HIGHWAY HI-FI: The Music You Take with You

CAR STEREO
Ivan Berger's Guide for Buyers

NEW AUDIO PRODUCTS
At Las Vegas CES: Car Stereo, Accessories, Headphones, Video

EQUIPMENT TEST REPORTS
- Allison: Six Speaker System
- Audio Pro TP-150 Tuner-Preamplifier and A4-14 Speaker System
- Bang & Olufsen Beogram 8000 Turntable with MMC 20CL Phono Cartridge
- Sansui AU-D11 Integrated Amplifier
- Technics RS-M270X Cassette Deck

DISC SPECIALS
Emmylou Harris • Juice Newton • The Who
Hank Williams, Jr. • Leon Ware • Miles Davis
Willie Nile • Rick Springfield

STRAVINSKY: A Digital Firebird
WEBER: Der Freischütz
SCHUBERT: Stabat Mater
BACH: The Partitas
Pioneer's new speaker has polymer graphite cone.

HPM Polymer Graphite.
Introducing the first low distortion speaker. The Pioneer HPM Polymer Graphite. With up to three times less distortion than conventional paper speakers.

Most high fidelity speakers today offer you little more than kazoo technology. And the paper cone you find in most conventional speakers is proof of it. Just as the paper cone in a conventional kazoo creates a buzzing noise, the paper cone in most conventional speakers creates distortion.

At Pioneer we've developed our new HPM speakers with Polymer Graphite cones instead of paper. This new material sets new lows in speaker distortion and new highs in speaker technology.

What good are low distortion components when you have high distortion speakers.

Most people believe that to get the most out of a recording all they need is components that give them the least amount of distortion.

But expensive components mean little when attached to conventional speakers. Even components with an amazingly low level of distortion can't be appreciated when you're listening to them on speakers that most likely have ten times the amount.

So Pioneer engineers created Polymer Graphite, a new speaker cone material that gives you up to three times less distortion than paper.

Polymer Graphite reproduces sound. Paper and metal create it.

The perfect cone material should be rigid enough to significantly reduce distortion. It should be lightweight, And high in internal loss. So it sustains no vibrations and allows no artificial coloring to your music.

Unfortunately, these three attributes are not commonly found in any one speaker.

Paper cones are not rigid enough to keep from flexing. They tend to break up at high listening levels. As they alter their shape, they alter your music. What's more, over the years, their performance can deteriorate.

Metal cones, on the other hand are rigid enough to lower distortion. And can be light enough for quick response. Unfortunately they tend to ring and add their sound to your music.

Pioneer's new HPM speakers have woofer, tweeter and midrange made of Polymer Graphite.

Because Polymer Graphite is rigid, the wave that comes out of your speaker cone is virtually identical to the signal that went into it. Because it's so lightweight, it's responsive enough to accurately reproduce transients for an added sense of realism.

And because it's acoustically dead you'll hear nothing more and nothing less than music the way it was intended to be heard.

But that's not all. Pioneer's new HPM Polymer Graphite speakers have a horn loaded High Polymer supertweeter that expands frequency response an additional octave to 50,000 hertz. A computer designed bass reflex cabinet. And much more.

So if you're in the market for high fidelity speakers, you can buy a paper speaker and get kazoo technology. Or you can buy a Polymer Graphite speaker and get Pioneer technology.
Conventional kazoo has paper cone.

WHAT'S GOOD FOR A KAZOO IS BAD FOR A SPEAKER.
Conventional speaker has paper cone.
Heart of a Great System — ½ Off! The Realistic STA-720 gives you a tuning display that makes it easy to find AM and FM stations — plus our Digital Auto-Magic® system that automatically fine-tunes FM for lowest possible distortion, then locks in the signal for drift-free listening. There’s FM muting to silence between-station “hiss” as you tune. And both systems can be switched out for manual tuning — a mode you may need to receive distant FM stations. You get a super-sensitive dual-gate MOS-FET FM front end and a phase-locked loop circuit for rock-stable channel separation on stereo FM.

Direct-Coupled Power Amplifier. Deeper and far more accurate bass is the result. The STA-720 can power two pairs of speakers to room-filling volume. It’s rated 25 watts per channel rms minimum into 8 ohms, over the entire audio range from 20 to 20,000 Hz, with no more than 0.05% total harmonic distortion. Special circuitry protects the amplifier from speaker wiring shorts and overheating. A phono preamp using the latest op-amp technology lowers noise and distortion and maintains precise RIAA equalization — the recording industry standard.

Massive 40-Detent Volume Control For Exact Settings

Buy This Realistic® Digital-Display Receiver With Exclusive Auto-Magic® FM Now and Save $100!

Many Other Exciting Hi-Fi Values During Our Storewide Inventory Clearance Sale Thru June 30th. Wherever You See this Sign:

Radio Shack®
THE NATIONWIDE SUPERMARKET OF SOUND®
A DIVISION OF TANDY CORPORATION

Price may vary at individual stores and dealers. See page 17 of our 1981 catalog for warranty details.
NEW PRODUCTS
Roundup of the latest audio equipment and accessories

AUDIO QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS
Dynamic Range, Stylus Replacement, Beginners' Problems

TAPE TALK
Taping for Car Stereo, Dolby Test Tapes, Cassette Storage

TECHNICAL TALK
How Well Built Is It?

EQUIPMENT TEST REPORTS
Hirsch-Hauk Laboratories test results on the Technics RS-M270X cassette deck.
Bang & Olufsen Beogram 8000 turntable with MMC 20CL phono cartridge.
Audio Pro TP-150 tuner preamplifier and A4-14 speaker system.
Allison Six speaker system, and Sansui AU-D11 integrated amplifier

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Question Number One: Will It Fit?

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GOING ON RECORD

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COVER: Design by Borys Patchowsky; photo by Bruce Pendleton.
The First Discwasher Tape Accessory

PERFECT PATH™
Head Cleaner

- Non-abrasive.
- High technology system: simultaneously cleans heads and removes oxide from tape path.
- No alcohols to damage tape mechanism.
- Special non-abrasive cleaning fibers are backed with an exclusive "capture surface" designed to trap tiny particles of tape residue, preventing them from contaminating tape mechanisms.

The Perfect Path Difference:

- "Cleaning contact" is made along the total tape path including guides and heads, normally untouched by wiper cleaners.

- Perfect Path cleans without alcohol or freon. It will not extract and age pinch rollers.

- Perfect Path simultaneously cleans tape heads while removing debris from along the tape path.

- Perfect Path's cleaning fiber grid is non-abrasive. Even after hundreds of passes, it will not scratch heads.

- Perfect Path restores high frequency "air" and transient response of cassette recordings.

Playback accuracy of a calibrated test tape. Note that after only three hours of play, high frequency response is reduced by as much as 10 dB. One cleaning with the Perfect Path Head Cleaner restores the highs to within 1 dB of the original response.
N.A.B. URGES U.S. TO OPPOSE 9 KHZ.

On behalf of its nearly 4,800 member stations, the National Association of Broadcasters has urged the government of the United States to join Canada in supporting retention of 10-kHz spacing between radio stations on the AM dial. According to N.A.B. president Vincent Wasilewski, reducing the spacing to 9 kHz is not in the public interest and U.S. government officials who favor it adopted the position without adequate study. In announcing Canada's support of retaining 10 kHz, Communications Minister Francis Fox said, "...the financial costs and operational disruptions that would result from conversion outweigh the benefits." The matter is to be voted on by all nations in the Americas in November of this year at Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

THE FIFTH ANNUAL SONGWRITER EXPO will be held at Beverly Hills High School in Los Angeles on June 6 and 7. Industry professionals and established songwriters will teach classes on the art, craft, and business of writing songs. Subjects of panel discussions include country, pop, and religious music, how to make and sell your own record, and contract negotiations with publishers and record companies. The expo is sponsored by BMI, and college credit for attending it is granted by some schools. For information write to L.A. Songwriters Showcase, 6772 Hollywood Boulevard, Hollywood, Calif. 90028, or call (213) 462-1382.

VIOLINIST ISAAC STERN TURNED SIXTY on July 21, 1980, with celebrations that spanned three continents and went on well into 1981. As president of Carnegie Hall, Stern announced that Exxon is contributing funding for a series of Festival Concerts there from May 28 to June 11. Stephen Stamas, an Exxon vice president, commented that Exxon will have its one-hundredth anniversary next year and will turn to Stern for advice on how to celebrate a birthday so well and so extensively. Said Stern: "Better oily than late." For a review of the CBS recording of Stern's birthday concert see page 132.

ARISTA ENTERS THE CLASSICAL MARKET this month with the release of twenty to thirty classical albums produced in Germany by the label's parent company Ariola-Eurodisc, an arm of Bertelsmann Verlag, which is one of the world's largest communications conglomerates. The new line, due in stores in June, will retail for $9.98 a disc.

THE NEW YORK CITY OPERA COMPANY'S spring season will be broadcast on National Public Radio stations on thirteen Saturdays beginning June 6. The repertoire includes such standard fare as Puccini's Madama Butterfly and La Bohème and Mozart's Don Giovanni plus many seldom-heard works including Verdi's Attila, Bizet's Pearl Fishers, Thea Musgrave's Mary Queen of Scots, and Prokofiev's Love for Three Oranges. Check local NPR stations for time.

FOGERTY'S BACK AND ASYLUM'S GOT HIM! After a six-year hiatus, John Fogerty, creative mainstay of the much-missed, chart-topping Creedence Clearwater Revival, will deliver a solo album to Asylum this year. Fogerty's timing is impeccable: his former band has a current hit album, and cover versions of his Creedence tunes are springing up all over. Emmylou Harris has just done Bad Moon Risin' and Rick Nelson, the Searchers, and Dave Edmunds have all just remade Almost Saturday Night. Edmunds' version is a hit in England.

A DIMITRI MITROPOULOS CONCERT ALBUM is the first of a series of historic recordings to be issued annually by the New York Philharmonic. A two-disc set, the album contains Strauss' Death and Transfiguration and Mahler's Symphony No. 5 in performances by the Philharmonic and Mitropoulos that have not been released before. The Strauss dates from 1956, the Mahler from 1960. The set was created as a premium in the orchestra's Radiothon fund-raising drive in April, but it will continue to be available by mail from: New York Philharmonic Album, Avery Fisher Hall, 132 West 65th Street, New York, N.Y. 10023. Price: $22 postpaid. The album is not sold in stores.

June 1981
Speaking of Music...

By William Anderson

WINNER of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences' Best Song award for the year 1980 was Fame (from the movie of the same name), a stirring little hymn to immortality (show-biz division) whose uninhibited lyrics ("I'm gonna live forever/ Baby, remember my name") offer perhaps more insight into the matter than we really have need of. Though the clumsier, Pal Joey-ish manifestations of the lust for fame may be pathetic, embarrassing, or worse, the way in which individual performers handle this universal human impulse has a lot to do with the quality of our entertainment. Take, for example, Dame Joan Sutherland, Marilyn Horne, and Luciano Pavarotti, three outstanding candidates for anybody's vocal Pantheon, who appeared at New York's Avery Fisher Hall (and on many of the nation's TV screens) March 23 in the Great Performers at Lincoln Center Series. Dame Joan, after better than twenty-five years of singing professionally, has come to terms with Fame—has, in fact, made it a mere ornament of a serene artistic domesticity. Her struggles behind her, she looks out from her seat on Parnassus secure and unruffled, a gracious prima donna assoluta. Time has naturally tempered the startling vocal prodigality of a decade or so ago, but prudent, musicianship of a still glorious instrument guarantees audiences that all vocal challenges will be thrillingly, unstintingly met.

Marilyn Horne gives the impression, in her brisk platform demeanor at least, that she is indifferent to Fame. She would have to be a paragon of saintly humility, however, not to have been affected by the response to the performance of the aria "Mura Felice" (from Rossini's La Donna del Lago) last March: the entire audience surged to its feet as one, with a roar that might have punched out the rear wall of the house had it not been anchored in concrete. Miss Horne is incredibly, after a quarter-century before the public, at the very peak of her art, and perhaps a concentration on singing rather than the demands of Fame has something to do with it. Her voice is simply sublime, its surpassing beauty matched by an unexampled musicianship. She has no bel canto peer today; it is hard to imagine there has ever been one.

And Luciano Pavarotti? It might reasonably be argued that he has been seduced by Fame to the detriment of his art. Now probably the best-known musical figure in the world, he has become a phoenix too frequent in the process, thrust upon us almost daily on TV talk shows, peddling his autobiography on radio and TV, appearing (rather presumptuously) as a "presenter" on the Academy Awards show, and quite likely singing too much. He seems, in fact, almost in a hurry to get his career over with. It is difficult to say whether vocal resources have been squandered without knowing just what those resources were—and tenor voices are made of fragile stuff anyway—what Pavarotti's singing was the least impressive in the March concert. The famous piano became a cromn, the controlled thrust of youthful power an undisciplined shout, and there was little left of what was once a kaleidoscope of vocal color. Mightn't a short rest do both singer and audience a world of good?

Signs of the times: Everyone I queried about the broadcast told me they watched on TV but listened to the FM simulcast through their stereo systems. The Era of Shared Hardware is already upon us.

FAME

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THE DL-300 SERIES

DL-301 To control resonances, the cantilever fulcrum of all Denon MC cartridges is independent of the damping rings. The DL-301 uses two damping rings, each optimized for its portion of the frequency range. In addition a special magnetic structure eliminates pole pieces, reducing both weight and cost for the best sonic value in MC cartridges.

DL-303 The first of the DL-300 Series, the DL-303 has repeatedly been judged "best of its class." It features Denon's cross-shaped coil and dual cantilever design and a special tensioning device that maintains ultra-high performance for extended periods.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Stereo TV
- As a Stereo Review reader of many years, and an ex-broadcaster, I was more than delighted to read the "Stereo TV" articles in the April issue. This is popular technical journalism at its best, and I only wish you could insist on this kind of hard-hitting, factual news reporting from your contributors in the audio field. I know there is the usual long time lag, with a monthly magazine, from event to delivery, but the April video articles showed that it can be done. You are going to need all the means you can gather to get through these difficult transition days from pure audio to audio/video. But you are already 'way out front and, in my opinion, moving in the right direction at the right pace.

GUSTAV GENSCHOW
Montreal, Quebec

Basic Repertoire
- I would like to see the following monthly series in Stereo Review:
  - Great Composers and/or
  - Great Works and/or
  - Great Conductors, etc.
  When the series is done, offer it in pamphlet form. Do it!

THOMAS J. ANSELMO
Wharton, N.J.

We did. It's called The Basic Repertoire, and it's now available in its 1981 edition (the seventeenth, by the way). See page 114 for ordering information.

Rodrigues Fan
- I enjoy Stereo Review very much and appreciate the balance of the contents. I'm also an avid fan of Charles Rodrigues, having first enjoyed his work in Playboy. I have cut out almost a hundred of his cartoons from Stereo Review, and only once did I find two of them printed back to back. Nearly always they're backed by advertisements. Could it be that your layout department also consists of Rodrigues fans?

THOMAS J. ANSELMO
Wharton, N.J.

I would also like to thank Julian Hirsch for his slaughter of some of the sacred cows of "salon" audio. I'm sure that some of his "Technical Talk" columns have caused consternation in a few quarters.

HOWARD FRY
Huntsville, Ala.

Don McLean
- Thank you for the very appropriate and fitting April "Best of the Month" review of Don McLean's latest album, "Chain Lightning." Peter Reilly's article paid proper homage to a truly great artist. However, I was surprised to see Buddy Holly's "It Doesn't Matter Anymore" attributed to Paul Anka. I must really be getting old when music reviewers start making such trivial mistakes.

JERRY M. HOSMER
Sikeston, Mo.

Popular Music Editor Paulette Weiss replies: It Doesn't Matter Anymore was written for Holly by a very young Paul Anka. Anka was on Holly's last tour and, as a junior member of the show, was assigned to a bus instead of to the plane that crashed and took Holly's life.

Aaron Copland
- Eric Salzman's article on our Aaron Copland in the February issue was great; however, the photograph by Ebet Roberts said as much and as well. This is the photograph of the composer of Appalachian Spring. (Please, Columbia Records, grab this one for a cover.) I owe a lot of respect to a man who can capture the essence of a day in my life when I'll open my front door and say, "Oh God, look at this day"—and automatically know that the only music to hear is the Copland of the Spring or of Rodeo in the summer or The Red Pony in the fall. (I have not, as yet, known him to be a part of the winter. Only Vaughan Williams has been, to me, the composer of the misty, foggy, cold, and rainy day.) Your photograph

(Continued on page 10)
Any car designed for extraordinary performance should also be equipped for extraordinary sound.

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Body by Lamborghini. High fidelity by Alpine.
Digital Primer

- Thank you for "Digital Audio: A Primer" in the February issue. This is the finest article I can recall in STEREO REVIEW, and I've been a subscriber for eleven years (remember Hi-Fi and Stereo Review?). Please keep the serious audio (and video) articles coming. I don't need to read about music personalities, but I do appreciate the hard technical stuff.

ANDREW POLON
New York, N.Y.

Firebrand on Disc

- Regarding Peter Reilly's reply to Donald E. Clark's April letter about Weill's Firebrand of Florence: besides the Lotte Lenya recording of one song from the show that Mr. Reilly mentioned, there was a two-record set, "Ira Gershwin Loves to Rhyme," issued by Mark 56 Records in 1975 (#721) that contains transfers from the fragile acetate originals of demo recordings from Ira Gershwin's private collection. Nine cuts are from Firebrand, with Gershwin doing the vocals and Kurt Weill himself on piano. (Also on the album are demos from the films Where Do We Go From Here? and Give a Girl a Break.) And on Ben Bagley's "Ira Gershwin Revisited" (Painted Smiles PS-1353), Charles Rydell sings A Rhyme for Angels from the show.

DAVID HUMMEL
Grawn, Mich.

Another Columbus

- For the record (see May "Letters"), the Christopher Columbus story was also musicalized by Meredith Willson (composer-lyricist of The Music Man) Tijuana (1941) and starring John Cullum and Jean Fenn, the musical bombed in Los Angeles in 1969.

DAVID R. KEHS
Waltham, Mass.

Mike Lipskin


CHARLES B. DAVIS JR.
Midway Park, N.C.

Looking Backward

- All I can say regarding the March "Bulletin" item on record and tape sales losses due to home taping is goody, goody! In the 1890s John Philip Sousa refused to record his band and told Thomas Edison that recordings would be a disaster for the professional musician. How prophetic! These parasitical recording companies and the radio stations that spin the recordings have displaced thousands and thousands of competent professional performers. Musicians were some of the very first to be displaced by technology. May tapes and home recorders bankrupt the whole bunch! Then maybe when people want to listen to music they will have to buy it from live performers. If this is reactionary, so be it!

LOWELL LITTLE
Ft. Lauderdale, Fla.

Well, it is a point of view.

Furtwängler Society

- It may be of interest to some readers of STEREO REVIEW to know that a worldwide Wilhelm Furtwängler Society was founded in 1973. We average four newsletters annually, usually with two to four supplements and occasionally a picture of the conductor, and are currently preparing our twenty-fifth issue. Membership costs $10 per year.

HANS A. ILLING, President
Wilhelm Furtwängler Society
6112 West 77th Street
Los Angeles, Calif. 90045

STEREO REVIEW
Teac's new look in hearing aids.

The sound you get is only as good as the recording you make. So TEAC engineers have pulled all stops to create a cassette deck that helps you make the most distortion-free recordings you've ever heard. It's called the V-9.

It all starts with our revolutionary new metering system. Color-coded, peak reading, incandescent lamps, the likes of which you've never seen. Bigger. Faster. Easier to read. Any level over 0 triggers a red lamp at the speed of light. So your eyes can tell you what your ears miss. And at the push of a button, you can set the metering system for metal tape. There's no more guesswork.

Just crisp, clean, distortion-free recordings.

Next, put our new transport through its paces. Three motors. Full IC logic. The softest, lightest, quickest transport controls you've ever touched. And a totally new technology that connects those controls directly to the motors to eliminate solenoids. It's fast, efficient, smooth, silent and extraordinarily reliable.

From its silky smooth, damped cassette compartment, to its motorized head-loading system, the V-9 is a recordist's delight. Visit your TEAC dealer and give one a try. You'll see why we're introducing a totally new look in hearing aids.

V-9 3-Motor Cassette Deck
Audio-Technica's Lightweight Phones

Audio-Technica's ATH-0.3 ("Point 3," left) and ATH-0.5 ("Point 5") headphones have been designed for portability and fatigue-free listening at home. Suitable for use with low-power portable radios and tape players while jogging, biking, and skiing, both units employ samarium-cobalt magnets, which make possible lightweight drivers with high sensitivity. A polyester-film diaphragm (0.00063 inches thick) is said to improve frequency response while maintaining low distortion. A unique pivot system permits easy adjustment to any head size without the use of slide-bar-type headbands. Frequency response for the Point 3 is given as 30 to 20,000 Hz; for the Point 5 it is 25 to 20,000 Hz. At 1,000 Hz, a 1-milliwatt input will generate a 100-dB sound-pressure level. Matching impedance is 4 to 16 ohms. Weight is 1.9 ounces. Prices: Point 3, $49.95; Point 5, $79.95.

Magnetic-fluid Tweeter in Avid Speaker System

Said to be the first cartridge incorporating an integrated stylus-cantilever cut by a laser from one diamond, the Sony XL-88D moving-coil unit features a new magnetic circuit using a high-energy samarium-cobalt magnet. For low distortion the moving coil is wound in a figure-eight shape. Output with a 5-centimeters-per-second groove velocity at 1 kHz is 0.4 millivolt; frequency response is 10 to 50,000 Hz. Channel separation at 1 kHz is greater than 33 dB; channel balance is better than 1 dB. Compliance at 100 Hz is 20 X 10^-6 centimeters per dyne. Recommended tracking force is 1.5 grams. Price: $1,000.

All-in-one Mitsubishi Audio System

Mitsubishi's X-10 Interplay System combines a vertical straight-line-tracking turntable, a two-head cassette deck, an amplifier, and an AM/FM tuner with six station presets. The belt-driven turntable clamps the record firmly in position. Speed and disc size are automatically selected. All automatic and cueing functions are fully electronic. Rated wow and flutter is 0.06 per cent (wrms), and the turntable's signal-to-noise ratio (S/N) is 66 dB (DIN B).

The cassette deck has a music-program selection system that operates with pauses in the recorded program. Other features include Dolby-B noise reduction, timer activation, soft-touch controls, and a back-panel switch that shifts the deck's bias oscillator frequency to minimize "whistles" when recording broadcasts. The unit has a wow-and-flutter spec of 0.07 per cent (wrms), a S/N of 64 dB (Dolby circuits on), and a frequency response of 30 to 16,000 Hz (with metal tape).

Rated at 25 watts per channel into 8 ohms from 50 to 20,000 Hz with no more than 0.8 per cent total harmonic distortion, the amplifier section has separate bass and treble controls, fast-acting, self-resetting speaker-protection relays, microphone mixing, and switching for two pairs of loudspeakers. The tuner section offers a mono S/N of 77 dB and a usable sensitivity of 11.2 dBf. Price: $690. An optional cabinet is $65.

Op tonica's Two-cassette Deck

Optonica's RT-6605 contains two separate tape drives: one with a recording and erase head, the other with a playback head only. The recording section's triple-layer Sendust head has a 3-micrometer gap and a... (Continued on page 14)
TDK creates SA-X.

Now you can explore the far reaches of high bias.

TDK has added a new dimension to high bias recording. It's called SA-X.

SA-X emerges from the Super Avilyn technology that has set the reference standard for high bias cassettes. Beyond that, TDK engineers saw new worlds of high bias to explore. By taking two layers of Super Avilyn with different coercivities and optimally matching them, TDK creates a formulation that raises high bias to a higher level. One that approaches the sound quality of metal.

You will hear rock and jazz soar to new heights. Classical, with more of its wide dynamic range. A clarity that even the best bias couldn't give you before. With every kind of music, SA-X brings you closer to the richness of a live performance. And it will keep you there, with its flawless mechanical construction. TDK has given SA-X the Laboratory Standard Mechanism for optimal interfacing with cassette deck heads. You'll hear its consistently superior performance for years to come.

SA-X performs like no other cassette. Expect it to cost a bit more. You can also expect it to take you further into high bias than you've ever been.

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The Amazing Music Machine

Circle No. 55 on Reader Service Card
The C-1 dynamic range downward expander that nearly doubles that reduces noise up to 8 dB. A peak unlimi-
ter (total) power amplifier, Autocorrelator System amplifier time-delay system with built-in 40 watt

The C-4000 Control Console includes Sonic Hologram Generator full-function stereo preamplifier time-delay system with built-in 40 watt (total) power amplifier. Autocorrelator System that reduces noise up to 8 dB. A peak unlimi-
ter (total) power amplifier, Autocorrelator System amplifier time-delay system with built-in 40 watt

The C-9 Sonic Hologram Generator allows you to add Sonic Holography to any system, including one with a receiver.

And when you do, you'll hear what these audio experts heard in their systems:

Hal Rodgers, Senior Editor of Popular Electronics: "When the lights were turned out we could almost have sworn that we were in the presence of a real live orchestra."

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

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

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

And now, whatever components you own, you can hear what all the audio experts have heard and acclaimed: Sonic Holography by Carver.

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P.O. Box 664, 14304 N.E. 193rd Place
Woodinville, Washington 98072

CIRCLE NO. 11 ON READER SERVICE CARD

New Products latest audio equipment and accessories

Specially designed recording amplifier. The playback-head gap is 0.8 micrometer to ensure good high-frequency response. Other features include an output-level control, a peak/peak-hold display, a four-position tape-type selector, bias adjustment, two sets of Dolby noise-reduction circuits, metal-tape capability, and timer-standby mechanisms. A single control puts both tapes in motion. Wow and flutter is rated as 0.045 per cent (wrm-s), frequency response 20 to 21,000 Hz with metal tape. Price: $550.

Circle 124 on reader service card

Receiver / Cassette Unit with Digital Readout from Sanyo

Featuring a digital frequency display that doubles as a quartz clock. Sanyo's FTC 12 AM/FM receiver and cassette-player unit for the car also incorporates an FET FM-tuner front end, local/distant switch, separate volume, balance, and tone controls, and tape-play and stereo-FM indicators. The cassette player has an automatic reverse mechanism as well as locking fast-forward and rewind. The rated power output of the FTC 12 is 4.5 watts per channel. An automatic up/down control for motorized antennas is included. Dimensions are 6 1/4 x 2 x 4 3/4 inches. Price: $149.95.

Circle 125 on reader service card

Floor-standing H. H. Scott Speaker

The 199T three-way floor-standing acoustic-suspension speaker system from H. H. Scott uses a 12-inch extended-voice-coil woofer, a 3 1/2-inch midrange driver, and a 1-inch wide-dispersion dome tweeter. Crossover frequencies are 800 and 3,500 Hz. The midrange is mounted in a tuned isolation chamber said to eliminate certain speaker-interference effects. The system includes three-position tweeter and midrange attenuation controls. Stated frequency response is 38 to 20,000 Hz ± 4 dB. The speaker will produce a 92-dB sound-pressure level at 1 meter when driven by 1 watt. System impedance is 6 ohms minimum. Recommended minimum amplifier power is 15 watts. Dimensions are 35 x 15 x 11 1/4 inches; weight is 50 pounds. Finish is hickory over particle board. Price: $330.

Circle 127 on reader service card

Teac's Modular Mixing System for Home Recordists

The Teac Tascam System 20 operates much like an electronic patch bay; the oper-
If you think "high bias" is discrimination against tall people, you're not ready for New Memorex.

High bias tape is specially formulated to deliver remarkably improved sound reproduction, particularly in the higher frequencies. And no high bias tape does that better than totally new Memorex HIGH BIAS II.

HIGH BIAS II improves high frequency reproduction.

We've developed a unique new formulation of superfine ferrite crystal oxide particles. And while that's a mouthful to say, it delivers an earful of results.

Singers ring out more clearly. Snare drums snap and cymbals shimmer with startling crispness. Even quiet passages sound clearer. Because new Memorex HIGH BIAS II has 4 to 5 dB lower noise. Which means dramatically reduced tape hiss.

And thanks to Permapass™, our extraordinary new binding process, the music you put on the tape stays on the tape. Play after play, even after 1,000 plays.

In fact, new Memorex will always deliver true sound reproduction. Or we'll replace it. Free.

Of course, we didn't stop once we made new Memorex sound better. We also made it work better. By improving virtually every aspect of the cassette mechanism.

We even invented a unique fumble-free storage album. So trust your next recording to new Memorex. In HIGH BIAS II, normal bias MRX I or METAL IV. As a discriminating tape user, you'll have a high opinion of the results. A highly biased opinion, that is.

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ALLISON: ONE® loudspeakers were used by Diversified Science Labs in reviewing nine audiophile discs. The reviews were published in a special section of the Winter 1980 issue of Stereo Review. Here are some excerpts:

"Stereo imaging has excellent width and depth and is rock stable... What we heard was as real a piano as we have ever heard on a recording... percussion is crisp and clean and even the triangle stands out clearly in the presence of the full orchestra. Brass is excellent in all registers, cellos and basses are clearly defined... Undoubtedly, this is one of the most sonically thrilling recordings we've ever heard...

The imaging, dynamics, and accuracy are so perfect that the three musicians seem to be performing in your living room."

These words are from record reviews. But the sounds described were not created by the records alone: they had to be reproduced by loudspeakers before the reviewers could hear them and judge their realism.

The loudspeakers were Allison One systems, with the Electronic Subwoofer to extend response flat to 20 Hz.

One reason why Allison® systems reproduce original sounds so accurately is that they have flat bass power response in real rooms. Conventional loudspeaker systems are affected by reflections from room surfaces; Allison Room-Matched® design avoids these effects. A series of technical papers on the room-boundary problem and its solution is available, along with our catalog and other literature, free on request.

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16

STEREO REVIEW

New Products

latest audio equipment and accessories

□ Maxell's New top-of-the-line cassettes, XL I-S and XL II-S, each feature a new epitaxial formulation for greater sensitivity and dynamic range. They also have an improved cassette housing. The XL I-S tape has a 1.5-dB greater dynamic range than its predecessor XL I, and the XL II-S has a 2-dB greater dynamic range than XL II. Both have higher signal-to-noise ratios, wider bias latitudes, lower intermodulation distortion, and lower print-through characteristics. The XL II-S is for use in cassette decks with high bias or CrO₂ bias and equalization; XL I-S is for decks with normal bias and EQ settings. Prices for either type: C-60, $5.10; C-90, $6.99.

□ The Orpheus S505 speaker uses a long-throw 5-inch woofer with a rear-mounted 5-inch passive radiator and a 1-inch Mylar-dome tweeter. Stated frequency response is 65 to 20,000 Hz ± 3 dB. Crossover frequencies are 125 and 2,000 Hz. The system's nominal impedance is 9 ohms; it will produce an 80-dB sound-pressure level at 1 meter with a 1-watt input. The amplifier-power recommendation is 15 watts per channel minimum. Finished in oiled-walnut veneer, the Orpheus S505 measures 10 x 6 3/4 x 6 inches and weighs 7 pounds. The grille is black cloth. Price: $325 per pair. Orpheus Loudspeakers, Dept. SR, 87 S. Sixth Street, Locust Valley, N.Y. 11560.

□ The Orpheus S505 speaker uses a long-throw 5-inch woofer with a rear-mounted 5-inch passive radiator and a 1-inch Mylar-dome tweeter. Stated frequency response is 65 to 20,000 Hz ± 3 dB. Crossover frequencies are 125 and 2,000 Hz. The system's nominal impedance is 9 ohms; it will produce an 80-dB sound-pressure level at 1 meter with a 1-watt input. The amplifier-power recommendation is 15 watts per channel minimum. Finished in oiled-walnut veneer, the Orpheus S505 measures 10 x 6 3/4 x 6 inches and weighs 7 pounds. The grille is black cloth. Price: $325 per pair. Orpheus Loudspeakers, Dept. SR, 87 S. Sixth Street, Locust Valley, N.Y. 11560.

□ Craig's "Soundalong" portable stereo cassette player measures 4 1/2 x 5 1/4 x 13/4 inches and weighs 17 ounces. Designed for motor with electronic-servo speed control. A pitch control can vary the turntable speed by ± 3 per cent. Weighted-rms wow and flutter is given as 0.025 per cent, signal-to-noise ratio as 72 dB (DIN B). Effective arm length is 8 7/8 inches. A cable-connected remote control is available. Dimensions are 16 1/2 x 5 1/8 x 15 inches. Weight is 13 pounds. Price: $239.95.

□ Craig's New Portable Cassette Player

□ Craig's "Soundalong" portable stereo cassette player measures 4 1/2 x 5 1/4 x 1 3/4 inches and weighs 17 ounces. Designed for (Continued on page 18)
You may not realize it, but you've only been listening to music in two dimensions. In fact, owners of the most sophisticated systems utilizing the latest enhancement techniques are also only hearing two-dimensional sound, totally lacking the missing third dimension, Omnisonic Imagery™. Even owners of the most modest stereo systems will recognize the 801 Omnisonic Imager™ as one of the most significant improvements in music reproduction in years. This advance, available after extensive research by Omnisonix in the field of psychoacoustics, is intended to provide the enjoyment and feeling of live musical performance. To vastly upgrade the performance of your stereo system, simply connect the 801 to the tape or preamp input/output jacks and listen to clear, distinct sound images that seem to surround you, even while moving about. In fact, the impact is so great that the sound seems to come from outside the speaker plane, often overhead and to the rear. Your home virtually becomes a concert hall.

Hearing is convincing
To experience the dramatic presence and detail that have been missing from your records, digitally recorded discs, and pre-recorded tapes, take a few of your favorites to an Omnisonix dealer for a demonstration; you are in for a musical delight. And amazingly enough, any tape you record through an Omnisonic Imager will retain the Omnisonic quality when it is played back on a conventional stereo system. The 801 Omnisonic Imager also adds a dimension to FM, monophonic AM and TV sound, with a simple adjustment.

Highway Imagery
The new Imager 801-A™ does for your car stereo what the 801 does for your home music system. It raises the sound from the floor level to the ear level. The variable imager control allows you to vary the image to any auto environment.

Hear what you've been missing
Join the growing thousands of music listeners who have found it completely affordable to enjoy the delight of Omnisonic Imagery and discover what they had been missing with conventional stereo. Since all Omnisonic Imagers are designed and built for lasting performance under strict quality control conditions, Omnisonix offers a lifetime warranty on the active proprietary circuitry.

Call today, toll free
1-800-243-0688
For additional information and the name of your nearest Omnisonix dealer. Write: P.O. Box 430, Northford, Ct. 06472 or call 203-239-6213 in Connecticut.
New Products
latest audio equipment and accessories

“people on the move,” the unit has outputs for two stereo headphones, switchable high/low tone control, separate left and right volume controls, and a built-in condenser microphone for communication between two headphone users. The unit is powered by four AA batteries or by an external source. The Soundalong package contains the player, one set of lightweight headphones, a waist belt with safety strap, adjustable shoulder/neck strap, and a case that can hold three cassettes. Price: $99.99; extra headphone set, $24.99.

Circle 130 on reader service card

Low-frequency Speaker System From Polk Audio

Polk’s “Reference Monitor” Low-Frequency System (L.F. 14) is an add-on modular bass loudspeaker. A built-in low-pass network allows the L.F. 14 to be added easily to any system either as a single “dual-channel” woofer or as one of a stereo pair of bass modules. The L.F. 14 uses two trilaminated polymer drivers coupled to a massive, low-resonance (16-Hz), 12-inch foam-laminated planar sub-bass passive radiator. When the system is used as a single dual-channel bass module, the stereo signal from each channel is fed to a separate driver. The crossover filter network uses air-core copper coils and can be adjusted for rolloff frequency and efficiency. The system’s -3-dB point is 25 Hz. Maximum output at 32 Hz is a 105-dB sound-pressure level. Dimensions are 28 x 16 x 11 1/2 inches. Price: $279.95.

Circle 132 on reader service card

Mr. Electronics’ Mission 730 floor-standing speaker uses a 1-inch soft-dome tweeter, a 4 1/4-inch plastic midrange, and a 10-inch Plastiflex-cone woofer. The tweeter in this system is damped with ferrofluid while the vented bass unit incorporates “dynamic damping” for extended low-frequency response without ringing or doubling. Drivers and crossovers are matched in each pair of speakers.

Frequency response is given as 40 to 20,000 Hz ± 3 dB. Minimum recommended amplifier power is 30 watts per channel; sensitivity is 84 dB sound-pressure level at 1 meter with a 1-watt input. Nominal impedance is 8 ohms. Dimensions are 35 1/2 x 12 1/2 x 12 1/2 inches, weight is 38 pounds, finish is walnut. Price per matched pair: $1,350. Mission Electronics, Dept. SR, 89 Galaxy Boulevard, Rexdale, Ontario, Canada M9W 6A4.

Circle 131 on reader service card

From Polk Audio

New Floor-standing Mission Loudspeaker

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

Domestic inflation and fluctuations in the value of the dollar overseas affect the price of merchandise imported into this country. Please be aware that prices quoted in this issue are therefore subject to change.
1939...FIRST DIRECT-DRIVE TURNTABLE SYSTEM.
1951...FIRST MOVING-COIL CARTRIDGE.
1972...FIRST DIGITAL (PCM) RECORDING.

-1981...DENON DRA-600. THE FIRST RECEIVER
FROM A TRUE AUDIOPHILE COMPANY

The Denon DRA-600, a synthesis of Denon’s greatest technological strengths.
From our thirty years of experience with moving-coil cartridges, we gave it a moving-coil preamplifier stage sonically as transparent as our renowned separate head-amps.
From our fifty-plus years of electronics design experience, we powered the DRA-600 with a proprietary Denon Class-A power amp, a design that delivers unparalleled definition and openness, yet avoids the excessive heat, size and cost of traditional Class A amplifiers.
And, from our decade of experience since our invention of commercial digital recording (PCM), we equipped the DRA-600 with a digitally synthesized tuner stage for the most precise station tuning with the lowest distortion. Plus, we added the convenience of eight AM and eight FM presets with automatic station scanning.
Denon. 70 years of audio design experience. An extraordinary history of technological firsts and advances in the state of the high-fidelity art. All embodied in the surprisingly affordable DRA-600. A most important first from Denon, where innovation is a tradition.

DENON
Imagine what we’ll do next.

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27 Law Drive, Fairfield, N.J. 07006

CIRCLE NO. 18 ON READER SERVICE CARD
There is a truism in the marketplace that few of us ever question. It says, you get what you pay for. What it really implies is that more is better, but it will cost you, brother.

In the area of high fidelity stereo equipment, that point of view has been raised to dizzying new heights. And somewhere between the state-of-the-art technology and the state-of-shock prices, a sense of value seems to be slipping away.

We're not playing that game at Sherwood.

Our design engineers employ proven advances in technology to produce superb sound. Our marketing department helps keep them on planet earth. It's a philosophy that works. Sherwood equipment has been quietly snapped up by critical listeners for more than twenty-five years.

Changes are not welcome. Improvements are.

Early this year a panel of scrupulously honest reviewers examined fifteen mid-priced stereo receivers. The results were published in America's leading consumer research magazine. Sherwood was rated #1, ahead of names that are probably more familiar to you. We tell you that reluctantly, because a short time later we reluctantly revised that superb model. And replaced it with the S-8600CP. It's better. It's more
powerful, more flexible, and has more finesse. And thankfully the price has barely budged. The new S-8600CP offers 60 watts RMS per channel with no more than 0.06% total harmonic distortion. It’s clean power you can monitor with an eight segment logarithmic LED power output display for each channel. The pre-amplifier has a discrete FET phono section for better cartridge performance, three position tape monitor and copy switching for two decks, and filters and treble squelch to weed out the undesirable little glitches that pop up in even the best of records. The FM section is remarkable for its clarity and convenience: 1.7μV usable sensitivity, 70dB stereo signal-to-noise ratio. There is Touch Lock Tuning that senses your touch and automatically fine tunes and locks in your station selection. And a digital display shows the frequencies in 0.1 MHz increments. The S-8600CP is a statistician’s dream. But more importantly, it’s for music lovers. Whether your choice is Polonaises or the Pretenders.

We don’t brag. We swear.

Most manufacturers spot check a few receivers along the assembly line. Sherwood is different. We test each and every one. Then we fine tune it and check it again. And again. Until with the final tweaking we know that every receiver not only meets our published specifications, but in most cases exceeds them. You can tell, because the key test results are recorded on a certificate and affixed to that unit’s shipping carton. That’s Certified Performance—our guarantee that what you see is what you get.

Now more than ever. Careful production means limited production. But this year we do offer a greater variety of Sherwood than we have in the past.

In addition to our receivers and separates, there are two superb tuners, three semi-automatic turntables, and three metal capable cassette decks. We also have three new speaker systems, from a two-way bookshelf to a three-way time compensated floor system.

Our apologies in advance. Sherwood just isn’t as easy to find as you might like. Well engineered stereo equipment that draws critical praise and remains reasonably priced doesn’t hang around on shelves gathering dust. For the moment, we don’t have an acceptable solution. So hurry.
There is no true accuracy without high efficiency.

By Larry Klein

Technical Director Klein checks out an assortment of computer-matched loudspeaker drivers at KEF’s British plant.

Dynamic Range

Q. I recently purchased a “master” recording of “Abbey Road.” When I played the album on my system one of the first things I noticed was that the recording level of the album was noticeably lower than that of my regular recording of “Abbey Road.” The vinyl was very quiet, but shouldn’t the recording level have been higher on the master recording to allow for wider dynamic range?

Thomas Vita
Port Chester, N.Y.

A. The average recording level (which is what you are referring to) is not necessarily related to dynamic range, except that anyone attempting to record a very soft musical passage must keep in mind the anticipated level of the disc’s background noise. If the background noise is very low, as it is on your new “Abbey Road,” then the average recorded level cut into the groove can also be reduced, thus leaving more room for the music to get loud when the score calls for it.

The term “dynamic range” describes the range from the very softest sounds to the very loudest. Obviously, the quieter the soft sounds can be without being buried in surface noise then the greater the possible spread between loud and soft signals. To repeat: dynamic range does not simply describe how loud something is, but rather the spread between soft and loud.

To return to the question, if the overall dynamic range can be expanded downward (as a result of quieter surfaces), then the average recorded signal is logically going to be lower in level also. The result is a wider—and more natural—dynamic range.

Stylus Replacement

Q. I have been told that when a stylus needs replacement the whole cartridge should be replaced rather than just the stylus—because the magnets in the cartridge undergo magnetic losses that cause the cartridge to perform poorly even with a new stylus. Is this true?

Tony Walecka
Glen Burnie, Md.

A. There’s a very small grain of truth in the advice you’ve been given. First of all, many if not most of the cartridges sold today are moving-magnet types in which the magnet is replaced when you replace the stylus. In the other types (induced-magnet, moving-coil, etc.) the magnets are stable enough that one can expect no significant flux losses over any reasonable time period (Speaker magnets do have a problem since they may be subject to the potentially demagnetizing effects of large voice-coil currents. Cartridge magnets have no equivalent difficulty.)

The grain of truth I referred to has to do simply with the rapid advance of the art of cartridge design. If you have a cartridge more than six or seven years old, a new model may provide enhanced record playback (flatter frequency response and improved tracking ability on demanding recorded passages). On the other hand, a few manufacturers have actually upgraded the performance of their styli over time, and a replacement stylus may provide better overall cartridge performance than the original did. Check this with the manufacturer of your cartridge, not your dealer.

Beginners’ Problems

Q. There are plenty of hi-fi beginners in your audience every month. I rank myself among them, and half the time I do not understand anything that you are writing about. How do you expect us to know what “frequency-synthesized tuning” or “integrated amplifiers” are? Beginners are your future readers, and none of us are mind readers.

Roger LaSmith

A. All of us at one time or another have faced the problem of being a beginner, either in a job, in an organization, or in a special-interest hobby such as hi-fi. In respect to a hobby, it is a mistake to believe that any monthly magazine will consistently provide beginners with all the basic information and terminology needed for a full understanding of the field. If we were to try, half of our hi-fi editorial content would (Continued on page 24)
When the oxide particles on recording tape aren't of a uniform size and shape, you can end up listening to distortion as well as music. The sounds of different instruments get blurred together, and your music loses its clarity.

At Maxell, every inch of our tape is checked and rechecked to make sure the oxide particles are perfectly uniform. Which means when you listen to music on Maxell tape, every instrument will sound perfectly clear.

So if you can't tell your brass from your oboe, try using our tape.

IT'S WORTH IT.
How to get 50% more sound without turning up the volume.

There's a whole range of sound in a live performance that you never hear from your stereo system. And it's not a question of turning up the volume. The problem is in the records you play.

When recording engineers master a record, they electronically eliminate up to half the music. They literally compress the sound to make it "fit" on the vinyl record.

Fortunately, there's one solution to the problem: dbx Dynamic Range Expanders. A dbx Dynamic Range Expander in your system restores most of the lost music. And it reduces annoying record surface noise by as much as 20 dB. So instead of a compressed 50 or 60 dB of dynamic range, you get a full 75 to 90 dB. The loud passages begin to thunder. The softs are truly subtle. All your music comes to life.

And you can use a dbx Dynamic Range Expander not only with your records, but also with tapes and FM broadcasts.

Visit your authorized dbx retailer for a demonstration of the 1BX, 2BX and 3BX Dynamic Range Expanders. Then select the model that's best for your system.

Because there's a lot more to music than has been reaching your ears.

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Making good sound better

circle no. 15 on reader service card
You've driven to the end of the world. Alone.
The engine is still warm.
Amid the roar of the waves and the cries of the gulls, you fire up your mobile high-fidelity system for a morning concert.
Whatever you choose, your system is equal to the task because you've chosen ADS.
The ADS Power Plate 100 Automotive Amplifier and the ADS 300i Automotive Loudspeaker System deliver the kind of power it takes to be heard above road noise, engine noise, and ocean waves. And it's not just brute power, but power with performance, subtlety and nuance — qualities collectively known as musical accuracy.

Easily the most sophisticated automotive audio components available today, the Power Plate 100 amplifier and 300i speakers are exactly what you'd expect from ADS, the company that literally invented mobile high-fidelity.

To find out more about putting an ADS system in your automobile, write ADS, Department SR23, or call 1-800-824-7888 (California 1-800-852-7777) toll free and ask for Operator 483.
The more time you spend with your automobile, the more you owe it to yourself to listen to ADS.

ADS Audio for the critically demanding

Analog & Digital Systems, Inc., One Progress Way, Wilmington, MA 01887 (617) 658-5100
TDK brings two new standards to open reel.

TDK now announces two breakthroughs in open reel. TDK GX Studio Mastering tape: an ultra refined particle lets it handle the critical demands of live music mastering. And TDK LX Professional Studio tape, with a super refined particle that gives it a performance ideal for professional and audiophile use.

A unique polishing and binding process makes dropouts practically a thing of the past. A special graphite and carbon backcoating on all GX and some LX reduces friction for smooth winding while preventing static and diminishing wow and flutter. At last your music is heard the way you intended to hear it.

Listen to TDK GX and LX. They could open up a whole new standard of recording excellence.

By Craig Stark

Tapping for Car Stereo

Q. My car-stereo system has a seven-band equalizer but no bias switch and no Dolby noise reduction. When taping programs for the car, should I use Dolby? Will using high-bias tapes hurt the deck in any way? My biggest problem is with tape hiss, and I want to use my equalizer most advantageously.

A. While your car's cassette player is not designed for high-bias tapes, you will certainly not hurt it (or the cassette) by playing a high-bias tape on it. What you will be doing, however, is providing a treble boost of 4 to 4.5 dB. This will "improve" the high-frequency playback through a low-cost automobile player, but it will "add" tape hiss. By turning down the treble with your equalizer you'll cut back on the hiss—but also on the "improved" high-frequency response. If hiss is your biggest problem, then, I recommend using a high-quality ferric-oxide ("normal"-bias) cassette.

Your equalizer will not serve as a Dolby-B decoder, but you may wish to record with Dolby-B anyway. The Dolby system operates (during record) by boosting the soft high frequencies—that is, the highs that would otherwise tend to get lost in the hiss. Playing back a Dolby-encoded tape without Dolby decoding will, again, not hurt anything. Although I find undecoded Dolby sound "bright" or "edgy" when heard on a wide-range cassette deck playing through a home system, many readers prefer this way for use in cars. So, try it and see.

Dolby Test Tapes

Q. Where can I purchase a cassette tape prerecorded with the Dolby-B calibration tone? I've tried several sources in my area and come up empty.

A. I know of three sources that make Dolby-B calibration tapes available to the consumer: TDK Electronics Corp., 755 Eastgate Boulevard, Garden City, N.Y. 11530 (the tape is sold as AC-317); Teac, 7733 Telegraph Road, Montebello, Calif. 90640 (MTT-150A); and Nortronics, 8101 Tenth Avenue North, Minneapolis, Minn. 55427 (AT-200).

Cleaning Open-reel Tapes

Q. A number of tapes I bought overseas while in the military some years ago shed so much oxide during use as to be unplayable. There are record cleaners, tape-head cleaners, and, I believe, tape cleaners for computer tapes. Do you know of any audiophile tape cleaners?

A. I recall that many years ago—back in the late Fifties and early Sixties—several tape-accessory manufacturers offered little wick-like devices you could mount on your deck in the tape path that would collect loose oxide particles. Improvements in tape binders (the "glue" that holds the oxide particles on the polyester backing of the tape) have since made such devices unnecessary, with the result that to the best of my knowledge—they have entirely disappeared from the market. If such a device is still available, both reader Wallen and I would be glad to hear of it.

Cassette Storage

Q. Having recently turned from open-reel tapes to cassettes, I wonder whether the same storage precautions apply? Specifically, should I always leave them in a "played" (head-in) condition, and will rewinding them before playing reduce print-through?

A. The chief reason for leaving open-reel tapes in a "played" position is that high-speed winding (forward or backward) normally results in uneven tensions (and a slightly uneven tape pack) throughout the reel. When a tape is stored in this condition over a period of time the uneven stresses can (Continued on page 28)
The Polk Principle:  
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Lab and listening tests prove Polks measure and sound better. Experts agree Polk speakers will give you the highest quality sound and the most listening pleasure for your money. They will deliver amazingly life-like, boxless, three dimensional sound with breathtaking clarity and detail in your listening room from your hi-fi system.

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NEW HIGHS. The 500ID defines hard-to-get high frequencies because it comes with a cantilever that doesn't easily distort them.

NEW FIDELITY. In addition to hearing more highs, you're going to hear less noise from a 500ID. There's nothing complex about the benefits of Samarium-Cobalt magnets. They are simply less massive and higher in output than conventional ones.

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NEW SOUND. The Empire 500ID. You're an arm's length away from a new listening experience.

Which means, the performance we monitor in our lab is the performance you're likely to hear at home.

EVENONE WHO WANTS THEIR OLD SYSTEM TO SOUND LIKE NEW, RAISE YOUR ARM.

Cassette Demands

Q. How do you record program materials with a very high transient content on a cassette deck? If I set the record level low enough to avoid turning on the "peak overload" light on drums and trumpets, the rest of the recording is low enough so that hiss is a problem. If I set it high enough to overcome the hiss, the transients are distorted. I use top-quality tape on my old $300 five-year-old deck.

A. Welcome to the club! Cassette decks in general simply don't have the transient-overload margin of a good open-reel deck, and the wonder is that they can do as well as they do, not that certain types of musical material (especially live recording) demand more than they can give.

In your case, however, there may be a satisfactory answer. In the five years since you bought your deck, signal-to-noise ratios for equivalently priced machines (now $500 or so) have improved 6 to 8 dB. Some are available with Dolby HX or with other improved circuitry specifically designed to handle the transients that are giving you difficulty. A "metal-ready" tape deck would also help in this regard.

Occasionally result in physical deformation of the tape or in edge damage, resulting in erratic playback. Further, as you suggest, some of the print-through (pre-echo and post-echo) to which open-reel tapes are susceptible can be lessened by immediately rewinding them (slowly or quickly) before playing.

Because the fast-winding tensions are considerably less in the case of cassette tapes and because they are equipped with graphite- or silicon-impregnated "slip sheets" that even up the pack, this precaution is much less important. Further, without getting into the physics of the matter, cassettes are not nearly as likely to suffer from audible print-through as open-reel tapes are.

In sum, to rewind just before playing is still theoretically better even with cassettes, but unless the feed and takeup tensions in your deck are seriously out of line, I suspect you wouldn't be able to notice any audible difference.

Bulk-erase and Reuse

Q. I frequently tape programs on my open-reel deck and then dub them onto cassette. I then use a bulk eraser on the original so I can reuse the tape. Is there any limit to the number of times I can bulk-erase tapes this way without losing some of their capabilities?

A. So long as the oxide coating doesn't start to fall off—which, after hundreds of passes through your machine (not your eraser), it may—your procedure is perfectly sound. Bulk erasing a tape doesn't harm it for future use any more than washing a blackboard hurts it.

CIRCLE NO. 32 ON READER SERVICE CARD
The Guard is America at its best.

You can’t train somebody to be a hero. And the Army Guard people on this page would be the last to label themselves that.

But it was Army Guard people like these who helped put a town and its families back together after a tornado had slammed through the countryside. And it’s Army Guard people like these, working in their own communities, who have helped neighbors and friends survive everything from floods to blizzards to tornadoes.

Put Army Guard people in situations like those and they perform at their flat-out best.

In the Army Guard, you're ready to meet any kind of challenge head-on. The training is geared to develop important human skills that work hand-in-glove with military readiness.

And you'll join your friends and neighbors who train at home.

But it won't just happen. You've got to do something first. Rip out the attached postcard, fill it out and mail it in. Better yet, call us right now. It's toll-free and won't cost you a penny. The number is 800-638-7600.* Or see your Army Guard recruiter. He has the whole story. Ask about the benefits that can last a lifetime and the money you’ll earn.

Then get on the Guard team. And be your best.

One aspect of reviewing hi-fi components that has always concerned me is the question of the construction quality, as opposed to the listening quality, of a product. It would be nice if it were possible to determine how long any specific unit is likely to continue working properly before requiring service. This is comparable to the product reliability, from which can be derived the optimum quantities of each replaceable part to be stocked for future maintenance.

The MTBF rating is difficult to determine even if one knows the complete history of every part used in the product and its electrical operating conditions. There are formulas into which such data as the quantities and types of each basic component (resistors, capacitors, semiconductors, etc.) can be "plugged" together with their individual, separately determined reliability ratings as modified by their operating voltages and temperatures. The result is defined as the MTBF of the complete product or system. Statistically, this sort of computation probably gives a fair picture of product reliability, from which can be derived the optimum quantities of each replaceable part to be stocked for future maintenance.

This sort of calculation is laborious enough for the designer of the product (I have been through the process and found it just a shade less enjoyable than preparing my income-tax returns!), but, fortunately or otherwise, it is quite impractical for evaluating consumer products on a regular basis. Even if we had all the necessary information (and it is hard enough to obtain specifications or even a block diagram on some products, let alone complete design information), there is not enough time to go through the calculations for the number of products we review each month.

Furthermore, the results, like most statistical averages, have meaning only in the aggregate. They would be helpful for the manufacturer or for his service personnel to know (and most of them do know, even if not through this precise method of calculation), but to the individual consumer it matters little whether an amplifier has a theoretical MTBF of 1,000 or even 10,000 hours if the unit he has failed in 100 hours or was "DOA," as sometimes happens.

It has been suggested to us that a visual inspection of the inside of the product might provide useful guidance to how well it is likely to stand up in service. This is akin to door slamming and tire kicking when shopping for a car, and it is just about as valid an indicator of quality. As it happens, I do open up most products that I test just to see how they are put together (not necessarily how well, but how). Obviously, a neat layout with well-constructed glass-epoxy circuit boards plugging into a mother board is preferable to a tangled nest of wires, but I have learned that neatness is no guarantee of superior reliability or performance, while the "rat's nest" description could apply to some superb products that have given me years of trouble-free service.

This situation differs markedly from the "strip down" study of a camera that forms a part of the product-testing program in our sister publication Popular Photography. A camera is basically a mechanical device, and its service life is closely related to its mechanical construction and the materials out of which it is made. An experienced technician can draw valid inferences from such details of construction when a camera is reduced to its component parts. But such conclusions would be much more difficult to arrive at through visual examination of an electronic instrument. The manufacturers of most of the parts are little known in this country, and most of us would be hard pressed to evaluate individual electronic parts (resistors, capacitors, etc.) with a purely visual inspection.

Some judgments of mechanical quality are possible, however. Flimsy metalwork that bends under such normal actions as inserting or removing a phono plug may have no bearing on how well or for how long a product will work, but it certainly does not inspire confidence. A noisy or "sloppy"-feeling potentiometer or switch is not likely to give good service, and this sort of characteristic can be identified easily. Unfortunately, if a product works well during our tests this does not mean that it will do so indefinitely. Normally, we keep products on hand for several months, with at least occasional use, just to see if any trouble develops. It rarely does in that short a time span. At times we have received a scathing letter or two from readers whose experience was less fortunate than ours in regard to a specific product. In any case, a single failure does not a universal problem make—only one for its victim!
The only way we can begin to judge the design conservatism—and from that perhaps the lasting qualities—of a product is to overstress it deliberately in a manner that is usually contrary to the manufacturer’s recommendations. Operating a power amplifier into 2-ohm loads is one example of this, for it has a direct relationship to the possible sound of the amplifier with certain speaker loads, and it can also verify the effectiveness of the amplifier’s protective system. If an internal fuse blows to protect the output devices but is located in such an inaccessible place that a major disassembly of the amplifier is required to replace it (this has actually happened to us with some very expensive amplifiers), we are naturally less enthusiastic than if a simple relay shuts the unit down until the fault is removed and turns it on again without further attention when it is safe to do so. In other words, we are concerned with how much the user is inconvenienced by aspects of the design that were presumably meant to be beneficial.

I happen to be a strong believer in “zero inconvenience.” A consumer product of any type should do just what it is claimed to do, with absolutely no fuss, and preferably it should not only be foolproof but idiot-proof. To the best of my knowledge, the only reasonably valid information on consumer-product reliability comes from Consumers Union, but even then only in a few categories such as major household appliances and automobiles. With many thousands of users supplying them with service-problem information via an annual questionnaire, this organization has a unique data source on the overall reliability of the surveyed products. Unfortunately, by the time this information has been amassed, analyzed, and published, many of the products reported on may be discontinued and the information therefore nearly worthless. Major exceptions are the automobiles, where long-term service data become increasingly valuable because of the used-car market.

Nothing like this situation exists in the hi-fi field, however. Products are introduced and replaced with dizzying frequency, so that reliability data (even if available) on last year’s items are of no help in judging this year’s. We acknowledge that Hirsch-Houck Labs cannot offer meaningful reliability information on anything we test. (Nor, in our view, can any other hi-fi test lab.) Even if the first sample is defective and we test a second unit, that fact tells us next to nothing about the overall merits of the product design (unless the defect is quite clearly a design flaw in an early sample, which is a rare occurrence and usually rectified anyway by the time the unit reaches the marketplace). If the second example is also defective, we generally do not test a third, but this is largely because of time and schedule limitations. Even two failures do not mean that later production models cannot be of good quality. In other words, sweeping inferences about a product’s long-term reliability, either positive or negative, cannot be drawn from small samples of a large product population.

We can close on a cheery note, however. The quality level of almost every legitimate hi-fi component sold today is impressively high. Failures still occur, but they are rare indeed. If our cars and major appliances were all as good as our hi-fi equipment, the consumer’s life would be a lot easier!
second d.c. motor turning the tape hubs. The combination record/playback head (called the SX head by Technics) is made of permalloy and Sendust. Together with the Sendust-alloy erase head and high-power bias/erase oscillator, it makes the recorder fully compatible with metal-alloy tapes.

Tape selection is made by a small front-panel knob with positions marked NORMAL, METAL, FeCr, CrO₂, and FeCrO₃. The cassette is loaded into guides within the well door, which slides out in a vertical position when the EJECT button is pressed. Most of the cassette can be seen through the glass window in the door. The pushbutton power switch is located just below the EJECT button.

The display area at the upper center of the panel contains two horizontal rows of fluorescent light segments that serve as level indicators for the two channels. They are calibrated from -20 to +8 dB, with the bars being blue-white below 0 dB and red above that point. The fluorescent indicators respond almost instantaneously to level changes and have a "peak-hold" feature that retains the highest reading for a second or two after the program level has dropped, making even short peaks visible to the operator. To the left of the level display is a three-digit index counter and its reset button.

The noise-reduction selector has a center position, and its counterclockwise position turns on the Dolby A system. A clockwise rotation turns on the DBX tape mode for recording and playback, and a further rotation to DBX disc mode enables DBX-encoded discs to be decoded for listening. Such discs can also be dubbed directly to tape without decoding, and in playback the tape will be heard with correct frequency response and dynamics when decoded by the recorder's DBX circuits.

Recording levels are adjusted by two large concentric knobs (they are coupled by a slip clutch) at the upper right of the panel. The playback level is set by a small knob at the bottom of the panel next to the tape selector. A pushbutton switch selects either the MIC or LINE inputs (but not both simultaneously). Another button prepares the recorder for timer-controlled operation. It can be set for either recording or playback, coming on automatically when power is applied by an external timer switch.

To set the recording levels, the REC button is touched, placing the machine into a record-ready mode and lighting a red LED above the button. The level indicators then display the incoming-signal levels as set by the input-level knobs (in PLAY, they show the playback level ahead of the front-panel output control). To start recording, the PLAY button is touched. During recording, the input signal appears at the LINE OUT jacks on the rear of the machine. It is not processed by any of the internal circuits unless the machine is set for DBX DISC operation, in which case the signals are processed by the DBX expansion circuits before reaching the LINE OUT jacks.

The PAUSE button halts the tape without releasing the tape tension (to put the tape in motion again, a touch on the PLAY button is required). Near the PAUSE control is the REC MUTE, which when held in reduces the recording level somewhat (this load is standard for low-level amplifiers and is expected to be part of the EIA tape-recorder test standard now in preparation).

The third-harmonic distortion at an indicated 0-dB recording level was only 0.56 per cent from the XL-1S and MX tapes, 1 per cent from the Duad, and 0.4 per cent from the AX-11 tape. In order to obtain the reference 3 per cent third-harmonic distortion in playback, we had to record at a high +6 dB with all the tapes except the MX, which required +7 dB.

The unweighted noise relative to the playback from the recorder was as follows: between -59 and -60.5 dB for all the tapes except XL-1S, which gave a -53-dB noise level. With the Dolby system in use and with CCIR weighting, the noise level from XL-1S tape was -62.3 dB, the AX-11 and MX tapes gave readings of about -64.5 dB, and the lowest noise was measured with Sony Duad tape, -63 dB. The noise increased by 8.5 dB through the mic inputs at maximum recording gain.

When we used the DBX system, the entire behavior of the recorder was radically altered. For example, the playback distortion from a 0-dB recording was reduced to 0.3 per cent for XL-1S, to 0.4 per cent for MX, and 0.56 per cent for Duad tape. In order to reach the reference condition of 3 per cent distortion, we had to record at a +17-dB level for all the tapes. We never did reach 3 per cent third-harmonic distortion with XL-1S tape, since the recorder's electronic noise made it impossible. The noise from XL-1S tape was -62.3 dB, the XA-II and MX tapes gave readings of about -64.5 dB, and the lowest noise was measured with Sony Duad tape, -63 dB. The noise increased by 8.5 dB through the mic inputs at maximum recording gain.

The noise reduction could be seen more clearly on our spectrum-analyzer screen. The Dolby noise reduction increased the signal to noise ratio by about 10 dB at all frequencies between 5,000 and 10,000 Hz and by even more at higher frequencies. The dbx system dropped the playback noise floor by about 22 dB (compared to no noise reduction) over the full audio range. An even more dramatic demonstration was to play a blank tape at maximum volume settings of the recorder and amplifier. With no noise reduction the hiss was, of course, loud and disturbing. Dolby reduced it substantially, but it was still plainly audible at the system gain used. Subsequently, we silenced the system—totally! With an ear close to the speaker, we could hear a faint hiss.

(Continued on page 36)
Sansui. Better turntables for today's better discs.

A RECORD IS ONLY AS GOOD AS THE TURNTABLE IT'S PLAYED ON.
Today, because of sophisticated recording techniques, records are better. There's more and more music in the grooves.

And with digital, direct-to-disc, and half-speed mastering, audiophile discs are nearing perfection.

So your equipment has to be better to meet these tougher, higher standards. That's why Sansui's new line of turntables is designed to play today's audiophile discs— and tomorrow's. We've combined high technology with convenience. Take a look.

The fully automatic, direct-drive XR-Q11 features a microprocessor controlled programmer that lets you choose the playing order of up to seven selections; the quick response quartz-crystal PLL servo system with digital readout greatly improves turntable accuracy and stability; and the solid BMC base helps eliminate feedback. Result? Wow and flutter reduced to 0.015% and a 78dB signal-to-noise ratio.

Our mid-priced FR-D55 shares many of the outstanding features of the XR-Q11, including direct drive, sequence programmer, and the straight-line, DynaOptimum-Balanced (DOB) tonearm with a separate motor to control its fully automatic operation. The arm tracks only the record, not nearby footsteps or speaker-transmitted vibrations.

Like the FR-D55, the modestly priced FR-D35 has a direct-drive motor, platter and strobe indicator, with ±3% pitch control. Impressive 0.025% wow/flutter and 72dB S/N ratio. And all upfront operating controls, so you don't need to raise the dustcover.

That's only half the Sansui turntable story—there are three other models to choose from: the XR-Q9, FR-D45 and the FR-D25.
Listen to your better records on Sansui's better turntables. At your local Sansui dealer.

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CIRCLE NO. 47 ON READER SERVICE CARD
The playback equalization was measured with TDK AC-337 (120-microsecond) and Teac 116SP (70-microsecond) test tapes. Both were played back flat within ±1 dB over their full ranges (40 Hz to 12,500 and 10,000 Hz, respectively). The overall record/playback frequency response was measured, with each of the tapes supplied, at levels of 0 dB and −20 dB (without noise reduction). The −20 dB curves were almost identical for all the tapes. The low-bass response was down by about 9 dB at 20 Hz but reached the midrange level by about 40 Hz. From 50 to at least 12,000 Hz the response was flat within ±0.5 dB. There were minor fluctuations at higher frequencies, followed by a sharp cutoff above 17,000 or 18,000 Hz. The rated frequency-response variation of ±3 dB over a range of 30 to 15,000, 16,000, or 17,000 Hz (depending on the tape) was met easily, most of that variation resulting from bass rolloff rather than high-frequency effects.

As expected, there were some differences between the tapes in their response at 0 dB. The XL-1S tape response began to roll off above 7,000 Hz, intersecting the −20 dB curve at 14,000 Hz. With the XA-II tape, the intersection was at 16,500 Hz. Although the response from DuoX tape began to roll off at about the same frequency as the others, the slope was more gradual and remained above the −20 dB curve all the way to our 20,000-Hz upper measurement limit. The metal tape really showed its mettle (!) in this measurement, with the 0 dB response curve being virtually identical to the −20 dB curve (±0.5 dB from 50 to 15,000 Hz).

The apparently very large upward extension of dynamic range afforded by the dbx system led us to measure the record/playback response of the metal tape (with dbx) at levels of −20, 0, and +10 dB (the last level would be unthinkable with any ordinary cassette recorder, and with most non-professional open-reel decks as well). There was little difference between the three curves up to 10,000 Hz, although the +10 dB response began to droop at higher frequencies. There was a slight peak in the response at 15,000 Hz for the 0 dB response at −20 dB levels as well as a shallow depression in the midrange between 500 and 5,000 Hz. The depression was only about 1 dB deep, and the peak was less than 2 dB at ±20 dB and 1 dB at a 0 dB recording level, so it is clear that we are talking about very good response in every case.

The final frequency-response measurement was made, also with MX tape, at levels of −20 and −30 dB with and without the Dolby system. The "tracking" of the record and playback Dolby characteristics was excellent, as shown by the fact that at either level the two curves (with and without Dolby) differed by no more than 0.5 dB up to 15,000 Hz or higher.

The Technics RS-M270X carries some other rather impressive specifications, such as a flutter rating of 0.035 per cent (rms). We measured the flutter as 0.033 per cent, both in playback of a TDK AC-342 test tape and in a combined record/playback measurement. The weighted peak (CCIR) flutter was only ±0.06 per cent in a combined record/playback measurement and ±0.07 per cent from our 20,000-Hz upper measurement limit. Dolby reference level at about +2.5 dB. A standard Dolby-level tape (200 nW/meter) gave indications about 1 dB higher than the indicated marks. The fluorescent display responded very rapidly, with no loss of accuracy on tone bursts as short as 40 milliseconds. The error was −1 dB at 20 milliseconds and −5 dB at 10 milliseconds. The peak-hold time was about 1 second. The volume through the headphone jack was fine, even with 200-ohm phones.

**Comment.** When we recorded interstation FM-tuner hiss and compared the playback with the original signal, the results were about what one would expect from the measurements we had made. At low levels (−10 dB or so) all the tapes gave nearly perfect reproduction of the random noise. At 0 dB, the XL-1S sounded slightly dull, the MX tape was still essentially perfect, and the rest fell between those extremes.

Even though the response curves we had measured with the dbx system should have prepared us for its behavior, it was still startling to find that the setting of the input-level knob had very little to do with the final sound quality, and when using dbx. We deliberately turned it to maximum, so that the FM broadcasts and records we were taping kept the level indicators at and beyond their maximum readings through the entire recording. Both FM hiss and a variety of musical programs were recorded and reproduced with audibly diminishing quality only under these highly unorthodox conditions. For all practical purposes, it seemed to be impossible to saturate the tape or cause the machine to distort when using dbx.

At first we found it necessary to look carefully at the controls of the RS-M270X to be sure what we were doing, but in time their use became almost automatic. In any case, we would have liked to see more physical distinction—spacing, size, shape, or some other characteristic—between the various transport-control buttons. We also noted that the large illuminated dbx logo on the panel confusingly has nothing to do with whether the dbx system is in use or not.
THE LEADING AUTO SOUND SPECIALIST SPEAKS OUT ON SPEAKERS.

AUTO SOUND IS DIFFERENT THAN HOME SOUND. Nobody knows that better than Delco. We've been building sound systems for GM for over 44 years. In that time we've built over 200 million speakers. And pioneered many auto sound firsts including the first solid-state car radio, the first AM/FM car stereo and the first in-dash radio/tape player. We've learned a lot.

THE LAST THING YOU WANT IS STATIC. A car radio is surrounded by numerous components that generate static. Delco builds impulse noise blankers into all our Delco-GM stereo sound systems to help minimize interference.

HOME STEREO SPEAKERS LIVE IN A QUIET ENVIRONMENT. Car speakers live with wind and road noise. Delco compensates for their effect on high- and low-frequency sound reproduction when designing auto sound systems.

SPKERS SHOULD BE LISTENED TO ON THE ROAD. Not in the showroom. So when you buy your new GM car or truck ask your dealer to demonstrate a Delco-GM sound system. Nobody knows the inside of GM vehicles quite like the Automotive sound specialists at Delco Electronics Division of General Motors Corporation.

Delco GM
MILES AHEAD IN SOUND EXPERIENCE.
Bang & Olufsen
Beogram 8000
Turntable
with MMC 20CL
Phono Cartridge

The Beogram 8000, currently the top-of-the-line Bang & Olufsen record player, is a direct descendant of the 4000 Series record players produced by B&O for a number of years. However, although it shares some basic design concepts with the 4000 Series, the Model 8000 is a completely new product.

The B&O 8000 features the same type of low-mass, tangential-tracking, servo-driven tone arm used in all previous 4000 Series units. The arm looks like two parallel arms on a single sliding carriage. One carries a light source and detector to sense the presence or absence of a record on the turntable, and the other carries the cartridge. The cartridge supplied with the Model 8000 is the top-ranking B&O MMC 20CL (reviewed in the June 1979 issue), which has a sapphire cantilever and a line-contact diamond stylus that tracks at a 1-gram force.

The turntable, unlike the belt-driven types used in the 4000 Series, is a quartz-locked direct-drive type whose drive system is totally unlike any of the other direct-drive turntables on the market. It uses what B&O calls a "magnetic-drive servo-controlled d.c. motor," which appears to be an eddy-current drive system similar to that used in an electric-utility watt-hour meter to rotate a disc that measures about 7½ inches in diameter and has a rim about 1 inch wide. The two fixed drive coils are located opposite each other with their pole pieces close to the inside and outside surfaces of the rim of the disc. Evidently the eddy currents induced in the disc by the currents through the drive coils create a magnetic field that reacts with the stationary field to turn the platter (a thin, flat aluminum disc that rests on the rotor disc). The combined weight of the rotating parts is about 1½ pounds. Unlike conventional direct-drive multi-pole motors, which have a pulsating torque characteristic, the B&O motor appears to deliver a constant torque to the turntable.

An optical tachometer wheel under the rotor interrupts a light beam and supplies pulses to the servo system at a frequency proportional to the turntable speed. The microcomputer which controls all functions of the B&O 8000 compares these pulses with a reference frequency derived from a quartz-crystal oscillator, and a correcting signal is supplied to the drive coils to lock the turntable speed to the desired value.

The B&O 8000 is entirely controlled by pushbuttons on a sloping panel at the right front of the player. After a record has been placed on the turntable, a touch of the PLAY button puts the turntable into operation. The actual speed is shown by a four-digit readout on the control panel (normally at 33.33 rpm). Pressing small "+" or "-" buttons below the display changes the speed in steps of 0.05 rpm over a range of about ± 3 per cent (at 45 rpm, the steps are 0.07 rpm).

The tone-arm carriage moves out from the concealed compartment where it remains at all times when not playing a record. As the light sensor passes over the outer radius of a 12-inch record, the absence of light reflected from the black surface of the disc signals the system that no record is present. The arm continues to slew inward, with the pickup safely above the platter surface. At the outer radius of a 7-inch disc (if such a (Continued on page 42)
The Acoustic Matrix™ Enclosure of the Bose® 901 Series IV Direct/Reflecting® Speaker.

Dense, uniform particle board is finished with genuine walnut veneer.

The wooden sides, top and bottom are joined to the molded structure with patented joints that are airtight and stronger than the wood itself.

A tapered central core helps smooth air flow.

The third, smaller air column operates on the front driver alone.

Air flow from the rear of four drivers is combined in this region.

Each of the two large reactive air columns loads the rear of four driver cones.

Each of the nine HVC (Helical Voice Coil) drivers is housed in a separate chamber to ensure proper isolation. The nine drivers working together provide a cone area equivalent to that of a 13" woofer.

Precise assembly is guaranteed by computer controlled routing of all grooves in the wood parts.

This enclosure has more engineering and technology behind it than most complete speaker systems.

Conventional speaker enclosures are simple wooden boxes. The Bose 901 loudspeaker has wooden sides, top and bottom. But inside is a structure so precise, complex and rigid, that it can only be manufactured by advanced injection molding techniques.

The Acoustic Matrix™ enclosure contains 14 distinct regions which act as acoustical elements. Some isolate the nine Helical Voice Coil drivers as if each had a separate enclosure. In others, air moves at speeds up to 100 km/hour to reduce unnecessary cone motion. This virtually eliminates distortion while increasing low-frequency power output. Critical surfaces are aerodynamically shaped to control and smooth air motion.

The characteristics of this enclosure accurately complement the full-range drivers and Active Electronic Equalization of the Bose 901 system. Together, they can reproduce even the lowest bass notes with clarity and power unmatched by any speaker of conventional design. Regardless of size or price.

The Acoustic Matrix™ enclosure is just one of hundreds of improvements developed since the introduction of the original 901 speaker. If so much thought, effort and design go into the enclosure alone, imagine what goes into the complete 901 system.

Ask for a demonstration of our 901 loudspeaker at your local authorized Bose dealer.

For more information, write Bose Corporation, Dept. SR, Mountain Road, Framingham, MA 01701.

The complete Bose Direct/Reflecting® System contains eighteen HVC drivers.

Recently recognized by Engineering/Design magazine with an award for ingenuity in utilization of plastic. Covered by patent rights issued and/or pending. © Copyright 1980 by Bose Corp.

Better sound through research.

CIRCLE NO. 10 ON READER SERVICE CARD
Vantage ple
When

ULTRA LIGHTS: 4 mg. "tar", 0.4 mg. nicotine.
FILTER: 9 mg. "tar", 0.8 mg. nicotine, av. per cigarette by FTC method.

asures
you want good taste and low tar, too.
The tone arm cannot be moved manually, but it can be slewed in either direction by holding down one of the two arm-slew buttons. A light pressure moves the arm slowly; more pressure increases the speed of movement across the record. The arm lifts off the record when either slew button is touched, and it remains lifted until the PLAY button is touched. The lift and descent are very rapid—almost instantaneous, in fact—but the cartridge outputs are muted whenever the stylus is off the record, so there are no thumps or other sounds from the speakers when the pickup is lifted or lowered.

The PAUSE button also lifts the arm, which is lowered by touching PLAY. If it remains lifted for more than 10 seconds, the arm returns to its rest position and the motor stops. But the exact position from which the arm returns to its rest position and the motor stops is off the record, so there are no signs of mistracking on the two highest levels of the flute and bell sections of the ERA 8.5 test record. The resonance was rather broad and extended slightly beyond 15,000 Hz; vertical stylus angle was 24 degrees. With the Shure ERA III record, there was also a trace of “sandpaper” quality on the highest level of the sibilance test, and there were signs of mistracking on the two highest levels of the flute and bell sections of the ERA 8.5.

Since the tangential-tracking arm has no skating-force problem, there is no need for antiskating compensation.

The B&O 8000 is styled in brushed aluminum and black, with rosewood trim and a hinged clear-plastic cover over the turntable portion. Other finishes (oak, teak, and white lacquer) are available on special order. The unit is about 19 1/4 inches wide, 14 3/4 inches deep, and only 3 1/2 inches high. The 8000 weighs just under 20 pounds. Price: $995.

Laboratory Measurements. Although we have previously reported on the B&O MMC 20CL cartridge (June 1979), that test was of a very early sample in a universal mounting bracket. We therefore made frequency-response and other measurements of the cartridge in the Model 8000 turntable.

With the cartridge outputs terminated by 47,000 ohms and 70 picofarads, the response to a CBS STR 100 test record showed a broad dip in the upper midrange. Relative to the 1,000-Hz level, the overall response was +0.25 dB from 40 to 20,000 Hz. The channel separation was at least 15 to 20 dB up to 20,000 Hz and typically better than 20 dB in the midrange. It should be noted that the individually run frequency-response curve supplied with the cartridge showed a flat response (within 1 dB or better) up to 20,000 Hz. This was made with a special test record of B&O design in a computer-controlled measurement and cannot be compared with results obtained using a different record.

We also made an extended frequency-response measurement, up to 50,000 Hz, with the JVC TRS-1005 test record. The -3-dB response frequency was about 30,000 Hz, and the high-frequency resonance at about 25,000 Hz was very well damped. The 15- to 20-dB channel separation was maintained up to 30,000 Hz.

Large changes in the load capacitance had little effect on the frequency response of the cartridge. Increasing the load to 440 picofarads (about as large as is likely to be encountered with modern amplifiers) raised the cartridge output slightly between 5,000 and 15,000 Hz, but the maximum change was no more than 1.5 dB. This shows that the performance of the MMC 20CL, in this record player, is essentially independent of the amplifier's input capacitance.

The arm mass could not be measured directly since the tone arm is clamped when not on a turning record. The low-frequency resonance with the MMC 20CL cartridge was at about 14 Hz with an amplitude of 6 dB. The resonance was rather broad and produced a boost of about 1 dB at 25 Hz but also cut off the phono response sharply below 9 Hz.

The cartridge output was about 2.9 millivolts, with the channel unbalance only 0.25 dB; vertical stylus angle was 24 degrees. Subjective tracking tests showed that the cartridge could play our high-level low- and middle-frequency test records and the 70-micrometer level of the German Hi Fi Institute Record #2 at its rated 1-gram force. With the Shure ERA III record, there was a trace of “sandpaper” quality on the highest level of the sibilance test, and there were signs of mistracking on the two highest levels of the flute and bell sections of the ERA 8.5.

(Continued on page 44)
Our $650 Reference Standard II. Virtuoso descendant of our $20,000+ Infinity Reference Standard.

It’s not only that this speaker is new—the experience of listening to it is new.

Close your eyes and there are no speakers. Instead, one perceives a wide sound panorama that closely replicates the original performance. Every instrument in the orchestra is in its proper place in a wide and deep sound stage; front, center and back, as well as left and right.

A rich inheritance.

As its name suggests, the Reference Standard II inherits much of its technology from the Infinity Reference Standard. Each is a classic of Form following Function.

For example, the solid oak diffraction wings, although aesthetically elegant, are curved the way they are because they were mathematically calculated to minimize distortion caused by diffraction.

These entirely new applications of diffraction technology, time-domain considerations and point source theory are found in the Reference Standard II as the direct result of what was learned in the design of the Infinity Reference Standard.

Your next step.

If you want a more detailed explanation of this new speaker, please ask your Infinity dealer for a brochure.

But if you want the excitement of a vibrant, live performance, by all means listen to it.

That experience may be all the explanation you need.

CIRCLE NO. 27 ON READER SERVICE CARD

We get you back to what it's all about. Music.

The turntable rumble was $-38$ dB unweighted and $-61$ dB with A.R.L.L. weighting, with most of the rumble energy being at 5 and 14 Hz. The flutter was 0.05 per cent wrms (JIS) and $\pm 0.06$ per cent DIN. The principal flutter rates were 3, 10, and 14 Hz. The turntable speeds were constant with time and line-voltage changes and could be adjusted slightly more than $\pm 3$ per cent about each nominal speed.

The isolation of the record player from its surroundings was exceptional, matched by only one of the hundreds of turntables we have tested over the years, and that one had transmission modes at 100 Hz and higher frequencies whereas the single response of the B&O 8000 was at 30 Hz. It is clearly the champion in this respect. Compared with even the better-isolated direct-drive or belt-driven turntables currently on the market, the B&O offers 10 to 20 dB more isolation, and compared with more typical units its advantage was more like 30 to 40 dB. These figures apply only to the audio range above 20 Hz, but handling and jarring the B&O 8000 while it was playing a record showed that it is as resistant to infra-sonic excitation as it is to acoustic feedback. The platter, its drive system, and the tone arm are suspended as a unit from the mounting base by leaf springs whose characteristics have obviously been carefully designed to isolate the record player from its environment.

The cycle time, from pressing of the PLAY button to touchdown of the stylus, was only about 4 seconds, and the only sound heard before the recorded program started was a faint whir as the arm slewed inward. At the end of play, about 6 seconds was required for the arm to return to its rest area. Manual slewing over the full surface of a 12-inch record took only about 4 seconds. We would have appreciated more lighting on the record surface as an aid to cueing, but the pickup does not shift laterally when it is raised or lowered, and it will return to the identical spot if left. Furthermore, the PAUSE memory seems to be equally accurate, so that the arm returns, rather uncertainly, to the point on the record it had left up to 30 minutes earlier. Because of the muting system, no extraneous sounds are heard from the unit while it is in operation.

Audio Pro TP-150 Tuner-Preamplifier and A4-14 Speaker System

The Audio Pro Model A4-14 speakers are self-powered and bi-amplified three-way systems featuring the unique “ACE-Bass” woofer design that is also used in the company’s B2-50 subwoofer. The TPA-150 tuner/preamplifier (which Audio Pro refers to as a “preceiver”) is essentially identical to the TA-150 receiver reviewed in the December 1979 issue except that it lacks a power-amplifier section. Audio Pro products are designed and made in Sweden.

The A4-14 is a compact bookshelf-size speaker that can be installed almost anywhere in the room with equal effectiveness. Its bass section consists of two 5-inch long-throw woofers operating in a vented enclosure whose volume is only half a cubic foot. The woofers are driven by a specially designed amplifier that permits them to develop high undistorted sound levels at the lowest audio frequencies (the “ACE-Bass” nomenclature stands for Amplifier Controlled Euphonic Bass). There is an electronic crossover at 300 Hz to a second amplifier that drives a more conventional 4½-inch midrange cone speaker, and there is a second crossover at about 2,500 Hz to a 1-inch soft-dome tweeter. The two woofers face downward, are located near the rear of the cabinet, and radiate through openings in the metal grille around the base of the enclosure.
BASF Chrome.
The world's quietest tape
is like no tape at all.

Today, only one high bias tape is able to combine outstanding sensitivity in the critical high frequency range with the lowest background noise of any oxide tape in the world. That tape is BASF's Professional II.

Professional II is like no other tape because it's made like no other tape. While ordinary high bias tapes are made from modified particles of ferric oxide, Professional II is made of pure chromium dioxide. These perfectly shaped and uniformly sized particles provide a magnetic medium that not only delivers an absolute minimum of background noise, but outstanding high frequencies as well. Like all BASF tapes, Professional II comes encased in the new ultra-precision cassette shell for perfect alignment, smooth, even movement and consistent high fidelity reproduction.

With Professional II, you'll hear all of the music and none of the tape. And isn't that what you want in a tape?

The difference in noise level between PRO II and ordinary high bias tape is greatest where the human ear is most sensitive (2-6 kHz). All BASF tape cassettes come with a lifetime guarantee. Should any BASF cassette ever fail—except for abuse or mishandling—simply return it to BASF for a free replacement.

For the best recordings you'll ever make.
system is placed near a wall, the woofers are shadowed in the left and right channels below 100 Hz. This reduces power-wasting, out-of-phase response to turntable rumble or record warps without loss of audible bass response. In the AUTO position of the AUTO/ON button, a signal-sensing circuit turns on the amplifiers when an audio signal reaches the speaker. Five minutes after all signals have ceased, the speaker amplifiers automatically shut off. In the ON position, the speaker amplifiers are powered whenever the system is plugged into an ac socket. Small pilot lights visible from the front of each speaker show its operating status; green shows that it is plugged into the ac line, and red indicates that it is fully powered and operational.

Each A4-14 speaker is supplied with a 20-foot cable, fitted with DIN connectors at both ends, and two 9-inch adaptor cables. When the speakers are driven from a receiver or preamplifier with DIN outputs (such as the Audio Pro TPA-150), the cable is simply plugged into the DIN socket on the receiver and into the DIN socket of either of the speakers. The cable from the other speaker plugs into the OUT socket of the first speaker, and the channel-assignment buttons of the two speakers are set for the desired left-right orientation. If the speakers are to be used with receivers or preamplifiers lacking DIN outputs, the adaptor cables permit connection to any signal source through phono jacks or terminals designed to accept wire ends (such as most speaker outputs).

There are three knobs on the rear of the A4-14 speakers. The SENSITIVITY control, with a calibrated range from 0.1 to 50 volts, sets the input voltage required to give a sound-pressure level of 96 dB measured at a distance of 1 meter from the speaker. The more sensitive settings are used with low-output preamplifiers; the less sensitive settings make it possible to drive the speakers from the output of any power amplifier (the 20,000-ohm input impedance of each speaker amplifier allows it to "bridge" the normal speaker output of any amplifier without loading or matching problems). The other knobs are ROOM MATCHING controls. The bass control adjusts the woofers to compensate for the other drivers to provide uniform overall frequency response with different speaker locations. The calibrations refer to the solid angle into which the speaker radiates: the 2π setting is used for wall mounting, which is the preferred placement, whereas 4π is used in a free-standing placement and π/2 when the speaker is in a corner. The treble control tilts the frequency response at frequencies above 2,500 Hz to suit room conditions or personal taste. It provides a maximum variation of ±6 dB at 20,000 Hz referred to the "0 dB" or nominal flat setting.

Audio Pro does not publish power specifications for the speaker amplifiers since they would convey no useful information. More to the point, the company states that the A4-14 is capable of generating sound-pressure levels as high as 110 dB (above 100 Hz) at a 1-meter distance. Many full-size speakers driven by the most powerful amplifiers cannot surpass that output rating. The drivers and amplifiers are protected by circuits that sense the energy in the high- and mid-frequency ranges over a period of time and shut down the high-frequency amplifier for 10 seconds if a potentially unsafe condition is detected. Operation is restored automatically after that time. The bass drivers are protected by fuses (inside the base of the speaker), and the amplifier heat sinks have thermal sensors that shut down the system if the heat sink becomes too hot.

The mid- and high-frequency drivers of the Audio Pro A4-14 are mounted flush with the front board to minimize the effects of diffraction on the polar response of the system. A black foam-plastic grille, retained by plastic fasteners, conceals the drivers and edging around the sides of the front board. The top, sides, and rear of the wooden enclosure are walnut finished, and, except for a single horizontal piece of wooden trim, the front of the speaker is black. The Audio Pro A4-14 speaker is 20¾ inches high, 12¼ inches wide, and 10½ inches deep. It weighs 35 pounds.

The audio performance of the TPA-150 was comparable in most areas to that of the TA-150 we measured last year. The RIAA phono equalization was accurate within ±1 dB from 20-20,000 Hz (it was not affected measurably by the inductance of a...
No tuning system on earth is more precise than quartz. Technics quartz-synthesized receivers.

Tune in an FM station with a Technics SA-626 quartz-synthesized receiver and you can be absolutely sure that it will be perfectly in tune. And that station will stay in tune because the chance of encountering FM drift is 0.00% thanks to the crystalline accuracy of Technics quartz-synthesized tuning.

Technics synthesized quartz also eliminates the hassle of tuning. Just push a button and you can preset and instantly retrieve seven AM and seven FM stations. And with Auto-scan, you can sample FM stations automatically.

The amplifier in the SA-626 will give you clean, crisp and dynamic sound because of Technics’ synchro-bias circuitry which completely eliminates switching distortion. By sending minute amounts of current to the amplifier transistors, synchro-bias never allows them to switch on or off. So there’s absolutely no switching distortion.

Listen to the SA-626 and hear the sonic purity of synchro-bias circuitry and the crystalline tuning precision of Technics synthesized quartz.
The tone-control curves were somewhat unconventional. They tended to affect a large part of the audio-frequency range even when used in moderation, a characteristic that may or may not appeal to some users. The loudness contours boosted only the low frequencies to a moderate degree, and the two filters had 6-dB-per-octave slopes with -3-dB frequencies of 50 and 9,000 Hz.

The audio distortion through the AUX input at 1,000 and 20,000 Hz rose linearly from about 0.0015 per cent at a 0.5-volt output to 0.02 per cent at 4 volts, and the output waveform clipped at 5.4 volts. At 20 Hz the distortion was slightly higher, reading between 0.008 and 0.02 per cent from 0.1 to 5 volts output. The input sensitivity for a 0.5-volt output was 55 millivolts (mV) through the AUX input and 1.8 mV through the phono input. The corresponding overload limits were 5.5 volts and 180 mV. The A-weighted noise level was 72 dB below 0.5 volt through either input. The phono-input impedance was 46,000 ohms in parallel with 80 picofarads.

The FM-tuner section had an IHF usable sensitivity (mono) of 11 dBf or 2 microvolts (µV). The stereo threshold was a rather high 35 dBf (30 µV), which also corresponded to the 50-dB quieting sensitivity. In mono, the 50-dB quieting sensitivity was 14.3 dBf (2.8 µV). The tuner signal-to-noise ratio at 65 dBf (1000 µV) was 71.5 dB in mono and 68 dB in stereo, and in both modes the distortion at that level was 0.068 per cent.

The stereo frequency response of the FM-tuner section was +1.6, -0 dB relative to the midrange output level from 30 to 15,000 Hz. The channel separation was better than 36 dB over that full range and was typically 42 to 46 dB over most of it. The 19-kHz pilot-carrier leakage measured -35 dB, indicating relatively ineffective filtering of this frequency from the tuner outputs. The power-line hum was a good -70 dB. Since the tuner's AFC could not be defeated, we could not measure the capture ratio or selectivity. The muting threshold was between 5 and 16 dBf (1.6 to 3.8 µV), with the audio level changing smoothly through that range instead of cutting on or off abruptly.

The smooth and integrated room response of the A4-14 speakers was impressively smooth and flat, with excellent dispersion of the highest frequencies (the response curves from on-axis and 30-degree off-axis measurements did not begin to diverge until above 10,000 Hz). The speaker's treble control produced roughly the indicated change in output (+5 to -6 dB at 20,000 Hz), with its effect becoming measurable at about 2,500 Hz.

To measure the woofer response, we had to place the microphone at the rear grille opening in the base of the speaker, as close to the cones as we could get without removing the base. The result was an amazingly flat response curve, within +0.5 dB from 45 to 225 Hz. There was no sign of the usual woofer resonance peak, and the output dropped off rapidly (apparently at 36 dB per octave) beyond those limits.

To splice the bass curve to the mid- and high-frequency curve, we had to resort to subjective judgments based on the sound of the speaker since the woofer response rolled off so rapidly beyond the crossover frequency that we could not use an overlap of several octaves as a guide to the correct transition between the curves. The final result was a frequency response that was flat within +1.5 dB from 36 to 2,000 Hz. When the treble control was turned down to -6 dB, the total response variation was only +1.5 dB from 36 to 20,000 Hz, something of a record in our experience with measuring speakers in this manner. However, the measurement method does not really warrant such a fine distinction, and we also tended to prefer the sound with the "0 dB" treble setting in our listening room (the manufacturer says this is the anechoically flat condition). This produced a smoothly rising high-end response, increasing about 5 dB from 2,000 to 20,000 Hz.

These figures were obtained with the 2r bass-control setting, since the speakers were mounted against a wall about 30 inches above the floor. When we measured the woofer response with the other settings of the control, we found that the π/2 (corner) setting reduced the bass output by 5.5 dB and the 4r (free-standing) setting increased it by about 3 dB relative to the 2r setting. There were only minor changes in the shape of the bass-response curve near its lower cutoff frequency.

Our distortion measurements also produced some surprises. According to the manufacturer, the ACE-Bass system tends to replace the physical properties of the woofer (its mass, compliance, damping, and voice-coil resistance) with effective values determined by the amplifier design, and to the extent that the speakers have been altered to the synthesized values, its distortion is also reduced.

We measured the bass distortion with a drive level of 0.5 volt at a 1-volt sensitivity setting. The result corresponded to a nominal acoustic output of 90 dB sound-pressure level, one that we would expect in a room of about 20 watts with more conventional speakers. The distortion was not unusually low in the upper part of the bass range, but it remained nearly constant as we lowered the frequency. It measured between 1.4 and 2.8 per cent from 100 Hz down to 25 Hz, increasing to 7.9 per cent at 20 Hz. Of course, the acoustic output at the very lowest frequencies was far below the levels reached at 45 Hz or higher frequencies, but, in contrast to almost every other speaker we have tested, it remained basically undistorted. The speaker sensitivity was approximately as rated, with a 1-volt input giving a 95-dB sound-pressure level at 1 meter.

To verify the claims for the maximum acoustic-output capability of the speaker, we played music through the A4-14s, increasing the drive level and monitoring the sound-pressure level at a point in the room about 10 to 12 feet from the speakers. We obtained readings of 104 to 105 dB, more or less sustained during loud passages, without significant audio distortion. The peaks, which were too brief to register on the movement of the sound-level meter, were at least 10 dB higher than the average readings. Except for its deafening volume, the music was unstrained and perfectly listenable. After a minute or so of this operation, the thermal cutouts of both speakers shut them down, but in a couple of minutes they had cooled sufficiently to resume normal functioning.

Comment. We felt much the same about the TPA-150 as we did about the TA-150 when we tested it last year. Although its FM tuner performance is, for the most part, not exceptional, and its tone controls and filters leave something to be desired, this is a function.
NO RUM REFLECTS PUERTO RICO LIKE RONRICO.

Puerto Rico is the Rum Island, the world's foremost rum-producing region. And Ronrico is the rum — authentic Puerto Rican rum since 1860. Ronrico's smooth, light taste has been the pride of six generations of Puerto Rican rum masters. One sip will tell you why.

RONRICO: AUTHENTIC RUM OF PUERTO RICO.
(in our opinion) one of the most intelligently designed hi-fi receivers on the market.

The Audio Pro TPA-150 is an exception to the prevalent pattern of control illegibility or functional obscurity. Its one large, easily grasped knob leaves the user in no doubt as to which control to turn. The buttons and lights next to the knob similarly leave no doubt as to the function being performed by the knob, and the lights on the panel display give positive indications of the actual settings of each control function even when viewed at a considerable distance. Since the unit steps automatically through the full control sequence each time the receiver is turned on, the operating status of the TPA-150 is clearly displayed whenever it is put into service. The only operating aid we missed was some form of FM signal-strength indication.

The Audio Pro A4-14 speakers were new to us, although we had previously read much about the ACE-Bass design. This is not a motional-feedback speaker, nor is it simply a conventional speaker with built-in amplifiers and electrical equalization. The design of the bass amplifier enables it, rather than the physical characteristics of the drivers, to determine the effective mass and compliance (and hence the resonance frequency) of the system. And because of the amplifier's control of the effective speaker resistance (using a synthesized negative resistance), the usual resonant rise in output is completely eliminated. The use of a ported enclosure (the design follows Thiele's criteria) makes the ACE-Bass design much more efficient than the typical acoustic-suspension configuration normally used in powered speakers, and this helps give it a low-bass output capability that one has to experience in order to appreciate fully.

The sound of the A4-14 is about as uncolored as that of any speaker we know of. The speaker does not emphasize or diminish any part of the audio band relative to any other part. The sound is obviously "all there" from the first moment one hears it, but only with continued exposure does one begin to appreciate how "invisible" these speakers are in an acoustic sense as well as being relatively unobtrusive visually.

We put the A4-14's protective system through its paces during our tests by playing the speakers as loud as we dared, and then a bit louder. As we mentioned earlier, before any of the drivers or amplifiers can be damaged they shut off for a while to let things cool down. Barring their use by a hard-of-hearing rock-music enthusiast, we cannot imagine that these speakers would protectively shut down in a normal home installation. Our ears were ready to give up long before the speakers showed any signs of distress.

These Audio Pro components are expensive indeed, but in our view they provide solid value both in sound quality and in ease of use. Only time will tell if a completely electronic, nonmechanical receiver will prove to be more reliable than conventional designs. We took a close look at the electronic sections of the speakers, and their quality and workmanship were manifest; in addition, the speakers themselves are nothing less than magnificent in their sound. The overall combination is hard to beat, even though it will leave little change from $3,000.

Circle 142 on reader service card

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Circle 142 on reader service card

The Allison:Six is the newest, smallest, and lowest priced addition to the Allison Acoustics speaker line. The half-cubic-foot Allison:Six is just large enough to enclose its 8-inch woofer, which faces upward and radiates frequencies up to 2,000 Hz. The dome tweeter, which faces forward, is identical to those used on all other Allison speakers, with a proprietary dome design that gives it exceptional dispersion. Like the other Allison models, the Six is meant to be installed against a wall, in which position the woofer output is most uniform because there are no cancellations of its output from wall reflections within its frequency range.

A two-position switch in the rear of the cabinet provides either a "flat" frequency response at high frequencies or a "slope" response in which the tweeter output is reduced by 3 dB. According to Allison, the latter response curve produces a more natural balance in most home environments.

The Six has the moderately low efficiency typical of a small acoustic-suspension system, but it can be driven satisfactorily by amplifiers rated at 15 watts or more output. It will handle that much power continuously without any part of the audio band relative to any other part. The sound of the A4-14 is about as uncolored as that of any speaker we know of. The speaker does not emphasize or diminish any part of the audio band relative to any other part. The sound is obviously "all there" from the first moment one hears it, but only with continued exposure does one begin to appreciate how "invisible" these speakers are in an acoustic sense as well as being relatively unobtrusive visually.

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These Audio Pro components are expensive indeed, but in our view they provide solid value both in sound quality and in ease of use. Only time will tell if a completely electronic, nonmechanical receiver will prove to be more reliable than conventional designs. We took a close look at the electronic sections of the speakers, and their quality and workmanship were manifest; in addition, the speakers themselves are nothing less than magnificent in their sound. The overall combination is hard to beat, even though it will leave little change from $3,000.

Circle 142 on reader service card

The Allison:Six is the newest, smallest, and lowest priced addition to the Allison Acoustics speaker line. The half-cubic-foot Allison:Six is just large enough to enclose its 8-inch woofer, which faces upward and radiates frequencies up to 2,000 Hz. The dome tweeter, which faces forward, is identical to those used on all other Allison speakers, with a proprietary dome design that gives it exceptional dispersion. Like the other Allison models, the Six is meant to be installed against a wall, in which position the woofer output is most uniform because there are no cancellations of its output from wall reflections within its frequency range.

A two-position switch in the rear of the cabinet provides either a "flat" frequency response at high frequencies or a "slope" response in which the tweeter output is reduced by 3 dB. According to Allison, the latter response curve produces a more natural balance in most home environments.

The Six has the moderately low efficiency typical of a small acoustic-suspension system, but it can be driven satisfactorily by amplifiers rated at 15 watts or more output. It will handle that much power continuously without any part of the audio band relative to any other part. The sound of the A4-14 is about as uncolored as that of any speaker we know of. The speaker does not emphasize or diminish any part of the audio band relative to any other part. The sound is obviously "all there" from the first moment one hears it, but only with continued exposure does one begin to appreciate how "invisible" these speakers are in an acoustic sense as well as being relatively unobtrusive visually.

We put the A4-14's protective system through its paces during our tests by playing the speakers as loud as we dared, and then a bit louder. As we mentioned earlier, before any of the drivers or amplifiers can be damaged they shut off for a while to let things cool down. Barring their use by a hard-of-hearing rock-music enthusiast, we cannot imagine that these speakers would protectively shut down in a normal home installation. Our ears were ready to give up long before the speakers showed any signs of distress.

These Audio Pro components are expensive indeed, but in our view they provide solid value both in sound quality and in ease of use. Only time will tell if a completely electronic, nonmechanical receiver will prove to be more reliable than conventional designs. We took a close look at the electronic sections of the speakers, and their quality and workmanship were manifest; in addition, the speakers themselves are nothing less than magnificent in their sound. The overall combination is hard to beat, even though it will leave little change from $3,000.

Circle 142 on reader service card
Come to where the flavor is.

Marlboro Red or Longhorn 100's— you get a lot to like.

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wall of the listening room at approximately the ear height of a seated listener. When the speaker was driven by 2.83 volts of pink noise in an octave band centered at 1,000 Hz, the sound-pressure level at a 1-meter distance from the front (tweeter) grille was 86 dB. This voltage corresponds to 1 watt into 8-ohm loads or 2 watts into the lower impedance of the Allison:Six.

The measured system resonance was 60 Hz, where the impedance rose to 10 ohms. There was a rise to about 12 ohms centered around 2,000 Hz, and in the 100- to 300-Hz range the impedance was about 4 ohms. At 20 Hz and in the vicinity of 10,000 Hz it fell to about 3 ohms.

The frequency response measured in the reverberant field of the room and corrected for room absorption was exceptionally flat from 2,500 to 20,000 Hz, varying only ±1 dB over that range. The high-frequency level was about 3 to 5 dB higher than the average midrange level in this measurement, but setting the HF switch to SLOPE brought the two bands into close agreement. The response curves obtained from the left and right speakers (about 30 degrees apart as seen from the microphone position) were very similar, diverging significantly only at frequencies above 10,000 Hz. This confirms the broad dispersion claimed for this tweeter. The close-miked woofer response was around 2,000 Hz, and in the vicinity of 10,000 Hz it fell to about 3 ohms.

The woofer distortion was very low at a moderate input level of 2.83 volts (the level used for the sensitivity measurement, which corresponds to 1 watt into 8 ohms or 2 watts into 4 ohms). The distortion was under 2 per cent (and typically less than 1 per cent) from under -40 Hz to the 100-Hz upper limit of our measurement. A 10-dB power increase produced considerably higher second- and third-harmonic distortion, but the woofer cone did not “bottom” or produce any harsh sounds. The harmonic distortion at the higher level increased smoothly from 1 per cent at 100 Hz to about 8 per cent at 35 Hz.

Comment. The frequency-response measurements we made on the Allison:Six did not differ materially from those we have obtained from many other good-quality speakers. Our experience has been that these measurements can identify significant aberrations in a speaker’s response, such as driver-to-driver unbalance or crossover cancellations, but do not provide any firm guidance to its reproduction qualities (only the ear can do that). In other words, speakers that measure alike in this sort of measurement do not necessarily sound alike.

The sound of the Allison:Six was quite extraordinary in view of its size (we did most of our listening before making any measurements). If this had been our first exposure with an Allison speaker, it would have been even more impressive. Although we did not have any other Allison speakers on hand for comparison, it is apparent from our experience and from Allison’s design philosophy that the Six sounds pretty much like the larger Allison speaker models. One of the key qualities of the sound from this little box (Allison refers to it as “Le Cube”) is its superb balance. The change in the high-frequency sound was clearly audible when we moved the HF level switch, but we preferred the FLAT setting in our rather well-damped listening room. In A-B comparisons against other speakers with considerably greater bass capability, the Allison:Six held its own easily. This is simply a reflection of the fact that most musical program material has very little energy content below 60 Hz. One could hardly ask for a more listenable speaker, or one more completely unobtrusive both visually and aurally, and at a price compatible with the smallest high-fidelity budget.

If one desires, the Allison:Six can be electronically equalized to extend its flat response down to 30 Hz or so at moderate volume levels. The Allison “Electronic Subwoofer” (reviewed in October 1979) will do that very nicely, although it is a bit costly as an extender for such low-price speakers. Other, similar equalizers can be used if they have the requisite response and a steep infrasonic cutoff filter to protect the woofer cone against excessive excursions. Keep in mind that, equalization or not, many amplifiers will not take kindly to driving two pairs of these speakers, or even one pair in combination with another pair of speakers, because of their rather low impedance. However, no added equalizers are really needed to get a full measure of sonic pleasure from the Allison:Six speakers.

Sansui AU-D11 Integrated Amplifier

The AU-D11 is Sansui’s finest integrated amplifier. It features the company’s “super-feedforward” design, combining the properties of feedback and feed-forward circuits to achieve extremely low distortion without the potential problems incurred by the use of very large amounts of negative feedback. The amplifier’s rating of 120 watts per channel into 8-ohm loads.
from 10 to 20,000 Hz with no more than 0.005 per cent total harmonic distortion excluding the crossover and design requirements. Few, if any, other amplifiers carry such a low distortion rating over that wide a frequency range. While the audible advantages of such vanishingly low distortion levels are arguable, the achievement is nevertheless noteworthy.

Feedforward is a distortion-reduction technique that has been known for some time but is rarely applied in practice. Like feedback, it involves a comparison between the input and output waveforms of an amplifier. Any difference between the two is, by definition, the distortion, which is used as the "error signal" for a corrective circuit. In a feedback amplifier, the error signal is amplified in a separate, extremely low-distortion error amplifier whose output is fed forward error signal, it is theoretically possible to reduce all distortions to zero. This is unlikely in practice because of the extreme precision required of the error amplifier and the signal-combining circuits.

Sansui therefore has incorporated the best parts of both methods in the AU-D11, using only enough negative feedback to reduce distortion substantially without posing a risk of transient or slewing-response problems. In addition, a separate error signal is adjusted at the point where it drives the load. By careful adjustment of the level and phase of the feedback error signal, it is theoretically possible to reduce all distortions to zero. This is unlikely in practice because of the extreme precision required of the error amplifier and the signal-combining circuits.

The Sansui AU-D11's front panel is finished in black, with black knobs and control buttons and clearly contrasting white markings. Red LEDs show the engagement of any of the unit's pushbutton switches and the setting of the input-selector knob. The inputs include two high-level sources (marked AUX and TUNER) and two phono sources. A small button below the selector knob converts the normal phono moving-magnet (MM) input to a high-gain moving-coil (MC) input, and a second button gives a choice of two gain values for MC cartridges of different outputs.

The AV-D11's output to a tape recorder until the start-up transients have stopped. The light then remains on and the speakers are connected. Whenever the amplifier's internal protective circuits are activated due to excessive load current or an internal failure, the speakers are silenced and the light begins to blink. To restore operation, the power must be shut off for a few seconds and reapplied.

Four slender pushbuttons, each with its own status LED, complete the amplifier's front-panel controls. The tone button connects the tone-control circuits, which are otherwise completely removed from the signal path. Two filter buttons, marked 16 Hz and 20 kHz, introduce 6-dB-per-octave slopes in the amplifier response at the indicated frequencies. Finally, the mute button reduces the amplifier gain by 20 dB when it is engaged.

On the rear of the Sansui AU-D11 there are phono jacks for the signal inputs and the recorder connections, plus insulated binding posts for the speaker outputs. One of the three a.c. convenience outlets is switched. The amplifier provides no access to the junction between its preamplifier and power-amplifier sections nor any means of interrupting the signal path at that point. The AU-D11 is supplied in a rosewood-grain wooden cabinet. It is about 171/2 inches wide, 171/2 inches deep, and 61/2 inches high; weight is 381/2 pounds. Price: $1,000.

- Laboratory Measurements. Because of its large size and weight in relation to its power rating, the Sansui AU-D11 got only moderately hot over its power-transistor heat sinks (which are within the cabinet) during a 1-hour program of music. The power transistors remained cool elsewhere on its exterior. With both channels driving 8-ohm loads at 1,000 Hz, the output waveform clipped at 153 watts per channel for an IHF clipping-headroom rating of 1.06 dB. The AU-D11 is not specifically rated for other load impedances, but we measured power outputs at clipping of 210 watts per channel into 4 ohms and 200 watts into 8 ohms. We rated the AU-D11 at 200 watts into an 8-ohm load. (Continued on page 55)
“Curious. Now that I have the 2 acoustically optimized cylinders of a Jensen J-2000, I don't feel the need for the 8 high compression cylinders of a Ferrari GTB-308.”

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Sleek, bronze and beautiful, the design of the J-2000 is like no other car stereo speaker you've ever seen. And, more importantly, it sounds like those fine mini-speaker systems you used to hear only at home.

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test reports

into 8 ohms, 257 watts into 4 ohms, and 304 watts into 2 ohms (this, too, was the point at which the protection circuit operated). The ultra-low distortion of the Sansui AU-D11 was demonstrated by its performance into 8-ohm loads at 1,000 Hz, where the distortion was between 0.0005 and 0.001 percent for power outputs up to 140 watts. When the AU-D11 was driving 4-ohm loads, the distortion did not change very much, reading less than 0.0014 percent up to 190 watts. Many amplifiers, over the limited power range through which they can drive 2-ohm loads, have substantially higher distortion driving such impedances than they have with higher ones. Not so with the AU-D11, whose distortion was under 0.0032 percent into 2 ohms from 1 to 200 watts. The distortion across the full audio-frequency range was measured into 8 ohms at full power, half power, and one-tenth power. At most power levels and frequencies, the distortion was under 0.001 percent, reaching 0.0045 percent at 20 Hz and full power, 0.006 percent at 20,000 Hz and most power levels. Although the latter seems to be slightly above the amplifier's rating of 0.005 percent, measurement errors at these very low distortion levels are difficult to isolate and avoid, so our readings do not really contradict the manufacturer's ratings.

For a reference output of 1 watt, the required line-level (AUX) input was 26 millivolts and the phono (MM) input was 0.21 millivolt at maximum volume setting. The respective A-weighted noise levels, referred to 1 watt, were -84 and -81 dB, both very low figures. The phone preamplifier overloaded at 200 millivolts at low and mid frequencies, and at 178 millivolts at 20,000 Hz (converted to the equivalent 1,000-Hz level). The phone-input impedance could not be modeled by a simple parallel R-C combination; it measured 55,000 ohms at 1,000 Hz. Measurements were made through the MM input only, although we used the MC mode in listening tests and found it to be perfectly satisfactory. We made other amplifier measurements that strongly confirmed the exceptional linearity, even at high frequencies, of the AU-D11. A two-tone intermodulation-distortion measurement using equal-amplitude signals at 19,000 and 20,000 Hz, having a combined peak output equal to that of a 120-watt sine wave, showed third-order distortion (18,000 Hz) at -92 dB relative to 120 watts and second-order distortion (1,000 Hz) at -96 dB. The latter is the residual level of our spectrum analyzer, the former is the lowest 1M reading we have ever measured in this test.

The IHF overload-recovery test showed a negligible recovery time of 10 microseconds. The IHF slew factor was greater than our measurement limit of 25, and the rise time was about 1 microsecond. When driving a complex simulated speaker load, the amplifier showed no signs of instability, and only a minimal ringing on a square wave differentiated the complex load from a resistive load. It is worth noting that all our measurements were made through the AUX outputs with the tone controls bypassed and under IHF standard gain conditions.

The tone-control frequency response characteristics were good, though quite conventional. Especially when using the 6,000- and 150-Hz turnover frequencies, we were able to apply considerable modification at the frequency extremes, where it is usually necessary, with no effect on the midrange response. The RIAA equalization was accurate to within ±0.25 dB from 20 to 20,000 Hz (this is the limit of our measurement accuracy). When the inductance of a phono cartridge was inserted into the signal path, the frequency response changed slightly at high frequencies. But even in the worst case (using a high-inductance Shure M91 cartridge), the response change did not exceed 1 dB up to 15,000 Hz. The "16-Hz" filter began to affect the response at about 100 Hz and was down 2.5 dB at 20 Hz. The "20-kHz" filter began to roll off above 3,000 Hz and was down 3 dB at 13,000 Hz and 5 dB at 20,000 Hz.

Comment. On the test bench, the Sansui AU-D11 proved to be everything its manufacturer claimed. It is an extremely low-distortion, wide-band, low-noise, stable amplifier with almost all the control functions that might be desired by a serious audiophile. In our view, the excellent tone controls, flexible input and tape-recording facilities, and built-in MC head amplifier more than compensate for the amplifier's ineffective filters. The absence of separate preamplifier outputs and power-amplifier inputs did not disturb us, since it is perfectly possible to use the AU-D11 as a power amplifier alone by driving its AUX inputs with the tone controls bypassed. The AU-D11 has many features that are likely to be desired by a serious audiophile. It can drive 2-ohm loads, have substantially more than 65,000 microfarads of filter capacitance in its power supply (far above the average for amplifiers of this power rating). Furthermore, the "U"-shaped metal channels, no filter capacitors and from them to the rectifiers is not wire at all: these connections are made with "U"-shaped metal channels, no doubt in the interest of achieving minimum power-supply impedance. To assess the Sansui AU-D11 properly, one should think of it as a state-of-the-art amplifier built for the most discriminating audiophile, rather than just another high-price product from a large Japanese manufacturer. Assuming that its power is adequate for the intended use and that no serious objections are raised to any of its control features (or lack thereof), we believe that there is no better amplifier to be had today. Naturally it sounds as good as an amplifier can sound. This flagship of the Sansui line is an amplifier whose performance, combined with full protection for itself and the speakers, may possibly be equalled (though not cheaply) but is not likely to be surpassed. If something better came along we doubt that it could be measured with today's instruments, since ours were operating at or beyond their design limits during our tests of the AU-D11.

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Astatic’s MF cartridges offer the economy of moving magnet cartridges. Competitively priced, moving flux also has high output, eliminating the need for expensive preamps or transformers. And unlike most moving coil cartridges, Astatic’s moving flux stylus is user replaceable.

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CIRCLE NO. 3 ON READER SERVICE CARD

Going on Record

By James Goodfriend

LITTLE THINGS

NEW YORK’S Metropolitan Opera had a surprising success this season with a triple bill presented under the overall title “Parade” and comprising a ballet on Satie’s Parade, Poulenc’s little opera Les Mamelles de Tirésias, and Ravel’s operatic masterpiece L’enfant et les Sorcières. The surprise was actually threefold: that the Met conceived the idea at all and then had the courage to go through with it, that, as Donal Henahan of the New York Times pointed out, the fireworks on stage were being produced by some of the same performers who have been sleepwalking through the standard repertoire; and that the audience response was as enthusiastic as it was and the production sold out.

Such a bill is certainly not what the Met is noted for doing, but, beyond that, it is the sort of thing that, according to established wisdom, the Met is not even supposed to try to do. Its correct area, conventional wisdom says, is really grand opera with international stars, and the experiments, the entertainments, the charming “little” things should be left to somebody else.

Granted, there’s a thin line between doing something like this and doing Gilbert and Sullivan or Leonard Bernstein’s Mass or (to take the final step) South Pacific. The temptation to do popular entertainment and get popular acclaim is a strong one. But I think the line is well worth drawing and the usable territory that it encloses is well worth defining. The tripartite idea, though convenient, is not necessarily a must, nor is the combination of opera and ballet. But the conjunction of short, unrelated works is (the Met made a half-hearted and wholly unnecessary attempt to tie the three together); the point of the whole thing is to perform works of real value that are generally not performed.

Accordingly, I have a little list (oops) for the Met’s consideration. I don’t pretend to have worked out all the problems or even to have established and added up all the timings involved, and it is more than possible that some of these selections may work in different conjunctions than I propose. But my record-listening experience, aided and abetted by concert going and occasional score reading (I am quite conscious of the irony of that statement), leads me to believe that these are operas (and ballets) that, given sympathetic production, could be theatrically viable for the Met.

I begin with a triple bill in English. Gustav Holst’s Shakespearean one-acter At the Close of the Day, which could be touted around as Co-May (which could be Co-May 1565 and co-May 1620), and The Mira-
cle in the Gorbals, a French and Spanish evening beginning with either Debussy’s L’Enfant et les Sorcières or Darius Milhaud’s Le Boeuf sur le Toit (a little Brazilian there) and going through Massenet’s Thaïs, Stravinsky’s Le Boeuf sur le Toit, and the charming “little” things should be left to somebody else.

I would dearly love to see productions of Milhaud’s three “opéras-minutes”—L’Enlevement d’Europe, L’Abandon d’Ariane, and La Délivrance de Thésée—complete operas of molecular size lasting about ten minutes each. This, of course, is barely enough for a third of an evening, but if they were preceded by the same composer’s La Création du Monde and followed with Erik Satie’s Socrate, one might have an evening that balanced movement and stillness, fun and feeling in quite a new way.

Do you yearn for a singing evening and hang the action? Try a pairing of Monteverdi’s Combattimento di Tancredi e Clorinda (with a little dancing on the side) and George Frederic Handel’s Ais and Galathea and what about a Schubert opera (Die Verschworenen is a one-acter with beautiful tunes), or Chabrier’s L’Étoile with its sneezing aria, or Richard Strauss’ exquisite Daphne? Really, the possibilities are enormous. The Met, I am happy to say, realizes this. Without even consulting me, for next season they have come up with “An Evening of Stravinsky,” a triple bill of the ballet Le Sacre du Printemps and two short operas, Le Rossignol and Oedipus Rex.
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WHEN you set out to buy stereo components for your home, your three main concerns are performance, features, and price. But when you are shopping for a stereo system for your car, your main concern is a simple one: what will fit? In the home, even when space is tight, you can usually juggle things—move furniture, take books off shelves, and so on—to make room for the equipment you want. In the car, you have certain options too: under-dash accessory mounts, accessory or custom-built consoles, back-seat installations (usually in limousines), and so on. But, for most people and most cars, the “radio” hole in the middle of your dashboard or built-in console is usually the only practical place to put a radio/cassette player.

Your first step in shopping, then, is to slim down your list to only those units you can actually shoehorn into your car. Your local car-stereo dealers should know which of the models they sell are likely to fit. The best single guide I’ve seen is the mail-order catalog put out by Crutchfield (P.O. Box 1, Charlottesville, Virginia 22906), which lists everything on wheels from Alfa Romeo to Volvo and tells which of the available units fit or can be made to fit in each.

You also have to decide whether you’re going to install your system yourself or have it done professionally. Unless you’re already used to working under dashboards—and are comfortable making connections while flat on your back with your feet hanging out the car window—you’re better advised to leave things to the pros. It’s possible to install your own (I’ve done it a few times myself), but it’s not easy. If you do intend to put it in yourself, pay special attention to the instructions that come with any set you may consider buying as well as to the special installation kits available—and necessary—for many cars. Some manufacturers make it easier for you than others.

Next consider what basics you’ll want in your system. Like most people, you’ll probably want FM, AM, and cassette facilities. But it pays to question yourself a little, even about that. For example, if there are no radio stations in your area that you care to listen to and you seldom travel to other broadcast areas, a tape player may be all you need. (If so, it will probably end up under the dash, because few tape-only systems are designed to fit within it.) If, on the other hand, you never listen to tape, then you may prefer a radio alone. Even if you use eight-track tapes at home or have some left over from a previous car installation, resist the temptation to install an eight-track player in your new car. Since eight-track tapes have an inherently limited playing life, it’s time to join the cassette mainstream rather than install a system on its way to obsolescence. Cassettes take up less space in the car, and cassette players are usually higher in fidelity, too, if you need additional arguments.

Radio / Tape Features

When it comes to the question of radio features, understand that the smaller your dashboard’s radio-space allotment, the more limited your choice will be in respect to the features available to you. Your listening habits will likely have the greatest effect on the particular tuning facilities you choose. If you rarely listen to the radio or listen to one station all the time, a plain old manual tuning knob will do perfectly. If you have several favorite stations, then you’ll want pushbutton “preset” tuning. But make sure the radio section you choose has enough station settings for you. Some pushbutton setups are restricted to three AM and two FM stations, or vice versa, and some have only one button each for AM and FM. Models with separate AM/FM band-select-or switches usually allow one AM and one FM station per button for a total of ten or twelve (or fourteen, as on Fujitsu’s seven-button Dashboard Wizard). Each button on Pioneer’s KEX-20 can select one AM and two FM stations for a total of fifteen. Sony’s XT-1 component tuner provides ten FM stations but no AM ones. And Clarion’s PE-959A not only brings in ten AM and FM stations, but brings them in “on schedule,” if you like, with a built-in, programmable timed switcher. You should also be aware that there are several models that have an array of pushbuttons—but none of them are used as station-selection presets.

If you listen a lot to the radio but have no favorite stations, or if you travel often to areas where the stations are unknown, you may want a radio with “scan-and-seek.” In the scan mode, the radio tunes its way along the dial (usually in only one direction) and stops for five seconds or so at each; when you hear one you like, you press the scan button again to stop the process. In the seek mode, the radio just tunes to the next station and stops there. These are not only great conveniences but safety features too: you can watch the road, not the radio tuning dial.

You’re far more likely to find the scan-and-seek function on car stereos with digital tuning. Whether or not you want digital tuning is largely a matter of taste—some people find it easier to remember a station by its position on
CAR STEREO

"The only really useful listening room is a car—your car, preferably . . . ."

deteriorate in mid-program as you drive behind obstacles or further from the station.

Some tape-deck features shift in relative importance in the car too. Decks that eject the tape automatically when it ends are good to have when your eyes should be on the road and your hands on the wheel. Decks that eject (or buzz a warning) when you turn off the ignition with a tape in place help you keep your deck and your cassettes in better shape. An auto-reverse mechanism doesn't change in importance, but the reasons for it do: at home it's a convenience, but in the car it's also a safety factor that cuts down on distractions. If you listen to tapes of short selections (as most listeners to popular music, folk music, jazz, or even German lieder do),

you may appreciate the automatic program finders that seek out and stop at the pauses in between selections on the tape.

Tape playback-equalization switches are becoming more necessary as more and more recordings are made on chrome, chrome-equivalent, or metal cassettes. Any playback deck with such an equalization switch is "metal-ready" (though having adjustable equalization in a deck that doesn't also have Dolby seems a trifle odd). Any deck can play any of the new tape types reasonably well if you're willing to turn down the treble tone control a bit when necessary to compensate for the boosted high-frequency response.

Dolby is becoming more and more common in car tape systems—and about time, too, since it's virtually universal in home cassette decks and pre-recorded tapes today. It's a little too soon for Dolby C to show up in a mobile unit, but add-on dbx car units are due soon from Rockford/Fosgate and Roadstar (there are no signs yet of in-

dash units with dbx built in). The Dolby circuits in some car-stereo units work on FM too, on others, they don't. And don't believe people who say that the difference Dolby makes is not significant in a noisy moving car—now that I've heard it in mine I wouldn't be without it.

Sound Controls

Many other controls affect both tape and FM listening: volume, loudness, balance, front-rear faders, tone controls, and equalizers. You'll probably use the balance control a lot more in the car than you do at home, setting it to the left to get good stereo-channel balance at the driver's seat when you're alone, centering it when you have a passenger. Cars with speakers in both front and rear need faders to control the front-rear balance as well. The best reason for having full-range speakers front and back is that they make it possible to set the balance so that the sound can be audible at both ends of the car simultaneously without being so loud at either end that it deafens passengers. If you feed those rear-deck speakers from a delay device (available from Sound Concepts, Alpine, and Fujitsu), the car sounds acoustically larger too—a big virtue with today's smaller cars.

Tone controls are needed more in the car than in the home, and equalizers even more yet, for car stereo has to contend with many special sonic problems: road noise, weird acoustics, peaky speakers (or good speakers in poor locations or housings), FM multipath, AM static (a high proportion of all AM listening occurs in the car), and so on. You can, of course, add equalizers to your car stereo later, but you'll find more and more in-dash units with equalizers already built in. The slide controls on built-ins (and most add-ons, for that matter) are short enough to make precise adjustment tricky, though.

Performance

It's almost impossible to get a meaningful demonstration of how a car-stereo system will sound before you buy it. The only really useful listening room is a car—your car, preferably—and while a dealer may have a few systems installed in cars for you to listen to, there's no way he can give you an in-car demonstration of each combination of car stereo and speakers he sells. That leaves you with the specifications, alas, and those will give you only a very general indication of how well things will sound in addition to being compromised by a woeful lack of standardization.
There's some progress on the standards front, however. The Ad Hoc Committee of car-stereo equipment manufacturers, which had attempted to set voluntary specification standards, has now become part of the Electronics Industry Association, and the EIA has reissued the original Ad Hoc proposal as an interim standard of its own. I've seen the Ad Hoc standards acknowledged only on spec sheets and catalogs from Alpine, Clarion, Craig, Jensen, Mitsubishi, Pioneer, and Sanyo—seven out of the original twenty-two Ad Hoc committee members. I've also seen the same acknowledgments on sheets from Linear Power and Sony, who were not on the original committee. But there's been an impact on many other companies: they don't follow these recommendations all the way, but they increasingly run specifications showing a definite Ad Hoc influence. And there were some companies furnishing meaningful specs (Pioneer, for example, whose latest catalog includes a long explanation of the Ad Hoc standards) long before the committee was formed.

The snake oil runs thickest among the specs for power output. The Ad Hoc/EIA standard specifies that rated power should be the continuous power for one channel, with both channels driven, and that the bandwidth and maximum distortion for that power level must be stated. Some companies still ignore this. Others fudge it by stating power, bandwidth, and distortion separately, with no guarantee that the latter two are measured at the rated power level. Stating output power and distortion together and frequency response (or bandwidth) separately is more meaningful and, thank goodness, more common. Many manufacturers, though, list power only at a stated (or unstated!) 10 per cent distortion level, but since this has long been the unsspoken standard for car-radio and tape equipment, it's a sign of progress that manufacturers now sometimes do at least state it. Many show power both at 10 per cent distortion (to compete on equal footing with competitors who state it only that way) and at 1 per cent or less (to satisfy their audiophile customers). There are two things to bear in mind here: first, ultra-low distortion that may be significant in a home system will not be meaningful in a car simply because road noise is likely to mask distortion at levels below 1 per cent or so; second, most car speakers are, for sound technical reasons, rated at 4 ohms impedance, so a car amplifier's power specs will probably be for operation into 4-ohm loads (power specs in home hi-fi are almost always for 8-ohm loads).

FM-tuner sensitivity specifications can be read just like home tuner specs—so long as you're reading them in dBf. Figures in microvolts are illusive, since car-radio antenna inputs are 75 ohms, not 300 ohms as those in most home tuners are. That means a car-stereo unit with a rated sensitivity of 2.5 microvolts (or µV) would be only as sensitive as a home tuner with a 5-µV sensitivity—though both would be properly rated at 19.2 dBf.

Other specifications, if you can find them, are stated the same way as those for home equipment. AM rejection is more important in the car than in the home, both because it affects multipath rejection (you can't orient your car's antenna to get rid of multipath) and because a car stereo is sitting just a few feet from your engine, a potent AM interference generator. (Interference, by the way, is another reason to use a professional installer—he's more likely to know how to minimize the problem.) In practical terms, I consider a power of 20 watts per channel about optimum—high enough to sound good, low enough to be affordable. Anything below 10 watts per channel sounds a little "skimpy" to my ears, and anything above 40 or 50 is pure luxury.

Paradoxically, the higher-power systems are sometimes easier to fit into a smaller car than the medium-power units. The larger amplifiers always come as separate boxes connected by cables to the unit in the dashboard slot—which means that the in-dash unit can be comparatively small. If you're planning on high power, get a system with preamplifier-level (line) outputs and an amplifier with line inputs; the sound will be slightly cleaner than if you feed a low-power system's amplifier output into a higher-power "booster" amp (though even a booster will usually clean your sound up noticeably). If your budget dictates that you start with a low-power unit, look for one with both amplifier and line-level outputs (what Alpine calls "bi-level") so you can add true amplifiers later.

 Speakers

Fitting speakers into your car is both easier and harder than fitting the electronics in. It's easier because there's always someplace you can put some type of speaker; it's harder because the spots available aren't always the ones you'd pick to get the best sound. Where the car manufacturer does provide specific spots, they're increasingly likely to take small and unusual speaker sizes, such as 3½ inches in diameter, or 4 by 10. Again, a good installation man should know where speakers can go in most cars and where to seek new spots in those he's not familiar with.

Speakers are available in a wild variety of configurations (a good thing, too, considering the wild variety of environments they have to be installed and operate in). There are naked speakers to be flush-mounted in holes, open-backed baffles to be screwed onto surfaces, and minispeaker boxes on swiveling brackets. There are full-range, single-driver systems, single drivers with "whizzer" cones attached for somewhat improved treble, and multiple-driver systems ranging from two- to five-way. Multi-driver systems are available as separate drivers, coaxial units, or combinations such as Jensen's "Triax" (coaxial midrange/ tweeter in a surface-mount enclosure, plus a flush-mounting woofer). There are also add-on tweeters and a variety of subwoofers.

From the systems I've heard, I'd say the best compromise between sound and cost is the two-way system. The single-driver "whizzer-cone" types are a step down but still good, and three-way systems are naturally a step up. Subwoofers make a difference too—if you've the space and money for them.

Picking the right speaker isn't easy. Take my car, for example: at the moment, I have a different speaker system in each of my doors. One brand has greater clarity, the other has better bass—and because its tweeter is separate, I can mount it where my body (or a passenger's) won't block the highs. I've been riding around like this for months now, and I still haven't decided which set to remove and replace with a system to match the other. About the time I finally do make a decision, someone will probably lend me another set with different virtues that I'll like just as much. Well, I never said the decisions would be easy.
Preview for Buyers: AUDIO PRODUCTS AT LAS VEGAS CES

Part 2: Concluding the survey, begun last month, of the Winter 1981 Consumer Electronics Show

A report by Ivan Berger

What's New in

CAR STEREO  ACCESSORIES

HEADPHONES  VIDEO

Car Stereo

The autosound exhibits inside the Las Vegas Show have always been supplemented by others outdoors: cars with super-stereo systems installed (usually involving a trunk full of amplifiers) are parked in the lot between the main exhibit hall and the additional exhibits in the Hilton. This year there were more such cars than ever.

Check by jowl with half their competition, several of these exhibitors evidently couldn't resist the temptation to turn the gain up full. And once a few of the cars were thumping like pile-drivers (for some reason nobody ever does this with classical music) the others had to turn their gain up too or not be heard at all. The resulting din was like living on a city block full of discotheques, so I scuttled off to sonic safety.

But I did notice, as I left the car-fi lot, a moderately posh commuter van equipped with a reasonably but not unconscionably loud system. The exhibitor, Lew-Mark of Tucson, isn't actually in the audio field, but rather offers such vans on a subscription basis to commuter groups. Lew-Mark says they'll use computers not only to match drivers and passengers by routes but by similarity of interests, so they can, if they like, converse. The car-stereo, I presume, is for groups that haven't been successfully matched—or for those sharing musical tastes, taciturnity, or laryngitis.

Another way to get car stereo without buying a car was pointed out by Craig, whose systems will be installed in exotic cars (Clenets, Rolls, and the like) available from Budget-Rent-A-Car. That's the Beverly Hills branch, naturally, though the rental prices (up to $400 per day) might make it more economical to install a stereo system in your own car.

Judging from what there was on view inside the show, however, there isn't much that's terribly new to choose from. This spring's crop struck me as all too similar to last fall's, and the reason is probably the current economic crunch. The most visible trend was that toward building five-band equalizers into in-dash stereo systems instead of offering them only as separates.

Last year, only Panasonic and a few others had such units. This year they're available from American Audio, Audiobahn, Audiovox, Blaupunkt, Fujitsu (not new with them), Kraco, MetroSound, Roadstar, Sparkomatic, and possibly a few more that I missed.

Panasonic's newest such model is the latest version of their overhead Cockpit system, the 710. From the human-engineering standpoint it's the best of the Cockpits, too: the tape slot and digital tuner dial, up/down tuning controls, and power switch are on a downward-sloping panel that faces the driver instead of being out of his line of vision as they've been on some prior versions.

Then, as we move back from the windshield, there are the six station-preset buttons, the controls for station scanning and band select, the volume up/down switch (I think it would be better up front, where the Dolby and tape EQ switches now are), a ball-type four-way balance control, the equalizer, and an overhead light. All controls are as flat as possible for crash safety,
and the enclosure's sides are padded. And, though there is a LED-string level indicator, it's a way back where it can't distract the driver, though it might amuse back-seat passengers.

Blaupunkt showed the latest version of their Berlin; only the tape slot is in the dash, the other controls being on a stalk which can be adjusted to the most convenient position (in a car with bucket seats, one could even pass control to rear-seat passengers). The Berlin in the "LS" circuitry, which senses ambient noise levels and adjusts its sound output accordingly, Dolby, short- and long-wave reception as well as AM and FM, and night illumination of all functions. The Berlin costs $1,300, which may limit its appeal. So Blaupunkt also offers the 300 (-$360), which also has night-time illumination (illuminated collars surround the major function buttons) and a remote-station-scan and cassette-reverse control mountable on your dash or steering column. Roadstar has a stalk, too, but it controls only a five-band equalizer and booster amp ("60 watts"—see further details).

Three-way face plates are available on some models of the newly restyled Roadstar line, offering a choice of black or brushed-aluminum finishes plus the option of concealing the Roadstar logo for those who prefer to keep the system anonymous. Kra-co's Designer series and Marantz's new CAR-330 (which fits small cars such as GM's X-car series) also had reversible face plates. Kra-co's had individually reversible center and outer sections for all-black, all-silver, or two-tone effects; Marantz's was wood-grain on one side, a plain dark color on the other.

There was increased emphasis this year on ease of installation. Audiovox was making much of their new Flex and Super Flex installation systems (as well as "Audio-lot"—a circuit sounding rather like AFC), Kra-co had Dashmaster, Sanyo had its EZ and EZ-C systems, and so on.

One trend that I had hoped to see accelerate seems instead to be grading to a halt: the use of the industry's Ad Hoc Committee specifications for amplifier power (see "Audio News," January 1980). I did, however, notice the specs used on many catalogs and product sheets, including some from Alpine, Clarion, Jensen, Linear Power (amplifiers), Mitsubishi, Pioneer (whose new catalog includes a long explanation of the Ad Hoc specs), Sanyo, and Sony—pretty much the same line-up as last year. There was, however, an encouraging trend toward the use of more detailed—if not quite Ad Hoc—specs; some smaller makers and some in-dash units and many amplifiers and boosters. But still unspecified by most of the manufacturers who don't follow the Ad Hoc standard are the frequency limits within which rated power and distortion apply.

Under-dash units are growing less common, though both Alpine and Clarion showed new ones. Alpine's 5400 was the more unusual of the two, having a built-in, five-band equalizer/booster amp (preamp outputs, too) with a relay box available to feed an existing radio's output through the system. Both the Alpine and Clarion units had Dolby. There's also much less emphasis on separate-component systems. Kra-co's Stackmaster separates being the only new ones I saw. With cars getting smaller, such a trend would seem predictable. Smaller cars may be one of the reasons for the growing popularity of systems with separate amplifiers, though. Audiovox's new Dyna-Mini (a $200 system for X-cars and the like) is built that way, and it's just one of many.

Other new in-dash units, though not pointing out new trends, were worth a second look. Jensen introduced its first two electronically tuned receivers, the RE-518 ($400) and the X-sized RE-512 ($370). Both have digital scan, ten-station preset tuning, and auto-reverse (a far cry from the days when Jensen stereos lacked even push-button tuning). The 512 also has Dolby, loudness compensation, and a tape-equalization switch (Some other makers' press releases called such controls "bias" switches—a total misnomer, since playback-only units do not use bias.)

Kra-co's new KGE-801 includes weatherband reception, and their KR-1255 converts car radio to VHF-TV, and FM reception to AM radios. Some of the new models in Panasonic's Supreme series have broadened coverage to pick up traveler's advisory broadcasts (available in some national parks and other areas) at 530 and 1,610 kHz.

While they still make true components, Mitsubishi exemplified the trend away from such units by labeling their in-dash units with separate amplifiers as "Auto Modules/In-Dash Component Systems." Mitsubishi units also feature "pinch-off," a device that retracts the tape drive's pinchroller when the power is shut off. Pioneer had new models in the Super tuner II series: the KE-2100, KE-5100, KE-6100, and KEX-50. All have electronic tuning and circuits that gradually blend from stereo to mono for reduced noise as reception grows more difficult. And Sanyo now has a "Plus Series" for the car as well as for the home. The series includes new models (and several of last year's) whose performance meets the (unspecified) Plus Series standards.

In sound add-ons, the biggest news was either the first showing of an Omnisonic Imager for car use or the first showing of dbx decoders from Rockford-Fosgate and FAS. The latter are especially timely since dbx-encoded tapes were announced at the show too.

In equalizers, nothing much was new. MGT Magtone had a "parametric" five-band equalizer (actually only semi-parametric, since only the center frequencies of each band, not their widths, can be changed) for $240. Mobile Audio Development showed a ten-band equalizer/booster and a seven-band preamp-level equalizer with reversible face plate; Blaupunkt again showed the BEA-200 equalizer/amp with built-in delay/reverb circuitry; Sanyo showed a seven-band preamp-level equalizer; and Tancredi showed a seven-band equalizer booster, with and without output-level meters (less distracting than the more common LED arrays).

In amplifiers there were two opposing trends. One ran toward high power (100 X 2 or 50 X 4 watts from MGT Magtone, 100
X 2 watts from Mobile Audio Development, 75 X 2 watts from Linear Power and from Spectron, to mention only some that specify distortion ratings along with their watts), the other toward small size (Mini-Amp’s Mini-Mac, only 3/4 inches thick, and Pioneer’s new downsized GM-2 and GM-4 amps, which replace larger amps having the same specifications). There is also a growing tendency to include slew-rate among the standard specifications—at least Linear Power, Sanyo (with a 70-volt-per-microsecond rating on their new PA6110), and Spectron did.

I noted no new speaker trends, though some recent ones continue. Many new systems resembled the front of a typical mini-speaker but without the enclosure behind. The rectangular panel of such a system holds a small long-throw woofer and a dome tweeter; while its raised rim allows the system to stand out a bit from the door panel of the car, minimizing the mounting depth needed for the woofer’s protruding magnet. Among those with such systems this year were ADS, Avid, Blaupunkt, EPI, Magnum (a three-way version), Audiosource, Visonik, and others.

Another trend is that toward speakers designed for very shallow mounting—a necessity in many current cars. ADS, for example, showed a subwoofer system whose two 7-inch drivers can be reverse-mounted (behind a suitably distended grille) where space forbids normal mounting. Pioneer’s TS-X5 speakers try a different shallow-mounting tack: their surface-mount enclosures face the speakers forward while the enclosure bases open down into the 4 x 10-inch speaker holes in the new “X” cars; similar systems have been seen before, but not, as far as I know, designed to fit specific speaker holes.

Still another trend was toward higher power-handling capacity to match the trend to higher-powered amps. A.R.A.’s Pow*R*Handler II series, for example, is rated up to 100 watts maximum program power. Clarion’s new modular systems have polypropylene woofers with Kapton voice coils, plus tweeters with Nomex coils, to withstand higher heat and other environmental factors. Craig’s twenty-one new speakers all have hefty power-handling ability, as does Kraco’s new Turbo series. Matrecs points out that they’ve used ferrofluid (as does Craig) for four years to increase power-handling capacity; Pioneer says their new TS-X11 has a perforated, glass-fiber coil bobbin to improve heat resistance; Sparkomatic uses vented pole pieces; and so on. Heppner, meantime, stresses its high sensitivity—104 dB out for 1 watt of pink noise in, measured 18 inches from the cone—a figure few car-speaker makers quote (with high speaker efficiency, less amplifier power is needed, of course).

The Matrecs Domeplex and the Clarion Modular series have something in common besides heat resistance: removable tweeters. The Matrecs is basically a coaxial unit whose tweeter can be removed to a better location when required. The Clarions have a sealed tweeter/midrange module that can be installed in the grille of either 6 x 9 or 6 1/2-inch woofers or mounted separately, in which case grille inserts are added to the woofers.

Pioneer may not have a removable tweeter, but it does have one that retracts, a “periscope” tweeter which, like the one on Pioneer’s TS-1600 speaker introduced last year, projects above the grille for forward firing when the speaker is mounted in a rear deck. Unlike Pioneer’s, however, Panasonic’s tweeter also folds down so the speaker can be mounted in a door or other panel. The AFS Kriket line offers the option of coaxial, triaxial, or completely separate tweeters.

And if you’re not satisfied merely to reproduce music, Antenna Electronics Company lets you make some yourself with their “Whoopie Horn,” which can play any of sixty-four selected tunes. These include patriotic, school/country/Western/folk, and pop/traditional themes. Of the twenty school songs included, incidentally, only one (Cornell’s High above Cayuga’s Waters) is from the Ivy League; there may be a message in that.
Accessories

Accessories have the same relationship to the major products at CES as a sideshow has to a circus' three big rings. Unfortunately, the accessory sideshows are scattered throughout the CES and often hard to spot.

For once, the pile of literature I collected for tape accessories was almost as high as that for phonograph accessories. Demagnetizers and head cleaners were, unsurprisingly, most common. There's a definite trend toward demagnetizers built into cassette shells—in part, perhaps, because these are easy to use with mobile and portable systems. Hitachi introduced its AD-091 ($25) and Maxell its HE-44 ($24). There were demagnetizers in other formats too. Maxell introduced its hand-held illuminated head demagnetizer, an ac-powered model selling for $17. Like the Calibron demagnetizer introduced last year, it has a plastic light pipe to channel light to the demagnetizing tip, and it is long and narrow enough for use with 8-track or slot-loading cassette decks.

There were probably as many devices to clean heads as to demagnetize them. Discwasher (now a division of Jensen) showed its new Perfect Path cassette-shell head cleaner using a dry, non-abrasive fiber-grid cleaner. Osawa's Nagaoka QC-209 head-cleaning cassette ($8) was also announced.

Panasonic unveiled a battery-powered table-top cassette eraser, the BH-645E, which winds the tape quickly past an erase head. This makes it perhaps the only eraser that can delete one track of a recorded tape while leaving the other intact. Robins showed a new cordless eraser of the pass-through, permanent-magnet type.

Panasonic also showed a cassette winder, the BH-652E, which rewinds a C-60 tape in 60 seconds. Osawa introduced a similar device, the Nagaoka CW-402 winder ($20) with a 35-second rewind time. Both shut off automatically at the tape's end.

Osawa introduced a few other tape accessories at the show. The PC-507 cassette repair and maintenance kit ($25) includes a splicing block with 60- and 90-degree cutting slots, scissors, tweezers, small screwdrivers, replacement pressure pads, and replacement screws, as well as a jig on which one can mount the pieces of a disassembled cassette and various replacement parts, including a replacement hub with cassette leader tape already fastened to it.

Phono accessories continue to hold their own as well. Record cleaners, though receiving less emphasis than last year, still got their share: Hitachi showed its first such cleaner, the AD-093 ($30), a battery-powered brush that fits on the turntable spindle and sweeps itself around the record. Discwasher introduced its new D4 record-care system ($17) with a reformulated fluid and a new fabric covering on the familiar walnut handle. It's also available as part of a new DocKit ($55) containing a pad cleaner for the D4, a Zerostat antistatic gun, a SC-2 stylus cleaner, and space for additional headshells or accessories, all organized in a walnut base with a plastic dust cover.

Osawa had a new kit, too, the QR-202, which includes both a QR-201 cleaning brush and EX-202 care fluid. Adcom re-introduced its wet/dry record-care system with a new fluid. The system has two stacked, tubular brushes with a one-way pile, one of which is dipped into a fluid reservoir before use. Canton introduced a number of record-care accessories too, including a carbon-fiber brush that opens like an old-fashioned straight razor.

Sound Guard introduced a new version of its record preservative which is said to furnish increased antistatic protection (charges reduced from 20,000 to 0 volts even after 100 plays) and to lower stylus wear by 30 per cent.

Both Hervic and Signet showed battery-powered vibrating-pad stylus cleaners for $35 and $30, respectively. Signet's is long and thin, roughly the size and shape of a fat fountain pen, while Hervic's Pro model is triangular.

Getting into slightly more exotic recording-accessories, there seems to be a boom afoot in special turntable mats. There's no great agreement about the way they're constructed, however. Some mats, like Discwasher's D'Stat II, Empire's Audio Groome, Sound Saver's Omega One, 3M's accessory mat, and the new mat from Transcribers, are designed primarily to reduce static charges.

Other mats, such as Marco's Glass Mat and Micro Seiki's new CU-180 copper mat ($150), are claimed to provide better sound thanks to their mass and rigidity. Still others—such as Eon's Tripad, the new Platter Pad II (distributed by Monster Cable), and the Platter Matter—take the opposite approach, using soft materials with high damping characteristics. Platter Matter demonstrated its damping ability clearly and simply by placing a salt-covered record on its own and several other pads, then tapping it to show how much less the salt danced when the record was on the Platter Matter.

Dennenos's Isolation Base is a 50-pound granite slab suspended on three pneumatic "isolator pods"; the platform is leveled by adjusting each pod's pressure independently with a bicycle pump. Vibration isolation is said to extend down to 3 Hz. Dennenos also introduced the Pivotram, a gauge to simplify accurate tone-arm installation by showing where to drill the mounting hole. The Dennenos Soundtractor, for setting overhang after the arm is installed, is now avail-
able in a less expensive plastic version. The
Elite EEI alignment gauges, introduced last
year, are now being distributed here by
Platter Matter; two gauges (one to fit in
place of a universal headshell, one to fit in
place of a cartridge in any shell) are pack-
aged together for $20.

As an aid to proper arm alignment,
Denneseen introduced the Geotractor, a
universal headshell that can be adjusted side-
ways for offset angle, rotationally for azim-
uth setting, up and down for rake angle,
and fore and aft for overhang. Orsonic (dis-
tributed by Monster Cable) showed two
other interesting headshells. The AV-1 res-
oneance-canceling universal shell consists
mainly of two frame rods along which the
cartridge mounting plate can be adjusted
fore and aft. The SC-2 is an antiskating cal-
ibration gauge that fits in place of a con-
ventional cartridge and universal shell. ADC
introduced a new stylus-force gauge that uses
LEDs behind a transparent panel to in-
dicate the tracking force.

To help snare the wild goose of absolute
fidelity, there were special wires and cables
for every application. Audio-Technica's
AT609 ($8) replaces wires in "universal"
headshells with silver Litz wires (said to
have improved high-frequency response)
and non-corroding gold-plated connectors.
The same company offers the gold-connect-
ext AT622 ($25), a low-resistance cable as-
sembly for rewiring standard Japanese tone
arms, as does Peterson Audio Engineering.
For component interconnection, Audio In-
terface offers Missing Link cables ($25)
made of oxygen-free copper Litz wire (and
covered in a deep and classy blue); Audio-
Technica has the AT610A ($111) and the
AT620 ($300), also in Litz wire; Discwasher
has its Gold-ens (also available in DIN-to-
RCA, female/female, and other special con-
figurations); Mendota Research has
MR1 Litz cables; Monster Cable has its
Interlink; Peterson has Audio Link cables;
and Sound Connections has special inter-
connect wires. All of the above have gold-
plated connectors and braided, rather than
twisted, shielding.

Monster Cable's gold-plated Phonolink
RCA plugs, used on its Interlink cables, are
also sold separately and incorporate several
good ideas. The plugs' center pins are split
and spread to maintain firm contact. The
hard outer case surrounds the ground-ter-
minal "skirt" so it won't spread and lose
contact. The center pin is shortened so the
positive connection will break before the
ground one does when the plug is removed;
this will prevent speaker-blowing transients
for those who accidentally or forgetfully un-
plug components while the power is on.

Special speaker cables are more common
yet. AudioQuest has its low-inductance
LiveWires at prices ranging from $9.95 to
$4.25 per foot, the most expensive versions
being Litz wire. DiscWasher showed Smog-
Lifters II, at prices of $20 to $36 per pair
according to length. Marcofo's Megastrand
has separately insulated strands. Oracle ca-
bable, from Canada, has 770 tiny filaments of
99.99 per cent pure copper per lead. Rus-
sound/FMP introduced SC-20 cables made
of No. 10 copper wire. Saxton's "Super
Sound" is a conventional appliance-type
"zip cord," but with clear vinyl jackets
and—more important—heavier weights
(No. 12 and No. 10 AWG) than most such
speaker wire. Sound Connections Interna-
tional has a "bi-metal" cable, claimed to
create eddy currents which prevent time
shifts caused by different frequencies travel-
ing at different speeds.

Monster Cable gave the only A-B com-
parison of its wire, switching between adja-
cent but not identically placed speakers.
The Monster Cable line has also broadened
well beyond the original product. There's
now a heavier cable (the Power Line) de-
signed to "allow currents flowing in oppo-
site directions to cancel their own magnetic
fields." Speaker stands as well as speaker cables
made a showing. Thunderfoot Engineering
showed ten new models, eight selling for
less than $22. Best introduced isolating
speaker stands covered with elastomeric
damping material. Audio Illusions showed
Underalls speaker stands ($40 per pair)
and Dress-Ups—acoustically transparent
screens, available in four colors, that "vi-
ually blend speakers into their listening en-
vironment." And Sound Suspenders offered
slings to support speakers from a ceiling.

The Soundstick is a new directional-an-
tenna design for FM, a compact rod with a
built-in signal amplifier. Its gain is adjust-
able from 8 to 28 dB. An automotive ver-
sion will be forthcoming. And Royal Amer-
ican Marketing introduced a combination
AM/FM/TV antenna and track light, the
Ramco Omnitrak, in kits priced from $50,
bulbs included.

Headphones

The biggest (and possibly the best) head-
phone news of the show was the continued,
almost fevered popularity of the new light-
weight models that plug into wearable cas-
sette players or stereo FM radios—a trend
evidently fired by the U.S. introduction of
Sony's quaintly named Walkman (which
was originally, and more aptly, called the
Soundabout). Koss, for one, has just introduced the
Sound Partner; it will plug into all these
portable devices and afford a special degree of
comfort by applying clamping pressure not
to the ear but to the bone structure above it,
and finally fold up into a palm-size package
thanks to ingenious hinging. A small denim
tote bag and two plug adaptors are supplied
for $35. Mura also introduced several light-
weight models.

Headphones meant to be worn in repose,
so to speak, were present but not numerous at the show. Beyer presented three of what
it calls "semi-open" designs; they fully en-
close the ear with a circular cushion but provide some contact with the outside world
through perforations on their outsides. The
models are the DT-330 ($449), DT-550
($80), and DT-880 ($125). All weigh close
to 200 grams and all are conventional elec-
trodynamic designs.

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AH-9 cable. These will afford a special degree of comfort by applying clamping pressure not
to the ear but to the bone structure above it,
and finally fold up into a palm-size package
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tote bag and two plug adaptors are supplied
for $35. Mura also introduced several light-
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Headphones meant to be worn in repose,
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Headphones meant to be worn in repose,
The impact of new video technology at the Winter CES was evident even from outside the Convention Center building, where a cluster of satellite down-link antennas gave the parking lot a space-age look. Third Wave Communications, Stargazer, Satelco, Hustler, and Downlink were among those shown.

Inside the hall, however, the videodisc was the big item. Of the established LaserVision manufacturers, Magnavox was present; Pioneer was not. But Fisher showed a prototype LaserVision player with wireless remote control like Pioneer's, Gold Star showed another, and Marantz and Advent announced that they would have LaserVision next year.

Disc players based on RCA's CED system made a bigger splash—appropriately, since the show came less than ninety days before RCA's units were scheduled to go on sale. In its first CES appearance in years, RCA had eighty-four SelectaVision CED players, set in eight 14-foot towers, simultaneously demonstrating the variety of programs available. Others were shown by Hitachi, Sharp, Sanyo, and Toshiba. Hitachi's new player had two fast-visible-search speeds (RCA's has one), an optional remote control, and a provision for a stereo-sound adapter. Sanyo's player also had dual-speed search and optional remote. Both Sanyo and Hitachi mentioned "still-frame" capability, obtainable by simultaneously pressing both forward and reverse-fast-search buttons. The RCA machine has the same ability, but RCA doesn't mention it, possibly because the picture isn't really still; it keeps repeating a four-frame sequence that looks frozen only if there isn't much motion in those frames.

The VHD system, due this fall, was shown by JVC, Panasonic, Quasar, and Sansui. Yamaha demonstrated an AHD digital audio disc player based on the VHD system (and using a compatible player) at a press conference just before the show. Sharp, however, Matsushita (which means Quasar, Technics, Panasonic, and quite possibly JVC as well) has joined Sony and officially espoused the Philips Compact Disc system as their digital sound disc, so AHD may conceivably not appear.

In video recorders, Akai's VPS-7350 portable is still the only stereo-sound VCR to reach the market, though others are sure to follow. The general trends in higher-priced VCRs are toward high-speed visible search (the greatest convenience in VCRs since fade-forward, in my opinion) and more elaborate remote controls than the simple remote pause controls of earlier machines. Hitachi, JVC, Magnavox, Panasonic, and Sanyo all showed such machines, and Toshiba showed a Beta portable with seventeen-tines fast search (faster than any VHS machine can boast).

The coming trend in low-price VCRs, however, is toward "no-frills" models designed to compete in price with the new videodisc players (currently priced at $500 to $750). Quasar showed one such model with a list price of $695, and others are due soon.

Other new video products were audio-oriented. There was an announcement that Variable Speech Control (already used by JVC) is now also licensed to Aiwa, GE, Panasonic, and Sony. With VSC, videotapes played at speeds faster than those they were recorded at can still be understood. That's more than a convenience: VSC claims that learning from material heard at twice normal speed is both easy and efficient.

For cable viewers, there were several converters to bring in special cable channels. Magnavox's $27.50 model switches mid-band channels A through L and super-band channels J through W onto UHF frequencies. Magnavox's CTC5R remote converter has its own wireless remote controller. Bruce Instruments, Marshall Electronics, and Guardian Electronics showed similar converters.

With video systems beginning to include audio, video-to-audio accessories, a few of which will also be familiar to audiophiles. The KLH DNF1201A Dynamic Noise Filter is now being promoted for video-sound noise reduction too. Superox showed their GEM 100 video equalizer, used to enhance luminescence, color, and contrast by boosting various video-signal frequencies.

In receivers, Advent came up with one of those "why didn't I think of that?" solutions to the problem of fitting a projection screen into a room: the screen of their new $2,500 VBT 100 simply folds down to form a table top. RCA announced its first projection system, a 50-inch model. Fisher showed a video and TV line, including a rear-projection system. Hitachi introduced a $3,300 front-projection system with a 50-inch screen and a pair of two-way speaker systems. MGA/Mitsubishi showed a similar model, a $4,500 unit with doors that cover the screen when it is not in use; its two sets of speakers each have separate amplifiers for, of course, stereo use.

Panasonic introduced the CT-551, a 5-inch color set with direct video and audio input and output jacks that permit it to be used as a video monitor (or, for that matter, as a TV tuner) for about $430. Most interesting to audiophiles, perhaps, will be the prototype TV sets shown by Fisher. A 26-inch console had stereo sound with two-way speakers and a speaker defeat switch, presumably in case you want to route the sound to your audio system's speakers.
Emmylou Harris' "Evangeline": Inspired Programming

Boy, howdy! The first side of "Evangeline," Emmylou Harris' new effort for Warner Bros., is simply awesome music making, the most impressive half of an album I've heard—honestly—since side two of "Abbey Road." It starts with I Don't Have to Crawl, a fine mood piece by Rodney Crowell, and shifts nifty into How High the Moon (!), with Albert Lee (electric guitar), Tony Rice (acoustic guitar), and Ricky Skaggs (mandolin) taking turns paying homage to those great licks Les Paul invented so that Jerry Douglas can make a summary statement on the dobro, of all instruments. Beautiful. (If Mary Ford could've sung the way Emmylou sings here, my whole childhood would have been different.) Then comes Spanish Johnny, a truly haunting (and seldom played) old Paul Siebel song in a version even better than Ian Tyson's (which I have on a much-cherished Canadian album I've about worn out). If Emmylou, with Waylon Jennings singing a larger-than-life harmony, doesn't raise hairs on the back of your neck with this one, you're just dead. And then another surprise: John Fogerty's Bad Moon Rising, one of the best examples of Creedence Clearwater's simplicity and goodness. The side ends with the fine, countrified title song by Robbie Robertson.

The second side was, I thought at first, a letdown. But then I listened some more. It is, in fact, the other half of a yin-yang proposition. Where the first side comes out and grabs you so that you have to just sit there and dote on it, the second side wants you to have a little patience and do a little work. Songs like James Taylor's Millworker and Rodney Crowell's Ashes By Now (I like this version better than Rodney's own) aren't about to grab anyone, but they will reward your purposeful involvement. Mister Sandman (!?) might easily be considered a repertoire goof, but it's given such a classy treatment that older listeners may even forget how lousy the McGuire Sisters were. (All is forgiven! Silly old song, come home!) I still have trouble with the melody of Bill Payne's Oh Atlantis—the use of interval seems a bit whopper-jawed—but even there you get exemp-
Emmylou Harris

(Photo courtesy of Warner Bros. Records)
CHRISTOPH VON DOHNÁNYI: responding to the coloristic sideman, Amos Garrett. But there’s no showing off in the “Evangeline” instrumentals, no lick that does not serve a purpose. There are, in fact, a number of dazzling runs that serve very good purposes indeed, and they lead me to think that musicians are going to like this album as much as normal people will. If I could afford only one album released so far in 1981, this would be it.

—Noel Coppage

Stravinsky’s Firebird: Its Rich Sonic Detail Is a Natural for Digital Recording

With all its orchestral bangles, baubles, and beads, the complete 1910 Firebird score is a natural for digital mastering, as is gorgeously evident from the very opening of London’s new version with Christoph von Dohnányi and the Vienna Philharmonic. The darkness and the “fancy lights” of the mysterious introduction become all but palpable in the recording, so rich is it in detail and sensual sonic ambiance. It is, in fact, to the coloristic and sensual elements in this work that Dohnányi seems to respond most, and not, thank goodness, at the expense of rhythmic vitality. He neither dawdles nor plays with the music, with the result that the Firebird has never soared and fluttered more seductively, nor have Kastchei and his minions with their haunted carillon ever seemed quite so eerie and so terrifying as they are here.

Beyond all these atmospherics, Dohnányi pays loving attention to melodic content, giving the heady Russian-folk-song flavor that permeates this score a pleasurable prominence it seldom enjoys. Appropriately, there is dynamic range aplenty and at every point, separately and collectively, in the spectrum, but, as always in the best digital mastering (and superior pressing), it is the fine detail in the sound of the percussive and plectral overtones that adds that vital something extra. It’s all here, presented in the most opulent fashion by the Vienna Philharmonic in peak form. I won’t throw out my Stravinsky and Boulez recordings of the music, but this new London disc I’ll certainly keep. And for the Stravinsky fan who is also a sound buff, the record is simply a must.

—David Hall

Kubelik’s Freischütz: Lovingly Conducted Realization of a Glorious Score

It is hardly surprising that Carl Maria von Weber’s opera Der Freischütz, thoroughly steeped as it is in German traditions and folklore, has never become part of the international standard repertoire. Further, since the work was introduced 160 years ago (June 18, 1821), we might as well face the fact that it never will. But at least we have several recorded versions—all of German origin, of course—to remind us more than once that Der Freischütz abounds in gorgeous, frequently virtuosic orchestral writing, in inspired atmospheric tone painting of nature, and in beautifully laid-out arias and ensembles. Even the libretto, taken on its own terms, is quite decent. All in all, then, a masterpiece.

The excellence of nearly all the previous recorded versions is proof of the esteem in which the opera is held in Europe. The latest version comes from London; lovingly conducted by Rafael Kubelik and with one exception splendidly sung, it is perhaps the best of them all. Right from the start, in the justly famed overture, Kubelik captures the aura of ominous tension that hangs over much of this opera. His leadership never fails to bring out the rich orchestral sonorities, the ingenious details of the instrumentation, the incisive instrumental underlining of the recitatives, or the Beethoven-like power of the dramatic scenes. Though he does not quite match the hair-trigger precision Carlos Kleiber achieves in his rival set for Deutsche Grammophon (2709 046), he avoids his colleague’s occasional tempo extremes and his overall view is warmer, more human. His orchestra supports him splendidly: the important flute, viola, and cello solos are impressive, the horns nothing short of magnificent.

Laudably, the troublesome “tradition” of having actors supply the spoken dialogues is dispensed with here. Sensibly reduced (as they usually are),

Leon Ware Steps Out: “Rockin’ You Eternally” Is a Fine Showcase For a Fine Songwriter

Leon Ware is an artist whose name always rings a bell somewhere at the back of my mind, but the little tin-

kles never swelled to an outright jang-

gle of recognition. No wonder: his most out-

standing rhythm-and-blues contributions to date have usually been re-

corded by the Isley Brothers, Kim

Weston, Johnny Nash, Ike and Tina

Turner, the Righteous Brothers, and

Michael Jackson. Ware himself re-

mained mostly in the background until

1974, when he was featured on Quincy

Jones' excellent album “Body Heat” (A&M SP-3617) singing his

“If I Ever Lose This Heaven” in a memorable duet

with the late Minnie Riperton. This fine composition became a pop stan-

dard when it was picked up by the Average White Band and others, but,

though acclaim was lavished on the

song, its creator remained in the shadow-

s, the albums he made under his own

name never quite catching fire.

There may in fact have been some

little tendency on Ware’s part to avoid

the limelight, as the story of Marvin Gaye’s 1976 hit “I Want You” (Tamla

T6-342S1) suggests. Ware was then

working for Motown, and the album

had been designed to showcase all his
talents—composing, singing, and pro-
ducing. The tracks had indeed already

been laid down with Ware’s vocals, but

at the last minute he decided it would

be more beneficial to his career if a star

of Gaye’s stature sang his songs. Ware’s vocals were erased and Gaye

went on to chalk up another best seller.

Now, however, the time has evidently

arrived for Leon Ware to step out as

his own man. His new album, “Rockin’

You Eternally,” is a worthy vehicle to
do it with, for it fully captures his gift

for composing buoyant songs with en-
gaging melodies and imaginative shifts

of key. An accomplished producer, he

knows how to manipulate all the aural

elements to achieve a rich, harmoni-

ous balance, but the real treat is his vocal

performances: he is quite likely the

most sensual and original male singer

to emerge since Marvin Gaye packed

up his sack of woes and sought seclu-
sion in London.

Though Ware has suffered in the

past from comparison with Gaye, he

might well benefit now from that super-

star’s continuing absence from the re-
cording scene. Like Gaye, he has a

keenly discriminating ear for nuance

and inflection, and he uses it to tease us

with the pauses, the slurred spaces be-

tween notes, building up an almost

palpable tension. Unlike Gaye, who is a

master of the taut falsetto style of sing-
ing, Ware most often stays in his natu-

real register to produce a roundly mas-
culine sound. Thus, though there are in-

termittent suggestions of Gaye in timbre and in texture, Ware actually

sings in a voice of his own.

(Continued on page 76)
Although the songs in this new release seldom achieve the high level of If I Ever Lose This Heaven, they are well within that quality range, especially Baby Don’t Stop Me Now, Sure Do Want You Now, and In Our Garden, the last being a message song reminiscent of Gaye’s What’s Going On. Yes, I think it is clearly time for Leon Ware.

—Phyl Garland

LEON WARE: Rockin’ You Eternally.
Leon Ware (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. A Little Boogie (Never Hurt No One); Baby Don’t Stop Me; Sure Do Want You Now; Our Time; Rockin’ You Eternally; Got to Be Loved; In Our Garden. ELEKTRA 6E-332 $7.98, © TC5-332 $7.98, ©ETS-332 $7.98.

Jean Redpath Sings
Robert Burns:
Mostly Sweet, but Sometimes Salty

That Robert Burns! What a gifted and complicated fellow he was! They never told us in school that the man who wrote all those bright, boring little ballads about the “bonnie green braes” was also a bit of a rip who could make the ears of eighteenth-century listeners burn with double-entendres and ribald references to their unreferables. Not to worry, however, for we are given another opportunity to fill in the blanks with a second volume of songs by Burns put together by Jean Redpath. She gamely sings them all, innocent plaints of love such as Sweetest May, patriotic ditties like It Was A’ for Our Rightfu’ King, verses that could be sung “before ladies,” such as Sae Flaxen Were Her Ringlets, and others that could not (one is called Nine Inch Will Please a Lady, but the poet also supplied a more “delicate” set of lyrics for the same air), and even the familiar Auld Lang Syne set to an unfamiliar traditional tune.

The album, which bursts with infectious music (the poet found his melodies everywhere, in tune books, in the street ballads of Edinburgh, in broadsides of the time), also supplies much fascinating information about Burns and his period (1759-1796) set down in a highly entertaining style, plus complete texts of everything. As for Miss Redpath, she has long since earned her just reputation as the foremost traditional singer of Scotland, and she confirms it again here. She is, quite simply, wonderful. This is a worthy successor to Volume One; may there be many more like it.

—Paul Kresh

JEAN REDPATH: The Songs of Robert Burns. Had I the Wyte; Nine Inch Will Please a Lady; Beware o’ Bonie Ann; The Cooper o’ Cuddy; Sweetest May; A Parcel of Rogues in a Nation; Auld Lang Syne; Hey How Johnie Lad; Mary Morison; The Dusty Miller; Steer Her Up; It Was A’ for Our Rightfu’ King; Sae Flaxen Were Her Ringlets. Jean Redpath (vocals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. PHILO PH1048 $7.98.

João Carlos Martins
Is Back with a Dazzling Recording of Bach’s Partitas

Well, the art of playing Bach on the piano is not dead. Quite the contrary, it is alive and extraordinarily lively in the hands of the Brazilian pianist João Carlos Martins who, with a sensational new recording of Bach’s
partitas (the first album of a projected set of the complete Bach for clavier), caps a remarkable comeback to active performance. Martins, who made his initial impact almost twenty years ago with The Well Tempered Clavier, injured his arm playing soccer in 1970 and was inactive for several years. His rumored return is obviously a fact, and, to judge by this recording, he has lost none of his old ability to startle and move us.

On the technical side—both playing and recording—this Arabesque set is impressive. The digital sound is excellent, and what it reproduces is the clearest, most articulated and vital keyboard playing you have ever heard. This accomplishment is not purely technical, of course: Martins' powers of articulation and phrasing, as great as his technical, of course: Martins' powers of technical, of course: Martins' powers of articulation and phrasing, as great as his technical, of course: Martins' powers of articulation and phrasing, as great as his technical, of course: Martins' powers of articulation and phrasing, as great as his technical, of course: Martins' powers of articulation and phrasing, as great as his technical, of course: Martins' powers of articulation and phrasing, as great as his technical, of course: Martins' powers of articulation and phrasing, as great as his
tions within a tempo do seem capricious. (Only popular and folk musicians make their personal and expressive tempos)

JUNE 1981


--Eric Salzman
Popular Music Briefs

REMEMBER when they used to let you listen to records before you bought them? Probably not, it's been so long. The "Soundbar," a new merchandising display island, will make it possible for as many as twelve customers to sample (or "preaudit") a dozen different albums simultaneously through earphones at the point of sale. There is no wear and tear on the discs because the Soundbar is strictly a "hands off" demonstration tool. The customers do not handle the actual records, but select stereo tapes of what they wish to hear by pushing buttons. The unit can be programmed to play an entire album repeatedly or to play a promotional message read by an announcer who then introduces shorter preselected cuts. The manufacturer, New York's Media Communications, Inc., hopes to place Soundbars in stores beginning in July.

INNER CITY RECORDS has just inaugurated a line of jazz cassettes for audiophiles. Selected releases from its catalog are now available on chromium-dioxide tapes, duplicated at a speed ratio of eight to one from the original masters, for a list price of $8.98. Among the artists represented in the initial release are such jazz notables as Stéphane Grappelli, Jean-Luc Ponty, Stan Getz, Helen Humes, Dizzy Gillespie, and Gerry Mulligan. Heding its bet a little, Inner City is also marketing CrO2 tapes of a New Wave pop band (the Sneakers) and the even more seductive sounds of actress Cybil Shepherd warbling such old favorites as Mad About the Boy.

BAD news for the President's inflation fighters. Bearded country star Kenny Rogers recently purchased a thirty-five-room house on ten acres of land in Beverly Hills. The price? The highest ever paid for a single-family residence in the United States—a staggering $14.5 million. Formerly owned by movie producer Gino Delaurentis, the modest little shack has nine bedrooms, eight baths, and seven servants' rooms. Not to mention an elevator, a wine cellar, a gun room, a heated pool, a screening room, and a thirteen-car garage.

Grace Slick (who has re-joined Jefferson Starship yet again) was in New York recently promoting her new solo album. "Welcome to the Wrecking Ball." Stereo Review caught up with everybody's favorite hippie dream-date outside a storage room at RCA ("I've been with this outfit for fifteen years," she said, "and I still don't know my way to the bathroom.")

The new album is a 180-degree turnabout from the orchestral lushness of her previous "Dreams," a heavy-metal excursion that suggests Pat Benatar on overdrive. The idea for the disc came to her in Houston: "I saw a wrecking ball there and had a religious experience. They were knocking down a building that was only eight years old, and I thought, what a stupid thing, knocking down things just to make way for more stupid things. The wrecking ball itself had the kind of indifferent, massive power that this country exhibits. It was also like rock-and-roll." Most of the music was written by her current guitarist, Scott Zito: "It's more Scott's record than anybody else's. I don't want to do an album where I write all of it, because I'm limited. And the kind of music I want to write I can't sing very well. I grew up listening to two records at home, the Peer Gynt Suite and Miles Davis' Sketches of Spain, so what I do is sort of a cross between semiclasical piano music and Spanish stuff." Asked if she thought that the album, like the recent Starship product, was more blatantly commercial than her Sixties material, she couldn't agree. "I've tried writing AM lyrics, and I can't. I've tried like crazy. I tried just this morning to write a song Mickey Thomas [Starship's new lead singer] and I could sing, but it's dirty. I'm still doing the double-entendre. I'd love to be able to know what it is to write a regular song everybody could understand, but I just don't think straight."

Other one-liners included comments on her daughter Chiara ("At the moment she wants to be a singer, tomorrow she might want to be a nurse"), her days with the Airplane ("We enjoyed being peculiar-looking people that were afraid..."), and the difference between her previous albums: "About the Boy." She said, "This is more Scott's, more seductive sounds of acoustic guitar, and it's dirty. I'm still doing the doubled-entendre."

Grace Slick (forStereo Review)
Making a rare TV appearance, Pete Townshend showed up recently on a BBC talk show hosted by Michael Parkinson to hype the Who's new "Face Dances" album. He was slotted alongside actress Shelley Winters, who apparently is not much of a Who fan. She turned to Pete at one point and asked, "You're not the one who was engaged to Princess Margaret, are you?" Ms. Winters was referring to Royal Air Force Group Captain Peter Townsend, a former beau of Her Royal Highness, and no, he isn't.

"St. Giles Cripplegate," one of the most sought-after cult albums of the Seventies, has been reissued on Initial Records (RC 006), an English classical label. The work of producer/arranger Jack Nitzche, who has been associated with acts ranging from Phil Specter and the Rolling Stones to Mink Deville and Graham Parker, the album is a series of orchestral sketches, rather like the score to a movie that only that was never filmed (Nitzche did, in fact, score Jack Nicholson's One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest). "St. Giles," along with John Cale's "The Academy in Peril," was part of Warner Bros.' brief, odd fling with the London Symphony, that sound rather like the score to a movie that was never filmed (Nitzche did, in fact, score Jack Nicholson's One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest). "St. Giles" is not much of a Who fan. She asked, "I think I'd be perfect as Darth Vader's wife in the next Star Wars movie, and I know what I'd say to George Lucas if I had the guts to call him up." — S S

The Music for UNICEF program began in 1979, the International Year of the Child, with the Gift of Song concert at the U.N. General Assembly. Income from that concert alone in record sales and royalties from donated songs has brought UNICEF $3.5 million. The Bee Gees donated all future royalties on the song Too Much Heaven which accounts for half a million dollars of the total, and royalties are still coming in Rod Stewart donated the royalties to Do You Think I'm Sexy? and ABBA donated "Chiquitita, a big international hit. Other artists participating in the Music for UNICEF project include John Denver, Earth, Wind and Fire, Fleetwood Mac, Cat Stevens, and Roger Whittaker. The latest Music for UNICEF activity is the two-record set "Concerts for Cambodia," now in stores. (Kampuchea is the new name for Cambodia.) The album, featuring performances by the Clash, Elvis Costello, the Pretenders, Paul McCartney, Van Morrison, Queen, the Who, and others is being pressed and distributed by Atlantic, but proceeds go to UNICEF's work for the Kampuchean people. List price: $13.98.

The famous Verve catalog of jazz recordings made during the 1950s and 1960s is being re-released by London Records, a division of PolyGram Classics (no less). The discs will be pressed in Japan on "high-definition, virgin vinyl" and the original Verve cover art will be reproduced. The first release, which should be available by the time you read this, includes twenty-five titles. Among the artists re-released by Verve are such important performers as Ella Fitzgerald, Stan Getz, Billie Holiday, Gerry Mulligan, Charlie Parker, and Oscar Peterson. List price: $.98 each.

French singer/songwriter Enrico Macias, in New York on the first stop of his spring coast-to-coast U.S. tour, was honored by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) with a reception and a citation. Macias is the latest artist to donate all the royalties from one of his songs to UNICEF. The song, Malheur à Celui Qui Blesse un Enfant (Bad Luck to him Who Hurts a Child) is on Philips and EMI albums in Europe, and Macias is rerecording it for the Trema label to be distributed here. The Trema label is produced by Audio Fidelity.

Macias' Pathé album "Douze Nouvelles Chansons" was featured in Stereo Review's "Best of the Month" section 'way back in July 1967. He gave concerts in the United States annually in the late Sixties and early Seventies, but failed to reach a mass audience here (Continental singers, no matter how good, seldom do Edith Piaf was a notable exception, but Macias, Mireille Mathieu, Nana Mouskouri, and Nat "M" Tristal, all big stars in Europe, have attracted only small (though intense) cult followings in the U.S."

TNTs Macias' Pattie album "Douze Nouvelles Chansons" was featured in Stereo Review's "Best of the Month" section 'way back in July 1967. He gave concerts in the United States annually in the late Sixties and early Seventies, but failed to reach a mass audience here (Continental singers, no matter how good, seldom do Edith Piaf was a notable exception, but Macias, Mireille Mathieu, Nana Mouskouri, and Nat "M" Tristal, all big stars in Europe, have attracted only small (though intense) cult followings in the U.S."

...
BADFINGER: Say No More. Badfinger
(vocals and instrumentals). I Got You; Rock and Roll Contract; Hold On; Three
Time Loser; Crocodilia; No More; and four
others from JZT 37004 $7.98, © CS
16030 $7.98, © TP 16030 $7.98.
Performance: Very good
Recording: Good

Badfinger's comeback album last year on
Elektra was pallid, but this time out the re-
constituted group—original members Joey
Molland and Tom Evans, plus Tony Kaye,
Richard Bryans, and Glen Sherba—has
opted for an aggressive sound, and it works.
It isn't the same as the Badfinger sound of
the late 1960s; when original member Pete
Ham took his own life in 1975, distraught
over bad management and the collapse of
the Beatles and Apple Records (under
whose auspices Badfinger first appeared),
he took that special sound with him. I sug-
gested in my review of the Elektra album
that since Badfinger was trading on memo-
ries of a sound they could no longer pro-
duce, the name should be retired. I'm not so
sure about that now; this album may signal
a second identity worthy of the first.

None of the melodies on "Say No More"
approach those of the old Badfinger, but
there is an attractive renewed confidence
and assertiveness. Molland and Evans are
writing, playing, and singing hard, and it's
true they could have accepted them on their
own new terms. The most interesting cut is
Rock and Roll Contract, a cynical, painful,
and painful horror story about what can
happen to a band. Some of the guitar pas-
sages paraphrase the George Harrison/Eric
Clapton duet on While My Guitar Gently
Weeps from the 1973 Bangladesh Concert
(for which the original Badfinger served as
the rhythm section), and there are oblique
references to Pete Ham's suicide and a
spoken interjection in a bogeyman voice:
"We have a five-year agreement until death
do us part... or I pick up the option-heh
heh heh." If this is exorcism, I hope it
works.

THE BOOMTOWN RATS: Mono Bango.
The Boomtown Rats (vocals and instru-
ментals). Mood Mambo; Straight Up; This Is
My Room; Another Piece of Red; Go Man
Go; Under Their Thumb (Its Under My
Thumb); and six others. COLUMBIA JC
37062 $7.98, © JCT 37062 $7.98, © JCA
37062 $7.98.
Performance: Nothing to say
Recording: Good

It's hard not to like the Boomtown Rats.
Their lead singer, Bob Geldof, is one of the
great bigmouths of our age, they put on a
wonderful, energetic stage show, and
they've made a couple of really terrific sin-
gles. Unfortunately, now that they're inter-
national stars (huge everywhere but in
America) they have succumbed to Creepin'
Significance, and their music is clearly suf-
ferring. This new album is an aural Cecil B.
DeMille epic: trashy, overproduced, gimb-
micky, and mannered, it strains for the Big
Statement in a really embarrassing way.
There's attempted social commentary (An-
other Piece of Red chronicles the decline of
the British Empire, no less), lots of sound
effects, lots of than fully baked ideas
(Mood Mambo features Geldof doing off-
craft stream-of-consciousness Beatnik poetry, which is hardly my idea of a good
time), but precious little of the blues roots
or pop smarts that made the Rats' first two
albums memorable. If you're looking for
tunes or genuine feeling, I'd advise you to
look elsewhere.

JIMMY BUFFETT: Coconut Telegraph.
Jimmy Buffett (vocals, guitar); vocal and
instrumental accompaniment: It's My Job;
The Good Fight; Growing Older but Not Up;
Stars Fell on Alabama; Little Miss Magic;
and four others. MCA MCA-5169
$7.98, © MCAC-5169 $7.98, © MCAT-
5169 $7.98.
Performance: Good
Recording: Good

I'm a fan of Jimmy Buffett's, but even fans
can become bored with their idols if they
never change. Buffett's new album finds
him lazily coasting in almost every way.
While it's true that he created a musical
mini-genre (which some have called Gulf-
and-Western) in his songs about the care-
free, laid-back lifestyle of the citizens of the
Florida Keys, his work is beginning to
sound mechanical and pat instead of
charmingly familiar.

Not that he still doesn't have a striking
ability to bend the language delightfully,
because he does. He wryly comments on the
death of John Wayne in Incommunicado,
and such lines as "So let the winds of
change blow over my head/I'd rather die
while I'm living than live while I'm dead"
(from Growing Older but Not Up) and
"There's no place like home when it's this
far away..." (from The Weather Is Here,
Wish You Were Beautiful) are pure gold.
But too much of the rest is not so much laid-
back as shopworn. Vocally Buffett does an
interesting job on the Mitchell Parish clas-
sic Stars Fell on Alabama, apparently in
an attempt to sound like a variety of old-time
American crooners. With typical Buffett
twitchiness, though, he ends up sounding
more like Al Bowlly than a Florida Keys
crooner with the Ray Noble Orchestra. I
think Buffett needs to get out of that ham-
mock and the sooner the better.

BURRITO BROTHERS: Hearts on the
Line. Burrito Brothers (vocals and instru-
ментals) instrumental accompaniment: That's When You Know It's Over; She's a
Friend of a Friend; Family Tree; Oh, Lones-
some Me; and five others. CURB JZ 37004
$7.98, © JZT 37004 $7.98.
Performance: Possible sleeper
Recording: Good

Through the years the Burrito Brothers
(once known as the Flying Burrito Broth-
ers) have been loved a lot, but not by a lot of people. They've lain dormant at times and
have seldom maintained the same personnel
for two straight albums. For this one they've tried to "broaden their musical
base," a move that has killed off many a
cult favorite, but this time it just might
work. New member John Beland has a
softening—and broadening—influence on
them, especially as a songwriter. And if
She's a Friend of a Friend is the only good
example of an old-time Burritos song—
smartly paced and heavily country-in-
fluenced—the others, the new-type materi-
al, have their own good points. The band
apparently still doesn't have a drummer
(the studio drummer used here isn't cred-
tied), but the instrumentals are nicely
adapted to the new stuff without losing all
the old identifying marks. My present im-
(Continued on page 82)
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As you probably already know, the cover of the Who's new "Face Dances" carries portraits of the band members by various well-known artists. Some advertising copywriter has already run the idea into the ground in the British press by proclaiming that the album will "change the face of rock." Well, to be blunt, it won't (though that's a claim this band could once have made with some justice), and there's not even any indication in the music that anything of the sort was seriously attempted.

Despite the obvious need for change in pop music, I'm not convinced that the Who really needs to prove anything any more. They have made enduring music, changed a lot of lives, and through it all remained the most brutally honest rock band ever. It's hardly fair, at this point, to expect every note Pete Townshend writes to have the fresh impact of Substitute or My Generation or Pictures of Lily or whatever your favorite Who song is at the moment. All we can ask is that he and the rest of the band continue to speak truthfully about their lives and about how they see rock-and-roll. Whatever else one might say about "Face Dances," that's exactly what it does.

I'm not suggesting that the new album is any masterpiece, but it is a big step in the right direction after the whiny boredom of "Who Are You." In a way, it's tempting to view "Face Dances" as a debut, since any edition of the Who without Keith Moon has to be considered a new band. Indeed, some of the pleasure of "Face Dances" comes from hearing how Kenny Jones has (perhaps unconsciously) altered the Who's old style. Jones is an excellent but thoroughly conventional drummer, sane and solid where Moon was mad and brilliant; there's no denying that there is a loss in overall excitement and energy, but I have to admire the way his playing fits in with the more grown-up slant of Townshend's current songwriting.

The other important change in the new Who is, surprisingly, in Roger Daltrey's singing. His work over the last few years, though technically superior to anything he could have done earlier, has been verging on the mannered, unfeeling posturing of a typical heavy-metal front man—sort of a cross between a bad Bob Seger and the interchangeable belters in such ghastly dinosaur bands as Judas Priest. But his performances on "Face Dances" are close to being revelatory; he reaches levels of feeling and delicacy and nuance that I had thought were beyond him. He seems truly to identify with Townshend's songs again, and the passion and wit with which he sings them can't, for once, be explained in the usual way as a Svengali act by Townshend. If for no other reason than Daltrey's vocal resonance, "Face Dances" bodes well for the Who's future.

As for the songs themselves, I have to say that too many are either too long, too vague, or underdeveloped. The two by John Entwistle, in fact, are flat-out disasters. The Quiet One is based on a riff so banal I can't believe anybody thought it was good enough for a Who record, and although the sexual paranoia of You is somewhat more compelling, the song is still a turgid, unlistenable mess. Entwistle's material used to be weird and funny; these tunes seem to be by someone else altogether.

Townshend's songs are variable, but even the worst have an inventiveness and insight that make one overlook their glaring weaknesses. The best—and they are very good indeed—are the first and last. The opener, You Better You Bet, is not only a classic Who single but one of the best attempts in rock history at setting a mid-life crisis to music. It shows the Who striking a genuinely new posture: adult frustrations are brilliantly expressed in a poignant and funny vocal by Daltrey, the tune's a honey, the back-up harmonies are gorgeous, and the band gives an explosive yet controlled performance. In short, it's great stuff. The closer, Another Tricky Day, is almost as good. Besides being an exciting piece of rock-and-roll, it has some pointed and valuable things to say about the dangers of letting one's personal demons serve as a metaphor for the state of the world (an insight I hope will not be lost on, say, the Clash).

Brief takes on the rest: Don't Let Go the Coat is the prettiest love song the Who has given us in quite a while; Cache Cache and Did You Steal My Money have good ideas but don't go anywhere with them; How Can You Do It Alone is a potentially heart-breaking conceit that simply wears out its welcome; and Daily Records is appealingly humane but is memorable chiefly for the great line, "When you're eleven the whole world's out to lunch."

In sum, "Face Dances" is an uneven album that nonetheless shows the Who is very much alive and well. If rock-and-roll needs elder statesmen (an arguable proposition), we couldn't ask for better ones. After "Who Are You" I was prepared to write the band off, and Townshend's solo album was such a strong statement that it seemed perhaps he felt the same way. The nicest thing about "Face Dances," then, is that, flawed and inconsistent though it is, it makes it okay to like the Who again.

Steve Simels

THE WHO: Face Dances. The Who (vocals and instrumental). You Better You Bet; Don't Let Go the Coat; Cache Cache; The Quiet One. Did You Steal My Money; How Can You Do It Alone; Daily Records; You Are You; Another Tricky Day. WARNER BROS. HS 3516 $8.98, © M5 3516 $8.98, © MB 3516 $8.98.

JUNE 1981

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FRANKE AND THE KNOCKOUTS: klutzy name, but good theatrics

FRANKE AND THE KNOCKOUTS: The Main Event. Franke Prevette (vocals), the Knockouts (vocals and instrumentals). Come Back, Sweetheart; She's a Runner, You're My Girl, One for All; Running into the Night; and four others. MILLENNIUM BXL-1-7755 $7.98, © BXK-1-7755 $7.98, © BXSI-1-7755 $7.98.

Performances Very good Recording Thick

Despite its klutzy name this is a highly professional band. Franke Prevette, son of an opera tenor, sings in the rock tradition of Johnny Maestro and Eddie Brigati—with full tones, respect for the melody, good interpretation of texts, and a bit of theatrics. The line between this kind of singing and hambone is sometimes thin, and, though Prevette is careful not to cross it, he does sometimes forget a lesson he learned fronting a heavy-metal band called Bull Angus: "I realized I wasn't singing anymore...I was yelling."

But Prevette in good form is someone to watch. For one thing, he has a fine sense of timing and phrasing. Furthermore, he is a fine singer, well able to command a crowd. The Knockouts, too, are a fine band. They are well rehearsed and well disciplined, and they play well together. Their sound is clean and crisp, and they are able to handle a variety of styles, from soul to rock. The result is a fine album that should appeal to a wide audience.

FRANK AND THE KNOCKOUTS: klutzy name, but good theatrics

EMMYLOU HARRIS: Evangeline (see Best of the Month, page 70)

MILLIE JACKSON: I Had to Say It. Millie Jackson (vocals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. I Had to Say It; Loving Arms '81; The Rap '81; Stranger, I Ain't No Glory Story; It's Gonna Take Some Time This Time; and five others. SPRING SP-1-6730 $7.98, © CT-1-6730 $7.98, © BT-1-6730 $7.98.

Performance Censored Recording Satisfactory

The Moral Majority must have invaded Spring Records and clamped a hand over the dirtiest mouth in town. Perhaps the idea is to gain more airplay for Millie Jackson's records. Either that, or some smartass has arbitrarily sabotaged her latest album. Instead of the penetrating, funny, and utterly vulgar raps and lyrics that are Jackson's stock in trade, we now have bleeps. The result is that some of the best parts of this record have been censored. It's a shame, for this prudishness lays a pall on the work of one of our most enjoyable, freewheeling r- & b performers.

Fortunately, the sabotour permits Jackson to use the word "bed," enabling her to explore the consequences of casual sex on The Rap '81 and Stranger. There's still enough of the essential Millie left to make the title track, I Had to Say It, one of those head-bobbing "Amen" numbers for which she is famous. Here she aims her fire at black men who prefer white women and overweight people who collect food stamps. The second side consists of fairly straight r- & b songs with no rapping. I have to say it: I'm disappointed.

THE JAM: Sound Affects. The Jam (vocals and instrumentals). Start!, Going Undercover, That's Entertainment, Scrape Away, Set the House Ablaze, Pretty Green; and six others. POLYDOR PD-1-6315 $7.98, © CT-1-6315 $7.98, © BT-1-6315 $7.98.

Performance Very good Recording Very good

"Sound Affects" is the Jam's sixth album, and while it is a musical portrait of Britain's current social, economic, and political woes, it is also in its way quite patriotic. Lost and idle people, the fatuousness of politicians, hysterical spending, social jealousy, and urban decay are the subjects of the songs, and much of the music is gloomy, dry, and spare. But Shelley's exhortation to Englishmen to "Rise like lions after slumber" graces the back cover, and there are inflections of hope and confidence in the music as well.

It must be sweet for the British to remember when the Beatles not only ruled the world but almost reversed the island's negative balance of payments, so it's not surprising that the Jam's music feeds on and
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Barbara Cook's latest album, "It's Better with a Band," was recorded live with digital equipment by the Moss Music Group at her Carnegie Hall concert last September. The overflow audience evidently responded to her with the kind of rapturous attention and appreciation very few performers can command. They were here from the first note of Irving Berlin's "I Love a Piano" to the last chord of "Sweet Georgia Brown," alive to every lyric lilt, unexpected mood change, and musical shading. Ms. Cook brought to her varied repertoire. It all sounds a lot like love—and flowing from both sides of the proscenium.

Ms. Cook rewarded her loyal audience, and the disc enables us to share that reward, by being absolutely brilliant. At least two tracks here—one a Leonard Bernstein medley, the other Noel Coward's "If Love Were All"—are just plain exquisite. The only missing step, I think, is the inclusion of "The Ingenue" and the title song, both of which strike me as a bit "twee" (a useful British neologism meaning just 'too painfully precious'). But the audience obviously didn't think so, for they loved everything, and certainly everything here sounds splendid thanks to the digital recording.

If your only acquaintance with Barbara Cook is through her memorable work in such historic Broadway-cast albums as those of "Candide," "The Music Man," and "She Loves Me," then you owe it to yourself to hear her newer, mellower incarnation. As a cabaret singer, she's well on her way to becoming a cross between Mabel Mercer and Lotte Lenya. —Peter Keil

BARBARA COOK: It's Better with a Band. Barbara Cook (vocals); Wally Harper (piano and cond.); other musicians. I Love a Piano; It's Better with a Band; Remember; Chant la Vie; Them There Eyes; Bernstein Medley—Simple Song/One Hand; One Heart/Some Other Time! Can Cook, Too; I Never Meant to Hurt You! Never Knew That Men Cried; The Ingenue; If Love Were All; Sweet Georgia Brown. Moss Music Group D/MMG 104 $10.98.

The only successful cut here is Jeffreys' carbon copy of '66 Tears, a 1967 hit by Question Mark and the Mysterians, in which he indulges his Jaggerisms to the full. At least Jeffreys has made one person happier—Rudy Martinez, who wrote '66 Tears, will be receiving some royalty money. J.V.

KLEEER: License to Dream. Kleeer (vocals and instrumentals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. Running Back to You; Hypnotized; Get Tough; Say You Love Me; and four others. ATLANTIC SD 19288 $7.98. © CS 19288 $7.98. © TP 19288 $7.98.

Performance: Solid music. Recording: Not up to standard.

Despite some virtuoso noodling on guitar, percussion, and all manner of electronic instruments, what Kleeer's music is all about is the beat. "License to Dream," their third album, is the most ambitious yet, for though the beat is still king, it's syncopated, toyed with, and made to yield a wider range of effects than it does even in their impressive previous "Winners" album.

Running Back to You is a case in point. A dozen distinct instrumental voices, from an electronic squeak-squeak-yet, for though the beat leaves something to be desired, but the effect is powerful. Sippin' and Kissin'—sung with hushed Sergio Mendes charm by Kleeer's frequent guest artist Isabelle Coles—dramatically shifts the mood to straight bassa nova. The group's disco beginnings are recalled by the energetic Get Tough, a real ripper that's enhanced by a sense of humor. Kleeer is still a solid group, and I highly recommend their new album. I.C.

LAKESIDE: Fantastic Voyage. Lakeside (vocals and instrumentals); instrumental accompaniment. Fantastic Voyage; I Need You; Strung Out; I Love Everything You Do; and four others. SOLAR BXL-3720 $7.98, © BXK-1-3720 $7.98, © BXSI-3720 $7.98.


When Lakeside swings into the chorus of their Top-40 hit Fantastic Voyage ("We just want you to feel/Nothing but pleasure, musical pleasure"), it is one of the more delightful dance moments of the year. The song is a true disco-funk hybrid and a fine lead-in for the album. But it's all downhill from there. The group's members write, arrange, and perform their own music, and they even produced this second album themselves, so I have to assume the end result is pretty much what the guys wanted. It's too bad so much of it is mediocre. They do wring considerable feeling out of a me-

BARBARA COOK: Escape Artist. Garland Jeffreys (vocals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. Christine; 96 Tears; Jump Jump; Mystery Kids; Modern Lovers; Ghost of a Chance; R.O.C.K.; and seven others. EPIC JE 36983 $7.98, © JET 36983 $7.98.

Performance: Drivel. Recording: Very good.

Garland Jeffreys has long been touted as "a poet of the urban street experience" and a cult figure who needs only one more "landmark" album (or possibly two or three) to bring him to a general audience. It may happen; relentless bores sometimes succeed. Jeffreys doesn't have enough to say and takes too long to say it; he isn't gifted; he's garrulous. His attempts to portray street people aren't half as effective or literate as Tom Waits'; his efforts to write cosmopolitan material like Stevie Wonder's lack not only Wonder's brilliance but his naive charm; and his vocal style, taken from Mick Jagger's circa 1965, is simply irritating. Who else would try to rhyme a mispronunciation of Les Misérables ("lay mizz-er-ables") with "It's one of my favorite novels," throw in other references to French artists to prove he has culture, and then, as a trendy afterthought in the liner notes, dedicate the song to John Lennon?

The only successful cut here is Jeffreys' carbon copy of '66 Tears, a 1967 hit by Question Mark and the Mysterians, in which he indulges his Jaggerisms to the full. At least Jeffreys has made one person happier—Rudy Martinez, who wrote '66 Tears, will be receiving some royalty money. J.V.
andering soul ballad called I Need You, and reggae influences perk up Eveready Man; they also hang some sweet harmonies here and there. But the songs and the arrangements are basically uninspired, and this album will be easily lost in the increasingly crowded r & b field.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

DEBRA LAWS: Very Special. Debra Laws (vocals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. On My Own; Meant for You; Very Special; Long As We're Together; All the Things I Love; and three others. ELEKTRA 6E-300 $7.98, © TCS-300 $7.98, © ET8-300 $7.98.

Performance: Sparkling
Recording: Very good

This is Debra Laws' debut album, so you've probably never heard of her, but she belongs to a very special musical family whose members also include Hubert, Ronnie, and Eloise Laws. All are recording artists of some standing whose activities range over the classical, jazz, and pop fields. From the sound of this set, Debra specializes in a kind of progressive r & b with energetically punched-out rhythms and melodies that have a built-in strutting quality. Her high, clear, youthful voice summons up images of lighthearted dancers rather than heavy sentiments, and there's a touch of Stephanie Mills and a dash of Deniece Williams in her sound. The songs and instrumentals here are several cuts above most of what one hears these days, possibly because brothers Hubert and Ronnie produced the album and used some of the better studio musicians around, including synthesizer specialist Larry Dunn of Earth, Wind & Fire. Among the best tracks are Very Special, which sounds like a natural hit, Meant for You, and Be Yourself, though there's not a dog or even a puppy in the lot. A most promising beginning.

P.G.

ELOISE LAWS. Eloise Laws (vocals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. Let's Find Those Two People Again; Strength of a Woman; Almost All the Way to Love; Moment to Moment; Got You into My Life; You Are Everything; and three others. LIBERTY LT-1063 $7.98, © 4LT-1063 $7.98, © 8LT-1063 $7.98.

Performance: Waste of talent
Recording: Satisfactory

Eloise Laws used to be one of the handful of younger female singers with enough talent, taste, and musical sensibility to be modern jazz stylists. But lately she has plunged into pop (as have Dee Dee Bridgewater and Jean Carn, who once showed similar promise). On this album Laws' voice is clearly superior to the stuff she's singing, mediocre ballads we've all heard more times than we can remember (if under different titles). It is a terrible waste of talent, for she takes the triest sliver of a song and invests it with all the passion and concentration worthy of a major opus. A few things here do manage to transcend the trivial. Let's Find Those Two People Again and Moment to Moment, which open the first and second sides, respectively, are almost worthy showcases, and Almost All the Way to Love, produced...
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by brother Ronnie Laws, bounces along to a beguiling gospel beat.

P.G.


Performance: Provocative
Recording: Terrific

I suppose we should have been tipped off by the "k" in M's successful rock-disco hit Pop Musik. Such spellings have long been a code for those who see fascism under every corporate rock and behind every star in the American flag. But I was nonetheless startled by the agit-pot theme of M's new album. The group's innovative electronic-pop-rock fusion energy is put to the service of material that ticks off the corporate state (Working for the Corporation), racial and political strife (Join the Party), the waste of war (Your Country Needs You), and the drugged society (H relax).

It works only intermittently. Join the Corporation wed a pretty embroidery of whistles to a lyric that becomes the very image of desperate drudgery simply because of its repetition. The flow that seeps into the muscular percussion of Keep It to Yourself becomes almost romantic. And lyrics like "Sweethearts and lovers don't breathe a word/Everything you say is about to be heard" make the title track a truly ominous and distressing, if paranoid, commentary on the ultimate corruption of ultimate power.

But much of the time I felt (as I did in the Sixties, when this sort of thing was more common) that I was being lectured at or warned rather than entertained—even in the broadest possible meaning of that word.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

BARBARA MASON: A Piece of My Life. Barbara Mason (vocals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. Let Me Give You Love; I'll Never Love the Same Way Twice; On and Off; So in Love with You; Yes I'm Ready; Love Having You Around; Playing with My Feelings; and three others. WMOT JW 37060 $6.98, JWT 37060 $6.98, JWA 37060 $6.98.

Performance: A good comeback
Recording: Good

Although Barbara Mason has released several previous albums, I can remember only one of her songs, Yes I'm Ready, which she composed and recorded when she was about thirteen years old. Maybe the memory is so strong because that was her first and biggest hit, or maybe it's because so many of the items she waxed after that just didn't take hold. Maybe she wasn't packaged right or produced properly. Whatever the reason may have been, she didn't click, and it's been about five years since she was last heard on disc.

"A Piece of My Life" is a fine comeback, surpassing in quality most of what Mason has done before. For good luck, she has included an updated version of Yes I'm Ready, nestled among other selections that (Continued on page 94)
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Juice Newton

People have been calling country music conservative as long as I can remember, thinking they had it safely pegged. It's not all that easy. While the genre's concerns have been the basic emotions of love, hate, jealousy, compassion, and so forth—the stuff that William Faulkner said in his Nobel acceptance speech ought to be the concerns of the writer—rather than, say, the width of neckties and lapels, country music has always been alert to and influenced by the outside world.

Even before it had a name, the emerging "hillbilly" music in 1900 met a man named Frank Ferera and borrowed some of his Hawaiian guitar sound. It was "crossover"—conscious at least as early as the Twenties, when it provided a forum for a trained singer named Vernon Dalhart, whose recording of The Prisoner's Song became a national hit. Through the years it has rubbed elbows with Dixieland (remember the Firehouse Five Plus Two?), cowboys (Gene Autry et al.), jazz (Bob Wills), and the blues (Jimmy Rodgers) among other things, in addition to dealing lyrically with current events ranging from the Berlin Wall to women's liberation. Right now, a good-sized portion of country music is responding to, and assimilating influences from, its meeting with a seemingly unlikely and patently non-conservative bunch called the hippies.

Before me is Juice Newton's latest album, "Juice," a good example of that assimilation and another of several signs coming at us lately that "crossover" may not turn out to be so bad a word after all. Rodney Crowell, who definitely is in on it, calls this sort of thing "second-generation country." Use whatever term you're comfortable with, but be aware that we're talking more about an attitude than a sound. In Grandpa Jones' terms, Newton's second album doesn't sound very "country" (neither did her first), but then neither did Eddy Arnold's immersions in strings nearly thirty years ago. But where that kind of crossover attempted to merge two equally provincial realms—the one inhabited by Grandpa Jones with the one inhabited by Andy Williams, both steadfastly unhip—the country/hippie blend is evolving organically. The elements of country that are not reactionary are curling up with a world-view that says formality is no longer all that necessary, to hell with neckties altogether, and if you like something, it doesn't matter what other people have named it.

"Juice" is, of course, presented by people who don't have to think all this through for themselves. Waylon Jennings and Willie Nelson and Gram Parsons and other country/hippie pioneers have taken care of that part. An artist like Newton—or Gail Davies or Lacy J. Dalton—can just do his or her thing, which makes for a dearth of a certain kind of self-consciousness that gave the Eddy Arnold-style crossover its lack of grace.

Newton has a sweet, moist vocal style, good range, and a folksinger's need to identify with the song. The program she and producer Richard Landis selected includes two monster pop hits of yore, Angel of the Morning, written by Chip Taylor, and the Everly Brothers' ticket to stardom, All I Have to Do Is Dream. By Boudleaux Bryant. Also familiar are Elton John's fair-sized pop hit that paid tribute to the country life, Country Comfort, and Paul Davis' minor country success of a few years back, Ride 'Em Cowboy. That's maybe a little more "familiar" material than some of us want in a new album, but Newton does do some exciting new things with Angel—which is welcome back in my house any case—and the pieces serve as landmarks to help guide you to some worthy stuff you may not have heard before, such as Bob McDill's Shot Full of Love (McDill was one of the first to get the hang of country/hippie songwriting) or Hank DeVito's Queen of Hearts.

Newton does not whine like the traditional "pure" female country singer, nor does she affect the casual gloss of the traditional crossover singer; her delivery is natural and airless, yet her phrasing and subtle use of ornamentation suggest she has an excellent ear for the patterns of both melody and speech. There's nothing arch about the backing either, for it is as far from hard rock as it is from hard country, it, too, is organic and natural-sounding, seemingly based more upon what a particular song needs than on formal ideas about what kind of stuff it is.

"Juice" is not the best album someone this talented can make, but it's a good example of how free her head is of preconceptions about how this has to sound thus because it's named that. I look for country/hippie to blossom in the next few years, and for a possibly percentage of the known world to discover and—as they say in the country, in their understated but not necessarily conservative way—become partial to Juice Newton.

—Noel Coppage

JUICE NEWTON: Juice. Juice Newton (vocals, guitar); Rich Shlosser (drums); Neil Steubenhaus (bass); Otha Young (guitar); Dan Dugmore (steel guitar); Brad Felton (dobro, banjo); other musicians. Angel of the Morning; Shot Full of Love; Ride 'Em Cowboy; Queen of Hearts; River of Love; All I Have to Do Is Dream; Headin' for a Heartache; Country Comfort; Texas Heartache; The Sweetest Thing (I've Ever Known). CAPITOL ST-12136 $7.98, © 4XT-12136 $7.98, © 8XT-12136 $7.98.
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STEREO REVIEW Record of the Year award.

Recording: Satisfactory

Performance: Middling plus

STEREO REVIEW

Somebody has "improved" Willie's music almost beyond recognition, and it's a damn shame, because his first album was one of the real pleasures of 1980. That was partly credible to the shock of hearing an unadorned, pre-metal guitar band recorded as clean and live-sounding as Willie's obvious models from the Sixties, a neat combination of folk-rock roots and New Wave energy. But mostly it was because of Willie himself: the man is a singularly gifted songwriter with a solid grasp of structure, a good performance. But the smart guys at the record company, who—like their counterparts at the networks, the studios, and, to a lesser degree, the publishers—are made deeply uncomfortable by anything that isn't an obvious clone of some recent success. I can guess what the conversation went like: Ever the smart guy, I'll bet you a dollar that a songwriting hippie in the satin Arista baseball jacket, "you gotta make one for AOR, for the kids. Get one of those big-deal producers who'll make you sound like Springsteen." Or maybe Willie said it himself, though I doubt it.

But somebody must have said it, because that's exactly what happened with "Golden Down." The stark simplicity of Willie's first record has been replaced with a Wall of Sound approach so blatantly derivative it verges on parody. The arrangements have been tricked out with all sorts of unnecessary keyboard overdubs, Willie's voice has been EQ'd for monitors, his tempos for clubs, and at every turn the thing sounds as much like Springsteen as humanly possible given the physical limitations of all concerned. It gets embarrassing—every third song or so you expect Willie to break into "Backstreets," and you're almost surprised when he doesn't.

Of course, there are some songs under-neath the pointless Asbury Park flourishes, and they're pretty wonderful when you can hear them through the Foggy Day on the Boardwalk murk of the overproduction. Lyrically, they often ring changes on a sort of Down in the Boondocks, wrong-side-of-the-tracks fatalism, but they're terrific stories, and for all I know they may even be true. My personal favorite is Les Champs Elysées, a small comic masterpiece sullied only by a gutless, ersatz Chuck Berry piano break, but just about everything else is tightly crafted and melodically fetching. Willie's musical personas, in fact, are among the more touching love songs I've heard in a while, but it's a real effort to get into them, the fussiness and falseness of the accompaniments are so intrusive, so inappropriate. We're no longer on Dylan's Highway 61, the territory of most of the first album; it's more like being trapped on a Los Angeles freeway at rush hour, which is not particularly inspirational. I'm still a Willie Nile fan, and I'd still go see him and his hot little band bash these songs out in person. But as for listening to "Golden Down" on a regular basis, well... in the immortal words of Rick Nelson, I'd rather drive a truck.

Steve Simels
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coy; she sings well but is trapped by the limited material. She manages to overcome the limitations on several cuts, including "Cry to Me, You Can't See Thunder, and—the best of the lot—City Lights, which is delightfully funny. But I wish someone would set her free to really sing the blues.

WILSON PICKETT: Right Track. Wilson Pickett (vocals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. Back on the Right Track; If You Can't Beat 'Em, Join 'Em, Ain't Gonna Give You No More; Maybe This Time; and three others. EMI/AMERICA SW-17043 $7.98, ® 4XXW-17043 $7.98, ® 8XXW-17043 $7.98.

Performance: Lusty
Recording: Very good

Back in the Sixties, when James Brown carried the art of screaming to new heights of popular performance, he now dishes out a healthy portion of straight-ahead r & b singing. While none of the songs here really jump out and grab you, they should find favor with lovers of basic, uncontrived funk.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

ELVIS PRESLEY: Guitar Man. Elvis Presley (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. Guitar Man; After Loving You; Too Much Monkey Business; Just Call Me Lonesome; Loving Arms; You Asked Me To; and four others. RCA AAL1-3917 $7.98, ® AAK1-3917 $7.98, ® AAS1-3917 $7.98.

Performance: First-class remake
Recording: Good

The Las Vegas regulars won't understand this album at all, which is just one of several good things about it. As his last project, the late Felton Jarvis, Elvis' producer for eleven years, took the vocal tracks from various records and hired some Nashville sidemen—including Larry Lindev, David Briggs, and Jerry Shook—to play along with them. (In most of the originals the King's voice was buried under considerable strings-and-chorus mush.) Jerry Reed, who wrote the title song, was brought in here to play lead guitar on that cut, and he fairly tears up the pea patch. The album raises the question of why they didn't usually accompany Elvis this way and let Jerry Vale and Waync Newton have Las Vegas, but if you can avoid thinking about that too much, you'll have a good time.

N.C.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

PRETENDERS: Pretenders (vocals and instruments). Message of Love: Talk of the Town; Porcelain; Cuban Slide. Precious. SIRE MINI 3563 $5.98.

Performance: World class
Recording: Good

Prejudices up front: for my money, Chrissie Hynde is (1) the greatest white girl singer in the history of rock-and-roll; (2) the first female rock composer worthy of mention together with any of the immortals; and (3) the leader of the most interesting mainstream rock outfit to debut since Bruce Springsteen's. This new "mini" release (LP format but only eighteen minutes long) of Pretenders material is, therefore, an indispensable purchase. One, it's supposed to be a bridge into the all-new studio album due out in a couple of months, and, musical merits aside, this is a marketing ploy I wish other groups would emulate, for it makes good sense both economically (cheaper than buying the separate singles) and in terms of粉丝.

The songs? Well, they range from the merely terrific to the sublime. Talk of the Town is a quintessential twelve-string pop tune featuring Chrissie at her most authoritatively winsome. Cuban Slide mates a Bo Diddley beat with Beatles guitar figures and is one of the sexiest pieces of music ever committed to vinyl. Message of Love is a Wilson Pickett update, modern soul music that takes a few listening to hit—but oh! when it does! Porcelain is a delightful throwaway in which the band plays a game of Guess Where We Stole the Riffs. Finally, Pretious is a sweetly bluesy love tune from the first album in which Chrissie discourses on the relative merits of Howard the Duck and what my mother used to call X-E-S. In short, this is a bargain that is at once sweaty, hauntingly melodic, and defiantly intelligent. Get it.

S.S.

LEON REDBONE: From Branch to Branch. Leon Redbone (vocals, guitar); instrumental accompaniment. (Mama's Got a Baby Named) Te Na Na; A Hot Time in the Old Town Tonight; Step It Up and Go, Your Cheatin' Heart; Seduced; Why, Extra Blues; and four others. EMI/AMERICA SW-38-136 $7.98, ® CS 38-136 $7.98, ® TP 38-136 $7.98.

Performance: Pleasantly demented
Recording: Very good

If Dr. Demento's still around, Leon Redbone is still making the kind of records the DJ prefers for his show. Redbone has added instruments—a quiet Dixieland complement here and there, occasionally some even quieter strings—but his style hasn't changed much, nor the impression he makes. It's hard to describe that impression. If you're familiar with his stuff—the
growly voice, the supple fingerpicking, the Forties songs—he might remind you here of a one-joke comedian, though not unpleasantly. But if you've had your head stuck in rock-and-roll or jazz or any other one thing, he could be a refreshing change of pace. I still think Redbone works best as a warm-up act in a small concert hall. He won't steal the thunder of the main act or make the patrons edgy to get on with the proceedings. As an Added Attraction, in small doses, he complements practically anything. He makes me wish they still ran the cartoon before the feature at the movies.

JEAN REDPATH: The Songs of Robert Burns (see Best of the Month, page 76)

ROCKET 88. Rocket 88 (vocals and instrumentals). Roll 'Em Pete; St. Louis Blues; Roadhouse Boogie; Talking About Louise; and three others. ATLANTIC SD 19293 $7.98, © CS 19293 $7.98, ® TP 19293 $7.98.

Performance: Shallow fun
Recording: Fair

In the notes for this album, pianist/producer Ian Stewart describes it as a "straightforward, mainly instrumental blues album with boogie woogie as its foundation." So it is, but I am sad to report that Rocket 88, for all the celebrities it harbors (Charlie Watts, Jack Bruce, and Alexis Korner among them), makes only a pale English copy of American music. Blues of the jumping, honking style Rocket 88 seeks to emulate has never thrived in the hands of Europeans. Not even the presence of Hal Singer—whose tenor sax was a part of the original scene in the Forties and Fifties—can lend credence to this attempt at doing the impossible.

I should point out that, even diluted as it is, the album does have moments when it stimulates a body response. But these bones have very little meat on them, and the whole thing becomes downright embarrassing when guitarist Alexis Korner and bassist Jack Bruce do vocal impressions of old, uneducated black men. The whole thing seems to have gone over big at Hanover's Rotation Club, where it was recorded, but it's a big mystery why Atlantic chose to issue this imitative import instead of drawing from its own multitudinous stock of r&b goodies.

C.A.

THE ROLLING STONES: Sucking in the Seventies. The Rolling Stones (vocals and instrumentals); instrumental accompaniment. Shattered; Everything Is Turning to Gold; Hot Stuff; Time Waits for No One; Fool to Cry; Mannish Boy; and four others. ROLLING STONES COC 16028 $7.98, © CS 16028 $7.98, ® TP 16028 $7.98.

Performance: Inconsistent
Recording: Good

What the world needs now is emphatically not another Rolling Stones repackaging, but as these things go, "Sucking in the Seventies" is a decent enough job with a nice balance between the unexpected and the ubiquitous. I would have programmed it differently, though. Mannish Boy is one of the weaker cuts from "Love You Live"; Cracking Up from the same album would have made a lot more sense. Room should...
Hank Williams Jr.

Come on, urban cowboys, get with it. Hank Williams Jr. has made a string of brilliant albums and you're still messing around with Johnny Paycheck? "Rowdy," the latest, may be his best yet; in fact, I think it's the best country-rock album I've heard since Waylon Jennings' "I've Always Been Crazy." Hank Junior wrote all the songs on the first side and used the work of such people as Merle Haggard, Dickey Betts, and Waylon (a song that's obliquely about Hank Senior, Are You Sure Hank Done It This Way) on the second side, which starts with his father's neglected but haunting Ramblin' Man. And I like his own songs even more than I like the fine guest batch.

Hank Senior's fiddler, Jerry Rivers, is among the sidemen, who include horn players as well as steel-guitar players and who are all robust—there's nothing tentative about this record—but never overplay.

Williams' voice (like George Jones', it is capable of imitating a lot of others) has settled into an easily recognized sound, with some of the nerves-exposed intensity of his father's and some subtle qualities his father's didn't have. If you go about wearing a Stetson—or even if you don't—and don't know about this guy, you've got a great new experience ahead of you.

—Noel Coppage

HANK WILLIAMS JR.: Rowdy. Hank Williams Jr. (vocals, guitar, dobro); Larrie Londin (drums); Joe Osborn (bass); Reggie Young (guitar); other musicians. Dixie on My Mind; Texas Women; You Can't Find Many Kissers; Give a Damn; Ain't Much Heavyweight. As it does grubbiness and other attributes of the Stones' voice (like George Jones', it is capable of imitating a lot of others) has settled into an easily recognized sound, with some of the nerves-exposed intensity of his father's and some subtle qualities his father's didn't have. If you go about wearing a Stetson—or even if you don't—and don't know about this guy, you've got a great new experience ahead of you.

—Noel Coppage

also have been found for the remixed single version of Before They Make Me Run, which is not only vastly superior to the "Some Girls" version but is currently selling for $50 in specialty stores; for the great live Let It Rock, currently languishing on the Spanish "Sticky Fingers"; for the studio takes of Drift Away, Shame Shame Shame, and the scandalous Claudine, which fans have been clamoring for; and for Through the Lonely Nights, a gorgeous 1974 B-side.

Still, this is a pleasantly listenable set. Everything Is Turning to Gold, a great, charming, funk excursion from the "Some Girls" sessions, makes a welcome first album appearance; the new version of Dance is an interesting curiosity; and Hot Stuff, which was much maligned in 1976 for being a robot, but I don't think the world will turn music over to cybernetics. If it does, and the results sound anything like this, I say to hell with the world.

N.C.

RUSH: Moving Pictures. Rush (vocals and instrumentalists). Tom Sawyer; Red Barchetta; Limelight; Witch Hunt; and three others. MERCURY SRM-1-4013 $7.95, © MCR4-1-4013 $7.95.

Performance: Plodding. Recording: Very good

Ordinarily there is at least one cut on a Rush album that rises above their usual razzle-dazzle—either a sly, slow-tempo sleeper in which the lyrics and melody merge into something approaching a real song or else one with a catchy arrangement that propels the esoteric lyrics past one's ears. No such luck this time. If I hadn't heard Rush before I'd say this album was by a mediocre group trying to sound like a robot, but I don't think the world will turn music over to cybernetics. If it does, and the results sound anything like this, I say to hell with the world.

J.V.

SISTER SLEDGE: All American Girls. Sister Sledge (vocals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. All American Girls; Next Time You'll Know; Happy Feeling; Ooh, You Caught My Heart; Music Makes Me Feel Good; and five others. COHILLION SD 16027 $7.98, © CS 16027 $7.98, © TP 16027 $7.98.

Performance: Mixed blessing. Recording: Fine

The title song here, a kind of pro-ERA anthem, is another big commercial success for the four sisters Sledge. It's in their chanted style and strongly reminiscent of their previous big hit We Are Family. Yet it's one of the least interesting cuts on this new album, which is mostly hot, fast, and (yes, I'll say it) disco. Unfortunately, the singers come out second to the production. Both blame and praise should go to Narada Michael Walden, Sister Sledge's new producer. Unlike Bernard Edwards and Nile Rodgers, who worked with them on their earlier album, Walden drowns out their vocals. Only in the charming chorus to If You Really Want Me and the ballad Next Time You'll (Continued on page 100)
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**Hidden Talent: Derek Smith**

**Derek Smith** is an English pianist who spent six years not being heard in the world of jazz. His recent emergence on the National scene has brought him to the attention of many jazz fans who had previously overlooked his talent. Smith has managed to keep a talent of such magnitude hidden for so long, which is a testament to his skill and dedication.

Smith's playing is characterized by its fluidity and passion. He has a way of blending his own style with the music of others, creating a unique and memorable sound. His recent album, "Love on Sale," is a testament to his talent. The album features Smith's signature blend of jazz and pop, with a number of covers that showcase his versatility and range.

Smith is known for his ability to connect with his audience, and his performances are always a highlight of any jazz festival. His work has earned him critical acclaim and a loyal following of fans who appreciate his unique take on the genre.

**Love on Sale**

This album is a must-listen for any lover of jazz. Smith's playing is captivating and his compositions are innovative and thought-provoking. It's a testament to his talent and a celebration of his love for the genre.

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**Starpoint:** Keep On It

This album features Smith's talent in full swing. The music is energetic and dynamic, with Smith's playing taking center stage. The album is a great introduction to Smith's work and a must-listen for any jazz enthusiast.

**Performance:** Cool and clever

**Recording:** Terrific

This album is a testament to Smith's talent and his commitment to the genre. It's a great listen and a reminder of why jazz is such an important part of our cultural heritage.

**Performance:** Dad's a pro

**Recording:** Good, but see below

This album features Smith's talent in full swing. The music is energetic and dynamic, with Smith's playing taking center stage. The album is a great introduction to Smith's work and a must-listen for any jazz enthusiast.
FRANKIE VALLI/THE FOUR SEASONS: Reunited Live. Frankie Valli (vocals); the Four Seasons (vocals and instrumentals), instrumental accompaniment. Who Loves You; Our Day Will Come; Rag Doll; Dawn; Can't Take My Eyes Off of You; Fallen Angel; Slip Away; Workin' My Way Back to You; Sherry; Walk Like a Man; Big Girls Don't Cry; December 1963 (Oh, What a Night); and twelve others. WARNER BROS. 2WB 3497 two discs $13.98, © JSA 3497 $13.98.

Performance: Could be worse
Recording: Good remote

I knew something like this would happen. One of the shakedown concerts preparatory to this reunion album was wiped out by a tornado last summer. I'd been saying for years that Frankie Valli's falsetto was going to ruin our weather, and there it was. Probably Big Girls Don't Cry (aye-aye) was what did it—at least that's the one that always unpeels my wallpaper. Guess you can tell I regard this as a novelty act, but it's one I'm glad to have around. I was looking forward, actually, to having a fresh version of Rag Doll, one of my all-time favorite songs, but unfortunately the boys give it perfunctory, live-concert, middle-of-a-medley treatment. Smile thing happens to Workin' My Way Back to You (Sherry fares a little better). Worse, throughout most of the program Valli panders to the crowd to an annoying degree—exhorting it to clap hands and say it's feelin' good and so forth—and the plastic and insufferable Grease is drawn out over eight minutes. But there are some examples of what's good about the Four Seasons' sound here and there. A less expensive studio album might have got this reunion off to a better start, but since the Eighties are going to have novelty acts anyway, this one is a relief from the Plasmatics. At least it's got tunes. Of course, you can look for Mount St. Helens to blow again if Valli and company catch on.

N.C.

LEON WARE: Rockin' You Eternally (see Best of the Month, page 73)

EDGAR WINTER: Standing on Rock. Edgar Winter (vocals, keyboards, saxophone); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. Star Garbage; Standing on Rock; Love Is Everywhere; Rock and Roll Revival; and four others. BLUE SKY JZ 36494 $7.98, © JZT 36494 $7.98, © JZA 36494 $7.98.

Performance: Professional
Recording: Good

Edgar Winter has settled into a pattern of more or less programmed music, standardized jumpers and ballads without real content but presented with his customary—and considerable—skill. Star Garbage rejects the trappings of fame in favor of domestic bliss (Winter has dedicated this album to his wife, and all the ballads here are gee-whiz honeymoon items). Standing on Rock and Rock and Roll Revival are jittery pep talks about the future of the music by which Winter makes his living. Cast in different language, they could serve as the closing paragraphs of a corporate report. All I can say is, stockholders beware.

J.V.

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Jazz

Recording of Special Merit

Clifford Brown: The Paris Collection, Volume 2. Clifford Brown (trumpet); Gigi Gryce (alto saxophone); other musicians. Minority (three takes); Baby (two takes); Salute to the Band Box (two takes); Strictly Romantic; Inner City. [IC 7011 $7.98. © PRS 8-24020 $7.98. © PRS 5-24020 $7.98.]

Performance: Precious

Recording: Good mono

I remember Clifford when he was twenty-two and full of fresh ideas that flowed from his horn on a chilly November night; like kernels of popping corn, the notes came bursting forth, splitting the smoke-filled air, blending with the clang of beer-bottle traffic, and rendering inconsequential the efforts of those who performed with him that night. That the local musicians should pale alongside this young American was not startling, but even Gigi Gryce, Quiring, Jones, Anthony Ortega, and Jimmy Cleveland—fellow members of the touring Lionel Hampton band—lost some glitter beside this newcomer. The occasion was an all-night jam session I helped arrange in Copenhagen almost thirty years ago, an event time might well have blurred but for the extraordinary display of originality by a player we had not heard of before. Almost a month earlier, Clifford Brown made some recordings in Paris—for the French Vogue label—and some of these now make up the second Clifford Brown release in Inner City's Jazz Legacy series.

Like the earlier Brown release (IC 7001), the second volume features several alternative takes, including two that have never previously been made available. I have always felt that listening to take after take of a selection is a bore unless one is making a study of the music, but there is justification for it in Brown's case; he had the ability to generate a fresh approach each time. At any rate, all of his recordings are precious, for he died—in an automobile accident—less than three years after making his recording debut as a leader.

The sextet, co-led by Gigi Gryce and featuring a European rhythm section, yielded the best of Brown's output during that Hampton tour; as he outshone even those eminent professionals, he treated the jazz world to a marvelous preview of things to come. What came, of course, was the collaboration with drummer Max Roach, but just as the recordings have earned a niche in jazz history, so have these precursors taken on a significance of their own. You may not, as I do, remember Clifford from personal experience, but you are robbing yourself of some extraordinary performances if you don't lend this batch from Paris an ear.

C.A.


Performance: Singularly haunting

Recording: Excellent

This is the second album by Codona, the group that gets its name from the first names of its three players, Collin Walcott, Don Cherry, and Nana Vasconcelos. The first release ("Codona," ECM-1-1132) mainly featured Cherry's horn against a mural brushed with strokes of jazz and raga; "Codona 2" tends to be a reflection of the disparate cultural backgrounds and experiences of these three men. The result is easier to enjoy than to define, a surrealistic collage of postcards from exotic places, all crisp and clear, the way ECM likes to capture things with its sound cameras.

Recording of Special Merit


Performance: Lovely

Recording: Good

Chris Connor is an exquisite jazz singer whose gift for projecting lyrics with lucid delicacy and innate musicianship makes her the leader of any ensemble she performs with. She's surrounded here by some very fine musicians, and they seem to be taking their cues from her, not because they're "supporting" or "spotlighting" the star but because that's the only way the phrase or chord can play. This certainty, this absolute control over material and sound, is a Connor trademark that shows to lovely advantage in such familiar material as Just in Time, I Wish You Love, and Any Place I Hang My Hat. All of them re-emerge as distinct musical entities, not mere hooks on which the average jazz singer hangs his or her "inventive" cloth. Ms. Connor's respect for the material she works with is always apparent. A lovely, elegant album. P.R.

Recording of Special Merit

Wild Bill Davison with Eddie Condon's All Stars: Live! Miami Beach 1955. Wild Bill Davison (cornet); Lou McGarity (trumpet); Pee Wee Russell (clarinet); Gene Schroeder (piano); Walter Page (bass). Beale Street Blues; Judy; I'm in the Market for You; Rockin' Chair; Singin' the Blues; and five others. PUMPKIN. (111 $7.98. (From Pumpkin Productions, P.O. Box 7963, Miami, Fl. 33155).

Performance: Very good

Recording: Very good

Well, you can't ask for much more: an Eddie Condon hot-jazz commando squad in
a comfortable setting, recorded live in 1955, with excellent sound and an appetizing program of warhorses and obscure gems. Of special interest is a ballad medley containing Hoagy Carmichael's gorgeous and nearly forgotten Judy, every facet of which pianist Gene Schroeder gently polishes, followed by the very obscure I'm in the Market for You, played very close to the melody by the incomparable Pee Wee Russell, and capped by Wild Bill Davison's slightly screechy but passionate lead on Rockin' Chair, a still-water tune that runs deep.

Condon, by the way, did not play in this session, but as entrepreneur and personality he ruled the band. With his small group, either appeared at his New York club or were called on the road for dates such as this one. Hank Bredenberg's, detailed notes are entertaining and welcome, if at times somewhat frenzied. Davison was never my first choice as a hot cornet—he maintained a precarious balance between damn-all zeal and cheap vulgarity—but he was a commanding lead. Trombonist Lou McGarity has trouble getting started on this occasion, but he later warms up and shows considerable confidence. Russell always managed to be on intimate terms with perfection, and the rhythm support of Schroeder, bassist Walter Page, and drummer George Wettling is a fusion to be treasured. The album ends with I Want to Be Happy, by which time every listener should be.

DIZZY GILLESPIE: Digital at Montreux, 1980. Dizzy Gillespie (trumpet); Toots Thielemans (guitar); Bernard Purdie (drums); Christopher Columbus; Manteca; I'm Sitting on Top of This World; and two others. PABLO LIVE O D2308226 $8.98, © KO8226 $8.98.

Performance: Delicious Dizzy, but... Recording: Utter unbalance

There is no question about it, Dizzy Gillespie plays superbly on this album, but I do wish we could hear him better. It's an odd trio consisting of Dizzy with Belgian harmonica player Toots Thielemans on guitar and drummer Bernard Purdie. Purdie is a New York studio musician who has performed on countless forgettable sessions. If you never noticed him before, you will on this set, but for the wrong reasons—he is terribly miscast and excruciatingly over-recorded. It is as if all the microphones had been placed in front of the drums, and when Dizzy wanders off mike—as he does throughout the first track and for most of the second—the joy of hearing him play so magnificently is lessened considerably. Thielemans does a fine job on guitar, often managing to come through Purdie's percussion barrier better than the leader, but those of us who were not present could do without Get That Booty, which has Dizzy playing a jew's harp and was obviously of more visual than musical interest. This album is a very mixed blessing.

BOB JAMES: All Around the Town. Bob James, JoAnne Brackeen, Richard Tee (piano); Tom Scott, Mark Colby (saxophone); Eddie Gomez, Gary King (bass); Wilbert Longmire, Earl Klugh, Hiram Bullock (guitar); Jim Pugh (trombone); Mike Lawrence, Ron Tooley, Tom Browne (trumpet); George Marge (flute); Mike Lawrence (flute).
gelhorn): Idris Muhammad, Jimmy Maelen, Steve Gadd, Billy Hart (drums). Touchdown, Stompin' at the Savoy, Angela (Theme from 'Taxi'), We're All Alone, and four others. COLUMBIA/TAPPAN ZEE C2X 36786 two discs $11.98, © CTX 36786 $11.98, © CAX 36786 $11.98.

Performance: Good
Recording: Very good

In December 1979 Bob James appeared in a series of New York concerts (Town Hall, the Bottom Line, Carnegie Hall) with various musicians, some from his own Tappan Zee label and others out-of-town jobbers who flew in for the bash. There wasn't any special reason for the series, the recordings aren't cultural milestones, and James himself is still some distance from legendary status. But James is a prolific and facile pianist, and there are some first-rate musicians here. The eight selections are all lengthy, so everyone has room to stretch out. The two Town Hall performances give the marvelous JoAnne Brackeen and Richard Tee a chance to share the spotlight with James on piano. The best performances are on Stompin' at the Savoy (identified, in a colossal misprint, as a James original), Farandole (James' arrangement of a movement of Bizet's L'Arlesienne music), and Boz Scaggs' We're All Alone. The musicians and audiences were enthusiastic, and listeners should also have a good time. J.V.

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RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

EDDIE JEFFERSON: There I Go Again.
Eddie Jefferson (vocals); Joe Newman, Clark Terry, Dave Burns, Bill Hardman (trumpet); Jimmy Cleveland (trombone); James Moody, Johnny Griffin (saxophone); Wynton Kelly, Junior Mance, Sadik Hakim, Barry Harris, Joe Zawinul (piano); other musicians. Body and Soul, Dexter Gordon, There I Go, So What, Filthy McNasty, Old Shoes, A Night in Tunisia, Now's the Time, Mercy, Mercy, Mercy. Come Along with Me, Baby Girl, Letter from Home, and eleven others. PRESTIGE P-24095 two discs $8.98.

Performance: Excellent
Recording: Good

It was two years ago that singer Eddie Jefferson was fatally shot as he emerged from a club engagement in Detroit. It happened just as the sixty-one-year-old master of "voices" (as his art of setting lyrics to instrumental solos has been called) was enjoying his career in popular music that was as warmly embraced as the avant-garde as it was by those to whom it represented a nostalgic slice of the Fifties. The latter group should be particularly receptive to "There I Go Again," a two-record reissue that combines material from the Prestige and Riverside labels recorded between 1953 and 1969 and features supporting work by some of the celebrated instrumentalists of the period.

The set starts with two selections from Jefferson's first Prestige session (he had made four sides for Hi-Lo in Pittsburgh the previous year), continues with some sides recorded at a James Moody big-band date, takes us through the 1961-1962 Riverside sessions, and concludes with ten selections from two late-Sixties Prestige sessions. It is as representative a slice of Jefferson's work as we are ever likely to get in one release, a wonderful collection that in itself represents a chapter in modern jazz, and it is made all the better by Ira Steinberg's fine, informative notes.

C.A.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

TEO MACERO: Teo. Teo Macero (alto and tenor saxophones); Art Farmer (trumpet); Al Cohn, Phil Woods, Pepper Adams, Lee Konitz (saxophones); Bill Evans (piano); Charles Mingus (bass); orchestra. St. Louis Blues, I'll Remember April, Blues for Amy, Mitzi, Out of Loneliness, Thou Swell, and six others. AMERICAN CLAVE 1002 $6.50 (plus $2 postage and handling charge from New Music Distribution, 500 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10012).

Performance: Excellent
Recording: Good

Teo Macero has been composing and arranging jazz-oriented music since the early Fifties, but he is more widely known for his work as a producer for Columbia Records. His work in that field includes many of the albums that document the development of such stars as Miles Davis but relatively few recordings featuring his own music. "Teo," a new release on a new label called American Clave, is not an album of new music, but Macero has always been somewhat of an experimenter, so even the
Lennie Tristano made remarkably few recordings in his fifty-nine years. Because he
considered his stature as a musician and the influence he exerted on modern jazz, Lennie Tristano made remarkably few recordings in his fifty-nine years. Because he was never granted full recognition from the recording industry, he himself was in large measure responsible for his meager representation in the catalog. A man who took his music very seriously, Tristano was loath to have others hear performances that "did not seem to him to speak well enough of what he had seen and heard," according to Barry Ulanov, whose excellent notes—both old and new—accompany Atlantic's reissue, in one set, of two outstanding albums ("Lennie Tristano" and "The New Tristano"). The old releases, from 1955 and 1961, appear intact (with Ulanov's original notes as well as an update) except that a 1955 quartet session has now been mastered in stereo as originally recorded.

That session features alto saxophonist Lee Konitz, bassist Gene Ramey, and drummer Art Taylor at the Sing Song Room of New York's Confucius Restaurant. It is a quartet quite different from the groups Tristano had been heard with in earlier years, and the relatively unadventurous approach to five standard ballads surprised many followers at the time. Not quite orthodox are the four Tristano originals that precede the quartet tracks; two—Requiem and Turkish Mambo—are layers of piano solos overdubbed by Tristano, while Line Up and East Thirty-Second feature his piano dubbed over "adjusted" rhythm tracks by bassist Peter Ind and drummer Jeff Morton. If you have not heard these tracks,

Lennie Tristano (piano); Lee Konitz (alto saxophone); Gene Ramey, Peter Ind (bass); Art Taylor, Jeff Morton (drums). You Go to My Head; C Minor Complex; Line Up; Epistrophy; Morning/Midday; and five others. COLUMBIA 0 IC 36247 $14.98, © HCT 36247 $14.98.

Performance: Ho hum dum-de-dum
Recording: Good

I don't care if Max Roach is one of the greatest jazz drummers of all time (and he is), nor will I allow my opinion of this album to be influenced by his being joined here by some other extraordinary rhythm men. "M'Boom" makes very boring listening, totally devoid of the kind of spirit that quickens the heartbeat on encounters with the African and Balinese music that seems to have inspired it. These are all accomplished, skilled players, but it appears that technique has edged out soul, at least this time around. The result sounds like the rhythm track for one of Cal Tjader's Sixties commercial ventures. This sort of thing will give digital recording a bad name.


Performance: Superb
Recording: Good mono and stereo

Considering his stature as a musician and the influence he exerted on modern jazz, Lennie Tristano made remarkably few recordings in his fifty-nine years. Because he...
MANY people would like to know what happened to Miles Davis, why he removed himself from the jazz scene in the mid-Seventies, suddenly adopted a comeback recording session in the late Seventies, and so far shows no signs of making a return in the Eighties. Miles' enigmatic ways must be particularly frustrating to those for whom he generates income, but even though they cannot book past performances, they can still issue them on records. Columbia (the label Miles has recorded for since the mid-Fifties) is particularly fortunate in having a wealth of unissued Miles material in its vault.

Unissued recordings often translate into undesirable albums, but that is not always true in the case of Miles Davis, as "Directions," Columbia's latest Davis release, splendidly proves. A two-record set of performances, hitherto kept under wraps, covers the most productive and interesting decade of the trumpeter's career, from a late Gil Evans collaboration (1960) to the latest Davis tapes.

Edited and compiled by P.K. Grossman (reeds); Wynton Kelly, Joe Zawinul, Keith Jarrett, Victor Feldman, Herbie Hancock, Chick Corea—all present on this release—to listen to it carefully, for many of their own recent efforts are mere dilutions of the brew they helped Miles concoct.

—Chris Albertson

MILES DAVIS: Directions. Miles Davis (trumpet); Hank Mobley, Wayne Shorter, Bennie Maupin, George Coleman, Steve Grossman (reeds); Wynton Kelly, Joe Zawinul, Keith Jarrett, Victor Feldman, Herbie Hancock, Chick Corea (keyboards); Ron Carter, Paul Chambers, Buster Williams, Dave Holland (bass); Billy Cobham, Tony Williams, Jimmy Cobb (drums); other musicians. "Round Midnight; So Near, So Far; Directions I, Directions II; Limbo; Fun; Konda; Song of Our Country; Water on the Pond; Ascent, Duran, Willie Nelson. Columbia KC2 36472 (two discs $13.98).

Before, a treat awaits you, especially if you like the kind of rhythmic games Tristano delighted in playing. Apropos rhythmic games, sides three and four of this set are full of them. Recorded by Tristano himself (presumably in his home, where he frequently recorded and—one surmises—erased tapes), these are piano improvisations on original themes, done without any overdubs or speed manipulations. Stunning, that is all I can say. This music does not all fall into the category of jazz, but when music is as sophisticated and beautiful as this, who cares about categories? It's good to have these recordings back.

C.A.

COLLECTION

THE COMPLETE ARTIE SHAW: Volume IV/1940-1941. Anita Boyer (vocals), with Artie Shaw and His Gramercy Five: Cross Your Heart, Dr. Livingstone, I Presume?; When the Quail Came Back to San Quentin. Artie Shaw and His Orchestra: If It's You, Temptation; Love of My Life: Who's Excited?; The Calypso, Concerto for Clarinet; Dancing in the Dark; I Cover the Waterfront; Moonlight; and Fifteen others. RCA/Bluebird @ AXM2-5572 two discs $11.98, © AXK2-5572 $11.98.

Performance: Must for collectors. Recording: Remarkable remastering.

Here is another of those almost too well-documented collections of big-band tunes, complete with a comprehensive discography and treated with the reverence that used to be accorded the discovery of a forgotten opera by Monteverdi. It is true that in his heyday Artie Shaw played one terrific clarinet and led a band that helped keep things swinging on the nation's dance floors, but is he really ready for sainthood? On the other hand, some of the music here—recorded with such distinguished jazz musicians as Billy Butterfield (trumpet), Ray Conniff (trombone), Nick Fatool (drums), Jerry Jerome (tenor sax), and Johnny Guarnieri (piano and harpsichord)—is certainly worth hearing again. Shaw's own Concerto for Clarinet may not be ready for the Berlin Philharmonic, but it's intriguingly constructed and stunningly played. The blues movement from the Lenox Avenue Suite that black composer William Grant Still wrote for the band, though here attenuated and simplified for commercial purposes, is another item of interest. So are the treatments of such landmark hits as Hoagy Carmichael's Star Dust, Duke Ellington's Pyramid, and Vernon Duke's What Is There to Say? plus Shaw's own exciting Dr. Livingstone, I Presume? and his lovely When the Quail Came Back to San Quentin. The playing is polished (especially when the Gramercy Five chamber-jazz unit is featured), the sound of the band is always a little different from anyone else's, and the remastering of the original recordings is well done. Overall, this is a treat for those who love vocalists by Anita Boyer are so deadpan and spiritless (no overwrought Edith Piaf she) and so many of the cuts are so banal that listening to the whole program at one sitting can grow a bit wearisome. Still, as annotator Burt Korall points out, it is obvious that there was much more to Artie Shaw than Begin the Beguine. P.K.
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Classical Music Briefs

For one admirer at least, it is exceedingly difficult to admit that the Beaux Arts Trio has passed its twenty-fifth anniversary. It is not that I question the stability of such a maison à trois, but it just does not seem that long ago that Menahem Pressler flew here from Israel to enter a Debussy competition, learned a portion of the repertoire on the plane, and took first prize. And also not that long since he embarked on the project of recording “everything,” known and unknown, for MGM Records, some of it with a fine ensemble called the Guiet Quartet. Yet a 1959 Schawn catalog (the oldest that comes easily to hand) lists recordings of the Ravel and Fauré trios by the “Beaux-Arts Trio”—Pressler, Daniel Guilet, and Bernard Greenhouse—and so it must be true. Isadore Cohen replaced Guilet in 1969, and the ensemble has remained immutable since.

All three present members of the Beaux Arts Trio were soloists of standing before their conjunction, and all three continue to play solo roles as well as an ensemble one. And all three teach. But mostly they continue to play together. They have a broad view of the basic repertoire for an ensemble of violin, cello, and piano, and they have performed and recorded most of it. They also have an interest in new music, and there are a number of new works that have been written for them. “The problem with new music,” says Pressler, “is time. Do we really have the time to learn it properly and still fulfill all our other commitments? And then, is it always worth it? Sometimes we have the feeling with a contemporary piece that when we have mastered the notes and the playing indications we have come to the end of the thing. That’s all there is. With Beethoven and Schubert and Mozart, when we have mastered the score that’s only the beginning. People ask us how we can return to a piece again and again. The answer is, because every time it’s different.”

And so the Beaux Arts Trio, which has played Beethoven and Schubert and Mozart (and Haydn, Brahms, Ravel, Fauré, Ives, Mendelssohn, Tchaikovsky, Schumann, Dvořák, and others) from the beginning, continues to perform them and to record them and even, sometimes, to rerecord them. Because every time they are different. Obviously, there is something scandalous about this. “Menahem, say something scandalous.” “We love the music.” “That’s not so scandalous. There are lots of people who love the music.” “Ah, yes. But we even get paid for loving it. That’s the scandal.” —J.G.

The American conductor David Zinman was honorably mentioned earlier this year in STEREO REVIEW’s Record of the Year awards for his Philips recording of Delibes’ Coppélia with the Rotterdam Philharmonic, of which he is the music director. Since then Zinman has won a Grand Prix du Disque for his recording (same orchestra, same label) of music for Pelléas et Mélisande by Fauré, Sibelius, and Schoenberg, reviewed here in April. Zinman is also music director of the Rochester Philharmonic, and when he was in New York with that orchestra this season he talked with STEREO REVIEW. A native New Yorker, he has lived in Holland for the last seventeen years, but when his current contract with the Rotterdam orchestra runs out next year, he will not renew it and will return to the United States to live. “There are many reasons, both professional and personal,” he said. “One is that I have a son who will be ready for the first grade in a year and a half. I’d like him to grow up an American, and I simply couldn’t drag him back and forth between this country and Europe.”

On the subject of the plight of American conductors, Zinman said: “I think they cry too much, though maybe Americans do have to prove themselves elsewhere. When the subject was discussed at the American Symphony Orchestra League meeting last year, Ernest Fleischmann [executive director of the Los Angeles Philharmonic] made the point that James Levine, Lorin Maazel, Leonard Slatkin, Michael Tilson Thomas, Calvin Simmons—and David Zinman—along with many others were not there to join the discussion because we were too busy working.”

Leonard Bernstein has observed that there are too few training orchestras. I had a wonderful opportunity to learn from Pierre Monteux as an apprentice with a professional orchestra, which is quite different.
played once daily at a different time each day. All twelve commissions went to composers in the Chicago area who know the station, its sound, and its program format. Heard so far are the fanfares by Hans Wurman (January), Roberto Lombardo (February), Ralph Shapey (March), Raymond Wilding-White (April), and William Russo (May). Yet to come are those by Easley Blackwood, M. William Karlins, Richard Manners, Albert Payson, Shultan Ram, Leon Stein, and Alan Slout. Release of the whole set on disc is being considered, says station program director Norman Pellegrini.

WFMT is a "superstation," which means that it has a national audience in addition to its listeners in the Chicago broadcast area. The station's twenty-four-hour-a-day programming is made available by the satellite service of United Video Inc. to TV cable subscribers nationwide, reaching an additional 500,000 homes.

Back in Angel's Los Angeles studios after a four-year sabbatical from recording is classical guitarist Christopher Parkening, whose album "Parkening Plays Bach" is still among Angel's top-selling records every year after more than a decade in the catalog. The album he is now working on is a collection of religious music. It is his first digital recording, and he is, so far, "very pleased with the sound."

The latest in a rash of books by or about singers is Birgit Nilsson's My Memoirs in Pictures (Doubleday, $19.95). Now in her early sixties and still going fairly strong, the Swedish dramatic soprano has documented her phenomenal career with a collection of photographs. These include the usual childhood snapshots, pictures of herself in her best roles (such as Salome, Elektra, Brunnhilde, and Turandot), and more formal portraits with royalty and heads of state.

The captions are generous and at times surprisingly candid; she speaks of being poorly prepared for her operatic debut as Agathe in Weber's Der Freischiitz at the Royal Opera in Stockholm in 1946. Despite good reviews, she says, the Royal Opera House there just didn't "unmusical and untrained." She writes with pride of her greatest triumphs, such as fifty-nine curtain calls following an Elektra in Berlin (apparently she always counts them), singing both Venus and Elisabeth in Tannhäuser, and holding the world's record several times over for the number of performances of the title role in Turandot ("For the last fifteen to twenty years I have had the part pretty much to myself, at least in the major operatic stages").

She tells again of the historic performance of Tristan und Isolde at the old Met in which she had a different Tristan in each act. The tenors Ramon Víoday Karl Leibowitz and Alberta da Costa all felt too ill to attempt the whole opera, but each agreed to sing one act. Rudolf Bing, then general manager of the Met, told Nilsson he put the fattest one (Da Costa) in the last act so that when Isolde collapsed on Tristan's lifeless body, she would have something soft to fall on. Curiously, recordings get short shrift in the book although Nilsson has made many. She describes recording sessions as among her "worst ordeals" and includes a picture of herself receiving a Grammy award for her first complete Turandot (RCA), but the book strangely contains no reference to her vital contribution to London's landmark recording of Wagner's Der Ring des Nibelungen, which is ranked among the greatest achievements in the history of the phonograph.

In Ring Resounding (Viking, 1967) an account of that seven-year recording project, John Culshaw, who produced the London Ring, wrote of Nilsson: "I have the deepest admiration for her voice, her artistry, her intelligence, her sense of humor, and her incredible stamina, but I still don't know, after all this success she has had in our Ring, whether she thinks the records are any good or not. Culshaw died last year. Perhaps it is just as well that he was spared the thunderous silence that appears to be Nilsson's only comment on the records. —W.L.

Chicago's fine-arts radio station WFMT, which has been on the air since December 13, 1951, has given itself a thirtieth birthday present of twelve specially commissioned musical fanfares. They require up to five players each and vary in length from two to four minutes. There is one for each month of this anniversary year, and during its month on the air a fanfare is
AUBER: Manon Lescaut, Mady Mesplé (soprano), Manon Lescaut; Peter-Christoph Rung (tenor), Manon Lescaut; Jean-Claude Orliac (tenor), Amore; Claudine Gervais; Alain Duvery (baritone), Marguerite; Gérard Friedmann (tenor), Cénus; Alain Duvery (baritone), Sergeant Renaud; others. Lyric Orchestra and Chorus of Radio France as a French-Porto-Marty cond. ARABESQUE 8059-3L three discs $21.94, © 9059-3L $21.94.

Performance Idiomatic

Recording Good

During his long career, Daniel-François É蒂que Auber (1782-1871) wrote more than forty operas. Manon Lescaut (1856) is neither the most historically significant among them nor the most successful in terms of international fame. Those honors belong, respectively, to La Muette de Portici and Fra Diavolo. What Manon Lescaut does bring to mind is that Auber frequently anticipated other composers with his settings of good operatic subjects: Massenet and Puccini in this instance. Donizetti's L'Elisir d'Amore with his Le Philtre (1831), and Verdi's Un Ballo in Maschera with his La Muette de Portici and Alain Duvery (baritone), Parisian Lescaut; Emmy Gregor (mezzi-soprano), Marguerite; Gérard Friedmann (tenor), Gervais; Alain Duvery (baritone), Sergeant Renaud; others. Lyric Orchestra and Chorus of Radio France as a French-Porto-Marty cond. ARABESQUE 8059-3L three discs $21.94, © 9059-3L $21.94.

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During his long career, Daniel-François É蒂que Auber (1782-1871) wrote more than forty operas. Manon Lescaut (1856) is neither the most historically significant among them nor the most successful in terms of international fame. Those honors belong, respectively, to La Muette de Portici and Fra Diavolo. What Manon Lescaut does bring to mind is that Auber frequently anticipated other composers with his settings of good operatic subjects: Massenet and Puccini in this instance. Donizetti's L'Elisir d'Amore with his Le Philtre (1831), and Verdi's Un Ballo in Maschera with his La Muette de Portici and Alain Duvery (baritone), Parisian Lescaut; Emmy Gregor (mezzi-soprano), Marguerite; Gérard Friedmann (tenor), Gervais; Alain Duvery (baritone), Sergeant Renaud; others. Lyric Orchestra and Chorus of Radio France as a French-Porto-Marty cond. ARABESQUE 8059-3L three discs $21.94, © 9059-3L $21.94.

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This is a perfect example of Sony pioneering and how the Sony balance system works.

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SCHUMANN: String Quartets: No. 1, in A
ferred to the new Swiss label Lodia, but it has yet to make its way to our shores; it's time it did. R.F.


Performance: Schumann better
Recording: Mostly good


Performance: Intense
Recording: Good

The Guarneri Quartet has always responded well to the Romantic masterpieces of the chamber-music literature, as witness their early RCA discs of Smetana, Dvořák, and Grieg. It is to the gentler muse of Schumann that they are attuned most closely in this new release. Occasionally, as in the slow movement of No. 1, the first violin’s vibrato seems a bit heavy, and I would prefer more rhythmic bite in the finale of No. 3, but on the whole I'd call the Guarneri Schumann series successful. When it comes to the Brahms Op. 51 quartets, however, the Guarneri Quartet and the RCA producers seem to have errred on the side of caution. Compared with both the new LaSalle recording and the older one by the Budapest Quartet, this one by the Guarneri seems to have a decidedly limited dynamic range, and there is no real sense of presence. Oddly enough, these drawbacks are even more striking in what is normally the easiest of the Brahms quartets with which to cope: both musically and sonically, the lovely Op. 67 in B-flat. For me, the wonderfully gutsy Budapest reading leaves the Guarneri players standing at the post.

The LaSalle Quartet’s readings of Brahms’ Op. 51 suffer from no such inhibitions or restrictions of either dynamics or presence. If anything, the C Minor’s opening movement here verges on the febrile, but all goes well on the rest of the disc, especially throughout the A Minor, whose finale comes off as gloriously fierce. D.H.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT
BRAHMS: Viola Sonatas, Op. 120: No. 1, in F Minor; No. 2, in E-flat Major. Bernard Zaslav (viola); Naomi Zaslav (piano). GASPARO GS-215 $7.98

Performance: Excellent
Recording: Excellent

It is a bit surprising that only two previous recordings of the viola versions of Brahms’ Op. 120 sonatas are listed in Schwann now (and not many more of the clarinet versions, by the way), but both are genuinely distinguished. Pinchas Zukerman with Barenboim in the Deutsche Grammophon three-disc set with the violin sonatas (2709 058), and an older, and far less costly, mono version by William Primrose and Rudolf Firkusny on Seraphim 60011. Bernard Zaslav, late of the Fine Arts Quartet and now a member of the Vermeer Quartet, and his wife Naomi have been performing as a duo for twenty years, and in this repertoire they are by no means outclassed by their stellar competitors. That their grasp of the material is complete is not surprising, for these are the very works such a duo would surely perform most frequently, but the gorgeous tone, affectionate commitment, and exhilarating sense of adventure in evidence here are factors that can never be assumed or taken for granted, no matter how long any performers may have worked together. The sound itself is exceptionally rich and well balanced. R.F.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT
BRAHMS: Violin Concerto in D Major, Op. 77. Ulf Hoelscher (violin); North German Radio Symphony Orchestra, Klaus Tennstedt cond. ANGEL © DS-37798 $10.98.

Performance: A-1
Recording: Splendid

This is yet another distinguished recording of the Brahms Violin Concerto, ranking with the half-dozen best from analog tape...
of nine and published only in 1924, is fascinating not only in its own right but for what it reveals of the composer's stylistic roots in Schubert and in the Beethoven of the Ninth Symphony. For example, the very opening is almost like one of Schubert's "walking" motifs, but the ensuing musical events are more Beethovenian in character. The slow movement anticipates in less fully defined character the quasi-ecclesiastical evocations of the late adagios. I find the scherzo, though spirited, the least interesting part of the score, but the brilliant finale is full of striking music, especially in the brass.

All told, this is an absorbing and unusual work, and Daniel Barenboim and the Chicago Symphony respond to it with great warmth and enormous zest. The recording is altogether stunning in both brilliance and massive power. Bernard Haitink's more reflective interpretation on his 1967 Philips disc has much to recommend it, but the dynamism of Barenboim's performance and the superior sound of this Deutsche Gramophon release capture more honors. D.H.


Performance: Committed
Recording: Good

The name of the long-lived Czech composer Josef Bohuslav Foerster (1859-1951) turns up more often in the context of his friendship with Mahler than in connection with any of his own music. We never hear Foerster's works in our concert halls, and even on records there has been little to sample. Only three titles besides this release are available here now: his Easter Symphony (Nonesuch H-71267), a wind quintet (Orion ORS 76254) and the very late Sonata Quasi Fantasia included in Josef Suk's survey of Czech violin sonatas (Supraphon 11 2341/2). The sonata struck me as "highly romantic ... with an emphasis on sweetness and nostalgia," and Cyrano de Bergerac makes a similar impression, though this descriptive suite composed in 1903, forty years earlier than the sonata, is far more overtly dramatic, its five substantial movements being character studies of the hero at crucial points of Rostand's play. The writing everywhere shows a master hand as well as a sympathetic response to the literary inspiration. The scoring is sumptuous but extremely tasteful, the organization cogent and well-proportioned; listeners weary of the Strauss tone poems may find this refreshing, though the meditative sections of this longish (forty-minute) work appear to overbalance the active ones in the second half, and none of the well-wrought themes is especially memorable. Cyrano may be an acquired taste, but it is certainly worth a hearing. Václav Smetáček's performance is a committed one, and the recording itself is quite adequate. R.F.
RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

HANDEL: Israel in Egypt. Jean Knibbs, Marilyn Troth, Daryl Green, Elisabeth Pri-
day (sopranos); Christopher Royall, Ashley Stafford, Brian Gordon, Julian Clarkson
(counterenors); Paul Elliott, William Kend-
dall (tenors); Stephen Varese, Charles
Stewart (basses). Monteverdi Choir and
Orchestra, John Eliot Gardiner cond. Mu-
SICAL HERITAGE SOCIETY MHS 824273
two discs $13.90, © MHS 826273 $15.50
(plus $1.25 postage and handling charge
from the Musical Heritage Society, 14 Park
Road, Timon Falls, N.J. 07724).

Performance: Grand
Recording: Excellent

In most of his oratorios, Handel presents a
single main personage whose character is
developed by supporting personalities and
comments by the chorus. Israel in Egypt is
unique in that the hero of the work is not a
single character but an entire nation, Israel,
which is portrayed by the chorus. The struc-
ture of the work is also unique: in the first
part, "Exodus," the various plagues, the de-
parture of the Israelites from Egypt through
the Red Sea, and their arrival in the
land of Canaan are graphically de-
picted; in the second part, "Moses" Song,
the same events are reviewed in a gigantic
song of praise. The listener is thus given one
story from two points of view: first as the
Israelites experienced it and then as their
leader contemplates it after the fact. All in
all, the work is a grand nation's
throwing off bondage for liberty.

The music is as grandiose as the theme it
celebrates, and in the first part is some of
the greatest tone painting to be found in all
music. Scholars, however, are troubled be-
cause Handel "borrowed" so much of the
material. Almost an entire Stradella sere-
ries is successfully adapted to Ba-
roque performance practices. This is surely
a tour de force in the grand manner so often
used by Handel, which is the essence of the work. The so-
lid sound of modern instru-
ments is successfully adapted to Ba-
roque performance practices. This is surely
one of the best recordings of a Handel orato-
rio available today.

S.L.

(Continued on page 117)
Here's an easy way for you to get manufacturer's information about products advertised or mentioned editorially in this issue. Just follow the directions below...and the literature will be sent to you free of charge from the manufacturer.

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If you have come a little late to class, here's your chance to catch up. Any questions you may have about How to Buy, How to Set-Up, How to Use, or How to Understand audio equipment are probably answered in one or more of the reprints listed below.

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- GUIDELINES TO SPEAKER SHOPPING 8/69
- RECORD DEFECTS (Their Causes & Cures) 8/71
- HOW IMPORTANT IS AUDIO-COMPONENT COMPATIBILITY? 1/74
- GUIDE TO UPGRADING YOUR COMPONENTS 6/75
- HOW TO SELECT A MICROPHONE 3/75
- HI-FI TROUBLESHOOTING CHARTS 7/75
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RECORDERING OF SPECIAL MERIT

HAYDN: Trios for Piano, Violin, and Cello in G Major (Hob. XV:25) and D Minor (Hob. XV:23); Trios for Piano, Flute, and Cello in G Major (Hob. XV:15) and D Major (Hob. XV:16). Mozartein Players. ARABESQUE 8123-2 two discs $13.96, © 9123-2 $15.96.

Performance: Spirited
Recording: Excellent

The identification of the Mozartein Players’ Rebecca Troxler and Richard Luby on the jacket of this record as, respectively, “Classical Flutist” and “Classical violinist” might suggest nothing more than a repertoire different from that of Herbie Mann or Stéphane Grappelli. The point, however, is that Troxler plays an eighteenth-century wooden flute, Luby and cellist Myron Lutzke perform on instruments with gut strings, shorter necks, and lower bridges than are in general use now, and Steven Lubin plays an enchanting-sounding fortepiano—all the sort of instruments in use when Haydn wrote this music. Most regrettably, no information is given on the specific instruments used here or on their makers, and there is little on the music itself, the entire inner liner of the gatefold container being devoted to a listing of the Arabesque catalog. The performances, though, are more than ingratiating and should appeal even to collectors who already have these works in the Beaux Arts Trio’s fine series on Philips, for the sound here is quite different. In Hob. XV:15 and 16, of course, the conspicuous difference is the flute in place of the violin: Haydn actually specified the flute in both of these trios, though it was surely assumed that the violin could and often would be substituted. How fetching this music sounds on the old wooden flute, and what charm is lent to all these performances by the sweet character of the fortepiano and the warmth of the gut strings!

I have not had an opportunity to hear the Telefunken series of the complete Haydn trios performed on similar instruments, but I have for some time enjoyed the Musical Heritage Society set of the last sixteen trios played by keyboardist Huguette Dreyfus, violinist Eduard Melkus, and cellist Elisabeth Vogt (MHS 1522/1525). That four-disc set is laid out economically with two works on each side, and the Carl Schneider Hammerklavier that Dreyfus plays is fitted with a device that enables her to emboss the famous “Gypsy Rondo” in Hob. XV:25 with “Turkish music.” But the performances on the Arabesque set are more winning, for the Mozartein Players are not simply demonstrating their period instruments but digging into the music with obvious affection and enthusiasm. That same celebrated rondo is here informed with a real gypsy flavor such as I have never before heard attempted: the fortepiano actually suggests a cimbalom in a way no modern piano could, the strings manage to sound fiery without sacrificing their warmth, and the rhythmic inflection on the part of the whole beautifully integrated ensemble captures the Zigeuner spirit with a zestful flair that really strikes sparks. This is the sort of record that is bound to get a lot of broadcast exposure, and it could convert a lot of...
A Discovery: Schubert's "Stabat Mater"

God, how genius will out! Franz Schubert's Stabat Mater, just released by Musical Heritage Society, is a virtually unknown work written when the composer was nineteen, modeled on Pergolesi, incorporating remembered passages of Mozart (O Isis und Osiris) and Haydn (the Emperor's Hymn), technically primitive in places, probably too lightweight for the text and of- ten disassociated from it, and crammed with more graphic stuff than most com- posers can come up with in a lifetime. Yet, despite occasional imperfections, a student could point out the ineptitudes of the work's fugues. Any commercial arranger could point out the inefficient use of orchestral re- sources. Any church musician could tick off the various unsuitabilities for church perfor- mance. But it is still a work of genius— which is not to say that it is an unflawed masterpiece, but that in the present, willy-nilly, music that only a genius like Schubert could have written. Actually, you can hear Schubert maturing as a composer right through the piece (apart from the final fugue, that is, which just lies there like a dead elephant), from tentative beginnings and short breath through folksy lyricism to some really commanding writing in the penultimate trios. Truly, the Stabat Mater is a discovery. With great perform- ers it might make a really startling impression. The Vocal Ensemble and Chamber Orchestra of Lausanne in this recording are very good rather than great performers, but they deserve all credit for a clean, musician- ly, and sympathetic rendition. This is a magnificently performed recording.

THE record is filled out with two other relatively unfamiliar works. The Magnificat (also available on an Odyssey recording) dates from later in the same year as the Stabat Mater. I find it more of a throw- away piece than the latter, but it too has its moments. The Offertory Intende Voci (for tenor solo, chorus, and orchestra), on the other hand, is a work of Schubert's full ma- turity—indeed, it was composed the month of his death—a gorgeous eloquence in typical late Schubert style goes on to heavenly lengths and almost makes you wish it would never stop. What a gift the man had!—James Goodfriend

SCHUBERT: Stabat Mater (D. 383); Offer- tory Intende Voci (D. 963); Magnificat (D. 486). Sheila Armstrong (soprano); Hanna Scher, alto; Alejandro Ramirez (tenor); Philippe Hutenlocher (baritone); Philippe Corboz (organ); Vocal Ensemble and Chamber Orchestra of Lausanne, Michel Corboz cond. MUSICAL HERITAGE SOCIETY MHS 427 $9.95 (plus $1.25 postage and handling charge from the Musical Heritage Society, Inc., 14 Park Road, Tinton Falls, N. J. 07724).

From the House of the Dead was Janáček's last opera, completed shortly before his death in 1928. It presents a bleak panorama of Siberian prisoners haunted by their dark past, bitter, humiliates, and eludes to the last shreds of human dignity. The prisoners relate their past crimes and suf- ferings in some detail, and the composer skillfully built the opera's rather uncon- ventional "action" around these narratives. The prisoner Goryanchikov is freed at the end, and at the same time a wounds eagle that was captured by the prisoners in the opening scene takes wing. But this is no sign of optimism: we know that prison life with its relentless routine will continue after the final curtain.

Dostoyevsky tells a gloomy tale, and Ja- náček made no effort to sweeten it. Lack of action is not the only problem. Not much happens in Pelleas et Mélisande or Blue- beard's Castle either, but Debussy and Bar-
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CIRCLE NO. 16 ON READER SERVICE CARD
Rossini’s Overtures

Three recent Rossini overtures packages feature conductors who are attached to both a major American orchestra and one in London, and in all three cases they are leading their London ensembles: Riccardo Muti (music director of the Philadelphia Orchestra) with the Philharmonia on Angel, Claudio Abbado (principal guest conductor of the Chicago Symphony) with the London Symphony on RCA, and Neville Marriner (music director of the Minnesota Orchestra) with the Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields on Philips. All that is needed to complete the coincidental survey is a similar disc from Sir George Solti (music director of the Minnesota Orchestra) with the Philharmonia on Angel, William Tell in Ermione; Torvaldo e Dorliska, from Il Turco in Italia in Otello, from The Siege of Corinth in Bianco e Faliero, etc. But if these pieces are not Rossini at his most inspired, they are quite enjoyable in their own right. Except for the big tune is shared with Bianco e Faliero, has the unusual feature of including choral passages. Marriner’s second Rossini overtures disc, with the big pieces on it (9500 349), was a bit of a disappointment, but this one is a winner all the way, exuding all the peculiarly Rossinian virtues and presented in Philips’ characteristically warm, handsome sound.

The new Marriner issue does not, of course, come into competition with any other Rossini overtures package, but the Muti and Abbado offerings do, and they leave some of the popular titles unaccounted for. Perhaps the economical London disc by Peter Maag (STS 15030) and Marriner’s Volume I (Philips 6500 878) together constitute the happiest way to acquire all the well-known overtures and a few of the gems among the lesser-known ones. There is not a single duplication in these two discs, and the only drawback is the nasal tone of the Conservatoire Orchestra’s horns in Maag’s otherwise stunning Semiramide.

—Richard Freed

Rossini: Overtures. The Barber of Seville; La Scala di Seta; Semiramide; William Tell; The Siege of Corinth; Il Viaggio a Reims. Philips Orchestra, Riccardo Muti cond. ANGEL: SZ-37750 $9.98, © 475-37750 $9.98.

Rossini: Overtures. The Barber of Seville; La Scala di Seta; Semiramide; William Tell; Il Turco in Italia; Tancredi. London Symphony Orchestra, Claudio Abbado cond. RCA AR1-3634 $9.98, © ARK-1-3634 $9.98.

Rossini: Overtures. Ermione; Torvaldo e Dorliska; Bianco e Faliero; Otello; Demostrato e Polibio; Edoardo e Cristina. Ambrosian Singers (in Ermione); Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields, Neville Marriner cond. PHILIPS 9500 886 $9.98, © 7300 886 $9.98.
at which date it must already have seemed incredibly old-fashioned. It is the old fable of the grasshopper and the ant, slightly updated to favor the grasshopper: mean old Madame Ant lets the goodhearted and generous grasshopper die in the snow. According to the old poster or sheet-music cover reproduced on the album cover, Mlle. Grasshopper was a bosomy young lady whose worldly possessions consisted of a lute and a very scanty tutu that scarcely began to cover her ample figure against the cold. They don't make ballet dancers that way any more. It's almost worth buying the record for that picture. Is it worth buying it for the music? Yes, if obscure French Romantic ballet kitsch—complete with orchestrated old carols, variations on Au Clair de la Lune, and angelic female voices—is your style. You also get a fashionable slow waltz for an encore.

This is the kind of music that one of our New York “good-music” stations plays during afternoon drive time interspersed with ads for restaurants. For whatever they're worth, Cigale and its companion waltz are played and recorded to perfection. E.S.

SAVERIO MERCADANTE was an Italian opera composer (1795-1870) whose work was praised by his contemporaries, including Rossini, but who was criticized more than once for composing “too fast.” Until recently, only the best-informed of today's music lovers even knew his name. But, like many other composers of Italian opera, Mercadante, who played flute and violin, wrote instrumental music too, including funeral symphonies for Rossini, Donizetti, Bellini, and Pacini and some orchestral fantasies. The two concertos on this new disc are both shapely works that start out like operatic overtures but later feature spectacular solo passages that seem to be tailor-made for the tireless Jean-Pierre Rampal, who makes the most of them, flawlessly backed by the English Chamber Orchestra under Claudio Scimone. The set of thirteen elegant variations for flute and string orchestra, exploiting the composer's thorough knowledge of the instrument, is a virtuoso showpiece with each variation more difficult than the one before it. Yet it all sounds easy as Rampal breezes through. P.K.


age and handling charge from Spectrum Records, Harriman, N.Y. 10926).

Performance: Warm
Recording: A bit fuzzy

Now that the fortepiano, especially the Viennese instrument of Mozart's day, is becoming increasingly popular, we can begin comparing instruments and performers. Such an opportunity is afforded by the first two discs of the same Mozart sonatas played by Malcolm Bilson and Steven Lubin. Bilson’s fortepiano was built by Philip Belt and based on a copy of an Anton Walter instrument of about 1780. Lubin’s was constructed from a design by Philip Belt based on a 1784 instrument by Johann Andreas Stein. Both capture accurately the essential differences between the products of the original builders: Bilson’s “Walter” produces a dry, crisp tone. Lubin’s “Stein” has a richer, singling sound. Mozart himself preferred Stein’s instruments but, ironically, could afford only a Walter.

Both Bilson and Lubin are faithful to the musical qualities of their respective instruments. Bilson’s playing is crisp, and his expression is achieved through the detailed articulation indicated by Mozart. Much of his playing is on the staccato side, and the pedal is sparingly used. Lubin achieves his expression more through rubato, very often very overlooked. Mozart’s articulation and ignoring rests as the sound carries through. He applies the pedal much more generously than Bilson does, and the effect is more like that rendered by performers on modern pianos today. Bilson’s style is probably closer to Mozart’s, but Lubin’s more romantic approach has its points and is equally rewarding. Both pianists (or is it fortissi?) are fine musicians and play beautifully.

S.L.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

MOZART: Sinfonia Concertante in E-flat Major (K. 297b). Idomeneo: Ballet Music (K. 367). Randall Wolfgang (oboe); Jane Hamborsky (clarinet); Frank Morelli (bassoon); William Purvis (horn); Orpheus Chamber Orchestra. NONESUCH O-D79009 $11.98.

Performance: Poised
Recording: Excellent

Less frequently heard than the corresponding piece for violin and viola, the Sinfonia Concertante for Oboe, Clarinet, Bassoon, and Horn is one of Mozart’s mellower works, a lyrical work in which the four soloists weave a tapestry of exquisite melodies. And the soloists of the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra are accomplished weavers. Their precise ensemble and spacial tempos lend Mozart’s poised phrases a wonderful feeling of repose and utter contentment. The group plays without a concertmaster, and to play the ballet music from Idomeneo that way is indeed a tour de force. The work is a single structure built on its points and is equally rewarding. Both pianists (or is it fortissi?) are fine musicians and play beautifully.

S.L.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT


Performance: Excellent
Recording: Okay but shallow

Staffan Scheja is a Swedish pianist who has studied at the Juilliard School and who knows how to play the stuffing out of Prokofiev. These three works—the Sarcasms of 1912-1914, the Third Sonata (originally from 1907 but entirely rewritten in the year of its original handling, 1917), and the Sixth Sonata of 1939-1940—all belong to Prokofiev the Romantic Rebel, the character that originally made the composer famous but that has given way to the more popular, bucolic, public Prokofiev, the good boy of the Classical Symphony and the ballets. Actually, in spite of the first impression of anger and unrelenting virtuosity, there are strong neo-Classical elements in all these works, even in the free-form Sarcasms, and Scheja, who is always in control, is really as much of a classicist as he is a Serge Thump-the-Keys. In any case, I find these performances beautifully modulated but still exciting and deep in feeling, and they are slightly smarred by the shallow piano sound of the recording.

E.S.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT


Performance: Superb
Recording: Echoey

This is one of those Denon Nippon Columbia Studio No. 1 digital specials. It isn't the digital recording that is most impressive here, though, but the playing of Jeffrey Siegel. Rachmaninoff's piano music is coming into its own—especially the works he wrote in the old country before his departure in 1917. The Etudes-Tableaux, composed just before the Revolution, contain some of the composer's best music—characteristic, expressive, superbly written for the instrument, poetic and bal¬lardic, and almost without a false note of tone or style. The Kreisler arrangements are something else; they are merely encore pieces, quite out of place at the head of a perfectly serious collection like this one.

The best measure of Jeffrey Siegel's success with this music is his wonderful performance of the C-sharp Minor Prelude; he makes even this pompous, overworked piece into something altogether different. The Kreisler arrangements are something else; they are merely encore pieces, quite out of place at the head of a perfectly serious collection like this one.

The best measure of Jeffrey Siegel's success with this music is his wonderful performance of the C-sharp Minor Prelude; he makes even this pompous, overworked piece of Romantic fustian moving and powerful. The ideal conductor is someone who can perform anywhere as high, technically and spiritually.

To tell the truth, I don't think the ideal in recorded piano sound has been reached here; this recording is too echoey and hollow
for my taste (although it is impressively wide-ranging and quiet). But the music is of great interest, and the performance is strong and sensitive.

E.S.


Performance: Touching
Recording: Okay

Max Reger’s violin concerto is just what you would expect—solid, stolid, serious. The music, in the late-Romantic mode. The surprise here is Suzanne Lutenbacher. Her fine recordings of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century music have endeared her to many listeners, but who would have thought she would do so well in music of the nineteenth century? Actually, this concerto was written in this century—1904 to be exact—but it is inescapably one of the codas to old-fashioned Romanticism and very much in the high tradition.

Perhaps the finale could have used a lighter touch in performance. And the recorded orchestral sound could have been lighter as well; the violin is strongly featured in a rich ambiance. But, finally, the piece is effectively represented and affecting in a curious way. There is a note of nostalgia behind the serious façade that makes it quite touching.

E.S.

SATIE: Socrate. Hugues Cuenod (tenor); Geoffrey Parsons (piano). NIMBUS 2104 $13.98 (from Brilly Imports, 155 North San Vicente, Beverly Hills, Calif. 90211).

Performance: Curious but effective
Recording: Piano not great; voice okay

This is a curious version of a curious work. Socrate is a setting of passages from three Platonic dialogues intended for four sopranos and chamber orchestra. It is said that Satie once performed it on the piano—indeed, its score is soulful and tender. A story that provides a slender precedent for this version. In fact, this setting can in no sense be called authentic, but it has one advantage: it sounds good. Hugues Cuenod, even in the twilight of his career, has that rare declamatory style and elegant simplicity of performances and Satie’s music sounds good on the piano. In many ways the work, especially the death of Socrates, is more satisfying and touching in this form than the way the composer intended! E.S.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

SCHUBERT: Piano Trio No. 1, in B-flat (violin); Roland Pidoux (cello). HARMONIA MICHELIN 11490 $10.99.

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CIRCLE NO. 38 ON READER SERVICE CARD

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT


Performance: Entirely winning
Recording: Full-bodied

Clara Schumann's Three Romances, composed in 1853, prove to be altogether too attractive to have suffered the neglect they have heretofore, and they are short enough to make up a nice, full side with Robert's A Minor Sonata. Some collectors may have preferred the second of Robert's two violin sonatas to complete such a package, but the still barely known Mendelssohn sonata of 1838 ("rediscovered" by Yehudi Menuhin only about thirty years ago) is another piece we are not too likely to encounter in the recital hall, and thus it is especially welcome from such able and committed advocates as Sergiu Luca and Anne Epperson. All three works are given entirely winning performances; the familiar Op. 105 is brought off with all the composer's characteristic fervor and impetuosity and yet without the minutest sacrifice in terms of sheer beauty of tone. Handsome and full-bodied as the digital recording is (and it does enhance the radiant quality of the playing), I can't help wishing Nonesuch had put this release in its lower-priced regular series so it would have been within easier reach of a greater number of listeners. But, economics aside, it is certainly a winner.

R.F.

Performance: Impressive
Recording: Very impressive

Bernard Haitink’s new reading of Shostakovich’s Seventh Symphony attempts, very successfully I think, to place both the structure and content of the work in a different perspective from the usual militant-propagandistic one. It will be interesting to hear how this approach fits into Haitink’s complete Shostakovich symphony cycle.

The opening movement of the Leningrad, with its infamous march-crescendo (the bane of evil?), gets its dramatic due here, but for once that is also evident in the many lyrical episodes, in particular in the lamentation of the last pages. The second movement is a gem, and the digital mastering shows to fine advantage this music’s many delicate touches, especially the big solisicopic episode for bass flute, contrabass clarinet, and harp. The tautly constructed themes of the finale without neglecting to deliver all the terrifying rage inherent in the central portion. An aura of bitterness hangs over the elegiac passage just before the coda’s metamorphosis of the basic theme into a major-key chorale. Here Haitink makes the most of the tautly constructed themes of the finale without neglecting to deliver all the terrifying rage inherent in the central portion. An aura of bitterness hangs over the elegiac passage just before the coda’s metamorphosis of the basic theme into a major-key chorale. Here too, Haitink manages to keep the musical aspect at maximum and the bombast to a reasonable minimum. I don’t regard the Seventh as the most successful of Shostakovich’s orchestral symphonies (No. 10 holds that spot for me), but neither is it the inferior piece that some have made it out to be. Haitink and his players make a strong case for it. One should give this album serious consideration.

In the early, predominantly satirical and raucous Age of Gold music, Haitink does not pass lightly over the reflective adagio episode for bass flute, contrabass clarinet, and harp. The tautly constructed themes of the finale without neglecting to deliver all the terrifying rage inherent in the central portion. An aura of bitterness hangs over the elegiac passage just before the coda’s metamorphosis of the basic theme into a major-key chorale. Here too, Haitink manages to keep the musical aspect at maximum and the bombast to a reasonable minimum. I don’t regard the Seventh as the most successful of Shostakovich’s orchestral symphonies (No. 10 holds that spot for me), but neither is it the inferior piece that some have made it out to be. Haitink and his players make a strong case for it. One should give this album serious consideration.

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Formidable Rachmaninoff

Last October I was somewhat critical in these pages of Andrei Gavrilov's wild man approach to the Tchaikovsky B-flat Minor Piano Concerto on Angel. A recently released CBS/Melodiya disc presents him in a recording he made five years earlier, and on his home territory, of the Rachmaninoff Third Concerto. It is as formidable a performance as I have ever heard of the composer's most difficult and sophisticated work for piano and orchestra.

The score is uncut, and Gavrilov plays the long cadenzas with consummate virtuosity and dash. Indeed, the fervency and brilliance with which he attacks the one in the first movement suggests nothing less than Josef Hofmann in his prime. Also shattering is the initial piano entry in the slow movement, which here carries the burden of a relentless tragedy. The recitative episode is singularly eloquent, the waltz section is a real dazzler—and so it goes all the way to the triumphant final pages. If it appears that the soloist dominates the proceedings, that reflects no discredit on the noble and spirited collaboration of conductor Alexander Lazarev and the USSR State Academic Orchestra.

The sonics indicate a rather close but by no means discomfiting microphone setup. Though not state-of-the-art, the sound is actually very decent—a welcome change from the blowiness that afflicts a good many big-scale Soviet recordings. I would rate this disc among the top three recorded realizations to date of the Rachmaninoff D Minor.

—David Hall


This is a recorded by-product of a German film, presenting—indeed, mis-spelling errors and the absence of any useful notes—in haste. There are several familiar and beloved selections here, plus a few pleasant novelties that are not further identified on the jacket. Placido Domingo is in outstanding form. I do not find the settings (chorus with or without organ) irresistible, but if you have a passion for treble voices you may respond to this offering more enthusiastically than I did.

G.J.


Performance: Excellent
Recording: Effective

GLEN GOULD: The Little Bach Book. J. S. Bach: Aria (BWV 998): Six Little Preludes: Nos. 1 and 2 (BWV 933, 934). Two-part Inventions: No. 1 (BWV 772); No. 3 (BWV 774); No. 4 (BWV 775); No. 5 (BWV 776); No. 6 (BWV 777); No. 7 (BWV 778); No. 8 (BWV 779); No. 10 (BWV 781); No. 13 (BWV 784); No. 14 (BWV 785); No. 15 (BWV 786). Partita No. 1, in B-flat Major (BWV 825): Minuets 1 and II; Gigue. English Suite No. 2, in A Minor (BWV 811): Bourrée 1 and II; Gigue. English Suite No. 3, in G Minor (BWV 808): Gavottes 1 and II; French Suite No. 3, in B Minor (BWV 814): Minuet; Trio. French Suite No. 5, in G Major (BWV 816): Gavottes; Boureé; Gigue. English Suite No. 6, in E Major (BWV 817): Minuet; Boureé; Gigue. C. P. E. Bach: Well-Tempered Clavier. Book 1: Preludes and Fugues No. 1, in C Major (BWV 846). No. 5, in D Major (BWV 850); and No. 21, in B-flat Major (BWV 866). Nine Little Preludes: No. 1, in C Major (BWV 824). Glenn Gould (piano). CBS M 36672 $9.98, © MT 36672 $9.98.

Performance: Excellent
Recording: Excellent

from top to bottom, no audible effort in his tone production. His pronunciation is admirable, and my only reservation concerns his occasional tendency to go sharp in loud high passages.

Actually, I admire the beauty of the singing here more than I do the music. Recitals devoted only to Strauss lieder invariably expose the unevenness of the composer's song output. Too many of these songs lack the high passages. My only reservation concerns my only reservation concerns

Performance: Deft
Recording: Excellent

The four tiny pieces by the contemporary Cuban guitarist-composer Leo Brower—rhythmically and melodically appealing, with some rather mild dissonances for spice—constitute the only portion of this program actually composed for guitar duo. All the other pieces are transcriptions of keyboard or (in the case of the Granados) orchestral originals prepared by Emilio Pujol, Miguel Llobet, or the performers themselves. Various listeners will have various attitudes toward such transcriptions, but there could hardly be a negative response to these deft, occasionally poetic performances, in which the two players (who are married to each other) seem to breathe as one. The recording itself is of demonstration quality.

R.F.


Performance: Festive
Recording: Good

In his "Silver Jubilee Album," Glenn Gould presents himself not only as a pianist, but also as a composer, actor, and writer, facets of a kind of multiple career rarely encountered in this (or any other) country. As a soloist he gives wonderful performances of
Scarlett and Scriabin, makes pianistic sense out of an obscure C. P. E. Bach harpsichord sonata, and is bold enough to play a Liszt transcription of the first movement of Beethoven's Pastoral Symphony. Concerning the last, I wished there had been room for the entire work (it is better for orchestras, of course), but Liszt's solutions to various thematic problems are fascinating. To show himself as an accompanist, Gould has included a stunning performance of the first three of Strauss' Op. 8 Etudes that he recorded with Elisabeth Schwarzkopf in 1966. So You Want to Write a Fugue, released in its first incarnation by Stereo Review (April 1964 issue), is a devastating parody of a Bach fugue in which all of the master's devices are exploited together with a few musical quotes.

The second disc in the set contains A Glenn Gould Fantasy, which is a self-conducted interview in which Gould faces such noteworthy, if nonexistent, critics as Sir Neville Twitt-Thornwaite, Karlheinz Klopweisser, Theodore Slutz, and Marta Horváti. Despite the broad satire, Gould eloquently defends the playing of Bach on the piano and his preference for restricting his performances to highly edited recordings. There is also a discussion of and excerpts from two of his radio documentaries, The Idea of the North and The Latecomers. The session terminates as Gould plays his transcription of La Valse to the board of directors of "Geyser Petroleum" on a storm-ridden oil rig in Hudson's Bay. Although much of this is hilarious, there are also moments of profundity, and the entire Fantasy tells us a great deal about Glenn Gould and his controversial career.

Turning to "The Little Bach Book," I found most of it charmingly played, but, as usual, Gould's acute sense of articulation is often misapplied and some of the tempos will cause eyebrows to rise and hairs to stand on end.

S.L.


Performance: Big virtuoso style. Recording: Lacks brilliance.

Vladimir Leyetchkiss is the sort of big-style emigré Russian pianist who, if not for the heavy competition, would probably be a lot better known. As it is, we are the beneficiaries, for instead of competing in the standard repertoire he has chosen to emphasize Scarlatti and Scriabin, makes pianistic sense out of an obscure C. P. E. Bach harpsichord sonata, and is bold enough to play a Liszt transcription of the first movement of Beethoven's Pastoral Symphony. Concerning the last, I wished there had been room for the entire work (it is better for orchestras, of course), but Liszt's solutions to various thematic problems are fascinating. To show himself as an accompanist, Gould has included a stunning performance of the first three of Strauss' Op. 8 Etudes that he recorded with Elisabeth Schwarzkopf in 1966. So You Want to Write a Fugue, released in its first incarnation by Stereo Review (April 1964 issue), is a devastating parody of a Bach fugue in which all of the master's devices are exploited together with a few musical quotes.

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Performance: Big virtuoso style. Recording: Lacks brilliance.

Vladimir Leyetchkiss is the sort of big-style emigré Russian pianist who, if not for the heavy competition, would probably be a lot better known. As it is, we are the beneficiaries, for instead of competing in the standard repertoire he has chosen to emphasize lesser-known music. Sergei Taneyev (1856-1915), whose impressive opera Oresteia was released in this country by Deutsche Grammophon not too long ago, was an early neo-Classicist—before Stravinsky, that is. The Prelude and Fugue in G-sharp Minor was the required piece at the First Tchaikovsky Competition (Van Cliburn), but it does not appear to have been previously-recorded. It is a serious, brilliant, difficult work, very well played here.

The rest of this record is even more attention-getting. The Prokofiev settings of Schubert waltzes are, at the very least, charming. And the Scriabin Op. 8 Etudes are from the full flower of that composer's Romantic first period. One or two of them

Performance: Top-drawer. Recording: Excellent.

The American art song deserves the kind of attention it gets in this carefully produced album. It’s too bad that there was no room in the recital for songs by such major composers as Carpenter, Ives, Thomson, and Barber, but what is included is fascinating. Moreover, baritone William Parker, with his strong voice, superbly controlled style, and long experience both in the concert hall and on the operatic stage, was certainly a fine choice for most of this repertoire.

Charles Tomlinson Griffes (1884-1920) studied in Berlin at a time when most other aspiring American composers were drawn to Paris, and he wrote his early (unpublished) songs to German texts by such poets as Heinrich Heine. Mr. Parker’s own studies in German and performing experience in Vienna and Strasbourg serve him well here, and you could swear that what he’s singing is Brahms or Schumann—not good Brahms and Schumann at that. The altogether lovely The First Snowfall (published in 1912) and the 1918 setting of John Masefield’s nautical An Old Song Restored show us the more familiar Griffes, first among American musical impressionists.

Parker sounds a bit wooden in the “Anatomy Lesson” from Lee Holby’s opera Summer and Smoke (based on the Tennessee Williams play), yet he is moving in the scene in which, as the young man who knows he is dying, he warns Alma against encroaching spinsterhood. He is also effective—with strong help from clarinetist Virgil Blackwell and the Columbia String Quartet—in the late Robert Evett’s setting of Melville’s Billy in the Darbies (the epilogue to Billy Budd) and even better in Ernst Bacon’s more straightforward treatment of the same text for voice and piano. Coached by the composer, Parker is perfect in Ned Rorem’s Reported Missing in Action, 1943. William Parker (baritone); William Huckaby (piano); Virgil Blackwell (clarinet). Columbia String Quartet. New World NW 305 $8.98.

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**Happy Birthday**


**Zukerman, Perlman, Mehta, Stern**

Birthday to You is not included, in case you wondered. Obviously, the disc is a must for anyone who was at the concert and probably for many of those who watched and listened to the Exxon “Live from Lincoln Center” presentation on PBS stations across the nation. For the rest of us, it has, as all such “occasional” recordings do, its ups and its downs. The first thing on the positive side is that a real sense of fun comes through. These musicians (Mehta included) enjoy playing together. Second, of course, there is some fabulous playing here. Stern’s tone and his intonation go off a bit toward the end of the Mozart Sinfonia Concertante, but he is still every inch a great violinist. Zukerman’s combination of tone (enormous) and agility (Olympic) on the viola is nothing short of startling. Perlman is simply a beautiful player. The three of them together in the Vivaldi provide passages as exquisite as any to be found on disc. The orchestra, in its somewhat impersonal way, plays like the great orchestra it is but does not always seem to be... On the negative side, there is, principally, the matter of style. None of the three soloists, gifted as they all are, has ever been known for any particular sensitivity to historical style; they play pretty much as they play—big tone and vibrato, slashing attacks, long-line phrasing, and so on—regardless of the repertoire. Mehta is not very historically oriented either. And so, though there is a Harpsichord in the Vivaldi and the Bach, the music is rather thick and out of scale; there are odd and out-of-place orchestral crescendos, trills are played sometimes right-side-up and sometimes upside-down, and every now and then one or the other of the soloists cannot resist a gypsy grace note or a Russian sob. The digitally mastered recording is very well managed for the circumstances, and the applause has mercifully been faded out quickly after each selection. Technical perfectionists, however, will notice a dropout close to the end of the first movement of the Bach concerto. Something of an accurate perspective on the record’s place in the scheme of things can be gained from the album package itself: in its double -fold space, it offers pictures, comments on the telecast, biographies of the artists, and newspaper quotations—all in three languages—but not one word, beyond the listings, about the music.

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