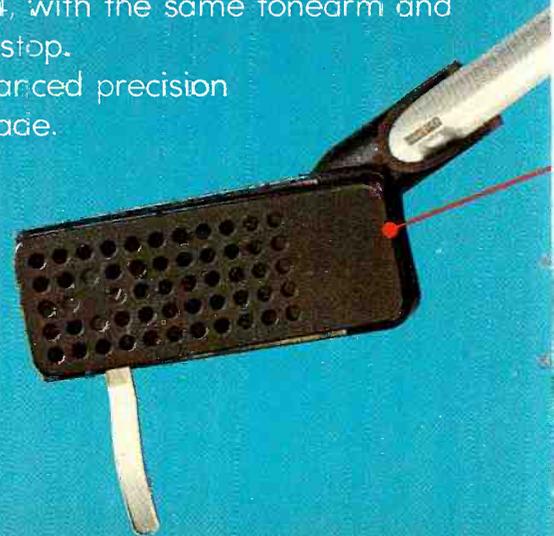
With either model, you will enjoy the advanced precision performance of the quietest turntable ever made.



United Audio Products

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Exclusive U.S. Distribution Agency for Dual



True, four-point gimbal centers and pivots the tonearm mass at intersection of horizontal and vertical axes. Tonearm is dynamically balanced in all planes. The four need-e-point pivots are first hardened, then honed, a process which produces microscopically smooth surfaces.

Cueing descent speed can be set from slow to rapid, and tonearm cueing height is adjustable. Result: complete control of stylus setdown via cue-control.

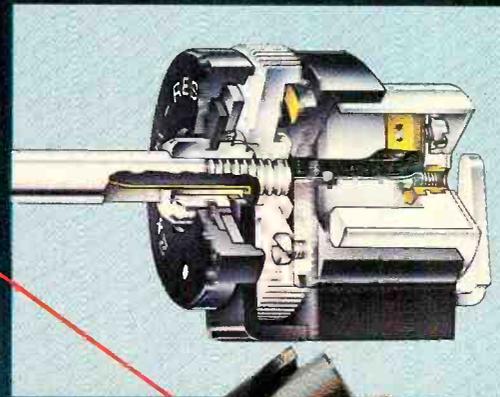
Vertical Tonearm Control sets and locks tonearm height at any point over an 8mm range. Tonearm thus exactly parallels the record with any size cartridge. Result: accurate vertical tracking without the added mass of cartridge spacers.

Straight-line tubular tonearm provides maximum torsional rigidity and lowest effective mass. With the same effective tonearm length and tangential tracking error any other shape must either sacrifice rigidity or increase mass.

Rigid three-point suspension locks cartridge holder to tonearm head in identical position each time it is removed and replaced. Together with adjustable stylus overhang, this assures that correct vertical and horizontal tracking angle will be maintained.

Specifications (DIN B1): CS721, > 72dB; CS704, > 70dB.
Wow and flutter: $\pm 0.03\%$

The unique counterbalance contains two mechanical anti-resonance filters. These are separately tuned to absorb energy in the resonance-frequency ranges of the tonearm/cartridge system and chassis to minimize acoustical feedback.



Stylus pressure is applied via a long coiled spring centered around the vertical pivot. Pressure is always maintained perpendicular to the record even if the turntable is not level.



The Dual CS721: fully automatic, single-play turntable with an electronic direct-drive motor. Features include: Vertical Tonearm Control; variable cue-control tilt height and descent speed; 10% electronic pitch-control for both speeds (33 1/3 and 45 rpm); illuminated strobe; dynamically-balanced 12" platter; cue-control viscous-damped in both directions continuous-repeat.

Price: less than \$400, including base and dust cover. **Dual CS704:** similar, except semi-automatic. Ingenious mechanical sensor locates lead-in groove of 12" and 7" records; tonearm lifts and motor shuts off automatically at end of play. Less than \$310, including base and dust cover.

Fully-automatic, single-play/multi-play Duals: 1225, less than \$140; 1226, less than \$170; 1228, less than \$200; 1249, less than \$280. Semi-automatic, single-play Duals: 502, less than \$160; 510, less than \$200.

CIRCLE NO. 50 ON READER SERVICE CARD



FIEDLER

BUILDER OF AMERICA'S MUSICAL BRIDGES

***M**R. FIEDLER," said the voice of the telephone operator in the New York Hotel where the conductor was staying on a recent visit to the city, "is in the King Cole Room." No doubt, I thought, as the call was being processed, with his pipe, his bowl, and his fiddlers three, preparing for a forthcoming bash in royal surroundings.*

If the Nassau (Long Island) Coliseum may be construed as "royal surroundings," then so it was—with the fiddlers three augmented by all the other strings, brass, and woodwinds that make up the Boston Pops Orchestra. By no coincidence at all, the concert was part of a week's sojourn during which the parent Boston Symphony paid its first visit of the season to New York. The players' time was divided between their Symphony commitments with the current music director Seiji Ozawa (two concerts in Carnegie Hall), and the Pops with the perennial Fiedler (the Saturday program on Long Island followed by a TV taping on Sunday) ▶

By Irving Kolodin

Photo courtesy Deutsche Grammophon

FIEDLER



"Music was all around the first generation of Boston-born Fiedlers."

Such assignments have for so long been the pattern for the pink-cheeked,

white-haired gentleman who has to be the liveliest octogenarian in the musical community that there are millions who think he has been doing nothing else all his life. And certainly among that group is the mass of individuals who have, collectively, bought more than fifty million records with Fiedler's name on them during the last forty-eight years.

Scattered among those fifty million discs, most of which are by the Boston Pops, are a comparatively small number marketed in the name of the Arthur Fiedler Sinfonietta, an aggregation whose surpassing performances of works by Bach, Boyce, Corelli, Felton, Handel, Mozart, Pachelbel, Telemann, and even Hindemith conjure up the possibility of quite another career for the conductor. They amply prove that America has given birth to very few musicians equal to Arthur Fiedler in talent, training, and that very necessary extra ingredient we try to describe with the word "temperament."

The question on my mind, when Fiedler had settled down for the visit that followed the phone call, was: "Do

you ever look back and think of another path that might have taken you in quite a different musical direction?" The answer came quickly enough to suggest that the thought had perhaps crossed his mind. "Well, you can't help thinking of that. But I am really very happy. I chose this way myself. I have been connected with the Boston Pops for forty-eight years and I am very glad to have had the opportunity. I like the diversity of the repertoire. I am not a specialist in anything, as some people are in Mahler, or Bruckner, or what not. I like to do all types of music. All Pops concerts, you know, are divided into three parts. The first section is rather good music. The second part is a soloist. The third consists of light music of various kinds—show music and music of the day."

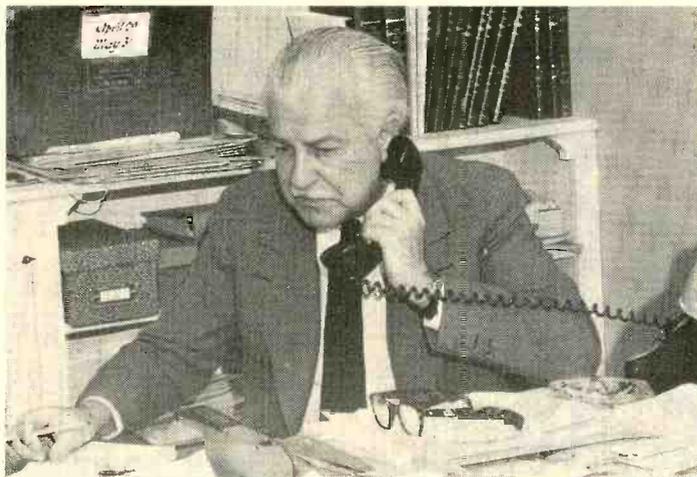
"The question comes up," I elaborated, "among some of us who, being familiar with your varied—I don't say checkered [small chuckle from Fiedler]—career in all its aspects, have long thought that your gifts were of a nature that, had you concentrated, could have led almost anywhere." "Well, yes,"



There's more to it than just waving a stick; Fiedler spends more time at his desk than on the podium.

agreed Fiedler, "had I concentrated. I know, as an instance, when I began to conduct the Pops concerts in the Thirties and even before, that people approached me to take over this and that orchestra in smaller communities in the United States. Well, that would have gotten me involved in local politics, which I don't like, and I wouldn't have had the kind of orchestra I have in Boston—it was a great temptation to hang on to *that*. Furthermore, the whole idea of the Pops concerts needed someone really to give his whole devotion, time, and love to it. I don't care what I play, I try to do it all damned well. In any case," he added with a laugh, "it's too late to change now. After all, I have performed with almost every orchestra you can mention in America. Only last week I conducted the Chicago Symphony, which is, as you know, a great orchestra."

The mutually accepted, if unspoken, point of it all was that, under the light



touch and even the frivolity that sometimes invades his Boston Pops work, there is the hand of a master musician and the mind of a man cultivated by long association with some of the greatest artists of his time. And the prime condition of the Boston Pops indeed shows the devotion, time, and love that Fiedler has lavished upon it.

THERE was another Fiedler in the Boston Symphony when the Pops were born in 1885. That Fiedler was the Vienna-born Emanuel, father of Arthur, who had been recruited for service in America by his friend Wilhelm Gericke, an honored name among the orchestra's early conductors. Pops concerts were then directed by Adolf Neundorf in the old Boston Music Hall on behalf of city-bound Bostonians who couldn't escape the summer doldrums by running off to Cape Cod or the White Mountains. They sat at tables, perhaps with an ice for refreshment, and responded to performances of Rossini's *William Tell* Overture and Strauss' *Pizzicato Polka* very much as their fourth-generation descendants do today.

In addition to Father Fiedler, there were brothers Gus and Benny in the violin sections, and they were eventually joined by a cello-playing relative whose family name (Zimble, later associated with a Sinfonietta he organized) concealed an offspring of Emanuel Fiedler's sister. Music was therefore all around the first generation of Boston-born Fiedlers, which included Elsa, a fine pianist, and Rosa, a cellist, as well as Arthur. This was only as natural as the family name they had inherited. "After all," the conductor observed, "as a tailor came by the name of Schneider in the old country, and a cobbler was a Schumacher, so we fiddlers became Fiedlers."

With violin studies in Berlin behind him, and a diploma from that city's Hochschule in his pocket, where else should the young Fiedler go but back to Boston (especially in 1915, with Europe locked in World War I? No reception committee with offers in hand awaited him at the pier; he spent a summer playing at a resort on Nantucket before an opening occurred in the second violin section of The Symphony (there has been, traditionally, only *one*

FIRE departments and universities across the land have honored Arthur Fiedler, but in the serious music community he has apologists. "The Pops are all very well," the condescending defenders will say, "because they help to subsidize the more significant activities of the Boston Symphony Orchestra. Fiedler gives young artists their first opportunities to play as soloists with orchestras. And who knows how many people have been

orchestra into the world's classiest jukebox, Fiedler has over the years conducted most of the standard repertoire, made significant incursions into areas of music that have since become standard thanks in part to his advocacy, and kept alive a whole tradition of honorable music that is both well made and entertaining.

And, of course, no music in a Fiedler performance ever seems boring—thanks to his taste in arrangers, his program-building abilities, his skill on the podium, his joy-communicating personality; Fiedler makes music reach people. On the Fourth of July this last year a crowd of more than 400,000 people gathered on the banks of the Charles River to hear Arthur Fiedler and the Boston Pops Orchestra. That crowd was about the same size as the one at Woodstock; combined with the television and radio audience it may have been the largest public ever assembled to hear a symphony orchestra. There were extra-musical reasons for that: there was a gaudy fireworks display to spangle the sky; the beautiful night invited picnicking and confidences; and it was, after all, the actual Bicentennial of our nation's birth. But the cheer that went up after every selection on the program reaffirmed the place music has in all the most important public and private moments of our lives as it reaffirmed Arthur Fiedler's long, loving, and lasting association with festivity.

Richard Dyer
Music Critic, Boston Globe

The View From Boston

brought to appreciate greater music because they were introduced to it when they came to hear Arthur Fiedler conduct something else?"

The apologists are saying true things, but they are not emphasizing the right ones. The Maestro himself, for example, doesn't think his job is to toil as a musical missionary among the quality-deaf heathen. "I just want people to have a good time," he will say, going on to quote Rossini's famous remark about how all kinds of music are good except the boring kind.

It has been Fiedler's great gift to the public that so few kinds of music are boring to him. In addition to the arrangements of current hits that turn his

FIEDLER



"It's really not the money that keeps me going, it's the activity. But I have slowed down...."

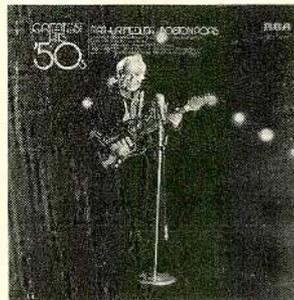
symphony as far as Bostonians are concerned).

"I have never had another job than the Boston Symphony," confided Fiedler. "I started with Karl Muck, as you know. It was a different world in those days. No guest conductors; one man did the whole damned thing. No time off to guest conduct elsewhere. It was severe, but it was rewarding." Asked if he could capsule his recollections of Muck (who made the Boston Symphony's first recording ever, in 1917, with fiddler Fiedler playing in the finale of Tchaikovsky's Fourth Symphony as well as other selections), he replied: "He was a very educated man. He had a Ph.D. . . . legally, not honorarily. He loved mathematics, as many musicians have. A very precise man. Never sentimental—something I hate in music—and very productive in his use of rehearsal time. Knew what he wanted. Highly industrious. Would take home parts that needed treatment, like the woodwinds, and put in markings—always in very good taste—in his own immaculate hand."

DOUBTLESS Fiedler could furnish a similar word picture for every subsequent Boston Symphony conductor and music director. He played under three others—Henri Rabaud, Pierre Monteux, and Serge Koussevitzky—as well as being proconsul (for Brookline) for every music director since Koussevitzky: Charles Munch, Erich Leinsdorf, William Steinberg, and, now, Ozawa. "You know," said Fiedler, "we venerated the conductor in Muck's day. Doffed our hats if we met him on the street or backstage. The other day, as I was leaving Carnegie, a

young member of the Pops came charging by. 'Hi, Arthur!' he yelled at me. Damned if I even know his name. Imagine what would have happened in the days of Muck or Koussevitzky."

The impulse to conduct began to stir in Fiedler as he approached his tenth year in the orchestra. In 1924 he organized a group of colleagues into the Fiedler Sinfonietta; the aggregation persisted and came in time to record, with E. Power Biggs, some of the first Handel organ concertos ever available in this country. Sitting on the banks of the Charles a few years later, Fiedler visualized an activity that would give



additional employment to himself and members of the orchestra while providing Bostonians with free outdoor music of high quality. The Esplanade Concerts were born in 1929, and among the other things to which they gave rise was Fiedler's career as conductor of the Boston Pops. The Sinfonietta and the Esplanade Concerts demonstrated his rapport with his colleagues, his businesslike way of getting things done, and these were factors in his favor even if being born in Boston was not. In looking for a new conductor for the Pops, continentalists among the orchestra's directors had thought an Italian—Alfredo Casella, for example—could take the pulse of the public better. That experiment ended after a sea-



son or two; Fiedler got the job in 1930. However, it was not until the mid-Sixties that Fiedler became the first Boston-born musician to conduct the Symphony in a subscription concert.

Once given his chance with the Pops, Fiedler did what every productive person does with such an opportunity: he converted the orchestral programming into a mirror image of himself. If there is a Beethoven overture on a Pops program, it is because Fiedler, in the days of recorded versions by Toscanini and Weingartner, did a better-sounding *Weihe des Hauses* than either. And if the audience responds to a special kind of character in Liszt's Hungarian Rhapsody No. 1, it could be for the reason I gave in a comment of mine on Fiedler's recording of it (c. 1940): "There is a suspicion of the Nikisch treatment in the vigorous grandeur of the first side." Over the years, new names and new pieces have taken their places in the Boston Pops repertoire because Fiedler is a man devoted to both.

As an instance, I asked him how Leroy Anderson came into his life. "Leroy Anderson?" cross-queried Fiedler. "He was a young man at Harvard Music School when I first got to know him, studying and leading the Harvard band. Very scholarly. I asked him to do a few arrangements for us. In return he asked to be allowed to attend Pops rehearsals, something we never permitted. I agreed, and he came regularly every



day, listening very attentively, with razor-sharp ears, learning everything about instrumentation. He came in one day, looking very sheepish, and said: 'I have here a little piece I have written. Look at it and tell me what you think.' I looked at it. It was called *Jazz Pizzicato*. I liked it, and we played it. Very cute. People loved it, and we arranged to record it. As it was quite short, I suggested he write another piece to precede it. That was *Jazz Legato*. Everything went on from there: *Syncopated Clock*, *Toy Trumpet*, *Sleigh Ride*, all charming, with wonderful titles that framed the music he wrote. He also did excellent show arrangements for us—*Kiss Me Kate*, things like that."

Not all such stories have happy endings, of course. Like the one that begins with Fiedler's discovery, while leafing through stacks of music in a

New York publishing house, of a piece called *Jalousie*. The composer's name was Jakob (not Niels, of nineteenth-century fame) Gade, and *Jalousie* was to become the first Pops record to sell a million copies. Several years after this memorable success, the phone rang in Fiedler's Boston apartment. "Here is Jakob Gade," said the caller. "You have done so much for my *Jalousie*. I came from Copenhagen to thank you." There was little Fiedler could do but invite the man up. When the doorbell rang he discovered a small, quaintly dressed, middle-aged figure with a package under his arm. "Here is my symphony," said Gade, presenting the bundle. Years later, Fiedler remembers it as "one of the worst pieces of music I ever looked at."

YEARs of evolution have brought changes of matter rather than of manner to Fiedler's work. Did he wear a wig to dramatize his presentation of the Beatles' music in the Sixties? Yes, he did. And in 1936 he had taken pride in welcoming his father, on his seventy-second birthday, as a playing member of the Esplanade Orchestra in a performance of Brahms' C Minor Symphony. A doting son? Of course. But a news-minded showman as well, as a contemporary picture of the event in the *Boston Traveler* attests. Some of us wince just a little when a Fiedler antic—a bewhiskered Santa Claus at Christmas time, for example—is caught not only by local news cameras but by the vastly more public ones of TV, but the publicity is effective.

Asked to define his own attitude toward the present-day Pops repertoire, Fiedler, in effect, echoed the maxim attributed to the great Theodore Thomas in the 1890's when he was creating America's symphony-orchestra audience: "Popular music is familiar music." Says Fiedler: "I continually add to the catalog music from current shows, music from movies, music people enjoy dancing to and might enjoy hearing in arrangements for our great orchestra—all as a supplement to the old favorites. Right now we are doing *A Fifth of Beethoven*, a hit record created by a man named Murphy. Very cute. Some people might call it immoral. I think it's fun. You know, there *should* be fun in music. All the great composers wrote music for fun—

Fiedler's Latest Discs



"...no reservations about the stunning performances or demonstration-quality sound"

IT is good to find Arthur Fiedler recording real music again after the long stretch of show tunes, rock medleys, etc. Polydor had him doing. His expert handling of the Moussorgsky, Saint-Saëns, and Dukas staples on a new DG disc reminds us that he is, after all, the conductor whose 78-rpm recording of Beethoven's *Consecration of the House* Overture received almost universal critical acclaim, and who gave us so many "reference" versions of dozens of other concert works by Weber, Rossini, the Strauss family, Wolf-Ferrari, Ibert, Dvorak, Paderewski, MacDowell, *et al.* (to say nothing of those "Mottled" goodies by Rameau, Gluck, and Leclair). I suspect most listeners will want, and perhaps already own, more of the three ballets than the single excerpt by which each is represented on the DG recording (certainly so in the case of the Stravinsky), and at this price one does try to avoid duplications. I have no reservations at all, though, about the stunning performances or the demonstration-quality sound.

One of those ballet pieces is in fact duplicated in the bargain-price assortment—a kind of Basic Library of Fiedler—assembled by RCA from recordings made between 1956 and 1967. And, if it matters, I like both the performance and the sonic treatment of the *Sabre Dance* just a little bit more in RCA's 1958 version, for the remas-

View from the inside out: the Boston Pops Esplanade concert July 4, 1976. (Photo: R. Di Natale/Seagull Corp.)

tered sound is remarkably undated, with everything shimmeringly realistic and well focused. Fiedler was, I think, the first to record *Wein, Weib und Gesang* with its wonderful introduction uncut, and his 1966 remake is a classic demonstration of the style he acquired as a teenage member of the great Strauss-family orchestra itself.

John Green's fussy arrangement of *Strike Up the Band* is less appealing than the one Fiedler recorded some forty years ago, but the stylish presentations of *Jalousie* and the *Fire Dance* parallel those that made that same coupling the famed best-seller it was in Victor's 78-rpm Red Seal catalog for a decade or so. What a knowing, subtle, and altogether untired *Waltz of the Flowers*, and what an equally subtle blend of gutsiness and dignity in the *Sousa!*

PERSONALLY, I'd have preferred a Nicolai or Suppé overture in place of the pop numbers, but the point of this particular collection, obviously, is to illustrate the elegance and panache this rather extraordinary figure has brought to all his music-making when he's been at his best—and that has been in a greater percentage of his undertakings

than anyone could reasonably ask from any musician active in so varied a repertoire over so long a period. A great showcase. —Richard Freed

ARTHUR FIEDLER: *Danse Infernale*. Moussorgsky (arr. Rimsky-Korsakov): *Night on Bald Mountain*. Saint-Saëns: *Danse Macabre*, Op. 40. Khachaturian: *Gayne: Sabre Dance*. Dukas: *The Sorcerer's Apprentice*. Stravinsky: *The Firebird: Infernal Dance of Kaschei*. Ginastera: *Estancia: Malambo*. Boston Pops Orchestra, Arthur Fiedler cond. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2584 004 \$7.98.

ARTHUR FIEDLER: *A Legendary Performer*. Gershwin (arr. Green): *Strike Up the Band*. J. Gade: *Jalousie (Tango Tzigane)*. Tchaikovsky: *The Nutcracker*, Op. 71a: *Waltz of the Flowers*. Falla: *El Amor Brujo: Ritual Dance of Fire*. Ippolitov-Ivanov: *Caucasian Sketches*, Op. 10: *Procession of the Sardur*. Mascagni: *Cavalleria Rusticana: Intermezzo*. Khachaturian: *Sabre Dance*. Johann Strauss II: *Wine, Woman and Song*, Op. 333. F. Loewe (arr. Hayman): *My Fair Lady: Selections*. Lennon-McCartney (arr. Hayman): *I Want to Hold Your Hand*. Raye-Prince (arr. Hayman): *The Boogie-Woogie Bugle Boy of Company B*. Sousa: *The Stars and Stripes Forever*. Boston Pops Orchestra, Arthur Fiedler cond. RCA CRL1-2064 \$7.98.

Mozart, Haydn, Schubert. I also like to think of myself—some people, again, may dislike me for saying so—some-what as a chef. I try to make a good combination of elements, beginning with an *hors d'oeuvre*, then a main course, and, of course, dessert—don't forget dessert. People love it. I like to think that we play not only things that are popular, but those that have the potential to become popular."

Fiedler's relish for his own identity is not difficult to understand. He likes to be liked, of that there is no doubt. He enjoys living well, and that has its price. Young musicians have enjoyed his patronage on innumerable occasions, and that he enjoys too. The first time I heard Grace Bumbry was at a Pops concert conducted by Fiedler in the San Francisco Civic Auditorium in the early Sixties. "Right," he confirmed. "She was as nervous as a witch, but very curious, in an intelligent way, about everything connected with singing with an orchestra, that being her first time. She's gone a long way. So has Tedd Joselson, one of the more recent new pianists to play with me, and Horacio Gutiérrez."

"It's really not the money that keeps me going," says Fiedler, "it's the activity. But I have slowed down from the year in which I had 197 dates—not including rehearsals or recordings. I like to travel, but it takes me away from home too much. My wife doesn't enjoy travel as much as I do; when she does, it's usually on a long (and expensive) trip—Hawaii, for example, where we'll be a week from now. Often on tours I run into colleagues. Recently I met up with Rubinstein. He said to me, 'Arthur, why do you travel so much?' I said to him, 'Arthur, why do you travel so much?' We both laughed. But if I didn't move around, especially if I had to give it up or—God forbid—retire, I think I'd just collapse. I really need the activity."

AN abiding share of this activity, wherever Fiedler finds himself, is in firefighting, its lore and its techniques. Pictures of him attired as a deputy chief, in a rubber coat and boots, are probably in more newspaper files than similar snaps of any prominent personality since the late Ed Wynn was selling gasoline for Texaco or Fiorello La Guardia was mayor of New York. Fiedler drives a Volkswagen whose plates identify him as an honorary deputy chief of the Boston Fire Department, and it is radio-equipped to alert him to the outbreak of any major fire in the Boston area. While on tour, his hotel telephone operator is instructed to flash his room any time a four-alarm fire is reported.

Asked to explain this phenomenon, Fiedler offered as concise an explanation as his capsule comment on Muck as a conductor. "When I was growing up, I liked to play ball with the kids, but I spent most of my time practicing and couldn't get out. So, when I had a little time free, I'd go down the street to the nearby fire house, play with the dogs, pat the horses (they had horse-drawn trucks in those days), and make friends with the firemen. They were all nice fellows and let me slide down the pole from the room upstairs where they slept or played cards between calls. Then the alarm would sound, and off they'd go. I was left alone, wondering what they did at the fire. As I grew up,



"I am an honorary chief in over three hundred fire departments all over the world."

they called me 'Sparks' (I later owned a Dalmatian called Sparks). I was what now would be called a buff. Do you know how that term came about? No? Well, in the old days, here in New York, when the engine went out on trips in the winter, they'd be followed by fellows wearing buffalo coats, which were then popular. When the men got to the fire, one would say to the other, 'Look at the buffs.'"

"Sounds logical," I commented.

"Right," said Fiedler. "But my interest in firefighting goes deeper than that. A very good friend of mine when I was growing up was a man named Codman, who became Fire Commissioner of Boston. Knowing of my interest, he gave me credentials which allow me to be on the scene when the deputy arrives and begins to organize the strategy for fighting that particular blaze. It varies all the time, depending on the wind, the kind of building, the materials, all kinds of factors. The chief on duty has to make up his mind quickly and outline the plan to be put into action. It's much like conducting an orchestra. You go out and go to work immediately. No time for second

thoughts or changing a tempo. You have to go to the heart of the matter instantly." He thought for a moment, then remarked, "You probably wouldn't believe it, but I am an honorary chief in over three hundred fire departments all over the world."

That includes not only Brookline, Massachusetts, and Tokyo, Japan, but Vienna, Virginia, the home of the Filene Center at Wolf Trap, where Fiedler conducts regularly. I would not be surprised to learn that it also applies to the firefighting arm in Vienna, Austria, if only to honor Fiedler's long association with such incendiary matter of local origin as Josef Strauss' *Feuerfest*.

Despite his imposing credentials as the only person remotely connected with classical music who has accumulated a sales total of over fifty million records, it will surprise most readers (it surprised me) to learn that, at this writing, neither Fiedler nor the Boston Pops has an ongoing recording affiliation. He deplores the situation, he says, more on behalf of the orchestra's personnel than for himself, because recording fees have become an anticipated part of their annual income.

RECORD collectors will remember that RCA gave up its long association with the Boston Symphony and the Pops because of the heavy investment it had to make in the Philadelphia Orchestra. RCA wanted, apparently, to retain the Pops, but Deutsche Gramophon, the company that was to sign the Boston, wanted all or nothing. Now, after five years with DG (on the Polydor label), the Boston Pops is free-lancing. An affiliation with London's Phase IV produced some impressive records, but the bugaboo of high production costs makes it necessary to achieve astronomical sales in order to show a profit, the kind of sales that result from long association with a single label and consequent over-the-years promotion. So the future of both Fiedler and the Pops remains for the moment in doubt.

But whatever the vagaries of the remainder of his career, Arthur Fiedler's combination of musical distinction and vast popularity will be a tough act to follow. I have heard at least one American's name suggested as a possible Pops conductor if and when, but he'd better acquire a good many more humane attributes to go with his nice back and sprightly tempos if he wants to succeed in this line. They didn't name a span across the Charles River (beside the Esplanade) the Arthur Fiedler Bridge just because he went to a lot of fires. Arthur Fiedler has been building America's musical bridges all his public life. □

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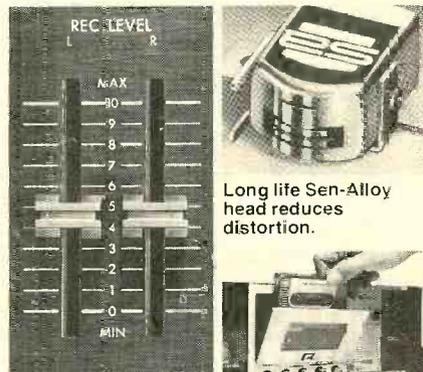
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Pianist Garrick Ohlsson

By Gladys Saxon

INTERNATIONAL piano competitions are in some ways like big international tennis tournaments. But though winning a major tournament may be a climax in the career of a professional tennis player, taking first prize in a prestigious competition is only the beginning for a young pianist. Garrick Ohlsson, who in 1970 became the only American ever to win the Chopin International Piano Competition in Warsaw, Poland, says, "It's a stepping stone, a way of letting people know about you."

A first prize puts a seal of approval on a young pianist, certifying that he has reached a certain level of professional attainment, and this is useful in getting him engagements. "Orchestra managers get so many brochures from pianists every day they don't even have time to read them, let alone listen to audition tapes or to the pianist himself," Ohlsson continued. "But if someone is a first-prize winner in the Chopin, they can say, 'We don't have to *think* about this guy—just hire him.' Once you arrive at those places, of course, you still have to play well enough so they'll like you and want you back. Winning the competition doesn't *make* it for you—it just paves the way."

When Ohlsson returned to the United States from Poland, he was immediately invited to play with the Philadelphia Orchestra at Avery Fisher Hall in New York and to perform at the White House. Over the next few years the number of his engagements increased as he toured America and Europe, and he signed an exclusive contract with Angel Records.

ANOTHER kind of seal of approval was put on the young pianist's career in 1975 by Harold C. Schonberg, the powerful critic of the *New York Times*. Reviewing one of Ohlsson's recitals, Schonberg said, "This was not merely a good piano recital; it was also an important one, and it put Mr. Ohlsson right up in the rank of major pianists." He praised Ohlsson's warm piano sound and his phenomenal technique and commented that everything he played was full of personality. Schonberg ended the review by saying, "Physically this young man is a giant, and if he continues to play and develop this way, he can also be a musical giant."

Interviewed recently at his New York City apartment, Ohlsson said, "I'm so obsessed with the idea of playing the piano and—I hope—getting better at it, that if I had a nine-to-five job

doing something else, I'd still manage to practice a few hours a day anyway. Being a pianist, which really means having a job that permits one to work at the piano full time, is like icing on the cake."

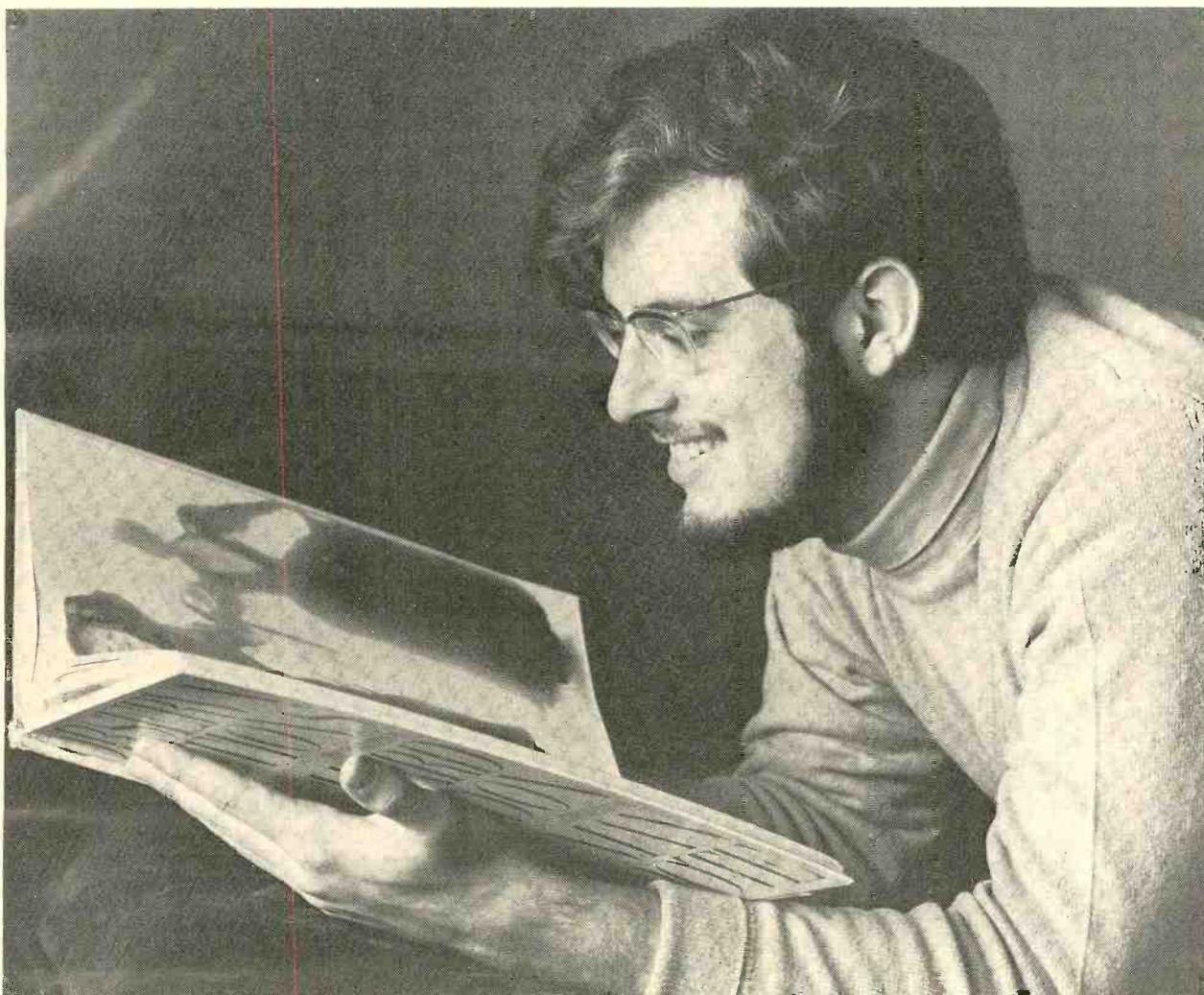
FOR Ohlsson it all started in White Plains, New York, where he grew up and where he faced his first piano keys at the age of eight. "My parents felt that every kid should have piano lessons. After two weeks I was addicted," he said. "As soon as I started thinking about what I wanted to do with my life, it was definitely music. There was no choice involved—it was kind of inevitable."

He studied first with Thomas Lishman in Westchester County, New York, later with Sascha Gorodnitzky at the Juilliard School in New York City, and he says with pride that he also had a bit of coaching with the late Rosina Lhevinne. "But my most important teacher was Olga Barabini, the lady I studied with privately in Westchester from the age of eighteen on. I worked with her while I was at Juilliard, and the moonlighting trick of having two teachers was highly unusual—but very valuable to me."

He doesn't work regularly with a teacher now, but even at this stage in his career he occasionally wants the opinion of a coach. "Singers are always coaching, even some of the very greatest ones, and string players are always playing for each other. It's easy to become isolated if you're a pianist. It's a much lonelier existence. I have a few people I coach with, people who are a bit severe and who know me, including Olga. You need people listening, people who can help you."

On the subject of what motivates a person to become a concert pianist, he said, "When you're young, you don't even know. If you are talented, people encourage you to do things that get you a lot of attention, and you think of fame. You go on working, and then you get competitive about it. You realize there are a lot of good people in the field, and you want to be able to say, 'Well, I'm really better than most of them.' You have to come to terms with that at some time."

"When I was about seventeen, I went to concerts every day for a couple of weeks as an experiment, and at the end I thought to myself, 'Well, I've heard a good selection of pianists now, and if I'm not better than half of them, I *can* be in very short order. That's good enough for me. At least if I enter



the field, I won't be in the bottom half."

Unlike some pianists, Ohlsson has no obsession about his hands. "You can get awfully neurotic about it," he said. "Lots of pianists go around with their hands in their pockets and won't shake hands. But the real danger to one's playing doesn't come from immediate little things you do with your hands. Any physical problem beyond a cold will affect it."

"I don't happen to be especially interested in woodworking or anything like that, but if I were, I'd go ahead and do it. I'm careful. I don't do stupid things. I play tennis, but at the beginning of the season I don't go out on the court for two hours immediately and come back with an arm I can't move. I go out the first day for ten minutes, the next day for fifteen, then twenty, and in a week I am able to play just as long as I want."

Ohlsson is on the road giving concerts seven or eight months of the year, which he thinks is a little too much. ("In this profession you seem to travel too much or not enough.") But he says if he ever gets to the point that he doesn't know which town he's in, he'll quit touring for a while.

The French, German, and Spanish he learned in high school are useful in his travels. "I also speak Italian pretty well," he says. "I learned it because I wanted to—from operas and from my mother, who's Italian. I know a little Swedish—my father's Swedish. Languages are a kind of mini-hobby of mine. I'm not really fantastic at it like some musicians, but I can get along pretty much anywhere in Europe with ease. Every season I spend two or three months there. My mother is a travel agent, and I'm her best client. She figures up the mileage each year and it's colossal."

"I want to be influenced; everybody has been. Pianists have always stolen ideas from each other, and that's as it should be."

(Continued overleaf)

Ohlsson

Because of his "race-horse nerves," Ohlsson has never been bothered by stage fright. "As far as nerves go, it's very easy to give two recitals a week. It's much more difficult to give one a month. And to give one a year, as conservatory students do, is holy hell. And yet to give five a week is inhuman. A well-balanced life would probably be about one concert a week, or maybe three in a week and then two weeks off."

ACCORDING to Ohlsson, piano groups are "mostly ladies over seventy-five," and ladies' committees are part of every recitalist's life. "It's understandable. A concert is an event, after all. I complain that they all ask the same things: how many hours a day I practice and where I'm going. But if I'm at a party and I see Alicia de Larrocha, for example, I say, 'Where have you been, where are you going, what are you working on?' And I realize I'm as bad as the rest of them."

Alicia de Larrocha is a pianist he says he admires immensely. "She's always been very encouraging to me. Whenever we're both in New York we spend an evening together." There are other modern pianists he admires but tactfully prefers not to discuss. He hasn't met Horowitz or Rubinstein, but would like to. Ohlsson is not afraid of being influenced by other pianists' interpretations of music he is adding to

his repertoire. "If it is in the standard repertoire, I've already heard it, so I can't say that I'm starting with a clean slate because I've already been influenced. Besides, I want to be influenced; everybody has been. Pianists have always stolen ideas from each other, and that's as it should be."

"When I listen to records it's mostly those of Golden Age pianists: Josef Hofmann, Rachmaninoff, Ignaz Friedman. After I won the Chopin prize, an important critic in Poland took me aside and said, 'Now that you're going to be playing Chopin as an expert, you really ought to know how it's done.' I spent about four hours listening to his recordings of Hofmann, Friedman, and others, and my mind was bent backwards. I heard people play Chopin with conceptions I'd never dreamed of, and I realized there's more to this than just doing a nice job in a contest. This could be a whole style of life. Now that I'm out of my purist phase, one thing that will begin to show up in my work is ideas from those Golden Age pianists. If some striking conception really appeals to you, there's no reason not to try to adapt some of it—if it's true to your own way of musical thinking."

Although Ohlsson admits to an "ongoing affair" with the music of Chopin, he does not consider himself a specialist in the works of any single composer. Most of his repertoire is drawn from the standard piano literature of the nineteenth century. "It's what I was trained on at school. If I'd studied with a Mozart or Bach specialist, I would probably play more of that today."

Eventually, he would like to do some teaching himself ("transmitting, passing it on, that's important"), but he

does not want to be a conductor. "So much of any musical career has little or nothing to do with actually making music, but when I see what conductors have to go through, I'm very happy to be playing the piano."

Does he still go to other pianists' concerts? "I loved what Leontyne Price said in the STEREO REVIEW interview [January 1976] about being unable to go to the opera because she knows all the craziness that's going on backstage, and it makes her too uncomfortable," he said. "A concert isn't nearly as involved as an opera, but nonetheless, I know too much about it, and I almost can't enjoy piano recitals played by other people. I also know symphonic music too well. So my first choice, if I'm in New York, is always the opera. It's such a spectacle, and there's always the chance one of the many things that can go wrong will go right."

He also enjoys chamber music and would like to play more of it. "I love playing with people. Other repertoire. Just doing other things in my life. I don't have time to learn Chinese at the rate I'm going, and that's one of my big goals. And astronomy—I haven't done anything with that yet."

WHILE waiting for the Chinese and astronomy lessons, what does he do between concerts? "I play tennis, swim, eat, cook, drink, go to the opera, run around, see people, take naps, pay bills—all the normal things. Food, music, and sex—in no particular order. They're all so nice. Those things are what most musicians are interested in. It's only the music that makes us unique." □

GARRICK OHLSSON: SELECTED RECORDINGS

OHLSOON's performances at the 1970 Chopin competition in Warsaw, where he was the first-prize winner, are preserved on the two Connoisseur Society albums listed below. Also listed are recommended albums among his recent releases on the Angel label, for which he now records exclusively.

CHOPIN: *Sonata No. 3, in B Minor, Op. 58; Etude in A-flat Major, Op. 10, No. 10; Polonaise in F-sharp Minor, Op. 44; Scherzo in E Major, Op. 54.* CONNOISSEUR SOCIETY CS 2029.

CHOPIN: *Piano Concerto No. 1, in E Minor, Op. 11; Nocturne in E-flat Major, Op. 55, No. 2; Mazurkas in C-*

sharp Minor, E Minor, and A-flat Major, Op. 41, Nos. 1, 2, 4. With the Warsaw National Philharmonic Orchestra, Witold Rowicki cond. (in concerto). CONNOISSEUR SOCIETY CS 2030.

CHOPIN: *Seventeen Polonaises.* ANGEL SB 3794 two discs.

LISZT: *Piano Concerto No. 1, in E-flat Major; Piano Concerto No. 2, in A Major.* With the New Philharmonia Orchestra, Moshe Atzmon cond. ANGEL □ SQ 37145.

LISZT: *Mephisto Waltz No. 1; Benediction de Dieu dans la Solitude; Funerailles; Liebestraume, Nos. 1-3.* ANGEL S 37125.

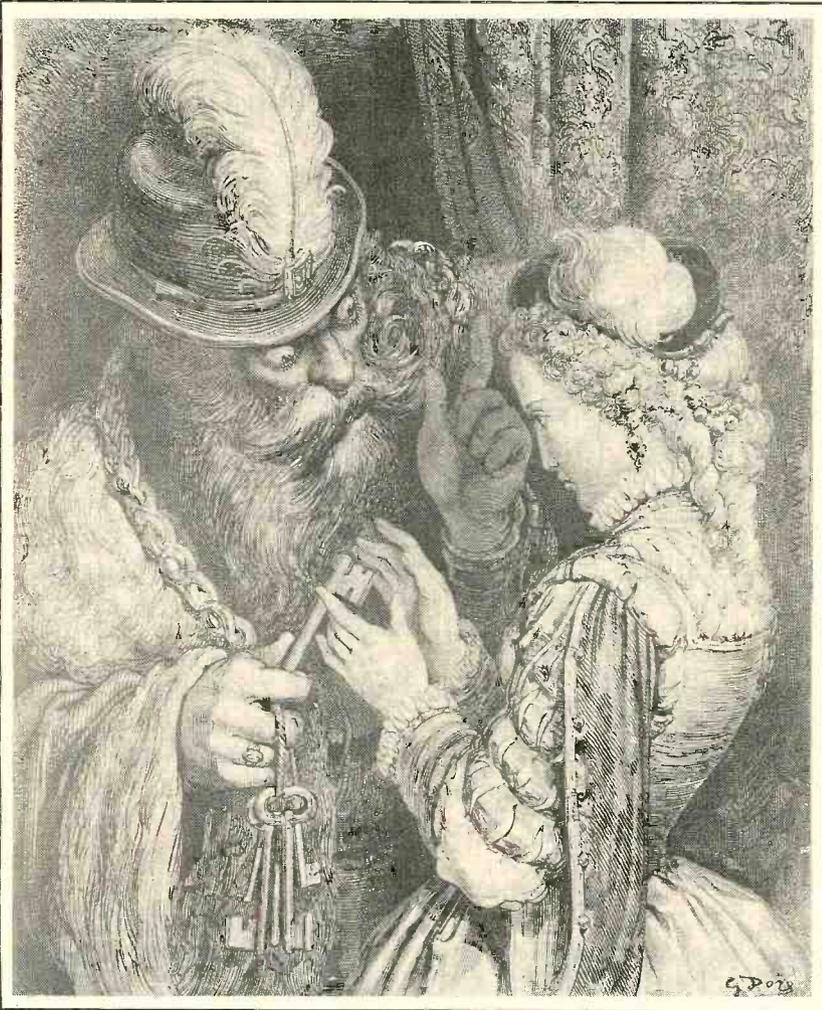


Peg Wilson/Angel

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



Beitmann Archive



Gustave Doré illustration for the Perrault version of the Bluebeard legend

“At Once Fascinating and Unbearable”:
Bartók’s Intense, Inward, Extraordinarily
Coloristic Opera *Bluebeard’s Castle*

BLUEBEARD’S CASTLE, written in 1911, is Bartók’s only opera and, indeed, it barely qualifies for admission into that exalted and much-abused genre. It is a one-act work with only two characters and almost no action at all. Judith, Bluebeard’s latest, comes into his castle and immediately demands to know what lies behind seven mysterious doors. She finds a torture chamber, an armory, a hoard of treasure, a secret garden, and a window on her spouse’s realm, all stained with blood. Finally she discovers a lake of tears and Bluebeard’s previous wives, alive and covered with jewels—a fate worse than death that Judith, for her curiosity, must now share.

What does it all mean? Are the seven doors seven chambers in the human mind? Something like that, no doubt. *Bluebeard’s Castle* belongs to that small and remarkable group of psychological and expressionist works created (mostly) before World War I (Schoenberg’s *Pierrot Lunaire* and *Erwartung* are others). For it, Bartók wrote a score that stands out in his work as intense, inward, and extraordinarily coloristic (most of Bartók’s music is distinguished by rhythm and drive, but these are unimportant here, as is the use of folklore, which plays only a secondary role). The scenes are like a series of brushstrokes interpreting inner states, and they are connected by the somber mood of the whole. It is an agonizingly beautiful work, at once fascinating and unbearable.

Bluebeard’s Castle is not unknown in the opera house, and it has been recorded several times in several languages, including the original Hungarian. But it has probably never had the all-round advantages of superb singing, original language, orchestral workmanship, superb conducting, expressive shape, and first-class sound it gets in its new recording by Columbia. How odd that this striking performance of a Hungarian opera in Hungarian should be produced by a Greek-American so-

prano, a German baritone, a French conductor, an English orchestra, and an American record company! I cannot vouch for the quality of the Hungarian sung here, but I will vouch without reservation for all the rest of it.

—Eric Salzman

BARTÓK: *Bluebeard's Castle*. Tatiana Troyanos (soprano), Judith; Siegmund Nimsgern (baritone), *Bluebeard*; BBC Symphony Orchestra, Pierre Boulez cond. Columbia M 34217 \$6.98.

Joan Baez: A Little Company To Help Us Through The Seventies

As I watched the recent Dylan TV debacle, suffering along with the drenched and (it seemed to me) excessively behatted audience, it came across strongly, unmistakably, that the real star of the show was the beautiful Joan Baez and not the baleful, posturing Dylan. That she has survived the Sixties and her initial fame (and/or political notoriety) and is now, in the Seventies, more of a performer, more of an interpretive singer, and more of a beauty than ever is testament to a talent that has deepened, broadened, and matured as the years have passed. While Dylan stood there uneasily, looking like a tempest-tossed Goodwill poster, snarling out his lyrics as if the Feds of the corrupt Sixties were still breathing down his bandannaed neck, Baez, dressed in a sort of outrageous bur-noose appropriate perhaps to a furloughed Carpathian archduchess, capered around the stage having, most of the time, an absolutely joyous ball.

And that, dear friends, is precisely what you will have too if you listen to her new A&M release "Gulf Winds." She's back in very secure stride as a composer (she wrote all the songs), and though none of her efforts will exactly knock you down with their originality or depth of insight, they are perfect material for her. The title song, *Gulf Winds*, the story of a young girl in a Mexican family living in the U.S., I found especially good. She sings it to her own guitar accompaniment, and it has all of the quiet, angry power of her best work in the past. Other highlights are *O Brother!*, a snappish, funny tale about a no-good who's going to get his someday if Baez has anything to say

about it, and *Stephanie's Room*, a dramatic mood piece with a touch of odd ambivalence about it that the performance very carefully does nothing to clarify. Her voice seems to be in as good shape as ever—still the shimmering, satiny soprano web that has enchanted me with its tonal iridescence ever since I first heard it years ago.

But the most important thing is that Baez seems to be totally out of her activist bag as far as her music is concerned, and this new album (her best-produced, by the way, since she left Vanguard) is a happy hymn to Happiness Now. Yeah, we're all gonna live through the Seventies too, and company like this will make it easier.

—Peter Reilly

JOAN BAEZ: *Gulf Winds*. Joan Baez (vocals and guitar); orchestra. *Sweeter for Me*; *Seabirds*; *Caruso*; *Still Waters at Night*; *Kingdom of Childhood*; *O Brother!*; *Time Is Passing Us By*; *Stephanie's Room*; *Gulf Winds*. A&M SP-4603 \$6.98, © 4603 \$7.98, © 4603 \$7.98.

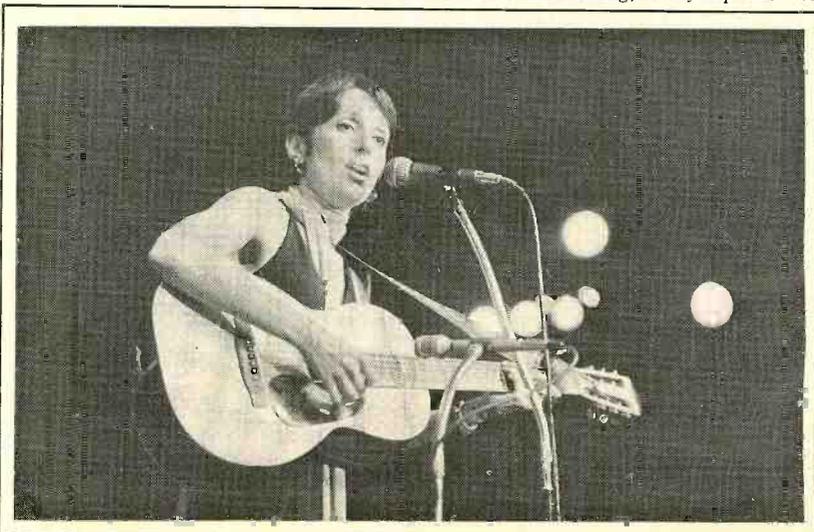


TOKYO QUARTET: K. Harada, K. Ikeda, S. Harada, K. Isomura

The Tokyo Quartet Returns with the Rest of Haydn's Opus 50

Now just where would you go about looking for an authentic interpretation of the wit and wisdom of an elderly eighteenth-century Austrian musical *philosophe* named Josef Haydn these days? Tokyo, perhaps? Well, why not? That's where Deutsche Grammophon looked, and they evidently looked in the right place. The Tokyo Quartet received a 1974 STEREO REVIEW Record of the Year award for an album containing the first two quartets of Haydn's Op. 50, and DG recently sent the group back into the studio to do the rest of them (there are six in all) and has just issued the whole thing in a three-disc set.

JOAN BAEZ: still a shimmering, satiny soprano web



Russell Peir Photo



ELO: Lynne, Bevan, McDowell, Kaminski, Gale, Tandy, Groucutt

Opus 50 is a fine set of quartets written in 1787 and dedicated to the King of Prussia, a good cellist and an avid quartet player. These works are situated on that steep slope that leads to the apex of Haydn's career as a quartet composer. Our hero was a very great symphonist, but he was perhaps an even greater master of the string quartet, a medium he himself brought to perfection (he is challenged in this field, but not really surpassed, only by Beethoven). Although these quartets are not, on the whole, as well known as some of the later ones, they are full of the choicest expressions of Haydn's wit and invention. Since the King of Prussia was a cellist, Haydn starts right out in No. 1 with a cello solo—on one note! Nothing to tax the royal talent, you know, but don't think this royal Johann One-Note has been relegated to a mere accompaniment role. The entire movement is built on this one-note theme of repeated B-flats and the little cadential figure in the violins above it. Indeed, all the instruments have a wonderful freedom in these quartets; even the second violin gets a nice solo in the slow movement of No. 2. In No. 3 there is one of Haydn's finest false endings, while No. 2 has a kind of false *opening*—it starts out in the "wrong" spot and bounces all over the place with consummate ease and clarity. The F-sharp Minor Quartet, No. 4, has a fugal finale, *the* masterpiece of its kind (often imitated, but never quite equaled—again, even by Beethoven).

The Tokyo String Quartet, founded in 1969, does not in truth come to us (or to DG) straight from Japan but via New York's Juilliard School (where they studied with the Juilliard Quartet). They are also products of the Toho School in Tokyo, and their internation-

al fame is owing in large part to a sensational debut in a Munich competition where they took first prize. A recording contract with DG followed. This is a crack ensemble; they play with precision and virtuosity, of course, but also with delicacy, finesse, spirit, and insight. They have developed a wonderful Classical style of their own, balanced and elegant but not the least bit lacking in wit, fire, and expression. This is Haydn—via Tokyo or whatever—as he ought to be.

—Eric Salzman

HAYDN: String Quartets, Op. 50, Nos. 1-6 (Hob. III, Nos. 44-49, "Prussian"). Tokyo Quartet. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2709 060 three discs \$23.94.

Making Sophisticated Stereo Equipment Worthwhile: ELO's Anthology of Rock Sound

Rock wouldn't be in much trouble if a few more bands did their jobs as well as the Electric Light Orchestra does its job, a description of which is most likely on file in the great personnel office in the sky under the heading of Sound Enrichment. The ELO has quite a sense of history where sound is concerned, and in its work you hear echoes of the Beatles, the Moody Blues, the doo-wop groups, and Beethoven. Also Dylan, Chuck Berry, Little Richard, and so on.

The United Artists album "A New World Record" has these elements cross-indexed in a glorious sound one can still with a straight face call rock. Among other things, it makes sophisticated stereo equipment *worth having*—which most rock records don't do—as it sends out knee-bending (fake classical) orchestral bass and a swirl of stuff that's actually warm and musical though it comes from electronic instruments. Jeff Lynne's taste in arranging is warmer (hell, it's schlockier) than, but on a plane even with, Steeleye Span's. He looks for other ways to do things, and he has found a fair number. The lyrics here do their job, too, which is to turn up a little something now and then but generally to avoid kicking up too much fuss about it. The emphasis is on the sound of music and not on the fury of it. It isn't a complete "record" of how the "new world" really is, but a welcome affirmation of the suspicion that there's still some good stuff left in it.

—Noel Coppage

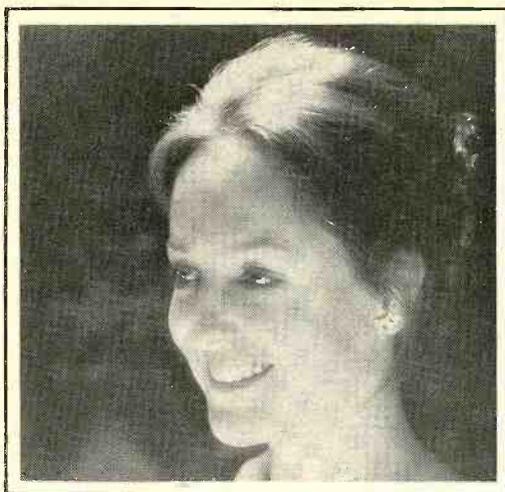
ELECTRIC LIGHT ORCHESTRA: A New World Record. Electric Light Orchestra (vocals and instrumentals); orchestra, Jeff Lynne, Richard Tandy, Louis Clark, arrs. *Tightrope; Telephone Line; Rockaria!; Mission (A World Record); So Fine; Livin' Thing; Above the Clouds; Do Ya; Shangri-La.* UNITED ARTISTS UA-LA679-G \$6.98, © UA-EA679-H \$7.98, © UA-CA679-H \$7.98.

A Solo Recital Debut: French Opera Arias by Frederica von Stade

WITHIN a few years and with relatively few appearances on concert-hall and opera stages around the world (New York, San Francisco, Paris, Glyndebourne, Salzburg) in a fairly limited repertoire, Frederica von Stade has risen from her auspicious professional beginnings as a Metropolitan Opera audition winner to her present status as an international star. Her good looks and winning stage presence in part account for this phenomenal growth, but the main reason can be found on her new debut recital disc of French opera arias for Columbia (it follows one she shared with another charmer, soprano Judith Blegen, on Columbia M-33307).

This release reminds me of the time

FREDERICA VON STADE:
a phenomenal ascent
to international
stardom



Columbia Masterworks

more than fifteen years ago when I was reviewing the first recordings of Teresa Berganza in these pages, for here again we are in the presence of an attractive young singer who is already a mature artist, blessed with innate musicianship and sensitivity as well as an undeniable flair. Miss Von Stade's voice is a bright mezzo, fresh and lovely in tone quality, at the moment stronger in the upper extension, where it ascends to a high C with relative ease. With her clear and pointed diction she reveals a natural affinity for the French repertoire, interpreting all the music on this disc to virtual perfection. The courtly playfulness of the page Urbain, the longing of Mignon, the dejection of Marguerite are as capably, as persuasively rendered as are the two delicious Offenbach vignettes. Even the somewhat undramatic excerpt from *Béatrice et Bénédict* comes across with fine shadings and expressivity.

The artist—and producer Paul Myers—deserves special praise for assembling a refreshingly imaginative program. I find conductor John Pritchard's pacing a shade too leisurely at times, but the orchestral playing is beautiful and it is reproduced in ideally balanced rich sound.

—George Jellinek

FREDERICA VON STADE: *French Opera Arias.* Meyerbeer: *Les Huguenots: Nobles seigneurs, salut!* Gounod: *Roméo et Juliette: Depuis hier je cherche en vain.* Berlioz: *Béatrice et Bénédict: Il m'en souvient. La Damnation de Faust: D'amour l'ardente flamme.* Massenet: *Werther: Va, laisse couler mes larmes. Cendrillon: Enfin, je suis ici.* Thomas: *Mignon: Connais-tu le pays?* Offenbach: *La Périchole: Ah! quel dîner. La Grande Duchesse de Gérolstein: Dites-lui.* Frederica von Stade (mezzo-soprano); London Philharmonic Orchestra, John Pritchard cond. COLUMBIA M 34206 \$6.98.

Pizzarelli/Freeman: Jazz as Satisfying and Comforting as Fine Old Brandy

FLYING DUTCHMAN's teaming of guitarist Bucky Pizzarelli and tenor saxophonist Bud Freeman turns out to be a happy event. Freeman, a mem-

ber of the "Austin High Gang" of the slugging Chicago school of white jazz in the Twenties, is now near seventy, but his fire and bite remain undiminished, his jazz is still muscular and generous. Pizzarelli is the present wearer of the crown in the royal line of jazz guitarists that began with Eddie Lang—a Freeman contemporary—and is traceable in the glorious careers of Carl Kress, Dick McDonough, Charlie Christian, Al Casey, Django Reinhardt, and other princes of the fretboard.

It is interesting to note that with all the often loony and self-destructive changes jazz has been through since 1940, the guitarists seem to have been able more than most to maintain their sanity amidst the chaos. Elder statesman Pizzarelli, for example, still has the taste, the gentle but firm execution, the agile and lyrical solo ideas, and the real joy in playing he has always had. Maybe it comes with the instrument.

Saxophonist Freeman now lives in Ireland and works as much as he pleases throughout Europe; this album was recorded during a recent visit to America. I used to admire the solidity of his tone, but it now seems to me somewhat fuzzy and spitty. His musical thinking is still athletic, however, with just the right balance between common sense and whoop-te-doo.

Most of the selections on this "Buck & Bud" album are duets between the two instrumentalists, and the exchanges of experience, personality, imagination, sympathy, and sheer "clout" are wonderful to hear. The material is, of course, superb, drawn as it is from the hefty catalog of inspired, strongly built melodies devised in the decades between 1920 and 1940 when the consistent high quality of the American popular song set the standard for the world.

Veteran bassist Bob Haggart (it's good to hear him again), drummer Ronnie Traxler, and pianist Hank Jones provide smooth and neat support on the quintet selections. The album is as satisfying and comforting as a fine old brandy, and because of the talents of the people involved, the record is not only rewarding today but will remain so for (a conservative estimate) about the next hundred years.

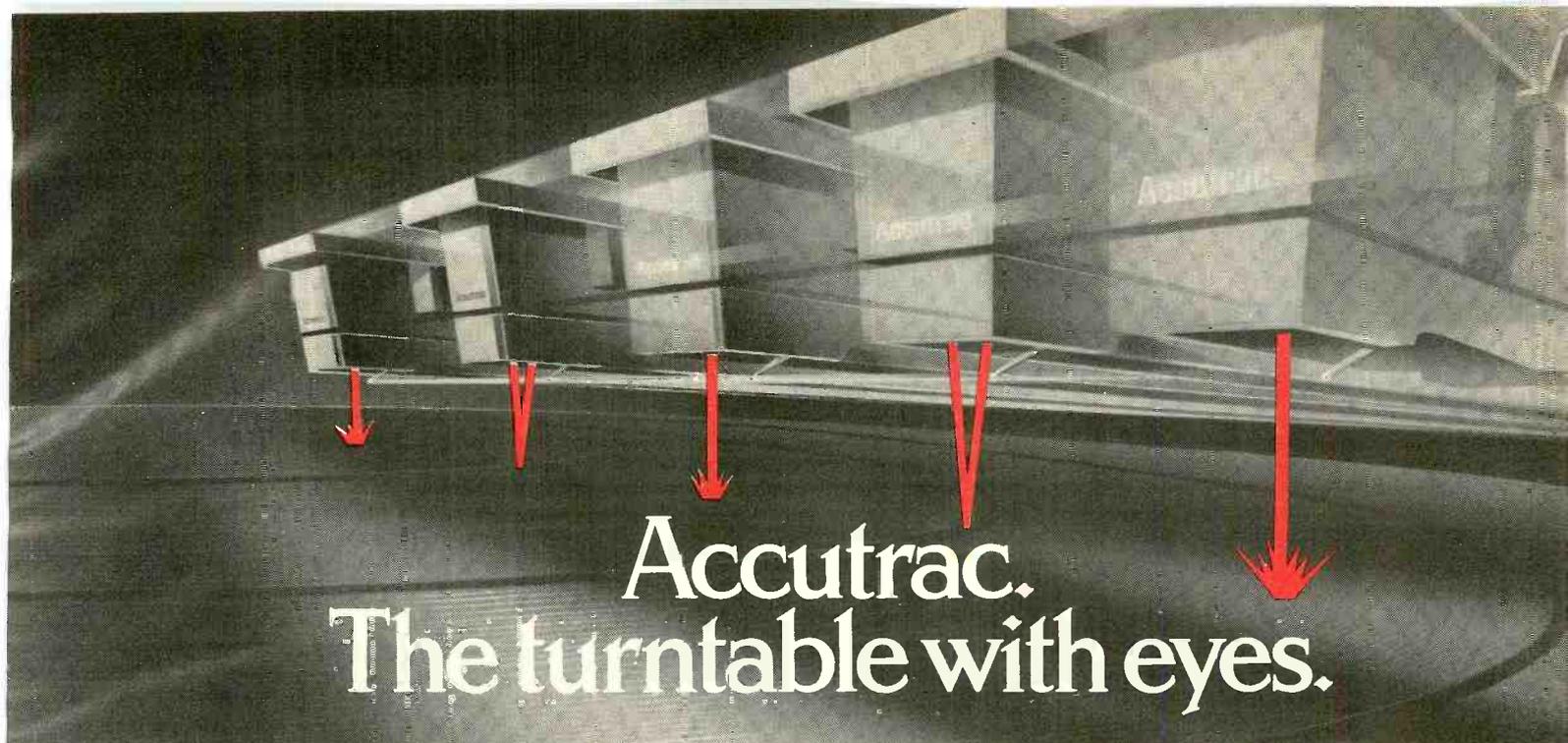
—Joel Vance

BUCK AND BUD: exchanges wonderful to hear



Flying Dutchman

BUCKY PIZZARELLI AND BUD FREEMAN: *Buck & Bud.* Bucky Pizzarelli (guitar); Bud Freeman (tenor saxophone); Hank Jones (piano); Bob Haggart (bass); Ronnie Traxler (drums). *Way Down Yonder in New Orleans; Easy to Love; Tea for Two; Sweet Sue, Just You; Blues for Tenor; At Sundown; I Could Write a Book; You Took Advantage of Me; Exactly Like You; Dinah; Just One of Those Things.* FLYING DUTCHMAN BDL1-1378 \$6.98, © BDS1-1378 \$7.98, © BDK1-1378 \$7.98.



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POPULAR DISCS AND TAPES

Reviewed by CHRIS ALBERTSON • NOEL COPPAGE • PAUL KRESH • PETER REILLY • JOEL VANCE

PAUL ANKA: *The Painter*. Paul Anka (vocals); orchestra. *Wildflower; The Painter; Happier; I'll Help You; Closing Doors*; and six others. UNITED ARTISTS UA-LA653-G \$6.98, Ⓡ UA-EA653-H \$7.98, © UA-CA653-H \$7.98.

Performance: **Glossy**
Recording: **Excellent**

Here is Paul Anka in one of his glossier ego-trip albums—cover by Warhol, conducting and arrangements by Michel Colombier, super-production by Denny Diante. No grunts about having one's baby in *these* surroundings. Instead, there is a tasteful, and very good, adaptation from the French, *Do I Love You? (Yes, in Every Way)*; a melancholy reflection on *The Painter*, one of those dedicated souls who will never live to enjoy the eventual high price a collector will someday pay for his work (he should have painted pictures of *Diana* or someone having his baby and just waited for the loot to roll in); and a couple of moody, slick ballads, *Closing Doors* and *Living Isn't Living*.

Anka is, of course, the complete pro in complete charge; his signature is all over everything in the album, and your own prejudices regarding the undoubtedly clever little devil will be the gauge of your enjoyment. Personally, I prefer him in a less grand atmosphere—one in which he can crank out the kind of mindless, but hugely communicative, bits of pop philosophy that give teenyboppers across the world (no matter what their age)

frissons of soulful recognition and *Something To Think About*. P.R.

AZTEC TWO-STEP: *Two's Company*. Rex Fowler and Neil Shulman (vocals and guitars); instrumental accompaniment. *Dance; Finding Somebody New; A Conversation in a Car; Isn't It Sweet to Think So; Pajama Party; Give It Away*; and five others. RCA APL1-1497 \$6.98, Ⓡ APS1-1497 \$7.98, © APK1-1497 \$7.98.

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

A two-man, two-guitar act, augmented with bass players and whatnot when it records, does not have as many possibilities to work with as a three-to-five-person act, yet the duo is caught in a more rigid framework than one of its members would be as a solo act. Paul Simon has demonstrated the truth of this since the demise of the two-man, one-guitar act of Simon and Whatshisname. Rex Fowler and Neil Shulman give me the impression that two incompletes are being fitted together in an attempt to achieve a complete one. Sometimes I hear the third personality, the product they're trying for, and sometimes I hear their individual limitations refusing to be filtered out. When they're singing together they often sound like Loudon Wainwright overdubbing harmonies with himself, but Fowler's songwriting has produced at least three entries of substance here (in order of my preference, they are *A Conversation in a Car*, one the driver is having with himself; *Isn't It Sweet to Think So*, about how one doesn't give up on love simply because one can't; and *Dance*, which has a fetching minor-key tune and beat), and Neil Shulman now and then tosses off a brief guitar solo that's simply a gem. The arrangements, acoustic instruments at their hub, could use a little more zip, but there's no ugliness or noise in them. There are, however, too many songs like *Pajama Party* that are awkward about being shallow. Fowler ought to consider giving up *Shallowness for Lent* and see how it goes. The boys could also take advantage of the extra latitude a two-singer combination has with harmonies, be more adventurous. But this album has persuaded me to keep closer tabs on them. N.C.

JOAN BAEZ: *Gulf Winds* (see *Best of the Month*, page 82)

MOE BANDY: *Here I Am Drunk Again*. Moe Bandy (vocals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Here I Am Drunk Again; If I Had Someone to Cheat On; What Happened to Our Love; The Bottle's Holdin' Me; Please Take Her Home*; and five others. COLUMBIA KC 34285 \$5.98, Ⓡ CA 34285 \$6.98.

Performance: **Bring the antabuse**
Recording: **Good**

Moe Bandy is shown on his album cover curled up inside a beer glass, and his voice sounds as though it's coming out of one. Consider his subject matter: a drunk who's on the sauce because his woman is cheating on him; another alcoholic abandoned at the bar of his choice by his girl because "no woman wants a man that drinks too much" ("I'm not holdin' the bottle," he explains, "the bottle's holdin' me"); another unfortunate who "walks from bar to bar in worn-out shoes" after having fallen off some wagon or other. All this is delivered in a guileless country style more suitable for ballads describing bouts with bottles of 7-Up. Can it be that Mr. Bandy is a creature of the Nashville branch of A.A.? What this feisty fellow can do when he's allowed a chance to change the subject is indicated in a jolly ballad about a devotee of the rodeos who finds a girl with an "Oklahoma look" whose personality melts the brim of his hat and sends him into transports of wholesome outdoor rapture. Let's hope she keeps him sober until after he cuts his next platter. P.K.

TONY BENNETT: *Life Is Beautiful*. Tony Bennett (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *Life Is Beautiful; All Mine; Bridges; Reflections; Experiment*; and five others. IMPROV 7112 \$5.98.

Performance: **Too much horsepower**
Recording: **Very good**

"Life is beautiful," sings Tony Bennett in his big voice, powered like the engine of a large, costly car that uses too much gas. "Beautiful," when Tony Bennett uses the word, has a tendency to conjure up images of a Las Vegas hotel lobby. Packaged ardor is his stock in

Explanation of symbols:

- Ⓡ = reel-to-reel stereo tape
- Ⓢ = eight-track stereo cartridge
- Ⓒ = stereo cassette
- = quadraphonic disc
- Ⓡ = reel-to-reel quadraphonic tape
- Ⓢ = eight-track quadraphonic tape

Monophonic recordings are indicated by the symbol Ⓜ

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

trade, as every ballad gears up for a big, synthetic climax and the oversize orchestral arrangements come heading at you like a fleet of souped-up Cadillacs. Actually, the song quoted is an affable item with lyrics by Fred Astaire, and it would be lovely to hear him perform it in his special, offhand style.

In this album, the program is so topnotch that you keep thinking of the other singers who made famous the very ballads Bennett is busy running energetically into the ground. Cole Porter's *Experiment* brings up memories of Gertrude Lawrence's sly rendition; *This Funny World*, such an overfurnished, unprivate place as Bennett makes of it, made this listener wish he were hearing it in the once-over-lightly approach favored by, say, Bobby Short. The program also includes a story-song by Gene Lees called *Bridges*, a dreamy number called *Reflections* that Duke Ellington composed late in life, and *All Mine*, a Brazilian lovesong. Tony turns them all into blockbusters: out of the way, or he'll mow you down. It's enough to bring about a musical energy crisis. P.K.

BLACK SABBATH: *Technical Ecstasy*. Black Sabbath (vocals and instrumentals). *Back Street Kids; You Won't Change Me; It's Alright; Gypsy*; and four others. WARNER BROS. BS 2969 \$6.98, © M8 2969 \$7.98, © M5 2969 \$7.98.

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

Neo hard-rock bands tend to sound the same and to borrow frequently from one another. On this album, Black Sabbath starts out by impersonating Led Zeppelin, especially the high-decibel zip-zaps of Zeppelin's vocalist Robert Plant. They then go on to parrot Deep Purple and to ape groups like Aerosmith and Status Quo. Doubtless all these other bands will casually borrow from Sabbath when their next albums are due.

Programming—the sequencing of performances—also tends to be uniform for bands of Sabbath's species. The first two selections are invariably loud and pounding, the third is semi-acoustic, the fourth a mixture of the first three, the fifth a utilitarian number for dancing, *et cetera ad infinitum*. It is all quite predictable and damned dull. I think a better title for the album would have been "Technical Competence." J.V.

DAVID BROMBERG BAND: *How Late'll Ya Play 'Til?* David Bromberg (vocals, guitar); instrumental accompaniment. *Danger Man II; Summer Wages; Dallas Rag/Maple Leaf Rag; Whoopie Ti Yi Yo; Young Westly; Dyin' Crapshooter's Blues; Bluebird; Idol with a Golden Head*; and eight others. FANTASY F-79007 two discs \$8.98, © 8160-79007 Z \$9.98, © 5160-79007 Z \$9.98.

Performance: **Good instrumentals**
Recording: **Excellent**

David Bromberg is an accomplished country/folk and classic blues guitarist. Though his style is not original and his playing tends to be intellectual (he's never quite gotten over his student days at Columbia University), his technique can't be faulted: every note, every riff, every solo passage, every single-string run, every relaxation and tension comes at the right place at the right time. The most satisfying cuts on this double-disc album are the instrumentals: the *Fiddle Tune* medley, the *Dallas Rag/Maple Leaf Rag* segue, the country-

ish *Bluebird*, and the jazz-blues *Chubby Thighs*.

The vocal performances are less successful, though his backing band has some fine talents in it, notably mandolinist Dick Fegy, trombonist Curt Linberg, and cornetist Peter Ecklund, who excel on *Dyin' Crapshooter's Blues* and *Sloppy Drunk*. Unfortunately, Bromberg just wasn't born with a set of pipes capable of handling blues, or really anything else. When he tries to utter a lyric line with passion or *savoir faire* it comes out sounding like something from the ninth-grade class play. But what saves the proceedings is the obvious fun Bromberg is having playing his repertoire of Twenties blues, country dances, and mellow contemporary ballads. If you ignore his squeaky vocals and concentrate on the music and atmosphere of the performances, you'll find this a very refreshing and pleasurable album. J.V.

HARRY CHAPIN: *On the Road to Kingdom Come*. Harry Chapin (vocals, guitar); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *On the Road to Kingdom Come; The Parade's Still Passing By; The Mayor of Candor Lied; Laugh Man*; and five others. ELEKTRA 7E-1082 \$6.98, © ET8-1082 \$7.98, © TC5-1082 \$7.98.

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

Harry Chapin is an ambitious and garrulous hack who presents himself as the bard of the untouchables; his characters include lonely disc jockies, psycho snipers, bitterly sentimental taxi drivers, and other low folk that you are supposed to weep for on your day off. Like Dylan and Kristofferson, Chapin's vocals are alternately nasal and bronchial. But where Dylan honked and sneezed his way into fame with buckshot sprays of words and a demagogic mastery of smarmy kid emotions, and where Kristofferson (a Rhodes scholar in

English) used personal experiences to carol the lives of the dispossessed, the dimwits, and the damned, Chapin merely dispenses an ersatz sympathy for his subjects. He sets up his characters so he can blow hot at them and pummel the listener with his blowsy poetics.

Dylan is now in the history books and Kristofferson is a movie actor. Chapin attempted a Broadway revue which quickly flopped. Like the late Phil Ochs, to whom Chapin dedicated *The Parade's Still Passing By*, Chapin wants to be a star. I suppose he can't be blamed for trying; I just wish he would stop singing. J.V.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

ERIC CLAPTON: *No Reason to Cry*. Eric Clapton (vocals, guitar); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Beautiful Thing; County Jail; Carnival; Sign Language; All Our Past Times*; and five others. RSO RS-1-3004 \$6.98, © 8T1-3004 \$7.98, © CT1-3004 \$7.98.

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

Everybody—Bob Dylan, Georgie Fame, most of the Band, Ron Wood, Jesse Ed Davis—everybody and Mick Jagger's brother (Chris) apparently contributed to this, and in spite of that it's a good one. I'm not sure why Clapton brought in such notorious help, but it could be a way to spread out the attention, keep so much of it from clotting around Clapton's guitar and hanging there to dry. I admit I bring such a bias to his albums. When Dylan is singing the song he wrote, *Sign Language*, when it figures that a whole generation is paying attention to the singer this time for sure, Clapton does some of his most spectacular runs as a back-up guitarist. Little things like that are in here, along with some fine singing by Clapton himself—his style is maturing attractively—and it might shake us into reflecting that

(Continued on page 92)

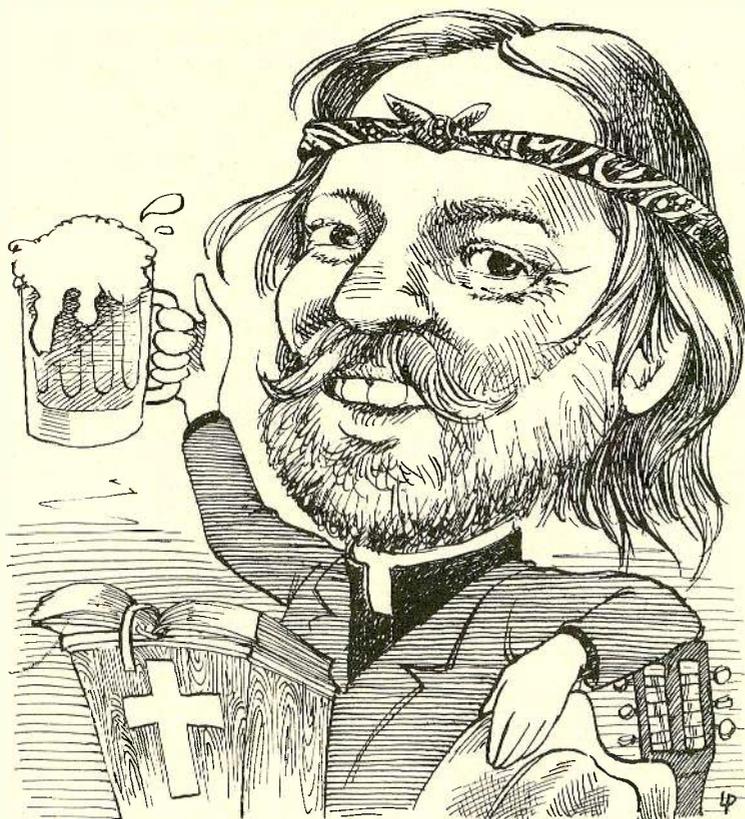
Vicki Sue Robinson



Ms. Robinson is a new singer with a fairly shopworn variety of borrowed styles but with a voice and an acting technique that promise more for the future. She's intermittently very good indeed in *Let Me Down Easy* (he's been spending time with her only to forget someone else), in which she's able at times, through her purplish voice and her acting skill, to transcend the essential moper of the lyric and tell an affecting little story. Nice work. Unfortunately, the rest of her performances either seem buried under Warren Schatz's overstuffed arranging and conducting or fail to come out because of Robinson's lack of trust in letting herself go in her own style. She's someone to keep an eye on, though. Watch for an early move.

—Peter Reilly

VICKI SUE ROBINSON. Vicki Sue Robinson (vocals); orchestra. *Let Me Down Easy; How About Me; Falling in Love; After All This Time*; and five others. RCA APL1-1829 \$6.98, © APS1-1829 \$7.98, © APK1-1829 \$7.98.



Lincoln Perry

Preacher Willie Nelson

PAUL SIMON said God used to lean on him, and I know the feeling. That line of Simon's stuck in my mind, but what brought the feeling back was Willie Nelson's new "gospel" album, "The Troublemaker." Country stars routinely record albums of hymns, but they usually do so in a style radically different from this. I've suspected it was partly an act of penance on their part, that some feel *better* when such albums flop commercially, as they often do. The way such albums are usually recorded results in something sickly sweet, so inflated with angelic choruses and pious attitudes (go back and listen to Red Foley doing this kind of thing, or Tennessee Ernie Ford) that it must turn off the God-fearingest of Presbyterian deacons in his secret heart of hearts. But Nelson has given the old church songs the *regular* Willie Nelson treatment, performing them in the same existential way(s) he performs songs officially designated as "commercial" or "secular." His band, one of the jauntiest and best bar bands in Texas, plays here the way it plays in honky tonks, plays *Uncloudy Day* with the same freewheeling aplomb it customarily brings to that old Nelson-written drinking-and-fighting-club favorite that goes, "Sometimes it's heaven, sometimes it's hell, and sometimes I don't even know. . . ."

And the most important thing I may be learning—or realizing—in listening to it is that I wasn't being *leaned on* back there in the little Baptist church by the highway: not leaned on, but more like cleaved in twain, perhaps by

something akin to that two-edged sword the preacher kept mentioning. In church was where I first got the notion that there were two forces inside us, and one couldn't embrace both at once but had to choose one or the other. These weren't, to my mind, "good" and "evil." One I thought of as the intellectual, or rational, or thinking part, which I dimly sensed must be the key to autonomy (something a growing boy or girl feels an imperative to assert), to self-reliance, self-

Demonstrating that you can't respond fully to life with either a turned-off head or a turned-off heart

control, responsibility, growth. The other I identified as the emotional, even superstitious force. Its official name, at least on Sunday, was Faith, but it seemed to me to have a dark side. Why else would the grownups let it come out only in church, a controlled environment, a *holy* place (they said), and try to keep it stomped down everywhere else?

A big factor in the emotionalism of the church services was the music. The sharper preachers had a way of talking over the singing of the Invitation Hymn—some were slick as modern disc jockeys talking over the last bars of a Captain and Tennille single—talking

in persuasive, tremulous tones about giving up thinking for oneself, controlling oneself, and turning the responsibility over to Jesus, talking about my coming down the aisle to be Saved. I was engrossed by the *style* of all this; even then I could see in it a rite-value in which some apparently found catharsis. On Monday, though, if one were honest with himself, the world looked quite a bit different; among other things it didn't seem to want one to be very emotional or behave as if he were under the control of someone or something else. My problem was I couldn't turn it off and on the way I thought others must be able to, couldn't swing with it on Sunday and then clamp it down on Monday, couldn't favor first one and then the other of the forces in me. If I were to have a style of my own, an identity, I'd have to favor the same one all the time.

Thus I disputed church attendance and, when I became sophisticated or wily enough, phased it out. This one was a Missionary Baptist church, same strain as Jimmy Carter's, and it sat with twin driveways flanking it at the top of a small hill. The state highway department gave this young doubter a rather dazzling early look at irony when it placed, just beyond the driveways, traffic signs that read "Blind Entrance."

THE song I remember most vividly from those days, the penultimate Invitation Hymn, *Just as I Am* ("Just as I am, without one plea, but that thy blood was shed for me . . . Oh, Lamb of God, I come, I come . . ."), is not included here, but Nelson *did* include it in his "Red Headed Stranger" album, the one in which he identifies with a preacher torn by a more dangerous inner conflict, schism, cleavage, than I was. Willie *does* identify with preachers, and his singing style is influenced by church music. So is the nominal barrelhouse piano style of Bobbie Nelson. So these aren't, after all and strictly speaking, purely secular performances (in America's interior perhaps none can be) any more than they are conventional Sunday performances. It's all one with Willie. Both forces *are* embraced at once, integrated. What he does here, at least for people with backgrounds something like mine and (I gather) Paul Simon's, is give us something good and solid to contrast against

the split either/or way we perceived this as kids.

Just because you're "for" your mind, Willie asserts—and he asserts it not with content but with style—it doesn't mean you have to be "against" your emotions, or vice versa. What was then perceived as superstition can now be looked at as parapsychology; an intelligent person may conclude there's something to it. One grows up, reads about Jung and the collective unconscious, Zen, Carlos Casteneda and Don Juan, and isn't sure whether it's a thought or a feeling he has that *there's something out there*. And the point may be

just that: to *not* differentiate, not divide up the inner life between thoughts and feelings.

Well! And you know what else Nelson demonstrates? He demonstrates that these old songs amount to good music. Just listen to the way the first cut takes to a relatively hot, beer-joint-perfected run on Willie's funny little guitar with a hole worn through the top. Listen to what a bluesy harmonica can do teamed up with a spunky, inventive tune like *In the Garden*, or how a soaring, uninhibited steel guitar can energize *Shall We Gather*. These old melodies have great and (like Willie Nelson) deceptively simple staying power and an admirable elegance born of hardscrabble economy in the words, the verses.

That last one, incidentally, *Shall We Gather* ("at the river," which Willie pronounces the way my congregation did, "rilver"), is a great favorite with Baptists, a must at total-immersion baptism services the country churches still hold at rivers, or, in a pinch, at ponds. There is no real rouser of an invitation hymn here, although I have heard *When the Roll Is Called Up Yonder* and even the Carter family's *Will the Circle Be Unbroken* put to such uses (both work better at funerals), and I wonder if Nelson's failure to include something approaching *Just As I Am* in emotional fervor is itself a comment of some kind. Certainly his inclusion of the title song is. It's a different kind of song, a new, topical one by Bruce Belland and David Somerville. In it a hippie and the way he's persecuted are described, and of course it is finally revealed that the hip one is Jesus about to be nailed up; it's all told from the viewpoint of a "good" conservative conformist of the day who holds the prevailing view that something has to be done about these radicals and the way they have been threatening the establishment and the status quo.

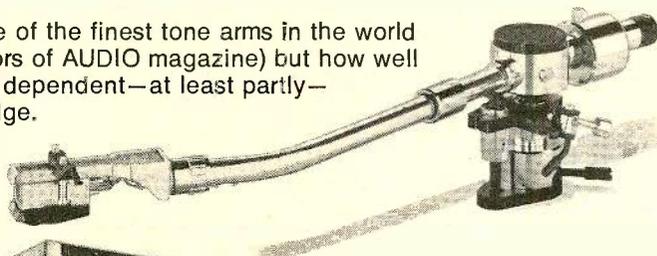
SOCIAL comment? Yes, but again it can't easily be construed as strictly secular in nature—again, Nelson seems to be demonstrating that you can't respond fully to life with either a turned-off head or a turned-off heart, or listening to first one and then the other. You have to listen to the mix.

You really ought to listen to this *album*, too, regardless of whether you remember being leaned on or having your consciousness divided against itself way back when in the presence of these hymns. This piece of work froths with such music, such life, such spirit and such technique that surely it must be counted a success in purely objective aesthetic terms, whatever those might be. But if such exist—if we start cordoning that off—I'll have the feeling that this is where I came in, and from here it looks like just another Blind Entrance.
—Noel Coppage

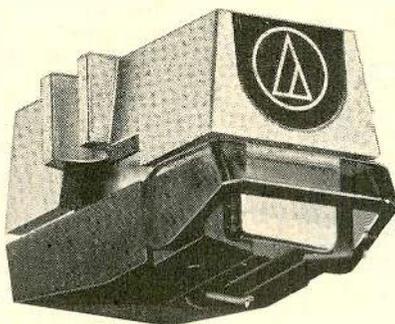
WILLIE NELSON: *The Troublemaker*. Willie Nelson (vocals, guitar); Paul English (drums); Don Spears (bass); Larry Gatlin (guitar); James Clayton Day (steel guitar); Doug Sahn (fiddle); other musicians. *Uncloudy Day*; *When the Roll Is Called Up Yonder*; *Whispering Hope*; *There Is a Fountain*; *Will the Circle Be Unbroken*; *The Troublemaker*; *In the Garden*; *Where the Soul Never Dies*; *Sweet Bye and Bye*; *Shall We Gather*; *Precious Memories*. COLUMBIA KC 34112 \$5.98, © CA 34112 \$6.98, © CT 34112 \$6.98.

Our Synergistic System

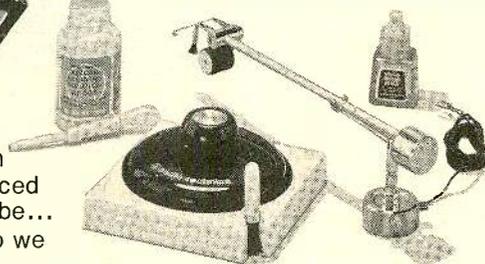
We make one of the finest tone arms in the world (ask the editors of AUDIO magazine) but how well it performs is dependent—at least partly—on the cartridge.



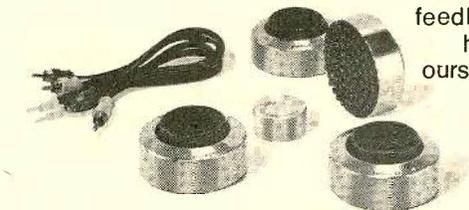
We also make one of the finest phono cartridges in the world (ask almost anyone about the AT20SLa) but how well it can perform is governed at least in part by the tone arm.



But even the finest combination of cartridge/tone arm is influenced by how clean the records may be... and how clean the stylus is. So we have both a superb manual and automatic record cleaner, and a fine stylus cleaner.



And of course the whole system works best only if it is free from such things as acoustic or mechanical feedback (especially with a cartridge having subsonic capabilities like ours), and excessive cable capacity. We solve these problems neatly and effectively with our AT-605 Audio Insulator and AT-610 Low Capacity cable set.



Finally, we also make one of the finest headphones in the world (ask Len Feldman) our incredible AT-706 that makes all the care that went before audibly worthwhile.

Any one of these components in your system can assure you of the very finest standard of performance— from that component. All of them *together* provide an unparalleled listening experience.

Start anywhere in our system. You'll soon find that as you *add* Audio-Technica products, you *multiply* enjoyment.



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• INNOVATION □ PRECISION □ INTEGRITY

AUDIO-TECHNICA U.S., INC., Dept. 27F, 33 Shiawassee Avenue, Fairlawn, Ohio 44313

(Advent on Tape.)

Why We Believe That Chromium-Dioxide Is The Tape To Buy For Highest-Quality Cassette Recording.



When we at Advent were developing the first high-performance cassette recording equipment, we applied two innovations that were crucial for making cassettes that could equal or surpass the quality of the best stereo records. One was the Dolby System of noise reduction. The other was DuPont's chromium-dioxide (CrO_2) tape formulation.

At the time, chromium-dioxide was being used (as it still is) for video recordings, for which its high-frequency performance was unparalleled. But no one was marketing it for audio cassettes. Since we felt it was a must for highest quality, we decided to market it ourselves—although we had never thought we would be in the tape business.

Since that time, other manufacturers have followed suit (as they have in making high-performance cassette equipment). And other tape formulations have appeared on the market, with claims of performance surpassing that of chromium-dioxide. Some claims have been, to put it kindly, very questionable. So it feels like the time for us to be very explicit on what chromium-dioxide has to offer. We think no other tape offers its combination of advantages.

Here are those advantages:

High Coercivity and Excellent High-Frequency Response.

Chromium-dioxide is a man-made oxide, "grown" very much as crystals are. Unlike iron (ferric) oxide, which has to be ground and milled to achieve an appropriate particle size for tape, CrO_2 particles can be grown to near-perfect size and shape for cassette recording.

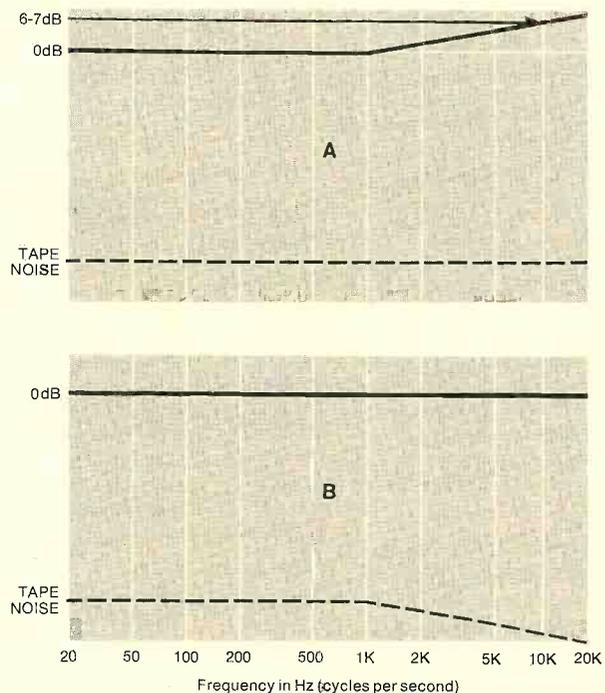
One of their advantages is high coercivity. That is, it takes a very strong force to magnetize and demagnetize chromium-dioxide tape. One thing this means is that the bias current necessary for tape recording, which has a tendency to erase high frequencies during the recording process (especially at low speed), has far less of this effect on CrO_2 than on standard ferric oxides.

Chromium-dioxide holds onto high-frequency signals that would be "self-erased" on standard ferric oxide tapes. More important, it can put onto the tape an unprecedented total amount of high-frequency energy—a function of both its coercivity and the near-ideal size and orientation of its particles. No tape we know of surpasses it in this crucial consideration, and few approach it. (Probably the best indication of CrO_2 's high-frequency abilities is that it is considered a prime tape for video cassette recording, in which it must deal at relatively low speed with a video bandwidth in the *millions* of Hz.)

Low Noise and High Output.

The unique advantage of CrO_2 's total high-frequency capability for cassettes is the way it lends itself to the objective of a low-noise, wide-frequency-and-dynamic-range medium.

As we indicate in the diagram, chromium-dioxide's high-frequency response begins to rise at 1,000 Hz, and is up by 6-7 dB at 10,000 Hz. This rising characteristic allows an unusually steep equalization of the signal during playback (the " CrO_2 " equalization now found on all good cassette decks for home use) to level out the overall frequency response. And in this equalization process, the tape noise under the high frequencies automatically comes down along with the signal by 4-6 dB. (That



A. Chromium dioxide's rising high-frequency response (up by 6-7 dB at 10,000 Hz).

B. When this response is equalized downward in playback for flat response, tape noise is automatically reduced by the same amount.

means 4-6 dB greater noise reduction than would be possible with standard equalization of standard tape.)

That is a tremendous advantage, and in conjunction with the Dolby System was, and is, the key to cassettes with sound that is at least as good as that of the best records. And CrO₂'s noise-reduction benefits for cassettes are *automatic*—built into the playback process.

It's also possible to increase potential signal-to-noise ratio in another way, as conventional cassette tapes have done, by raising the total amount of signal that can be put onto tape. But to realize that potential in everyday use, the recordist at home has to be able to set levels critically for maximum signal on each recording. In practice, most people can't manage this and don't get anything like the maximum benefit from this approach.

Which is why we introduced not only CrO₂ itself but the special equalization characteristic that makes its low-noise potential automatic in everyday use.

While other tapes have since claimed to have added still more dynamic range, their maximum increase is actually small (2dB) and realizable only with the highest possible setting of recording levels.

In practice, we know of no tape with significantly, audibly greater signal-to-noise capabilities than CrO₂.

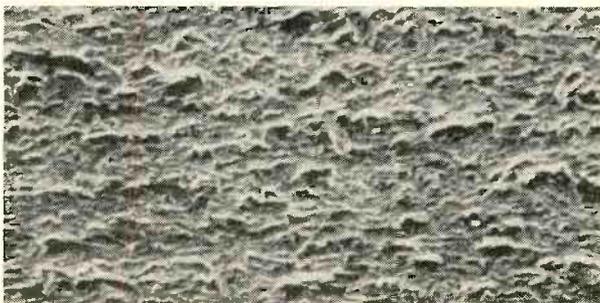
Low Print-Through.

Another advantage of CrO₂'s high coercivity is that it not only magnetizes exceptionally to begin with but *stays* magnetized to an unprecedented degree, storing the signal with an absolute minimum of signal leakage ("print-through") from one layer of tape to the next. Print-through can be a none-too-subtle form of noise, and can contribute to a murky overall recording quality. CrO₂ has the lowest print-through we know of in cassette recording, and this, along with its very low modulation noise, makes it an even more impressively low-noise recording medium overall.

Low Drop-Out.

CrO₂'s long, thin particles disperse very evenly over the surface of the tape (see photo), without the tendency to clump or leave bare spots. Their small and consistent size also allows them to be easily oriented the right (longitudinal) way on tape.

These two factors add up to a highly *uniform, consistent* tape coating that avoids drop-out problems—either at first or after repeated playings.



A 5,000-time magnification of a very small section (less than half a cassette tape width) of Advent CrO₂ tape. The 1½-micron marker under the photo indicates the width of a standard head gap in cassette recorders.

The extremely even and almost perfectly longitudinal dispersion of the oxide particles makes for uniform response and freedom from drop-outs.

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

*Back in the days when CrO₂ was first coming into use, a whispering campaign—begun, we suspect, by someone with a lot to lose if CrO₂ became important (as it did)—began to spread the story that chromium dioxide wore heads excessively. This has never been true, and at least one manufacturer who recently asserted that claim in print has since retracted it. In six years of selling CrO₂ and cassette equipment, we haven't received a single complaint of excessive headwear from CrO₂.

Low Head Wear.

Chromium-dioxide's head-wear characteristics are satisfyingly low not only for audio cassette recorders but for operation (with heads of critically narrow gaps) in video cassette recorders. A home recordist can expect excellent head life with CrO₂.*

Compatibility.

The CrO₂ playback standard pioneered by Advent is now provided in all high-quality stereo cassette decks for home use. You can enjoy chromium-dioxide's full capabilities on all of them.

Among premium tapes other than CrO₂, however, are some that require equalization and/or biasing that isn't provided by today's cassette machines. Whatever the *theoretical* advantages of these tapes (and we know of none that exceeds CrO₂'s sonic capabilities), you can't realize them in the right proportions in actual use. Using them on today's cassette recorders is like using a film with a camera that doesn't supply the right ASA number.

Most auto stereo recorders don't supply the right provisions for either CrO₂ or other premium tapes, and we know of no way you can enjoy their full advantages on the road. What you *do* get from CrO₂ on car cassette machines, however, is a high-frequency boost that in the usual circumstances (with equipment that isn't the ultimate in high-frequency response) is pretty welcome.

Uniformity.

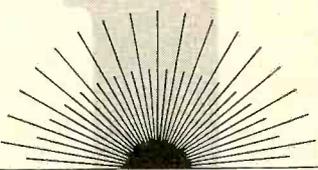
The unique nature of CrO₂ particles makes for excellent coating uniformity from batch to batch in the manufacturing process. Overall results with any tape also depend on keeping other factors consistent, including the manufacture of the cassette housing. We at Advent take considerable pains to make sure of product consistency in tape as well as on other products, and we know that several other marketers of CrO₂ take similar pains. Not all brands of CrO₂ are the same in final quality, but the consistency that's *made possible* by CrO₂'s basic properties is at least as good as that of any other tape.

Price-Performance Ratio.

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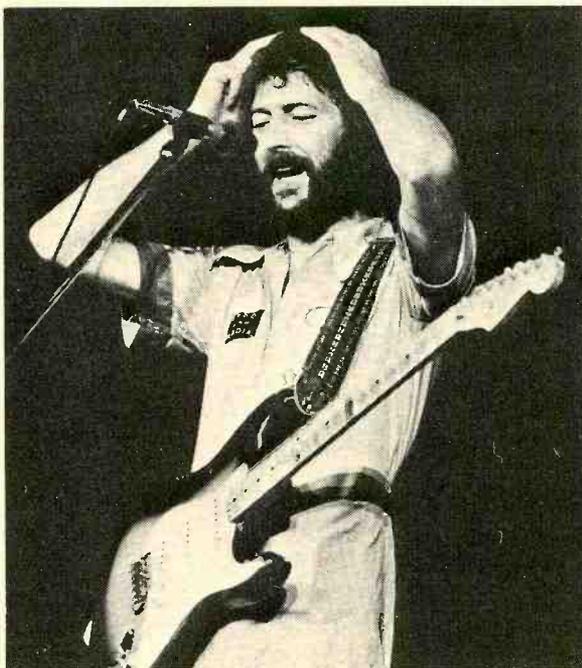
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ERIC CLAPTON:
not a freak
with a guitar
growing out of
his side

Clapton is not a freak with a guitar growing out of his side but a musician who's now made a little string of pretty good albums. *Sign Language*, incidentally, is a winner; it could be addressed to writers ("can't you even make a sound?"), or to urban life (and, by extension, civilization) with all its actual physical signs saying don't do this and that, or to the way we sometimes expect those close to us to read our minds, or A good Dylan song, it is loose enough to fit your situation. Not all the fare here is that meaty, but the performances are rich yet fad-free; Clapton's affinity is for something that's lasted, the blues, and his goal seems to be music that never goes too far in or out of style. You can get a feeling for his self-respect here, and you can also get, as Gene Nobles used to say, some jollies. N.C.

BURTON CUMMINGS. Burton Cummings (vocals, piano); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *I'm Scared; Your Back Yard; That's Enough; Is It Really Right; Stand Tall;* and five others. PORTRAIT PR 34261 \$6.98, © PRA 34261 \$7.98, © PRT 34261 \$7.98.

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

Burton Cummings was the lead singer of the now-defunct Guess Who. This initial solo album is largely designed to show that he has a good voice and handles it well; to that end it succeeds. Unfortunately, the album also sounds like an application for employment, but Cummings gives no indication of what kind of job he wants—and the star market is rather overcrowded these days.

With few exceptions, the material is by Cummings, which is to say that it's filled with murky references to persons and events that are never explained, so it is difficult for the listener to be interested. Several of the songs seem to have been written for no other reason than to show off Cummings' voice, but a set of tonsils does not a singer make, and leaping nimbly from range to range is not the same thing as phrasing. Cummings attempts to pass himself off as an established artist, but it doesn't work. At least not here. J.V.

EARTH, WIND & FIRE: *Spirit.* Earth, Wind & Fire (vocals and instrumentals). *On Your Face; Saturday Nite; Imagination; Biyo; Burnin' Bush;* and four others. COLUMBIA PC 34241 \$6.98, © PCA 34241 \$7.98, © PCT 34241 \$7.98, □ CAQ-34241 \$8.98.

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

Earth, Wind & Fire is one of those mediocre groups that require the listener to accept, *a priori*, their possession of some deep, mysterious spiritual knowledge and strength that automatically make whatever they play valuable. The conceit puts the blame on the listener if he fails to catch and fawn over the supposedly indisputable emotional purity of whatever the band offers, and this type of psychological poker bluff is especially effective on a youthful listener who believes in whatever his peer group does and lives in terror that he will be left out of anything.

A television commercial running over New York stations shows film clips of Earth, Wind & Fire leaping about (literally) while the narrator asks what is supposed to be a rhetorical question: "Is this the finest group in America?" My answer: "Hell, no!" Maybe the members of the band are sincere in their beliefs, but they come across here as a sappy group with hackneyed arrangements, fey vocals, and songs loaded with the usual hey-baby-let's-get-it-on-in-the-cosmos twaddle. J.V.

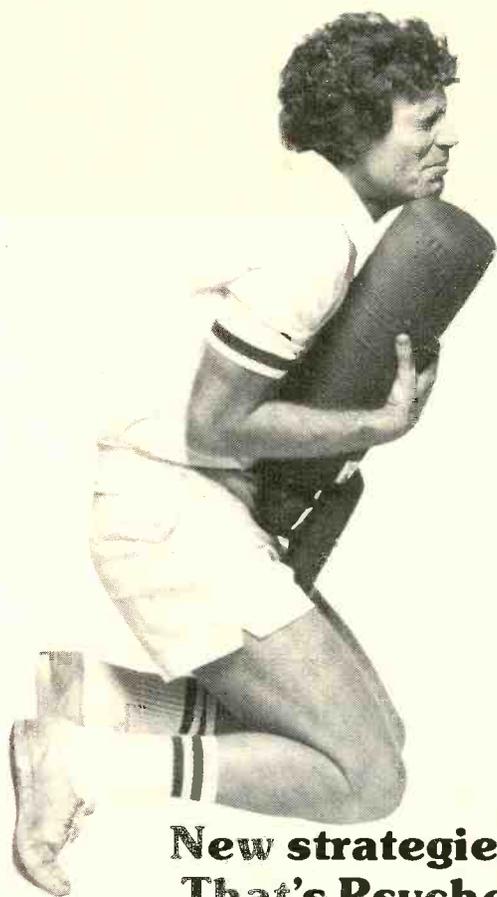
ELECTRIC LIGHT ORCHESTRA: *A New World Record* (see Best of the Month, page 83)

FIREBALLET: *Two, Too.* . . . Fireballet (vocals and instrumentals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Great Expectations; Chinatown Boulevards; Desirée; Flash;* and three others. PASSPORT PPSD-98016 \$6.98, © 8167-98016H \$7.98, © 5167-98016H \$7.98.

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

It is a mistake to approach music as an applied science, as this clinical quintet does. It is (Continued on page 96)

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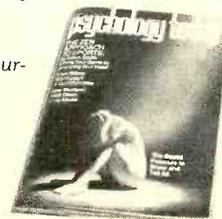
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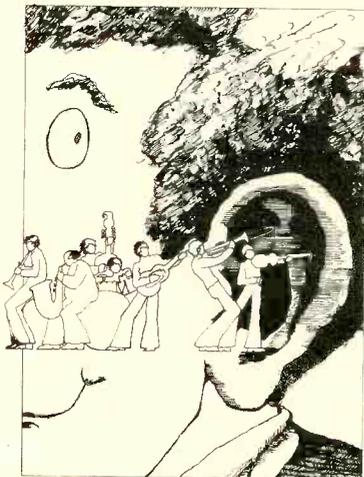
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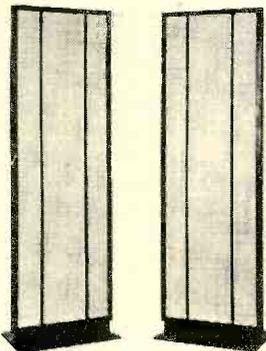
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worse to gussie things up with exotic and cute instruments (such as the Chinese zither and sleigh bells), to drag in woodwind and string sections, to write turgid material, to sing it as if it were important stuff, and to present the whole mound of sludge as mousse for the connoisseur. The proceedings on this waste of vinyl amount to something a high-school orchestra might pull off in order to win the county musical achievement award. *J. V.*

ELTON JOHN: *Blue Moves*. Elton John (vocals, piano); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Your Starter for . . . ; Tonight; One Horse Town; Chameleon; Boogie Pilgrim; Cage the Songbird; Crazy Water; Shoulder Holster;* and ten others. MCA/ROCKET 2-11004 two discs \$13.98, Ⓢ MCAT2-11004 \$13.98, Ⓢ MCAC2-11004 \$13.98.

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

Every now and then Elton John records something that represents the state of the art of pop-music craftsmanship—material, performance, arrangement, production—such as the superb *Goodbye, Yellow Brick Road*. But in between these happy occasions, though he is a star and has many hits, he tends to paddle about in a sea of sparse or puffy orchestrations, to sing beyond his range, and generally to sound busy.

This double-disc album could have been a single-disc album had John and his lyricist Bernie Taupin been able to get their technical ability into focus. But being technicians—their approach to music is quite as clammy and bloodless as that of any hack Tin Pan Alley duo of fifty years ago—they have to tinker endlessly to come up with something that appears well constructed and can give the impression of emotion. Lord (or Moloch) knows, they try hard enough here, but it's still fuzzy around the edges. *J. V.*

LED ZEPPELIN: *The Song Remains the Same*. Original-soundtrack recording. Led Zeppelin (vocals and instrumentals). *Rock and Roll; Celebration Day; Rain Song; Dazed and Con-*

fused; No Quarter; and four others. SWAN SONG SS 2-201 two discs \$11.98, Ⓢ TP2-201 \$9.98, Ⓢ CS2-201 \$9.98.

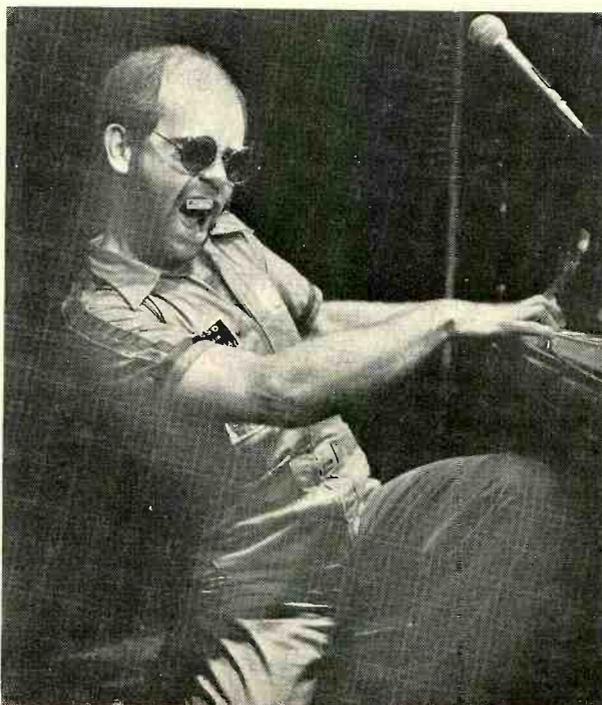
Performance: **So-so**
Recording: **Good**

This is the soundtrack album of what a usually reliable source calls another boring concert movie, a good-quality recording job of a program that makes the chair seem awfully hard before it's over. I suppose albums like this are of some use to someone, but there are plenty of better examples of what Led Zeppelin can do. *Stairway to Heaven*, the best piece the band ever came up with, is much better served by the exacting environment of the studio recording than by the looseness of this one. The band has enough taste and discipline problems under ideal conditions. There's also the problem of their simply having played, say, *Whole Lotta Love* too many times; the version here doesn't seem to say much of anything else. And, of course, the inevitable drum solo puts its usual pall on things. I may yet go to see the movie, but not with a whole lotta enthusiasm for listening to it. *N.C.*

JACKIE LOMAX: *Livin' for Lovin'*. Jackie Lomax (vocals, guitar); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *More (Livin' for Lovin'); Peace of Mind; Blue World; (Put Some) Rhythm in Your Blues; On the Road to Be Free; Our Love;* and four others. CAPITOL ST-11558 \$6.98, Ⓢ 8XT-11558 \$7.98.

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

Jackie Lomax, as the press material accompanying this lackluster album stresses, is something of a cult figure. He was a member of the Undertakers, a British pop group of the Sixties who dressed in morticians' outfits and rode to their engagements on putt-putt motorbikes. Lomax's first solo album was produced by George "Where Have I Heard That Melody Before?" Harrison in the early days of Apple Records. He has had several albums out since then, some of them group efforts, some of them solo.



ELTON JOHN:
*a bit fuzzy
around the edges*

MCA/Rocket

Lomax is a fair songwriter (by today's de-based standards), a guitarist of some skill and technique, and a vocalist who resembles James Taylor in listless delivery and comatose tone. Why he should be a cult figure is beyond me, but cultism has a streak of lunacy that passeth all understanding. J.V.

THE LOST GONZO BAND: *Thrills*. Gary Nunn (vocals, piano, bass, guitar); Robert Livingston (bass, piano, guitar, vocals); John Inmon (guitar, vocals); Kelly Dunn (keyboards); Donny Dolan (percussion). *Write a Song; Relief; Wilderness Song; Sweet Little Lilly; Dead Armadillo; Daddy's Money*; and six others. MCA MCA-2232 \$6.98, © MCAT 2232 \$7.98.

Performance: **More like spills**
Recording: **Good**

These are Jerry Jeff Walker's associates. Of course they have been dominated by his personality, and understandably they don't quite manage to define their own collective personality with which to front this thing. One might expect of them a bit of a songwriting showcase, and they seem to approach that but then hedge. *The Last Thing I Needed*, by Gary Nunn and Donna Ciscel, is a dandy spoof of country-song word play ("The last thing I needed the first thing this morning was to have you walk out on me"), but it works best as satire; nothing else is particularly impressive standing up straight. Some tunes are pleasant enough, but too many—of which the most blatant examples are *Dead Armadillo* and *Ain't No Way*—are built exclusively of parts from the pop-country junkyard. The playing doesn't show much sense of style either, following a lot of conventional decisions about what "type" a song is and digging into the corresponding bag of clichés. This isn't a physical or mechanical problem, exactly, but the presence of one strong, authoritative vocalist would have gone a long way toward easing it. As it is, it's useful mostly to those studying the pop history of Austin. N.C.

BOB MARLEY AND THE WAILERS: *Live!* Bob Marley and the Wailers (vocals and instrumentals). *Trenchtown Rock; Burnin' & Lootin'; Them Belly Full; Lively Up Yourself*; and three others. ISLAND ILPS 9376 \$6.98.

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

All right, all right. Linda Ronstadt persuaded me to give reggae another try. I've been listening a little more carefully to Jimmy Cliff, and I've been impressed. But I'm still less impressed with Bob Marley and the Wailers. In part, that may be because the thing of theirs I'm listening to—this—was recorded live in a big place, the Orpheum in London, which has sopped a lot of brightness out of the sound. In part, it's something else. I don't mind Marley's being political—I don't mind anybody's being political—but there's cultural politics as well as political politics. It's the style he brings to the extra-reggae parts of the music that impresses me about Cliff, whose lyrics and melodies aspire to be graceful. Marley's seem to want to be assimilated by the greatest number possible, so that while he may not have emulated the most sure-fire commercial elements of the popular song, he might as well have in many cases. The part of the result that bothers me most is the slickness that creeps in around the edges. I like this version of *I Shot*
(Continued on page 100)

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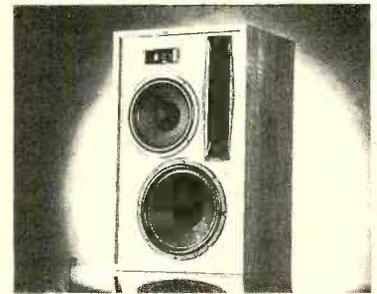
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A Valentine for Hammerstein
(from Ben Bagley)

WHEN Ben Bagley, the Emperor of Nostalgia, told Clive Davis, the president of Arista Records, that he was going to devote the next album in his "Revisited" series to songs with lyrics by Oscar Hammerstein, Davis assured him that "a recording of Oscar Hammerstein songs would not be meaningful in 1976." How wide of the mark, and how little Mr. Davis knew his man! Bagley, who at forty-two has already enriched the world's record shelves with revisits to the lesser-known works of Cole Porter, George Gershwin, Frank Loesser, Harold Arlen, Arthur Schwartz, and a score of other popular masters of the past, including two volumes of Rodgers and Hart, went ahead anyhow, and our musical lives will be the better for it.

The enterprising fellow who produced his celebrated Shoestring Revues on a shoestring (but nonetheless never does things by halves) first set about assembling an incredible cast: Cab Calloway, Blossom Dearie, Alfred Drake, E. Y. Harburg, Dorothy Loudon, Patrice Munsel, Elaine Stritch, and . . . Gloria Swanson! He got Norman Paris to do the arrangements and Harvey Schmidt, the composer of *The Fantasticks*, to do the artwork for the album cover. The liner notes he wrote himself, as usual, and they are worth the price of admission alone.

Hammerstein may not have been the "great poet" Bagley thinks he was, but he did contribute the words to many of the hardest specimens in the arboretum of show music. A number of these are on display here in the *Grande Finale* medley: *Some Enchanted Evening*, *You Are Love*, *Hello Young Lovers*—the list is long. There have been years when it seemed as if every hit you heard had lyrics by Hammerstein, from the marvelous songs of *Showboat* to the syrupy ones of *The Sound of*

Music. Hammerstein was never able to contribute the kind of tricky, witty rhymes that flowed from the pen of Lorenz Hart; he usually wore his heart on his sleeve. Of course, *Carmen Jones* is a clever exercise, and the man who made up the words of *Old Man River* should not be underestimated, but that's not the sort of stuff you'll find here.

Bagley's retrospective takes us back to the musicals of the Twenties and Thirties, the frail voice of Gloria Swanson trilling out such dusty discards as Jerome Kern's *We Were So Young* ("We were so young/The time was an evening in May/I wore the pale pink organdy/You thought so gay . . .") and most of the time moon settles pretty much for rhyming with June. But with Dorothy Loudon on hand to sing flops from the failed musical *Ballyhoo* (music by Louis Alter), Elaine Stritch to resurrect *All in Fun* from Kern's *Very Warm for May*, Alfred Drake to wring all the sentiment out of *My Best Love*, Blossom Dearie to offer a poker-faced version of *Eleven Levee Street*, a lost blues number by Sigmund Romberg, and Patrice Munsel to charm our ears with an old Kern lullaby called *Somebody Wants to Go to Sleep*, there's never a boring moment.

The material reaches back all the way to Hammerstein's first Broadway show, *We've Got Something* (1920), and as far forward as *Flower Drum Song* (1958). Some of the participants are a little bit longer in the tooth than one cares to believe: Cab Calloway is sixty-eight, Alfred Drake sixty-one, "Yip" Harburg seventy-eight, and Gloria Swanson is—

now wouldn't you like to know? But you'd never guess any of their ages from the way they carry on here. With his typical sly perversity, Bagley slips in a lyric by Larry Hart—*That's Love*, from the movie *Nana*, in which it was originally sung by Anna Sten—but you have the feeling that Oscar wouldn't have minded at all.

From the celebrant of blighted love in his fledgling efforts as a lyricist to the skillful ballad-maker of *Oklahoma*, *Carousel*, and *The King and I*, Hammerstein found his way to a style that is still endearing, even if the corn on occasion grows a little higher than an elephant's eye. Bagley has produced another winner (I still don't see how he got that cast together), and if the results aren't "meaningful" they are certainly altogether delightful. Collectors, to the counters! —Paul Kresh

OSCAR HAMMERSTEIN: Ben Bagley's Oscar Hammerstein Revisited. *We've Got Something* (Gloria Swanson, Dorothy Loudon, and the Patios); *Lonely Feet* (Blossom Dearie, Alfred Drake); *No Wonder I'm Blue* (Dorothy Loudon); *Totem Tom-Tom* (Elaine Stritch); *Somebody Wants to Go to Sleep* (Patrice Munsel); *Eleven Levee Street* (Blossom Dearie); *Sweetest Sight I've Ever Seen* (E. Y. Harburg); *I'm One of God's Children* (Dorothy Loudon and the Patios); *Little Hindoo Man* (Dorothy Loudon and the Patios); *We Were So Young* (Gloria Swanson); *When I've Got the Moon* (Blossom Dearie, Cab Calloway); *My Best Love* (Alfred Drake); *That's Love* (Blossom Dearie); *All in Fun* (Elaine Stritch); *Dance, My Darlings* (Patrice Munsel, Alfred Drake); *Grand Finale* (Dorothy Loudon and the Patios). PAINTED SMILES PS 1365 \$6.98 (from Painted Smiles Records, Inc., 116 Nassau Street, New York, N.Y. 10038).

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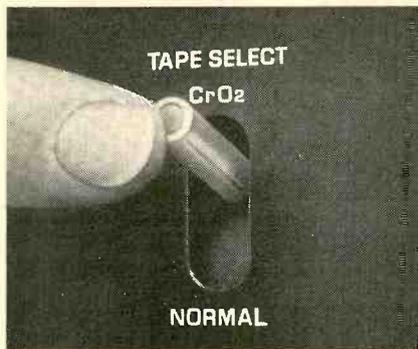
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the *Sheriff*, though, a song I'd underestimated, and I like this version of *No Woman, No Cry*, in which Marley shows that a clean but fairly ordinary rock guitar solo can fit nicely into his format. There's still too much repetition of what I'd call banalities through much of it, but I do see possibilities in Marley I hadn't seen before. *Surely*, for one thing, he's got more in the way of words to say—even if one does have to drum political slogans into people's heads—and maybe now that he's got the floor he'll say them. N.C.

GEOFF MULDAUR: *Motion*. Geoff Muldaur (vocals); Klaus Voorman (bass); Jim Keltner (drums); Dr. John (keyboards); other musicians. *Let It Out*; *Since I've Been with You Babe*; *What Do You Want the Girl to Do?*;

Motion; *When You Touch Me This Way*; and four others. REPRIS MS 2255 \$6.98.

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

Oh, I suppose I like this for what it is. At least I'm not bored with it. It does sound, though, like a pause between commitments. At times, they fall to showcasing Muldaur's versatility as a vocalist, which is the kind of thing that can happen when you don't have something better to do, such as putting across some songs you really like. This material swings from being relatively cold-blooded, emotionally uncommitted, to being so all-out sentimental as to seem stylized, as happens with Allen Toussaint's contrived but oddly affecting title song. (Interesting to compare *Motion*

to the hit *It Ain't the Meat, It's the Motion* that Maria Muldaur had.) Muldaur does get his singing into the grain of a song now and then, as in *I Don't Want Talk About It*. In such moments his work compares to what for me are the album's *best* moments, provided by guest-singing Bonnie Raitt in *Since I've Been with You Babe*. Mostly, Muldaur seems to be fishing for the instantly recognizable Geoff Muldaur song and going a long time between bites. Sure, he's got a voice, and sure, it's versatile, but he doesn't have to play Captain Eclectic. Still, I sort of like it. N.C.

OLIVIA NEWTON-JOHN: *Don't Stop Believin'*. Olivia Newton-John (vocals); orchestra. *A Thousand Conversations*; *Compassionate Man*; *New-Born Babe*; *Sam*; and six others. MCA MCA-2223 \$6.98, © MCAT-2223 \$7.98, ©MCAC-2223 \$7.98.

Performance: **A bit of a bore**
Recording: **Good**

Although Olivia Newton-John has the aphrodisiac qualities of one of my fantasy airline stewardesses (the one on Air Gomorrah), she is a bit of a bore once secured to the turntable. She's still murmuring sweet nothings breathlessly into the mike, and that's okay for the likes of *Hey Mr. Dreammaker* or *Love You Hold the Key*. But when she girlishly attempts to "act in song" through such things as *Every Face Tells a Story* and *Compassionate Man*, the results have an itty-bitty, pouty quality in place of any real dramatic mood. Her fans love it all, of course, and she's such a complete pro at dishing out the glop that it's relatively painless and pleasant in a sugary sort of way. What happens when she hits thirty is anybody's guess. P.R.

ROBERT PALMER: *Some People Can Do What They Like*. Robert Palmer (vocals); orchestra. *One Last Look*; *Keep in Touch*; *Hard Head*; *Off the Bone*; *Spanish Moon*; and five others. ISLAND ILPS 9420 \$6.98, © Y81 9420 \$7.98, © ZC1 9420 \$7.98.

Performance: **Forced**
Recording: **Fair**

Robert Palmer tries mightily to force some excitement into this, particularly in such reggae-inflected things as *Man Smart*, *Woman Smarter* and *What Can You Bring Me*, but it just ain't here. Certainly it's not in his voice, which has the carefully uneven quality of distressed wood, and mostly it's not in the production by Steve Smith, which is generally shrill—that is, when it isn't clumsily labored. An ungainly record. P.R.

MARY KAY PLACE: *Tonite! At the Capri Lounge*, *Loretta Haggars*. Mary Kay Place (vocals); Dolly Parton, Emmylou Harris, Anne Murray (back-up vocals); other musicians. *Vitamin L*; *Streets of This Town*; *Gold in the Ground*; *Settin' the Woods on Fire*; *Good Old Country Baptizin'*; and five others. COLUMBIA PC 34353 \$5.98, © CA 34353 \$6.98.

Performance: **Good-natured**
Recording: **Good**

Well, honey, ah wuz happy as a pig in a waller when ah heard that Loretta Haggars, despite trahl an' tribulation, had finally made the recordin' that would be her ticket to superstardom. Raht now, I mean *right* now, it's as difficult for most viewers of the TV soap opera spoof *Mary Hartman, Mary Hartman* to dis-

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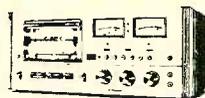
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tinguish the character, Loretta, from the person, Mary Kay Place, as it is for me to resist falling into the broad "Southern" accent I affect whenever speaking of her. The title of her album only serves to emphasize this confusion of identities.

Sides one and two each begin with a song actually written by Ms. Place, but closely associated with the TV Loretta. These two, *Baby Boy* and *Vitamin L*, are widely accepted as happy parodies of the c-&-w style. The listener's expectations are thus primed for humor, and when the remaining selections prove straight Nashville grist, a readjustment of perspective becomes necessary. The mental grin brought on by *Baby Boy's* lyrical image of Loretta and her honey sharing "chunky tuna" and kissing "under the moona" at the local Tasti-Freeze wavers uncertainly through the straight-faced *Get Acquainted Waltz*, picks up eagerly at the "bowling trophies on the TV set" in *Coke and Chips*, then sags and disappears permanently.

And yet it's so goshdarn difficult to take this record seriously, despite the impressive supporting cast of professional c-&-w musicians and Mary Kay's emphatic denial that "Tonight!" is a novelty effort. Her delivery throughout is just as bright and good-natured as can be. Her pleasant voice with its authentic Southwestern twang (just love when she sings "settin' the woods on fahr") bounces through these predominantly up-tempo tunes with uniform affability, so uniform that all sense of emotional involvement is lacking. We might as well be a-whoopin' and a-hollerin' at the Capri Lounge on a Saturday night.

Ambivalence is the kicker here. The popular Loretta image may sell albums, but it's the real Mary Kay Place who's got the talent. Well, ah'm jes gonna set back awhile and wait for the real woman to come out. Honey, ah got faith 'n' tahn.

—Paulette Weiss

LOU REED: *Rock and Roll Heart*. Lou Reed (vocals, guitar); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *I Believe in Love; Banging on My Drum; Follow the Leader; You Wear It So Well; Ladies Pay; Rock and Roll Heart*; and six others. ARISTA AL 4100 \$6.98, © 8301-4100 H \$7.98, © 5301-4100 H \$7.98.

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

Lou Reed is touted in some quarters as a serious artist, but there is nothing on this album to support such a fantasy. He seems deliberately mediocre and dull. He is an anti-musician, much as his mentor and former employer Andy Warhol (from their Velvet Underground band association) was an anti-artist and anti-film director. Now, the theory that justifies being an anti-artist is that calculated non-achievement in a given art form is a rebellion against the limits and content of that form. Thus, just as Warhol's silk-screen facsimiles of Brillo soap-pad package designs and his film *Empire*, where he trained a camera on the Empire State Building and simply let the film run through for eight hours, were once held to be significant by certain art and film critics, Reed's monotone vocals and non-songs are considered deceptively simple statements with deep underlying meanings.

The truth is that Reed and Warhol are, consciously or unconsciously, con men. Like all con men, they hold their victims in contempt and their pleasure comes in seeing just how gullible their audience can be. Warhol's Brillo silk-screens were sold at New York art galler-

ies for considerable amounts of money, and he became a national figure. Some people took him seriously, some saw through him but thought he was cute, and all admired his getting away with his game. The same has been true of Reed; his albums have been steady sellers, and he himself has come in for some heavy "analysis" and a certain amount of prestige among the denizens of Critical Cuckoo Land.

Since he is an anti-musician, it is impossible to judge Reed on the basis of music. Sample: on three of the selections here, the titles of the tunes are the only lyrics, and they are repeated over and over to the accompaniment of a not more than competent band. It would be comforting to dismiss him as a rascal, but that cannot be done. Even as a con man he

has no flair, and his contempt for his audience is ugly. J.V.

PHOEBE SNOW: *It Looks Like Snow*. Phoebe Snow (vocals, guitar); David Bromberg, Steve Burgh (guitars); Sonny Burke (keyboards); Reggie McBride (bass); James Gadson (drums); other musicians. *Autobiography (Shine, Shine, Shine); In My Girlish Days; Don't Let Me Down; Shakey Ground; Teach Me Tonight*; and five others. COLUMBIA PC 34387 \$6.98, © PCA 34387 \$7.98, © PCT 34387 \$7.98.

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

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STUFF
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is. I think I once called her style bizarre, and it is bizarre in the sense of being pinned to a series of exaggerated mannerisms, but here that's throttled back a bit and she seems more concerned with what the words and melodies say. She takes the oldie *Teach Me Tonight* and turns it into what people with dirty minds would call a dirty song, and you realize that aspect of it has been there all along; she's convincing. But there are excesses—she can't seem to end a certain kind of song without a drawn-out, repetitious parading of grunts and shouts and stuff I assume is supposed to enhance her credibility with a certain presumed kind of audience. I like the high note she hits, trumpet-like, at the end of *Stand Up on the Rock*, but I was bored with the Queen-of-Soul scatting that went on and on before that. Some songs are a little thin, too, although there are interesting lines scattered through most of them. Her technique, of course, continues to be dazzling. It still does get in the way of communication, now and then, but I think less often than it used to. The backing is splendid, Steve Burgh again prominent in it, and the recorded sound puts a nice sense of transparent space around each instrument without isolating it emotionally from the others. Somehow the album gives me the vague impression that what Snow really is is a caricaturist of some kind; I'm already eager to hear the next one and see what it does to that. This one, meanwhile, is worth some of your time. N.C.

RINGO STARR: *Ringo's Rotogravure*. Ringo Starr (vocals, drums, percussion); John Lennon (piano); Eric Clapton, Danny Kortchmar, Lon van Eaton (guitars); Jim Keltner (drums); Dr. John (keyboards); Klaus Voorman (bass); Melissa Manchester, Paul McCartney, Linda Eastman, Harry Nilsson (background vocals); other musicians. *Cookin' (in the Kitchen of Love)*; *Pure Gold*; *I'll Still Love You*; *This Be Called a Song*; *Cryin'*; *Hey Baby*; *Lady Gaye*;

and five others. ATLANTIC SD 18193 \$6.98, © TP 18193 \$7.98, © CS 18193 \$7.98.

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

Whenever I hear a Ringo Starr solo album I think of Billy Shears, a mild and modest entertainer who doesn't have much of a way with a song but who sings to please and takes life pretty much as it happens to him. The Shears character was invented by John Lennon and Paul McCartney when they wrote *With a Little Help from My Friends* as a speciality number for Ringo on the "Sgt. Pepper" album. Some years later, after the Beatles breakup, Lennon contributed *I'm the Greatest*, again about Shears, to a Ringo solo LP. The alter ego is, I think, very close to the original, and, since I like Shears, I like Ringo. His quavering baritone sometimes lists dangerously to either port or starboard of the tune he is singing, but his performances are fresh and zesty and straightforward, and his albums are consistently entertaining.

I have yet to hear any comment so poignant and openhearted on the Beatles smashup as Ringo's song *Early 1970* (available on "Blast from Your Past," Apple SW-3422); he was sending a message of affection and conciliation while the other three indulged in petty squabbling. Today, he is the only ex-Beatle that the other three regularly write for and play with. This time out Lennon contributes *Cookin'*, McCartney offers *Pure Gold*, and the Harrison entry is *I'll Still Love You*.

Viewed over his past three solo albums, Ringo's own material (he is most often a collaborator) contains some very singable items; an example here is *Cryin'*, which shows his fondness for American country music. The outstanding cut is *You Don't Know Me At All*, which has a vaudeville feel, and in which Ringo and good old Billy Shears are one. Billy may sing out of tune now and then, but this listener will never walk out on him. J.V.

AL STEWART: *Year of the Cat*. Al Stewart (vocals and guitar); orchestra. *Lord Grenville; Sand in Your Shoes; On the Border; Broadway Hotel; Midas Shadow*; and four others. JANUS JXS-7022 \$6.98, © 8098-7022 \$7.98, © 5098-7022 \$7.98.

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

Here's a bunch of sentimental, softly packaged songs by Al Stewart. None of them are helped at all, however, by Stewart's hissing sibilant "s"s, which give even the elegiac *Lord Grenville* a prissily comic, Paul Lyndish quality. When he is set loose on something like the gloweringly melodramatic *On the Border*, with such lines as "Smuggling guns and arms across the Spanish border" to be gotten through, the results are downright hilarious. Aside from Stewart's distracting speech (or recording) defect, though, this is a nice enough low-key collection with a warm, easy atmosphere. And, luckily, he still plays dynamite guitar. *P.R.*

STUFF. Richard Tee (keyboards); Eric Gale and Cornell Dupree (guitars); Gordon Edwards (bass, percussion); Christopher Parker and Stephen Gadd (drums, percussion). *Foots; How Long Will It Last; Happy Farms; My Sweetness*; and six others. WARNER BROS. BS 2968 \$6.98, © M8 2968 \$7.98, © M5 2968 \$7.98.

Performance: **Good Stuff**
Recording: **Very good**

You may have caught Stuff on NBC's live *Saturday Night* show or at one of their many appearances in an Upper West Side New York night spot called Mikell's. If not, the odds are strongly in favor of your having heard the group's individual members propel onto the charts some of the most celebrated names in today's popular music. Stuff is a sextet of musically articulate East Coast session men, a super rhythm section hatched in the shadows of the great, the near great, and the ne'er great. Under the leadership of bassist Gordon Edwards, these men have now decided to step out of the shadows as a unit (guitarists Cornell Dupree and Eric Gale have previously recorded as leaders for the Atlantic and Kudu labels, respectively), and after listening to this, their first album, I think it was a wise decision.

Stuff's music is infectiously rhythmic, as one might expect, and often downright nasty in its funkiness. Sure, the guitars are electric, but they are in such capable hands that it is the players rather than the instruments we hear. There are no profound musical statements here, nor, I'm sure, were any intended—just good down-to-earth sounds that have the timeless flavor and spirit of what we used to call hot music. *C.A.*

ROBIN TROWER: *Long Misty Days*. Robin Trower (guitar); James Dewar (bass, vocals); Bill Lordan (drums). *Same Rain Falls; Long Misty Days; Hold Me; Caledonia; Pride; Sailing*; and three others. CHRYSALIS CHR-1107 \$6.98.

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

Robin Trower plays—and his bassist sings—very much in the style of Jimi Hendrix. Although the late Mr. Hendrix was an audacious and occasionally brilliant technician of the
(Continued on page 105)

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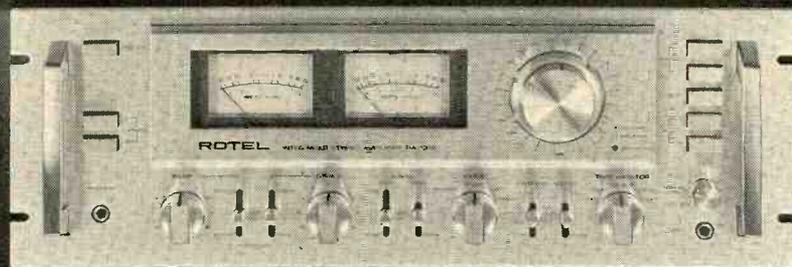
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Lincoln Perry

Patti Smith's "Radio Ethiopia"

PATTI SMITH'S much-awaited second album, "Radio Ethiopia," is here and will probably cause as much fervent discussion as her sensational debut album, "Horses." Well, what now, rock fans? If Janis Joplin, Jim Morrison, and Jimi Hendrix brought all the goodies of surrogate self-destructiveness to you, will you settle for Patti Smith's second act in her drama of a lamb of the Seventies being led to martyrdom? Her second bid to become the King or Queen (whichever you feel comfortable with these days) of Rock is unquestionably a first-rate album. It is always professional to the nth degree and a thoroughly involving emotional and musical experience. What's lacking in the album is what's lacking in Ms. Smith's timing. She is attempting to re-heat the anger and narcissism of the Sixties in the cooled-off Seventies. The result is an eerie, uneasy nostalgia for a time that tragically burned out too many of the best.

As did Joplin, Morrison, et al., Smith is attempting to be much more than a mere musician performing rock-and-roll: she seeks instant elevation to secular sainthood. It must be remembered, however, that it took death itself to so elevate Joplin and the others. Smith seems to think she can sidestep that little exercise and achieve super-stardom simply by sledge-hammer image projection. This image includes her self-proclaimed liens on our attention as a poet of our time (yet she will not trouble herself to make more than one or two lines per song intelligible to even the careful listener); her deliberately intimidating work in, for instance, the title song in which she and the band create a menacing tidal wave of sound to engulf the speakers, the room and anyone in it; the overt shock and terror of her spoken monologue in the macabre oh-God-the-sickness-of-it-all *Poppies*; and her sexual exhibitionism, at least as *heard* in something

such as *Ain't It Strange*, which comes across not only in her pants, groans, and bellows—they drip with pre-, during- and post-coital blues—but also in an oddly impersonal note of undertow that conveys sex as power and power as sex.

Smith's version of the mirage of the Sixties, when rock stars were taken as seriously and as religiously as a daily acid dose and were regarded as messengers of The Truth and of Life, is in this day and age a pretentious, one-dimensional effort to revive yesterday's gospel. Joplin and Morrison were rock idols who exemplified and personified the attitudes and the life style of a whole youth culture that tried desperately to get out from under the consequences of reality. They lived as their audiences wished they had the hell-with-it-all recklessness to live. Joplin both outraged and delighted with her revolt against the middle class. Morrison's bizarre expressions of his own pain and anger mirrored perfectly his audience's pain and anger. Naughty Jim Morrison. Devil-may-care, boozy Joplin. Both burnt out much too soon. Both trying, toward the end, to get out of the pact they had made with their audiences and neither succeeding. Smith's performance distance, her proscaenic reticence, may be her defense against being consumed by the unfocused hungers of her admirers, but her driving ambition to place herself in the Rock Pantheon may also, paradoxically, lead to the same end. And there's no need for that in the Seventies. Human sacrifices have gone out of style—way out of style. Those times are lived-through and gone, and, no matter how often Smith runs through the room with her hair on fire, she won't be able to convince us they aren't.

THAT said, it must be added that "Radio Ethiopia" is, on almost all *musical* levels, the kind of album we've been waiting to hear for a very long time. Smith's work has all of the vital, urgent excitement that caused the rock explosion to ignite in the first place. The quality of the "poetry" she's provided here will have to remain something of a mystery, at least until she picks up the rudiments of English-language communication. Her group performs around her with beautiful, controlled abandon, and the production, nominally by Jack Douglas, is as flattering to her as a pink light bulb.

Patti Smith is already an important artist of the Seventies, bound to become more important. But it is something of a chore to be a fan of hers. Neither of her albums seems yet to have captured the unique potential that the listener senses seethes under the actual performances—and that's frustrating. Even more frustrating is her self-held conviction that it's flashback time to the days when rock was the medium of The Message and that she is now its First Apostle. In short, she's an abundantly talented woman still trapped in a stereotype. But get the album. There is *something* there that you're not going to hear anywhere else these days. —Peter Reilly

PATTI SMITH: *Radio Ethiopia*. Patti Smith (vocals and guitar); orchestra. *Ask the Angels*; *Ain't It Strange*; *Poppies*; *Pissing in a River*; *Pumping*; *Distant Fingers*; *Radio Ethiopia*. ARISTA AL 4097 \$6.98, © 8301-4097H \$7.95, © 5301-4097H \$7.95.

electric guitar, there was more sound than substance to his music (as he realized shortly before his death), so that a Hendrix emulator—even one as skilled and comfortable in the role as Trower—doesn't have much to build on. Hendrix intended to try playing jazz, and had he done so—as Jeff Beck has successfully done—his career might have been more artistically rewarding; at the least it would have been more challenging. But Trower is content to stay in the place Hendrix wanted to move away from: limbo. *J.V.*

TOM WAITS: *Small Change*. Tom Waits (vocals and piano); orchestra. *Step Right Up; Bad Liver and a Broken Heart; Pasties and a G-String; Small Change; The Piano Has Been Drinking*; and six others. ASYLUM 7E-1078 \$6.98. © ET8-1078 \$7.98, © TC5-1078 \$7.98.

Performance: **Actor-y**
Recording: **Melodramatic**

Tom Waits looks, on the cover of this album, as if he's on the near side of thirty and caucasian, but he contrives, on the recording, to sound on the far side of sixty and black. His songs are uniformly designed to depress, something they succeed at completely. He's dreary all right: *Bad Liver and a Broken Heart, Pasties and a G-String*, and the title song ("Small change got rained on with his own .38") all have the *joie de vivre* of a tango with a corpse and the overpowering bad breath of a wino.

Waits' delivery, unfortunately, is so crisply clear that he makes sure you don't miss one obscenity or one belching groan of disgust about all this Nelson Algrenish squalor. He recites in a deep, gravelly voice that sounds so artificially produced that all he needs to do is throw in a few "ho-ho's" to be mistaken for a scatological Santa Claus. After about twenty minutes of wallowing around in all of this back-alley-derelect chit-chat, I realized that I was listening to a very silly album by a very untalented actor. *P.R.*

WENDY WALDMAN: *The Main Refrain*. Wendy Waldman (vocals, guitar, piano); Ken Edwards (bass); Andrew Gold (guitar, key-

boards, vocals); Michael Botts (drums); Waddy Wachtel (guitar); other musicians. *Eagle and the Owl; The Main Refrain; Soft and Low; Is He Coming at All; West Coast Blues*; and five others. WARNER BROS. BS 2974 \$6.98.

Performance: **Improving**
Recording: **Excellent**

This is more like it. I wasn't impressed with the last Wendy Waldman album, but where that one seemed the indulgence of a self-declared creative person this one shows some interest in craft. Her voice is nothing special aesthetically but it's taking on more personality, and her writing, especially in the lyrics, seems more concrete. She still has a tendency to take melodies through awkward, unmusical turns, but here you have a better feel for the elusive quality she's trying for—particularly in *Is He Coming at All* and *Prayer for You*—and an inkling or two into her growth as a craftsman. She still has a tendency to settle on *dull* tunes, too, but here that's softened by the fine back-up she receives, mostly from Linda Ronstadt's people and from Ronstadt herself in no fewer than four songs. The instrumentation is at least clever everywhere, and sometimes it's considerably more than that. *Eagle and the Owl* is my favorite, I guess, although it doesn't color in the hues of her developing style as faithfully as some of the others. The album has some dull spots, but it also has some nice surprises. *N.C.*

ANDY WILLIAMS: *Cindy*. Andy Williams (vocals); orchestra. *Sailin'; My Lonely Room; Since I Fell for You; Groovin'; The Poem*; and five others. COLUMBIA 34299 \$6.98.

Performance: **Very good**
Recording: **Elegant, expensive**

Andy Williams, who in personal appearances and TV shots always goes for the homespun projection and the boyish manner, returns here in another of his albums, an album which is, as always, and however paradoxically, as elegantly tooled and luxuriously crafted as a Cartier cigarette case. The arranging and conducting by Barry Fasman fold about Williams

WENDY WALDMAN
An album with some nice surprises



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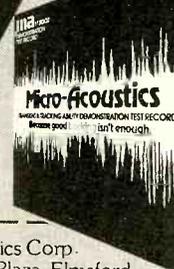
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as comfortably as a vicuna coat, and the production by Larry Brown keeps the keylight securely and flatteringly on the star at all times. Total pro that he is, Williams handles all of this fuss with a disarming ease and charm. Even in a gasping weeper such as *The Poem* he never loses his nice-guy appeal.

By now Andy Williams is really the Cary Grant of the record business (and oh, how the movie business needs a new one). No single piece of material that he does is ever all that interesting, much less innovative, but his enormous casual grace and style mark it immediately as his own—much in the way that any part Grant played became a Grant part. Those were not bad parts; neither are these.

P.R.

BILL WITHERS: *Naked & Warm*. Bill Withers (vocals); orchestra. *Close to Me; Dreams; I'll Be with You; My Imagination; Where You Are*; and three others. COLUMBIA 34327 \$6.98, © PCA 34327 \$7.98, © PCT 34327 \$7.98.

Performance: **Very good**

Recording: **Excellent**

The best thing about any Bill Withers album has always been the expansive presence of the man himself. He has a big, roomy, cushiony voice and delivery, a facility for writing direct songs that keep simple ideas simple (*Close to Me* and *Where You Are*, in particular, in this album), and an easy, innate musicianship that glides him over any rough spots. For this album he's collected a dynamite back-up group that includes Don Freeman on electric piano and Jerry Knight, who is excep-



BILL WITHERS
Easy, innate musicianship

tionally good, on bass. His best effort here is the title song ("Heaven makes love to me and I feel/Naked and warm . . ."). It's a little heavy in the "expressiveness" department but still a fine, richly detailed performance. Withers is an Old Dependable who really is, album after album, dependable—and these days that's a lot.

P.R.

COLLECTIONS

SIDEWALKS OF NEW YORK. Music rolls played on the General, a Wurlitzer Model 164 band organ. *The Natchez and the Robert E. Lee; Toot, Toot, Tootsie!; After the Ball; Mother Machree; A Little Bit of Heaven; When Irish Eyes Are Smiling; Livin' Sam (Sheik of Alabam); Sidewalks of New York*; and eight others. COLUMBIA M 34159 \$6.98.

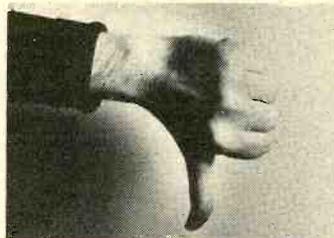
Performance: **Too long at the fair**

Recording: **Good**

On this disc of nostalgic music rolls ground out on an elaborate band organ known as the General, the band plays on—and on and on. Paul Torin, the gentleman who acquired this mammoth Wurlitzer, restored it, painted it red, white, and blue, and lends it out for openings of banks and supermarkets, is rather obsessed with it. He possesses twenty-five music rolls for it, with ten tunes per roll; the sixteen vintage samples on the record were quite enough for *this* pair of ears. Even so, the arrangements of *Toot, Toot, Tootsie!*, and *Goodbye, Mother Machree*, are so redolent of old-time carnivals, merry-go-rounds, and state fairs that it would take a flinty heart indeed to respond to the program with *no* affection at all. The organ, which weighs 2,500 pounds, is a formidable piece of machinery with 252 wooden pipes, 64 brass pipes, a 22-bell glockenspiel, a brass drum, a snare drum, and cymbal. All this for *The Sidewalks of New York* and *Sweet Rosie O'Grady*. Somebody ought to turn it loose on something more elaborate than *After the Ball*. Why, it might even replace the Moog!

P.K.

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WHEN WOMEN SANG THE BLUES. Lillian Glinn: *Shreveport Blues; Cravin' a Man Blues; Shake It Down.* Bobby Cadillac: *Carbolic Acid Blues.* Emma Wright: *Lonesome Trail Blues.* Chippie Hill: *Christmas Man Blues; Weary Money Blues.* Bessie Tucker: *Bogey Man Blues; Key to the Bushes; Mean Old Stroppler Blues.* Bessie Jackson: *B. D. Woman's Blues.* Georgia White: *Your Worries Ain't Like Mine.* Memphis Minnie: *I've Been Treated Wrong.* Willie B. Huff: *I've Been Thinkin' and Thinkin'.* ARHOOLIE BLUES Classics 26 \$6.98.

Performance: **Down but never out**
Recording: **Good restoration job**

The blues is a peculiarly American form where melancholy sometimes merges with an undercurrent of subversive mirth. The women in these blues songs are beaten, abandoned, left to die; *I've Been Treated Wrong* is a typical title. But the singer has the last word. For Christmas, if she can't get a good one, she'd like at least "a full-grown man."

The collection of blues songs here stems from the South of the Twenties and Thirties. Most of the singers represent the lesser-known ranks of theater and club performers whose records never made it big but sold well enough to a substantial audience of mostly black customers. Some, like Bobby Cadillac, Emma Wright, and Bessie Tucker, favored a country vocal style. Others, like Bertha "Chippie" Hill and Memphis Minnie, made a measure of success in the big cities, and their voices have a harder edge. The influence of Bessie Smith is strong on most of them; a few, like Georgia White, have such strapping

voices that it's hard to believe they were ever put upon the way it says in the songs.

Producer Chris Strachwitz has put this program together from old discs dating back all the way to the early Twenties; the dubbings are remarkably clean and preserve the quality of the well-played accompaniments. Even so, it's a little startling to suddenly hear, unblurred and full, the voice of Willie B. Huff, recorded in the Fifties when high fidelity had arrived; it had begun to seem by then that all blues singing had to be heard through a sonic haze. By the time Huff came along, the blues had quit the stage and slunk off to the bars. Still, like the women who sang it, down but never out, the blues always comes back. P.K.



JOHN ABERCROMBIE/RALPH TOWNER: *Sargasso Sea.* John Abercrombie (electric and acoustic guitars); Ralph Towner (twelve-string and classical guitars, piano). *Fable; Over and Gone; Elbow Room; Parasol;* and

four others. ECM ECM-1-1080 \$6.98, © 8T-1-1080 \$7.98, © CT-1-1080 \$7.98.

Performance: **Tedious**
Recording: **Echo chamber**

I am rarely bored by anything I hear on the ECM label, but I found it just as hard to sit through a playing of this album as I did to sit through a recent New York concert appearance of Abercrombie and Towner. Let me say that I have tremendous respect for both musicians, but as a combination sans colleagues they fail to hold my attention. As far as jazz recordings are concerned, ECM has established a technical standard that is higher than that of any other label I know of, but this album is a disappointment in that area as well; I don't know how all that echo was created, but I wish it hadn't been. C.A.

BARBARA CARROLL. Barbara Carroll (piano); rhythm section. *Feelings; Send In the Clowns; Baubles, Bangles and Beads;* and six others. BLUE NOTE BN-LA645-G \$6.98, © BN-EA645-H \$7.98.

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

Barbara Carroll was playing Bud Powell-inspired piano at New York's Embers almost twenty-five years ago, but she was never an exciting pianist. Before she disappeared from the scene in the very early Sixties, Ms. Carroll had turned more to pop tinkles for the society set. Now she is back, and Leonard Feather—who annotated this album—seems very happy with what she is doing. I don't share his enthusiasm; I would even have

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turned down the offer of writing the notes, and I'm sure the old Blue Note company would not have opened its microphones to Ms. Carroll's pretty but invertebrate piano improvisations. C.A.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

RAN BLAKE: *Breakthru*. Ran Blake (piano). *No Good Man; Spinning Wheel; Bebopper; Bird Blues; Drop Me Off in Harlem; Tea for Two*; and eleven others. IMPROVISING ARTISTS 373842 \$6.98 (from Improvising Artists, Inc., 26 Jane Street, New York, N.Y. 10014).

Performance: **Original**
Recording: **Excellent**

Ran Blake is one of the most original pianists around, but few people are familiar with his work; he records only about one album every ten years, and his personal appearances are



RAN BLAKE

Personal and original statements with no stylistic boundaries

all but secret events. Like so many other American artists, Blake has been given a better reception overseas, particularly in the late Fifties and early Sixties, when he teamed up with various female singers for some compelling, pioneering piano/vocal improvisational duets. In recent years, however, most of his time has been spent working with Gunther Schuller at the New England Conservatory of Music, where he now holds a position as chairman of the Third Stream Department.

A tireless listener whose ears know no stylistic boundaries, Blake's repertoire is as unrestricted as his playing. Whether he draws his material from the dawn of jazz, a Forties musical, the bebop era, or the current rock scene, he is sure to transform it into a very personal and highly original statement in which only one influence—that of Thelonious Monk—is occasionally detectable. His statements are wonderfully concise, well structured, and imbued with his sense of history; there are fourteen of them here, each one a little gem. Let's hope we get more before another ten years has gone by. C.A.

JACK DEJOHNETTE: *Untitled*. Jack DeJohnette (drums, tenor saxophone); Alex Foster (soprano and tenor saxophones); Warren

Bernhardt (keyboards, cowbell); John Abercrombie (guitars); Mike Richmond (bass). *Flying Spirits; The Vikings Are Coming; Malibu Reggae*; and four others. ECM ECM-1074 \$6.98, © 8T1-1074 \$7.98, © CT1-1074 \$7.98.

Performance: **Six of one, half a dozen . . .**
Recording: **Excellent**

This is an ECM record, but not very. Drummer Jack DeJohnette, one of the most talented and successful men to come out of the Chicago-based AACM (Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians) movement has brought to ECM a side—side one, that is—that would draw applause at a Columbia Records a-&-r meeting. Is that good? Only if you like the 110-volt treadmill that seems to have imprisoned Herbie Hancock *et al.* of late.

Side two of "Untitled" is another matter. *The Vikings Are Coming*, with DeJohnette

PAUL HORN: *Altura Do Sol (High Sun)*. Paul Horn (flute); Egberto Gismonti (?); others. *Carno; Salvador; Tango*; and five others. Epic PE 34231 \$6.98, © PEA 34231 \$7.98.

Performance: **Eclectic**
Recording: **Excellent**

Paul Horn is joined by Egberto Gismonti on this album. Who is Gismonti? What does he play? Don't ask me. The fact that the annotation consists of brief mutual pats on the back by Horn and Gismonti made me curious. As I had done on a previous occasion, I called Epic Records for the information. "Who? Gismo who?" asked the young lady in what I had been told would be the appropriate department. "Oh, a Paul Horn album. Give me the number and I'll check the cover." "I have the album, there's no information on it."

"Oh, let me switch you to the product manager for this album." She switched, he answered. "I don't know who the guy is, but I'll give you Paul Horn's telephone number."

He gave it to me. It was in Canada. I decided to skip the whole thing and just listen to the album. Lots of good flute, exotic instruments being scratched, banged on, and rubbed, guitars, violins—you name it. It borders on schmaltz, but it's beautiful, and I'm ready to wear my Egberto Gismonti button. C.A.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

STEVE KUHN: *Ecstasy*. Steve Kuhn (piano). *Prelude in G; Ulla; The Saga of Harrison Crabfeathers*; and three others. ECM ECM-1-1058 \$6.98, © CT-1-1058 \$7.98.

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

Steve Kuhn recorded this album in 1974 at the Bendiksen Studio in Oslo, which seems to be the studio for piano recordings these days. If Kuhn has had other albums of solo piano, I have not heard them; if he makes more I want to hear them, for he has never sounded more interesting to me than on this solo flight. Though he is normally regarded as a jazz pianist, his work here actually falls outside that category, lacking the element of rhythm necessary to jazz. It is, however, improvised music: impressionistic pieces, often delicate, sometimes dazzling. This kind of insight into the creative thoughts of the performer is worth a few hundred pennies any time. C.A.

OREGON/ELVIN JONES: *Together*. Oregon (instrumentals); Elvin Jones (drums). *Le Vin; Lucifer's Fall; Driven Omens; Teeth*; and three others. VANGUARD VSD 79377 \$6.98.

Performance: **Winning combination**
Recording: **Very good**

I have previously sung the praises of both Oregon and Elvin Jones, so I'm happy to be able to report that they work well together. The overall sound here is, quite naturally, more that of Oregon than of Jones' own group, but—since Oregon in its make-up is less obtrusive than the Elvin Jones group—we are also able to hear the drummer's work better in this context, and that experience is certainly worthwhile. As one might expect, the program consists of original tunes, which—in this case—does not mean merely that they were written by the performers on hand. C.A.

OSCAR PETERSON/JOE PASS: *Porgy and Bess*. Oscar Peterson (clavichord); Joe Pass

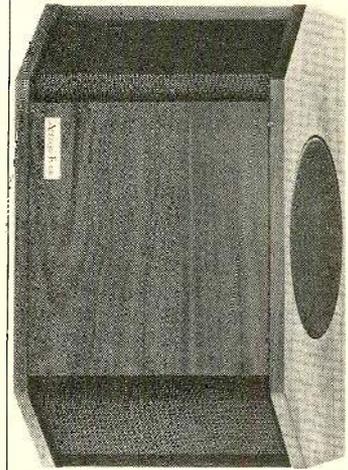
playing tenor sax, has a nice ethereal quality about it (were my ancestors ever that delicate?), *Struttin* is slightly neurotic, pianist Warren Bernhardt's *Morning Star* is the seven and a half minutes that make the album worth adding to your shelves, and *Malibu Reggae* is a wonderful bit of humor that ends the album in a spirit far removed from that which began it. C.A.

HAMPTON HAWES: *The Challenge*. Hampton Hawes (piano). *Tokyo Blues; My Romance; Bag's Groove; Summertime*; and eight others. RCA JPL1-1508 \$6.98.

Performance: **A dash of this and . . .**
Recording: **Very good**

As I have stated in these pages before, I don't feel Hampton Hawes has lived up to the promise of the recordings he made for the Contemporary label some twenty years ago. This album, made in Japan almost nine years ago, is Hawes' only solo effort to date. It is a very pleasant excursion through mostly familiar material, but the material is not all that is familiar about it: the piano styles of Tatum, Hines, Powell, and Monk are great springboards, but Hampton Hawes isn't doing any jumping. C.A.

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(guitar). *Summertime*; *Bess, You Is My Woman*; *My Man's Gone Now*; *It Ain't Necessarily So*; *I Loves You, Porgy*; *I Got Plenty o' Nuttin'*; *Oh, Bess, Oh Where's My Bess*; *They Pass By Singing*; *There's a Boat Dat's Leavin' Soon for New York*; *Strawberry Woman*. PABLO 2310-779 \$7.98, © S10-779 \$7.98, © K10-779 \$7.98.

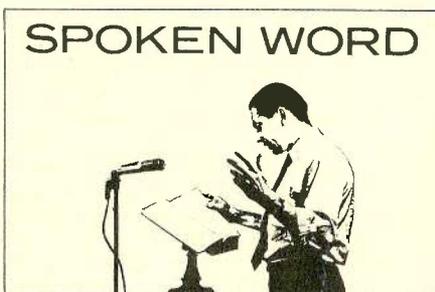
Performance: **Bore of the year**
Recording: **Good**

For a long time this admirer of *Porgy and Bess* has regarded that sturdy score as virtually indestructible. It has survived all sorts of treatment, from Broadway musical to Hollywood movie to grand opera to grist for exploitation by such "personality" singers as Mel Tormé, Frances Faye, and, of late, Cleo Laine and Ray Charles. Its tunes have been turned into an interminable symphonic medley of dubious atmospheric interest by Robert Russell Bennett, tinkled out in cocktail lounges by the languid fingers of background pianists, harped on by harmonicas. But I think poor *Porgy* has come a-cropper at last—felled by the clavichord of Oscar Peterson and the garrulous guitar of Joe Pass, his collaborator.

There is no real reason why the melodies in which *Porgy and Bess* abounds should not lend themselves to the resources of the clavichord and the guitar or even the theremin and the Moog (maybe I should have kept my mouth shut—Tomita is probably putting the finishing touches on such a program even as I write this). But Peterson and Pass, for all their fancy talk about the "tonal personality of the clavichord" and "the way that familiar themes take on fresh identities through the unfamiliarity of the instrumental tones" have managed somehow to put together one of the most boring records ever made. The most exhilarating moment in this one comes when it's over. And that doesn't happen in a hurry.

P.K.

BUCKY PIZZARELLI AND BUD FREEMAN: *Buck & Bud* (see Best of the Month, page 84)



CHEECH AND CHONG: *Sleeping Beauty*. Cheech and Chong (comedians). *The Big Sniff*; *The Adventures of Red and Roy*; *Tactical Women's Alert Team*; *Pedro's Request*; *Framed*; *Jimmy*; *Uncle Pervy*; *Sleeping Beauty*. ODE SP-77040 \$5.98, © 8T 4591 \$7.98, © CS 4591 \$7.98.

Performance: **Good dirty fun**
Recording: **Very good**

Cheech and Chong, whose latest album comes in the shape of a sleeping pill (it opens to simulate a large human tongue), are a pair of not precisely light-handed humorists, but they are funnier these days than they once

were. Here, with an unsparing lasciviousness that makes it advisable to keep this particular acquisition high on the shelf out of the hands of little ones, they tackle such topics as the adventures of a dog tossed into the pound for assaulting a poodle; a scatological roundup of lewd cattle; the personality of Uncle Pervy, who teaches unspeakable practices to children; the adventures of a tactical force of female organs organized to foil sexual invasion; and a version of *Sleeping Beauty* that would feel at home on the screen of a porno house in Times Square.

Portraying Ralph and Herbie, two street-smart canines who meet in the pound and conspire a break (foiled at the last minute by the pink poodle who got Ralph into trouble in the first place), Cheech and Chong are droll and adept in a skit that is as entertaining as it is raunchy. The rauchiness turns rancid in several of the other sketches, but the full side devoted to *Sleeping Beauty* is worth the space afforded it. The updated tale of the Princess Squash who sleeps away the years on a mink-lined waterbed in a castle "overgrown with growth" until she is brought out of it by a swinging prince and his dissolute friends manages to sustain a mood of hilarity longer than one might think probable. A filthy record, but a funny one.

P.K.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

ERIC IDLE AND NEIL INNES: *The Rutland Weekend Television Songbook*. Eric Idle (narration); Neil Innes (piano, guitar, harmonica, arrangements); other musicians. *L'Amour Perdu*; *Gibberish*; *Wash with Mother*; *Say Sorry Again*; *Rutles for Sale*; *Twenty-four Hours in Tunbridge Wells*; *The Fabulous Bingo Brothers*; *The Children of Rock and Roll*; *The Song o' the Insurance Men*; *Communist Cooking*; *Johnny Cash Live at Mrs. Fletcher's*; *Accountancy Shanty*; *Football*; *Boring*; and nine others. PASSPORT PPSD-98018 \$6.98.

Performance: **Hilarious**
Recording: **Excellent**

Eric Idle is an alumnus of Monty Python, the bizarre and hilarious English comedy group. Neil Innes is the former captain of the departed Bonzo Dog Doo Dah Band, a satiric musical group which provided an accurate and brilliant running commentary on the foibles of British and American pop music during the late 1960's and early 1970's. The starting point of this album is the hopelessly inept and fatuous programming of a provincial English television station—equal, in American terms, to the programming served up by a station in, oh, say, Champion's Wounds, Wyoming, or New York City.

The record belongs almost entirely to Innes. Eric Idle is a guest star, brought on board for his name value, and he has only a few brief bits where he indulges in the stream-of-consciousness double talk and university political humor that were his specialities with the Pythons. Innes' skewerings of British and American pop groups and solo performers are cherishable because of the way he appropriates their glitter while demonstrating the often meathead content of their lyrics and attitudes. *Concrete Jungle Boy* is a marvelous dismissal of the early Who's "anthems" to alienated youth. *The Children of Rock and Roll* is an autopsy of John Lennon, cruel but true. *Protest Song* is an Innes masterpiece—as anyone who saw him appear with the Pythons in their 1976

(Continued on page 111)

"**E**LECTRIC MUSE (The Story of Folk into Rock)" is an ambitious four-record album from the British Island label that brings home a truth we Americans may tend to overlook: some pretty good British "rock" bands, including the Pentangle, Fairport Convention, and Steeleye Span, electrified the folk process almost as if there were no America. A bigger deal has been made, at least over here, of how the Yardbirds, Beatles, and Rolling Stones grew up with their ears fixed on American-made music, folk and pop. It therefore does something for your perspective to be shown that Dave Swarbrick and such a "pure" folkie

sexy, for example, they got bawdy, which is to say crude.

I think there's a lot to think about here; I even have a theory about all this that covers why Western Europeans start and win so many wars, why they are so corporate, which has to do with ingrained organization-mania, which has to do with ingrained linear thinking, which probably has to do with a more or less constant fear (a psychiatrist would call it an anal one) of losing control. This music had to grow up, in fact, among attitudes that held that making music was risky business, since any music was either a force for God or a

by a vocal or two, for example, and it would've felt a little less like a lecture was going on. Some of the lesser-known performers beg the question of when it is folk in the untouched-by-outside-ways sense as well as when it is simply poorly done. But then there are performers I didn't know much about—including Davey Graham, a wonderful guitarist—who hit you with pleasant surprises.

An eighteen-page booklet by Dallas provides neat-to-whimsical information about the tunes, such as how William Kemp allegedly danced a jig from London to Norwich in 1599 to *Kemp's Jig* (played here by Gryphon), accompanied by a single musician on the three-holed pipe and tabor drum. Sitting down and listening to the whole thing at once could make you numb, of course, but—thanks to the relative nonlinearity of the disc format—you don't have to do that. It's a valuable reference work, in effect, for some of us, and a pretty good percentage of it also works as something to listen to. —Noel Coppage

The Electric Muse: Folk into Rock

"... when they got sexy, they got bawdy, which is to say crude."



Ralph McTell/courtesy Reprise

as Martin Carthy can identify with each other enough to play duets and to have it suggested that a sense of community over there can link the classic, almost-anthropological Chieftains with a gang of rock-and-roll kids like Traffic.

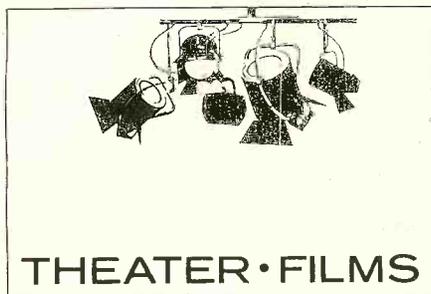
An American performer of a certain folk-song image—Leadbelly, Ramblin' Jack Elliot—shows up in the collection now and then, but mostly "Electric Muse" demonstrates a folk-to-rock process quite different from ours. What makes it different mainly is the fact that so much of our root music was made by black people, and no sources feeding the British bands had experiences quite like theirs. Listen to this, then, and you'll find interval cordoned off in orderly half-step (or, in the modal pieces, mostly whole-step) increments. The folk consciousness that wants to slide from one note to another, and the techniques with which to do it (the way we play harmonica, saxophone, various types of slide guitar, etc.), developed on this side of the ocean. The bluesman's easy command of double-entendre (mostly sexual) metaphor did not occur to the white Western Europeans; self-consciousness did, and when they got

force for the devil. My own Anglo-Saxon, Baptist grandmother believed that (so, as a matter of fact, did the Greeks). The thinkers this music had to contend with included the likes of William Cobbett, who is quoted as saying, "A great fondness for music is a mark of great weakness, great vacuity of mind . . . a want of capacity, or inclination, for sober thought." Opposing this, to be fair, we must balance Martin Luther's conviction that the joy of music is man's best armor against Satan. As I said, there's a lot to think about.

I DOUBT whether Karl Dallas and the other collectors of "Electric Muse" meant for our minds to wander that much, but the collection does show how folk music was toughened by bumping against such attitudes, and at the same time how it reflects some of them. The collection also promotes wandering of the mind, having, as it does, a few dry spots in it. It isn't academic seriousness about Folk Music that makes it that way, however—just linear editing. A spate of guitar solos, nice as some of them are, could have been broken up

ELECTRIC MUSE (THE STORY OF FOLK INTO ROCK). Steeleye Span: *Robbery with Violins: The Weaver and the Factory Maid.* Ian Campbell Folk Group: *Tail Toddle (extract): Rocky Road to Dublin/Drops of Brandy.* Fairport Convention: *Sir B. McKenzie (extract): Medley—Lark in the Morning/Rakish Paddy/Foxhunter's Jig/Toss the Feathers: Chelsea Morning; Nottamun Town; Tam Lin; Lord Marlborough; Poor Will and the Jolly Hangman; Furs and Feathers; Stranger to Himself.* Leadbelly: *The Gallows Pole.* Jack Elliot: *Pretty Boy Floyd.* Margaret Barry: *She Moves Through the Fair.* Alan Lomax and the Ramblers: *Hard Case.* The Coppers: *The Banks of Sweet Primroses.* Ray and Archie Fisher: *The Twa Corbies.* A. L. Lloyd: *The Shoals of Herring Extract.* The Dubliners: *The Mason's Apron.* The Chieftains: *Carolán's Concerto.* Gryphon: *Kemp's Jig.* Morris On Band: *Greensleeves.* Hedgehog Pie: *Drops of Brandy.* John Martyn: *Eibhli Ghail Chiuin Ni Chearbhail.* John and Beverley Martyn: *John the Baptist.* Davey Graham: *Angi: She Moves Through the Fair; Better Git It in Your Soul.* Bert Jansch: *Veronica; Blackwaterside.* John Renbourn: *Waltz; Bransle Gay.* Ralph McTell: *Willoughby's Farm.* Marc Brinerley: *Dragonfly.* Jackson C. Frank: *Blues Run the Game.* Roy Harper: *Forever.* Pentangle: *Waltz; Let No Man Steal Your Thyme.* Martin Carthy: *Scarborough Fair.* Martin Carthy/Dave Swarbrick: *Our Captain Cried All Hands.* Al Stewart: *Soho, Needless to Say.* New Humblebums: *Please Sing a Song for Us.* Young Tradition: *Lyke-Wake Dirge.* Shirley Collins: *The Wedding Song.* Shirley Collins/Davey Graham: *Pretty Sara.* Traffic: *John Barleycorn.* Bob and Carol Pegg: *Rise Up Jock.* Mr. Fox: *The Gay Goshawk.* Lindisfarne: *Turn a Deaf Ear.* Jack the Lad: *The Third Millennium.* Richard Thompson: *Nobody's Wedding.* Albion Country Band: *Albion Sunrise; The New St. George/La Rotta.* Albion Morris: *Upton Stick Dance.* Steve Ashley: *The Spirit of Christmas.* Mike and Lal Waterson: *The Magical Man.* ISLAND Folk 1001 four discs \$15. (Available from Jem Records, Import Record Service, Box 343, 3001 Hadley Road, South Plainfield, N.J. 07080. Include a 35¢-per-disc handling charge.)

American stage tour will testify. In a conglomerate characterization of all the folkie kid whiners of the last ten years, Innes devastatingly portrays their snobbery, narcissism, and relentless musical incompetence, complete with a simulation of Bob the Dylan's infuriatingly bad harmonica playing. Ah, this is sweet surgery. J.V.



THEATER • FILMS

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

BUGSY MALONE (Paul Williams). An original-soundtrack recording. Archie Hahn, Julie McWilder, Liberty Williams, Paul Williams, others (vocals); orchestra. RSO RS-1-3501 \$6.98, © 8T1-3501 \$7.98, © CT1-3501 \$7.98.

Performance: **Really charming**
Recording: **Good**

Paul Williams' score for *Bugsy Malone* is the really charming result of what sounds like a sickeningly cute idea in concept: a gangster film with a Thirties setting, a cast composed completely of children, and an abundance of custard-pie shoot-outs, etc. If you've seen the film you know that the idea works wonderfully well and that the kids, particularly Florrie Dugger as the Joan Blondellish heroine, are pure delight. Williams' words and music for this unselfconscious little caper—recorded separately by adults, Williams himself among them—are just right for his material. The put-ons, thank goodness, are kept to a minimum, although Williams can't seem to resist a couple of tries at *petit-camp* in such things as *My Name Is Tallulah* and *Fat Sam's Grand Slam*. But in numbers such as Blousey's *I'm Feeling Fine* and *Ordinary Fool* and *Bugsy's Down and Out*, Williams writes with all of the slam-bang energy and tough naïveté that characterized the songs from Thirties musicals and have kept them in performance all these years. Very entertaining. P.R.



FOLK

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

GRUPO FOLKLORICO Y EXPERIMENTAL NEUVAYORQUINO: Lo Dice Todo. Grupo Folklórico (vocals and instrumentals). *Cinco*

en Uno Callejero; Se Me Olvido; Trompeta N Curero; Ao Meu Lugar Voltar; Corta el Bonche; La Mama; Dime la Verdad; Aguemimo. SALSOU SAL-4110 \$6.98.

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

The Grupo is composed of dozens of musicians and vocalists of different generations, styles, and backgrounds of Cuban, Puerto Rican, Jamaican, Brazilian, and Afro-American music. Within a given samba, guaguanco, rumba, or bolero they present an exciting fusion of the components of the disparate influences on Latin music, including flavorings of jazz.

The Grupo's concept is not new, but it is one quite often difficult to put into practice; integrating distinctive elements of multiple styles into a workable whole sometimes results in the domination of one component by another, or, on the other hand, in compromising all the elements so much that the result is weak and thin. But the Grupo's fusion is robust and flexible, whether the arrangements emphasize the simple folk aspect or demonstrate the power of a big Latin band with brass and reed sections.

There are, really, too many accomplished musicians and singers on the album to name all of them, but I must mention trumpeter Alfredo (Chocolate) Armenteros, vocalists Felix (Corozo) Rodriguez and Willie Garcia, violinist Alfredo de La Fe, Nelson Gonzalez of the *tres*, and trombonist José Rodrigues from Brazil. It's obvious from the music that the elders and youngsters had a whopping good time together. J.V.

PACO PEÑA: Fabulous Flamenco. Paco Peña (guitar); with Guillermo Basilisco (guitar), Ely "La Gambita," Antonio Gomez, and "Perete." *Rondeña; Sevillanas; Palmas y Guitarra; Tientos de la Bahía; Clara Fuente; Zorongo; Mantillay Peina; Milonga; Por la Lagunilla; Rumbaendo la Milonga.* LONDON SPC 22135 \$6.98.

Performance: **Crystalline**
Recording: **Excellent**

Classical Spanish guitar music is characteristically elegant and restrained—music that confides rather than exhorts, mitigating the tensions of its style with contemplative stretches of lyricism. Flamenco can be elegant too, but in an angrier way. It is music that seethes and smoulders beneath the knife-sharp twang of the lightly constructed instrument on which it is played. This music might not even exist in Spain if Ferdinand and Isabella had not forbidden the gypsies to leave Andalusia in 1492. They stayed to mingle church, popular, and folk music into this unique form. Countless guitarists play flamenco, but only a few—Manitas de Plata and Paco Peña among them—play it unforgettably. "Fabulous Flamenco" is the latest in a series of albums Peña has made for London. Like the others, it is marked by a kind of controlled ferocity in the playing and an exceptional clarity of recorded sound. To evoke the proper gypsy atmosphere, Peña's guitar is augmented by the clicking of castanets, occasionally a second guitar strummed by Guillermo Basilisco, characteristic vocal cries, and the clapping of hands. *Sevillanas, bulerías, zorongos*, and *granadinas* make up the program, along with *milongas* and *guajiras* imported from Latin America. A fine successor to Peña's earlier albums. P.K.

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CLASSICAL DISCS AND TAPES

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

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

J. S. BACH: *Eighteen Chorale Preludes (BWV 651-668)*. Alban Singers; Peter Hurford (organ). ARGO ZRG 843/4 two discs \$13.96.

Performance: **Sensitive**
Recording: **Spacious**

The chorale preludes copied as a group in the manuscript in the East Berlin Staatsbibliothek (Ms. Bach P 271) are affectionately known among organists as "The Eighteen." In contrast to the chorale preludes in the *Orgelbüchlein*, miniatures written for didactic purposes, these are full-blown compositions, revealing Bach's mastery of contrapuntal skills and instrumental technique. Playing the organ of All Souls Unitarian Church, Washington, D.C., Peter Hurford offers us a magnificently conceived reading of these wonderful works. The registration is carefully chosen to illuminate the complexity of Bach's part-writing and to feature the original chorale melody. Avoiding the almost-cliché and annoying *détaché* techniques so frequently used in Baroque organ performances today, Mr. Hurford adopts a flowing legato style of playing that is nonetheless clear in its articulation and subtle in its rhythmic control. Over this plastic structure, the square chorale melodies form a stunning contrast of monolithic strength. Especially fine is Hurford's molding of those highly embellished settings in which the original melody is subjected to every ornate division imaginable. And he incorporates all that minute de-

tail into the overall line without sounding mechanical.

Each chorale prelude is preceded here by a choral setting sung by the Alban Singers. Although Bach himself wrote choral settings of all the chorales involved, those are not used in this album. The choral settings here are earlier ones, presenting the melody in a simpler language than that employed by Bach and with a special freshness in their modality and an almost Renaissance concept of chordal progression.

The album also includes copious, interesting notes (by Stephen Daw) which are full of information on the source of the melodies, the various vocal settings, and Bach's settings for organ, and which include a brief analysis of the compositional technique used. S.L.

J. S. BACH: *Italian Concerto (BWV 971); French Overture (BWV 831)*. Igor Kipnis (harpsichord). ANGEL S-36096 \$6.98.

Performance: **Stately**
Recording: **Thick**

J. S. BACH: *Suite in C Minor (BWV 997); Italian Concerto (BWV 971); Two-Part Inventions (BWV 772-786); Fantasy in C Minor (BWV 906)*. Lionel Party (harpsichord). DESMAR DSM 1008 \$6.98.

Performance: **Brilliant**
Recording: **Clear**

J. S. BACH: *Toccatas in D Major, E Minor, and G Major (BWV 912, 914, and 916); Prelude in A Minor (BWV 922); Chromatic Fantasy and Fugue in D Minor (BWV 903)*. Blandine Verlet (harpsichord). PHILIPS 6833 184 \$7.98.

Performance: **Rhapsodic**
Recording: **Bright**

These three excellent discs of indestructible music by Bach will give the listener a fine sampling of what is going on in the world of harpsichordists. Igor Kipnis, widely known through his many records and concert activities, is certainly one of the finest performers we have today. His playing over the years has mellowed, and from the glowing performances on this disc it is evident that he has reached a wonderful stage of maturity and

confidence. His reading of the Italian Concerto is beautifully poised; the outer movements reveal the important structural clarity between solo and tutti, and the difficult slow movement is lyric and effusive. The opening of the French Overture is noble in its double dotting, but when this style returns after the intervening fugue the nobility is somewhat lost in a tempo too rapid for the fussy up-beat figuration. Kipnis employs the full panoply of French rhythmic alterations and brings them off nicely in the dance movements. Also, he is not afraid to add ornaments and divisions in the many repeats and da capos. Despite some rather muddy sounds resulting from the sixteen-foot stop (I do wish he would reconsider the use of this almost obsolete sound), the complex music comes off with admirable clarity in the artist's hands.

The young Chilean harpsichordist Lionel Party is a first-prize winner of the Leipzig International Bach Competition. He has fingers galore and possesses a brilliant technique. This is displayed almost to a fault in the Italian Concerto where the music is often blurred because of excessive speed and enthusiasm. Such an approach, however, is appropriate for the C Minor Fantasy and results in a kind of Scarlatti brilliance. Mr. Party's musicianship is heard to best advantage in the Two-Part Inventions. Faced with this highly abstract music with no direction from the composer in terms of tempos or dance rhythms, he has found a convincing affect for each piece rather than presenting them as a collective lump. We must also thank him for including a reading of the C Minor Suite, a rarely heard creation intended for lute. He brings it off superbly as a major harpsichord work.

Finally, there is the young French harpsichordist Blandine Verlet, who presents a youthful Bach at his most rhapsodic and reveals her penchant for the improvisatory style. The challenge of the toccatas is to achieve a balance between the free recitative-like sections and the highly ordered fugal writing. Ms. Verlet solves this problem with a disarming simplicity that contrasts her poetry and imagination with a keen sense of structure and form. Here is a new personality on the scene to watch and listen to. S.L.

Explanation of symbols:

- Ⓜ = reel-to-reel stereo tape
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The first listing is the one reviewed; other formats, if available, follow it.

BARTÓK: *Bluebeard's Castle* (see Best of the Month, page 81)

BEETHOVEN: *Missa Solemnis in D Major, Op. 123.* Heather Harper (soprano); Janet Baker (mezzo-soprano); Robert Tear (tenor); Hans Sotin (bass); New Philharmonia Chorus; London Philharmonic Orchestra, Carlo Maria Giulini cond. ANGEL □ SB-3836 two discs \$13.98.

Performance: **Devout**
Recording: **Boxy**

In an age in which the term "artist" is used casually as a synonym for "performer," Giulini is one of the great figures who remind us of the word's true meaning. His recording of the *Missa Solemnis*, which ought to have been an Event, has many moments of sublime beauty, but overall it is less persuasive than I had hoped and clearly less so than the Klempner and Böhm versions. As a shortcut description of this performance, one might say that Giulini emphasizes the work's devotional aspect and plays down the dramatic; the trouble with that is that there seems to have been no separation of the two in Beethoven's concept, and here the sections that should be the most stirring are for the most part barren intermezzos between the more meditative ones, which are most affecting indeed. The exultant quality of the Gloria, which should open like a sunburst, is dissipated by Giulini's deliberate

spacing, and so is that of the fugal section at the end of the Credo. Everyone sings and plays very well—Heather Harper especially—but the whole seems somehow less than the sum of its parts. The sound itself is not of much help. R.F.

BEETHOVEN: *Piano Sonatas: No. 8, in C Minor, Op. 13 ("Pathétique"); No. 21, in C Major, Op. 53 ("Waldstein"); No. 26, in E-flat Major, Op. 81a ("Les Adieux").* Vladimir Ashkenazy (piano). LONDON CS 6921 \$6.98.

Performance: **First-rate**
Recording: **Likewise**

BEETHOVEN: *Piano Sonatas: No. 8, in C Minor, Op. 13 ("Pathétique"); No. 14, in C-sharp Minor, Op. 27, No. 2 ("Moonlight"); No. 21, in C Major, Op. 53 ("Waldstein").* Rudolf Firkušny (piano). LONDON SPC 21080 \$6.98.

Performance: **Rugged**
Recording: **Close-up**

BEETHOVEN: *Piano Sonatas: No. 8, in C Minor, Op. 13 ("Pathétique"); No. 14, in C-sharp Minor, Op. 27, No. 2 ("Moonlight"); No. 23, in F Minor, Op. 57 ("Appassionata").* Bruno-Lionardo Gelber (piano). CONNOISSEUR SOCIETY □ CSQ 2113 \$6.98.

Performance: **Romantically intense**
Recording: **Good**

These three discs among them offer not only

the five most popular Beethoven piano sonatas, but, in terms of interpretive style, something for every taste. You can choose between the Schnabel-like ruggedness and intellectuality of Firkusny and the unabashed romanticism of Gelber, or, if you are looking for a near-ideal synthesis of the two approaches, there is the well-nigh infallible musicality and fleet-fingered virtuosity of Ashkenazy.

In terms of recorded sound, the Ashkenazy disc is just fine for my taste, with body, brilliance, and a comfortable room ambience. Firkusny gets a really close-up miking job that turns out well within its particular frame of sonic reference. Heard in two-channel playback, the Gelber recording seems distant in comparison with the others, but there is a more effective instrumental presence when the two rear channels are brought into play.

Ashkenazy's dramatic, yet disciplined, traversal of the *Pathétique* and the fine sense of atmosphere he brings to the opening pages of *Les Adieux* (Beethoven preferred the German *Lebewohl* to the customary French titling) are very impressive. The nimble virtuosity of the latter's final movement reminds one that this music came from the same period that saw the creation of the brilliant Emperor Concerto and the Harp Quartet. But, fine as Ashkenazy's reading of the *Waldstein* is, it doesn't measure up in imaginative quality to Alfred Brendel's recent version on Philips. (Continued overleaf)



Wolfe World Photo

Hallelujah choristers Menuhin, Fischer-Dieskau, Rostropovich, Horowitz, Bernstein, and Stern

Concert of the Century?

IF Columbia and Carnegie Hall want to call this "The Concert of the Century," who am I to argue? Still, I can't resist one small question: which century? If they mean the life of Carnegie Hall, they are entitled to claim only 17/20 of a century. The concert, reproduced here in its entirety (although not in the original order), was held on the eighty-fifth birthday of Carnegie Hall, May 18, 1976, as a benefit establishing an endowment fund to assure the future of the great old hall. The artists donated not only their artistic services to this event but also their album royalties.

In view of the worthiness of the cause and the blinding array of superstars, one would have to be a veritable Scrooge to pooh-pooh

or bah-humbug this one. But there is no need. The ultimate performance of everything it may not be, but there is first-class music and music-making here, with a real once-in-a-lifetime: the Fischer-Dieskau/Horowitz *Dichterliebe*. This wonderfully expressive performance—singer and pianist are a perfect match—is only one side out of four, but it is, as they say, alone worth the price.

The mild heterogeneity of the program has some logic to it. The Beethoven *Leonore* No. 3 was performed at the hall's opening-night concert in 1891. And the association of Tchaikovsky with the hall goes back to its opening-week festival, when the Russian composer led his own music and included the little-known

Pater Noster. The Rachmaninoff movement was a last-minute replacement for a Mozart aria which had to be canceled because of the illness of Martina Arroyo. And with Menuhin and Stern on the podium what could be expected except the Bach Double?

The recording has class and more than a bit of the excitement of the event; the charisma comes rattling off the platters. The boxed set includes the Carnegie Hall program for the event. Concert of the Century? Well, perhaps the occasion excuses the hyperbole—and the discs are a treasurable souvenir.

—Eric Salzman

CONCERT OF THE CENTURY: *The Eighty-fifth Anniversary of Carnegie Hall. Beethoven: Leonore Overture No. 3, Op. 72a.* Members of the New York Philharmonic, Leonard Bernstein cond. **Tchaikovsky: Pezzo Elegiaco from the Piano Trio in A Minor, Op. 50.** Vladimir Horowitz (piano); Isaac Stern (violin); Mstislav Rostropovich (cello). *Pater Noster.* The Oratorio Society, Lyndon Woodside cond. **Rachmaninoff: Third Movement from the Sonata in G Minor for Cello and Piano, Op. 19.** Mstislav Rostropovich (cello); Vladimir Horowitz (piano). **Schumann: Dichterliebe, Op. 48.** Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau (baritone); Vladimir Horowitz (piano). **J. S. Bach: Concerto in D Minor for Two Violins (BWV 1043).** Yehudi Menuhin, Isaac Stern (violins); Leonard Bernstein (harpsichord); members of the New York Philharmonic. **Handel: Hallelujah Chorus from "Messiah."** Oratorio Society; Bernstein, Fischer-Dieskau, Horowitz, Menuhin, Rostropovich, and Stern; members of the New York Philharmonic, Lyndon Woodside cond. COLUMBIA 34256 two discs \$15.98, © M2T 34256 \$15.98.

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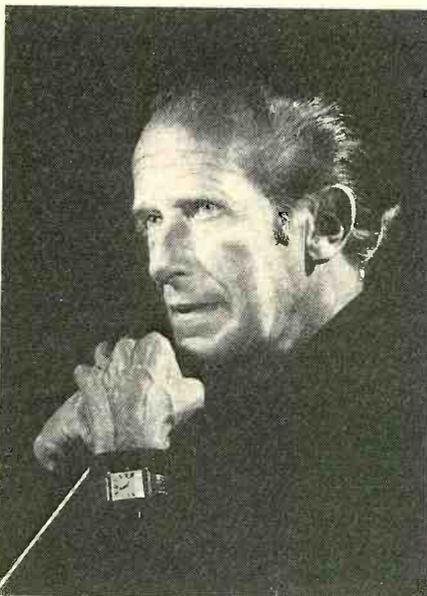
REPRINTS NOW AVAILABLE

This useful, information-packed, and attractive (suitable for framing) feature from our July 1976 Bicentennial Issue is printed in four colors on 11" x 16" stock and includes Music Editor Goodfriend's introduction. For your copy send 25¢ to: American Music Calendar, Stereo Review, 1 Park Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10016.

Firkusny scores in the way he works out developments, as in that of the first movement of the *Pathétique*, which fairly explodes into its reprise. Superbly urgent, too, is his treatment of the opening movement of the *Appassionata*, and his emphasis of contrast in expression and dynamics throughout the finale lingers in the mind long after hearing.

For all the immediate sense of drama and coloration Gelber achieves, I find his readings wear the least well. His hyperdramatic handling of the final movement of Op. 27, No. 2, is a prime instance in point. But matters of personal taste are involved here, and others may feel differently. I, though, would make a point of acquiring the Ashkenazy disc—judging from this as well as the earlier three in the series, I believe his sonata cycle when completed will be an outstanding achievement.

D.H.



MILTON KATIMS
Still a superb solo violinist

BEETHOVEN: Symphony No. 7, in A Major, Op. 92. Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, Carlos Kleiber cond. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2530 706 \$7.98.

Performance: **Rather breathless**
Recording: **Brilliant**

BEETHOVEN: Symphony No. 7, in A Major, Op. 92; Egmont Overture, Op. 84. New Philharmonia Orchestra, Leopold Stokowski cond. LONDON SPC 21139 \$6.98.

Performance: **Broad-gauge**
Recording: **Very good**

To my great regret the immensely talented young Carlos Kleiber does not repeat in Beethoven's Seventh the stunning success he achieved in the Fifth. He seems to be trying to emulate the dynamism of the justly famed Toscanini readings here, but, unlike the Maestro, and despite extreme dynamic contrast and headlong tempos in the fast movements, he does not let the music "breathe." This Beethoven Seventh is lithe and muscular, but, for my taste, there is not quite enough meat on its bones. Good, clean, recorded sound, however.

If Kleiber's reading has the clean lines of the sculptures of Barlach or Lehmbruck, Stokowski's is virtually a Rubens *kermesse* in to-

nal richness and vitality. His Philadelphia recording was, along with Toscanini's New York Philharmonic rendition, the best of the 78-rpm era, and here, to my mind, he achieves something almost as fine. The first movement, with a superb introduction, is simply glorious. Some may complain that the slow movement is more *andante* than *allegretto*, but one is quite disarmed by the sheer beauty of the orchestral playing. More justified would be criticism of the paucity of repeats in the scherzo, the drastic pull-up at the very end, and the exaggerated prolonging of the famous cello/double-bass interruption midway in the finale. But even these annoying details tend to fade away in the face of the vitality of the reading as a whole. The *Egmont* is magnificently dramatic and superbly played, a prime object lesson in tasteful and effective use of fluid tempo. The old wizard still has what it takes!

D.H.

BLOCH: Suite for Viola and Orchestra. Milton Katims (viola); Seattle Symphony Orchestra, Henry Siegl cond. *Schelomo*. Laszlo Varga (cello); Westphalian Symphony Orchestra, Siegfried Landau cond. TURNABOUT TV-S 34622 \$3.98.

Performance: **Excellent Viola Suite**
Recording: **Very good**

BLOCH: Suite Symphonique; Symphony for Trombone and Orchestra. Howard Prince (trombone); Portland Junior Symphony, Jacob Avshalomov cond. COMPOSERS RECORDINGS, INC. CRI SD 351 \$6.95.

Performance: **Adequate to splendid**
Recording: **Serviceable to good**

Best known and most often played with its original piano accompaniment, Ernest Bloch's Viola Suite is one of the classics of the literature. Though not Hebraic in inspiration, it is highly charged and colorful music of romantic post-impressionist persuasion. The Turnabout recording is the first release in this country of the orchestral version, which offers the music in even more highly colored dress. It is aurally fascinating, though it seems a bit diluted in the rhythmic impact that only the solo piano can bring to the second-movement scherzo. Milton Katims has gained a fine reputation as a conductor (of the Seattle Symphony), but he has lost none of his prowess as a solo violinist. He plays superbly here, ably abetted by his concertmaster in the conductorial role, and the whole performance is beautifully recorded.

In the *Schelomo* performance, Laszlo Varga's cello work is excellent, but the all-important orchestral role comes through rather weakly. Memories of Feuermann and Stokowski with the Philadelphia Orchestra, not to mention at least two of the currently available stereo recordings, simply will not permit me to recommend this version.

CRI's issue of the *Suite Symphonique* and the *Symphony for Trombone and Orchestra* is a welcome new addition to the recorded canon of Bloch's work, even if the pieces are not overwhelming masterpieces. The suite is in Bloch's romantic neo-Classical manner with almost Rachmaninoff-like references to the *Dies Irae* in its later pages. The briefer and more effective *Symphony for Trombone and Orchestra* offers more of Bloch's declamatory style and brilliant writing for the solo instrument. Howard Prince puts on a magnificent show of virtuosity and sterling musicianship.

(Continued on page 116)

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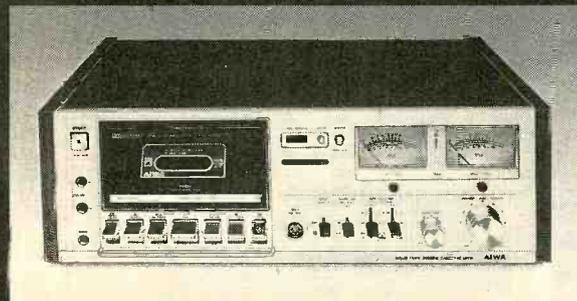
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and Jacob Avshalomov leads his young players in vigorous performances that come off better in the sharper and more refined Trombone Symphony than in the massive sonorities and intricate polyphony demanded in the suite. The sound is good, considering what seems to have been a somewhat limited acoustic ambiance. *D.H.*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

CHARPENTIER: *Louise*. Ileana Cotrubas (soprano), Louise; Plácido Domingo (tenor), Julien; Jane Berbié (mezzo-soprano), the Mother; Gabriel Bacquier (bass-baritone), the Father; Michel Sénéchal (tenor), Noctambulist and King of the Fools; Lyliane Guitton (soprano), Irma; Eliane Manchet (soprano), Ca-

mille; others. Ambrosian Opera Chorus; New Philharmonia Orchestra, Georges Prêtre cond. COLUMBIA M3 34207 three discs \$20.94.

Performance: **A-minus**
Recording: **Good**

Charpentier's *Louise*, something of a shocker in 1900 with its exultant praise of "free love" in the face of bourgeois values, is hardly more "modern" today than Puccini's *La Bohème*, which depicts the same Paris milieu without any crusading undertones. And yet there is something about the conflict of generations that lends *Louise* a certain timeliness. It is an opera that lacks the musical magic of *La Bohème*, but it yields riches of its own kind: a libretto of considerable literary merit, free of

bombast and all artificiality, characters that are recognizably human and real, and a passionate tribute to Paris—at least the Paris of 1900—and its irresistible magic.

Columbia's new recording, the opera's first in stereo, supersedes the classic but incomplete and sonically dated version by Ninon Vallin and Georges Thill and a long-deleted good mono set under Jean Fournet (Epic 6018). Both older sets were Paris-made products, imperfect but thoroughly idiomatic. Those challenges are only partly met by Columbia's otherwise fine and thoughtful effort.

I certainly have no objection whatever to the *Louise* of Ileana Cotrubas, who is a sensitive and musically artist, whose singing is pure in tone and affecting throughout, and whose command of French ought to please all but the most chauvinistically inclined. Plácido Domingo brings his characteristic ardor to the role of Julien, but his rich tenor sound is Italian, not French, despite a satisfactory way with the language. A leaner, more pointed, more Gallic timbre would have been a better match with Miss Cotrubas' tones—but then operas are cast with at least one eye firmly fixed on sales potential. The Gallic ingredients, however, are abundant in the richly characterized Mother of Jane Berbié, who is just about perfect, and in Gabriel Bacquier's moving portrayal of the Father. Equally convincing in anger and tenderness, Bacquier here accomplishes a triumphant singing-acting feat, a few effortful notes in the top register notwithstanding.

Michel Sénéchal excels in his double role. The numerous supporting characters representing the fanciful Charpentier creations of Parisian night life are done with varying degrees of competence by what I presume to be members of the Ambrosian Chorus, but the seasoned hand of Georges Prêtre assures a smoothly flowing performance. The recorded sound is good and atmospheric, though the guitar accompaniment in Julien's Serenade is virtually inaudible. *G.J.*

DANIEL-LESUR: *Andrea del Sarto* (excerpts). Gabriel Bacquier (baritone), Andrea; Andrée Esposito (soprano), Lucrèce; Danièle Perriers (mezzo-soprano), Spinette; Alain Vanzo (tenor), Cordiani; others. Ensemble des Choeurs de l'O.R.T.F.; Orchestre National, Manuel Rosenthal cond. INÉDITS ORTF 995 037 \$7.98 (from HNH Distributors Ltd., P.O. Box 222, Evanston, Ill. 60204).

Performance: **Impressive**
Recording: **Excellent**

Daniel-Lesur—the hyphenated form is correct, and the composer never uses his actual given names, Jean Yves—is almost unknown in this country. Born in Paris in 1908, he was with Messiaen and Jolivet in the group called Jeune France. Like so many of his confrères he is (or was) an organist. He has also been associated with French radio and television for many years.

These credentials might suggest some sort of modernism, possibly ultra. Nothing of the sort. *Andrea del Sarto* is an operatic version of a highly fictionalized account of the life of the Italian painter by the French Romantic playwright Alfred de Musset, and it is—in both words and music—heart-on-sleeve thud-and-blunder Romanticism of the most unabashed sort. The tragic intensity is a little overbearing but otherwise effective in this excellent performance and recording from the archives of French radio. No texts. *E.S.*

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DVORAK: *String Quartet in F Major, Op. 96* ("American"); *String Quartet in A-flat Major, Op. 105*. Prague String Quartet. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2530 632 \$7.98.

Performance: **Magnificent**
Recording: **Virtually perfect**

DVORAK: *String Quartet in F Major, Op. 96* ("American"); *String Quintet in E-flat Major, Op. 97*. Walter Trampler (viola, in Op. 97); Guarneri Quartet. RCA ARL1-1791 \$6.98, © ARS1-1791 \$7.98, © ARK1-1791 \$7.98.

Performance: **Well-played but dryish**
Recording: **Quite fine**

That DG intends to give us the complete cycle of Dvorak's quartets with the Prague Quartet is good news indeed, for their incomparable recording of Dvorak's big Quartet in G Major, Op. 106 (DG 2530 480), still strikes me, as it did when released two years ago, as "simply one of the most stimulating chamber-music recordings yet offered from any source." Certainly, there has been a real need for an authoritative account of Op. 105, which is actually the final work in that cycle (though assigned an earlier opus number than the G Major), and this is unquestionably it. As they did in the G Major, the members of the Prague Quartet delight in the music's earthy qualities without allowing the slightest hint of the earthbound; they convey a sense of spontaneity and happy urgency which carries with it an undercurrent of nervous excitement bordering on abandon—but always under the most subtle control. The real surprise, though, is the totally unexpected freshness with which the more familiar work in F Major comes across: there are not, as there were in this group's Op. 106, conspicuous departures from traditional notions of phrasing, but there is, again, that undercurrent of demonic excitement that makes every phrase glow with life, and the whole coheres more convincingly than ever. Since the recording itself is just about perfect, I cannot imagine a valid reason for denying oneself the extraordinary pleasure this record affords.

The Guarneri performances are quite handsome and accomplished, but they are several degrees cooler than the ones from Prague. The adjective that still pops into my mind when listening to this ensemble's recordings is "dry," which in this case applies more to the chosen style of performance than to the quite fine sonic frame provided by RCA. Tempos are always well chosen, playing is on the button, but there is not that magical pulse-beat, lambency, or the other almost mystical qualities that turn the Prague performances into impassioned and irresistible celebrations. For a fine version of the quintet, I would recommend the one on London by members of the Vienna Octet, coupled with the endearing Op. 48 String Sextet. **R.F.**

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

ELGAR: *Sea Pictures, Op. 37*. NYSTROEM: *Songs at the Sea*. Birgit Finnilä (contralto); Geoffrey Parsons (piano). Bis LP-38 \$7.98 (from HNH Distributors, P.O. Box 222, Evanston, Ill. 60204).

Performance: **Eloquent**
Recording: **Splendid**

Birgit Finnilä, one of the all too few real contraltos around now, brings a creamy, sumptu-

ous voice, an elegant style, and a most effective regard for the meanings of the words she sings to her assignment here, and her own eloquence is matched by sensitive, refined playing from the more than dependable Geoffrey Parsons. What more could anyone ask? Well, one might ask for an orchestra. The anonymous annotator lends point to the juxtaposition of these two song cycles by mentioning Nystroem's involvement with English music, but he does not mention that both of these works were composed for voice and orchestra. *Sea Pictures* is available in that form, with Janet Baker and Barbirolli (Angel S-36796), but the Nystroem cycle has not been available here since the early Sixties, when Westminster withdrew its disc of the Swedish recording by Aulikki Rautawaara (to whom the work

is dedicated) and Tor Mann. I rather miss the orchestra, but I cannot imagine either work more persuasively sung and would not have thought so much could be made of the accompaniment on the piano. The recording, like everything on this label, is simply splendid. **R.F.**

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

FIBICH: *Quintet in D Major, Op. 42; Trio in F Minor*. Karel Dlouhý (clarinet); Zdeněk Tylsar (horn); Fibich Trio. SUPRAPHON 1 11 1617 \$6.98.

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

Zdeněk Fibich (1850-1900) was the Czech composer whose brief *Poème* for piano used

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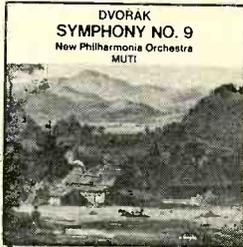
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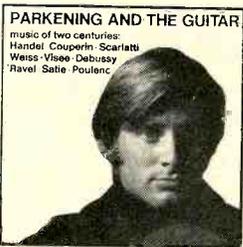
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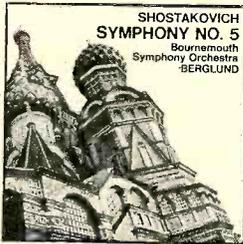
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to be played in all sorts of arrangements and was adapted as a popular song in the 1930's (*My Moonlight Madonna*). He is otherwise almost totally unknown outside his own country, and his name has not appeared in Schwann since excerpts from his opera *The Bride of Messina* were offered on the Colosseum label some fifteen years ago. But Fibich occupied a position of some importance in Czech music, and the two extremely attractive works presented here might well inspire curiosity about his other music. The Trio in F Minor was composed in 1872 but remained unpublished until after Fibich's death; the more substantial Quintet in D Major is a much later work (1893) but uses materials from various earlier ones. Both are Romantic works in the Schumann-Brahms vein, exemplary in craftsmanship and melodically abundant, with the Czech element prominent only in the scherzo of the quintet (a movement adapted from a piano sonata of 1871). The presence of both clarinet and horn enhances the warm coloring of the quintet, whose finale is especially endearing.

The Fibich Trio, which was organized less than ten years ago, evidently took its name out of deep affection for this composer's music, and it is clearly shared by the two wind players in the quintet. The performances are as dedicated and eloquent as one could imagine, and both the sonics and the actual pressings represent Supraphon's finest technical work to date.

R.F.

GLUCK: Operatic Excerpts (see Collections—Janet Baker)

HAYDN: String Quartets, Op. 50, Nos. 1-6 (see Best of the Month, page 82)

LE JEUNE: Missa ad Placitum. TITELOUZE: Quatre Versets sur "Veni Creator." Michel Chapuis (organ); Deller Consort, Alfred Deller cond. HARMONIA MUNDI HMU 251 \$7.98 (from HNH Distributors Ltd., P.O. Box 222, Evanston, Ill. 60204).

Performance: **Bland**
Recording: **Empty**

Collectors of Renaissance music will welcome this disc, and many libraries will be able to fill a gap in their late French Renaissance Masses. All the notes are clearly sung, enabling one to hear music that previously has only been seen. But don't expect a fresh performance of an inspired masterpiece. Le Jeune's music, although finely wrought, hews

to the conventional formula of the period, and the performance, although cleanly executed, sounds very much like the Deller Consort always sounds.

More welcome are the austere *Quatre Versets sur "Veni Creator"* by Titelouze. Obviously used to fill out the disc, this awesome work, grandly executed, whets the appetite for more of the French Renaissance organ school, which eventually flowered in the organ Masses of Couperin.

S.L.

LIDHOLM: Nausicaa Alone (see PETERS-SON)

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

LOEFFLER: Deux Rhapsodies for Oboe, Viola, and Piano. MOZART: Quartet in F Major for Oboe and Strings (K. 370). John Mack (oboe); Daniel Majeske (violin, in Mozart); Abraham Skernick (viola); Stephen Geber (cello, in Mozart); Eunice Podis (piano, in Loeffler). ADVENT 5017 \$7.98 (from Advent Records, 4150 Mayfield Road, Cleveland, Ohio 44121).

Performance: **Superb**
Recording: **Exceptional**

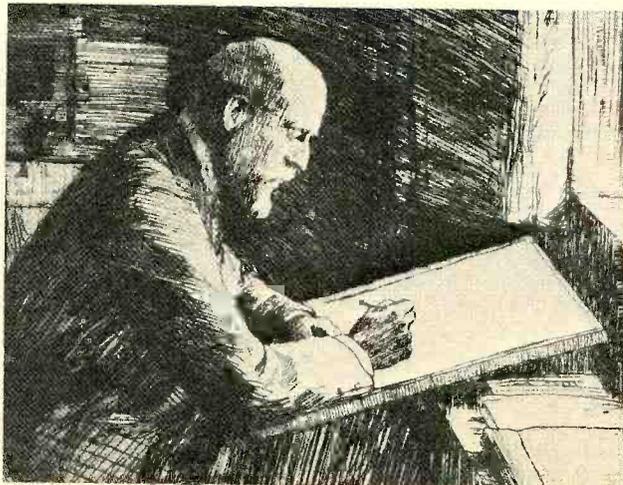
Of the few works of Charles Martin Loeffler we hear at all, none seems more original or more generally intriguing than the *Deux Rhapsodies*. This music has been missing from our catalogs far too long, and it is a pleasure to welcome it back in so expert and persuasive a presentation as it receives here. From the sound of it, Mack, Skernick, and Podis have been in love with the work all their lives and must have performed it together many times; it is an extremely beautiful and well integrated performance, and Skernick's marvelous "real viola" sound is a special pleasure in itself. The overside account of the Mozart quartet by the four first-chair members of the Cleveland Orchestra is similarly distinguished, and the exceptionally fine sound and utterly silent surfaces achieved by the Cleveland-based company justify the "import" price. A super production.

R.F.

MOZART: Quartet in F Major for Oboe and Strings, K. 370 (see LOEFFLER)

NYSTROEM: Songs at Sea (see ELGAR)

PETTERSSON: Concerto No. 1 for String Orchestra. LIDHOLM: Nausicaa Alone. Elisabeth Söderström (soprano); Swedish Radio



Charles Martin Loeffler
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Choir and Symphony Orchestra, Stig Westerberg cond. CAPRICE CAP 1110 \$7.98 (from HNH Distributors Ltd., P.O. Box 222, Evanston, Ill. 60204).

PETTERSSON: *Symphony No. 2.* Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestra, Stig Westerberg cond. SWEDISH SOCIETY DISCOFIL SLT 33219 \$7.98 (from HNH Distributors Ltd., P.O. Box 222, Evanston, Ill. 60204).

Performances: **Splendid**
Recordings: **Very good**

Swedish symphonist Allan Pettersson (b. 1911) made his first major impact on American listeners in 1972, when London Records issued the Antal Dorati/Stockholm Philharmonic recording of the haunting and unsettling *Symphony No. 7* (1968). The present brace of discs gives us a chance to view Pettersson's work in a more formative stage.

The *Concerto No. 1* for String Orchestra and the *Second Symphony* exemplify two major strains in Pettersson's work. The sinewy, athletic aspect is represented in the string-orchestra piece. The slow movement has something of the feel of Benjamin Britten, and the work as a whole reflects to some degree the influence of Pettersson's study with Milhaud, Honegger, and Leibowitz. The *Second Symphony* marks a breakthrough from athletic objectivism and toward an eruptive, frankly confessional outpouring. It has pages of Kafkaesque phantasmagoria and promises of redemption in which we encounter the ghosts of Alban Berg, Mahler, and Bartók.

Ingvar Lidholm (b. 1921) is ten years Pettersson's junior, but he has been a major force on the Swedish musical scene since the end of World War Two. *Nausicaa Alone*, a brilliant *scena* for soprano, incidental chorus, and orchestra, finds Lidholm in full command of every technique of advanced twentieth-century musical language, but also still endowed with the intensely poetic flair that has always distinguished the best of his work.

Soprano Elisabeth Söderström is absolutely gripping in her portrayal of Homer's princess as envisioned in the poetry of Nobel Prize laureate Eyvind Johnson. Stig Westerberg and the choral forces provide excellent support in their realization of Lidholm's exacting requirements in the realm of color, dynamics, and rhythm. No less fine is Westerberg's handling of the Pettersson works, especially the *String Orchestra Concerto*. Excellent recording work throughout. *D.H.*

REBEL: *Les Éléments.* Orchestre Lyrique de l'O.R.T.F., André Jouve cond. **DUVAL:** *Sonata for Violin, Viola da Gamba, and Harpsichord.* **DIEUPART:** *Suite No. 3 for Flute, Violin, Bass, and Harpsichord.* **DE LA GUERRE:** *Sonata in D Minor for Violin, Bass, and Harpsichord.* Pierre Séchet (flute); Fran-tisek Jaros (violin); Jean Lamy (bass viol); Antoine Geoffroy Dechaume (harpsichord). **INÉDITS ORTF 995 039 \$7.98** (from HNH Distributors Ltd., P.O. Box 222, Evanston, Ill. 60204).

Performances: **Excellent period style**
Recordings: **French radio**

P.D.Q. Bach lives! Or at least he really lived. Apparently he quarreled with his family and left Germany for France where he took the name of Jean-Ferry Rebel (an obvious *nom de plume* if ever there was one). We all know P.D.Q.'s famous work *The Seasonings*, but few know about *The Elements*. This ballet be-

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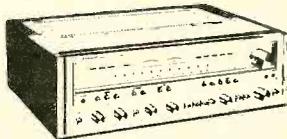
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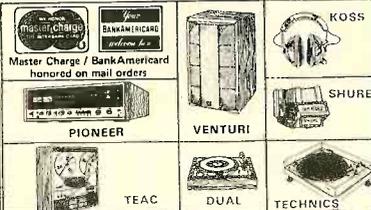
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gins with Chaos in the form of repeated chords containing "all the notes of the octave joined in a single sound"; it continues with more Chaos in the form of a series of unrelated musical ideas perfectly expressive of disorder. Intentional confusion on a scale (!) like this is not to be taken lightly, and our hero himself is hard put to keep it up. Nonetheless, this overture is a monument; even the celebrated moderns have rarely if ever achieved an equal level of incoherence.

This recording, one of a series from French radio tapes, represents French music of the generation after Lully. That makes it roughly contemporary with Johann Sebastian Bach (P.D.Q. Bach may actually have lived earlier than previously thought). Charles Dieupart, although French, lived, worked, and wrote suites in London, and was greatly admired by J. S. Bach, which explains why the latter called some of his suites "English." Dieupart's contribution to this record is excellent. On the other hand, the music of François Duval and Elisabeth Claude Jacquet de la Guerre is relatively minor stuff—no P.D.Q. Bach on this overside. But there are some exceptional performances; the chamber works are all extremely well played in high Baroque style on eighteenth-century instruments. *E.S.*

RIMSKY-KORSAKOV: Scheherazade, Op. 35. Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Leopold Stokowski cond. RCA ARL1-1182 \$6.98, © ARS1-1182 \$7.98, © ARK1-1182 \$7.98.

Performance: **Has its points**
Recording: **A bit over-reverberant**

A masterly reading of *Scheherazade* with a virtuoso ensemble can do wonders to remind one of Rimsky's remarkable accomplishment. Certainly Stokowski, together with Beecham, Monteux, Ansermet, and Rostropovich, has done much to reaffirm the vitality of this music when it has shown signs of becoming a disastrously faded affair.

I wish I could say that this, Stokowski's fourth recording of *Scheherazade*, measured up to his two 78-rpm versions with the Philadelphia Orchestra and the super-technicolor job he did in 1964 for London. The new reading has all the familiar Stokowski hallmarks, including some touching up here and there (the cymbals at the dynamic peak of the first movement were not scored by Rimsky), there is truly superb solo wind playing, and Erich Gruenberg (who was also featured in the London recording) provides splendid solo violin work. But I must say that the Royal Philharmonic, here at least, is no match for the 1964 London Symphony in razor-sharpness of attack and super-powered climaxes. Where the new recording *does* score is in an exquisitely played slow movement—and here, as in the *Kalantar Prince* music, the solo winds have their day.

RCA's recording is basically very lovely and splendidly transparent in texture, but I did find myself becoming a little too aware of room reverberation at moments of highly contrasted dynamics. *D.H.*

SATIE: Songs and Piano Pieces. *La Diva de l'Empire; Gnossienne No. 2; Le Piccadilly; Three Songs—Les Anges, Les Fleurs, Sylvie; Je Te Veux; Élégie; Hymne—Salut Drapeau!; Chanson; Tendrement; Pièces Froides—Airs à Faire Fuir No. 2; Chanson Médiévale; Poudre d'Or; Two Songs from Geneviève de Brabant—Air de Geneviève, Petit Air; Gymnopédie No. 1; Je Te Veux; Vexations.* Meriel Dickin-

son (mezzo-soprano); Peter Dickinson (piano). UNICORN RHS 338 \$7.98.

Performance: **Charming**
Recording: **Okay**

Mixing Satie songs with his piano music is an excellent way to appreciate the rather limited charms of the French composer's music. Satie's songs, not nearly as well known as his keyboard music, seem to divide into two principal types: a café or music-hall *chanson* style and a serious *mélodie* style. The latter, mostly represented by early and obscure works, reveals a little-known aspect of Satie's music; several of these songs are apparently recorded here for the first time in this album called "An Erik Satie Entertainment."

Meriel Dickinson's mezzo-soprano is not an extraordinary instrument, but she conveys a lot of feeling for this music and a lot of charm. The lack of any texts, however, is a problem. Peter Dickinson is a capable pianist, and the solo music, including one each of the *Gnossiennes*, *Pièces Froides*, and *Gymnopédies*, is well treated. The final cut is the *Vexations*, which was made famous by John Cage and friends who took seriously Satie's direction to play the piece 840 times and spent the better part of a weekend at it. Since this notion does not seem to have recommended itself to any record company (imagine a forty-record set of *Vexations*), the Dickinsons and Unicorn have ingeniously contrived to put the final chord in a locking groove at the end of side two, which, left to its own devices, will repeat a good bit more than 840 times before self-destructing. No doubt, Satie would have approved. *E.S.*

SCHUBERT: Piano Quintet in A Major (D. 667, "The Trout"). Samuel Rhodes (viola); Georg Hortnägel (double-bass); Beaux Arts Trio. PHILIPS 9500 071 \$7.98, © 7300 481 \$8.98.

SCHUBERT: Piano Quintet in A Major (D. 667, "The Trout"); Quartettsatz in C Minor (D. 703). Emil Gilels (piano); Rainer Zepperitz (double-bass); Amadeus Quartet. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2530 646 \$7.98.

Performances: **Beaux Arts more homey**
Recordings: **Philips richer**

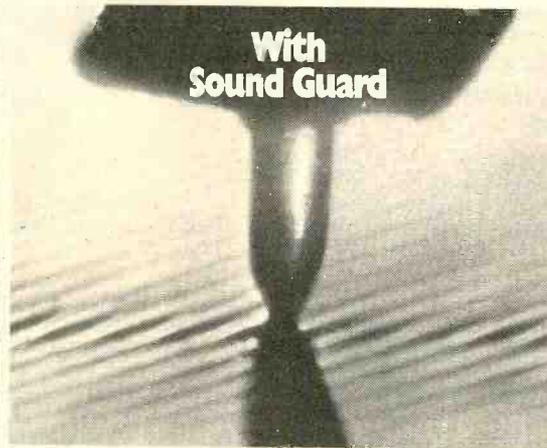
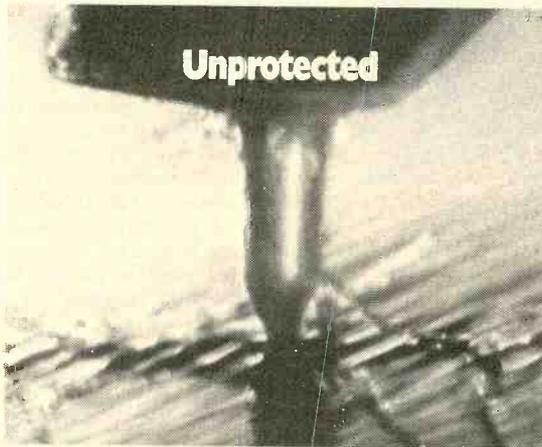
The most beguiling and masterly of all *Hausmusik*, Schubert's *Trout* Quintet has never lacked fine recorded performances, beginning with Schnabel and the Pro Arte in the middle Thirties and extending through Curzon and the Vienna Octet in the late Fifties to the memorable Peter Serkin/Alexander Schneider group recording for Vanguard a decade later.

Of the two new recordings at hand, there is no question but that the Beaux Arts group, with Menahem Pressler's splendidly musical and sensitively responsive pianism, runs away with the honors. Here is a performance that "breathes easy" yet avoids the slightest trace of carelessness: one feels altogether comfortable, yet alert and stimulated.

The Gilels/Amadeus performance seems scaled more to a large concert hall than to a home ambiance, and it *does* leave me uncomfortable and ill-at-ease. The tone is set in a rather over-aggressive opening and is exacerbated by recorded sound that seems somewhat brittle in the mid-range frequencies and a bit bass-shy to boot—at least compared with the rich and natural sound that Philips offers us. The same sonic deficiency holds through-

(Continued on page 122)

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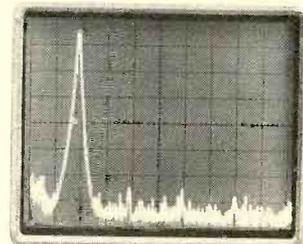
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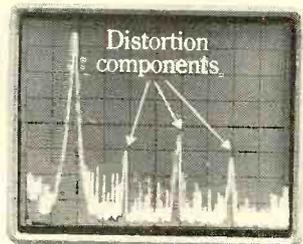
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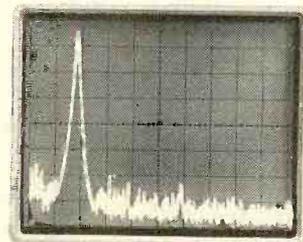
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out the Amadeus Quartet performance of the *Quartettsatz*.

All things considered, though I do like the Beaux Arts' *Trout*, I'm not about to give up my Serkin/Schneider record, which offers the homiest and bounciest reading of all. D.H.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

SMETANA: *Memories of Bohemia, Opp. 12 and 13; Reveries.* Antonín Kubalek (piano). CITADEL CT 6010 \$6.98 (from Citadel Records, P.O. Box 1662, Burbank, Calif. 91507).

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

Smetana's piano music has been so roundly neglected that many who love *The Bartered Bride* and *Má Vlast* are quite unaware that he wrote any at all, let alone important works for keyboard. He wrote quite a bit, enough to fill eleven discs in a Supraphon series that circulated briefly some fifteen years ago. Rudolf Firkusny recorded some of the polkas and Czech dances for Capitol before that, but that disc, too, is long gone, and—surprisingly—no one has had the imagination to get Firkusny to do more Smetana. The Musical Heritage Society has given us one valuable record of sixteen polkas, played superbly by Radoslav Kvapil (MHS 1373), and that would seem to be all we've had available here in the last several years. Antonín Kubalek's new release is enormously welcome, even though it duplicates Kvapil's Opp. 12 and 13 (sets of two somewhat Chopinesque polkas each). *Reveries*, a set of six contrasting pieces composed in 1875, is certainly a major work, filled with



Chrysalis

KARLHEINZ STOCKHAUSEN
Sounds that are, on the whole, pleasant

frequent touches of poetry and exultant originality; it culminates in an especially exuberant "Bohemian Festival" whose first theme may recall Liszt's Second Hungarian Rhapsody but whose character is thoroughly and unmistakably Czech.

Kubalek plays with assurance and evident commitment, and his evocative performances have been realistically recorded (though not without a bit of pre-echo and surface crunch). One minor complaint: because the two sets of polkas are short, the first of the six *Reveries* follows them on side one, and the enumeration of the bands on side two makes it appear that they contain pieces Nos. 1-5 instead of Nos. 2-6. Buy it anyway. R.F.

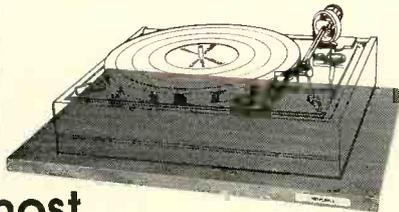
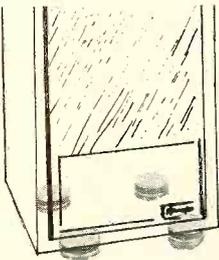
STOCKHAUSEN: *Ceylon; Bird of Passage.* Harald Bojé (electronium); Peter Eötvös (camel bells, triangles, synthesizer); Aloys Kontarsky (piano); Joachim Krist (tam tam); Karlheinz Stockhausen (Kandy drum, chromatic rin, lotus flute, Indian bells, bird whistle, voice); Markus Stockhausen (trumpet, flugelhorn); John Miller (trumpet); Tim Souster (sound projection). CHRYSALIS CHR 1110 \$6.98.

Performance: **Composer-supervised**
Recording: **Composer-supervised**

These are rather typical pieces of Stockhausen's work in recent years with their mixture of ethnic and natural sound sources projected in terms of electronically modulated live sound—mostly percussion with some wind and brass mixed in. Unlike much earlier work of this kind, in which the sounds are highly distorted and junked up, the sounds here are, on the whole, pleasant: bell-like and ritualistic for *Ceylon*, walk-in-the-woods sound-environment-style for *Bird of Passage*.

Ceylon is a West German Radio recording and has excellent sound. *Bird of Passage*, apparently a tape produced by the composer, is a little less impressive but perfectly adequate. Chrysalis, basically a pop company, provides very little information about these works outside of the statement that Stockhausen wrote *Ceylon* in 1970 immediately after a visit to a Hindu ceremony. Someone has, however, thoughtfully provided reviewers with a copy of Jonathan Cott's interview-book with the composer which contains a detailed description of the ceremony along with a list of Stockhausen's work up to 1973; *Ceylon* is not

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CALENDAR OF CLASSICAL COMPOSERS

BACK by popular demand and updated from its original (1966) printing, Music Editor James Goodfriend's *Calendar of Classical Composers* is a listing of the most important composers from the year 1400 to the present, grouped according to the stylistic periods—Renaissance, Baroque, Classic, Romantic, etc.—in which they worked. This 12 x 24-inch aid, guide, and complement to your music listening is printed in color on heavy, nonreflecting stock suitable, as they say, for framing. A key to the calendar, consisting of capsule accounts of the principal stylistic characteristics of each musical period, is included. The whole will be sent rolled in a mailing tube to prevent creases: we pay postage. All you do is send 25¢ to:

Calendar of Classical Composers
Stereo Review, 1 Park Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10016

mentioned (neither is *Bird of Passage*). A bigger problem: the labels of the two works have obviously been reversed. But what the hell. Stockhausen on a pop label and it even got written up in the *New York Times*. What more can you ask? *E.S.*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

STRAVINSKY: *Le Sacre du Printemps*. London Symphony Orchestra, Claudio Abbado cond. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2530 635 \$7.98.

Performance: **Superb**
Recording: **First-rate**

STRAVINSKY: *Le Sacre du Printemps*. Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, Lorin Maazel cond. LONDON CS 6954 \$6.98.

Performance: **Verges on the perverse**
Recording: **Sonically rich**

If Arturo Toscanini in his prime had chosen to add Stravinsky's epoch-making masterpiece to his repertoire, the result might have been much akin to Claudio Abbado's reading here. There is no question in my mind regarding Abbado's respect for what Stravinsky wrote, and to the music's rhythmic aspects he brings unerring precision, abetted by comparably unerring ensemble work from the London Symphony players. But it is the refinement of line and texture Abbado brings to the introductory sections of *Le Sacre's* two parts that gives this performance special distinction—that and a wonderfully detailed and powerful recording from the DG production staff. This record belongs right up there with those of



CLAUDIO ABBADO
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Solti and Monteux (in the out-of-print Boston Symphony version of 1951) and with the unique documentation by Stravinsky himself.

Lorin Maazel's way with *Le Sacre* is one that reinforces the often-made observation that Stravinsky's score, like Richard Strauss' *Zarathustra*, has become for conductors of the 1970's what Rimsky-Korsakov's *Scheherazade* was for those of the 1920's—a mere virtuoso vehicle. Maazel offers what most Stravinsky buffs would consider inconceivable—indeed, impossible, given what is written in the score—a rubato *Sacre*. If you doubt it, lend an ear to the trombone glissando bits in the "Round Dance" or the odd phrasing of the very opening of the work; or sample the

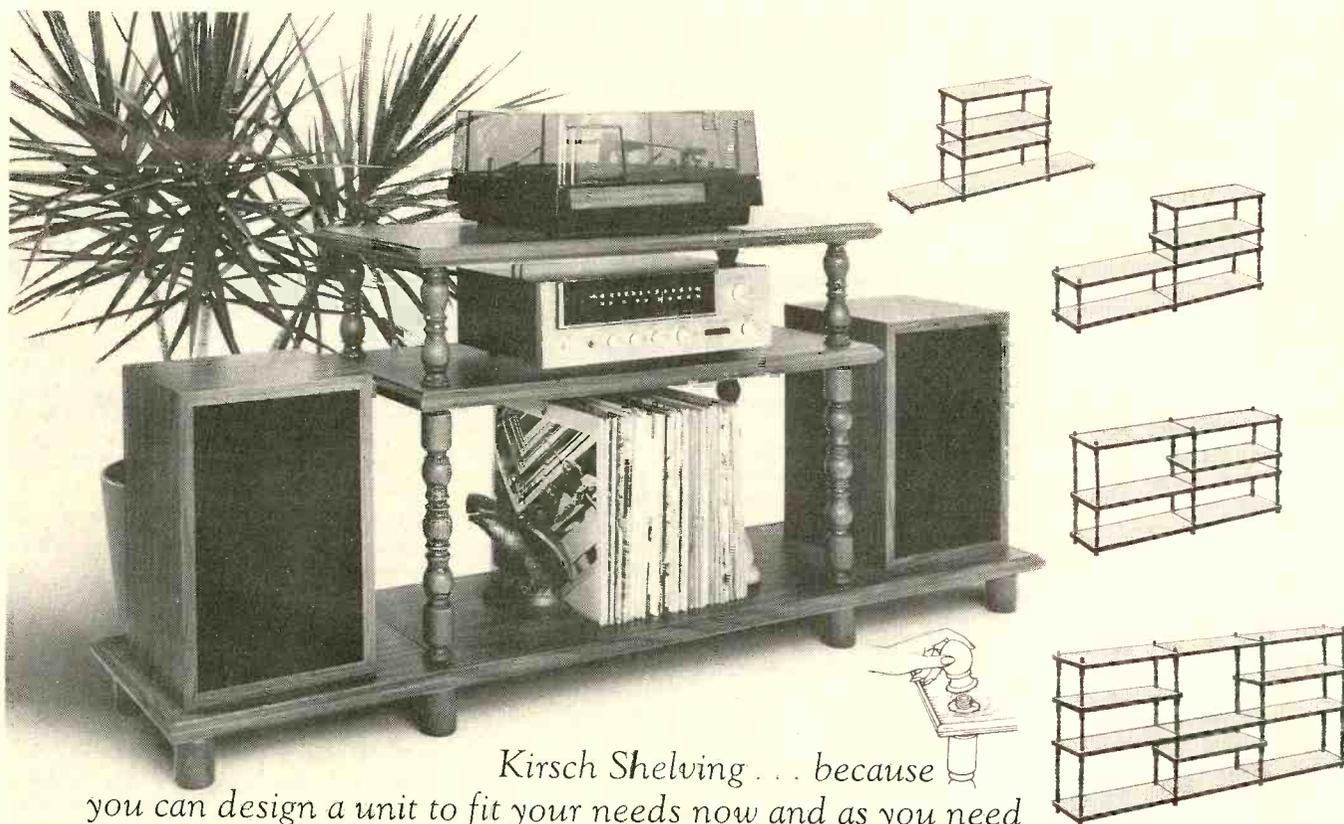
really odd tempo of the timpani *ostinato* that sets the stage for the "Glorification of the Chosen One." Even London's fine recorded sound, noteworthy here for its stereo depth illusion, can do little to make this reading palatable to me. *D.H.*

TCHAIKOVSKY: *The Nutcracker, Op. 71*. Boys' Choir of St. Bavo Cathedral, Haarlem; Amsterdam Concertgebouw Orchestra, Antal Dorati cond. PHILIPS 6747 257 two discs \$15.96.

Performance: **Spirited**
Recording: **Powerful**

Dorati's third complete *Nutcracker* (which happens to be the most expensive recording of this music to date) finds him, as before, both elegant and spirited, favoring a crisp line, making the most of the score's dramatic episodes, and never yielding to what must be powerful temptations to sentimentalize here and there. The great Dutch orchestra seems to me somewhat less flexible than the London Symphony was in Dorati's 1962 Mercury recording—there is a little squareness in the Spanish Dance, the *Mère Gigogne* number, and the Waltz of the Flowers—but this impression is possibly created by Philips' powerhouse recording, which tends to be downright overpowering at times with excess emphasis on the drums and the low end in general. For the most part, though, one appreciates the exceptional clarity with which details of the enlivening performance come through, and it is good to have the boys' choir Tchaikovsky specified in the Snowflakes scene in-

(Continued on page 129)



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LAST summer, I wrote an article for STEREO REVIEW on "The Great American Symphony" which provoked a fair bit of reader response. Not about what was in the article, but about what was not. Every single one of the letters was written to plead the case of a composer who didn't get mentioned.

Of course, a short survey cannot possibly include everyone, and there are many reasons why Distinguished People's Composer X, Maverick Modern Musician Y, or Avant-Garde Astronaut Z might have been omitted. But the real message from those letters was that there are lots of composers out there and lots of contemporary music that does not get the hearing or the recognition that it deserves. Still, there are a few recordings around, and recent releases from CRI, Odyssey, and Opus One demonstrate the quality of some of this music.

Ralph Shapey (who was mentioned in the article) is as important and influential in new music as, say, De Kooning or Kline is in modern painting. Yet, his music has been little played outside contemporary-music circles, and only two or three works have been recorded. A number of years ago Shapey announced that he was not going to write any more music and withdrew all his earlier works from circulation. The CRI recording of *Praise*, with Shapey conducting, apparently represents a reversal of that decision.

Praise is, like many of Shapey's works, big in conception. It was begun in 1961 and appears to have been his last completed work before the silence. It is a kind of very unorthodox Hebraic service expressed in strong, modern language. Shapey's music is hard—not hard-edged but firm, strong, and difficult—and it has to be met on its own terms. At least it is here to be met!

A GREAT deal of recent new music is religious or meditative in feeling and searches for a certain suspended, timeless quality. George Crumb's music, like Shapey's, is both static and ecstatic. *Makrokosmos, Vol. II* has the composer's now familiar array of unusual sounds, including singing, whispering and whistling, plucking and scraping inside the piano, and quoted fragments from *Boris* to Beethoven to the Catholic liturgy. The twelve pieces are meditations on the signs of the Zodiac with titles like *The Mystic Chord*, *Ghost-Nocturne for the Druids of Stonehenge*, and *Litany of the Galactic Bells*, and there are such playing directions as "Like a Nirvanatrance," "Dark, fantasmic, subliminal," and "Prayer-wheel . . . as if suspended in endless time." Well, you get the idea. Robert Miller's performance on Odyssey is superb.

The notion of creating music that resists or denies music's most apparently fundamental quality—time, that is—originated in New York in the early 1950's in the circle around John Cage, an early Western disciple of Zen Buddhism and the ancient Chinese book of divination/prophesy called the *I Ching*. Probably the principal exponent of this idea of timelessness is Morton Feldman, who, with Earle Brown, David Tudor, and Cage himself, has developed ideas of chance and open form which have been enormously influential in the avant-garde. The Rothko Chapel was built in 1971 in Houston, Texas, by John and Dominique de Ménéil and is filled with giant can-

vases by Mark Rothko. The simple, floating music of Feldman's *Rothko Chapel*, one of his best works, was written for this space. *For Frank O'Hara* is dedicated to the memory of the New York School's poet laureate, who was killed in an accident on Fire Island in 1966. Like everything of Feldman's, it creates a beautiful, motionless, passionless musical surface. This music comes from nowhere,

The Avant-garde: In Love with Easeful Death



“. . . all these in
memoriams cannot be
a sign of health. . . .”

goes nowhere, meditates but has no message. Shapey shouts his song of praise; Feldman's pianissimo just is.

Of all the members of the original Cage group, Christian Wolff has been the least conspicuous—perhaps because he elected an unlikely career (for an avant-gardist) as a professor of classics. Apparently 1972 was a fateful year for him. *Lines*, written in the early part of that year, has the purity and the timelessness one would expect of a Cage alumnus. But *Accompaniments for Piano* is something else. A text about revolutionary China is sung and declaimed by Frederick Rzewski, who accompanies himself with simple, repeated musical fragments of a certain profile; later he plays drums and cymbal as well as piano. The revolutionary fervor of *Accompaniments*, part of a definite but little-noticed movement toward an *engagé* avant-gardism in music, is striking, important, embarrassing, intriguing, and exasperating.

Gunther Schuller's *Tre Invenzioni* and Bruno Maderna's *Il Giardino Religioso* were both

commissioned by the Fromm Foundation for performance at Tanglewood in 1972; they are recorded here with Schuller's *Contours* as an *in memoriam* for Maderna, an Italian composer-conductor who died in 1973. *Il Giardino Religioso* has some of the suspended, meditative qualities of the New York School, with time out for one dramatic, driving middle section; it is an effective, intimate work. In contrast, the Schuller compositions—one recorded by Schuller himself and the other taken from a live performance by Arthur Weisberg—are nervous and intense in their odd blend of European and American modern styles.

A very different sort of homage is represented by Andrew Thomas' *The Death of Yukio Mishima*. It is a theatrical piece in which the Japanese writer Mishima is portrayed by a woman. The work provides a rather ambiguous commentary on Mishima's garish and widely publicized *samurai* suicide. Thomas juxtaposes fragments of Mishima's writings in Japanese and English with a Shakespeare sonnet, and the whole is set in a Western, modern version of *gagaku*. Whew! *Dirge in the Woods* is still another *in memoriam*—for Thomas' Juilliard teacher, Hall Overton. Set to a text by George Meredith, it is a deeply felt but mightily depressing work. The air of gloom is not dispelled by Lawrence Widdoes' bright, biting *From a Time of Snow*.

ALL these *in memoriams* (*memoria?*) and meditations on death and eternity—Zen Buddhist, astrological, or otherwise—cannot be a sign of health in the modern-music body politic. What is healthy is the fact of the recordings and the quality of the performances and the sound reproduction, which are, where I have not already mentioned them specifically, exceedingly fine. —Eric Salzman

SHAPEY: *Praise*. Paul Geiger (bass-baritone); Contemporary Chamber Players and Chorus of the University of Chicago, Ralph Shapey cond. CRI SD 355 \$6.95.

CRUMB: *Makrokosmos, Vol. II (Twelve Fantasy-Pieces After the Zodiac for Amplified Piano)*. Robert Miller (piano and other instruments). ODYSSEY Y 34135 \$3.98.

FELDMAN: *Rothko Chapel*. Karen Phillips (viola); James Holland (percussion); Gregg Smith Singers, Gregg Smith cond. **For *Frank O'Hara*.** Members of the Center of the Creative Arts, State University of New York at Buffalo, Jan Williams cond. ODYSSEY Y 34138 \$3.98.

WOLFF: *Lines for String Quartet; Accompaniments for Piano*. Nathan Rubin, Thomas Halpin (violins); Nancy Ellis (viola); Judiyaba (cello); Frederick Rzewski (piano). CRI SD 357 \$6.95.

SCHULLER: *Tre Invenzioni; Contours*. MADERNA: *Il Giardino Religioso*. Instrumental ensemble, Gunther Schuller cond.; Contemporary Chamber Ensemble, Arthur Weisberg cond. (in *Contours*). ODYSSEY Y 34141 \$3.98.

THOMAS: *The Death of Yukio Mishima; Dirge in the Woods*. WIDDOES: *From a Time of Snow*. Jeanne Ommerlé (soprano); Notes from Underground, Peter Leonard cond. OPUS ONE 28 \$4.98 (from Opus One, Box 604, Greenville, Me. 04441).

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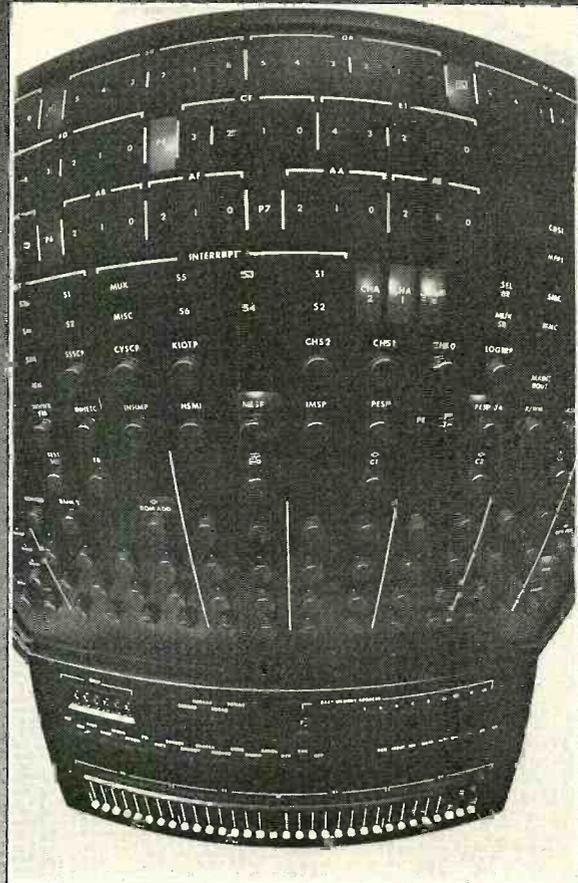
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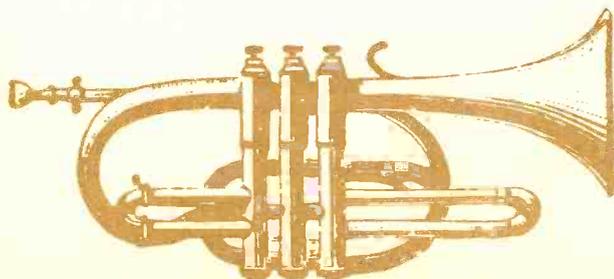
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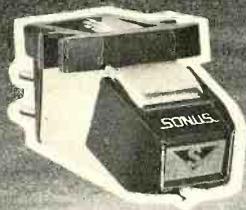
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Carreras (tenor); Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Roberto Benzi cond. PHILIPS 9500 203 \$7.98.

Performance: **A vocal treat**
Recording: **Excellent**

Aria recital discs sometimes follow a new artist's meteoric rise too soon, before the artist has had time to become familiar with the repertoire, before he has reached a certain artistic consolidation. José Carreras did not hurry, and the present debut recital disc—following the tenor's successful participation in several complete operatic recordings—was well worth waiting for. A look at his program testifies to the care and imagination that went into it: unhackneyed Verdi combined with a string of unfamiliar excerpts, five of which are entirely new to records.

Carreras has come a long way since his early successes with the New York City Opera. In demand everywhere in the world, he inhabits the top tenor hierarchy with Pavarotti and Domingo (not to forget the unforgettable Bergonzi), and the present recital substantiates his eminence. The voice has a sunlit quality God apparently bestows only on Italians or Spaniards who choose Italian opera for their livelihood. It is a natural lyric spinto, brilliant in timbre, well-supported, and equalized with a healthy ring up to the A-natural and a hint of tightness above it (a freely produced high C may not be within his range, but neither was it within Caruso's . . .). His singing is pure in intonation, with passion and drama built into it but not at the expense of the musical line. He projects the texts clearly and meaningfully, occasionally with an ardent over-emphasis, but never in a tasteless or vulgar manner.

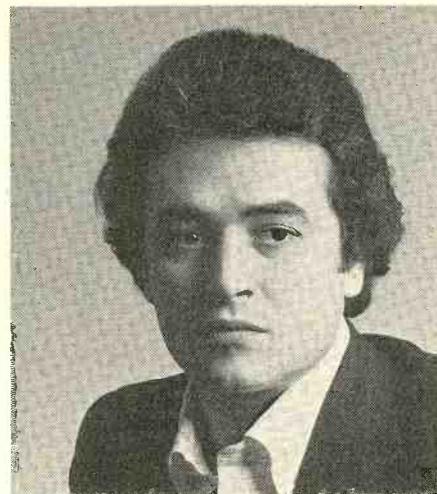
Anyone seriously interested in Italian opera would want to hear an excerpt from Bellini's student opera, or Donizetti's last one, or from the opera Ponchielli wrote after *La Gioconda*, or from the once popular *Il Giuramento* by the hapless Saverio Mercadante, who had the misfortune of being eclipsed by Donizetti in the first half of his life and by Verdi in the second. Needless to say, they are all performed admirably here, with solidly competent orchestral support, and the recorded sound is excellent. *G.J.*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

FRANCIS CHAPELET: *Organs of Spain*. Bermudo: *Cantus del Primero por Mi Bequadro*; Conditor *Alme Siderum*. Mudarra: *Gallarda*. Arauxo: *Tiento de Medio Registro de Baxon de Sexto Tono*. Casanoves: *Paso No. 7*. Lopez: *Versos de Quarto Tono*. Arajo: *Batalha de Sexto Tono*. Peraza: *Tiento de Medio Registro Alto de Primero Tono*. Bruna: *Variations on the Litany of the Virgin*. Anon.: *Batalla Famosa*; *Versos Varios*; *Himno Sacris Solemnis*; *Je Vous*; *Pour un Plaisir*; *Reveillez-vous*. Francis Chapelet (organ). HARMONIA MUNDI HM 759 \$7.98 (from HNH Distributors, Box 222, Evanston, Ill. 60204).

Performance: **Brilliant**
Recording: **A tour de force**

Francis Chapelet's tour of Spanish Baroque organs enables us to hear the sound of wondrous machines in Toledo, Ciudad-Rodrigo, Salamanca, Lisbon, Trujillo, and Covarrubias, and, from the standpoint of exotic sound, his disc is extremely rewarding. Listen, for instance, to the sweetness of the flute registers on the organ at Toledo, and then listen to the snarling reeds of the same instru-



Mike Evans/Photogram

JOSÉ CARRERAS
A recital well worth waiting for

ment. And the *basson* stop at Ciudad-Rodrigo is the raspiest sound around except for my neighbor's bad doorbell. The recording engineers have done an excellent job, and specialists will be particularly delighted to hear such extramusical sounds as the chiff on the Ciudad-Rodrigo instrument.

The repertoire Chapelet has chosen demonstrates that the organ was not limited to religious functions. Besides the dignified *tientos* and *versos* (time fillers during Mass), here are secular dances, transcriptions of French chansons, and two rousing battle pieces. The exciting performances reveal the organist as scholar as well as performer. M. Chapelet is not afraid of rhythmic alterations, free embellishment, or that notorious specialty of Spanish organ music, the double trill in contrary motion. Let us hope there will be more of his tours. *S.L.*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

JACQUELINE DELMAN: *Song Recital*. Shostakovich: *Seven Songs on Poems by Alexander Blok*, Op. 127. Messiaen: *Poèmes pour Mi*. Pergament: *Who Is Playing at Night?* Martin: *Three Christmas Songs*. Head: *A Piper*. Jacqueline Delman (soprano); Emil Dekov (violin); Ake Olofsson (cello); Gunilla von Bahr (flute); Lucia Negro (piano). BIS LP-37 \$7.98 (from HNH Distributors, P.O. Box 222, Evanston, Ill. 60204).

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

The adventurous and thoughtfully produced Bis label (Swedish imports) has come up with another winner: a recital centered on English-born soprano Jacqueline Delman, a Swedish resident since her 1961 engagement with the Royal Opera. She is said to concertize in seven languages; only four are on display here, but she sounds at home in all of them.

The Shostakovich cycle, written for soprano voice and three virtuoso soloists (violin, cello, and piano), matches the gloomy vision of impressionist poet Alexander Blok with the pessimistic mood associated with the long-suffering composer's final years. The seven songs call for different instrumental combinations; only the last one engages all three instruments. That last song, *Music*, injects a note of optimism on the poet's part, but the

(Continued on page 132)

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ALBERT WHITE AND HIS SAN FRANCISCO MASTERS OF MELODY: *soothing our savage breasts*

composer's expression leaves the gloom unrelieved. Yet the sequence is anything but monotonous, and Miss Delman realizes its essence sensitively with fine instrumental support. (It is safe to assume, however, that a more passionate interpretation took place when the cycle was introduced in 1967 with Galina Vishnevskaya. David Oistrakh, Mstislav Rostropovich, and Moisei Weinberg as participants.)

The remainder of this fascinating disc offers a rare representation of Oliver Messiaen as song composer, combining his own brand of song speech with arresting piano sonorities; three brief Christmas songs by the late Frank Martin, who nearly always managed to be "modern" and songful at the same time; and two welcome entries by the Swedish-Finnish Moses Pergament and Englishman Michael Head. There is not a familiar item in the lot, yet not one is unworthy of being discovered. And they are all well performed and transparently recorded here. G.J.

A PALM COURT CONCERT. Moret: *Silver Heels*. Drigo: *Serenade*. Herbert (arr. Langley): *The Fortune Teller (selections)*; *L'Encore*. Drdla (arr. Dumont): *Souvenir*. Heuberger: *Im Chambre Separée*. Monti (arr. Baroni): *Czardas*. Piefke (arr. Ascher-Mahl): *Kutschke Polka*. Faris: *Theme from Upstairs, Downstairs*. Lincke: *Folies Bergère*. Berger: *Amoureuse*. Lincke: *The Glow-Worm*. Tierney (arr. Lange): *Irene (selections)*. Gungl (arr. Winter): *Casino Dances*. Albert White and His San Francisco Masters of Melody. ANGEL □ S-37304 \$6.98.

Performance: **Cozy**
Recording: **Superb**

You can scarcely enter a restaurant, a skyscraper elevator, or a dentist's office these days without being greeted by the sound of music, some of it programmed by psychologists determined to see to it that our savage breasts are soothed at every possible opportunity. At the turn of the century, this genteel need was served by salon music. Amid the potted palms, under the glass conservatory windows of courtyards and hotel gardens, ladies and gentlemen sipped their tea to the strains of intermezzos from Viennese operettas, Drigo's *Serenade*, and *The Glow-Worm*.

This sort of music has been scrupulously revived in a period program by Albert White and His San Francisco Masters of Melody, a spin-off of their salon-music broadcasts over San Francisco radio. Here is music to which you can relax to the point of stupor while en-

joying the languorous strains of a medley from Victor Herbert's *The Fortune Teller*, the aforesaid *Serenade*, Drdla's once ubiquitous *Souvenir* (first jotted down, we are informed, on the back of a streetcar ticket in Vienna), *Alice Blue Gown* from *Irene*, and even *The Glow-Worm*, which, the liner notes disclose, was once danced by Pavlova. This listener was roused from the tranquility of a deep trance at a certain point by music that seemed strangely associated with another source. It turned out to be the theme from *Upstairs, Downstairs*. For a moment I could see Mrs. Bridges plain. Then the fans turned slowly again in the old palm court as the thirteen members of Mr. White's ensemble played on in an endless twilight of musical détente. The ambience is all there. P.K.

JÓZSEF SIMÁNDY: Songs from Operettas. Songs from Lehár's *The Land of Smiles* and *Friderike*, Kálmán's *The Violet of Montmartre* and *Countess Maritza*, Zeller's *Der Vogelhändler*, and Oscar Straus' *Rund um die Liebe*. József Simándy (tenor); Marika Németh (soprano); Chorus and Orchestra of the Hungarian Radio and Television, András Sebestyén cond. QUALITON SLPX 16581 \$6.98.

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

József Simándy is a leading dramatic tenor of the Hungarian State Opera with such roles as Don José, Don Alvaro, and even Otello among his regular assignments. Like many Continental singers, he seems completely at home in operetta. Though he does not command the melting manner of a Wittrisch or a Wunderlich, he nonetheless sings these excerpts with full involvement and a sure mastery of the style. The tenor is now sixty, and his voice is not as pure as it once was, yet it is still capable of nice dynamic effects, and only one of the selections (the Hungarian equivalent of "O Mädchen, mein Mädchen") is less than acceptable.

All selections are sung in Hungarian, a language quite appropriate to the operettas of Hungarian-born Lehár and Kálmán, who regarded these versions as "authentic." As a matter of fact, "*Komm Zigány*" sounds just perfect in this paprika treatment, while "*Grüss mir mein Wien*" loses none of its charm when the lyrics say "Embrace my Budapest." The truly Viennese melodies of Zeller and Straus, of course, are a different story, but the singer's stylistic command easily (Continued on page 136)

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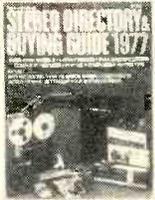
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FREDERICA VON STADE: French Opera Arias (see Best of the Month, page 83)

100 YEARS OF BAYREUTH—RICHARD WAGNER. The Flying Dutchman: Senta's *Ballad* (Emmy Destinn, soprano); *Mögst du, mein Kind* (Paul Knüpfer, bass); *Wie aus der Ferne* (Walter Soomer, baritone). **Tannhäuser:** *O du, mein holder Abendstern* (Friedrich Schorr, baritone); *Rome Narrative* (Lauritz Melchior, tenor); *Dich, teure Halle* (Leonie Rysanek, soprano). **Lohengrin:** *Mein lieber Schwan* (Franz Völker, tenor). **Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg:** *Was duftet doch der Flieder* (Josef von Manowarda, bass); *Wahn! Wahn! Überall Wahn!* (Hans Hotter, baritone); *Morgenlich leuchtend* (Wolfgang Windgassen, tenor). **Das Rheingold:** *Weiche, Wotan, weiche* (Karin Branzell, contralto). **Die Walküre:** *Ein Schwert verhiess mir der Vater* (Max Lorenz, tenor). **Siegfried:** *Ewig war ich* (Astrid Varnay, soprano; Wolfgang Windgassen, tenor). **Götterdämmerung:** *Waltraute's Narrative* (Sigrid Onégin, contralto); *Hier sitz ich* (Richard Mayr, bass). **Parsifal:** *Ich sah das Kind* (Frida Leider, soprano); *Das ist Karfreitagszauber, Herr* (Josef Greindl, bass). **Tristan und Isolde:** *Einsam wachend in der Nacht* (Margarete Klose, contralto); *Liebstod* (Birgit Nilsson, soprano). Various orchestras and conductors. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2721 115 two discs \$15.96.

Performance: **Good to outstanding**
Recording: **Vintage**

Only one of the selections (the *Liebstod*) in this album was recorded in Bayreuth, and many artists are represented here with recordings predating their association with the Wagnerian shrine. But there is no denying the Bayreuth credentials of the interpreters: all nineteen of them sang there and all deserve a place in Wagner's own Valhalla.

Emmy Destinn, Bayreuth's first Senta, starts the sequence magnificently with a soaring, boldly projected *Ballad* that triumphs over the primitive (1907) recording. Leider's thoughtful *Kundry*, Melchior's firm and resonant *Tannhäuser*, and Schorr's mellifluous *Wotan* stand out among the acoustical recordings and show these artists in full magnitude at the outset of their careers. Bassos Knüpfer and Mayr come off less impressively, but Walter Soomer's noble delivery clearly shows the major presence his *Dutchman* must have been.

All of these early singers exhibit a remarkable command of effortless legato, and in this respect Karin Branzell, Franz Völker, and Margarete Klose, the Bayreuth stars of the 1930's, were their worthy heirs. Manowarda and Lorenz belonged to the ranks of "declamatory" singers. The former's solid delivery suffers from the sound of a noisy master, the latter's uningratiating timbre is balanced by the clarity and expressiveness of his enunciation. Hans Hotter's early (1942) *Sachs* shows him light of voice but already rich in insight.

Side four of the set consists of recordings of the 1950's and 1960's by artists closer to our own time. Windgassen and Rysanek are heard in characteristic examples of their art, and Josef Greindl, a longtime Bayreuth favorite, is in peak form. It is good to hear Astrid

Varnay in the impressive vocal estate associated with her early Bayreuth years. And Birgit Nilsson's *Liebstod*, which closes the sequence, is a classic.

Some of the acoustical discs have been extremely well restored; the sound in the more recent masters varies but, with the single exception of Manowarda's aria, remains generally enjoyable. Brief but informative notes and pictures of the performers complete a very praiseworthy release. G.J.

THE YIDDISH ART SONG. Engel (arr.): *Kaddish of Reb Levi-Itzhok of Barditshev; Listen!; Dear Father.* Weiner: *The Story of the World; A Father to His Son; Rhymes Written in the Sand; Yidl and His Fiddle.* Weiner (arr.): *A Tree Stands on the Road; What Is the Meaning Of?; A Nign.* Golub: *Tanchum.* Gelbart: *Keep Moving On.* Achron (arr.): *In a Little Cottage.* Milner: *In Cheyder; The Hunter.* Binder (arr.): *Sabbath at the Concluding Meal.* Leon Lishner (bass); Lazar Weiner (piano). OLYMPIC OLY-105 \$7.50 (from University of Washington Press, Seattle, Wash. 98105).

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

A couple of years ago, composer Lazar Weiner, who carries on practically singlehandedly the Yiddish musical tradition in this country, accompanied soprano Bianca Sauler in a concert of his settings of Yiddish poetry which were remarkable for their sensitivity and almost total lack of bombast or sentimentality. Weiner's treatments recalled the impressionism of Debussy more than the emotionality of Eastern Europe, and the whole program, issued by Naomi Records, was enchanting. Now Weiner is back at the piano, this time with basso Leon Lishner, for another series of Yiddish art songs. Some of these are folk ballads, and others have been rescued from collections by composers of a vanished time in Eastern Europe. Here is Reb Levi-Itzhok of Barditshev demanding of God that, for a change, his people be chosen for something else besides persecution, but at the same time fervently extolling the great name of the Monarch of Monarchs. Here are songs of nature, of joy in the midst of poverty, of the hardships of pale schoolboys in *cheder* classrooms, of the sorrow felt by devout parents when the Enlightenment sweeps over Europe and steals the minds of their sons away from religion to worldly preoccupations.

There are merry moments, like the ballad of *Yidl and His Fiddle*, set to joyous music by Weiner himself, but mostly the mood is melancholy, the material more self-consciously sententious and not quite as intimate or lyrical as in the earlier collection. Moreover, Mr. Leshner has a powerful bass and a formidable command of the Yiddish idiom in matters of both words and music and can warble like a nightingale when he wants to, but when it comes to so challenging a piece as *The Kaddish of Reb Levi-Itzhok*, there is too much strength and not enough feeling; his interpretation only made this listener long to hear Jan Peerce perform this one again. There are a number of lovely moments, though, especially in the treatment of *What Is the Meaning Of?*, a tender lyric about the sorrow of aging too young, an affliction that blighted the youth of many a Jewish religious student in those dusty study houses where time stood still until that whole world crumbled. Complete texts are included. P.K.



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Introducing the Staff . . .

When a personal opinion, particularly a publicly expressed one, grates on our nerves, one of the commoner responses is to ask, either under or at the top of our voices, just who that so-and-so thinks he or she is. The question is asked of STEREO REVIEW with respect to our regular contributors and staff many times each month, and in this column we endeavor to supply the answers. —Ed.



Contributing Editor

Igor Kipnis

Music almost literally surrounded me as a child. My mother's father, Heniot Levy, a pianist, composer, and head of the piano department at the American Conservatory in Chicago, gave me some early lessons. My uncle Hans Heniot, who later became one of the first conductors of the Utah Symphony, did his share by exposing me to the orchestral classics. And, of course, my father, Alexander Kipnis, who was singing leading bass roles with the Berlin State Opera at the time I was born, took care of the vocal end. The family phonograph loomed large in my early years, partly because of my father's many 78-rpm discs of lieder and operatic arias.

Before the age of eight, I had traveled with my parents virtually all over the world. We finally settled in the United States just before the outbreak of World War II, when my father joined the Metropolitan Opera. I spent my teens in Westport, Connecticut, where I had a normal sort of schooling, took further piano lessons (without any particular thought of becoming a professional performer), and madly collected records.

I had one project: trying to earn enough money to buy Edwin Fischer's piano re-

recording of Bach's *Well-Tempered Clavier*, complete in five volumes at a total price of some ninety dollars. I was disgusted when I found that the final volume contained, in addition to the last four preludes and fugues, two other 78's included as filler. On these the second English Suite was played not on the piano by Fischer but on the harpsichord by Wanda Landowska. As it turned out, this apparent rip-off soon fascinated me more than any of the many Bach piano discs I had, and I longed to try a harpsichord in the flesh sometime.

At Harvard, where I majored not in music but in social relations and dreamed of winding up in either radio or TV production or doing a-&-r work with a record company, I finally had my chance to try a harpsichord as part of a project in Randall Thompson's Handel course. I was thoroughly smitten. Nothing happened, however, until 1957, when my parents imported a small instrument for me to fool around with after work.

Work up to that time had included two years in the army teaching signal communications to basic trainees, a few months selling books and records at a Doubleday store in Grand Central Station, and a few months as assistant record librarian at New York's top-forty station WMCA. When I got my first harpsichord, I was art and editorial director of Westminster Records, which meant that I was in charge of all covers and liner notes. I began reviewing records for the *American Record Guide* at that time as well.

In 1961, two years after my debut as a harpsichordist, I went free-lance. There was a fair amount of harpsichord continuo work available, including a number of Baroque trumpet albums for Kapp Records. There were also writing assignments for the New York *Herald Tribune*, and I joined the STEREO REVIEW roster of record critics. I was extraordinarily lucky with my own records: my first solo discs for Golden Crest were followed, in 1964, by a CBS contract and eight years later by one from Angel, and I have now made twenty-six solo albums.

IN 1971 I left New York for Redding, Connecticut, where I live with my wife Judy and our son Jeremy, who is almost twelve years old. For four years I taught full time at Fairfield University, but my concert schedule now includes more than fifty recitals and orchestral dates a year and involves tours of Europe, Australia, Israel, and South America as well as the United States and Canada, and that has necessitated cutting back on other activities. I have also become artist-in-residence at Fairfield, and readers will have noticed that my contributions to STEREO REVIEW have therefore dwindled considerably.

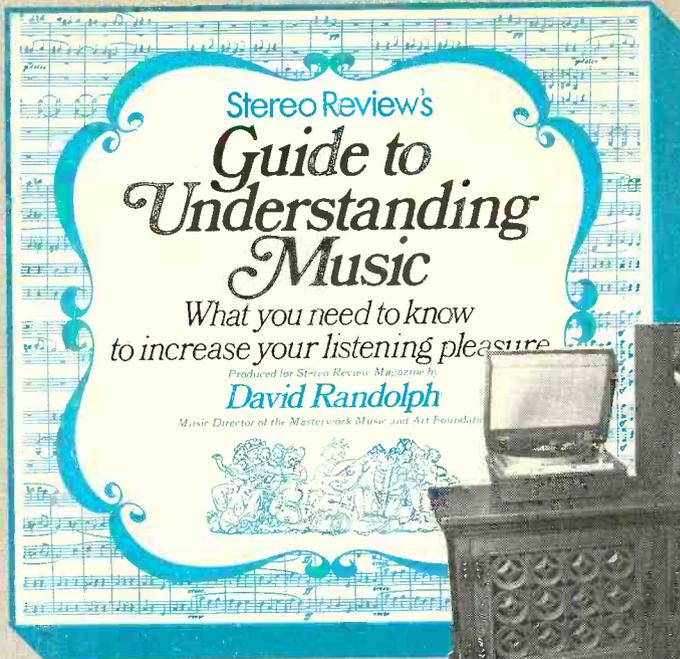
I still like to keep my hand in, though, so that my reviewing hat will never have to go into permanent storage in the attic. And although I have a lot less time for it now, I just cannot get rid of that terrible habit of collecting records. That even includes searching out old 78's, which I enjoy transcribing onto cassette so that I can play them in my van while hauling my harpsichord to the next concert. —Igor Kipnis

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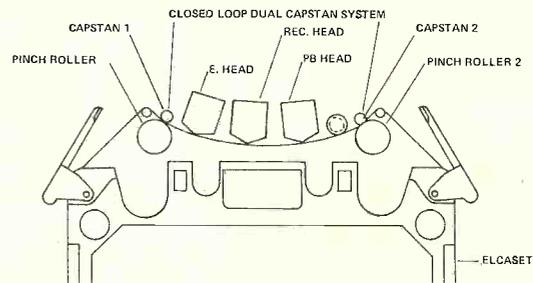
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