

JULY 1981 \$1.95

ICD-08398

High Fidelity

THE MAGAZINE

OF AUDIO, VIDEO, CLASSICAL MUSIC AND POPULAR MUSIC

The Critical Component You Can't Overlook!

Important New Miles Davis Collection from the '60s

Breathtaking Advances in Home Video Viewing

Does Broadway's Magic Survive on the Album "42nd Street"?

Which Accessories Really Work?



A black and white photograph of a vintage vinyl record player. The turntable is visible on the left, and the tonearm with a needle is positioned over a record on the right. A red diagonal banner with the words "MUSICAL AMERICA EDITION" in white capital letters is overlaid across the middle of the image.

27



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THIS YEAR, PIONEER DISCOVERED A NEW ART.



Pioneer goes beyond state of the art electronics to make a major new contribution in human engineering.

In the past 40 years Pioneer has made countless contributions to the state of the art in High Fidelity. Now Pioneer is introducing new components that actually restate the art. We call it High Fidelity for Humans.

This year to a list of audible innovations and incredible specifications we have added human engineering features that give the owner of our equipment a new ability to control it and the quality of the sound it produces.

For example, Pioneer's new CT-9R, three direct drive motor Cassette Deck has a Time Remaining Counter with a digital readout that shows you how much recording time is left on a tape. So you won't run out of tape before running out of music. There's also an Index Scan feature that previews a tape by playing the first five seconds of each piece of music. And to give the CT-9R an incredible signal-to-noise ratio with extended high frequency response, Pioneer's engineers developed RIBBON SENDUST tape heads with laminations 4 to 5 times thinner than conventional Sendust heads. And only Pioneer has them.

Our new Quartz Synthesized F-9 Tuner has a Multipath Indicator that goes so far as to tell you when a signal is being reflected off nearby objects or buildings. So you can adjust

your antenna for the best reception. It can also memorize six of your favorite FM and six AM stations and retrieve them instantly. And to make sure every one always sounds its best, our engineers combined two of our exclusive ID MOSFET transistors in a Push-Pull Front End circuit. When you tune in a weak station there's no worry about stronger stations causing distortion



views the entire band and eight FM and eight AM Memory Presets recall the stations you prefer instantly. What's more, Pioneer's patented Non-Switching amp does away with one of the most troublesome and audible forms of distortion—the noise generated when

output transistors switch on and off thousands of times a second.

Our new top-of-the-line turntable, the Linear Tracking PL-L800 is another feat of human engineering. It features a linear motor that drives the tonearm across the track by electromagnetic repulsion—another Pioneer innovation. So it's extraordinarily quiet with no noisy belts, worm gears or pulleys and tracking error is virtually non-existent. The tonearm

itself is made of Polymer Graphite—an amazing material that dampens resonance. And there's a coaxial suspension system that isolates the platter and tonearm assembly. These features combine to keep what's going on in the room around the turntable from becoming part of the music.

And all this is just the beginning. While the Pioneer concept of human engineering makes our components a pleasure to live with, Pioneer's innovative electronics and technology make them a pleasure to listen to. If you'd like to hear more, visit your nearby Pioneer dealer. You'll see and hear why Pioneer components are #1 with humans who care about music.

PIONEER
WE BRING IT BACK ALIVE

due to front end overload. And Quartz-PLL Synthesized tuning makes drift impossible.

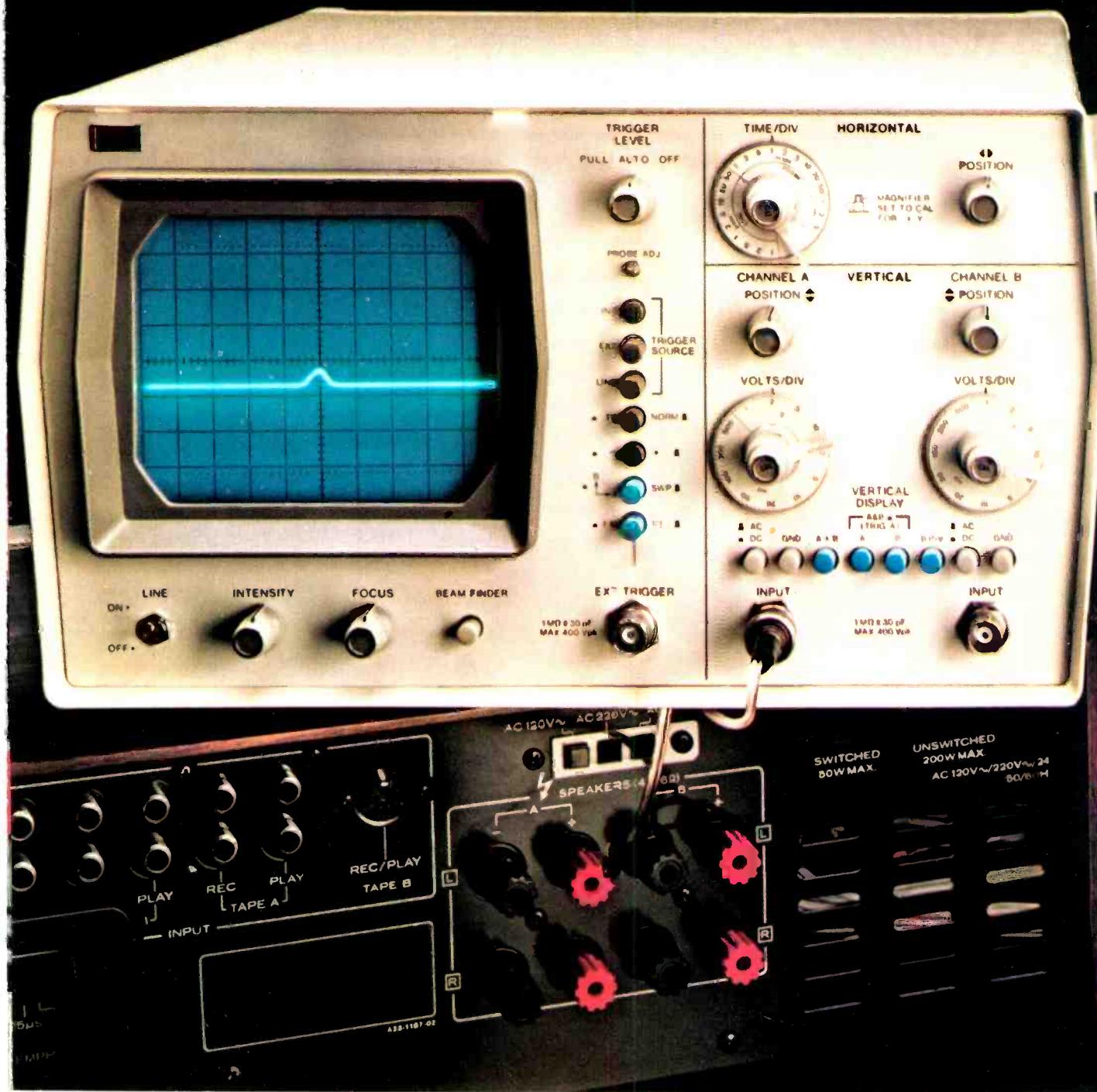
Unique features on the new Pioneer A-9 Integrated Amp include a Subsonic Indicator. It lights up only when you need to use the Subsonic Filter to get rid of very low frequency interference caused by record warps and such. Inside, a new DC Servo circuit eliminates all capacitors from the signal path so they can't muddy up the signal.

That gives you a purer signal with superb definition.

Pioneer's SX-7 Receiver brings you precise electronic control of most functions including volume. The Auto Station Scan control pre-



EVERY YEAR, HI-FI COMPANIES MAKE MINOR IMPROVEMENTS IN THE STATE OF THE ART.



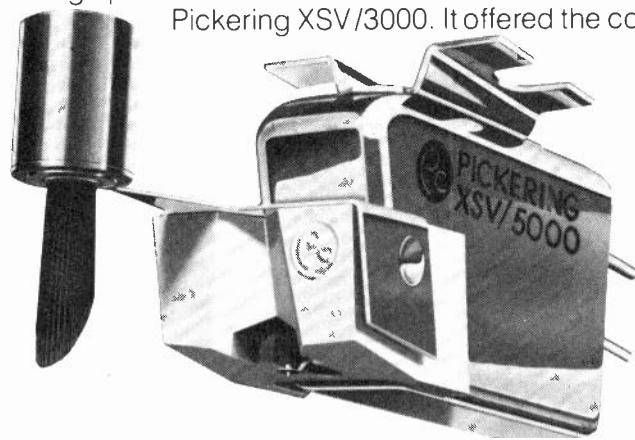


The best for both worlds

The culmination of 30 years of Audio Engineering leadership—the new Stereohedron®

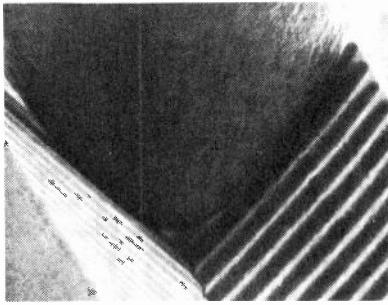
XSV/5000

One of the most dramatic developments of cartridge performance was the introduction of the Pickering XSV/3000. It offered the con-



sumer a first generation of cartridges, combining both high tracking ability and superb frequency response. It utilized a new concept in stylus design—Stereohedron, coupled with an exotic samarium cobalt moving magnet.

Now Pickering offers a top-of-the-line Stereohedron cartridge, the XSV/5000, combining features of both the XSV/3000 and the XSV/4000. It allows a frequency response out to 50,000 Hz.



The Exclusive Stereohedron Tip

The new XSV samarium cobalt magnet accounts for an extremely high output with the smallest effective tip mass. The Stereohedron tip design is the result of long research in extended frequency response for tracing of high frequency modulations. The patented Dustamatic® brush and stylus work hand in hand with the rest of the cartridge assembly to reproduce with superb fidelity all frequencies contained in today's recordings.

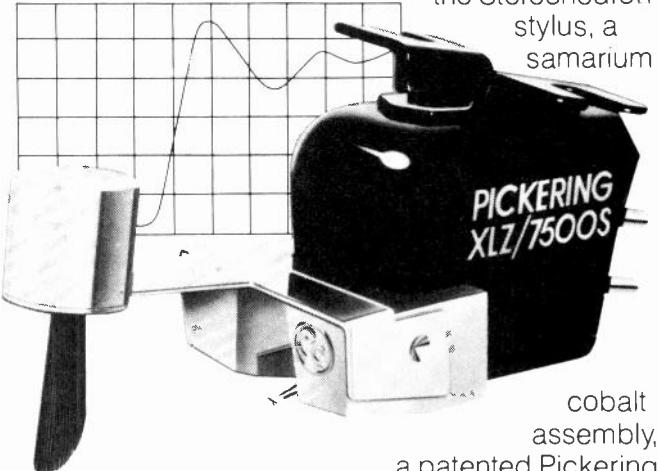
Pickering is proud to offer the XSV/5000 as the best effort yet in over 30 years of cartridge development.

A fresh new breakthrough in cartridge development designed specifically as an answer for the low impedance moving coil cartridge—

XLZ/7500S

The advantages of the XLZ/7500S are that it offers characteristics exceeding even the best of moving coil cartridges. Features such as an openness of sound and extremely fast risetime, less than 10μ , to provide a new crispness in sound reproduction. At the same time, the XLZ/7500S provides these features without any of the disadvantages of ringing, undesirable spurious harmonics which are often characterizations of moving coil pickups.

The above advantages provide a new sound experience while utilizing the proven advantages of the Stereohedron stylus, a samarium



cobalt assembly, a patented Pickering Dustamatic brush, with replaceable stylus, along with low dynamic tip mass with very high compliance for superb tracking.

So, for those who prefer the sound characteristics attributed to moving coil cartridges, but insist on the reliability, stability and convenience of moving magnet design, Pickering presents its XLZ/7500S.

 **PICKERING**

"for those who can hear the difference"

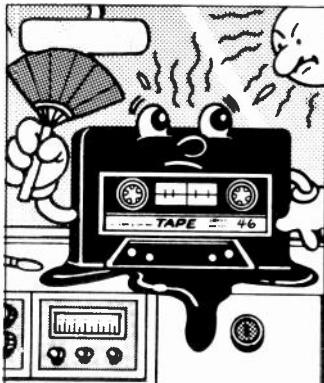
Two new sources
of perfection!

For further information on the XSV/5000 and the XLZ/7500S write to Pickering Inc., Sunnyside Blvd., Plainview, N.Y. 11803.

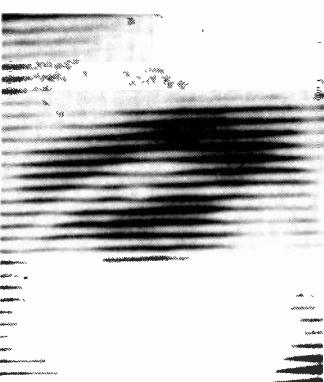
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High Fidelity

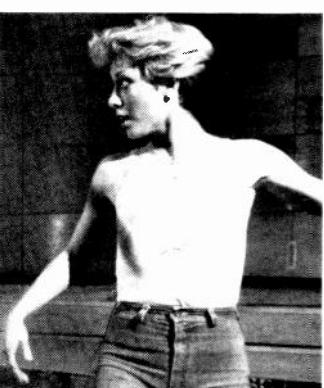
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HIGH FIDELITY

About This Issue

This issue of HIGH FIDELITY is very special: It celebrates both a new graphic design and the relocation of our editorial offices from Great Barrington, Massachusetts (pop. 7,400), where HF was founded thirty years ago, to New York City. The move brings us closer to the vital information sources we need to continue our tradition of excellence—a tradition we believe is reflected in our "new look."

OF SPECIAL NOTE:

- Much as the Baja road race serves as a torture test for cars, a radio station puts records, equipment, and associated accessories to the test. To find out what accessories and system care products can withstand the rigors of twenty-four-hour-a-day, seven-day-a-week use, we went to WFMT—Chicago's FM "superstation"—and asked producer Richard Warren to recommend those gizmos and gadgets he had found most useful for home stereo systems as well as in the studio. As it turned out, WFMT's preferences closely parallel conclusions made by HIGH FIDELITY more than a year ago.
- Samuel Barber, who died earlier this year, was one of America's most noted twentieth-century composers. HIGH FIDELITY critic Allan Kozinn was the last person to interview Barber, and this month he completes his two-part article, critiquing Barber's vocal, choral, chamber and solo, and stage works.
- Few recording artists have universal appeal, but Miles Davis certainly must be numbered among them. Often with great artists, "best of" collections fall short of capturing the essence of the performer. In the case of the new double-disc album "Directions," however, reviewer Don Heckman says the magic of Davis' most prolific era has been faithfully captured.

AND DON'T MISS.... a closeup look by assistant audio-video editor Michael Riggs at a critical link in your audio system—the phono pickup. Riggs reports that improper tracking can cause extensive damage to your record collection and tells you how to spot the problem.... When is a "hit" a "miss"? Reviewer Matthew Gurewitsch says one instance is the attempt to capture the toe-tapping excitement of the Broadway show *42nd Street* on disc.... Who ever heard of Delbert McClinton? Not many people, until recently. BACKBEAT writer Sam Sutherland reports on the long road to the top for this southern rocker....

IN VIDEO TODAY AND TOMORROW.... you'll find a three-part report on your television set. The "boob tube" has come a long way in the past few years, gradually assuming the role of a display screen for home video entertainment systems. What's ahead? Component television and stereo TV broadcasts, for openers.

NEXT MONTH LOOK FOR.... our special 1982 preview of new equipment; a close-up by audio-video editor Robert Long on the new baby in the Dolby noise-reduction family—Dolby C; a hands-on report by associate audio-video editor Peter Dobbin on the new lightweight, personal portable cassette players; test reports on four new cassette decks; and a BACKBEAT interview with vibraphonist Gary Burton.



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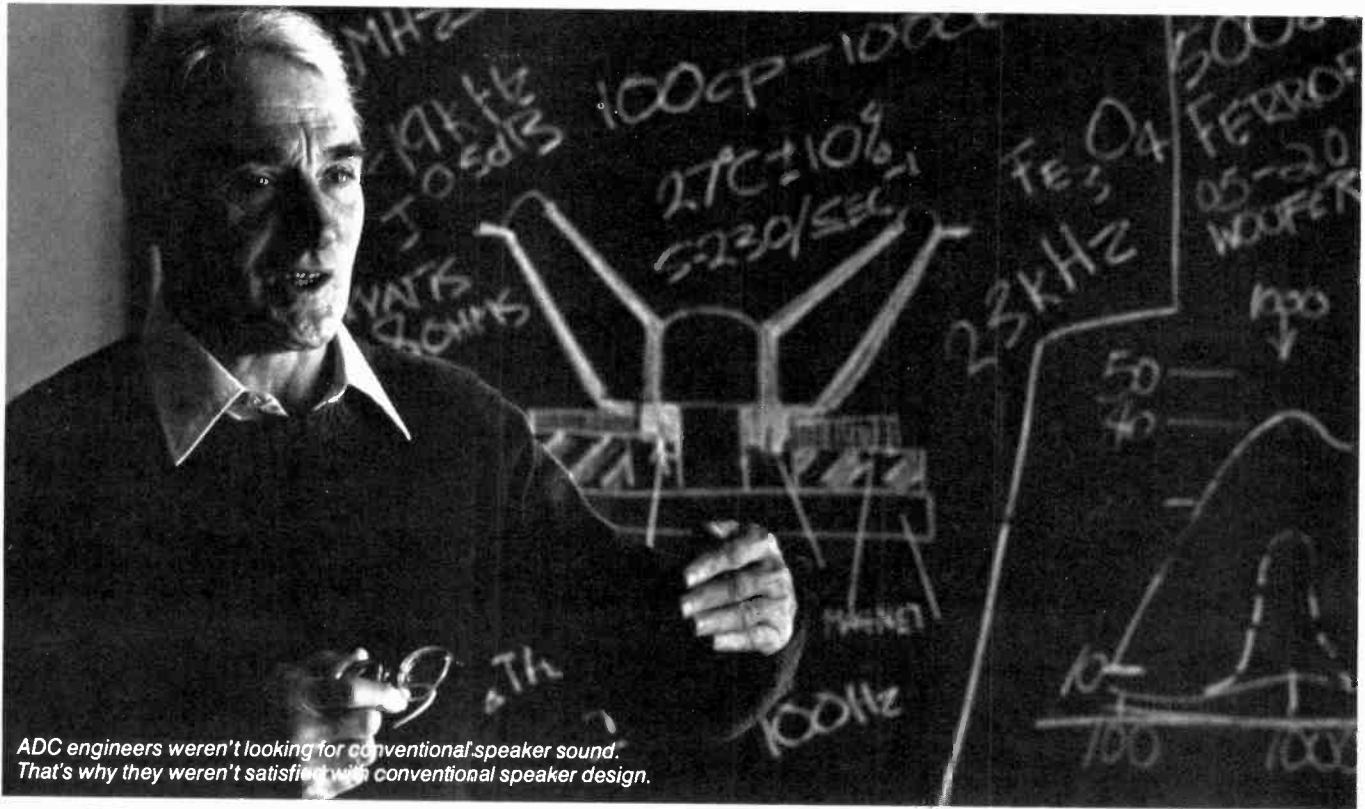
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Originality

**When it comes to performance,
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There's nothing conventional about our ADC MS-650 mini-speaker system.

Not its size; each MS-650 is just 11" high.

Not its design; it's available as a pair or as a three piece system with bass module.

Not its performance; "We cranked up the volume to almost orgiastic levels Ry Cooder's bass guitar and the howitzers in the new Telarc digital 1812 Overture came through undiminished and unscathed, and we didn't even smell the smoke of battle ..." - Hi-Fi/Stereo Buyers Guide.

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Most mini-system drivers can overheat and distort under high power. Both our 6 1/2" high compliance woofer and 1" soft dome polyamide tweeter are specially cooled with ferrofluid. It disperses heat five times faster than air for better frequency response, lower distortion and greater power handling capacity... 150 watts per channel!!

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For most people a pair of ADC MS-650's are perfect. But maybe you're not most people. For you, there's our matching MS-10W bass module. It reproduces the lowest bass notes for both channels. The result? Bass response that not only defies the size of the system, it defies the imagination.

the System, it defies imagination.
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High Fidelity

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David Drucker
The Complete Buyer's Guide to
Stereo Hi-Fi Equipment

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Letters

Bartók Tribute

The pen of Paul Henry Lang slipped when he wrote ["Bartók at Columbia," March] that the Nazis could not have denounced Béla Bartók as "non-Aryan." Bartók himself told how it could be done. He was not a Jew, but no Jew detested the Nazis more than he did.

On April 13, 1938, he wrote (in part) from Budapest to a friend in Basel: "Not only has my publishing house gone Nazi, but the Viennese society for performing rights to which I (and Kodály) belong is being Nazi-fied. Only the day before yesterday I received the notorious questionnaire about grandfathers, etc.: 'Are you of German blood, of kindred race, or non-Aryan?' Naturally, neither I nor Kodály will fill out the form. It's rather a pity, for we could make fun of them. We could say that we are non-Aryans, because (according to my lexicon) 'Aryan' means 'Indo-European.' We Hungarians are Finno-Ugrians, or ethnically we might possibly be northern Turks. That is, we are a non-Indo-European people and, consequently, non-Aryans. Another question runs like this: 'Where and when were you wounded?' Answer: 'On the 11th, 12th, and 13th of March 1938, in Vienna!'"

The dates are those of the *Anschluss*, the infamous Nazi invasion, occupation, and annexation of Austria.

Leonard Burkat
Danbury, Conn.

An addition to David Hamilton's illuminating "Bartók at the Piano" in March: Bartók's Patria recording of Liszt's *Sursum corda* was reissued by Hungaroton in a transfer that is much more spacious and vivid, although also noisier, than that on Bartók 903. The Hungaroton (LPX 11759), which includes the first *Romanian Dance* and two of the HMV folksong recordings, is a fascinating grab bag of Hungarian notables (Kodály, Hubay, Weiner, Dohnányi, Zathureczky, and others) issued in commemoration of the centenary of the Hungarian Academy of Music in 1975.

Also, around 1920, Bartók made a number of piano rolls for Welte; while it is generally true that modern releases of Welte rolls are not good, these are exceptions. Among them is the "Recorded Treasures" album (676, with a side of Dohnányi), containing *Romanian Folk Dances*, the Sonatine, "Evening in the Country," and a group of Hungarian folksongs (6-10, 12, 14, and 15). This small California label was responsible for a number of skillfully processed piano-roll reissues, and this particular release excited the admiration of Béla Bartók, the composer's elder son, who brought it with him when he was interviewed on WGBH (Boston) by Robert J. Lertsema some years ago.

John C. Swan
Crawfordsville, Ind.

I am very fond of the music of Béla Bartók and a loyal HIGH FIDELITY reader, and I was thrilled with the Bartók 100th-anniversary sec-

tion, which gave me fresh insights into him as a pianist and ethnomusicologist as well as composer. My own celebrations for this great composer during 1981 include listening to recorded performances of his music; playing the solo piano works, such as *For Children* and *Mikrokosmos*; and, best of all, hearing his music performed live.

Ruth F. Block
New York, N.Y.

Recording in Chicago

In regard to the Decca/London recordings mentioned in "Behind the Scenes" [April], the Bartók sessions did indeed take place in Chicago's Orchestra Hall, but only because the Medinah Temple was not available at the times needed. However, the people involved were so delighted with the results that they remained in Orchestra Hall for the Bruckner Fourth sessions, even though the Medinah Temple was available.

I realize that the magazine is made up several months in advance, and this change of venue was made within a week of the sessions, held on January 26 and 27. (I play third horn and am also unofficial recording archivist for the Chicago Symphony.)

Richard S. Oldberg Jr.
Evanston, Ill.

Our information was checked with the Chicago Symphony press office during the week of the sessions.—Ed.

A Little Nostalgia

In reading "About this Issue," which headed the "Letters" column in April, I was touched with nostalgia. My audiophilia began in 1954 with my first recording (mono, of course) of the RCA Red Seal Toscanini version of Tchaikovsky's *Romeo and Juliet*. My first amplifier was an imported Telefunken radio that I played a turntable through. Then I bought a Voice of Music console, which was considered pretty "uptown" with other prepackaged systems of the era. Next was a Fisher amplifier kit (tubes and all) that I put together in the early Sixties. Also, I picked up a Dual turntable from a damaged freight store for about \$35 and had it repaired for another \$20. My listening was confined to Koss Pro/4 earphones until I could spring for the price of a pair of AR4ax speakers, which I still own.

I "grew up" with the high fidelity movement, and I lament the sad fact that the music industry is changing. You used to be able to audition a record before buying. Today? I bought a tape of Dvořák's cello concerto (or thought I did) on an Angel cassette from one of our largest record stores. There wasn't any place to try the tape there. Instead of Dvořák, I got Tchaikovsky's *Swan Lake*—not once, but three times. The manager asked if I was sure that was not Dvořák! As a candidate for a Ph.D. in music and performer in several orchestras, I was exasperated.

Music lovers are leaving the places they should be: in record stores selling music to music lovers like themselves; in universities

(Continued on page 10)



Technics linear-tracking turntable. Program it to play any cut. In any order. Even upside down.

Technics direct-drive SL-15. It automatically plays the record selections you want and skips the ones you don't. It completely eliminates tracking error and is so advanced it can even play upside down.

The SL-15's microcomputer and infrared optical sensor let you play up to 10 cuts per side, in any order. Just press the program keys in the order of the selections you want to hear. And with the repeat button, the SL-15 can repeat the entire program or any selection.

The SL-15 performs virtually any function, automatically.

It accurately selects the record size and speed, finds the lead-in groove and begins playback at the touch of a button.

More proof of the SL-15's accuracy is its quartz-locked, direct-drive motor and dynamically balanced, linear-tracking tonearm. In addition to tracking perfectly, the SL-15 plays a record as accurately upside down as it does right side up.

Technics also offers other linear-tracking turntables, including our famous SL-10 and SL-7. Audition one and you'll agree when it comes to linear tracking, Technics is a cut above the rest.

Technics
The science of sound

Sansui "Z" Receivers give you a spectrum worth analyzing.

What frequency range does your favorite singer's voice most commonly fall into? What about your favorite instrument?

How accurately does your cartridge handle those frequencies? How about your tape deck?

The newest Sansui "Z" Receivers all have an ingenious spectrum analyzer that answers these and other questions by letting you see exactly what you hear.



And it's what you hear that makes Sansui so special.

SANSUI—THE LEADER IN DC TECHNOLOGY. The DC-Servo Amp brings you coloration-free, superbly defined reproduction with the healthy, realistic bass response that only a DC configuration can provide. Gone are unwanted ultra-low frequencies—like record warps and tonearm resonance. What you hear is a clean, tight, transparent sound that sets a new standard for receiver performance.

SYNTHESIZED DIGITAL TUNING. You can't mistune a Sansui synthesized digital receiver. Not even a little. Press the up/down tuning buttons.

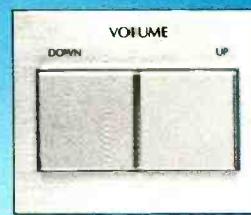
The digital circuitry ensures that every station received is automatically locked in for lowest possible distortion, with its frequency indicated both on a digital readout and by a LED indicator along an analog type dial.

12 PRESET STATIONS. To make FM and AM tuning still easier, up to 12 user-selected stations may be "stored" in all "Z" Receiver memory circuits for instant recall. The last station received will be remembered when the tuner is turned on again; and memories are kept "live" even during a power outage.

TOUCH VOLUME CONTROL & LED PEAK POWER

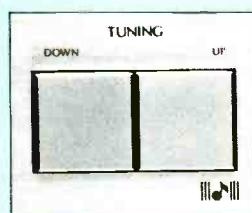
LEVEL INDICATOR. The Sansui "Z" Receivers use a pair of touch-buttons to adjust the listening level. Relative volume control setting is indicated on a fluorescent display. On most models actual peak power amplifier output is shown by 14- or 18-segment LED indicators.

And there's more. Instead of up/down tuning buttons, both the 9900Z and the 8900ZDB have tun-



ing knobs linked to a rotary "encoder" disc. As you turn the knob, the encoded disc works with an LED and a photo transistor to generate electronic pulses to raise or lower the tuned frequency. In addition, the 9900Z, 8900ZDB, and 7900Z have ceramic buzzers which signal unobtrusively while you tune in a station. There are three speaker select switches on the 9900Z for driving any two of three connected speaker pairs and two switches on all the other "Z" receivers. Included are LED's for every important function. Two Muting Modes. Two tape deck connections with dubbing. And much more.

The full line of Sansui "Z" Receivers are at your Sansui dealer now. Visit him for a complete demonstration soon. He has just the right model for your pocketbook and power requirements.





SANSUI "Z" RECEIVERS

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160 watts/chan., min. RMS, both channels into 8 ohms, from 20-20kHz, with no more than 0.015% THD.

890ZD3

125 watts/chan., min. RMS, both channels into 8 ohms, from 20-20kHz, with no more than 0.02% THD.

7900Z

100 watts/chan., min. RMS, both channels into 8 ohms, from 20-20kHz, with no more than 0.02% THD.

590ZC

75 watts/chan., min. RMS, both channels into 8 ohms, from 20-20kHz, with no more than 0.03% THD.

490ZC

55 watts/chan., min. RMS, both channels into 8 ohms, from 20-20kHz, with no more than 0.03% THD.

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40 watts/chan., min. RMS, both channels into 8 ohms, from 20-20kHz, with no more than 0.03% THD.

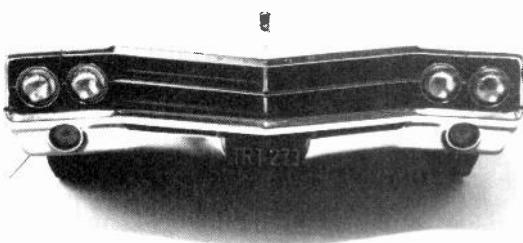
Cabinet of simulated wood grain.

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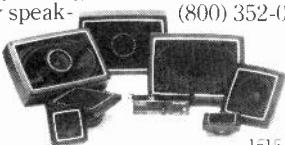
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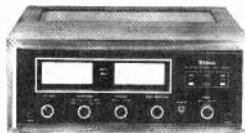
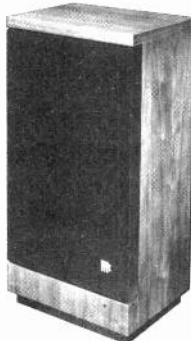
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(Continued from page 6)

teaching music appreciation; in responsible places of authority in the record and tape industry. When people like John Culshaw leave the scene, we are left with youngsters who are interested in a fast buck. Am I cynical, or is this a trend obvious to all who love music and see the record and tape industry and FM radio as poor substitutes for experiencing what great composers had in mind: the live concert? Incidentally, I faithfully read your classical reviews.

Gene Lacy
Houston, Tex.

Rare Beecham Tape

In a fascinating article on the history of tape recording ["'75 Years of Magnetic Recording"] that appeared in the March 1973 issue, reference was made to the fact that Sir Thomas Beecham and the London Philharmonic Orchestra had made a recording in Germany in 1936 of a section of Mozart's Symphony No. 39. An editorial in the same issue gave instructions on how to obtain a cassette recording of this excerpt, warning that quantities were limited.

I recall a later reference to this and similar recordings that have been released in the last several years on an LP. I have been unable to learn the label or number of the LP, and I wonder if any of your readers could help me. Failing that, would it be possible to obtain from someone a dubbing of the cassette that was being sold eight years ago?

Warren Reid
Montreal, Canada

The symphony's minuet is contained in the eight-disc Beecham "Musical Biography," EMI/World Records SHB 100 (distributed by German News), discussed in David Hamilton's August 1980 article.—Ed.

Deserving of Credit

[Apropos of the HIGH FIDELITY/Discwasher piece on vertical tracking angle and stylus rake angle in the March issue] it's probably worth mentioning that David Shreve deserves the credit for pointing out to the audio world, six years ago, the audibility of hypercritical vertical alignment of phono cartridges, which he called VTA. Then *International Audio Review* [No. 1/2, July 1976] discussed the following points: The distinction between SRA and VTA (and electrical vs. mechanical VTA); why VTA is less critical of alignment than SRA; that both cannot be simultaneously optimized in most existing cartridges; why Shibe (or "line-contact") styli are the most sensitive to SRA, ellipticals moderately sensitive, and conicals the least; that pinch effect might contribute to making SRA changes noticeable, even with conicals.

Discwasher, Inc., does deserve full credit for some good measurements that have further validated these points. Incidentally, the company's technical people have been enthusiastic readers and supporters of IAR.

J. Peter Moncrieff
International Audio Review
Berkeley, Calif.

WHY ONLY SONY WINDS UP WITH FULL COLOR SOUND.

Strangely enough, some of the things that make Sony Full Color Sound sound so terrific are things you can't hear.

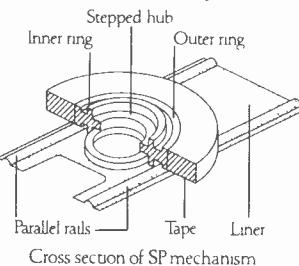
Such as Sony's unique experience and technical achievement. Sony makes both tape and the equipment that plays it. So Sony's experience with tape recording is unique among major tape manufacturers. After all, you'd better know all there is to know about tape decks before you make a tape. Sony does.

Then there's unique Sony balance. The fine-tuning of all the elements that go into making a tape, so that each synergistically complements the other and delivers the finest recording humanly and technically possible to achieve.

You also can't hear Sony's unique SP mechanism, one of the carefully balanced elements in every Sony tape. It's a perfect example of Sony technical achievement. The SP mechanism is what makes the tape run so smoothly inside the cassette. And smoothly running tape is critical for total, perfect tape performance.

Smooth running means less friction. So some of the most popular tape makers give the tape as much clearance inside the cassette as possible. (We used to do the same thing.) But this method results in uneven or too tight winding and actually increases friction as you wind and rewind the tape. Jamming and even a stopping of the tape in its tracks can result.

It was clear to Sony that even, uniform winding was the key. So Sony reversed the basic thinking about friction completely and invented the SP mechanism, the first positive guidance system on the market. Instead of giving the tape lots of room, it gently guides the tape smoothly and precisely through the cassette, and onto the reels, with a maximum of positive precision support, yet with an absolute minimum of friction. This is a perfect example of Sony



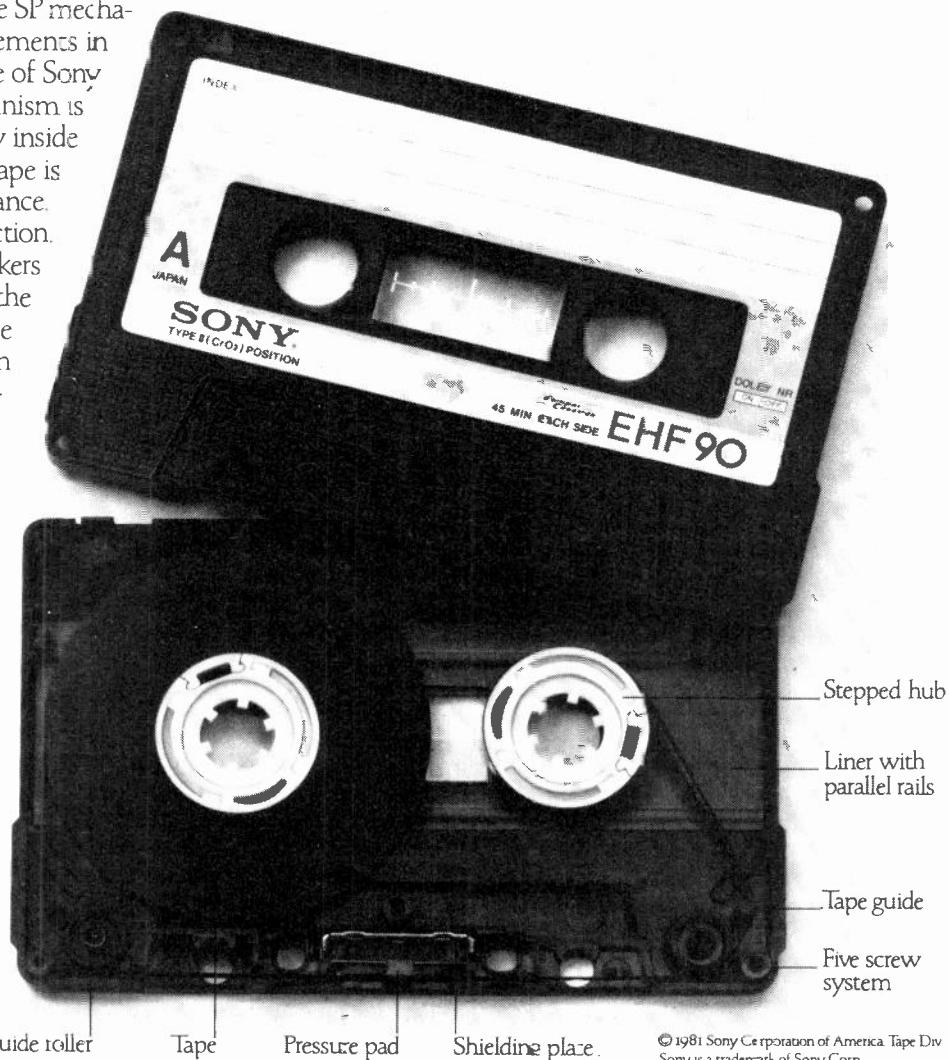
Cross section of SP mechanism

pioneering and how the Sony balance system works.

Some of the unique patented Sony innovations are the stepped hub wheel, which suppresses wobble; parallel "rails" of the liner which guide the tape and hub and keep the tape winding flat and even. Even the surface which touches the tape is special graphite-coated polyester, for the least possible friction.

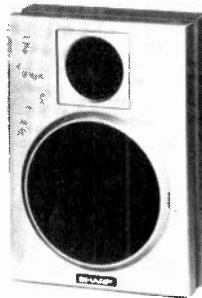
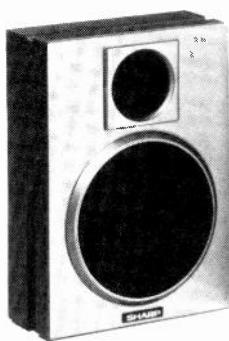
Our Sony SP mechanism is actually 10 times more trouble-free in lab tests than our old conventional mechanism. And the increase of friction after 200 "torture-test" windings and rewinding has been reduced by nearly 2/3!

The fact is, the more sophisticated your equipment, the more you'll appreciate Full Color Sound. Listen to Sony SHF (our best normal bias tape), EHF (high bias), FeCr or Metallic tape. Listen to the perfect balance of its perfect components. It's the secret of Full Color Sound. **SONY.**



High Fidelity News

New equipment and developments by Peter Dobbin



Flat Panel Stereo from Sharp

Barely 4 inches deep, Sharp's System 5000 includes an AM/FM tuner, a metal-ready cassette deck, and an amplifier rated at 18 watts (12½ dBW) per channel, all in a single housing; a pair of equally slender two-way bass-reflex speakers complete the ensemble. Among

the cassette deck's features are soft-touch transport controls, Sharp's Automatic Program Search System, and peak-reading LED level indicators. The tuner incorporates a digital frequency readout. The System 5000 sells for \$700.

Circle 149 on Reader-Service Card

Quiet on a Chip

With the announcement by National Semiconductor of its single-chip dynamic noise-reduction system bearing the trademark DNR, the possibility of lower noise levels in everything from car radios to video cassette recorders comes closer. First adopted by Advanced Audio Systems (see our test report on the DNR-450, May), the two-channel IC acts as a dynamically variable low-pass filter, reducing hiss and noise by varying the audio bandwidth as a function of the high-frequency content of the input signal. Delco Electronics has already announced that it will be incorporating the DNR chip in selected radios that it builds for General Motors.

Though National Semiconductor's ballyhoo on the new fourteen-pin IC touts the versatility of the design, one application must loom large in their thinking. Tests being conducted under the auspices of the Electronics Industry Association seek to assess the relative merits of the many systems that might be used to improve the dynamic range of stereo-sound TV and, presumably, become an integral part of the broadcast system. And any noise reducer that gets the nod for broadcasting will therefore appear attractive as a built-in for video recorders and disc players, where most

systems' stereo-sound technology is up for grabs.

Low system price (the IC's cost \$2.00 apiece in lots of 100,000) is one of the factors DNR has going for it. Another is its single-endedness: No encoding equipment is involved, so sonic reproduction on older equipment that has no chip is not "wrong"—just noisier than it need be.



A Moving-Coil with Muscle

The DV/10X Mark 2 is the third model in Dynavector's HV line of high-output moving-coil cartridges, which do not require the use of transformers or head amps. Said to have essentially flat response from 20 Hz to 20 kHz, it uses an elliptical diamond stylus bonded to a tapered aluminum cantilever. Recommended tracking force is 1.5 grams. The DV/10X Mark 2 sells for \$126.

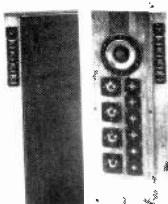
Circle 141 on Reader-Service Card



Add Dolby C to Your Deck

Dolby C, with its claimed 20 dB of tape noise reduction, is now available in an add-on processor from Nakamichi. The NR-200 offers four complete processing chains that allow simultaneous encoded recording and decoded playback; a monitor switch and an illuminated output-mode indicator facilitate tape/source comparisons on three-head decks. A built-in test oscillator allows the user to calibrate the sensitivity of his recorder for any tape and thus avoid Dolby tracking error. With its own peak-reading meters, recording level controls, and defeatable MPX filter, the processor replaces all controls—except those for the transport functions—on the deck itself. The NR-200, which also includes Dolby B processing, a master level control for fades, and an output level control, costs \$450.

Circle 140 on Reader-Service Card



A High-Rise Speaker from Heco

Manufactured in Germany by Heco and distributed in the U.S. by Osawa, the Lab 3 is a five-way acoustic suspension loudspeaker sold in mirror-image pairs. The system employs a 13-inch top-firing subwoofer, an 8-inch woofer, four vertically arranged 2-inch midranges, six 1-inch tweeters adjacent to the midrange drivers, and a supertweeter mounted above the driver level controls outside the grille cloth. Impedance is switchable between 4 and 8 ohms; frequency response is rated as 20 Hz to 40 kHz ± 2 dB and sensitivity as 89 dB SPL at 1 meter for an input of 0 dBW (1 watt). The Lab 3 costs \$4,900 a pair.

Circle 144 on Reader-Service Card

(Continued on page 14)



TDK brings two new standards to open reel.

Raising sound standards is nothing new to TDK. For years, TDK cassettes have set reference standards in metal and high bias. Now TDK announces two breakthroughs in open reel—GX and LX. Both are formulated to be fully compatible with your present system. You don't have to rebias to appreciate them.

TDK GX Studio Mastering tape handles the most critical demands of live music mastering beautifully. TDK's new ultra refined ferric oxide particle gives GX superior MOL, low distortion and a wide dynamic range. Equally impressive is TDK LX. Its super refined particle gives it high performance with low noise and low distortion throughout an extended frequency range. LX is ideal for both professional and audiophile use.

The refinements don't stop with the

formulations. A unique calendering and binding process rivets the particles to the tape surface, making dropouts practically a thing of the past. A special graphite and carbon backcoating, found on all GX and most LX tapes, reduces friction for the smoothest possible winding. At the same time, it prevents static discharge and reduces wow and flutter.

These high standards are carried through to the newly designed 10" metal and 7" plastic reels. Each has a separately molded hub and flange to ensure circularity and high strength. If you think open reel has gone as far as it can go, listen to the finest. TDK GX and LX. They could open up a whole new standard of recording excellence.

 **TDK**

Now you can add the three-dimensional impact of Sonic Holography to your system three different ways.



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 limiter/downward expander that nearly doubles dynamic range.



The C-1 combines the Sonic Hologram Generator with a full-function preamplifier.



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 credibility—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.

For literature, test reports and nearest Carver dealer, circle number below. For faster response, write directly to Carver.

CARVER
CORPORATION

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

AUDIO High Fidelity News

(Continued from page 12)

Invasion on Tiptoe?

Remember quadraphonics? For many audiophiles—and for many reasons—that question is sure to provoke an intensely negative reaction: quad is widely accounted the great sonic fiasco of recent years. But while its various American and Japanese incarnations (SQ, QS, CD-4, Q-8, and others) are virtually dead and buried today, a British mutant lives on in modest prosperity and even has set up an outpost in, of all places, Saginaw, Michigan.

The Ambisonic system is licensed by IMF Electronics (yes, the British loudspeaker manufacturer), which has established a U.S. subsidiary in Saginaw. The keystone of Ambisonics is a multi-capsule Calrec microphone whose rhomboidal geometry captures truly three-dimensional directional information (the more familiar quadriphonic schemes concentrated on a horizontal planar approach) but is claimed to be exceptionally compatible with transmission techniques using fewer than four discrete channels—down to and including mono. In its "standard" form, it is a matrixing system employing two transmission channels (like normal stereo) and is reproducible either via a stereo speaker pair or, with the aid of IMF's own \$658 decoder and an additional stereo amplifier, the same sort of four-speaker setup used for conventional quad.

IMF now is seeking to add various sorts of American popular music to the largely classical roster of Ambisonic recording available from Nimbus and Unicorn in England. Last year the company recorded Saginaw's New Reformation Dixieland Band and Traverse City's Bickley-Reef Petroleum Big Band, and in January it taped the bluegrass quartet Loose Caboose. A large midwestern theater organ (an endangered species) is under consideration as a further subject, and country-and-western acts are being sought.

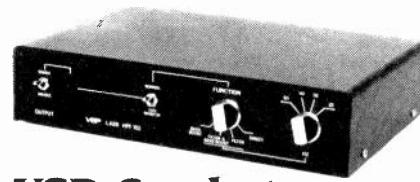


Integrated British (Phono) Tailoring

New to these shores is the British-made A-60 integrated amplifier from Amplification and Recording (Cambridge).

Ltd.—Arcam, for short. The amp is rated at 35 watts ($15\frac{1}{2}$ dBW) per channel into 8 ohms. Electronic protection circuitry is said to guard against damage from incorrect speaker loads or short circuits. Optional plug-in phono loading modules tailor the preamp to fixed-coil pickups that demand terminations other than the supplied 47,000 ohms in parallel with 30 picofarads. The A-60 sells for \$595; phono loading modules and the HA-10 moving-coil head amp cost \$6.00 and \$150, respectively.

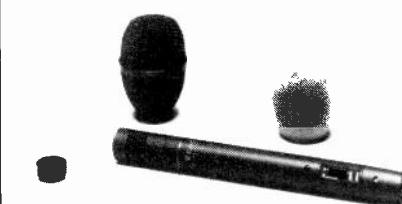
Circle 137 on Reader-Service Card



VSP Combats Infrasonics

The HPF-102 from VSP Labs is a high-pass filter whose sharp rolloff rate (24 dB per octave) and selectable cutoff frequencies (20, 30, 40, and 60 Hz) are reported to produce greater and more precise attenuation of infrasonic signals than is possible with the filters built into most preamps and receivers. A built-in tape monitor circuit permits the filter to be inserted ahead of the recorder inputs. The filter can be used with or without a 6-dB boost centered at 55 Hz. The HPF-102 carries a price tag of \$190.

Circle 143 on Reader-Service Card



Tascam Offers an All-Purpose Mike

The PE-120, an electret condenser microphone intended primarily for multi-track recording, comes with interchangeable cardioid and omnidirectional head elements. It also has a switchable bass rolloff (6 dB per octave below 250 Hz) for recording vocals with the cardioid head and a switchable 10-dB pad. The low-impedance, three-wire balanced output employs XLR-style connectors. The Tascam PE-120, including foam and metal wind screens, travel case, and battery, costs \$100.

Circle 142 on Reader-Service Card

(Continued on page 16)



At last there's a cassette transport that fully exploits the precision of quartz.

You expect precision from quartz-locked direct-drive. But with a wow and flutter specification of 0.019% WRMS, the JVC DD-9 goes beyond your wildest expectations.

Audibly, this means complete freedom from pitch wavering. Plus uncanny clarity in the high frequencies thanks to almost total absence of flutter.

What else can you expect from a deck that's this accurate? Do by* C for one thing. It reduces noise by 20 dB (versus 10 dB with the previous Dolby system). And it operates much farther down into the midrange, giving 15 dB noise reduction even at 500 Hz.

Against this newfound background of silence you'll hear a greater resolution of musical details, especially with wide-range source material.

There's other JVC magic in the DD-9, too. Like our computer B.E.S.T. system that automatically measures every tape you use. Then sets bias, EQ and noise-reduction values to achieve ruler-flat response with lowest possible distortion. While JVC's heralded Sen-Alloy (SA)® Heads give you supremely low distortion plus rugged durability, all in a three-head configuration.

*Dolby is a trademark of Dolby Laboratories.

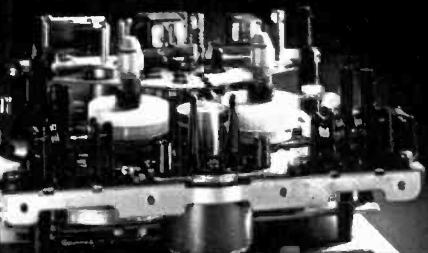
There's also an electronic-digital tape time counter. Peak/VU fluorescent level meters. Memory and Auto Rewind. And full-logic transport controls.

Is there a place in your system for a deck as accurate as the DD-9? Or the DD-7 or DD-5, both with wow and flutter at 0.021% WRMS? Why not visit a JVC dealer and find out.



DD-7 with quartz-locked direct-drive.

Quartz-locked direct-drive transport.

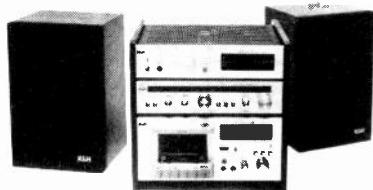


JVC

US JVC CORP

41 Slater Drive, Elmwood Park, NJ 07407
JVC CANADA, INC., Scarborough, Ont.

(Continued from page 14)



KLH Mini-Systems Arrive on the Market

First shown at the Winter Consumer

Electronics Show in Las Vegas, KLH's System 400 minicomponent ensemble is now on dealers' shelves. It includes a power amplifier rated at 30 watts (14½ dBW) per channel, a tuner/preamplifier, and a metal-ready cassette deck in a walnut rack 12½ inches square and 9 inches deep, plus a pair of KLH-4 loudspeakers with matching walnut cabinets and polypropylene woofer cones. The solenoid-operated cassette deck has soft-touch transport controls, LED recording-level indicators, and a memory feature that enables a user to set the tape counter to a particular selection and re-

turn to that selection at the push of a button. The components come mounted and wired in the rack, and speaker wire is supplied. The System 400 costs \$1,000.

Circle 147 on Reader-Service Card

ICELAND

You haven't seen it all until you've seen this unspoiled land.

WHAT'S ALL THIS TALK ABOUT ICE?

You don't hear it from people who've been here. Just from those who haven't.

Fact is, you'd have to deliberately search for it to find ice in Iceland. Most of our geography consists of picturesque villages and natural wonders. Volcanic craterlakes. Huge rock formations. And thundering waterfalls. The largest in Europe.

All of which makes for breathtaking views. And some of the most awesome colors this side of the solar system.

COLORFUL AS MARS. AND A HECK OF A LOT CLOSER. Much of Iceland is as it was centuries ago. Clean, natural, colorful. We have over 240 varieties of birdlife. A rare, native breed of pony. And lots of other things that make bringing your camera almost mandatory.

Start planning today to visit us soon. Your travel agent can plan your itinerary and brief you on our wondrous sights.

And Icelandair will get you here in non-stop comfort from New York in 5 hours.

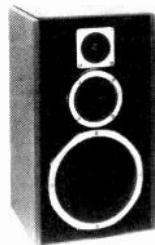
ICELANDAIR

For the Icelandair toll-free number in your area call 800-555-1212. Or for full details write Iceland, P.O. Box 105, West Hempstead, NY 11552



Circle 34 on Reader-Service Card

Dahlquist's "Digital" Studio Monitor



Dahlquist says its DQM-9 speaker system is designed for professional monitoring of digital recordings. The speaker's double-sidewall bass-reflex enclosure has dual rear-firing ports and is finished with a gray, suedelike coating developed by the 3M Company, called Nextel, which is said to damp the cabinet surface for improved sound quality. Magnat of West Germany makes the three drivers—woofer, midrange, and tweeter—for Dahlquist. The DQM-9s sell for \$1,200 per pair.

Circle 146 on Reader-Service Card

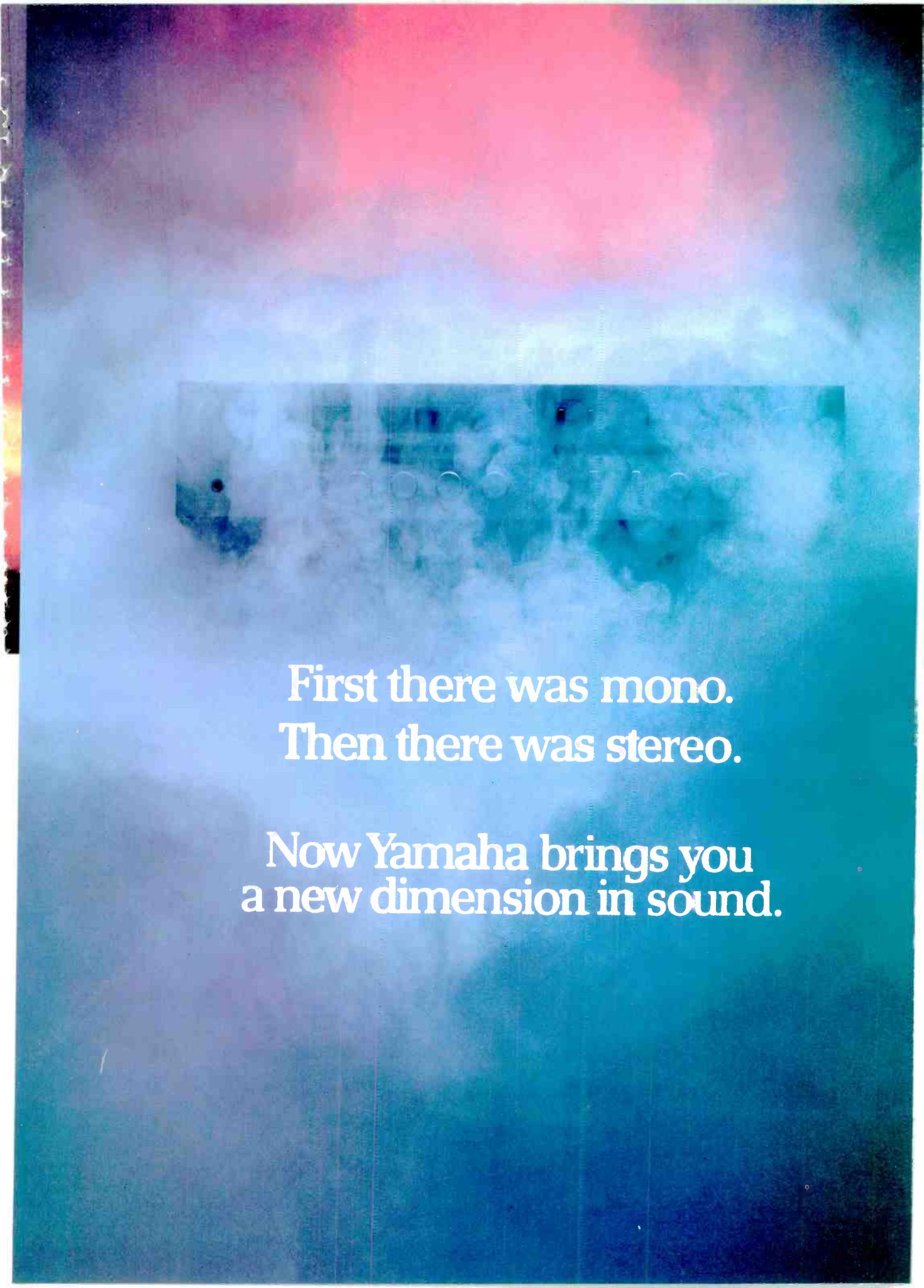
"Decoding" CBS's Disc Noise Reducer

CBS has been ducking most of the questions about its CX (Compatible Expansion) disc noise-reduction system. The date for one press conference on the subject has come and gone. And, though another press conference is promised, we've managed to learn enough about CX to satisfy our curiosity about the basics.

CBS's chief claim is that its CX-encoded discs will give listenable results even when played back without expansion. In other words, without a decoder, the discs will sound similar to conventional (and therefore presumably compressed) analog recordings. This, CBS says, has been verified by a panel of listeners and is the basis for its claims of compatibility. Use of a decoder, it contends, will restore the full glory of the original—even a digital original.

In round numbers, CBS figures it this way. The modern LP has 60 dB of dynamic range. (So does a cassette, though we've had no hint that the company is thinking along these lines.) Digital audio, even in multitrack mixdowns, has a dynamic range of about 80 dB, so 20 dB must be swiped from somewhere to get digital master tapes onto the

(Continued on page 20)



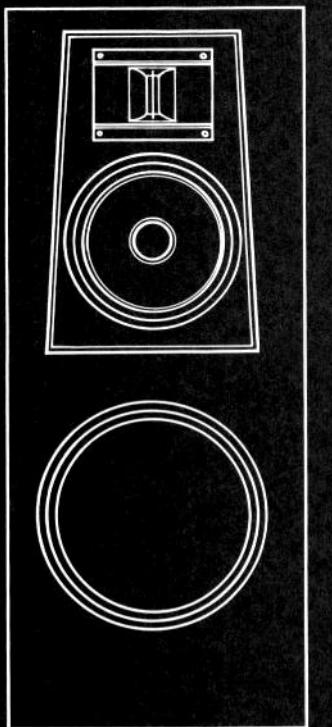
**First there was mono.
Then there was stereo.**

**Now Yamaha brings you
a new dimension in sound.**

FRESH ON YOUR EARS.

Now from Speakerlab comes the new S11, S15 and S17. Housed in slender, elegant enclosures, these speakers are designed to reduce edge defraction for better "imaging". Componentry includes: amazing Samarium Cobalt leaf tweeters for limitless high-end; efficient, ultra-low distortion polypropylene/Polylam™ woofers; and passive radiators to extend the low end both powerfully and accurately. The combined effects are awesome—bringing you music that's so fresh on your ears it's really like being there.

Send for a free catalog and read about these and a dozen more new designs from Speakerlab.



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Speakerlab
Dept. HF17, 735 N. Northlake Way
Seattle, Washington 98103

(Continued from page 16)

record. CBS's solution is to apply 2:1 compression over the top 40 dB of the dynamic range—from a reference 0 dB at the top down to -40 dB—below which compression ceases to prevent pumping of low-level noise and similar effects. So the top 40 dB have been squeezed into a 20-dB range, and the bottom 40 dB of the original 80 now add onto that, making a total of 60 dB in the compressed form. At the same time, the circuit controlling the compression (and the playback expansion) contains four paralleled filters whose time constants juggle the attack-and-release characteristics to match psychoacoustic perception-threshold models and further prevent potentially audible side effects.

By the time this issue appears, CBS plans to have released the first discs in the CX series, most of which should be classics for the short run, we're told. For the long run, however, the aim is to release everything in CX. We don't know where the expanders necessary to get optimum sound from the discs will come from. When CBS speaks to this point at all, it sounds confident that the equipment will pose no problem, but so far it's naming no names.

In the meantime, we're raring to hear what CX sounds like. Since the compression ratio is the same as that of the DBX system, the claim of reasonably good dynamics without an expander has raised more than a few eyebrows, even though CBS (unlike DBX) is limiting it to the upper part of the dynamic range. DBX claims no such compatibility, but we know some listeners who inadvertently played DBX discs straight and thought the results "brilliant" and "exciting." (For long-term, concentrated listening, the compressed sound might also be called "insistent" or "aggravating.") So it looks like we're off on another horse race.

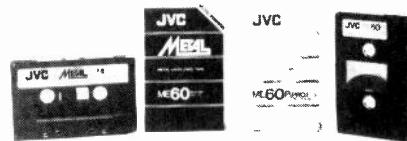


Digital Tuning from Crown

Not content to make just another digital tuner, Crown says the J-FET cascode front end in its FM Two is a big step forward in the fight against input overload and RF intermodulation. Among its other features are a pulse-count FM detector, crystal-controlled digital tuning with six station presets, a vacuum-fluorescent station frequency display, switchable de-emphasis (25 micro-

seconds for Dolby FM or the U.S. standard of 75 microseconds), and a switchable high-frequency blend mode for reduced noise on weak stereo broadcasts. Crown claims a 75-dB signal-to-noise ratio in stereo, 60 dB of separation at 1 kHz, a capture ratio of 1½ dB or better, and an AM-suppression ratio of 80 dB. The FM Two will sell for \$600.

Circle 148 on Reader-Service Card



JVC Achieves "Metal Excellence"

JVC is entering the metal tape market with two formulations, ME (Metal Excellence) for the serious amateur and ME-P for the advanced audiophile. Both employ needle-shaped metal particles less than 1 micrometer long, a binder system claimed to ensure uniform particle distribution with high packing density, and improved cassette shells. Maximum flux density of the ME formulation is 4,500 gauss; ME-P is rated at 4,800 gauss. Available in C-46 and C-60 lengths, ME cassettes are expected to sell for \$9.00 and \$11, and the ME-P, with an oversize "window" in the cassette shell, for \$11 and \$13, respectively.

Circle 138 on Reader-Service Card



Octave Equalizer from Vector Research

Vector Research's VQ-100 equalizer, which can supply as much as 10 dB of boost or cut in each of ten bands per channel, is said to use discrete-transistor push-pull circuitry for low noise and distortion. Signal-to-noise ratio is specified as 110 dB, while THD is rated at 0.005% from 20 Hz to 20 kHz. Frequency response, according to the manufacturer, extends from 5 Hz to 100 kHz, ±1 dB, when the equalizer is at the flat setting. Features include unity-gain controls for each channel to prevent overload, an infrasonic filter, a tape-monitor loop, and a switch to put the equalizer into the recording chain. Price for the VQ-100 is \$250.

Circle 145 on Reader-Service Card



Once again, in the interest of science and for the betterment of mankind, the services of *Mus albus rodendus*, or the white mouse, have been called upon. This time to demonstrate the sheer brilliance of the new Sony STR-VX5 receiver.

When the little chap so much as touches the VX5's "Memory Scan," you'll automatically hear four seconds of up to eight of your favorite AM or FM stations, without having to tune them in separately.

If he chooses our exclusive "Auto Sweep," you'll hear a four-second sample of every available station on the dial. Find a station you like and another feather-touch control instantly locks onto that frequency. There's no drift. No fade. A computer insures crisp, clear, perfect sound.

But that's merely proof that the VX5 possesses the world's most advanced tuning section. Here's proof that it possesses the

HOW A COMMON LABORATORY SUBJECT PROVES THE CLEAR SUPERIORITY OF A SONY.

world's most advanced amplifier section.

Statistically, the VX5 puts out 55 watts per channel with no more than 0.007% total harmonic distortion.* Even your dog can't hear that.

Part of the reason is Sony's unique "Legato Linear" amplifier. This circuitry prevents "switching distortion" from ever intruding on your music. Another part is an incredibly advanced, Sony-developed "Pulse Power" supply. Its transformer alone is but 1/50 the size of conventional transformers and is as quiet as a church mouse.

Of course, there are other outstanding features, from a subsonic filter to moving coil-cartridge capability. And it's all at a price that won't require you to get a second mortgage to purchase it.

The Sony VX5. We used a mouse to prove its genius. But all you really need are a good pair of ears.

SONY. We are music.

*FEATURES AND SPECIFICATIONS: 55 watts per channel, continuous power output, both channels driven into 8 Ohms from 20 Hz to 20 kHz, at no more than 0.007% THD; Quartz frequency synthesis/5-way tuning/Direct Comparator/IC logic function controls/Hi-Fi transistors. ©1981 Sony Corp. of America, 9 W. 57th St., N.Y., NY 10019. Sony is a registered trademark of the Sony Corp.

CrossTalk

Practical answers to your audio questions by Michael Riggs

Patch in a Preamp?

My system is built around an old Dynaco integrated amplifier. Over the years, its switches and controls have become noisy and intermittent, and this has led to thoughts of upgrading. A friend suggested that I could save money by buying a separate preamplifier and patching it into the Dynaco's power-amp section, which still performs well. Unfortunately, my amp has no preamp-out/power-amp-in jacks, so how would I hook in the new preamp?—Stuart Blair, Schenectady, N.Y.

The success of the enterprise will depend on what's malfunctioning in the Dynaco and how willing you are to modify it internally to bypass offending parts—though you may be able to get by with no modification. Set all switches and controls on the Dynaco to their neutral positions. Connect the preamp's main outputs to one of the integrated amp's high-level inputs (TAPE, TUNER, AUX, etc.), and set the amp's selector switch to that input. Leave the amp's volume control at a position that enables you to use the preamp's volume control over a convenient range of settings. From then on, connect all sources to the preamp and use its controls instead of the ones on the integrated amp. If you get intermittent level fluctuations in one or both channels, it may be necessary to give the Dynaco a VOLUME/BALANCE bypass surgically.

Tracking Troubles

The headshell on my Philips GA-312 turntable is tilted slightly to the left (viewed from the front). Unfortunately, the tonearm has no provision for correcting this error, which I think is causing mistracking. Would an alignment device such as the Dennesen Soundtracker help; if not, what would?—Frank Radano, Norwalk, Conn.

The Soundtractor and other alignment protractors are for adjusting stylus overhang and offset angle so as to minimize distortion induced by lateral tracking angle errors; they will not help you correct the tilt you describe. Inadequate tracking force or a worn stylus are more likely causes of mistracking than your lateral tilt is, but this error will definitely cause reduced separation, so it is worth

eliminating. Your best bet is to insert spacers between the cartridge's right-hand mounting hole and the headshell to create a compensatory tilt. Thin plastic or metal washers stacked to the necessary depth around the mounting screw should do the job nicely; for fine adjustments, you could make paper washers of various thicknesses.

Enough Power?

I am contemplating the purchase of a pair of AR-9 loudspeakers and an SAE R-12 receiver rated at 120 watts per channel into 8 ohms. In your review of the AR-9 [October 1978], you note that it is somewhat low in overall efficiency and needs a "capable and hefty power amp" to elicit its best performance. Does the SAE fall in the "capable and hefty" category, or will I need more power?—James M. Arseneau, Elmendorf AFB, Ark.

The R-12's power reserves are probably ample for your needs, especially if, as with most amps and receivers, it delivers more power into 4 ohms than into 8. A rating of 120 watts (20 1/4 dBW) per channel is comfortably high for most applications—at the edge of what used to be called the "super-power" range—and SAE's power specifications are usually conservative. Note, however, that we said "probably ample" (in this case there's a very high degree of probability), for there is no cut-and-dried answer to your question. The amount of power that you need depends on the size and liveness of your listening room, how loud you play your music, how tolerant you are of amplifier clipping, and the sensitivity of your speakers.

Airports and FM

I live a few miles from La Guardia Airport, and every time a plane passes over, the FM reception on my Technics SA-202 receiver is swamped by what sounds like voice transmissions from the airplane. My landlord won't let me put up an outdoor antenna, so I have been using a B.I.C. Beam Box, but it doesn't seem to help. What can I do to clear up my reception?—Howard D. Powders, New York, N.Y.

Admitting right off that remote diagnosis of interference problems is a risky

business, we suspect that the culprit is inadequate image rejection. Your tuner probably is picking up aircraft radio transmissions and transposing them down 21.4 MHz into the FM band, where they disrupt legitimate FM-broadcast signals. People who don't live near airports are rarely bothered by such "image" signals. The solution is to get a tuner with a higher image-rejection ratio—but exactly how much higher is hard to say. Technics specifies an image-rejection ratio of 55 dB for the SA-202, so we know you need more than that, and tuners and receivers are available (for a price) with ratings of more than 100 dB.

Dubbing Dilemma

My system now includes two cassette recorders connected to a Yamaha receiver. I would like to be able to add a new live vocal or instrumental part to an already recorded cassette. I could have done this with a Sony open-reel machine I used to have, but neither my cassette decks nor my receiver seem to have provision for this. Is there any way I can do this kind of dubbing with my present system?—Neil B. Downey, Reston, Va.

There are two options. If one of your decks is giving you problems, you might want to replace it with a model that includes what usually is called mike/line mixing. You would then connect your microphones to that deck's mike inputs and connect the output of your other cassette deck, on which you would play back the previously recorded tape, to its line inputs. If your receiver has dubbing facilities, you can make the line-level connection through it. The next step would be to adjust the mike and line recording level controls for correct balance between the new and the old material and record them together onto a new cassette.

Alternatively, you could buy a separate mixer and use the cassette decks you now have. This approach would also require separate microphone preamps or preamps built into the mixer. Mixers are available at many levels of price, complexity, and sophistication, so your choice would depend on your needs and your budget. For the greatest creative flexibility, this second option probably is the best way to go.

IMMORTAL MUSIC SHOULDN'T BE KEPT ON MORTAL TAPE.



Good music never dies. Unfortunately, a lot of cassette tapes do.

At Maxell, we've designed our cassettes to be as enduring as your music. Unlike ordinary cassettes, they're made with special anti-jamming ribs that help prevent tape from sticking, stretching and tearing.

And our cassette shells are built to standards that are as much as 60% higher than the industry calls for.

So if you'd like to preserve your old favorites for the years to come, keep them in a safe place. On one of our cassettes.



IT'S WORTH IT.

The Autophile

What you should know about car stereo by Robert Angus

Sun-Fried Cassettes and Other Problems

Meltdown. I know from experience that, if I leave cassettes in my car on a hot summer day, they get soft and warp. Can you recommend a cassette that is less susceptible to heat?—Sam Pickens, Phoenix, Ariz.

As of this writing, no cassette on the market will withstand long-term exposure to high-heat situations. A new company, Loranger Manufacturing Corporation, promises that its Loran brand cassettes will withstand temperature extremes better because Lexan rather than conventional styrene is used to make the shell. However, even if the shell doesn't warp, heat can cause the tape inside to flake, curl, or become brittle, so you should always remove your tapes from the car on a blisteringly hot day. If that's impossible, park your car in the shade and stow your cassettes (in their plastic boxes, of course) under the seat.

Chrome in the Car. Within recent months, Mobile Fidelity, Vanguard, Columbia, and RCA have introduced cassettes recorded on chrome tape. I would like to listen to them in my car, but my car deck is not designed to handle this premium tape formulation. Will the tapes sound peculiar?—J. D. Smith, Winsted, S.D.

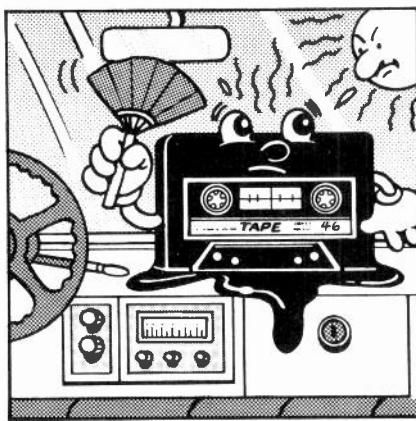
Presumably your car deck is an older or less expensive model that lacks proper 70-microsecond playback equalization. It may also lack Dolby noise-reduction circuitry, and all these tapes need Dolby decoding for accurate reproduction. In a typical home listening room, these cassettes would certainly sound peculiar—extremely bright and steely—when played back with the wrong EQ and without Dolby decoding. But a car's high ambient noise level, the off-axis listening dictated by the interiors of most cars, and the high-frequency rolloff inherent in many old decks can balance out a peaky high end, making premium prerecorded tapes a natural for the road.

Distortion Distress. My car cassette player performs quite well, except that I've been noticing a marked decrease in treble frequencies. A friend tells me that the tape head is worn and that I probably need a new one. But the deck is only two years old. Should I replace the head?—John Stow, Portland, N.J.

Replacing the head usually is a last resort. Since a dirty head also causes the kind of diminished high-frequency output you describe, normally a good cleaning will resolve the problem. Dip a cotton swab in isopropyl alcohol and move it back and forth across the head, parallel to the tape path. If a standard swab is too short to reach the head, try one of the extra-long variety, such as those that Nortronics includes in its cassette head-cleaning kits. TDK, among others, makes head-cleaning cassettes that you simply pop into the deck.

Better than a Booster? A local car stereo dealer tells me that adding an inexpensive power booster to my present system will muddy up the sound. He suggests that I replace my radio/cassette unit (which is only about a year old) with a tuner/cassette front-end and a separate power amp. Would replacing the whole system really give me better performance, or is he just trying to make a fast buck at my expense?—Frank Steele, Kansas City, Mo.

A good power booster should do the job as well as a separate power amp, provided your radio/cassette deck feeds it a clean wide-range signal. You might be able to measure more distortion or noise, but it's unlikely that you would hear the



Wanted: A sun-resistant cassette.

difference, especially against a background of road and engine noise. I suggest that you try the booster first, with the proviso that you can trade up to the dealer's recommended system.

Speaker Placement for Stereo. I've heard a lot of car speaker setups—mounted in door kick panels, in the rear deck, even under the dash—but they never sound like real stereo. There's no sense of depth and usually not even much separation. How can I overcome this when I install a system in my Honda Accord?—Howard Schwadron, Oak Ridge, Tenn.

Car stereo installations are always a compromise, and come what may, you will never get the same kind of stereo image that you get in a properly set up home system. No matter where you put the speakers, you will be off the center axis; getting any semblance of stereo will require careful adjustment of the balance control. Usually it helps to mount the speakers as high as possible, for best distribution of the highs. And adding a second pair of speakers can yield a better sense of ambience and involvement. For the ultimate, you could use an Omnissonix image enhancer or a Sound Concepts delay line, which would add spaciousness and depth to the sound.

Picket-Fencing. I live in a large city and have trouble with FM stations popping in and out as I drive. At present, my radio is hooked up to the antenna embedded in the windshield. Would switching to an old-fashioned fender-mount antenna give me more stable reception?—Martin Weed, Los Angeles, Calif.

Yes, it probably would. The antenna in your windshield is a dipole and therefore directional. Signal strength with such an antenna is highest when you are driving directly toward or away from a transmitter and lowest when you are driving at right angles to it. Any time you turn a corner, the signal strength will change dramatically, and this can cause the picket-fencing effect you describe. A fender-mounted whip antenna is omnidirectional in the horizontal plane and therefore immune to such variations. If the problem persists after an antenna switch, you might want to look into getting a new radio. Recent models tend to be quite resistant to picket-fencing.

Now you can hear how good a Revox system really is.

Studer Revox is known for recorders. The best in the business. But since even the finest recorder is limited by what it is connected to, we recently developed a line of tuners, turntables and amplifiers to optimize the signals going to and coming from our tape machines.

Now the system is complete. We have a new speaker factory. We make our own drivers. And we're introducing three innovative, high performance speaker systems so you can finally have a system that is *all* Revox. With unmatched sonic quality and a special pride of ownership.

The **Revox Triton** has the uncommon ability to reproduce undistorted bass frequencies as low as 30 Hz, yet it fits almost unnoticed in rooms of any size or decor.

Triton is a three-piece system. Frequencies from 200 to 25,000 Hz are reproduced by two 3-way compact bookshelf speakers that can be easily placed for maximum stereo effect. And the lowest frequencies, which are essentially non-directional, are reproduced by a pair of subwoofers mounted in a single cabinet that may be placed anywhere in the room. The subwoofers are spring-mounted within the cabinet and their resonance is so low that no vibration is transferred to the cabinet. It can be used as a shelf for other components, even a sensitive turntable.

We are also proud of the new **Revox BR530** speaker system. It's a 3-way bass reflex system with the accuracy and musicality customarily expected from much less efficient units. The mid- and high frequency drivers are placed to eliminate interference beats, and ringing is eliminated by a specially damped phase modulator tube. The cabinet on this and all Revox speakers is as beautiful as the sound, with magnificent hand rubbed and oiled walnut veneers.

Our new **Revox BX350** makes use of the latest research in phase-coherent wave propagation. The cabinet is precisely stepped, to ensure that all frequencies reach the listener at the same time—even if they are coming from drivers with different depths. The five drivers are specially made with cast aluminum chassis and a new kind of cone treatment, and are arrayed for optimum dispersion and overall transparent sound.

Three superb, but different, new speakers. Hear how good they are at your Revox dealer.

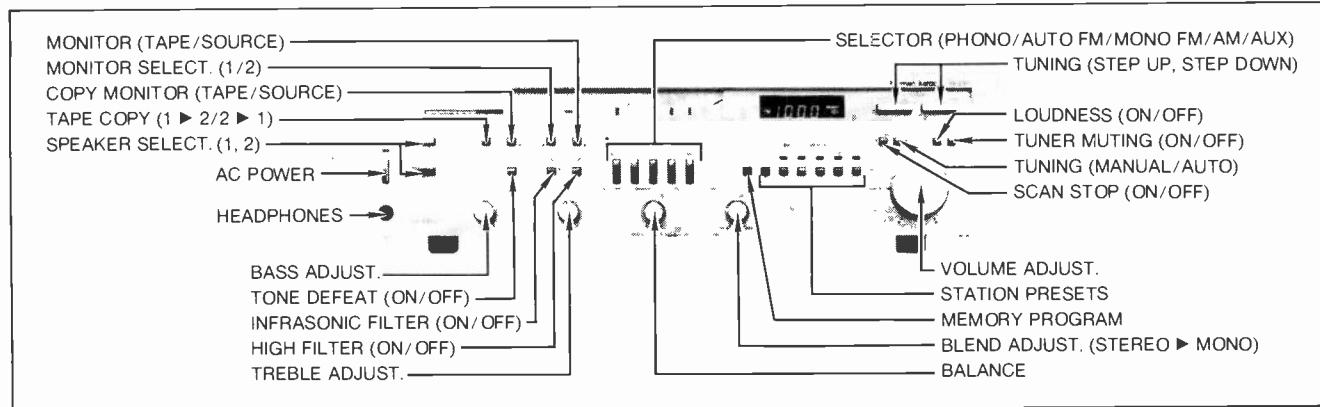
STUDER REVOX

Studer Revox America, Inc.
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Nashville, TN 37210, (615) 254-5651
Offices: LA (213) 780-4234; NY (212) 255-4462



New Equipment Reports

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



A Receiver That "Really Works"

Harman Kardon 680i AM/FM receiver, in metal case. Dimensions: 17 1/4 by 4 1/2 inches, 13 inches deep plus clearance for controls and connections. AC convenience outlets: two switched (150 watts max. total), one unswitched (150 watts max.). Price: \$630. Warranty: "limited," two years parts and labor. Manufacturer: made in Japan for Harman Kardon, Inc., 240 Crossways Park West, Woodbury, N.Y. 11797.

FOR A GENERATION NOW, Harman Kardon has had a reputation as a producer of perfectionist gear, generally for moderate prices. The not so moderately priced Citation line contributed to that reputation, but the company's unshakable loyalty to such criteria as broadband electronics—even when a criterion was out of style in the marketplace—has contributed more. Now that reputation has been enhanced by HK's liaison with Matti Otala, in whose acoustics laboratories (in Finland) the various forms of dynamic intermodulation distortion were first isolated and quantified. It is largely as an indirect result of his investigation of transient intermodulation, interface intermodulation, and the rest that use of negative feedback as a cure-all for amplification circuits has fallen into disfavor in some quarters of the audio industry; a central article of current design faith is that open-loop performance (that is, with no feedback in use) should be intrinsically as good as possible and the lily be gilded only by the minimum feedback needed to achieve design goals.

The hk-680i, the top of the receiver line in which Harman Kardon has applied Otala's ideas, is the most impressive product we've reviewed from that company in quite some time. Not only is the amplifier section clean—as you'd expect, given the design objectives—but the digital tuner section proves to be at least its match.

Getting to know it was not as easy as with most receivers because of the multiple tuning modes and options. Digital synthesis is employed in both the FM and AM bands, and there is quartz lock as well. (When DSL tried to verify tuning frequencies on the FM band, it couldn't. The lock followed the frequency of the lab's RF generator over a

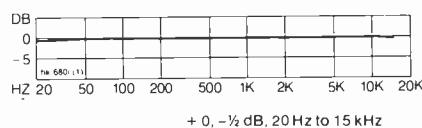
fairly wide swing, preventing even intentional mistuning within the FM channel.) Since not all countries share our 10-kHz AM station spacing—and since there has been some discussion of adopting the 9-kHz spacing here to permit more stations on the band—a back-panel switch gives you a choice of the two spacings. All this inner complexity actually works very simply in the manual tuning mode; from the user's point of view, the complexity becomes apparent when you start using the automatic tuning features, partly because the owner's manual is least clear in this area.

For example, the first users both at HF and at DSL began by assuming that the AUTO-FM button in the selector group had to do with automatic tuning and wondered why we couldn't get stereo reception when we punched up FM for manual tuning. "Auto," in this case, refers to automatic mono/stereo switching; the button marked "FM" is for mono reception only. To select the tuning mode, you must employ the MANUAL/AUTO button just below the tuning bars. The jazzy automatic mode steps in the direction you've selected on the tuning bars, pausing a few seconds at each station to let you hear what's going on there. When you hear something you like, you simply press SCAN STOP; if you don't get to the set before the scan has moved on, you reverse the scan direction and stop it when the interesting station reappears.

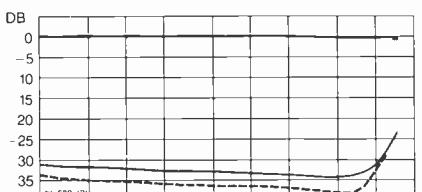
If you want to keep that station in one of the preselectors (there are six, each accepting one FM and one AM frequency), you press MEMORY and then the preselector button where you want the frequency stored. Harman Kardon has built in a nicad battery to retain the memorized information even through power blackouts and those annoying

FM tuner section

MONO FREQUENCY RESPONSE



STEREO RESPONSE & CHANNEL SEPARATION



Frequency response

L ch + 0, - 1/2 dB, 20 Hz to 15 kHz

R ch + 0, - 1/2 dB, 20 Hz to 15 kHz

Channel separation ≥ 30 dB, 20 Hz to 10.5 kHz;
≥ 22 dB, 20 Hz to 15 kHz

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.

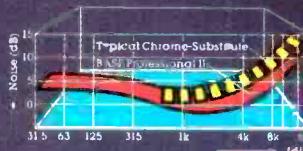
Professional II is like no other tape because it's made like no other tape. While ordinary high bias tapes are made from modi-

fied 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).

GUARANTEE OF A LIFETIME

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.

Mobile Fidelity Sound Lab.

BASF Professional II is so superior it was chosen by Mobile Fidelity Sound Lab for their Original Master Recording™ High Fidelity Cassettes. These state-of-the-art pre-recorded cassettes are duplicated in real time (1:1) from the original recording studio master tapes of some of the most prominent recording artists of our time.



CHROME



BASF

For the best recordings you'll ever make.

moments when the wrong plug is pulled to make room for the vacuum cleaner. Another nicety is a back-panel muting threshold adjustment with a range of more than 10 dB and a minimum setting equal to that of the stereo threshold. The muting threshold also has a hysteresis "window" about 1 dB wide, meaning that slight fluctuations in already-weak signal strength (usually multipath due to a moving reflector like an airplane) won't easily flop back and forth across the threshold, making reception "flicker." And the signal-strength "meter" is unusually useful for an LED display both because of its range (16½ to 64 dBf in ten steps, though there are twelve LEDs) and because of its continuity between steps, with each LED brightening gradually as signal strength rises through its range.

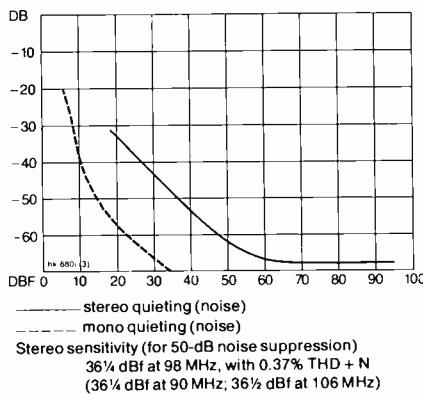
Both on the test bench and in the listening room, all this proved exceptionally gratifying, and in ways that are difficult to pinpoint. DSL commented that it was an "easy" tuner to test in that it consistently delivered positive, unequivocal results in areas where many tuners generate what you might call yes-but's. (E.g.: "Yes, but if you tune it slightly high by the meter, stereo distortion drops a hair.") Selectivity, for instance, measured the same whether the upper or the

lower channel was doing the interfering suggesting excellent IF-filter symmetry; normally, the two situations deliver somewhat different measurements, and the reported figure is the average between the two. Incidentally, the 680i's adjacent-channel selectivity, at 6¼ dB, proved as good (vis-à-vis competing tuner sections) as the alternate-channel figure. While a count of received channels can be misleading because propagation conditions may change between counts, it is our strong impression that we seldom have received so many so clearly.

By the relatively megalomaniac standards of recent years, Harman Kardon's flagship receiver is no blockbuster at its 60-watt rating. Its dynamic headroom actually brings it to the equivalent of 85 watts per channel on music signals, but the real point is that so engaging a receiver should not be passed over for want of the more impressive power ratings that few of us really need. The priorities here are with quality rather than superabundance, coupled with a full complement of features. We welcomed the tape switching, for example (though it, like the tuner, took a little getting used to). But most important of all, it's a design that really works.

Circle 135 on Reader-Service Card

FM SENSITIVITY & QUIETING



Mono sensitivity (for 50-dB noise suppression)

14 1/4 dBf at 98 MHz

Muting threshold 18 to 29 dBf (adjustable)

Stereo threshold 18 dBf

Stereo S/N ratio (at 65 dBf) 67 1/2 dB

Mono S/N ratio (at 65 dBf) 75 dB

CAPTURE RATIO 1 1/2 dB

ALTERNATE-CHANNEL SELECTIVITY 64 dB

HARMONIC DISTORTION (THD + N)

stereo mono

at 100 Hz 0.16% 0.22%

at 1 kHz 0.068% 0.093%

at 6 kHz 0.19% 0.13%

STEREO PILOT INTERMODULATION 0.10%

IM DISTORTION (mono) 0.78%

AM SUPPRESSION 63 dB

PILOT (19 kHz) SUPPRESSION 58 1/2 dB

SUBCARRIER (38 kHz) SUPPR. > 90 dB

Amplifier section

RATED POWER 17 1/4 dBW (60 watts)/channel

OUTPUT AT CLIPPING (both channels driven)

into 8 ohms 18 1/4 dBW (75 watts)/channel

into 4 ohms 20 1/2 dBW (112 watts)/channel

into 16 ohms 16 1/2 dBW (45 watts)/channel

DYNAMIC HEADROOM (8 ohms) 1 1/2 dB

HARMONIC DISTORTION (THD; 20 Hz to 20 kHz)

at 17 1/4 dBW (60 watts) ≤ 0.025%

at 0 dBW (1 watt) ≤ 0.023%

FREQUENCY RESPONSE

+ 0, -1/4 dB, < 10 Hz to 46 kHz;

-3 dB at 245 kHz

RIAA EQUALIZATION ± < 1/4 dB, 20 Hz to 20 kHz;

-0 dB at 5 Hz

INPUT CHARACTERISTICS (re 0 dBW; A-weighting)

sensitivity S/N ratio

phono 0.30 mV 74 1/4 dB

aux 18 mV 78 1/4 dB

PHONO OVERLOAD (at 1 kHz) 245 mV

PHONO IMPEDANCE 47k ohms; 140 pF

DAMPING FACTOR (at 50 Hz) 70

HIGH FILTER -3 dB at 6 kHz; ≈ 9 dB/oct.

INFRASONIC FILTER -3 dB at 15 Hz; ≈ 12 dB/oct.

A "Super Value" Speaker from AR

Acoustic Research AR-28s loudspeaker system, in wood cabinet with vinyl finish. Dimensions: 11 1/4 by 21 1/2 inches (front), 7 1/2 inches deep. Price: \$125. Warranty: "full," five years parts and labor. Manufacturer: Teledyne-Acoustic Research, Inc., 10 American Dr., Norwood, Mass. 02062.

ACOUSTIC RESEARCH'S newest line of speakers is aptly titled the Super Value series: three models ranging in price from \$90 to \$150, with the AR-28s occupying the middle slot. The AR-28s, which closely resembles the company's Model 25 (test report, March 1980), has a moderately tall, narrow enclosure and two drivers—an 8-inch woofer/midrange and 1-inch dome tweeter—aligned vertically on the baffle. There are spring-loaded connectors in a recess on the rear of the enclosure, but no driver level con-

trols. AR has chosen to effect economies in the least important area, putting tone balancing where we think it belongs: on your preamp or receiver.

In tests at Diversified Science Laboratories, the sensitivity came in at a 90-dB sound pressure level for a 2.8-volt input (equivalent to 0 dBW or 1 watt into 8 ohms). For an acoustic suspension system of relatively small volume, that is remarkably high. Moreover, the AR-28s is no slouch at handling high power inputs. It easily accepted our maximum contin-



"May your father borrow your vehicle tonight sir...seeing as it has the Jensen?"

The Jensen R406 AM/FM stereo cassette receiver.

Jensen receivers have brought an exceptional level of high fidelity to car stereo. Not just with advanced features, but with truly fine specs and, of course, terrific sound.

The R406 AM/FM Stereo/Cassette receiver has the convenience of 5 station, push button tuning. And it has an auto reverse tape system that lets you instantly play the other side of a cassette, or after rewinding, it will automatically play the same side again.

But it's those features that affect sound performance that make the R406, along with all the other fine Jensen receivers, impressive. Features like Auto High Blend circuitry. It's a special IC that automatically adjusts the high frequency separation when FM stereo reception

conditions are poor. So even in low intensity areas you're able to get clearer, sharper music with less interference.

And the R406 has a host of other sophisticated refinements such as loudness compensation to improve bass at low volumes. FM interstation muting. And separate controls to fine tune treble and bass.

Jensen has a wide selection of car stereo receivers that offer you many of the advantages of home hi-fi component systems. You can select engineering advances like electronic switching, bi-amplification and Dolby® noise reduction.

So listen to the full line of Jensen receivers. There's one with just the right features and, more importantly, just the right sound to move you.

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JENSEN
SOUND LABORATORIES
AN ESMARK COMPANY

When it's the sound that moves you.

© 1980, Jensen Sound Laboratories, Schiller Park, Illinois 60176.

Schwann!

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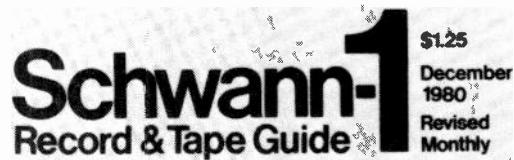
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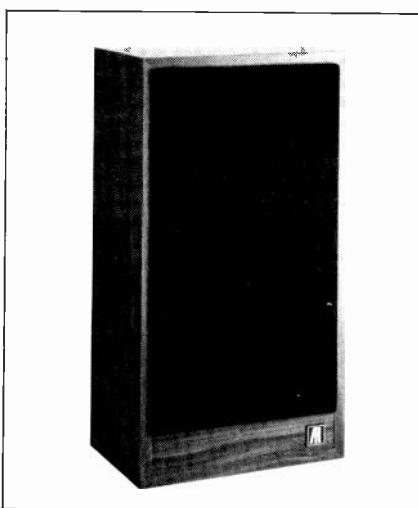
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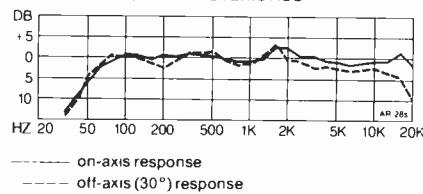
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ROOM RESPONSE CHARACTERISTICS



SENSITIVITY (at 1 meter; 2.8-volt pink noise,
250 Hz to 6 kHz) 90 dB SPL
CONTINUOUS OUTPUT (at 1 meter; 300 Hz)
110 dB SPL from 28.3 volts rms
PULSED OUTPUT (at 1 meter; 300 Hz)
120½ dB SPL from 61.5 volts peak

uous input of 28.3 volts (equivalent to 20 dBW or 100 watts into 8 ohms) and withstood inputs of more than 60 volts peak, 6½ dB higher.

The impedance curve is smooth and well controlled. AR specs the speaker at a nominal 6 ohms with a minimum of 4.5 ohms. DSL's measurements confirm this, pinpointing the 4.5-ohm minimum at 5.5 kHz. In the musically active midrange, however, impedance values remain higher. With its high efficiency, high power-handling capability, and smooth impedance curve, the AR-28s constitutes an excellent match for just about any amp. (AR suggests one with a power output between 15 and 100 watts.) But some caution would be in order when paralleling two pairs from a single amp, where the 5-ohm midrange minimum translates to an impedance of 2.5 ohms.

At loud playing levels (100 dB SPL), the second harmonic predominates in the distortion products and averages about 2% from 80 Hz to 10 kHz. The harsher-sounding third harmonics are very low, averaging ½% over the same range. At the saner playing level of 85 dB SPL, second harmonics decrease dramatically to about ½% and third harmonics are also lower.

In its owner's manual, AR suggests experimentation in speaker placement for optimum tonal balance. Though the AR-28s, like other speakers in the Super Value series, can be used as a genuine bookshelf model, DSL's tests (confirmed by some of AR's own comments) indicate a somewhat smoother and deeper response when the speaker is placed on the floor against a wall. Our data, including the graph, reflect this placement. Fre-

quency response is unusually smooth—virtually flat through the midrange and upper treble, with a small peak at about 1.6 kHz. Bass response remains strong down to 63 Hz.

In listening tests, auditioners were unanimous in appraising the AR-28s as a pleasant, accurate performer. Our sample pair easily dealt with extremely dynamic records played at very high levels; the deep, powerful timpani, for instance, from the "Hall of the Mountain King" movement of the *Peer Gynt* Suite (Telarc 10048) emerged with lots of drama, albeit lacking in the visceral wallop that a larger system can afford. Stereo imaging is superb—broad and with surprising depth. The word "detailed" cropped up often in our listening sessions: the speaker is noteworthy for its ability to discriminate among delicate instrumental timbres in the most complex orchestral pieces.

With the AR-28s, Acoustic Research continues to improve a genre for whose creation it is largely responsible. In a competitive market, the manufacturer has chosen to persist in its thrust toward more accurate sound—even in its lower-priced models. By comparison to more dramatic speakers, this model might, in fact, sound a bit reticent (its high end, for instance, refuses to overstate the importance of the triangle in a symphony orchestra), but this is one loudspeaker that will satisfy the discriminating listener long after the others have lost their charm. In an age of spiraling inflation, the AR-28s emerges as a speaker even a struggling musician could afford—and admire.

Circle 134 on Reader-Service Card

A Smart Turntable from JVC

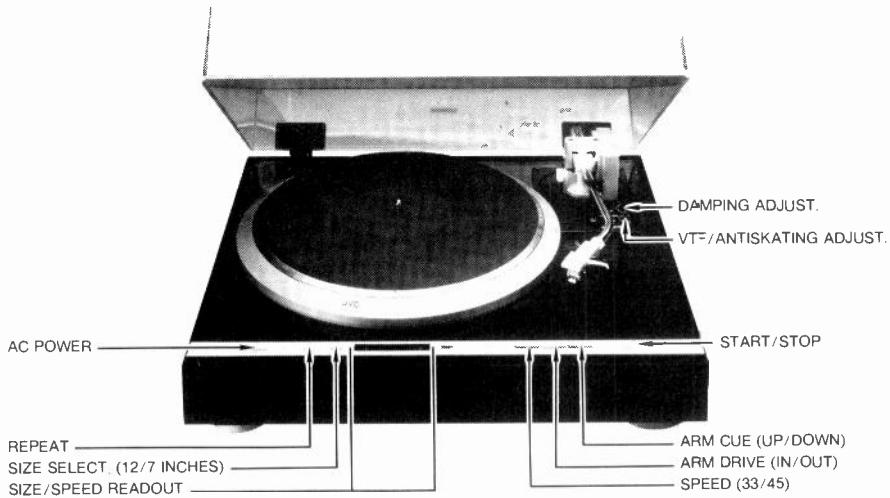
JVC QL-Y5F automatic single-play turntable with base, dust cover, and servo-controlled tonearm. Dimensions: 19 by 16½ inches (top), 6½ inches high with cover closed; additional 11½ inches vertical clearance and 3 inches at back required with cover open. Price: \$450. Warranty: "limited," one year parts and labor. Manufacturer: Victor Co. of Japan, Ltd., Japan; U.S. distributor: U.S. JVC Corp., 41 Slater Dr., Elmwood Park, N.J. 07407.

TURNTABLES—ALONG WITH just about all other types of components—have been getting smarter over the last few years. Yet the price for all that newfound brainpower has been getting much smaller, pound for pound. No better example comes to mind than JVC's versatile and utterly automated QL-Y5F, in which even the motion of the tonearm is under computer control. Like Sony's effort in this genre (PS-X75, test reports, November 1980), it incorporates an electronic servo system that constantly maintains correct tracking force while damping out the main low-frequency arm/cartridge resonance.

Far from being just an exercise in whiz-bang technology, such an electronic damping system serves a vital function, freeing both designer and consumer from the otherwise painful di-

lemma posed by the mix-and-match philosophy fundamental to componentry. By smoothing out the low-frequency resonance, a servo system can make a tonearm of almost any mass work well with almost any cartridge, making the arm truly universal and eliminating a major source of audiophile frustration.

Apart from the servo "sidecar" riding next to the pivots, the arm on the QL-Y5F is fairly conventional, with its dynamic balance, standard "universal" plug-in headshell, and S-shaped tube. Balance is set via a rotatable counterweight, tracking force and antiskating on a single calibrated dial to the right of the arm rest, damping factor on another dial. Arm height, cartridge tilt, and overhang also are adjustable, the last facilitated by a calibrated sliding cartridge-mounting plate. Stylus-overhang adjustment re-



SPEED ACCURACY (at 33 or 45 rpm)
no measurable error, 105 to 127 VAC
WOW & FLUTTER (ANSI/IEEE weighted peak)
± 0.04% average; ± 0.05% maximum
TOTAL AUDIBLE RUMBLE (ARL)
-67½ dB
TONEARM RESONANCE & DAMPING (with Shure V-15
Type III)
vertical 6.5 Hz; ≈ 6 dB rise
lateral 9 Hz; ≈ 1 dB rise
STYLUS-GAUGE ACCURACY
no measurable error to 1 gram;
gauge reads 10% high above 1 gram
TOTAL LEAD CAPACITANCE 105 pF

quires the use of calibration marks on the headshell; but it is not much help because of the difficulty of ascertaining the horizontal distance between the stylus tip and the centers of the cartridge mounting holes, which is very awkward to measure to the necessary degree of accuracy. Had JVC included a separate overhang gauge or alignment protractor, it would have made the overhang adjustment easier, especially for the audiophile who has several pickups.

Controls for the quartz-lock direct drive all are accessible in front of the dust cover for ease of operation. Turntable speed (33 or 45 rpm) and record size (12 or 7 inches) are set with separate switches, enabling the QL-Y5F to handle 45-rpm audiophile discs automatically. Punching the START/STOP button causes the platter to begin spinning and the tonearm to lift from its rest and move to the lead-in groove of the record. (As with most other automatic turntables, care should be taken not to activate this function without a record on the turntable, lest the stylus catch on the platter mat and be damaged.) At the end of the disc or when you push START/STOP a second time, the tonearm automatically returns to its rest. The entire cycle is very smooth, but record cleaning is a little more inconvenient than it would be if operation of the turntable proper were divorced from operation of the tonearm. As it stands, a user must hit START/STOP to spin the platter, then the arm-lift button to keep the stylus from going into the groove before the cleaning operation is complete. The base of the turntable, which has a beautiful shiny vinyl finish that comes the closest we've ever seen to the look of wood, rests on four adjustable isolator feet.

Lab data are uniformly excellent.

Speed accuracy is essentially perfect over a wide range of line voltages, and both rumble and flutter are (as we have come to expect from the best direct-drive turntables) very low. DSL found the calibration of the stylus-force dial acceptably accurate throughout its range (with a maximum error of $\frac{1}{2}$ gram at the 3-gram setting) and excellent in the most-used range around 1 gram. Capacitance of the arm wiring and 40-inch connecting cables is a low 105 picofarads.

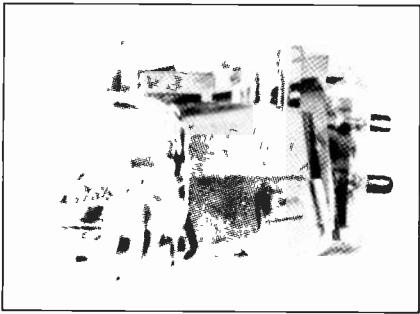
The action of the servo is evident in the resonance figures (obtained using our standard pickup), which show unusually low resonance amplitudes and an inversion of the usual frequency ordering, with the lateral resonance occurring at a higher frequency than the vertical. DSL also noted that the arm's resonance peaks are uncommonly broad and flat, as one would expect from a heavily damped system.

Use tests confirmed the servo system's effectiveness. Even very compliant cartridges tracked with utter grace and stability, sailing effortlessly over warps that ordinarily would have had them dancing madly in an undamped arm as massive as this one. But the turntable's suspension is not particularly effective in suppressing acoustic feedback, so some users may want more isolation in order to ensure the full measure of performance.

We found the QL-Y5F a consistent joy to use and remain amazed that JVC can offer such fine basic performance plus a sophisticated electronic arm-damping system at so reasonable a price. Many other audiophile-grade turntables do a great deal less while selling for a good bit more. The QL-Y5F is going to be a tough act for these others to follow.

Circle 132 on Reader-Service Card

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ADC's Jewel of a Pickup

ADC Astrion fixed-coil phono pickup with elliptical diamond stylus (tip radii, approx. 6½ by 37½ micrometers). Price: \$235; RSA replacement stylus, \$99. Warranty: "limited," one year parts and labor, excluding stylus wear. Manufacturer: Audio Dynamics Corp., Pickett District Rd., New Milford, Conn. 06776.

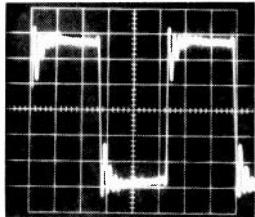
FREQUENCY RESPONSE & CHANNEL SEPARATION (test record: STR-170)

Astrion

Frequency response

L ch	-1½ dB, 20 Hz to 20 kHz
R ch	-1½ dB, 20 Hz to 20 kHz
Channel separation	>25 dB, 360 Hz to 8 kHz; ≥15 dB, 31 Hz to 20 kHz
SENSITIVITY (at 1 kHz)	0.95 mV/cm/sec.
CHANNEL BALANCE (at 1 kHz)	±0 dB
VERTICAL TRACKING ANGLE	≈30°
LOW-FREQUENCY RESONANCE (in SME 3009)	
vertical	7.5 Hz; 11 dB rise
lateral	8.3 Hz; 11½ dB rise
MAXIMUM TRACKING LEVEL (re RIAA 0 VU; 1.2 grams)	
at 300 Hz	+12 dB
WEIGHT	5.7 grams

SQUARE-WAVE RESPONSE (1 kHz)



AFTER YEARS OF steady but gradual improvement, the fixed-coil cartridge field seems subject to radical change in the Eighties, and ADC is a top-drawer example of both trends, past and present. The last ADC pickup we reviewed—the Integra XLM-III (September 1980), with its integral carbon-fiber headshell allowing adjustments for overhang and vertical tracking angle—prompted us to wonder aloud “why nobody has made cartridges that way before.” ADC’s latest, the Astrion, enjoys top-of-the-line status and, though different in format from the Integra, is no less interesting in design and materials.

Completely hand-assembled, with individual inspection of every internal component, the Astrion aims at a discriminating audience, indeed. In place of aluminum or one of the more exotic alloys, the cantilever shaft is formed of a single sapphire crystal. Sapphire’s high stiffness-to-mass ratio and strength make it superior to other cantilever materials, according to ADC. The company describes the diamond tip as elliptical, though the hand-polished narrow-radius surfaces that contact the groove walls are said to present an extended bearing area comparable to that of the Shibata and other multiradial styli. The tip is also claimed the smallest ever made by ADC, which adds that a redesigned suspension system—without wires, adhesives, or governors—keeps moving mass low and compliance high.

On the test bench at Diversified Science Laboratories, the Astrion demonstrated clearly the benefits of its careful design and construction. With vertical tracking force set at 1.2 grams, the mean of ADC’s recommended range, sensitivity came in at a healthy 0.95 millivolt. Tracking ability was excellent in the 300-Hz test, and separation—well in excess of 25 dB over much of the midrange—is more than adequate.

Vertical tracking angle, when measured as a function of second-order inter-

modulation distortion on the low-frequency bands of a special DIN test record, was approximately 30 degrees, the highest band on the test record but consistent with the VTAs of many other top-notch pickups measured for us in the past. The high-frequency IM bands on the same test disc, however, documented a VTA of 22 degrees; this figure presumably reflects stylus rake angle. (See “A New Angle in Record Playing,” March.)

Frequency response of the Astrion, measured with the CBS test disc, is ruler flat from 20 Hz to 3.5 kHz, followed by a broad and very shallow dip in the upper treble. In our “standard” medium-mass SME arm, its vertical resonance falls a bit on the low side, indicating the desirability of somewhat lower arm mass. Resonance amplitudes are consistent with those of other cartridges measured by DSL, though the numbers are larger than our former (CBS) technique delivered.

Comments from auditioners on the sonic character of the Astrion are a litany of superlatives, with many of the compliments centered on its high-frequency performance. Though detailed and precise, high strings, brass, and the like emerged free of the etched, steely quality that can make long-term listening less than pleasant. All auditioners were unanimous in assessing this model as a remarkably uncolored transducer, but some commented specifically on its “sweetness” and “airiness.” It also possesses a remarkable ability to discriminate among instruments in complex orchestral pieces, and one listener noted that it makes surface noise far less prominent than usual.

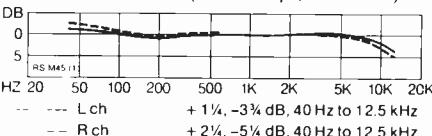
It’s not often that we can pronounce a cartridge to be as deserving of top-of-the-line billing as this one is. Considered in light of its fine craftsmanship, rare materials, and—most important—sonic character, the Astrion is nothing less than a jewel of a pickup.

Circle 131 on Reader-Service Card

A Nifty Nonprofessional Cassette Deck

Technics RS-M45 cassette deck, in metal case. Dimensions: 17 by 3½ inches, 13 inches deep plus clearance for controls and connections. Price: \$350; optional RP-9645 remote control, \$31. Warranty: “limited,” two years parts and labor; three years on direct-drive motor. Manufacturer: Matsushita Electric, Ltd., Japan; U.S. distributor: Panasonic Co., Division of Matsushita Electric Corp. of America, 1 Panasonic Way, Secaucus, N.J. 07094.

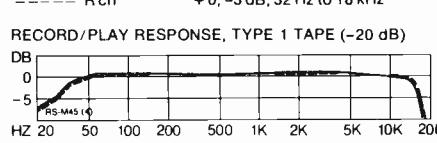
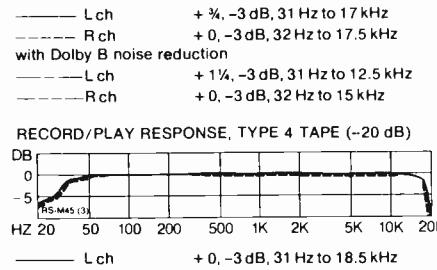
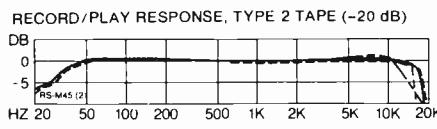
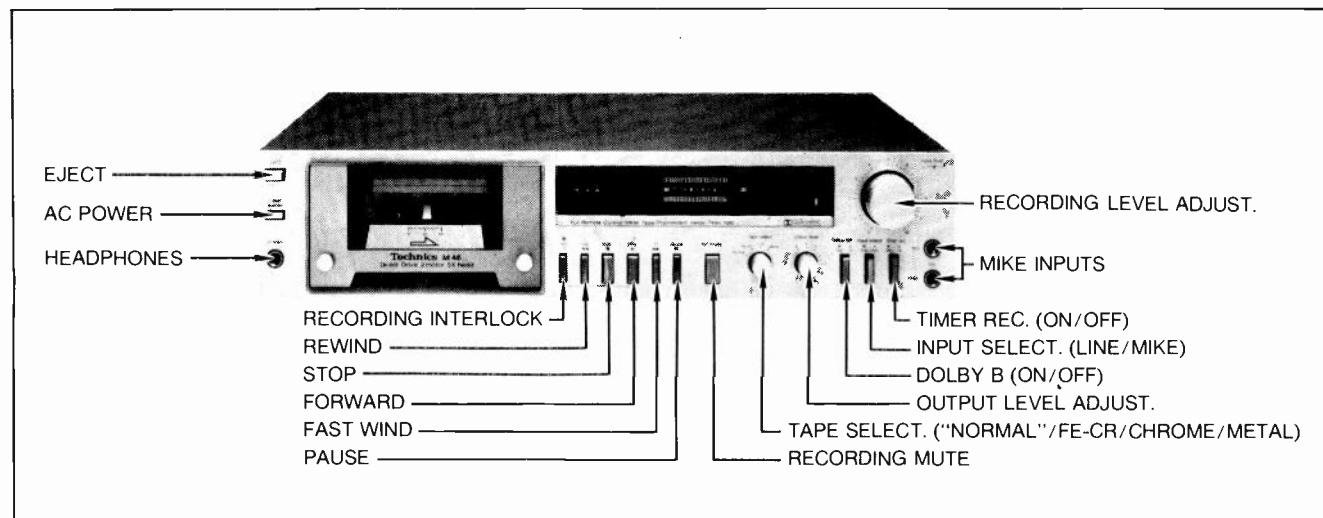
PLAYBACK RESPONSE (TDK test tape, -20 dB DIN)



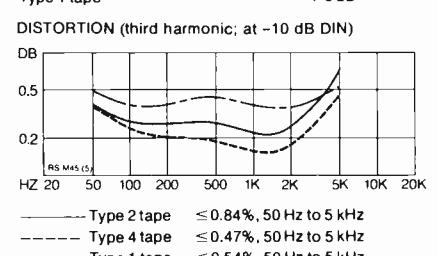
IN CASE YOU HADN’T noticed, the “component system” approach has replaced the console of yesteryear as the way to get high fidelity if you’re intimidated by components themselves. Everything comes prematched, obviating the quandaries that beset even the initiated, and often with ancillary capabilities that are difficult or impossible to find if you’re assembling a system on your own. Technics, for example, is among the companies offering full-system wireless remote control if you buy the whole works. So when we dipped into the ensemble by choosing the RS-M45 cassette

deck for a look-see test report, we were bypassing a part of its in-system appeal.

It does have its own remote control, however: an optional wired model. It also has much of the look, “feel,” and technical capability that you’d expect in any Technics deck. Sensibly, considering the intended market, it’s shorn of the sort of details that can lend more confusion than performance in the hands of novice recordists: fine-tuning controls for the tape selector’s four basic positions, line/mike mixing, multimode metering, and the like. It is a two-head deck whose multiplex filter is switched in along with



S/N RATIO (re DIN 0 dB; R/P; A-weighted)		
Type 2 tape	Type 4 tape	Type 1 tape
without noise reduction		
57½ dB	55 dB	54 dB
with Dolby B noise reduction		
66 dB	64 dB	62½ dB
METER READING FOR DIN 0 dB	+ 6 dB	
METER READING FOR 3% DISTORTION (333 Hz)		
Type 2 tape	+ 6 dB	
Type 4 tape	+ 8 dB	
Type 1 tape	+ 8 dB	



ERASURE (333 Hz; re DIN 0 dB)	
Type 2 tape	73½ dB
Type 4 tape	72½ dB
CHANNEL SEPARATION	51 dB

the Dolby B noise reduction. But it does have an output level control, a peak-hold feature on the fluorescent signal indicator, a timer-recording mode, recording mute, and direct capstan drive. Thus it is not a barebones deck, by any means.

The tapes supplied by the company along with the test sample included some of its own branded product. When we inquired about tapes that enjoy wider distribution in the U.S. market, Technics suggested testing with TDK SA as the Type 2 ferricobalt, TDK MA as the Type 4 metal, and Maxell UDXL-I as the "normal" Type 1 ferric. The graphs show very good performance with all three. You'll note that a dissimilarity between the two channels at the very top of the frequency band appears when the noise reduction is switched on for the Type 2 tape. This disparity remained with the other tape types and seems to be occasioned by the multiplex filter, rather than the Dolby B circuit itself. The filtering is extremely sharp in the right channel, with a slight tendency to peak just before the precipitous cutoff; in the left channel, there is no peak, the rolloff is much more gradual, and the filtering action at 19 kHz is less complete. Since we were unable to set up a listening situation in which we could document any audible difference between channels, we consider the point academic.

And replication is good or better with any of the recommended tapes. One reason, certainly, is the very good wow and flutter; since the record/play figures are no higher than those for playback, the test tape may be the limiting factor.

The other DSL measurements are consistent with the values we are used to

seeing in nonsystem components, with one exception: the calibration of the level indicator. In the days of average-reading meters, the headroom implied by a 0-dB calibration 6 dB below DIN's might have been necessary to allow for inherently poor meter response. Since Technics' indicator has excellent response, no headroom is necessary. Its low calibration therefore simply encourages the user to waste 6 dB of the deck's potential dynamic range. The ingenious manual, which is more graphics than text, does explain this point very well, but we wonder which will influence the intended user more, the manual or the change from white to red when the "bar graph" passes its 0-dB marking. Calibration goes down to -20 dB; bar increments are 1 dB apart around the 0-dB mark but 2 dB apart in the most critical range around +6—not a meter for the serious recordist, in our judgment, but adequate to the present need.

And there is a need for a deck like this. The difficulty of selling equipment in economically "soft" times has, unfortunately, led to an overemphasis on technological glitter, and all too many moderate-priced decks are fitted out with switches and knobs about whose correct deployment users are more than a little foggy. The RS-M45 aims at being a quality deck, not a "professional" one—a distinction we wish more companies would keep firmly in mind. From the logic of its transport mode controls to the rather nifty remote-control option (which even includes a RECORD MUTE button), from the styling to the specs, Technics has succeeded in that aim.

Circle 133 on Reader-Service Card

SPEED ACCURACY	0.4% fast, 105 to 127 VAC
WOW & FLUTTER (ANSI/IEEE weighted peak)	
playback	average ± 0.06%
record/play	maximum ± 0.08%

SENSITIVITY (re DIN 0 dB; 333 Hz)	
line input	98 mV
mic input	0.44 mV
MIKE INPUT OVERLOAD (clipping)	22 mV
MAX. OUTPUT (from DIN 0 dB)	0.94 V

For a guide to tape types, see page 37.



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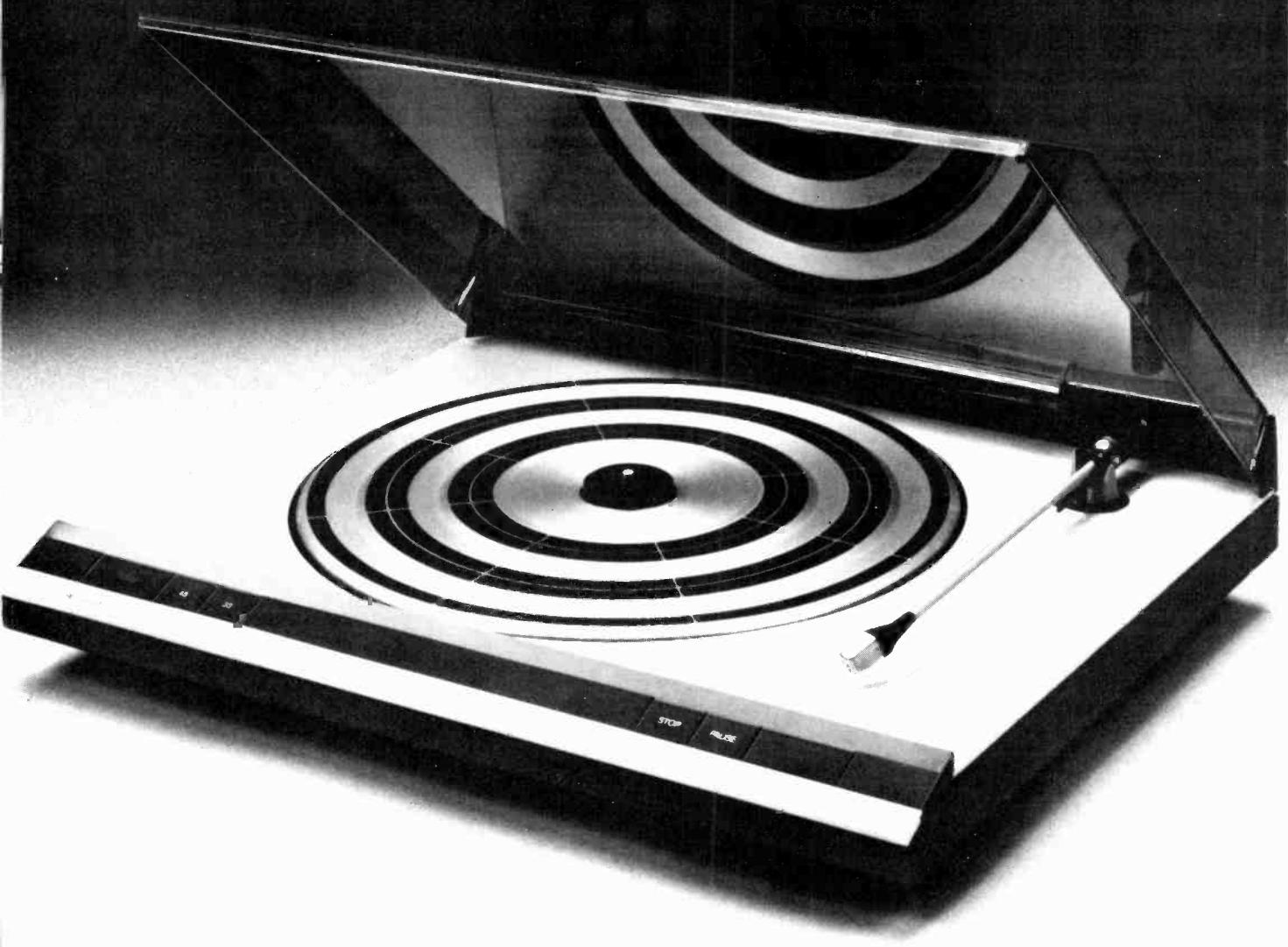
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ITS BEAUTY IS MORE THAN SKIN DEEP

Meet the Beogram® 3404...an intelligent, thoughtful and very well spoken turntable.

Like all Bang & Olufsen turntables, the 3404 effectively combines superior sound reproduction with simplified—not complicated—operation. That's the real beauty of the 3404.

That's why the controls are outside of the dust cover where they're easily accessible.

And that's why just a light touch of the START button does everything. It determines if a record is on the platter, and if so, quickly sets the correct speed and lowers the stylus to the record.

Slam! Pound the shelf next to the 3404. Not a skip, not a jump...thanks to the rock-steady patented suspension system. Audible acoustic feedback disappears as a result.

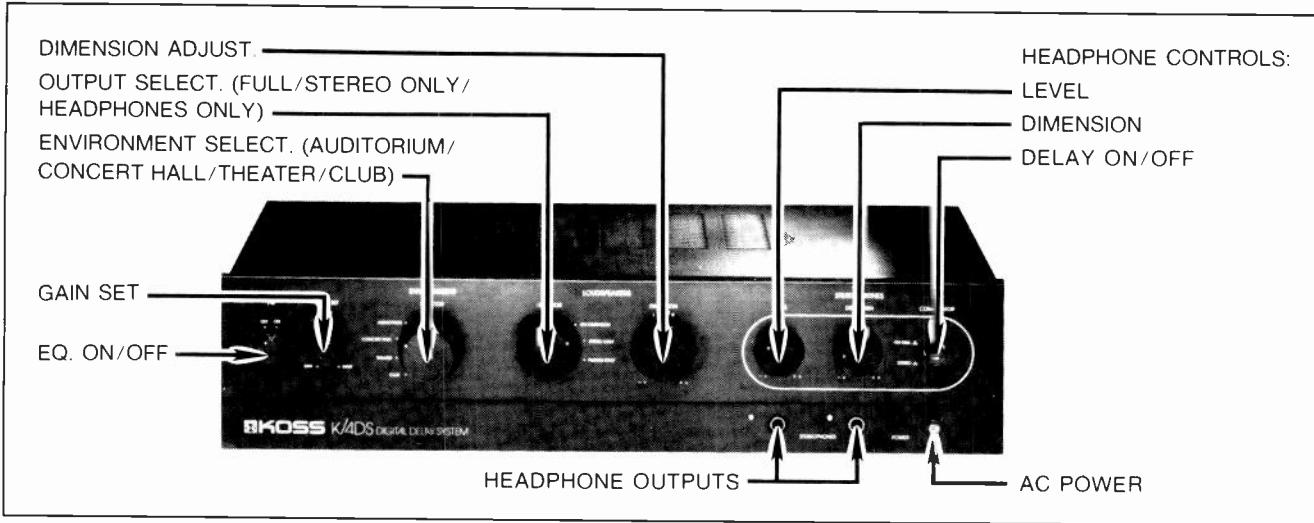
A low inertia tonearm with a knife-edge bearing system eliminates audible distortion. The Bang & Olufsen MMC cartridge works in flawless harmony with the tonearm. The unique self-correcting electronic servo-drive is so precise that the need for a conventional strobe device is eliminated.

The Beogram 3404 even responds to remote control commands when used with the Beomaster 2400 receiver.

At Bang & Olufsen, good looks and brains run in the family. So discover the inner beauty of our full line of fine turntables at your local Bang & Olufsen dealer or write us for complete informative literature.

Bang & Olufsen

Bang & Olufsen of America, Inc.
515 Busse Road
Elk Grove Village, Illinois 60007
Attention: Harold Flemming



Koss and the "Big Sound"

Koss K/4DS Digital Delay (ambience simulation) System, in metal case, with two K/2S loudspeakers. Dimensions: 16½ by 4 inches (front panel of electronics unit), 10 inches deep plus clearance for controls; speakers, 7½ by 12 inches, 5 inches deep. Price: \$460. Including the speaker pair. Warranty: "Limited," one year parts and labor. Manufacturer: electronics made in Taiwan (speakers in U.S.A.) for Koss Corp., 4129 Port Washington Ave., Milwaukee, Wis. 53212.

SENSITIVITY (for threshold of overload with maximum input gain setting)	16 mV
S/N RATIO (A-weighted; for 0.5 volt in at threshold of overload, 0 dBW out to speaker)	≥61 dB, depending on ENVIRONMENT setting
APPROXIMATE INITIAL DELAY TIMES	
AUDITORIUM setting	40 msec.
CONCERT HALL setting	30 msec.
THEATER setting	20 msec.
CLUB setting	10 msec.
AMP RATED POWER	11½ dBW (15 watts)/channel
OUTPUT AT CLIPPING (both channels driven)	12½ dBW (16½ watts)/channel
8-ohm load	12½ dBW (16½ watts)/channel
4-ohm load	13 dBW (20 watts)/channel

A Quick Guide to Tape Types

Our tape classifications, Types 0 through 4, are based primarily on the International Electrotechnical Commission measurement standards.

Type 0 tapes represent "ground zero" in that they follow the original Philips-based DIN spec. They are ferric tapes, called LN (low-noise) by some manufacturers, requiring minimum (nominal 100%) bias and the original, "standard" 120-microsecond playback equalization. Though they include the "garden variety" formulations, the best are capable of excellent performance at moderate cost in decks that are well matched to them.

Type 1 (IEC Type 1) tapes are ferrics requiring the same 120-microsecond playback EQ but somewhat higher bias. They sometimes are styled LH (low-noise, high output) formulations or "premium ferrics."

Type 2 (IEC Type II) tapes are intended for use with 70-microsecond playback EQ and higher recording bias still (nominal 150%). The first formulations of this sort used chromium dioxide; today they also include chrome-compatible coatings such as the ferricobalts.

Type 3 (IEC Type III) tapes are dual-layered ferrichromes, implying the 70-microsecond ("chrome") playback EQ. Approaches to their biasing and recording EQ vary somewhat from one deck manufacturer to another.

Type 4 (IEC Type IV) are the metal-particle, or "alloy" tapes, requiring the highest bias of all and retaining the 70-microsecond EQ of Type 2.

IN RETROSPECT, the enthusiasm for ambience simulation units, which began about five years ago, may seem a bit of a fad; after the initial gold rush, few entries in the category have appeared recently. Why, then, has Koss chosen to be the obvious exception? For one thing, it has done something none of the other manufacturers has attempted: The K/4DS addresses the special problems of headphone listening on their own terms and tailors the ambience simulation at the headphone jacks to those problems. It's not surprising that a company whose name is almost synonymous with stereo headphones should have done so. Nor, perhaps, is it surprising that it should have been so successful.

Headphones would, however, seem extrinsic to the idea behind ambience products, which seek to emulate the acoustic impression of what might be called "musical space": concert halls and other live-music loci. They take some of the signal destined for the normal speaker pair, delay it (Koss uses a digital delay, which is the most popular but by no means the only technique available for the purpose), and feed it (with or without the interchannel crossfeed that Koss apparently considers an important element in its design) to speakers at the back or sides of the listening space, in imitation of the sound that reflects from the walls in live listening. This isn't the same thing as capturing room reflections in the original recording site, because the recorded ambience is heard, in playback, coming from the front (main) speakers and the ear can hear the difference in arrival direction. Correctly done, theory says, the delay system should give you the impression of being in the hall where the music is being made—not of listening to it through a sonic window at the front of your room, so to speak.

As we have been constrained to point out in past reports on ambience devices, the ultimate criterion in judging

them is subjective and the judgments therefore as varied as the judges. We will recount our experience with the K/4DS, but we cannot predict what yours will be. It is imperative with any "psychoacoustic" product that you do your own listening and arrive at your own conclusion; at best, a report such as this will give you clues about what to listen for.

The first thing that will strike you in comparing the Koss entry with the competition is how much you get for the price. The electronics package includes amplification to drive the back speakers, and Koss throws in a pair of its own minispeakers and a plug-in interconnection from the speaker connections on your present system. Essentially, the carton contains everything you need for a full speaker/headphones ambience add-on to whatever stereo equipment you now use.

Your second surprise probably will be occasioned by the number of interconnection options available. You can drive the K/4DS from either the power terminals or a pair of line outputs (PRE-OUT, TAPE OUT, or whatever, depending on your stereo system). You can use the built-in amplifier, rated at 15 watts (11½ dBW) per channel, to power back speakers or interpose a stereo amp of your own via a line-level output. You can leave your main speakers hooked to your main amp, or you can drive them from front-speaker terminals on the Koss, which will obligingly kill this output whenever you switch it into its headphones-only mode.

The third surprise, surely, will be the number of controls on the front panel. Starting from the left, the EQ control adds a little oomph (3 dB or so, maximum) between 50 and 100 Hz in the back channels, which is welcome if you use the Koss or other minispeakers for that purpose. At the same time, the ON position cuts in a high-pass filter that reduces response below 40 Hz to minimize

distortion. The next knob adjusts input level to prevent overload, which is indicated by a small LED next to it. You rotate the knob counterclockwise until the loudest passages in the music just fail to light the LED; at that point you have optimum undistorted S/N ratio.

The next three knobs determine the ambience effect when you're using loudspeakers. The ENVIRONMENT SELECTOR chooses the basic delay time: in ascending order, CLUB, THEATER, CONCERT HALL, and AUDITORIUM. The OUTPUT SELECTOR is really a mode switch; it gives you a choice of full ambience effect, retaining the front speakers while cutting out those at the back (and therefore the ambience), or killing the speakers altogether for headphone listening. DIMENSION is a level control for the back speakers, with ganged elements so you can adjust their balance, if necessary, to compensate for asymmetric placement.

For the two (count 'em!) headphone jacks, there is the group of three controls at the right. Here, of course, the ambience signal—which is reproduced at the back when you're listening to speakers—must be mixed with the main front signal because headphones offer only one pair of transducers. The LEVEL knob controls the overall mix. DIMENSION the ambience signal alone. When you push the spring-loaded COMPARATOR button,

it cuts out the ambience signal so you can judge the enhancement vis-à-vis what you would hear without the delay.

Like most signal processors we've worked with, including all the ambience units, the K/4DS is capable of gross effects at immoderate settings. Turn the ENVIRONMENT knob to the AUDITORIUM setting and crank up the DIMENSION, and you'll hear an annoying "slap" or "ringing" or "echo" (depending on the auditioner) that would disqualify a real hall for live music and renders speech virtually unintelligible. With a delay this long, we found that the back-channel level had to be reduced until the STEREO/4TH-DIMENSION comparison revealed very little difference if we were to be satisfied by the overall effect. Even then, the success varied with the program material. Because organ sound is associated with large, reverberant spaces, for example, organ recordings could accept the AUDITORIUM setting and more back-channel level than most signals before the effect was judged unnatural. (In FM listening, however, the announcements at the ends of organ numbers can be an unpleasant shock at these extreme settings.)

As the ENVIRONMENT switch is moved to other settings, for shorter delay times, it becomes progressively easier to achieve satisfactory results. A light touch

is still in order at the controls, and results still vary with the nature and inherent ambience of the program source, as with all such devices, but the likelihood of achieving a sense of being in the same space as the music makers increases materially.

The big surprise, to us, was the usefulness of the ambience with headphones, despite their inability to redirect the sound. The most desirable effect, subjectively, is the blending or blurring of that insistent inside-the-head focus that headphone listening can create. There is some sense of opening up the space, but we judged it less specific than that with loudspeakers. Perhaps the comment that best summed up the advantage to the headphone listener was, "Wow! I could listen to this all evening!" Indeed, many people find headphone listening quite wearing, and the K/4DS does ameliorate that response.

The key considerations in such a product are, again, all subjective. Diversified Science Laboratories' data are shown here for the record, but they shed very little light on the capabilities or qualities of the K/4DS, which we consider a good buy among delay systems for loudspeaker use and particularly attractive at any price because of its headphone feature.

Circle 136 on Reader-Service Card

Manufacturers' Comments

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

Inception Audio Mirage SM-1 loudspeaker, April 1981. As you pointed out, the SM-1 was designed for "real-room" performance. This is achieved by maintaining a uniform acoustic impedance throughout its frequency range; that is, the loudspeaker "sees" the same room load at all frequencies (when used with our T-1 stands). This predictable interaction greatly reduces listening room compatibility problems.

We also heartily agree that the SM-1's "crystalline stereo imaging" derives from phase integrity. A crossover characteristic near the optimum of 6 dB per octave is achieved by making the drivers themselves look (electrically) like simple resistors through the use of a complex impedance compensation network. This allows very high tweeter power-handling capacity, even with such a shallow time-coherent crossover; these two conditions normally are considered mutually exclusive, prompting most designers to opt for the less accurate alternative.

The range of the tweeter level control is admittedly wider than necessary. This

particular control was selected for its quality and durability. We find its judicious use in correcting for "bright" low-cost cartridges more desirable than tone controls, which generally introduce time distortions.

With regard to the 300-Hz buzzing that was noted, we ascertained a few months ago (after we sent the review samples) that this was caused by the grille attachment. A minor running production modification has corrected this anomaly.

Please note that the optional T-1 stands, while not the most enjoyable kit to assemble (owner assembly significantly reduces the final cost), are supplied with rubber bumpers that, when used double thickness, do come into physical contact with the recessed rear of the speaker cabinet.

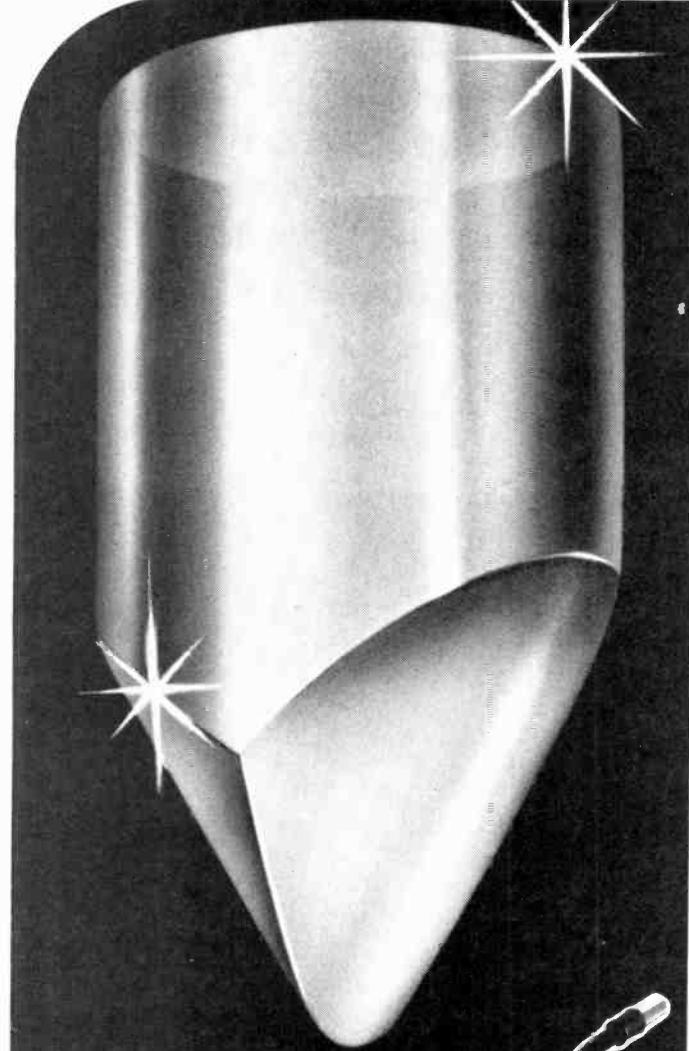
Kevin Voecks
Design Engineer
Inception Audio, Ltd.

Nikko ND-790 cassette deck, April 1981. In order to eliminate any confusion concerning the bias adjustment, we recently

produced a chart listing all popular tape brands and tape types, together with the adjustment of the bias control to match the performance characteristics of each tape. The chart has been supplied in quantity to all authorized Nikko dealers and is available to Nikko purchasers by writing to Nikko Audio, 320 Oser Ave., Hauppauge, N.Y. 11787.

John Schroder
Vice President, Marketing and Sales
Nikko Audio

HF replies: To our knowledge, Nikko is the first company in the land to follow a course we have been urging for years: local production of the tape-type list in and for the U.S. market. Only by following this course can deck importers keep abreast of the formulations and nomenclature that their customers will encounter when they come to buy tape. The alternative is all too familiar: lists prepared many months and thousands of miles away and including few tapes that can be purchased here and many that can't—even, in some instance, tapes that vary from one country to another though the name remains constant. Only if other manufacturers follow Nikko's lead will you be able to assume that the tape list accompanying your deck is a reliable instrument to help you make better recordings.



When you're ready to "face" the music we have a tip for reduced distortion

The HE Family: Hyperelliptical-Equipped



Whether you are seeking to reproduce the full dynamic range in the grooves of today's new superdiscs, or simply to obtain maximum listening pleasure from treasured "oldies" in your record collection, you need a phono cartridge that will deliver optimum trackability with minimum distortion.

Because the phono cartridge is the only point of direct contact between the record and your entire stereo system, its role is critical to faithful sound re-creation. That's why upgrading your phono cartridge is the single most significant (and generally least costly) improvement you can make to your stereo system.

To that end Shure now offers the Hyperelliptical Stylus Tip configuration—first introduced on the critically acclaimed V15 Type IV—in a full line of cartridges with a broad range of prices.

The Hyperelliptical Stylus Tip has been called the most significant advance in decades in tip geometry. It has a narrower and more uniform elongated contact area that results in significantly reduced intermodulation and harmonic distortion.

Look over the list at left to see which Shure HE cartridge best matches your tracking force requirements.

Shure has been the top-selling cartridge manufacturer for the past 23 years. For full details on this remarkable line of cartridges write for AL667.

Go with the leader—Shure.



SHURE®

Shure Brothers Inc., 222 Hartley Ave., Evanston, IL 60204

In Canada: A. C. Simmonds & Sons Limited
Manufacturers of high fidelity components, microphones,
sound systems and related circuitry.

A Pro's Approach to Audio Accessories

Gizmos and gadgets that keep Chicago's "superstation" super may improve your audio system too!
by Richard Warren



Keeping WFMT's signal clean demands constant record and equipment maintenance, says author Richard Warren.

IF BAJA CALIFORNIA is the rigorous proving ground for cars and twenty fathoms beneath the sea the test of a wristwatch, then a radio station—running twenty-four hours a day, 365 days a year—is the ultimate torture trial for audio accessories. Though a modern radio station is crammed with expensive heavy-duty gear, the little gizmos that keep its records clean and tape decks running up to par often are the same humble items you can purchase in blister packs at your local audio store.

As a producer at WFMT in Chicago, part of my job is to make sure all the equipment performs properly. An-

nouncers, engineers, and producers collaborate on choosing many of the station's accessories, but it's usually the producer who is handed the scrub brush and bucket of water and told to wash the records. We try just about every gadget that appears on the market, but in the end it's natural selection (or, more accurately, survival of the fittest) that determines which accessories find a permanent place at WFMT. A record or tape care product that's not popular with the staff often disappears mysteriously into the cracks between the turntables and the audio console and may never again see the light of day.

Those of you who missed HIGH FIDELITY's profile of WFMT [October 1980] may not know that it is hardly an ordinary radio station. We strive for ultimate audio quality and can boast a sig-

nal-to-noise ratio of better than 84 dB at the transmitter. This means that a dirty record surface or faulty patch cord is all the more noticeable on the air. Furthermore, the station is staffed by audiophiles whose debates over what sounds and works best often mimic the arguments of medieval theologians. It is much easier to reach an agreement on which \$10,000 tape machine to buy than whether or not to treat any of our 20,000 records with a preservative. Because of our emphasis on quality, we don't own a single tape cartridge machine and we rely on discs, open-reel tapes, and live performances for our programming.

Auditions for most accessories are held in my own listening room at home. After undergoing some initial experimentation there, a new product usually makes its way to the station. On many

Aside from his duties at WFMT, Richard Warren writes an audio column for Chicago magazine and is audio editor of the Chicago Sun-Times.

occasions, however, products that work well at home don't suit the needs of a broadcasting operation. So some of my own home preferences don't really fill the bill at WFMT.

Record Care

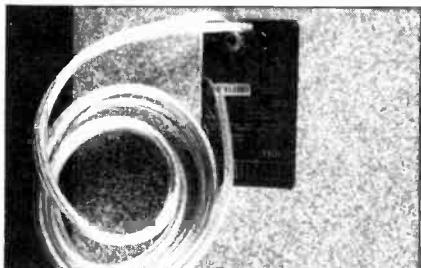
The Keith Monks Record Cleaning Machine is the most popular accessory at WFMT. Although the deluxe dual-turntable monster (about \$2,000) is certainly overkill for the home, many audio dealers have one in their stores and will clean your records for you for a small charge. The Monks machine applies fluid to a rotating disc via a Cecil Watts Record

Wash Brush (which works pretty well by itself for manual record cleaning). Then a "tonearm" with a tiny nozzle sucks the fluid out of the groove, eliminating the chance of residue buildup. For the cleaning fluid, we initially used Discwasher D-3 and subsequently D-4. These preparations were so effective that we could even dilute them a bit with distilled water. Considering the quantities used (each day's records are washed the previous night) and the price, however, we were forced to seek a homemade alternative. We now use a mixture of 25% ethyl alcohol and 75% de-ionized water.

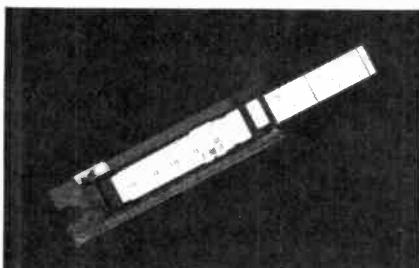
Machine washing is not the end of

record cleaning. There's considerable dust and static electricity in our control rooms. Besides placing the announcer on a 3M conductive floor mat and using the Shure V-15 Type IV phono pickup (its carbon stabilizer brush drains static charge and lifts out microscopic dust), during the static-ridden winter months we zap the records with the Zerostat gun. Then the Cecil Watts Manual Parastat whisks transient dust from the grooves. For quick, on-the-spot cleaning, the Discwasher brush and D-4 fluid are routinely used. We still broadcast several programs featuring 78-rpm records, and the producers of these programs carry

Nine Ways to Perk up Your Stereo System's Sound



Clearly coded for speaker phasing, Monster Cable is available in 15-foot and 30-foot unterminated pairs (\$27.50 and \$47).



An accessory gauge such as the Shure SFG-2 (\$7.50) provides a quick double-check on vertical tracking force.



The Zerostat pistol from Discwasher (\$27.50) temporarily neutralizes the static charges that build up on records.



Your stylus should be cleaned periodically, and the Discwasher SC-2 system (\$8.50) provides a safe scrubbing action.



Housed in its own cassette shell, the TDK HD-01 (\$24.99) is a convenient tape-head demagnetizer for cassette decks.



A tiny battery-powered IC oscillator brings automation to stylus cleaning in the Signet SK-305 (\$29.95).



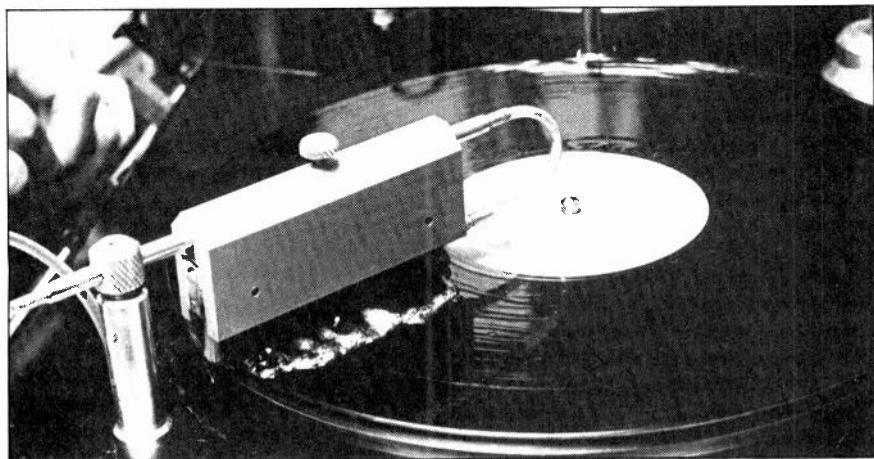
The Discwasher brush and D-4 fluid (\$16.50) clean records thoroughly and safely without leaving a residue.



Audio-Technica's Lifesaver (\$12.95) is an antistatic/lubricating preparation useful for records played repeatedly.



Stanton's Permostat (\$19.95) provides permanent antistatic protection to records with a single treatment.



Heavy-duty record cleaning at WFMT is handled by the Keith Monks machine (top), but for quick, on-the-spot cleaning a Discwasher brush (right) is used.

their own Discwashers with the company's special fluid for shellac discs. Once they have been cleaned, they are inserted into new inner sleeves. We use inexpensive paper and plastic sleeves manufactured by Queens Company that are similar to those used by Musical Heritage Society.

The general policy at the station is to put no chemicals into the grooves. At home, though, I've had good results with Stanton Permostat. It is effective in eliminating static charges, which is most of the battle in keeping records clean. For discs that I play repeatedly over a short time, Audio-Technica's Lifesaver does just that. Its lubricating and antistatic ingredients give it double appeal.

Clean records should be played with a clean stylus. The brush supplied with your cartridge is adequate for everyday use, but periodically the stylus should receive a thorough scrubbing. The Discwasher SC-2 system is simple and works well. Not much larger than a pack of chewing gum, its wooden housing conceals a slider with a magnifying mirror on one side for inspecting the stylus and a pad of short, hard bristles on the other. You moisten the pad with two or three drops of the supplied fluid and then draw it across the stylus from back to front.

The Signet SK-305 is a high-technology approach to the same objective. About the size of a cigar, this battery-operated device has a tiny IC oscillator that causes a small bristle pad to vibrate vertically; a built-in light illuminates the pad. The unit is placed on the platter mat (which must be stationary) and the tonearm lowered so that the stylus contacts the vibrating pad. Make sure, however, that the gain on your preamp or receiver is set to the minimum, lest the device's vibrations be reproduced through your system.



KATHY RICHARD

Setting up a turntable so that the pickup/tonearm combination will track the record with the lowest possible distortion is critical. In terms of getting the geometry correct, I've been pleased with the ADC Pro/Trac, which checks the lateral tracking angle at two places on the disc rather than just one. Vertical tracking force settings on many tonearms are inaccurate, so we always double-check VTF with the Shure SFG-2 gauge.

Since records are often slip-cued, the radio station uses felt mats on the turntable platters. If you want to play disc jockey at home, you can find felt at any fabric store and cut it to size. Vibration can be a problem in the office building where WFMT is located, and so we purchased special McCurdy pedestals for our Technics turntables. The turntables are suspended on springs and held in place by 90-pound weights. You can just about tap dance and still not disturb a cartridge. The front of each pedestal is open for rack-mounting equipment. Such expensive, professional pedestals might not be a big hit at home, where

At WFMT, it's usually the producer who is handed the scrub brush and bucket of water and told to wash the records.

something more subtle is called for. The Platter Matter turntable mat does a fine job of soaking up vibrations. It's made from a soft, tacky material that bonds tightly to the record. To remove the record, you must literally peel the Platter Matter away. For optimum performance, it's important that the record be clean, because dust reduces the mat's tackiness.

Electrons aren't terribly particular about how they get where they're going, but they prefer an easy path. Some bargain patch cords (including some supplied with equipment) give the electrons the equivalent of a dirt road. At WFMT we make most of our own cables and patch cords, because we need unusual lengths and special connectors. We generally solder the appropriate Switchcraft connector onto high-quality Belden cable, and sometimes we use standard, ready-made Switchcraft patch cords, which hold up well under heavy use.

At home, I've found that the Audio-Technica AT-620 Vital Link cables do make a difference. It's like providing the electrons with a four-lane interstate highway. The AT cables come in 1-meter lengths and are ideal for phono cables. For longer runs, I use Switchcraft.

The thicker the speaker cables, the better. Our engineers are utterly opposed to many of the "special" cables currently on the market because of capacitance and reactance problems they create. WFMT, therefore, uses plain old 10-gauge cable. For home use, however, cable that thick can be difficult to handle—and an eyesore as well. If you have to go the high-tech route, Monster Cable is probably your best bet. It is quite flexible, more pleasing visually than ordinary cable, and clearly coded for proper speaker phasing. This last attribute is no small issue; I'm tired of straining my eyes to determine polarity with ordinary zip cord. Monster Cable also has the virtue of creating no unpleasant side effects for your amplifier.

Tips for Taping

Just like brushing your teeth after every meal, you should clean the tape heads after every playing. WFMT uses full-strength ethyl alcohol. You also can

(Continued on page 88)

The Critical Component You Can't Overlook

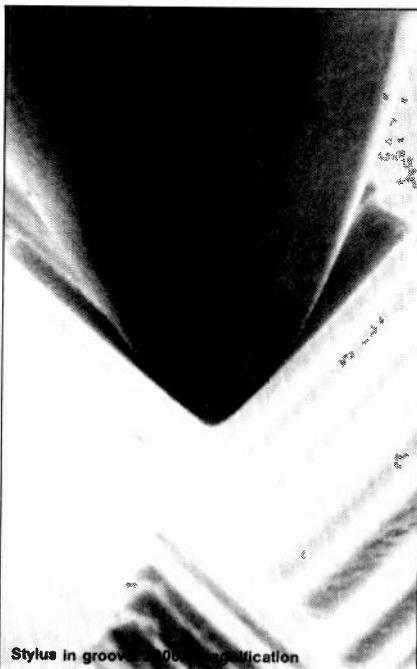
Key facts you should know before buying a phono cartridge — the smallest, yet most important link in your stereo system.

by Michael Riggs

THOUGH IT'S THE smallest component in your stereo system, the phonograph cartridge influences the sound you get far more than your receiver or amplifier does, regardless of price, power, or sophistication. The source of this apparent paradox is not hard to find. Like loudspeakers, phono pickups are electro-mechanical transducers, and it is the mechanical element of these devices that gives rise to most of the difficulties.

That music can be retrieved at all from a microgroove LP (much less in stereo high fidelity) is little short of miraculous. The signal on a disc consists of tiny, fragile undulations in an elastic substance called polyvinyl chloride (PVC). These undulations must be accurately traced by an equally diminutive diamond, ground and polished to a precise size and shape and mounted at the end of a relatively long, slender tube or bar, called the cantilever. The cantilever is held in place and supported by an elastomer bearing, which also provides mechanical damping. The size, shape, and alignment of the diamond tip, the mass and rigidity of the cantilever, and the properties of the suspension bearing do much to determine a pickup's frequency response and tracking ability.

Though important, the task of a cartridge's electrical system is relatively easy: It must translate the motion of the stylus cantilever into a corresponding electrical signal for each stereo channel to be passed through the tonearm wiring to the phono inputs of an amplifier or receiver. Exactly how this is achieved varies from model to model, but almost all modern high fidelity pickups are magnetic designs (as opposed to, for example, the piezoelectric transducers traditionally used in inexpensive compact systems). In one way or another, all of these depend on the relative motion between a magnetic field and a set of coils.



Tracking ability is the most important pickup characteristic; mistracking causes irreversible damage.

No one type of magnetic pickup has any magic advantage over the others; good cartridges come in all flavors—moving-coil, moving-magnet, and moving-iron. There are practical considerations that might tilt a buying (or design) decision one way or another, however.

For example, most moving-coil designs have very low output, necessitating the use of a stepup transformer or a so-called head amp to boost the signal to a

level high enough to drive a standard phono input. The reason for their low output is simple: Since the coils are attached to the aft end of the cantilever, they must be extremely small and lightweight, so fewer turns of wire can be employed and the output is reduced correspondingly. Adding more coil raises the mass of the moving assembly. The greater the mass, the greater the force required to accelerate it to a given velocity. So, if the effective mass of the stylus assembly goes up, so must the tracking force, or else high-frequency tracking ability will be reduced. Increasing the coil mass also tends to reduce the stylus assembly's resonance frequency—bringing it within the audible range and creating a "peaky high end" unless the designer is careful. In fact, this tends to be something of a problem even with conventional low-output moving-coil cartridges, which often have rising high ends and almost invariably have relatively low compliance and high tracking-force requirements.

Fixed-coil (moving-magnet or moving-iron) cartridges have a small, powerful magnet or a small piece of iron attached to the end of the cantilever, making these problems more amenable to a simple, inexpensive solution. Because the coils are not part of the moving system, they can be made large enough to provide fairly hefty output—usually in the vicinity of 1 millivolt for a groove velocity of 1 centimeter per second. And their relatively high inductance (an innate property of coils, and proportional to the number of turns of wire in the coil, among other things) in combination with the input impedance of a phono preamp forms an electrical low-pass filter that rolls off at high frequencies. Designers of fixed-coil cartridges exploit this characteristic to compensate for the high-frequency mechanical resonance peak and

achieve flat overall frequency response while maintaining high compliance and good high-frequency tracking ability.

Cartridge Loading

Obviously, there must be at least one fly in the ointment, or no one would make anything but high-inductance fixed-coil magnetic pickups. Indeed, there are a couple. One is that, all else remaining equal, the higher a cartridge's coil impedance (i.e., resistance and inductance), the more noise is generated. But given the signal-to-noise ratio of records, this is more a theoretical disadvantage than a practical one.

More serious is the matter of load sensitivity. Since, as we've seen, fixed-coil pickups may be designed to work with a specific preamp input load, getting that load may be important to their frequency response. Standard loading calls for a resistance of 47,000 ohms (supplied by the phono input) in parallel with some capacitance (provided by the phono input together with the tonearm wiring and cables), whose value depends on the specific cartridge model. For that reason, it is important to make sure before you buy a cartridge that is compatible with the capacitance it will find in your system. Deviations of ± 50 picofarads usually are acceptable, and if the error is on the low side, you can always bring it back up to the desired value. It is usually impractical, however, to remove capacitance, so if your system has too much for a certain cartridge, you probably should choose a more compatible model. Moving-coil and a very few low-inductance fixed-coil cartridges—along with the Micro-Acoustics pickups, which are not magnetic and therefore do not have coils at all—are insensitive to capacitive loading, so there's no need to worry if you select one of them.

The Key Specifications

But loading is only part of the story: A cartridge must be capable of producing flat frequency response when optimally terminated, or else there is little point in making the effort. You might reasonably expect a good modern pickup to be flat within $\pm 1\frac{1}{2}$ dB from 30 Hz to 15 kHz. That envelope is wide enough to permit significant audible differences between cartridges but about the best you can hope for, given the current state of the art and the fact that different manufacturers judge their results by different test records, which are themselves in various ways and to various degrees less than perfectly flat in response.

It is also worth remembering that cartridges are to some extent temperature-sensitive. Usually they boost treble at high temperatures and roll off the highs to some extent (and possibly impair tracking) at low temperatures. In

most homes, these effects will not be dramatic, but do not be surprised if your system sounds a little "hot" in midsummer or a little dull and fuzzy in the winter.

Another important desideratum is a cartridge's ability to keep the two stereo channels adequately separated. Fortunately, about 20 dB of separation at mid-band (around 1 kHz) is all that is necessary, and there probably isn't even one cartridge on the market today with pretensions to high fidelity that doesn't do at least that well.

Perhaps the most important pickup performance characteristic is tracking ability. The stylus must remain in intimate contact with the groove walls at all times, through the highest recorded velocities and accelerations. At best, mis-tracking will cause the sound to lose some of its smoothness and detail; at worst, it will throw the stylus clear out of

encountered during listening tests.

Mating Arm to Cartridge

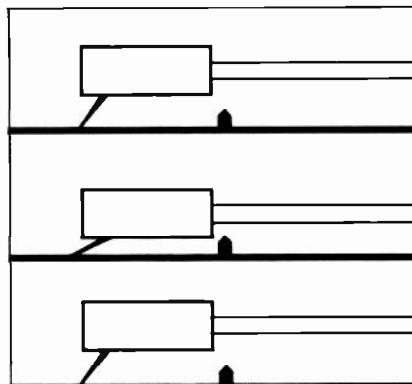
As with frequency response, tracking ability is not solely a function of the cartridge design: The tonearm also has its say. Because the mass of the arm is supported by the stylus through a compliant (i.e., springy) cantilever-suspension bearing, there is some low frequency at which the arm/cartridge system will resonate. At that point, there will be a peak in the frequency response (which may, in turn, cause phono preamp overload, wasted power, and/or excessive woofer motion) and markedly reduced tracking ability.

Consequently, it is desirable to keep the amplitude of this resonance as small as possible and its center frequency in a range where signals are both rare and weak. Which is to say, it should be well damped and should occur below the audible range and above that in which it will exaggerate record warps—between about 8 and 12 Hz. (Reducing pickup compliance or physical weight or the effective mass of the tonearm tends to raise the resonance frequency; increasing any of these tends to lower the resonance frequency.)

High resonance frequency is fairly rare these days, but it does sometimes occur when a low-compliance moving-coil cartridge is used with a low-mass tonearm designed with the more common high-compliance cartridges in mind. It usually appears in the form of exaggerated bass response and poor tracking of strong bass passages. But it can be corrected simply by adding mass to the tonearm.

The more difficult (and, unfortunately, far more common) situation puts the resonance frequency too low. The most direct evidence of this is relative vertical motion between the tonearm headshell and the surface of an apparently flat record. Viewed from the side at eye level, the entire cartridge/tonearm assembly should remain stable, with no bobbing of the headshell and pickup body relative to the record and stylus. If you see it bouncing up and down on a flat disc, the resonance is badly placed and underdamped. Remedies include substituting a cartridge of lower mass or compliance or a tonearm of lower effective mass, or introducing damping.

You can get some idea of which way to jump by looking at HIGH FIDELITY's turntable and cartridge reports. For the former, we show vertical and lateral resonance with a Shure V-15 Type III cartridge, whose weight and compliance are typical of most models now on the market; for the latter, the resonance figures are obtained with an SME 3009



How to Spot Tonearm Resonance Problems

Most records have many tiny warps concentrated below 8 Hz. If the center frequency of the arm/cartridge resonance falls there, response to these warps will be exaggerated, causing increased distortion, "warp wow," impaired tracking, and possible overload of the tape deck or amplifier. To spot this problem, view the stylus from the side as it traces a reasonably flat record: if it bobs up and down relative to the cartridge body (see above), the resonance frequency is too low.

the groove. And any time there is mis-tracking, there will be irreversible record damage. (One of the morals of this is that it's better to set a cartridge near the top of the manufacturer's recommended tracking-force range than to skimp when you adjust the VTF.) Sadly, there is no standard method of specifying tracking ability, making comparisons difficult. HIGH FIDELITY's test reports show it at 300 Hz, in dB above RIAA reference standard level (higher numbers being better), and comment on any difficulties

(Continued on page 88)

SPECIAL BONUS
SUPPLEMENT

VIDEO TODAY

CONTENTS/JULY 1981

& TOMORROW

SPECIAL
REPORT

Your Television Set

The familiar "boob tube"—the mindless electronic conveyor of mediocrity—is about to undergo a revolutionary transformation. Soon your home video screen will display material from such sources as broadcast and cable TV, video tapes, video discs, color video cameras, satellite TV, and home computers with both picture and sound of extremely high quality. The metamorphosis is beginning: Stereo TV cablecasts have just started, and so-called "component TV" soon will be available. With this issue we begin a multi-part report on these historic changes and how they will affect your home video viewing (Page A6).



Also in This Issue —

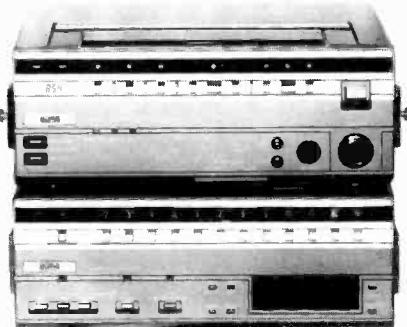
- In Focus ■ Video surprises from makers of home-movie equipment Page A2
- VideoFronts ■ Camera with a "zoom mike" ■ Cable-ready TV sets Page A4
- TubeFood ■ Viewer-selectable stereo video programming Page A10

Testing the Video Waters

We are just now witnessing the beginning of a movement that has been threatening to surface for some time: Manufacturers of home-movie equipment are gingerly testing the strange waters of home video. That some companies have acknowledged the existence of video as a possible alternative to movies is in itself encouraging. Why? Because the makers of high-quality super 8 gear often have shown considerable ingenuity in extracting the most from equipment of tiny dimensions.

Right now, the movie folks are gradually shifting gears, borrowing tried-and-true video components and adapting them to the home-movie market they know best. But it's a start that could eventually benefit the home videophile.

At a recent photo show in Miami Beach, Eumig displayed a portable VCR, a color video camera, and a front-loading AC-powered video recorder with Dolby B noise reduction. Of these, the camera justifies special attention. While it vaguely resembles a half-dozen other models, it does have an important extra: Eumig's PMA ultra-wide-angle-lens attachment for the built-in 12-72mm



Eumig's first: Portable VCR with tuner/adapter and versatile color video camera



Technicolor's VCR carrying case

f/1.4 zoom. The PMA lens halves the wide-angle end of the zoom to an effective 6mm, the widest, deepest focal length currently possible with video. The images I saw were quite impressive, with subjects in relatively good focus from a few feet away to infinity—all obtained with the marginal light present in the showroom.

The lens also has a macro mode; other camera features include a filter switch; manual or automatic iris control; a backlight control that opens the iris up about one stop to prevent a backlit subject from being underexposed; white balance; a built-in electronic viewfinder; power zoom buttons on the side and on the pistol grip; and jacks for earphones, microphone, and remote control.

The Eumig VR-1000P VHS portable recorder looks like a twin of JVC's HR-2200U. This relatively lightweight VCR has a reset memory device, pause/still mode, audio dub, rewind, fast-forward, and a shuttle search system for rapid reverse, forward, and play. Prominently displayed LEDs indicate tape run, battery condition, and moisture. A companion tuner/adapter, with a digital clock and channel lock system, provides seven-day preprogramming. The VR-1000P is a moderate 11-pound package to tote.

The more stolid-looking Eumig VR-2000 Dolby VCR, which does ev-

erything the portable can and then some, has more controls than the space shuttle. There is fine tuning, program search, automatic program repeat, cancel, and—I lost track. The built-in timer presets up to sixteen days of programming. Maximum recording time is 6 hours.

In a way, Eumig's Stateside venture into the home video field isn't surprising. This Austrian company has expanded throughout the years from movie into audio, and, yes, video equipment. It was producing small black-and-white video cameras for the European market long before the current U.S. boom.

Elmo Company, Ltd., which has built an impressive reputation exclusively with super 8 equipment, has chosen the disc route for its video debut. While Elmo maintains a firm commitment to its movie product lines, its array of video disc players at the Miami show drew the most notice. This may have been due, in part, to the general astonishment at Elmo's plunge into video.



Elmo unveils its CED video disc player

The VEC-200 player employs the CED system developed by RCA. Elmo believes it is the most reasonably priced approach and has the strongest backup of available feature films, concerts, and TV shows of any disc format. The machine has a built-in stereo adapter jack, remote control, and an indicator that registers playing time in minutes.

As with other CED players, this model provides up to 2 hours of playing time and has the ability to quickly scan programming in several modes. Forward and reverse operate at 180 times normal speed, visual search (forward and reverse) at 12 times normal speed, and "quick motion," advancing of picture and sound at 2½ times normal speed. Press the PICTURE SEARCH forward and reverse buttons simultaneously, and you get frame-by-frame search or freeze frame. PAUSE will stop picture and sound. The diamond-tip stylus provides 500 hours of playing time. Scheduled to be in stores by August, the VEC-200 will

(Continued on page A11)

Letters



The Satellite TV Controversy

No single topic has generated as much reader interest as Jack Valenti's February letter, in which he criticized VIDEO TODAY AND TOMORROW for printing information about the availability of satellite TV signals. We have devoted the entire "Letters" column of this issue to a single reply to Valenti's letter (republished here).

Two aspects of the question of receiving program material and storing it, be it obtained via a transmitted signal or on a video tape or even a film print, bear examination. First, consider the transmission of a broadcast signal and how the laws view such reception. First and foremost is the axiom that the airwaves belong to the citizenry. Every American citizen has the right to receive broadcast transmissions, period. The airwaves do not belong to businesses, conglomerates, and corporations. The only times the FCC has restricted the right to receive transmitted signals, such as in the case of certain police and other emergency transmissions, it has done so only to directly serve the public. When corporations begin using the public airwaves for private gain while demanding that the public be forbidden access to them, this is piracy.

One should also look at the realities of satellite reception. We are not talking about a large number of owners; most people who have the opportunity would much prefer to get their feature films simply and easily by subscribing to Home Box Office or some other pay-TV service rather than purchase and construct a satellite receiving station in their backyard. The citizens who do go to this considerable expense and bother are those whom the subscription companies find it unprofitable to serve, since it usually means bringing cables and equipment to sparsely populated areas. Thus, with Yankee ingenuity, these individuals have opted to do what is necessary to receive what they have

a right to receive. And even if there are a few people who would like to be pioneers in a new technology and actually like to keep that strange-looking dish on the back lawn, instead of a family swimming pool, it is their right by tradition and by law! To quote one receiver owner: "If you don't want me to pick up your television transmissions, keep your damn photos out of my backyard!"

The second aspect worth review is the original intent of the copyright law itself. Surprisingly, most people do not understand why it was instituted and what it was supposed to protect. Most think it protects the copyright owner from unauthorized use of material that he has created. This is true, but only in a round-about way. The primary purpose of the copyright law is to protect the public, not the artist or writer or composer—to ensure the public's free access to ideas and information. It was designed to do this by giving the creators of works limited protection by legal ownership, for a specified time only, thereby giving them profit from the sale or rental of these works and providing an incentive to continue such activity.

Should anyone have any doubt about this interpretation, the Central District Court of California reiterated this view forthrightly in its 1979 decision [Universal/MCA vs. Sony]:

"The Copyright Act gives copyright owners control of only some uses of their works. . . . [According to] the 1909 Act, copyright is not primarily for the benefit of the author, but primarily for the benefit of the public."

Text of Valenti's Original Letter

Astonishing and Evil

Among the more astonishing and evil—yes, evil—things I have encountered lately has been the comment in your November issue ("In Focus") on backyard satellite receiving antennas. It is evil because the magazine shamelessly advocates thievery—just plain piracy.

There can be no other interpretation, and certainly no excuse, when you recommend purchasing satellite receiving antennas to pick up pay TV for free. Just pick off the air, without compensation or authorization, programs protected by law. Is that your policy?

Our member companies negotiate to provide copyrighted movies and other material to pay TV. Entrepreneurs pay for these programs, and they expect, as our companies do, to be protected from pirates.

Jack Valenti, president
Motion Picture Association of
America, Inc.
Washington, D.C.

"The immediate effect of our copyright law is to secure a fair return for an author's creative labor. But the ultimate aim is, by this incentive, to stimulate artistic creativity for the general public good, . . . the general benefits derived by the public from the labor of authors."

If one listens to the companies and their spokesman, Mr. Valenti, one perceives an attitude that is contrary to the copyright law they invoke. Over the past three decades, most member companies of the Motion Picture Association of America routinely destroyed release prints of classic movies. They were prints in



excellent condition and included four-channel magnetic prints of stereophonically recorded films from the 1950s and '60s. This continues even today, despite the fact that there are film societies, archival libraries, and other nonprofit organizations that would be willing to store and care for them for posterity. But the film companies would rather destroy them than relinquish even the smallest amount of control over their "product."

Another major reason why perfectly good prints of a picture are destroyed is, put simply and plainly, money. It costs money to store film prints, and when they have not made enough money to support the storage costs, off to the shredder they go.

Thus many classic motion pictures are no longer available from the same companies who have been so concerned over the idea of people archiving their films or trying to receive their transmissions via satellite. Those 35mm magnetic prints that were destroyed included *My Fair Lady*, *Carousel*, *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers*, *Gigi*, *Bells Are Ringing*, *Ben Hur*, *Godspell*, *Dr. Zhivago*, and *Lawrence of Arabia*, to name just a few. This means that no person in the U.S. will ever have a chance to see them in their original, four-channel stereo versions. (Films now are being made

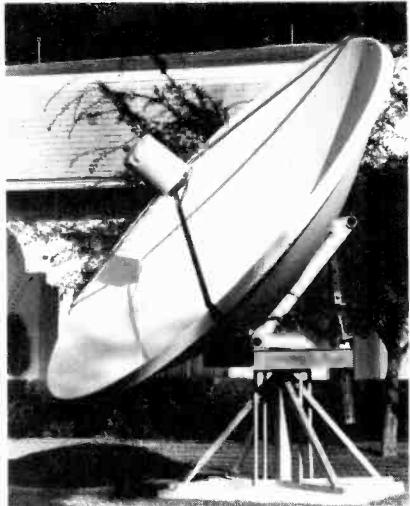
(Continued on page A10)

VideoFronts

Latest Video News and Products



Incorporating a quartz synthesizer tuner that provides access to 105 television channels, the CT-9051 from Panasonic is one of the new breed of cable-ready color receivers. The tuner eliminates the need for a separate cable-TV decoder. But, of course, scrambled pay-TV broadcasts still demand a decoder. The set has a 19-inch (diagonal) screen, a whiteness enhancer, an LED channel indicator, and a video sensor that adjusts the picture to room light. Price is \$570.



For the ultimate in television reception, you can have your own backyard satellite TV system from Channel One, Inc. The Model Channel One (\$9,950) comprises a 12-foot dish and all mounting hardware necessary for installation on a concrete pad. All connectors and the first 250 feet of coaxial cable are supplied. Other services, such as installation at the site, can be obtained at additional cost.

If you have several video sources feeding your television screen, the Superex VES-6 Video Entertainment Selector could be useful. It allows you to switch easily among VCR, cable / pay TV, antenna, and video games. The sophisticated system allows you, for example, to record on your VCR from one video input while playing back two different programs in separate rooms. User-codable graphics on pressure-sensitive labels are included. The VES-6 costs \$90.



A sophisticated portable color camera from JVC features a unique zoom microphone. Dubbed the Sound Zoom, the mike on the S-100U contains three pickup elements, two pointing forward and one to the rear. Pickup pattern choices are omnidirectional, superdirectional, and automatic zoom, keyed to the zoom function of the lens. When the lens is shooting at wide angle, the microphone pickup pattern is essentially omnidirectional; at full telephoto, the pattern is superdirectional.

The camera itself, including a 10:1 power zoom lens with "macro focusing," weighs less than 10



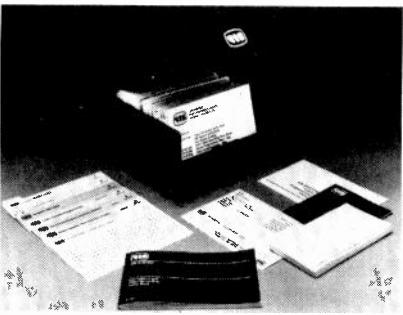
pounds. It incorporates a 1-inch Saticon tube with a color stripe filter providing 280 lines of resolution. There's also a 1½-inch black-and-white electronic viewfinder that indicates exposure, VCR start/stop, low battery, automatic white balance, and standby modes. Switches boost gain by 6 and 12 dB for low-light shooting. Among the numerous other features are a 5-hour memory capability for the white-balance circuit, a built-in daylight filter, an earphone jack for audio monitoring, and a built-in shoulder brace. Price of the S-100U, including AC adapter and carrying case, is \$3,500.

A problem shared by pay-television subscribers—off-the-air reception necessitating a decoder—is that it's impossible either to record on your programmable VCR automatically from that channel or to use remote control to change to or from that channel. The Channelizer from Energy Video (\$80), designed to be placed between the TV decoder and the VCR, converts the pay-TV signal to Channel 3 on a VCR or TV set that is connected to the system. Once a standard VHF channel has been assigned, it can be controlled either by the programmable function of the VCR or by remote control. The pay-TV decoder is left on all the time. With a separate video amplifier, Energy Audio says, the Channelizer can simultaneously distribute a pay-TV channel, along with regular TV channels, to any number of receivers or video tape recorders.



Building a video tape library?

The VIS-I video library organizer from Video Information Systems, Inc., consists of a series of forms, planning guides, and indexing materials for cataloging your video tape collection by subject, program title, and artist. Besides the index for the contents of each cassette, alphanumeric labels are provided for cross-referencing tapes within the system. A seventy-five page instruction booklet gives you information on video recording and maintenance techniques. The system also is available as the VIS-II, which



does not contain the options for subject and artist cross-referencing. With either model, you can choose from five components of varying cataloging capacities, from 10 to 100 cassettes (40 to 400 programs, respectively). Prices for the VIS-I range from \$40 to \$130, and for the VIS-II, from \$20 to \$60.



A single-piece, drawer-type color projection-television system from RCA, the PFR-100R (\$3,200), has a 50-inch diagonal screen of aluminum over fiber glass, with brightness rated at 120 foot-lamberts. It has built-in 5-inch woofers and 2-inch tweeters and includes video and audio input terminals and two external speaker terminals. A back-panel switch lets you choose between off-the-air broadcasts and video inputs, such as a VCR, video camera, home computer, or video game. Also provided is a full-function remote control for picture on/off, volume, mute, and channel change.

Want More Information?

If you'd like further information about any of the equipment or companies mentioned in the pages of VIDEO TODAY, write us at 825 7th Ave., New York, N.Y. 10019.

An adapter that allows you to reproduce mono television sound through your home stereo system is available from Total Video Supply Company. The SA-100 TV-to-Stereo-Adapter (\$25) plugs into your television earphone jack at one end and the auxiliary inputs of your stereo system on the other. A separate volume switch is provided.



Touching all the bases with its 1982 lineup, General Electric has a new video camera, three new VHS video cassette recorders, and many additions to and refinements of its television receiver line. Eleven TV models incorporate Superband tuning, which permits direct connection to several cable systems for reception of as many as thirty-five channels of nonscrambled programming without an external converter box. Both the 25-inch Model 24EM-2870P and the Widescreen 400 projection-TV set have stereo amplifiers and speakers, plus jacks and switching for direct connection to VCRs or video disc players.

GE will introduce a VHD video disc player early in 1982. Meanwhile, it has two new tabletop VCRs and a portable. The top-of-the-line Model 1VCR-2014W is a four-head unit capable of 2-, 4-, or 6-hour recording and playback, including a variety of special effects in the 2- and 6-hour modes. It comes equipped with a fourteen-channel electronic tuner, an eight-program fourteen-day timer, and a twelve-function wireless remote-control device. The 1VCR-2002X is a 2-hour/6-hour budget VCR with a twelve-channel electronic tuner and a single-program 24-hour timer. The portable Model



A storage unit that accommodates a VCR and up to thirty-two VHS or Beta tapes is available from Pyramid Manufacturing, Inc. The Elite-32 features a hinged dust cover to protect the VCR and a pullout drawer for the tapes. The storage cabinet, measuring 21½ by 13 by 16½ inches, costs \$129.

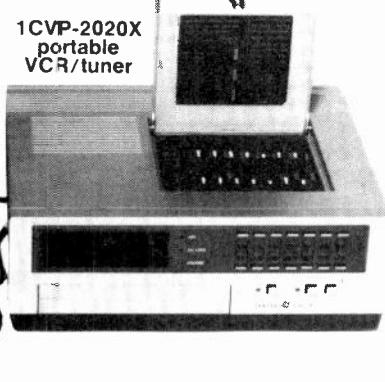
1CVP-2020X weighs 13 pounds with its built-in battery pack. It operates at all three speeds and has a wired four-function remote control for video scan, pause, freeze frame, and frame advance. The companion fourteen-channel electronic tuner/timer can be programmed for as many as eight settings over a two-week period.

Complementing the portable VCR is the company's first color video camera, the 1CVC-2030E, with an f/1.4 power-zoom macro lens and a monochrome electronic viewfinder that can be mounted on either side of the camera. Features include a built-in extendable boom microphone, automatic iris control, a fade-in/fade-out switch, and automatic white balance.

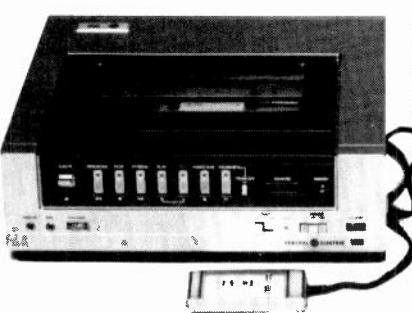
Prices have not been announced.



1CVC-2030E
color video
camera



1CVP-2020X
portable
VCR/tuner



The Best Is Yet to Come

Component television promises to increase your home video viewing pleasure in a single quantum leap.

by Myron Berger

Today we have a richer and more varied menu of video programming than ever before, but these enticing treats are cooked in a kitchen staffed by an incompetent chef. No matter how good the signal you feed into your TV set, the picture quality will be no better than the limited capabilities of that set.

Have you ever wondered why most magazine ads for television receivers bear the disclaimer "simulated picture," while most TV commercials proclaim an "actual closed-circuit picture"? For one thing, a magazine's photographic quality is generally so fine that its reproduction of an actual image from the advertiser's set would appear as of marginal quality. And if you think the closed-circuit picture on a TV commercial is less than perfect, how can you know that it isn't *your* set that is at fault?

One measurement of picture definition is the number of resolution lines. (See "What Makes Your TV

Tick.") The more lines, the clearer the image. They are a function of picture-tube design and the bandwidth of the system, and the number of lines may vary from set to set and from one signal source to another. About 350 lines of resolution is considered the best that a home television receiver can reproduce, but most sets average less. Typical resolution is about 300 lines.

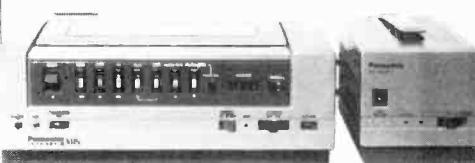
Currently, the best home signal is that picked up from a satellite. Of course, since earth satellite receiving stations generally cost at least \$5,000 and require space enough to mount the parabolic dish antenna, few consumers have them. Under the best possible conditions, these signals can yield more than 400 lines of resolution.

Myron Berger is a free-lance writer who specializes in the video and audio fields.

The optical video disc probably ranks second in terms of signal quality. An engineer for U.S. Pioneer, one of the companies distributing the LaserVision player, says it is possible to obtain 350 lines of resolution, which is comparable to the best broadcast or cable-TV signal you can receive.

At the bottom of this list is the video cassette recorder, with which a resolution of 250 lines in color is considered good. Most VCRs, however, can come closer to 300 in a black-and-white image.

Again, since most television sets are restricted to 300 or 350 lines, any signal that contains more than that will be reduced to that limit. The relationship between signal and receiver is somewhat like that between a pitcher and a glass; no matter how much water is in the pitcher, you can pour into the glass only as much as it will hold—any excess will spill over and be wasted.

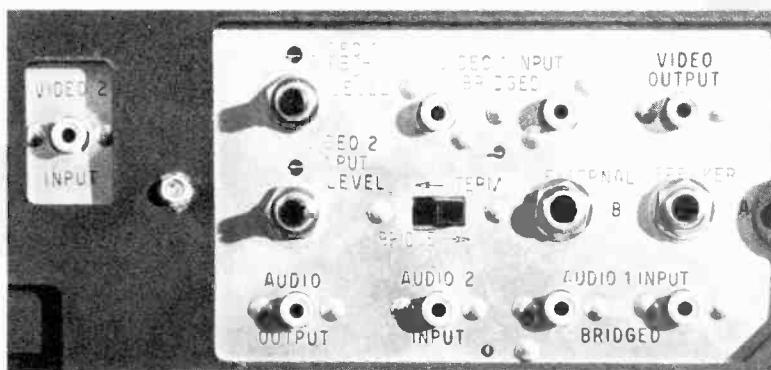


Video Cassette Recorder

Lines of resolution are perhaps the most critical factor in judging an image's definition, but a no less important consideration is signal-to-noise ratio, the mix of signal and nonsignal (noise) information displayed on the screen. Virtually any imperfection or weakness in circuit, component design, or manufacture will create noise. Video noise is seen on the screen as ghost images, snow, and momentary specks of inappropriately colored particles (chroma noise). A picture with a low S/N ratio (high noise content) is dis-



Tomorrow's television set will be the focal point of your home media room, providing high-quality pictures from a multitude of video sources, and linked to a quality external audio system, as depicted here.



pleasing to view.

Radio-frequency (RF) modulation, which is employed by most add-on recordings, games, and similar TV devices today, also contributes to system noise. Typically,



Home Computer Terminal

the signal from a video cassette or disc is converted from video to RF so that it can be processed by your TV set much as a broadcast signal is. This is why you must tune to an unused frequency (usually Channel 3 or 4) when using one of these devices. Once the RF signal travels through the TV tuner, it is demodulated back to a video signal. To return to our analogy, this is something like pouring water from one glass to another, then pouring it back into the first; chances are good that some water will be lost during all this switching.

These video devices use this RF method because there is no way for current TV receivers to bypass the tuner and throw the signal right onto the screen. But a video monitor has no tuner; it can receive only a direct



Cable and Pay-TV Decoder

video line feed or closed-circuit signal—and can take the signal straight from the source and bypass the RF problem. Since monitors are commonly used only in television studios and for other professional applications, they are designed and constructed according to higher standards, have better control over the picture, and produce images of better quality.

Monitors also offer resolution of more than 400 lines, higher than any consumer television receiver in the U.S. And they are priced accord-

ingly. For home use, you can get some of the benefits of a monitor, without the hassle and expense, by choosing a monitor/receiver. These units, made by virtually every television receiver and monitor manufacturer, are usually conventional TV sets with the addition of a video line input and circuit. RCA sells the VFM-575, a 19-inch set with two switched inputs, through its consumer division for about \$700.

Suppose you decide to go the true monitor route. With no tuner section, how would you receive broad-

Satellite
Television
Antenna



casts? Simple: Use the tuner on your VCR. You'll have to patch the VCR's video output into the monitor's video input and the VCR's audio output into your stereo system or some other audio device, as neither the VCR nor the monitor has an audio amplifier or speakers. What you'll end up with is, essentially, a component television system with picture and sound superior to any consumer receiver.

Component television—which comprises a separate tuner and a monitor with room for lots of direct video inputs—promises to revolutionize home TV quality in the '80s. Sony promises an introduction sometime this year of its component system, Profeel. On sale currently in Japan, the Profeel "monitors" are



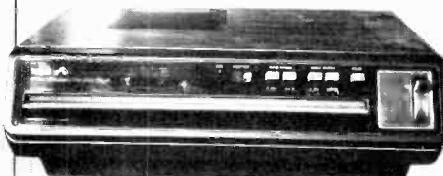
Color Video Camera



available with either 16-, 20-, or 27-inch screens. And while they have a built-in stereo amplifier and separate left and right speakers, the audio signal can easily be diverted to your main audio amplifier and speakers.

At least one U.S. company, New England-based NAD, is also thinking about component TV. "We plan to treat video as a high fidelity medium," says Paul DiComo, a company official. Still in the planning stages, NAD's system will include a monitor—probably a 19-incher—a separate tuner with a small stereo amplifier and, perhaps, small speakers. The tuner, claims DiComo, can achieve better signal-to-noise ratio, sensitivity (a measure of performance in relation to required signal strength), and capture ratio (ability to "lock onto" the stronger of two signals and to suppress the weaker) than conventional units. The monitor will offer image resolution of at least 500 lines.

CBS is looking to other technology to improve video picture quality. The network backed up its belief that we can have a picture in our homes at least equal to that in the movie theaters with a recent



Video Disc Player

demonstration for government and industry officials in Washington. Its system, developed by NHK—the Japanese national broadcasting network—was shown as both a projection system and a direct-view set. Rather than using the 525-line NTSC format, the system uses 1,125 lines. The horizontal-to-vertical proportion (the aspect ratio) of the picture tube was expanded from the current 4:3 to 5:3, which the Japanese say is closer to the aspect ratio of the hu-

(Continued on page A9)

What Makes Your TV Set Tick

A complete guide to how the heart of your home video system works.

by Edward J. Foster

The technical quality of our color television is often criticized as being inferior. We use the standards set by the NTSC (National Television System Committee—often jokingly referred to as Never Twice the Same Color), which was established in 1954, when little of the rest of the world had even black-and-white TV. It's true that systems developed subsequently, such as the European Pal and Secam techniques, offer finer resolution and more trouble-free color than ours does. But, in certain respects, particularly "flicker," the NTSC system is superior.

The engineers who established the early standards were not as shortsighted as it might seem at first. Recognizing the merits of the NTSC system requires some understanding of how a TV picture miraculously appears "in living color" on your screen. To begin with, we'll look at what goes on in your set, how engineers capitalized on the peculiarities of human vision, and how decisions made in monochrome days affect what we see in color now.

When we go to the movies, what we see is really a succession of still pictures flashed on the screen so rapidly that we do not perceive each one individually, but rather see them as a continuum of motion. This is partly because the human eye retains each image for a brief period—as it were, blending it with the preceding and subsequent images. Motion is perceived by the average person as continuous provided that he

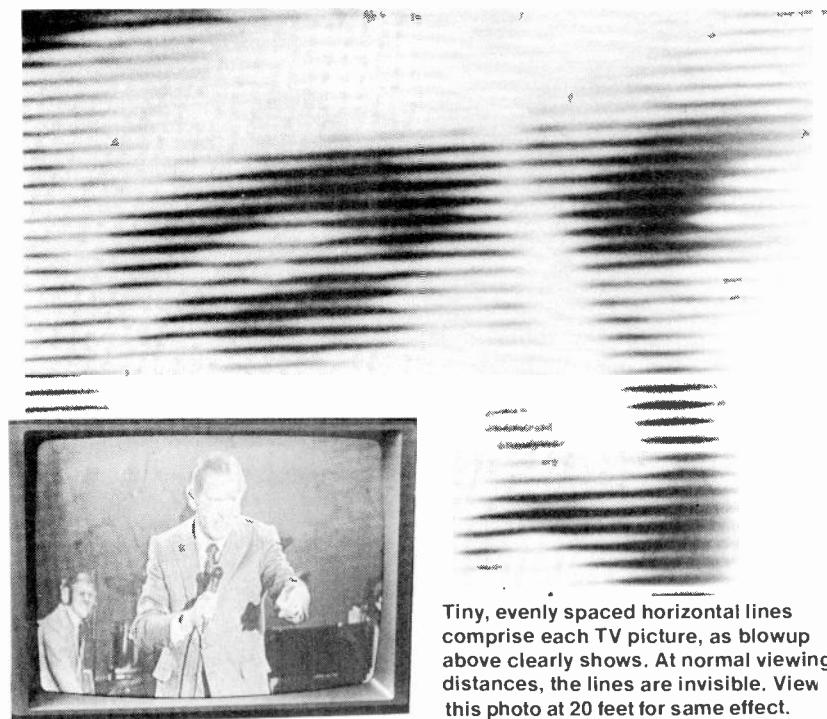
sees at least 16 pictures per second. Indeed, early motion pictures used that frame rate; later professionally filmed movies used 24 frames per second.

Though such frame rates are sufficient to preserve *continuity* of motion, a much higher rate is required to push flicker below the threshold of visibility. Movies achieve this by flashing each frame twice in succession, through use of a double-bladed shutter, doubling the rate to 48 flashes per second even though only 24 individual frames are on one

second of film. (Three-bladed shutters in super 8 projectors produce an effective 54-fps rate.) Interestingly, we fail to perceive flicker when shown the same frame twice in succession, whereas we would notice the blink if the frame had been displayed once during the same time period.

We also seem to build up a tolerance for flicker. Once you become accustomed to seeing pictures flash at a certain rate, you tend to ignore the flicker, but if the rate slows down, you experience eyestrain. (This may explain why Europeans are satisfied with their TV rate of 25 frames per second, while visiting Americans, who are used to 30 frames per second, find the flicker disconcerting.)

Flicker perceptibility also depends on image brightness and upon the area of the highlights. The brighter the image and / or the larger the area of brightness, the more noticeable flicker becomes. Without an absolute reference, the eye is quite tolerant of color inaccuracy. However, we do seem to retain a good mental image of flesh tone colors, and we are most intolerant when they are not real. Also, we are quite intolerant of a picture that is out of focus. Lastly, the contrast ratio—the difference in brightness between light and dark areas—that the eye encompasses is much greater than



Tiny, evenly spaced horizontal lines comprise each TV picture, as blowup above clearly shows. At normal viewing distances, the lines are invisible. View this photo at 20 feet for same effect.

that possible with current TV technology.

A TV set makes use of our visual acumen—or lack thereof, really—to produce a watchable picture. Unlike a motion-picture frame, which is flashed on the screen all at once, a TV picture is created by an electron beam that scans the screen. Inside the picture tube (let's stay with black and white for now) is a heater and a cathode. When the heater raises the cathode temperature so that the thermal energy is higher than the attractive forces holding the electrons to the metallic cathode, electrons boil off. Electrons are attracted by positively charged surfaces and repelled by other negatively charged ones. Once free of the cathode and in the airless vacuum within the tube, they are focused (either electrically or magnetically) into a tiny stream and accelerated (electrically) to a high velocity toward the front surface of the tube, which is coated internally with a phosphorescent material. When the beam hits the phosphor, light is emitted, the color depending upon the phosphor used.

To vary the brightness of this tiny spot of light, elements called control grids are placed in the tube near the cathode. Changing the voltage on the grid controls the strength of the electron beam.

To create a "raster" or picture, the electron beam must scan the tube hundreds of times. After the electrons leave the "electron gun"—the heater / cathode / grid / focusing structure—they are deflected from their otherwise straight path by a magnetic field generated by sets of coils (called the "yoke") that surround the neck of the tube at the point where it flares out. The beam sweeps across the screen, creating a horizontal line of light. When it reaches the right edge (as seen from the rear of the tube), it quickly snaps back to the left to trace a new line. In the original black-and-white system, the beam scanned 15,750 lines each second, certainly much faster than the eye can follow. Simultaneously with the left-to-right sweep, the beam moves from the top of the screen toward the bottom, but at a much slower rate. Thus, the lines are angled slightly downward, and there is very little vertical space between them. Original U.S. standards called for the beam to traverse

(continued on page A11)

THE BEST IS YET TO COME (continued)

man eye.

Dwight Morse, a spokesman for the CBS engineering and development division, claims that "high-definition television is a certainty. The elements already exist—it's just a matter of trying to put them together."

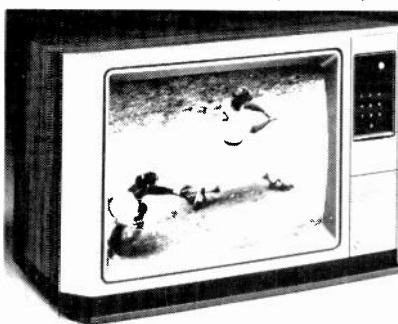
If you have no complaints about your current television picture, it's probably because you've never seen an image of truly high quality.

Back in the late 1940s and early 1950s, when television first appeared, people were amazed that the picture was as good as it was. These early systems are now judged to be primitive by contemporary standards, of course. And when you look at your old 1981 set sometime in the fall of 1987, you'll probably shake your head and wonder how you could have tolerated the picture it projects.

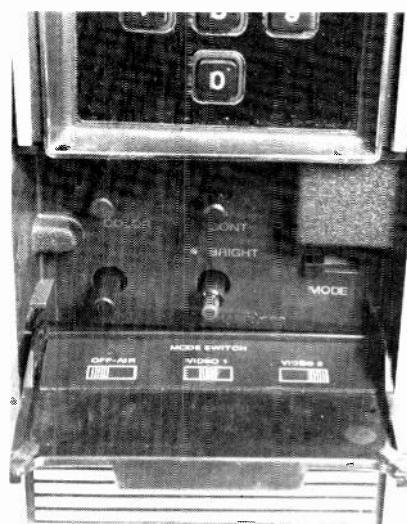
The New Generation of TV Sets



Component television systems, such as Sony's Profeel (above), differ from conventional sets in that they take a modular approach to maximize video and audio quality. The Profeel system consists of a video "monitor" with two built-in amplifiers, separate speakers, and a component-quality tuner.



Midway between today's TV sets and component types are TV receiver/monitors, such as RCA's VFM-575 (shown). These sets contain tuners but also allow for a variety of external video inputs, controlled in RCA's case by a front-panel mode switch.



TubeFood

News and reviews of new (and sometimes original) video tape and video disc programs.

by Peter Dobbin

Stereo Sound Comes to Cable Television

While stereo television—telecasting with a stereo soundtrack—is still languishing in the board rooms of the major networks, cable-TV systems are rushing in to provide the service. The most intriguing approach is offered by Warner-Amex Cable Communications to its Qube interactive cable subscribers in Columbus, Ohio. The Qube system links the viewer to a central computer via a hand-held terminal selector box. The terminal's five response buttons, which enable the viewer to "talk back" to the TV set, have been used mainly to gauge viewer reaction to people and issues. Now, however, they permit viewers to program the music shows they want to hear—and see.

Called *Sight on Sound*, the 90-minute weekly program is simulcast in stereo on a cable-carried FM channel for reception on an FM receiver. As the show begins, a "menu" of names of several Top 40 rock performers and bands flashes on the screen. The viewer signals his selections via one of the numbered response buttons. The central computer then tabulates the scores, and the group receiving the highest percentage of preference is aired. Visuals that accompany the soundtrack vary from live concert footage to promotional tapes to locally produced animation. Warner says that reaction to its program has been very encouraging and that it may offer it to Qube's other outlet in Cincinnati or to the new systems being constructed in Pittsburgh, Dallas, Houston, and St. Louis.

As some critics have pointed out, there's an Orwellian side to Qube: The computer can store individual preferences and reactions, allowing the system to paint a revealing portrait of a subscriber. With *Sight on Sound*, this capability is used for be-

nign ends: From time to time, an announcer asks a rock trivia question, and the viewer with the correct answer receives a prize.

Another Warner subsidiary, Warner-Amex Satellite Entertainment Company (WASEC), is scheduled to bring stereo TV to a much wider audience starting August 1, but without the interactive feature. WASEC is a satellite distribution network that beams programs to local cable companies that, in turn, offer them to their subscribers. The new 24-hour service is called, appropriately enough, Music Television (MTV) and will be geared to pop music lovers. Though the company hesitates to use the word "simul-



Viewer selects stereo programming.

cast," that's exactly how the subscriber will receive the stereo audio portion of the program—via a second cable hookup to a stereo FM receiver. Any reluctance to equate MTV with previous simulcast programs undoubtedly centers on the claimed quality of the stereo FM signal. MTV is said to use only master tapes, from which high-quality 15-ips four-track Dolby A dubs are made. And the local cable operator uses equipment approved by WASEC to transmit the multiplex signal. The result is an exceptionally good signal-to-noise ratio of 70 dB at the FM receiver's antenna input. At presstime, WASEC expected to have 2 million subscribers by August.

The visuals will probably be similar to Qube's. MTV, like its Qube cousin, will carry commercial advertising.

LETTERS (continued)

with two discrete optical tracks that, despite the hype, do not have the transparency or overall depth of the four-channel magnetic sound recording.)

And have you ever wondered why you don't see Bugs Bunny cartoons in theaters anymore? Also considered too costly to warehouse, all 35mm prints of these cartoons, along with *Merry Melodies* and those of the Roadrunner, Tweetie Pie, and Sylvester, were ordered destroyed about four years ago.

Oh, sure, the film companies will tell you that they have the negatives in a vault somewhere. But if I, as a theater owner, wished to run a Great Musicals retrospective, I would be laughed under the table if I suggested that Warner Bros., for example, get out the negatives of *My Fair Lady* and strike a new print for my engagement. The cost would be prohibitive.

What about all those film pirates that the Mr. Valenti would have us draw and quarter? They have prints of all these old films, right? Right. But I can't legitimately book a print of *My Fair Lady* from the basement of Mr. Film Collector. I must book it from Warner's. Besides which, no film collector is going to come forth to declare that he has "pirated" prints—at least, not while Jack Valenti is running loose.

So, if American film is to be available to future generations, it most likely will be in spite of the film companies. And until we hear some convincing words from the industry's spokesmen that they are doing something about their responsibility toward the films they produce, they should be a bit more reserved about painting film lovers as pirates.

Frank Angel
Brooklyn, N.Y.

Mr. Angel is the coordinator of motion picture control at Brooklyn Center for the Performing Arts and a member of the Society of Motion Picture and Television Engineers (SMPTE).

VIDEO TODAY AND TOMORROW welcomes correspondence from its readers. Letters accepted for publication are subject to condensation and editing. Address letters to The Editor, VIDEO TODAY, 825 7th Ave., New York, N.Y. 10019.

WHAT MAKES YOUR TV SET TICK (continued)

from top to bottom in 1/60 second. (That timing was chosen to synchronize with the 60-Hz power-line frequency and thus avoid "hum bars.")

Dividing 15,750 by 60, we find that the beam traces 262.5 lines across the screen by the time it reaches the bottom. However, the separations between the scan lines would appear as dark stripes if, during the next 1/60 second, the beam did not return to the top and "paint in the blanks." Each pair of complete "fields" of 262.5 lines constitutes one complete "frame" of 525 lines. There are 60 fields per second and 30 frames per second—sufficiently fast so that we perceive continuity of motion and little flicker.

In Europe, where the power-line frequency is 50 Hz, there are 50 fields—25 frames—per second, and some U.S. travelers report that they can see some flicker. However, the European systems operate with 625 lines per frame, so the vertical resolution is about 20% better than in the American NTSC system. Is this important? That depends upon how close you sit to the screen and the screen size.

Physiological testing has shown that the average person cannot visually separate two lines unless the spacing between them exceeds a certain amount which depends on the distance from the person to the lines. In effect, the line structure should not be apparent to him, provided that the viewing distance is at least four times the picture height and, of course, assuming that the two fields interlace perfectly so that the screen is painted with 525 equally spaced lines. A 19-inch TV screen has a picture height of 12 inches, so the viewer should be happy if he sits at least 4 feet away. For a typical large-screen projection TV set, he would have to be about 16

feet away to not see the lines.

The more "lines" you want horizontally, the higher the frequency required to transmit and receive them accurately. Although a U.S. TV channel is 6 MHz wide, the nominal video bandwidth is only 4.2 MHz. (The remainder is needed for the sound subcarrier and to provide guard bands between channels.) Theoretically then, the maximum number of black/white pairs (horizontal resolution) that can be transmitted is approximately 267 (4.2 MHz divided by 15,750 Hz). (European video bandwidth of 5 to 6 MHz affords better horizontal—as well as vertical—resolution.)

Obviously, the electron beam in the picture tube must be precisely synchronized to the signal transmitted by the station if the dot pattern it creates when modulated is to form a recognizable image. The synchronization is accomplished by pulses interspersed with the video signal. At the end of each horizontal line, a horizontal-sync pulse is transmitted. This pulse, transmitted at a level "blacker than black," turns off the electron beam as it rapidly snaps from right to left (so you don't see the retrace) and synchronizes the horizontal oscillator in the set so that it is locked to the information being transmitted and starts its scan at precisely the right time. At the end of each field, a series of pulses is sent to synchronize the start of the vertical sweep. Since the vertical-sync signal is many scan lines long, you don't get the full 525 lines on the screen; it's more like 500. (The vertical-sync signal can be seen as the black bar that "rolls" through the picture if you misadjust the vertical-hold control.)

Next month we'll take a close look at color television.

IN FOCUS (continued)

sell for less than \$500.

Rumblings from Japan have it that both Elmo and Chinon will also start marketing VCRs and cameras in that country. The Chinon strategy is to get a handle on what are said to be the most portable VCRs available: those made by Funai Electric. Judging from the description we received, this quarter-inch tape recorder sounds much like the one being distributed in the U.S. by Technicolor and recently shown in Japan by Canon. It weighs about 7 pounds; recording time is 30 minutes. Suggested list price in U.S. dollars is about \$950. A portable color camera with a 13.5-81mm f/1.8 lens will be offered at the same price.

The Japanese received a taste of Elmo's plans when the EVK-181 color video camera was on view at a Tokyo camera show. Managing director Haruo Teshi says that, although the company is uncertain about its choice of VCR format, the camera should go on the market in Japan this fall. As it has done in the U.S., Elmo will sell its video products not only through audio-visual stores, but through photographic-equipment dealerships.

The EVK-181 features an 18-52mm f/1.8 macro zoom, a split-image single-lens-reflex finder with exposure warnings, a color-temperature switch for daylight and tungsten, automatic white balancing, and a switch for backlight compensation and sensitivity. Incidentally, Elmo is not simply slapping its label on an existing video camera, as so often happens. Parts are being supplied by a Japanese electronics manufacturer, but according to *The Camera Times* of Tokyo, the design and production of this model are Elmo's all the way.

—Tony Galluzzo

COMING IN AUGUST'S

VIDEO TODAY & TOMORROW

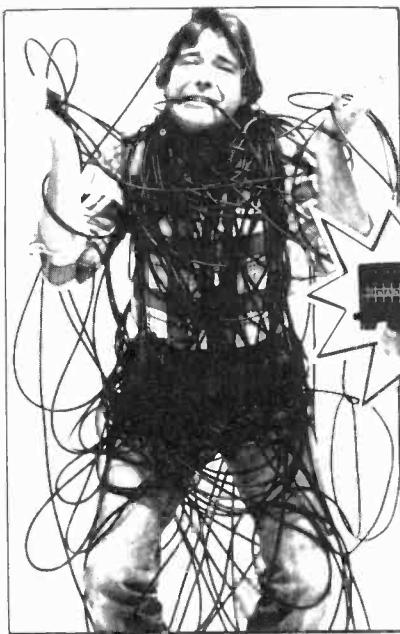
■ 1982 Video Equipment Preview

■ When Will Stereo TV Broadcasts Begin?

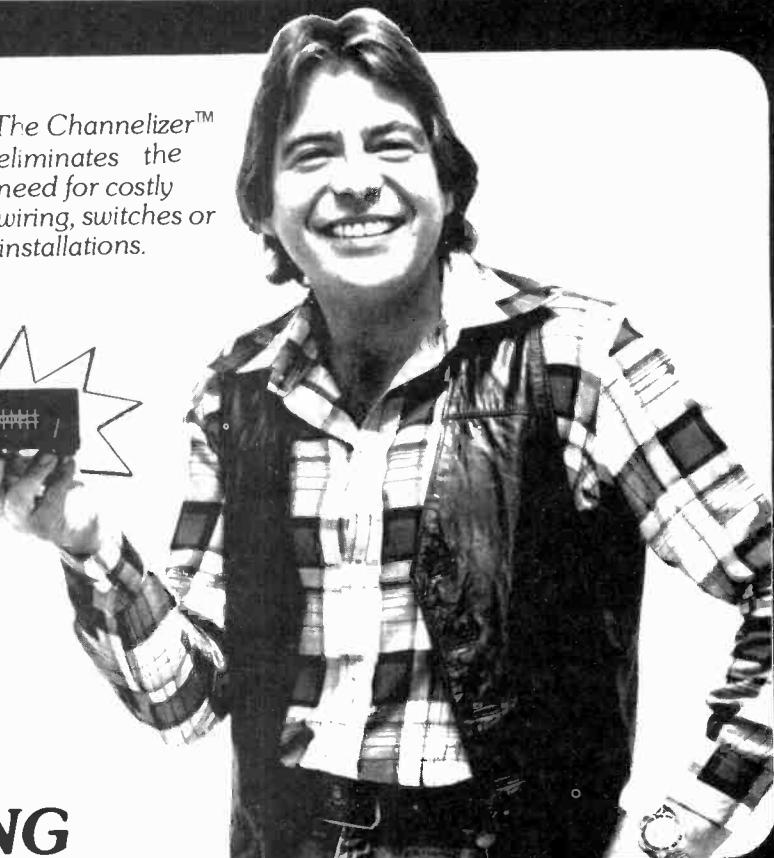
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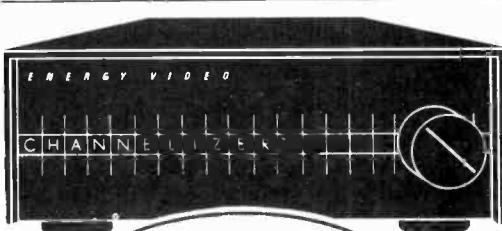
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Samuel Barber: The Legacy

A comprehensive critique of this noted American composer's vocal, choral, chamber and solo, and stage works.
by Allan Kozinn

This is the second and final installment of an interview conducted by the author—the last prior to Samuel Barber's death—and a detailed discography of his music. A complete list of titles appears near the end of each section.

Vocal Works

NED ROREM HAS WRITTEN that Samuel Barber's early songs lack profile and a personal signature, that they "could have been written by anybody." For those who want to test that harsh judgment, there are but two collections available—by baritone Dale Moore (Cambridge CRS 2715) and soprano Joan Patenaude (Musical Heritage MHS 3770), each including a few selections the other omits—and a stray "Sure on This Shining Night," Op. 13, No. 3 (1938), nicely sung by Bethany Beardslee (New World NW 243). For the most part, the Moore and Patenaude recordings support Rorem: The early songs are pleasant and skillfully written yet often bland. An exception is the dramatic and intense set of Three Songs, Op. 10 (1936), from James Joyce's *Chamber Music*, best served by Patenaude. Barber returned to Joyce several times over the years: Patenaude includes the tangolike setting of "Solitary Hotel" (text from *Ulysses*) from *Despite and Still*, Op. 41 (1968–69); and the strange, colorful *Nuvolella*, Op. 25 (1947), to a prose text from *Finnegans Wake*, has been recorded by Eleanor Steber (Desto DS 6411/2).

Another early work that cannot be said to lack character is *Dover Beach*, Op. 3 (1931). "I recorded *Dover Beach*," Barber recalled, "because there was someone at Victor who was interested and thought I had a good voice. Maybe they thought they were signing a potential John McCormack; well, they didn't get one. The difficulty with *Dover Beach* is

that nobody is boss—not the singer, not the string quartet. It's chamber music. And since we recorded it in the days of 78s, we had to go back to the beginning if somebody made a mistake. Not being a trained singer, I ran out of voice after the third time. When we finally got a good performance, the second violinist hit his music stand with his bow. So you hear this little 'ting,' like a triangle. But I wasn't about to sing the piece again, so that 'clink' is still on the record. Maybe it helps."

There is a sonically more up-to-date version by Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau and the Juilliard Quartet (CBS Special Products AKS 7131); but who can resist Barber's 1935 original, with the Curtis Quartet, available in an excellent LP transfer, "ting" and all (New World NW 229)? That disc also includes Barber's only

[In the lists that follow, performing groups are indicated with appropriate combinations of P (Philharmonic), S (Symphony), C (Chamber), O (Orchestra), and Ch (Chorus). Where a set includes more than one disc, the number is given parenthetically following the record number.]

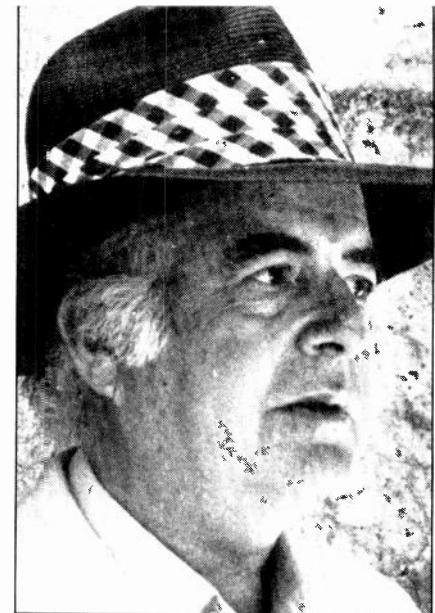
Vocal Works

CAMBRIDGE CRS 2715—Three Songs, Op. 2
No. 1, "The Daisies"; No. 2, "With Rue
My Heart Is Laden." Three Songs, Op.
10. Four Songs, Op. 13: No. 3, "Sure on
This Shining Night"; No. 4, "Nocturne."
"Monks and Raisins," Op. 18, No. 2.
Moore, Tomfohrde. (Also works by
other American composers.)

MUSICAL HERITAGE MHS 3770—"With Rue
My Heart Is Laden," Op. 2, No. 2. Three
Songs, Op. 10. Four Songs, Op. 13. *De-*
spite and Still, Op. 41: No. 4, "Solitary
Hotel." Patenaude, Eliasen. (Also
BERG: Seven Early Songs.)

NEW WORLD NW 243—"Sure on This Shining
Night," Op. 13, No. 3. Beardslee. Helps.
(Also works by other American compos-
ers, with other performers.)

DESTO DS 6411/2 (2)—*Nuvolella*, Op. 25. Ste-



Samuel Barber at Spoleto, Italy, 1975

non-English settings (not counting Joyce), the elegant *Mélodies passagères*, Op. 27 (1950–51) on texts by Rilke. Pierre Bernac and Francis Poulenc recorded this moving performance for Columbia in 1952, but it was unaccountably never released.

Knoxville: Summer of 1915, Op. 24 (1947), is a tender, nostalgic setting of a prose passage by James Agee that Barber encountered in the *Partisan Reader* and that later became the prologue of Agee's novel, *A Death in the Family*. Whereas in his other music of this period, Barber was experimenting with dissonance and rhythm, *Knoxville* is in his simpler, tonal/melodic style, and it includes some unabashed picture painting—for instance, the gentle rocking motif suggested by the first line of the text. David Measham's version (Unicorn UNS 256)

ber, Biltcliffe. (Also works by other American composers, with other performers.)

CBS SPECIAL PRODUCTS AKS 7131—*Dover Beach*, Op. 3. Fischer-Dieskau, Juilliard String Qt. (Also SCHOECK: *Nocturno*, Op. 47.)

NEW WORLD NW 229—*Dover Beach*, Op. 3. Barber, Curtis String Qt. *Mélodies passagères*, Op. 27. Bernac, Poulenc. (Also works by Rorem, with other performers.)

UNICORN UNS 256—*Knoxville: Summer of 1915*, Op. 24 (with McGurk); *Music for a Scene from Shelley*, Op. 7; Violin Concerto, Op. 14 (with Thomas). West Australian SO, Measham.

RCA LSC 3062—*Knoxville: Summer of 1915*, Op. 24; *Antony and Cleopatra*, Op. 40: Two Scenes. Price; New Philharmonia O. Schippers.

ONYSSFY 32 16 0230—*Knoxville: Summer of 1915*, Op. 24. Steber; Dumbarton Oaks CO, Strickland. *Hermit Songs*, Op. 29. Price, Barber.

CBS MS 6512—*Andromache's Farewell*, Op. 39 (with Arroyo, Schippers). New York P. (Also SCHUMAN: Symphony No. 8, with Bernstein.)



Barber with Leontyne Price at premiere of *Antony and Cleopatra*. September 16, 1966

is well played and acceptably sung, although Molly McGurk's soprano is somewhat thin. The two real contenders are Leontyne Price, with Thomas Schippers and the New Philharmonia (RCA LSC 3062), and Steber, who commissioned it, with William Strickland and the Dumbarton Oaks Chamber Orchestra (Odyssey 32 16 0230). Price gives a lazily atmospheric performance; Steber's is a bit brisker and clearer and, at low cost, offers a better coupling. Price's coupling is a pair of scenes from *Antony and Cleopatra*, otherwise unavailable, but Steber's *Knoxville* is coupled with a splendid Price/Barber performance of the *Hermit Songs*, Op. 29 (1952-53). These ten settings of texts—some sacred, some profane—by anonymous Irish monks of the eighth through thirteenth centuries, are a delight.

Andromache's Farewell, Op. 39 (1962), was commissioned by the New York Philharmonic for its opening season at Lincoln Center. A long way from *Knoxville*, this is a powerful, emotionally charged monodrama, with an orchestral score as electrifying as that of the piano concerto, composed the same year. The magnificent recording of the work, by Martina Arroyo, Schippers, and the New York Philharmonic (CBS MS 6512) is, for no good reason, out of print. Besides *Andromache*, Barber's unrecorded or

unavailable vocal works include "Bessie Bobtail," Op. 2, No. 3 (1934); "The Queen's Face on a Summery Coin," Op. 18, No. 1; four of the five *Despite and Still* songs; and the Three Songs, Op. 45 (1974).

Choral Works

When the outbreak of World War II made it impossible for Barber to continue traveling and composing in Europe, he returned to the Curtis Institute for his only teaching stint (1939-42). There he organized a small chorus and composed *A Stopwatch and an Ordnance Map*, Op. 15, and *Reincarnations*, Op. 16 (both 1940), for it. *Stopwatch* is an intriguing setting of a Stephen Spender poem about a fallen soldier in the Spanish civil war, scored for male chorus with percussion and optional brass accompaniment. Vladimir Golschmann, leading the Robert de Cormier Chorale (Vanguard VSD 2083), includes the brass; Gregg Smith (Vox SVBX 5353) does not and turns in the smoother, better-phrased performance. *Reincarnations*, a more ambitious and attractive work, contains settings of three poems by James Stephens for mixed voices, a cappella. There are two very good recordings, by the C. W. Post Chamber Singers

composers.)

GOLDEN CREST CCS 8050—*Reincarnations*, Op. 16. C. W. Post C Singers. Dashnow. (Also works by other American composers.)

ORION ORS 75205—*Reincarnations*, Op. 16. King Chorale. King. (Also works by other American composers.)

LOUISVILLE LS 763—*Prayers of Kierkegaard*, Op. 30 (with Capone, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary Ch). Louisville SO. Mester. (Also works by H. Johnson, Welcher.)

Choral Works

VANGUARD VSD 2083—*A Stopwatch and an Ordnance Map*, Op. 15 (with Robert de Cormier Chorale); *A Hand of Bridge*, Op. 35 (with Neway, Alberts, Lewis, Maero); *Serenade*, Op. 1; *Music for a Scene from Shelley*, Op. 7; *Essay for Orchestra*, No. 2, Op. 17. S of the Air. Golschmann.

VOX SVBX 5353 (3)—*A Stopwatch and an Ordnance Map*, Op. 15. Gregg Smith Singers. Smith. (Also works by other American

"There are more excuses for not doing opera—or for doing it badly."

(Golden Crest CCS 8050) and the King Chorale (Orion ORS 75205). The Orion disc has the edge sonically.

Barber's choral masterpiece is *Prayers of Kierkegaard*, Op. 30 (1954). Scored for mixed chorus (often in eight parts), full orchestra, and solo soprano, this work takes in everything from plainsong to polytonality, from haunting, devotional serenity to full-blown grand gesture, both orchestral and choral. It is a difficult piece, and although there are some problems (a too distant choir, some brass intonation flaws) in the sole recording—by Jorge Mester, with soprano Gloria Capone (Louisville LS 763)—the huge spirit of the work comes through clearly.

Unrecorded are two early settings, *The Virgin Martyrs*, Op. 8, No. 1, and *Let Down the Bars, O Death*, Op. 8, No. 2 (1935-36); *Chorale for Ascension Day* (1964); an *Agnus Dei*, Op. 11, that turns out to be yet a third incarnation of the *Adagio for Strings* (arranged 1967); and *The Lovers*, Op. 43 (1971), for baritone, chorus, and orchestra, to poems of Pablo Neruda.

Chamber and Solo Works

The Cello Sonata, Op. 6 (1932), is a fiery, entirely idiomatic work in a traditional mold. Its most striking characteristics are its frequent (though not surprising) modulations, the exciting interaction between the cello and piano parts, and—almost needless to say at this point—its gorgeous melody. Jeffrey Sollow and Albert Dominguez (Pelican LP 2010) offer the most expressive and finely nuanced performance, although Lucille Greco and Mary Zeyen (Orion ORS 7297) run a close second. Avoid the Harry Clark/Sanda Schuldmann record-

ing (Musical Heritage MHS 3378); it's a disaster.

If you think you've heard enough full-orchestra performances of the *Adagio for Strings*, perhaps it's time to cleanse your perception of the piece by hearing it in its natural habitat, the string quartet. After the aggressive, angular thrusting of the first movement, the serene Adagio seems a perfect foil; and when played by four single strings, it takes on a new clarity and intensity. Recordings of the quartet have come in and out of the catalog over the years, but the only one currently available is the fine, impassioned performance by the Cleveland Quartet (RCA ARL 1-1599).

The four *Excursions*, Op. 20 (1944), for solo piano, are as close as Barber got to writing folk- or popular-influenced music, and despite their definite charm, they are perhaps as far as he got from originality. The first and second *Excursions* are a boogie-woogie and a blues that, to paraphrase Rorem, could have been extemporized by any jazz pianist; the third is a set of variations on the cowboy ballad, "The Streets of Laredo"; and the last is a country hoedown. Leon Bates (Orion ORS 76237) best captures their loose, improvisatory atmosphere, but Zola Shaulis (Composers Recordings SD 295) comes close enough to make couplings the deciding factor. Angela Brownridge's approach is comparatively stiff, but hers is the only compilation of all Barber's piano music on a single disc (Hyperion A 66016).

"The most encouraging thing about the music world is the extraordinary progress young musicians have made, musically and technically," Barber said. "I remember when my piano sonata was first played, by Horowitz, an eminent critic now deceased (I love quoting de-

I get letters saying "Please, please, write something else for the piano; we're sick of that fugue."

ceased critics—the more the merrier) wrote that the work would rarely be played, and certainly not as it was played by Mr. Horowitz, who made it into the fine work it is. Well, the joke is that now the sonata is a required work at just about every piano competition, and young people have no trouble with it at all. I get letters all the time saying, 'Please, please, write something else for the piano; we're getting sick of that fugue.'

The Piano Sonata, Op. 26 (1949), is certainly a peak, one of Barber's few works that sounds ahead of its time. The first movement, with its notes spilling out in every direction, brings to mind some of the avant-garde jazz improvisation of, say, Cecil Taylor; the second is a fleet Allegro; in the third, Barber flirts with tone rows; and the finale is a dazzling fugue that, like the first movement, takes on a rollicking jazzy character. Heretical though it may be, of the performances I've heard, I enjoy Vladimir Horowitz' historic 1950 original (RCA ARM 1-2952) the least. It's a powerhouse performance, to be sure, yet it's so frenetic that it often sounds simply like "a difficult twentieth-century piece," not the expressive masterwork it is. Besides, the sound is boxy and distorted. There was, until a recent purge, a remarkably fluid

performance by Van Cliburn (RCA LSC 3229) that ought to be reissued. Brownridge also takes a freer, less frenzied view of the work (Hyperion). I've been unable to locate John Browning's recording (Desto 7120).

About *Summer Music*, Op. 31 (1956), for woodwind quintet, Barber said, "It's supposed to be evocative of summer—summer meaning languid, not [clapping hands loudly] killing mosquitos. Henry Cowell once wrote a piece in which the orchestra members had to clap their hands in that fashion—'brilliant innovation,' the critics called it. But all I can say about *Summer Music* is that everybody plays it too slowly. Which leads certain charming colleagues of mine to come up with real mean remarks. Two of them—one of our better-known composers and one L.F. [Lukas Foss] from Brooklyn—once told me they heard a performance that dragged so, it should have been called *Winter Music*." Two perfectly sprightly, languid performances are those by the Dorian Wind Quintet (Vox SVBX 5307) and the Philadelphia Woodwind Quintet (CBS Special Products AMS 6114).

Barber's chamber and solo works after *Summer Music* were mostly short incidental works. The Nocturne (Homage to John Field), Op. 33 (1959), is a light, pretty keyboard miniature in ABA form, as is the Ballade, Op. 46 (1977), composed for the Van Cliburn Competition. Roger Shields makes the most of the nocturne, dramatically shaping the melodic line and strikingly varying his tempo in the middle section (Vox SVBX 5303); but again, you may opt for the Brownridge (Hyperion) to have all the piano music on one LP. Only she has recorded the Ballade, a work that tends toward bluesy introspection in its outer sections, with an agitated, finger-breaking central passage. The sole work for solo organ, *Wondrous Love*, Op. 34 (1958), a set of variations on a hymn tune, is not very well represented in its only recording, a square, dry reading by Rollin Smith (Repertoire RRS 12). The Canzone for flute and piano, Barber's own arrangement from the second movement of his piano concerto, is played straightforwardly by Ransom Wilson (Musical Heritage MHS 1856). And finally, *Mutations from Bach* (1968), for brass and percussion, a set of not particularly interesting variations on chorale settings by Bach and Joachim Decker, has been recorded by the Locke Brass Consort (Unicorn RHS 339).

None of Barber's acknowledged chamber or solo works has gone unrecorded—only the early, prizewinning Violin Sonata (1931) and *Five Pieces for a Singing Tower* (1930) for carillon.

(Continued on page 89)

Chamber and Solo Works

PELICAN LP 2010—Cello Sonata, Op. 6. Solow Dominguez. (Also works by Dello Joio Kodály.)

ORION ORS 7297—Cello Sonata, Op. 6 Greco, Zeyen. (Also works by Bach; arranged by Siloti.)

MUSICAL HERITAGE MHS 3378—Cello Sonata, Op. 6. Clark, Schuldmann. (Also DIAMOND: Cello Sonata.)

RCA ARI 1-1599—String Quartet, Op. 11. Cleveland Qt. (Also works by Ives.)

ORION ORS 76237—*Excursions*, Op. 20. Bates. (Also works by MacDowell, Walker.)

COMPOSERS RECORDINGS SD 295—*Excursions*, Op. 20. Shaulis. (Also works by Bloch, Gruenberg.)

HYPERION A 66016—*Excursions*, Op. 20; Piano Sonata, Op. 26; Nocturne, Op. 33; Ballade, Op. 46. Brownridge.

RCA ARM 1-2952—Piano Sonata, Op. 26. Horowitz. (Also works by Prokofiev, Scriabin.)

RCA LSC 3229—Piano Sonata, Op. 26. Van Cliburn. (Also PROKOFIEV: Piano Sonata No. 6, Op. 82.)

DESTO DC 7120—Piano Sonata, Op. 26. Browning. (Also CUMMING: Twenty-four Preludes.)

Vox SVBX 5307 (3)—*Summer Music*, Op. 31. Dorian Wind Quintet. (Also works by other American composers.)

CBS SPECIAL PRODUCTS AMS 6114—*Summer Music*, Op. 31. Philadelphia Woodwind Quintet. (Also NIELSEN: Wind Quintet, Op. 43.)

Vox SVBX 5303 (3)—Nocturne, Op. 33: Piano Sonata, Op. 26; Fugue. Shields. (Also works by other American composers.)

REPERTOIRE RRS 12—*Wondrous Love*, Op. 34. Smith. (Also works by other American composers.)

MUSICAL HERITAGE MHS 1856—Canzone, Op. 38. Wilson, Villa. (Also works by other composers, with other performers.)

UNICORN RHS 339—*Mutations from Bach*. Locke Brass Consort, Stobart. (Also works by other composers.)

This 42nd Street Belongs on Broadway

The stage version of the 1933 film sets sparks flying, but the disc fails to capture the majesty of the stage.

Reviewed by Matthew Gurewitsch

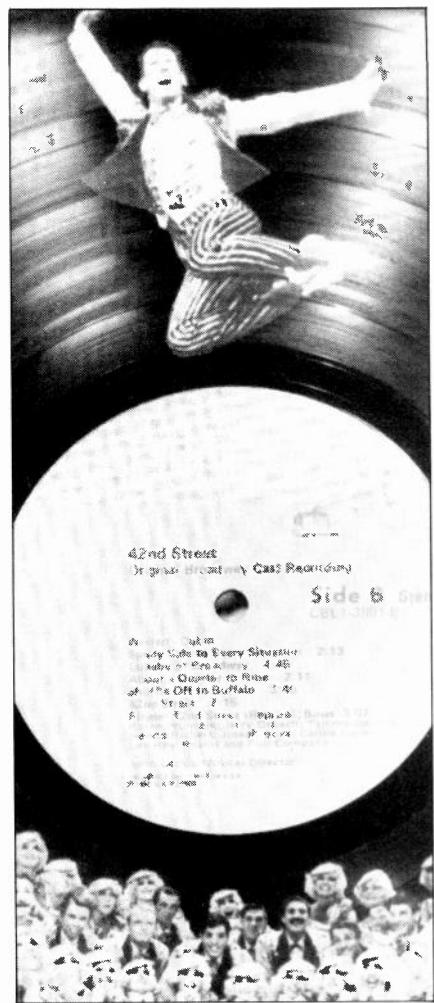


PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY FRED BURRELL

THE BACKSTAGE MUSICALS of the '30s belong to the movies, not the theater. The young hopefuls who crave the limelight in the Busby Berkeley spectacles always talk New York, but the production numbers they hoof and croon their way into glide, melt, and revolve with tricks of scale and perspective unthinkable without the camera. David Merrick's current extravaganza, *42nd Street*—its

Matthew Gurewitsch, dance critic for The New Leader, writes frequently on music.

title and much of its book taken straight from the 1933 prototype, its Dubin and Warren score cannibalized from the vast Warner Bros. legacy—transplants its material to a seemingly familiar yet in fact quite foreign soil: the Broadway stage. The final skyrocket in the fireworks of Gower Champion's charmed career as a director and choreographer in the musical theater, it explodes there with a brilliance of artifice and felicity of invention that make everything feel brand-new.

Champion, who died the day of *42nd Street*'s triumphant opening, was a virtuoso in an amazing range of styles. In "Shadow Waltz," he posed himself the problem of composing around a leading lady who doesn't dance. The few lines of dialogue that prepare the number explain how to solve it: Surround her with dancers, let her wave her arms "a lot." This strategy is promptly played out, with embellishments. Stagehands turn up with traveling spotlights, casting swirling silhouettes of the lady's firmly planted form against a blank screen behind which, in time, she retires to venture a few steps, her outline gallantly partnered by an escort out in front. The sequence is played for laughs, but enchantment is never far away, even as the showman casually tips his hand.

Elsewhere, Champion's constructions are positively symphonic, as in "Dames," where every section is the preparation and cover for the next: The movement begins with the male lead and four chorus boys in what, in these sumptuous surroundings, passes for practice dress. They state the theme in a stanza, then vanish as the walls fly up to reveal a double-decker carousel, part health club, part harem, where scantily clad nymphs revel in their pink, powdery beauty. An art deco facade (inscribed "*Maison des Dames*") descends as the gentlemen return, more numerous now, decked out in burgundy top hats and tails, and the ladies come filing out of their pleasure dome to meet them, each garbed in another sparkling hue. Peggy

Sawyer, the chorus girl destined to step in on opening night for the disabled star Dorothy Brock (only the audience knows that yet), enters in peacock blue, injecting into the dazzling parade a fleeting visual dissonance that is quickly gathered into the resolution of the rainbow of belles in their final tableau. On a smaller scale, there are Champion's countless little riffs and flourishes that join number to number, scene to scene.

But his majestic visions are no compositions for the ear. They do not transfer to disc. All that evokes the physical production is the beat of dancing feet and incidents of cooing by the chorus. Such evocations are mixed blessings. In the theater, the massed effect of a platoon in tap shoes can set sparks flying. The audition sequence, on which the curtain rises as the dancers chug away at full tilt, raises the roof; and the bang of portable pedestals in "We're in the Money" adds to the exuberance. Over loudspeakers at home, a little of this noise goes a long way. Tap solos, on the other hand, preserve a hint of their stage reality. In the title number, some antiphonal exchanges, clearly separated by the sound engineers, suggest arcs of seduction sparking across the empty stillness. Still, one couldn't guess from these moments what it is to see Wanda Richert dance Champion; it's like hearing Galli-Curci sing Bellini.

Not all the choral vocalizing conjures up images from the show. When it does, it pleases least. There is a tradition going back at least to Berkeley's back lots that, in songs of sentiment, an all-soprano chorus will repeat the tunes and lyrics first presented by a star—but without inflection, without expression, and without personality. In the movies, with the camera scanning the singers' mocking faces or capturing, in long shots, the pyramids and pinwheels into which Berkeley grouped his forces, the results could be perversely sensuous. In the stage show, Champion deploys his anonymous charmers as a moving frame for the principals, the lace around the valentine. Their tilted heads and swaying limbs are a pretty border to look past, and the sounds they make are part of the decor. But the human Muzak, by itself, is a horror to listen to. When the cast members get to strut their stuff, as in "Lullaby of Broadway," they make much spicier sounds, and their distinctive timbres almost summon up their faces.

The selection of songs is, on the whole, unimpeachable. To be sure, the score contains two clinkers: "Young and Healthy," a mindless reduction of love to algebra (even more offensive in its way than *Funny Girl*'s suaver variation on the theme, "You Are Woman"), and "Sunny Side to Every Situation," with its heavy ironies and fortune-cookie philos-

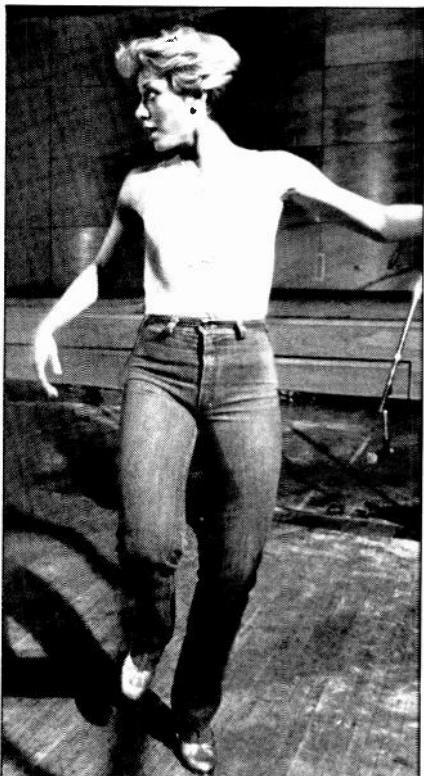
ophizing. And Dubin and Warren's most highly developed exercises in some of their less frequent keys are missing: The insinuating bawdry of "The Girlfriend of the Whirling Dervish" might have struck an off note in this family entertainment; the patriotic fervor of "Remember My Forgotten Man" perhaps seemed too intense (and relevant) for comfort; and the liquefying tenderness of "September in the Rain" may have struck the show's architects as dated supper-club stuff—or maybe there was just no one around who could sing it, as James Melton did in *Melody for Two* in 1937, with a directness and eloquence that would ennoble the most shameless heartstring-tugging in Puccini. Instead, *42nd Street* concentrates on Dubin and Warren's cocktails of glinting rhymes and lilting rhythms. After nearly half a century, their blend of worldliness and naiveté has not lost its fizz.

Such wonderful tunes—if only more of the contemporary cast knew how to sing them! The crux is not vocalism, but style. The conventions of the backstage musical are calculated to put an audience into a remarkably accepting state of mind. In the frame stories, the characters all work so hard and are so nice that only the crustiest curmudgeon could fail to warm to them in their moments of glory, however modest their talents. How else to account for the enduring popularity of Ruby Keeler, who starred in the movie *42nd Street* and innumerable sequels? She sang (if that is the word) in a toneless baritone, off key and off the beat, and she danced (if that is the word) with a smiling, dogged determination—right into the hearts of an enchanted public. With Richert in the Keeler role of Peggy, the old Cinderella scenario takes on a different complexion. From her first entrance, she is so accomplished yet so unassuming, so starry-eyed yet so credible, that her sudden rise seems not a miracle, but mere justice. Singing, though, is not her forte. Fortunately, it is never made to carry a whole number. She is most exposed in the title number (the second-act finale). As she delivers it, it is no bubbling romp à la Keeler, but a slow, sultry colloquy with soloists in the pit: shrill trumpets, a doodling flute, the hoarse trombone. At a restrained level of volume, her instrument is serviceable; when she applies pressure, as in the crescendo that concludes her stanza of "42nd Street," no good comes of it. But again, the crux is style. Her way with words and tunes has none of the originality and pizzazz of her tap routines. Happily, she never takes long to swing into her specialty, handing the music back to the musicians, who know exactly what to do with it. (The expert orchestrations are by Philip J. Lang; John Lesko, the vocal arranger, conducts

here with snap and flash, as Herbert Green does on Broadway.)

Tammy Grimes plays Dorothy (who is said to be no dancer—a point that Grimes, with little technique but much graciousness, disproves). Her sound is intrinsically no more beautiful or powerful than Richert's, but her style is infinitely more advanced, and she touches her songs with smoky enchantment. She

One would hardly guess from these moments what it is to see Wanda Richert dance Champion.



HENRY GROSSMAN

Richert as Peggy: The crux is style.

caresses the melody, flirts with it, sallies forth and withdraws in a breath. As movie buffs will recall, Dorothy, who has behaved like a bitch on wheels throughout the rehearsals for *Pretty Lady*, the musical within the musical, comes rolling into Peggy's dressing room in a wheelchair moments before Peggy is to open on Broadway with the brave, unforgettable command to "go out there and be so good you'll make me hate you." Grimes plays the scene with flair and caps it with an unexpectedly poignant moment: She coaches Peggy in one of her numbers, "Make them come to you," she explains and falls into a dreamy rendition of "About a Quarter to Nine," soft and intimate, as if for her own delight. She whiskers away in the final

bars, leaving Richert with the last note (demonstrating that she hasn't learned the lesson). Grimes is just as beguiling in "Shadow Waltz," "You're Getting to Be a Habit with Me," and "I Know Now." The last of these is omitted from the album; the others are its highlights.

Grimes is not all alone. Carole Cook qualifies as a seasoned stylist in a brassier, more fishwife vein; and the tin-throated Karen Prunczik and the gravelly Joseph Bova have their moments in the spotlight, notably in "Shuffle off to Buffalo." But more depends on Lee Roy Reams, who plays Billy Lawlor, the juvenile lead, and has the unenviable task of following in the footsteps of Dick Powell, the playful, pouting silly from the movies. Reams can dance, which to the best of my recollection is something Powell never attempted, and he wields his light tenor with smooth routine, but in the way of interpreting a lyric, he can't begin to compare with his predecessor. With Reams, all is saccharine. Sliding from speech to song and back again, Powell could yield to an allure while making light of it, and he knew how to dally with a wayward rhythm. Reams does not get to sing some of Powell's zaniest lyrics ("Oh dames are necessary to show business./Dames, without you there would be no business./Your knees in action/Are the attraction./And what good's a show without you beautiful dames"); given his blandness, the omissions are probably just as well.

Not much is heard from Jerry Orbach, which, in light of what he does sing, is no loss either. As the hard-boiled director Julian Marsh, he fires Peggy from the chorus at the *Pretty Lady* dress rehearsal, only to realize moments later that she alone might be able to pinch-hit for his disabled star. He follows her to Broad Street Station, Philadelphia, to win her back. With Orbach's harsh tone, fierce accent, and bullying demeanor, "Lullaby of Broadway" makes a singularly weird invitation, hardly the thing to reassure a disheartened tenderfoot. Shortly the entire cast (minus the injured Dorothy) pours down the station steps to reinforce the message. That their hoopla wins her over is no surprise.

This Peggy belongs on Broadway, and so does this *42nd Street*. If the album has hits and misses, that's just part of the package. As Dorothy said, the secret is to make the audience come to the song—and the dance, and the bright lights.

42ND STREET. Original Broadway cast recording.

Music by Harry Warren; lyrics by Al Dubin, John Lesko, cond. [Thomas Z. Shepard and Jay David Saks, prod.] RCA RED SEAL L-3891, \$9.98. Tape: CBK L-3891, \$9.98 (cassette).

The First Real Finta giardiniera (Okay!) and Yet Another Idomeneo (Sigh!)

The newly discovered first-act recitatives provide the key to an early Mozart opera, but no one seems able to solve the later one.
Reviewed by Kenneth Furie

ALL RIGHT, MOZART FANS, now we're getting somewhere. Oh no, not the new *Idomeneo* recording (digital!); for all its cosmetic differences from its predecessors, it's just more of the same. Or maybe less; it strikes me in nearly every way as the feeblest entry in the group, and that group, even taken collectively, provides no more than occasional hints of what sort of involving experience the opera might be.

No, the welcome event is the latest installment in the Salzburg-based series of recordings of Mozart's early dramatic works, coproduced by Austrian Radio and DG (which took over from BASF). Although *Finta giardiniera* is in fact one of the more commented-upon pre-*Entföhrung* Mozart operas and has cracked SCHWANN before, twice, the new DG recording is effectively a premiere.

It was only in the course of work on the new Mozart edition that researchers turned up the autograph form of Act I, which had otherwise survived only in a German edition that turned the opera into a *Singspiel* by replacing the recitatives with spoken dialogue. Since the Italian libretto was available, it was always possible to refit the original text of the musical numbers, but without the missing Italian score, it would have been necessary to compose new recitatives in order to perform the opera in its proper form.

The only other solution was to perform the entire opera as a *Singspiel*—i.e., junk the recitatives of Acts II and III, which we've always had. With the availability of the newly reconstructed score, whose first public hearing was the 1980 concert performance on which the recording is based, such desperate expedients—as reflected in Philips' deleted 1973 recording of the *Singspiel*, which it billed as *Die Gärtnerin aus Liebe*—can

be permanently retired.

I think we're going to be seeing and hearing a lot more of *Finta*. That it contains a great deal of excellent and emotionally resonant music was clear in the Philips recording, which remains of interest for the quality of some of its singing. But what becomes clearer now is the specificity and human grounding of the characterizations; indeed, all seven characters are created with remarkably full human contexts—believable histories, precise interrelationships, urgent objectives, powerfully motivated musical and verbal actions in pursuit of those objectives.

An acting teacher I know was talking recently about a round of student auditions he'd just been through that had disheartened him considerably. The problem wasn't that the students lacked talent, or that they were uninvolved emotionally. No, the problem was that all they were doing was displaying emotions—going straight for what they imagined would be a striking emotional effect rather than finding the behavior that arouses a genuine emotional response.

Nobody wanted anything, he reported sadly. And that, after all, is what drama is about: Characters with powerful objectives, to use the standard acting terms, pursue actions to overcome the powerful obstacles that stand in their way.

The absence of such a basic human framework is one way of describing my problem with Mozart's "serious" early dramatic works. And not just the early works; for me, *Idomeneo* and *Clemenza di Tito*, the fully matured Mozart's efforts to breathe life into opera seria models, have precisely this same hole in the middle.

To the great baroque composers,



DG's Don Ramiro, Brigitte Fassbaender

opera seria had a compelling emotional logic of its own, but by Mozart's time apparently all that remained was the bare-bones form. And so characters rattle off plot exposition in the endless recitatives, which are traditionally "solved" in performance by drastic cutting—a reasonable enough solution when you consider the alternative: endlessly dutiful recitation. Then, at regular intervals, the "action"—you call this *action*?—stops for a formal musical number in which a character announces an emotional attitude: "Ah, woe is me," etc.

Scholars and most recent performers have tried to solve this formal problem with massive doses of historical and structural sophistication, but I don't think any purely musical means can make the announcement "Ah, woe is me"—ungrounded in specific behavioral reality—interesting to an audience. It won't do to say that, well, these are old-fashioned characters in old-fashioned dramatic structures and therefore we can't expect them to behave like us; all that this attitude accomplishes is to create an impenetrable barrier between us and the proceedings; we sit in mute and wearied disbelief as beings who are human in physical but no other form enact drawn-out rituals that defy any connection to reality.

I believe that *Idomeneo* can be made to address an audience's real-life concerns, but this belief remains theoretical. To document it, you'd have to assemble a group of singers in genuine command of the opera's staggering executant difficulties, and then start exploring how each musical gesture, both in recitative and in formal numbers, can be made "a communication that is convincing, truthful, and utterly essential," to use Walter Felsenstein's lovely phrase. We've never been farther from this ob-

jective than we are in Telefunken's *Idomeneo*—mercifully not an original-instrument job, but so weakly cast (you could make a good case that each of the principal roles here receives its weakest performance among the five stereo recordings) that there's hardly any point in discussing the eccentrically dehumanized attitudes of the performance itself.

What's fascinating about the DG *Finta* is that the performance, objectively speaking, isn't radically better than those that have preceded it in this series. Although the singers themselves are mostly new (near as I can tell, the only repeat performer is Thomas Moser, who sang Emilio in *Il Sogno di Scipione*—DG 2709 098, October 1980), the general casting objective seems once again to have been to find people who could negotiate the notes, while Leopold Hager and the Salzburg Mozarteum Orchestra remain the ever-dutiful note-renderers.

And yet, from the beginning of the overture there's already a difference: a sense of rhythmic purpose in the phrasing that I've missed throughout the series, with the unsurprising exception of the genially pastoral *Bastien und Bastienne* (Acanta 22 772). This becomes more pronounced in the opening "chorus"—i.e., a *coro* composed of the six on-stage principals. Only Count Belfiore, the male romantic lead whose imminent arrival generates much of the immediate action in the early part of Act I, isn't present; the other characters, singing mostly as part of the spirited ensemble but also making brief solo announcements of their individual agendas, set a tone of lively expectation. These sound like people with real problems, with both hopes and dreads. It sounds like something is going to happen!

And it does. Perhaps nothing of the astonishing vividness and depth that characterize Mozart's greatest operas, but *Finta* seems ever more clearly the opera in which the composer focused his dramatic ambitions and explored ways of realizing them. There are no stock attitudes here, except insofar as such attitudes have actually been adopted by the characters—as in the case of the four central characters, young noblemen and noblewomen searching for love, who give evidence of having formed their views of life and love on the basis of reading too many romances.

But this is wonderfully and believably human. Take, for example, Belfiore's first aria, in which he tries to impress his prospective uncle-in-law, the Podestà. He attempts to document his self-importance with a hodgepodge of geographical and historical allusions that could be truly hilarious in a fully re-

alized performance, one that was not only well sung, but reflective of what underlying impulses might produce such an exaggerated declaration. (Insecurity, overcompensation—that sort of thing.)

Interestingly, the Podestà does find the aria funny, a measure of perceptiveness we might not expect from a stock *buffo* tenor character. But the Podestà isn't a stock character at all; he is as important as, and probably more interesting than, the "lead" tenor, Belfiore. Even his infatuation with a younger woman (our title character—the Marchesa Violante, disguised as the gardener Sandrina) is portrayed not as a plot formula, but as a specific behavioral reality.

One of the score's more famous numbers is the aria in which the Podestà tries to impress Sandrina with the force of his feelings, as expressed by musical images he hears: first, the joyous and contented sound of flutes and oboes;

servant, and I accept you in my heart." But after a while our befuddled ears are picking up things like: "I am capricious, an insolent and stubborn creature." And her uncle and fiancé don't seem to notice; they just go on smiling and nodding!

DG's Lilian Sukis has a good deal of fun with Arminda's recitatives, displaying a frequently specific sense of rhythm and tone color which somehow fades in the set numbers; for vocal freedom and oomph, compare Philips' Jessie Norman. Much the same thing happens with Jutta-Renate Ihloff as the Podestà's maid, Serpetta, a direct ancestor of *Cosi's* Despina: She finds some real life in recitative, but in straight singing, she sounds like a stock, monochromatic soubrette.

The two most consistent performances come from Brigitte Fassbaender as the young knight Ramiro, swooning with love for (gulp) Arminda, and Ezio di Cesare as the Podestà. It may have something to do with the accessibility of the roles, but Philips' Tatiana Troyanos and Gerhard Unger were if anything a little better. Still, Fassbaender's dark, controlled tone moves surely through the music, and Di Cesare's serviceable tenor and Italianate fluidity are excellent starting points for this potentially memorable character. (Can't you imagine what Piero de Palma might have done with him?)

The most serious problem with the performance as a whole is that neither romantic lead is more than barely adequate. Julia Conwell gets Sandrina's notes out, but without any distinction of voice or temperament. Moser lets the music lead him into some funny moments (and the more heroic Belfiore tries to be, the funnier he becomes) yet never asserts real control over the material—or makes the music sound especially attractive. Finally, the marchesa's similarly disguised servant, Nardo, is honestly rendered by Barry McDaniel, but in a gray tone whose only saving grace is that it spares us the obnoxious "personality" of Philips' Hermann Prey. The pity is that for such a lively and well-written role it should have been possible to attract a real singer—Allan Monk and Rollo Panerai spring to mind.

As for the Telefunken *Idomeneo*, try to imagine a performance of the opera in which the only glimmerings of humanity come from the royal confidant Arbace, who is normally little more than a plot device. It should come as no surprise, then, that the most important points to note here are textual. Conductor Nikolaus Harnoncourt has chosen to perform a single edition that would have been known to Mozart rather than combine music written at various times. This is a legitimate principle, except that with

Finta seems ever more clearly the opera in which Mozart focused his dramatic ambitions and explored ways of realizing them.

then, as the harmony changes, the somber melody of violins; finally, the desperate tumult of timpani, trumpets, bassoons, and basses. The aria is dazzling in its virtuosity, but more than that, it gives the character a specific and powerful behavioral reality (my God, I can't get these sounds out of my head!) and does so by providing the performer with a set of emotional impulses—objectives, obstacles, and actions—that demand music.

Since all the characters are introduced in Act I, restoration of the recitatives lends them all greater depth and believability than they were allowed in the German dialogue, which drastically reduced and simplified all aspects of plot and character. For example, without the recitatives, the Podestà's niece, Arminda, seemed like a stock romantic figure who behaved in quirkily aggressive flashes.

Now we have in full the zany scene in which Belfiore and Arminda meet for the first time. It could pass for a stock exchange of dazzlingments and endearments, except for what the characters actually say. Arminda begins conventionally enough: "Count, I am your

Idomeneo the specific choices aren't always clear-cut.

It's easy to reject music that was written after the Munich premiere, especially since we are promised a separate recording comprising all the music excluded here. But do the same principles justify leaving out music that was written for, though omitted from, the premiere? Was it entirely dramatic reservations that prompted Mozart to drop those three arias—Idamante's "No, la morte," Elettra's "D'Oreste, d'Ajace," and Idomeneo's "Torna la pace"—near the end

of the opera? Perhaps so, but my confidence isn't bolstered by reasoning that proceeds from statements like: "Mozart cannot be improved upon; he is invariably right." If he was *invariably* right, then he must have been right every time he added to, subtracted from, or revised the score—and where does that leave us?

There are points of interest in the chosen text. Since Idamante was a mezzo in Munich, rather than the tenor we are accustomed to, we get to hear "S'io non morro a questi accenti," the lighter-toned soprano/mezzo duet Mozart originally

wrote for Ilia and Idamante in Act III, rather than the soprano/tenor replacement. "*Spiegarti non posso*." (The Davis/Philips recording gave us a curious soprano/tenor version of "S'io non morro.") However one feels about the omission of "D'Oreste, d'Ajace," it's good to hear the fine alternative recitative Mozart provided to get Elettra off-stage.

But the greatest hope roused by Harnoncourt's booklet commentary goes unrealized. When a performer believes in his choices as strongly as Harnoncourt appears to, isn't it reasonable to hope that this belief may carry over into the performance?

It doesn't. In set numbers, Harnoncourt has two modes: a brisk, hard-accented one for proclaimatory material; a gentle flow for gentle numbers. Sometimes each of these modes works, but even at those moments it's hard to shake the awareness that a manner has been externally imposed, that the performance is never growing organically out of the music.

In retrospect, we might have anticipated something of the sort from those booklet remarks—as, for example, the notion that the cuts in the simplified version of Idomeneo's "Fuor del mar" "deprive the aria of its main characteristic, i.e., the bravura, and produce no benefit other than an easier life for the singer." In the first place, is bravura really the main characteristic of the aria? Second, does Harnoncourt really believe that the simplified version is shorn of bravura? Finally, what benefit is there in hearing a singer try to negotiate music he can't sing? (Mozart's views on this subject may be partly inferred from the fact that he did revise the aria.)

Which brings us to the cast. The only work of any interest is the Arbace of Kurt Equiluz, an intelligent artist who undertakes some of the human grounding discussed earlier, though he is mostly defeated by slow tempos. One of an opera conductor's basic jobs is to know what his singers can and can't do, but Harnoncourt doesn't seem to have noticed that Equiluz's basically attractive light tenor won't stretch to fill the spaces he creates in Arbace's arias.

The recitatives are generally spoiled by Harnoncourt's apparent belief that slow and dreamy is the way to go. Once again, you don't solve a performance problem by making abstract musical decisions; if you approach recitatives from the standpoint of objectives, obstacles, and actions, you should never have to decide what their correct rate of speed should be, any more than conversation in general has a correct rate of speed.

Werner Hollweg is, for him, in good shape here, but his tiny, drab tenor

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doesn't come within hailing distance of the title role, and the record companies have accustomed us to real singers: Philips' excellent George Shirley, Electrola/Arabesque's Nicolai Gedda, DG's Wieslaw Ochman. And while I might be persuaded by a mezzo Idamante, Trudeliese Schmidt is such a colorless, dull singer that no case is made.

With all due allowance for the vocal and dramatic difficulties of the female characters, Felicity Palmer and Rachel Yakar are never in the picture. That both are prone to midrange tonal whiteness may have something to do with the

MOZART: *La Finta giardiniera*, K. 196.

CAST:

Sandrina	Julia Conwell (s)
Arminda	Lilian Sukis (s)
Serpetta	Jutta-Renate Ihloff (s)
Don Ramiro	Brigitte Fassbaender (mis)
Count Belfiore	Thomas Moser (t)
The Podesta	Ezio di Cesare (t)
Nardo	Barry McDaniel (b)

Jean-Pierre Faber, harpsichord; Salzburg Mozarteum Orchestra, Leopold Hager, cond. [Gottfried Kraus and Michael Horwath, prod.] DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2740 234, \$39.92 (four discs, manual sequence).

MOZART: *Idomeneo*, K. 366.

CAST:

Elettra	Felicity Palmer (s)
Illa	Rachel Yakar (s)
Idamante	Trudeliese Schmidt (ms)
Idomeneo	Werner Holweg (t)
Arbace	Kurt Equiluz (t)
High Priest	Robert Tear (t)
Voice of the Oracle	Simon Estes (bs)
A. Marinette Extermann, harpsichord; Zurich Opera House Chorus and Mozart Orchestra, Nikolaus Harnoncourt, cond. FEE-FUNKEN 46.35547, \$47.92 (digital recording; four discs, manual sequence). Tape 34.35547, \$35.94 (three cassettes).	

COMPARISONS: *Idomeneo*:

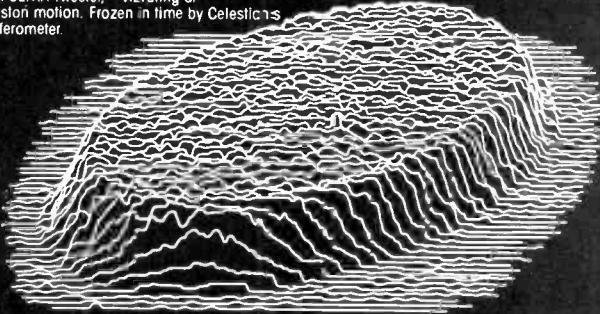
Pritchard/Glyndebourne	Sera. SIC 6070
Davis/BBC Sym.	Phi. 839 758/60
Schmidt-Isserstedt/Dresden	Ara. 8054-4L
Böhm/Dresden	DG 2740 195

digital recording—an effect analogous to digital bleaching of string instruments or it may just be the way they sing; either way, it's no fun to hear. I suppose Palmer deserves some credit for getting through Elettra's music (would we really want to hear her attempt "D'Oreste, d'Ajace"?), and I suppose we should note that Yakar makes a moderately pretty effect in some of Illa's can't-miss lyrical moments (e.g., "Zeffiretti lusinghieri"). I suppose.

So the *Idomeneo* situation remains in the same unsatisfactory state. Best all-round choice: the Davis/Philips set, though you have to make do with English paraphrases rather than complete translations. (Well, the performance is mostly a paraphrase anyway.) Most music: the Schmidt-Isserstedt/Arabesque set. Of interest for the Illa (Sena Jurinac) and Idamante (Leopold Simoneau): the Pritchard/Glyndebourne set.

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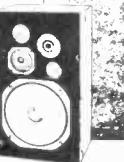
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CLASSICAL

Behind the Scenes

News on classical recordings edited by James R. Oestreich

Tchaikovsky Followup

Alexandra Orlova's account of Tchaikovsky's suicide, which formed the basis for Joel Spiegelman's February article and figured in David Brown's *New Grove* entry on the composer, has created quite a stir in America and throughout the West—not least in Holland, where composer Peter Schat has reportedly considered basing an opera on the story. It has not won universal acceptance, however. To air both sides of the controversy, next month we will publish a detailed rebuttal by Slavic specialists Nina Berberova, Malcolm Brown, and Simon Karlinsky.

Also sure to shed light—and perhaps some heat—on Tchaikovsky is a two-disc digital set of rare and unknown works scheduled for release this fall by the British Chandos label. Thirty-four-year-old Australian conductor Geoffrey Simon, now resident in Milwaukee, leads the London Symphony in first recordings of the original version of *Romeo and Juliet*, which Tchaikovsky twice revised at Balakirev's instance, and the *Festive Overture on the Danish National Anthem*; the first complete recording of the incidental music to *Hamlet*; and two entr'actes from *Mazeppa*. Edward Johnson, a Tchaikovsky and Stokowski expert in the employ of Her Majesty's Stationery Office, had originally persuaded the Royal Philharmonic to record the nascent *Romeo*, and the orchestra had gone so far as to have the parts hand-copied. That recording never materialized, however, so Chandos rented the parts and invited Johnson to supply the notes.

Decca/London is set to record Gay's *The Beggar's Opera*—not in the Britten edition, but in a new one by Richard Bonynge, who will also conduct. Joan Sutherland, almost needless to add, will star opposite another soprano from the antipodes, New Zealander Kiri Te Kanawa; early speculation has centered upon how the spoken dialogue will sound when these two face each other—appropriate enough, perhaps, since the regional dialect owes something to the speaking habits of the convicts transported there. John Gielgud and Angela Lansbury will share the spoken roles with British comedians Warren Mitchell, Alfred Marks, and others.

HF

CLASSICAL Record Reviews

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BACH: Concertos for Harpsichord(s) and Orchestra (complete).

Igor Kipnis, Linda Schell-Pluth*, David Schrader†, and David Hertzberg‡, harpsichords; Stuttgart Chamber Orchestra, Karl Münchinger, cond. [Peter Springer, prod.] INT'RCORD INT 185.925, \$51.98 (five discs, manual sequence). Tape: INT 485.925, \$51.98 (five cassettes). (Distributed by Brilly Imports, 155 N. San Vicente Blvd., Beverly Hills, Calif. 90211.)

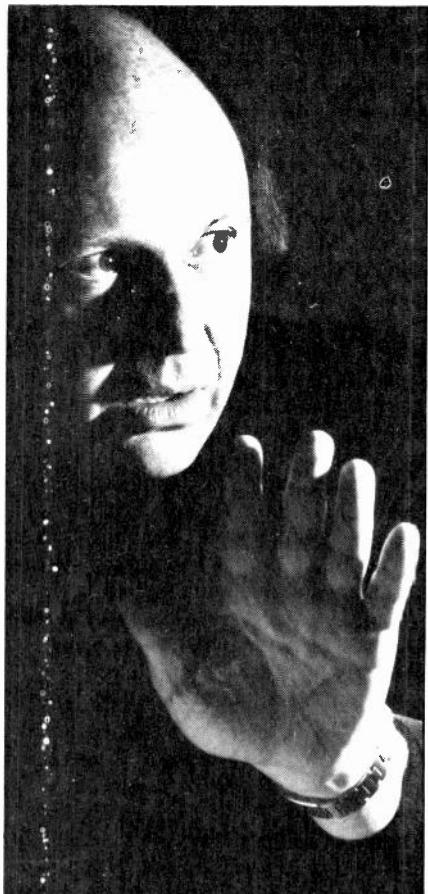
Concertos for Harpsichord: No. 1, in D minor, S. 1052; No. 2, in E. S. 1053; No. 3, in D. S. 1054; No. 4, in A. S. 1055; No. 5, in F minor, S. 1056; No. 6, in F. S. 1057; No. 7, in G minor, S. 1058. Concertos for Two Harpsichords: No. 1, in C minor, S. 1060; No. 2, in C. S. 1061; No. 3, in C minor, S. 1062.* Concertos for Three Harpsichords: No. 1, in D minor, S. 1063; No. 2, in C. S. 1064.* Concerto for Four Harpsichords: A minor, S. 1065.**

COMPARISON:

Leonhardt. Concentus Musicus Tel. 56.35049

Igor Kipnis recorded all the Bach concertos for single harpsichord about ten years ago for Columbia (with Neville Marriner conducting something called the "London Strings"), but since that version has been deleted, this issue will have special interest. It includes the seven complete concertos for single harpsichord (omitting the fragmentary S. 1059 that Kipnis completed for the earlier recording), as well as the concertos for two, three, and four harpsichords; it omits the S. 1044 Triple Concerto and the Fifth Brandenburg, included in the Columbia album.

Kipnis' ideas have not changed a great deal. The sound quality is considerably better here—vastly sweeter and with a nice sense of depth wholly lacking from the previous issue—and the string playing more polished. More relevant, though, is a comparison with the directly competitive Gustav Leonhardt survey of



ZNG

Igor Kipnis' recycled Bach lacks flavor

the same works—a fascinating comparison indeed.

In the solo concertos, I generally prefer Leonhardt's performance, often more strongly characterized. His remarkable subtleties of rhythm and articulation impart an intensity that Kipnis only rarely captures. Not that Kipnis is ever bad; it's just that his interpretations are sometimes all *too* polished, *too* smooth, *too* polite. Part of the problem lies in his tempos, almost always more cautious than Leonhardt's; yet even when Kipnis is faster (as in the first movement of S. 1055), Leonhardt exudes more sheer energy. There are exceptions, though: Münchinger's strings really come to life in the last movement of S. 1056, and in S. 1057 and 1058 Leonhardt proves surprisingly bland.

In the multiple-harpsichord concertos, the balance heavily favors Kipnis, et al. In the first movement of S. 1060, Münchinger's strings play with a particularly agreeable lightness and delicacy that would have been appropriate much more often. And in the first movement of

S. 1061, a bit of coy rhythmic stretching provides an unaccustomed buoyancy; suddenly all the notes *don't* sound alike, and the subtle variety is welcome. In the four-harpsichord concerto, Kipnis far outdoes his rival in capturing the dynamism of Vivaldi's original. In short, he is willing to take more chances in these works, and his colleagues are of the same mind; Leonhardt, evidently inhibited by the potential ensemble problems, opts for a safe—and ultimately dull—predictability.

One pervasive drawback here is the sound of the (modern) harpsichords. Much is made of their being based on historical models, but—at least as recorded—each produces the rather anti-septic (and decidedly unhistorical) tinkling all too familiar from previous generations of German mass-produced harpsichords. The irritation is heightened by the contrast with the sound of the strings, somewhat overly lush.

All in all, I prefer the sound of Leonhardt's harpsichords and eighteenth-century strings, and his best performances are inspired. Yet there are times when he seems dispirited and his string players sound ill at ease, while Kipnis and friends never fall below thoroughly professional standards. To paraphrase a friend's comparison of two hamburger joints, Kipnis is cleaner, but Leonhardt has more flavor.

s.c.

BRUCH: Concerto for Violin and Orchestra, No. 1, in G minor, Op. 26—See Sibelius: Concerto for Violin and Orchestra, Op. 47.

DEBUSSY: La Mer—See Ravel: Daphnis et Chloé: Suite No. 2.

DELIUS: The Magic Fountain.

CAST:

Watawa	Katherine Pring (s)
Solano	John Mitchinson (t)
Wapanacki	Norman Welsby (bs)
Talum Hadjo	Richard Angas (bs)
Spanish Sailor	Francis Thomas (bs)
BBC Singers and Concert Orchestra,	
Norman del Mar, cond. [Sylvia Cartner, prod.]	
ARABESQUE 8121-2L, \$14.96 (two discs, manual sequence). Tape: 9121-21, \$14.96 (two cassettes). [Recorded in performance, July 30, 1977.]	

Completed in 1895, *The Magic Fountain* is the second of Delius' operas. Despite attempts to produce it during and after his lifetime, it remained unperformed until July 30, 1977, when it was presented by the BBC in concert form and recorded for broadcast—the

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

performance presented here. Today, eighty-six years after its composition, the opera still awaits its stage premiere. The reasons for its neglect are both difficult and easy to comprehend: difficult, for it contains gloriously beautiful music; easy, because, like most of Delius' stage works, it is dramatically static. Perhaps the concert hall, radio, and phonograph are the best means of presenting it after all.

Many of Delius' works draw their inspiration from the history, folklore, and folk music of Florida, where he had spent two years reluctantly trying to grow oranges. *The Magic Fountain*, for one, makes use of musical material from another, the early suite, *Florida*. The plot is obviously derived from the story of Ponce de León's discovery of Florida and his quest for the fountain of youth. In the opera, Solano, a sixteenth-century Spanish nobleman, sets out in search of the fountain of eternal youth and life. (Solano Grove, near Jacksonville, was Delius' home in Florida.) He becomes shipwrecked and is cast ashore and rescued by the Seminoles. The Princess Watawa, who hates all white men for what they have done to her race, is nevertheless prevailed upon to be Solano's guide in his quest for the fountain. She knows that its waters bring death to those not prepared in wisdom and truth. She wants Solano to die but, predictably enough, falls in love with him (as he already has with her) and drinks the waters herself to save his life. Solano thereupon also drinks from the fountain so that he may follow her in death "to that sweet magnolia grove." (One wants to add "in the sky.")

The libretto, Delius' own, is quite dated and stilted in its language, the dramatic impulse virtually nonexistent despite storm and shipwreck—and a brief Indian war dance that does not make the Seminoles appear particularly ferocious. The music is absolutely gorgeous. Never known as a great allegro composer, Delius typically takes his own sweet time in telling this slender tale with music of great expansiveness, replete with beguiling melodies, lush harmonies, and sumptuous orchestration. Listening to this score, one could justifiably feel that no one wrote more beautiful music than Delius.

John Mitchinson sings Solano a bit pompously, somewhat in the English oratorio manner, with lots of rolled *rs*, though this is perhaps not inappropriate to the style of the libretto; the other men follow suit. Katherine Pring offers a sensitive portrayal of the princess. The real stars of this recording, however, are the orchestra and conductor. The BBC Concert Orchestra (not to be confused with the BBC Symphony), which normally devotes itself to lighter fare, plays with

the greatest involvement, sensitivity, and polish. Norman del Mar proves to be that extreme rarity, a truly distinguished Delian, capturing and projecting perfectly the subtle atmosphere, the ebb and flow of this most elusive music. His achievement is worthy of Sir Thomas Beecham at his best. Readers with long memories may remember Del Mar as the conductor of Beethoven's Fifth in the first release of the Book-of-the-Month Club's Music Appreciation Series back in the 1950s. He certainly deserves to be heard from more frequently.

The microphone balance sometimes favors the orchestra to the detriment of the singers. Sound effects depicting the storm, shipwreck, and fountain were added to the recording after the performance. For devoted Delians, this indispensable release fills an important gap in knowledge and appreciation of the composer; even the cynics who maintain that Delius should have stayed in the citrus industry may fall under the spell of his magical sound world. J.C.

FREDERICK THE GREAT: Symphonies (4).

Munich Pro Arte Orchestra, Kurt Redel, cond. PHILIPS 9502 057. \$9.98. Tape: 7313 057. \$9.98 (cassette).

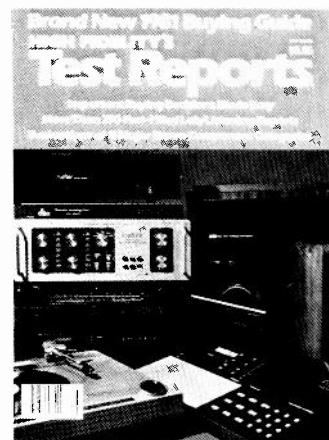
Symphonies: No. 1, in G; No. 2, in G; No. 3, in D; No. 4, in A.

In the old days when there were many kings, it was not rare for a crowned head to be interested in music and versed in it. But these were usually isolated individuals within a royal family. Not so the three children of the dour soldier-king of Prussia. Frederick William I: one of them was the future Frederick the Great. The two girls did not count, of course, even though Princess Anna Amalia was deemed by reliable contemporary judges "as good as a professional."

The crown prince showed musical abilities at an early age and began his studies when he was seven. As his interest in music and literature became paramount in his daily life, his enraged father placed him under arrest in a fortress, where he was effectively cut off from the arts. The situation did not improve for some years until he married and set up a household of his own. He then managed to organize a little chamber orchestra headed by Carl Heinrich Graun, who also continued Frederick's instruction in composition.

When the heir became king (1740), everything changed in a hurry. Emanuel Bach and, one year later, Johann Joachim Quantz were engaged as court musicians, the king ordered a splendid new opera house to be built, Graun was sent to Italy to recruit singers, and many other measures were taken that made Berlin within a few years a renowned center for music. In the meantime Fred-

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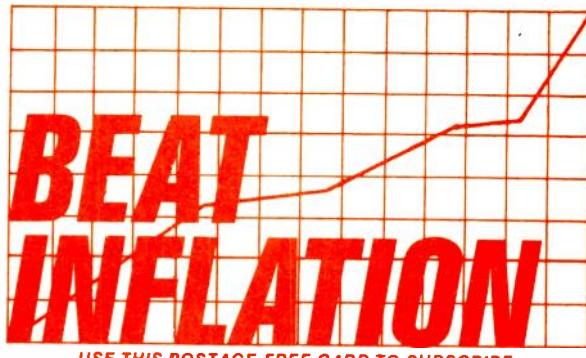
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Hasty generalization?

I was pleased to see Karen Monson's article on the Anchorage Civic Opera in the March issue. Many Alaskans feel isolated from the cultural mainstream and are, therefore, thankful for the national exposure.

I was disappointed, however, by Miss Monson's generalization about the caliber of instrumental musicians in Alaska. She stated that "the Anchorage Civic Opera will not take another step toward professionalism until it has a better group of instrumentalists. But those needed people are not to be found in Alaska." Was this statement based upon her attendance at a performance of *Rigoletto*, which had a forty-two-piece orchestra? I do not believe that is enough to substantiate a claim of statewide poor musicianship.

Alaska has many fine musicians and many fine performance groups. I moved to Anchorage from New York City for the sole purpose of being affiliated with one of those groups.

Patricia M. Lombard

General Manager
Anchorage Symphony
Orchestra
Anchorage, AL.

Women composers

To quote your reviewer, Karen Monson, "I thought I'd scream if I came across one more" . . . review of a book or article about women composers which criticizes it for not answering a question the reviewer has arbitrarily decided it should. Miss Monson, in her review of Christine Ammer's book, *Unsung: A History of Women in American Music* [November 1980], seems to say that no one should write about women composers without first definitively answering the question, "Why have there been no great women composers?"

What purpose does asking the question or even finding its answer serve? I am reminded of Professor

Shockley's assertions that American blacks are not, genetically, as intelligent as American whites. What would we do if this were, in fact, true? Assign blacks a different place in our ostensibly democratic society? Let us suppose for a moment that women composers are not as talented as their male counterparts. Is the knowledge a prescription for social action? If not, why does the question matter at all?

Every day of the week I am exposed by FM radio to the music of Dussek, Hummel, Spohr, Veracini and a host of other male composers who wrote music which is worthwhile but not great. Since we regularly program music by male composers which is second or even third rate, why must we apologize for programming, or even discussing, music by women composers which may not be of the stature of Beethoven's best works?

Reviewing is by nature vicarious, but one might hope that a review as extensive as Miss Monson's in a periodical as responsible as *MUSICAL AMERICA* might do other than repeat one of the worst old saws uttered since the inception of the women's movement. We do not expect the reviewer to be original, but she might ask herself what her objections to *Unsung* are really all about. Why *must* every book about women composers answer a question for which there is really no meaningful answer? (Either women composers are less talented than male composers or social circumstances have in the past prevented them from doing their best. What more is there to say?)

I sometimes wonder if women composers and those who write about us should all just shut up shop. Then we could be criticized for being weak as well as ungifted.

Nancy Van de Vate
Chairperson

International League of
Women Composers
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HIGHLIGHTS OF JULY

- Thursday 16** Christopher Keene leads the Indiana University Orchestra (Bloomington) in the premiere of *Ars Combinatoria*, a commissioned work by Milton Babbitt.
- Saturday 25** A new production of Stravinsky's *The Rake's Progress* is staged at Santa Fe; Raymond Leppard conducts.
- Sunday 26** Richard Dufallo conducts the Aspen Festival Orchestra in Varese's rarely performed *Ameriques*; the score calls for eleven percussionists and two sets of timpani.

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The Emerson String Quartet

A very special democracy prevails, with spectacular results

Peter K. Mose

The interaction of a string quartet has long fascinated music lovers: a handful of people exchanging sometimes animated, often poignant, and always expressive musical ideas suggests an exceptional personal bond between them. This rapport, obvious in performance, is born of course during countless hours of practice together, as well as during the hectic weeks of touring that a good quartet will put in (playing anywhere from one hundred to two hundred concerts a year). Indeed, the relationship of a quartet is very much a sort of group marriage, and quartet players consistently employ the marital analogy to describe their vocation.

Of course, there are frictions in any marriage, and one often hears stories, not just of frictions, but even of outright animosities within string quartets both past and present. Perhaps mindful of this, when cellist David Finckel was asked to consider joining the young but already established Emerson String Quartet at a personnel change juncture two years ago, he waffled at first: "I was petrified. I hadn't played much chamber music, and I thought, 'My God, it's going to take years and years, and what if the personalities don't work out?' Besides, I wasn't sure I wanted to be married to three men, as it were, when I was already very happily married to my wife, Marie." But violinist Philip Setzer had brought along a bottle of Scotch which the two proceeded to polish off, "and of course the more Scotch I had the more agreeable I became to his suggestion, and so I agreed to audition." The rest is the stuff of chamber music mythos: "The instant we all started playing together, I couldn't believe how great it felt. It was one of the greatest musical experiences of my life."

And so, in 1979, the current Emerson String Quartet was born, a group which has been winning consistently rave reviews across the country for a repertoire embracing Haydn to Davidovsky (the latter's Fourth Quartet was commissioned by the Emerson as part of its Naumburg Chamber Music Prize of 1978).

Eugene Drucker, the other violinist (who along with violist Lawrence Dutton makes up the quartet's other half), has been with the group since its earliest beginnings some ten years ago as a student quartet at Juilliard under Robert Mann's tutelage. Setzer and Drucker are the Emerson's remaining founding members, and together they have an interesting response to those colorful stories about quartet fighting. Says Drucker, "I really think those stories about quartets not getting along are exaggerated. Personally they may not all have been the closest of friends, but obviously deep down they had terrific respect for each other." "Right," Setzer continues, "or else they would never have stayed together."

But indeed the Emersons have both deep respect for and easy friendship with one another. Of their friendship, Finckel says, "We're certainly all good friends; I can't imagine otherwise." And the respect is evident in rehearsal by the tone of the comments: e.g., "One other thing I'd like to say—" or "Does anyone else feel that the eighthths are too slow?" It is not a postured politeness, this rehearsal tone, but an abiding belief in musical democracy.

This democracy extends further, in a way that the Emerson's audiences cannot help but notice: violinists Setzer and Drucker take turns within a concert at playing first and second violin. Such practice, of course, flies in the face of the entire string quartet tradition, a tradition in which the first violinist reigns so clearly supreme that his surname often becomes the ensemble's given name. And the two Emerson violinists readily admit that their switching is not

something for every quartet. Nevertheless, Drucker presents a compelling case for their practice: "The tradition of the quartet from the nineteenth century is to have a very strong first violinist and three accompanists. The idea persists that there is a first violinist personality and a second violinist personality, or at least a sound that is appropriate for each. For Phil and me, essentially we don't believe that either of us is a first violin or a second violin personality. It simply seemed natural to us personally and musically that we share the role of first."

Natural or not, the sharing provoked comment right from the start ("Several people advised us not to try it," admits Drucker), and it provides ready jokes within the foursome ("We even switch seats in restaurants every twenty minutes"). Now, however, it meets only with praise from without, and within the quartet both Dutton and Finckel heartily endorse the arrangement. As the two constant lower parts, violist and cellist believe that the Emerson's character is indeed different according to who plays first; significantly, both of them are equally convinced that the difference helps to maintain vitality in *everyone's* playing. So far, successful as the idea is, it seems to belong solely to the Emersons; no other quartet has yet followed their lead (or their lack of it).

How did the name Emerson come about? The quartet, all of them American born and bred, wanted to show its American musical roots (three of them trained at Juilliard, one at Manhattan School of Music), and thereby get away from the frequent practice of taking a European name, with its seeming pretensions. Also, the question of a permanent name for the group arose during the bicentennial, and they could scarcely think of one with a more American ring than Emerson. But beyond that, specific literary associations? "No, not really," says Finckel. "We simply wanted a name that would say, in short, 'We're truly Americans who have the ability to play European music, and who have an international repertoire.' "

Currently, the Emersons play about 125 concerts a year ("We want to hold the lid there, so we don't burn ourselves out," says Setzer). This summer will find the group spending three weeks each at the Spoleto Festival in Italy and at the Vermont Mozart Festival, as well as playing at Tanglewood and elsewhere. This fall, an exciting project for them will be the first of two collaborations with the great classical-era musicologist H. C. Robbins Landon at Middlebury College. They will perform several Haydn and Mozart quartets, and the following season will return to do a complete Beethoven cycle.

Amidst the Emersons' busy touring schedule, they also find time to be quartet-in-residence at the Hartt School of Music. It is an affiliation the group finds very gratifying, and one that will likely grow still stronger in the future. At present the quartet is on campus four times a year: coaching, giving masterclasses, and—most interestingly—collaborating with student performers. "We enjoy these collaborations very much," Finckel explains, "because we all remember that some of *our* most enriching musical experiences as students were when we played with older, more experienced musicians."

And how do the Emersons assess their future? There is hope for a recording contract, but mostly there is just conviction and dedication to improvement. Says Setzer, "We're continually striving to improve. If the performance of a score isn't at least as good as, and hopefully better than, the way we played it before, we're not satisfied." But Larry Dutton perhaps sums it all up the most succinctly: "We're doing exactly what we want; we just want to do it better."

Clearly, then, the Emerson String Quartet has arrived. They are still young (twenty-seven to thirty), and they have a successful career before them. But they are going about it their own way, and it seems to be the right way. Already, one senses both their independence and their sure trust in their musical intuitions; what could be more fitting tribute to their namesake?

"We're doing exactly what we want; we just want to do it better."

Beni Montresor, Stage Designer Extraordinary

A long collaboration with Menotti is celebrated this year

Dorle J. Soria



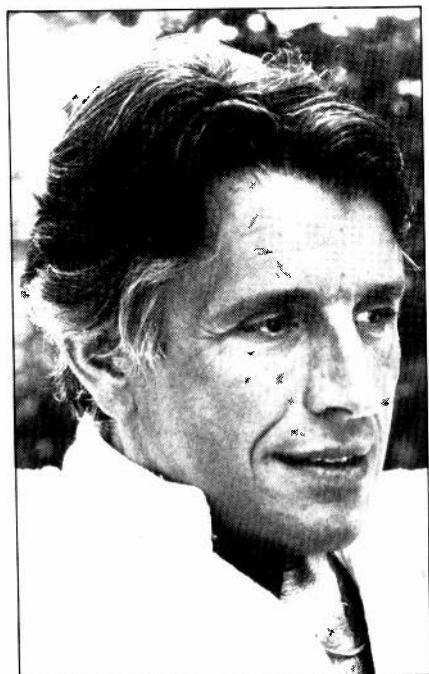
Beni Montresor, a little boy living in a small town in the country near Verona, knew what he wanted to do. "From the time I was born I knew I would be an artist," he says. When he was only three he remembers his grandfather bringing him some *caramelle* and he asked him, please, next time to bring him colored pencils instead of colored candies. "I was born with a pencil in my hand and I have been doing all my life what I did as a child." The church was his first inspiration—the angels and candles and music. "The church made me want to paint. The church was like a theater for me—the incense, the altars and flowers, the jeweled vestments of the saints. To understand this you must be Italian. Theater is in the blood of the Italian." There was no radio then and no recordings in the Montresor household. "I heard my first opera music from people singing when they went to work in the morning. I remember hearing '*Di quella pira*' from *Trovatore*." Filled with these sights and sounds, the boy would invent plays and make theaters of cardboard and paint little stage sets. "I still do the same sort of thing. Only now I am paid for it!"

The Montresor career, as stage designer of opera and ballet and illustrator of children's books, also as writer and producer of films which have both shocked and delighted critics, is now twenty years old. The anniversary was celebrated for over two months this past season at the Lincoln Center Library where, in the Main Gallery, an exhibition was mounted called "The Magic of Montresor." It attracted a daily stream of opera fans, costume designers, students, and passers-by, dazzled by the display. It was an extraordinary and radiant show—Beni Montresor's contributions to the opera scene: stage models, set and costume designs, and actual costumes. Opera houses from all over the world had contributed to it, from the Metropolitan, New York City Opera, San Francisco Opera, and Houston Opera to London's Royal Opera House, the Paris Opéra, Munich's Staatsoper, Le Théâtre du Capitole in Toulouse, Rio's Teatro Municipal, and—from Italy—La Scala, the Fenice of Venice, and the Spoleto Festival. Among costumes were those worn by Sherrill Milnes and George London in *Nabucco*, Joan Sutherland in *Esclarmonde*, Nicolai Gedda and Grace Bumbry in *Benvenuto Cellini*, Renata Tebaldi and Franco Corelli in the Met's *Gioconda*, José Carreras and Geraint Evans in *L'Elisir d'Amore*.

The Montresor anniversary was also appropriately marked at the end of May at the Charleston Spoleto Festival. Menotti's seventieth birthday was being celebrated—a bit in advance, as the actual date is this July 7—and his *The Last Savage* had a new production in his honor. Montresor was invited to design the opera. It was a natural choice, since he had done the sets and costumes for its Metropolitan Opera premiere in 1964, after which he and Menotti had collaborated on a charming children's book about the work. It was also natural that Montresor should be in Charleston with Menotti on this special occasion, for it was Menotti who had launched him on his career.

The Countess Paolozzi—an American who from the start has been a staunch supporter and friend of Spoleto—brought the young artist to the composer and said: "I think he should do *Vanessa*." Menotti looked at Montresor's work and looked at Montresor and agreed. Montresor is hard to resist. He has, even now, a youthful charm and freshness, a candid, attractive smile, and dark good looks which elude his glasses and gray-streaked hair. And so, at the Spoleto Festival of 1961—twenty years ago—Beni Montresor was designer for the Barber opera, which was a great visual as well as musical and dramatic success. John Ardoin wrote for this magazine: "The most impressive sets and costumes were by Beni Montresor, worthy of the finest operatic stage." The Montresor career had begun with a splash.

Continued on page 10



Montresor: "The church was like a theater for me."

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"I even listen [to an opera] without thinking about the libretto. The design must come from the music."

For a time it looked as if he would succumb to his own success. He was an immediate celebrity. He was showered with invitations. He was sought after by society—his romantic Italian aura lent glamor to a dinner party. Lucky the hostess who captured him. Everything he did made news. We remember the opening night of the new Metropolitan at Lincoln Center in 1966. The audience was as spectacular as the sets Zeffirelli had designed for *Anthony and Cleopatra*. Photographers dashed from Ford to Rockefeller, from Mrs. John F. Kennedy to Mrs. Lyndon Johnson, from tiara-crowned ladies to medal-hung diplomats. Suddenly in the midst of the crowds, they spied an irresistibly photogenic couple—it was Beni Montresor with a young assistant whom he had outfitted in a striped, jeweled, shawled, full-skirted dress, a leftover costume from the new *Gioconda* which he had just designed for the Metropolitan. Shortly after he was again in the news, now from England, featured in typical society-column prose which reported that "Beni was having the most wonderful time letting London lionize him" and that "everybody was talking about his sets and costumes for *Benvenuto Cellini*, such golden glowing color, everything Roman and Renaissance and ravishing." He was the lion of every party, "including the cosy kind with loads of spaghetti cooked by the guest of honor (what else can you expect from an Italian!) and such guests as Princess Margaret and Lord Snowdon."

Looking back, Montresor explains: "I was fascinated. I wanted to try everything. I entered the golden palace of the King. But I was lucky. I got out of it alive. I could have been imprisoned there forever." In later years he learned that there were also pleasures and advantages in solitude. In the catalogue of his Library exhibition he is quoted by his friend Brendan Gill as calling himself a "realistic optimist" and saying: "I feel very much loved, and I am grateful to be loved, but I also know that if the people who love me were to be taken away from me I would find others to replace them. I think we should learn how to live as if we were in a desert. In a desert, if you come on a few blades of grass, or if it rains a few drops of water, you have reason to be thankful."

We saw Beni Montresor the night of the Lincoln Center opening, which was a Metropolitan Opera Guild gala benefit. Velvet-jacketed, bowing and beaming, he was receiving congratulations from all sides, surrounded by board members and fluttering lady admirers, at the end of the dinner in happy conversation with the British Ambassador. But the day before he had been worried. We had gone to the Library to talk with him but found him, though warm in his greeting, distracted in his manner. He kept dashing back and forth, a quick-moving figure in casual slacks and tweed jacket, a heavy leather bag slung over one shoulder. "I am going crazy," he said. "I have called Rio de Janeiro over thirty times. The Bumbry *Norma* costumes have not come. And they are so beautiful!"

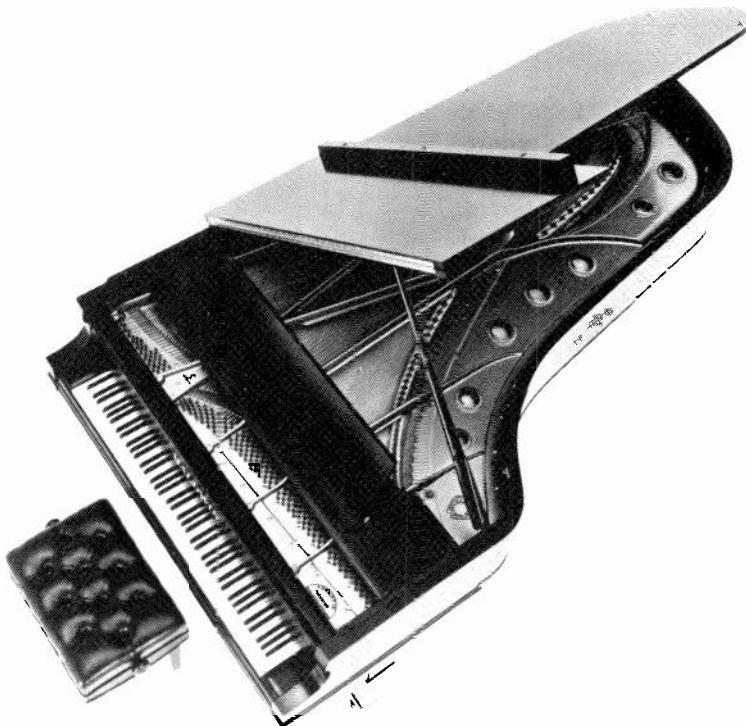
We did manage to talk a bit between crises. Yes, he loved opera best though he has worked in many fields. He had done plays and films and children's books, some with his own texts; one, *The Witches of Venice*, won the prestigious Caldecott Prize. In fact, he has had many prizes and honors. His ballet, *Hommage to Picasso*, which starred Carla Fracci at La Scala, won the 1979 Massine Prize for the best ballet design of the year. His *Salome* for the Toulouse Opera won the French Government's 1979 award for the best opera production in France. And last November he had been decorated with the order of "Grande Cavaliere" by Italy for his distinguished contributions to the arts. He was pleased: "I don't think there is another *Cavaliere* as young as me."

He likes best to design for opera "because I adore opera." Working



Sherrill Milnes in *Nabucco* sporting a Montresor design

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on an opera takes him a long time. "I often spend weeks, even months, listening to an opera. I even listen without thinking about the libretto. The music must come first. The design must come from the music. I try to translate the music visually."

What operas are close to him? "I reflect a mixture of Wagner and Strauss—they are my great operatic loves—and Puccini and Debussy. I see music in color. Debussy, for instance, is blue-green." About Mozart he once said: "I don't know what an angel is, but for me it is the most beautiful image there is. When I listened to Mozart, at a certain point I saw three angels." Verdi? "Yes, Verdi. Of course. But I think of him as a grandfather, so solid, so healthy." What operas would he like to do? "*Don Giovanni*. It is the dream of my life. But I must try hard to be equal to the subject. It is not just the story of a man and woman. It is a man in search of himself. And I would love to do *Rosenkavalier* as I see it, especially the opening. You know how it is always done. The Marschallin wakes up after a night of love. She must let her young lover go. She must face another day. But she would like to linger in the darkness of her dreams. But what do they do? Suddenly the curtains are pulled back and through the window you see all Vienna in the sunlight. Day should not be allowed to intrude so harshly."

But here reality intruded upon us. His help was needed. Where were the bows, the jewels, the crown? Where was this picture to hang? However, we met again a few days later, in an atmosphere of domestic calm. Beni Montresor had invited us to lunch.

He lives on a quiet street, in a Stanford White-designed building off lower Fifth Avenue, his home for almost twenty years. Very early in life he had gone to Venice to live and study painting. But, as he told critic Peter G. Davis, "I grew up with, not one, but three thousand domineering fathers. I was surrounded by Tintoretto, Titian, Veronese, Carpaccio—



Montresor's set design for Munich's *Aida*

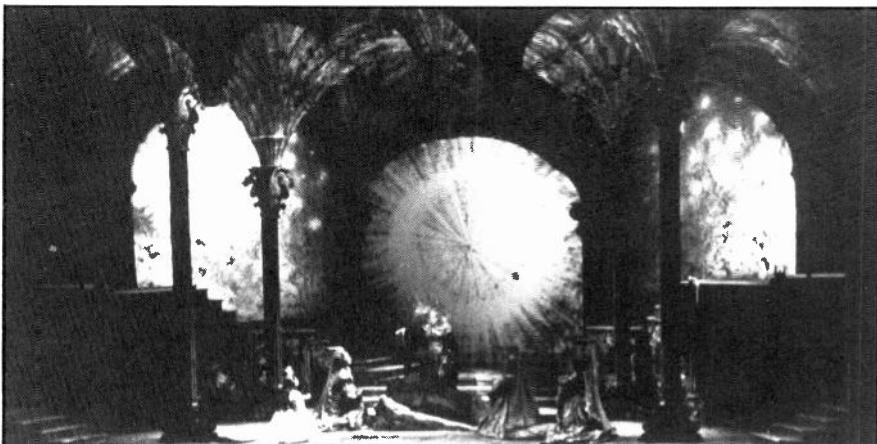
artistic giants, all of them. I couldn't help thinking that they hadn't left even a little place for me." But the daily scenes appealed to his theatrical blood. "I would see people at their windows calling down to persons in the street, talking to them about their personal problems—something you cannot imagine in an Anglo-Saxon society where everything is kept inside." However, to writer John Gruen, he explained why he left. "To me the streets and canals of Venice were like long, mysterious corridors. The squares and piazzas were dank, claustrophobic rooms. Finally I couldn't bear living in Venice any longer." And so he moved to Rome, where for some years he worked at film designs for masters such as Fellini, De Sica, Rossellini. Then, out of the blue, the chance came to go to New York. He came, he liked it, he stayed. "I am a Venetian living in New York." And, he says, he is fortunate in his neighbors, the composer Elliott Carter and his wife, "adorable neighbors."

His apartment is not what we would have expected. There are no pictures on the walls, no curtains at the windows, none of the lights and mirrors and colors which distinguish his designs. It is quiet, stripped, serene, uncluttered except for an occasional stage model or plant or antique chest. The kitchen is shining white. It was just painted. He said: "My head is so full. My house must have air, be empty." We sat down at a heavy

wooden table in the center of the kitchen while Beni Montresor finished stirring a pan of chicken and rice. He served us from the stove, then sat down with us. The table was simply set with colorful mats, plates and glasses. There was a bottle of California red wine. Later there would be ice cream from a container, spiked with a dash of vodka and very good. We ate quietly, talked comfortably.

We asked about his name, a name which sounds appropriately magical. "Very Biblical," he said. "Beni is for Benedetto which means 'blessed' and Montresor is 'my treasure.' It is French in origin. The family came originally from France. The old Montresor Castle still exists." He brought out a colored postcard. "Very romantic, isn't it?" He had visited it once. "A Polish family now owns it. They showed me around. There was jewelry two hundred years old. I think perhaps my ancestors were originally Jews. Perhaps they left France to escape the Revolution. Jews often took the names of the places where they were born." He continued with his fantasies. "Poe wrote a story, *The Cask of Amontillado*, about a nobleman called Montresor. A ferocious man—very different from me. And near Wall Street there is a statue of a Captain George Montresor. I don't know who he was but I don't think I would have a relative on Wall Street."

We said we had read that he had been described as "half prince,



The Magic Flute at the New York City Opera

half farmer." He nodded. "Yes, my head is in the stars, my feet are on the ground. But I like to think I am half sun, half moon. The farmer is the sun. The artist is the moon."

Born lucky

Beni Montresor was born March 11, 1926. "I was born lucky, under the sign of Aries. My rising sign is Cancer. My moon is in Scorpio." Our astrology being limited (except that we were always pleased when Callas would say "You and I, Dorle, we're both Sagittarians and we understand each other"), we made no comment. But we thought to ourselves that March 31 was also the birthday of Haydn and he was not at all like the mercurial Montresor. But probably Haydn's "rising sign" was different.

Certainly, like the industrious Haydn, Montresor believes in working for a living. He says: "People don't appreciate what they have any more. They have too much. It is too easy. All I can say is that life is so short and there is so much I want to do. I want to do more films, many more operas. I am lucky. I know why I am living. In spite of everything, we must always say 'thank you' to life."

Many projects are in the works. There is a new *Butterfly* for the New York City Opera and, for the year after next, *Il Piccolo Marat* of Mascagni for the Metropolitan. There will be another film, "a movie for six people. I am hoping to get John Gielgud and Ingrid Bergman. It is not religious

but it is called *In the House of the Lord*." There are two Oscar Wilde fairy tales, *The Birthday of the Infanta* and *The Happy Prince* which Montresor is illustrating and which will be published here as well as in France and Italy and probably England. He is also finishing a ballet story for *The Birthday of the Infanta* which is being talked of as a co-production between La Scala and the Paris Opéra.

It is now July and Beni Montresor is at his second home in Italy, at work. "Yes, I have also a summer house near Verona, where I was born." He showed us a snapshot of a beautiful colonnaded terrace. "It looks down on the valley below. Far off there is a little hill, like in a Carpaccio." He is well taken care of. "I have my 'vestals,' two sisters-in-law and many good friends. Last summer I invited about thirty people to lunch. There were the ballerina Carla Fracci and Paolo Bortoluzzi, the choreographer, and singers from La Scala, all kinds of people, and they had such a good time that they stayed on all afternoon and for dinner and they didn't leave until two in the morning." He added hospitably: "But you must come. You must."

That was Beni Montresor, the artist who needs solitude, the man who loves people, the "Wise Child"—as he once called himself—who believes that "this moment is the good moment." Picasso might have been thinking of him when he said: "It takes a long time to be young." **MA**

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Holmes in Houston's *Lady*



Scott Heinzerling in *Aureole*

it has many more poses in it than actual steps; emotional weight comes more from the dancers' facial expressions than from the essential expressivity of the movement. All of these characteristics applied to *Songs* and its meagerness was not rendered less noticeable by the presence in the pit of soprano Lynn Griebling and a live orchestra under the direction of James Slater. The lack of technical challenge left the real capacities of the dancers (led by Suzanne Longley, Dennis Poole, and Andrea Vodehnal) undisclosed.

Things did not look up much in the Tetley piece despite a striking Nadine Baylis set which suggested a clearing framed in steely vines, grotesquely bent, and a Webern string quartet vibrating with in-check tension. Tetley's Graham-based style seemed imitated rather than assimilated by the dancers; you wished, particularly in the case of William Pizzuto as the central male figure, that the performers would stretch themselves fully, giving the movement the luxuriance it can command. Only Suzanne Longley as the stark and stoic female principal projected the style with any assurance.

1976, Houston.

He has staged for Houston full-length classics like *Swan Lake* and *The Sleeping Beauty* (and intends his own *Peer Gynt* this year). He has stewarded the growth of the Houston Ballet Academy, the school from which more than a third of the members of the present company are graduates. He has forwarded the professional aspirations of the company to the gratifying point of forty-two weeks of consecutive work annually; the budget of the Houston Ballet in 1980 totaled \$3,350,000.

A non-ballet

These achievements, while admirable along pedagogical, administrative, and producing lines, fall short of true creativity, a conclusion which was reinforced as Stevenson's *Four Last Songs* established itself as a non-ballet. A non-ballet is one which depends heavily on a first-class score, usually of a melancholy nature; its theme is weighty—Love, Death, Life;



The Houston Ballet, the last-but-one in the Ballet America series presented at the Brooklyn Academy of Music (April 7-12), made its local debut with an ill-chosen and, I hope, atypical program: Ben Stevenson's *Four Last Songs* (Richard Strauss), Glen Tetley's *Praeludium* (Webern), and John Cranko's *The Lady and the Fool* (Verdi). Not until the lively and entertaining Cranko piece began did the monotonous tone established by the first two works show any signs of lifting.

Stevenson, English born and trained, with an underground reputation as one of the best "Bluebirds" of his day, danced with the Royal Ballet as a young man, and since 1968, when he arrived in the United States, has had the usual peripatetic career which seems to be the lot of ballet masters: New York (Harkness Youth Ballet), Washington, D.C. (National Ballet of Washington), Chicago (Chicago Ballet) and, since

Cranko's "Lady"

The Cranko's piece, choreographed originally for the Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet in 1954, turned out to be overlong but artfully put together around a score arranged by Charles McKerras from Verdi operas ranging from *Il Finto Stanislau* to *Don Carlo*. Its slight libretto—involving a beauty, two street clowns, an extravagant ball, true (if unlikely) love found, and friendship preserved—served for a variety of dance in both classical and *demi-caractère* styles. It is no wonder that Ninette de Valois,

seeing Cranko work successfully on a small scale with all the elements necessary to a ballet spectacular engaged him a year or two later for the first all-British, full-length ballet production of *The Prince of the Pagodas*.

The Lady and the Fool presented the dancers at their most winning; as La Capricciosa, Jennifer Holmes warmed up to Dennis Poole's Moon-dog until their final *pas de deux* took on a sweetness and rapture that was most touching; Dorio Pérez wrung considerable pathos from Bootface. The whole company danced with admirable verve and I particularly noticed Li Cunxin, a young Chinese student studying in Houston, who gave the Prince of Arroganza a great deal of panache and the audience a good look at the best multiple pirouettes of the evening.

Poll's Ohio Ballet

The Ohio Ballet, the Akron-based company which directly pre-

ceded the Houston troupe in the BAM series (March 12-15), has been directed by Heinz Poll since he founded it as an eight-member student group called the Chamber Ballet in 1968. Still small-scale—it numbers twenty-one dancers who work a forty-week annual contract—the repertoire is largely choreographed by Poll who, German-born and trained, arrived in New York in 1964 via the exotic route of the (East) Berlin State Opera Ballet and the National Ballet of Chile.

It is a repertoire which in its most successful aspects still reflects its chamber group origins. Poll's best pieces, *Schubert Waltzes* and *Summer Night* (Chopin), call for small casts and, particularly in the Schubert, he composes choreographic miniatures in a lyric-romantic vein, resembling in variety and intricacy (if not in depth) a ballet like Eliot Feld's *Intermezzo*. Even when Poll takes a stab at an "American" piece like *Scenes from*

Childhood, he chooses Schumann over, say, Copland; when he produces an outside choreographer's work he tends to favor the lyric vein also, as in Paul Taylor's *Aureole*. This limpid work, staged by Nicholas Gunn, teetered from wonderful to abysmal, mostly because of the male dancers' incomplete assimilation of Taylor's style and their lack of the stamina required in their roles. The girls, however—Jane Startzman, Catherine Iwaniw, and Tricia Vandor—captured the essentials with delicacy and understanding. With more coaching and performance experience *Aureole* could become the gem of the company repertoire; it is within the company's grasp to do right by it.

Hard & soft

What might be called the hard and the soft approaches to modern dance were simultaneously on view at the City Center in April with the Lar Lubovitch Dance Com-

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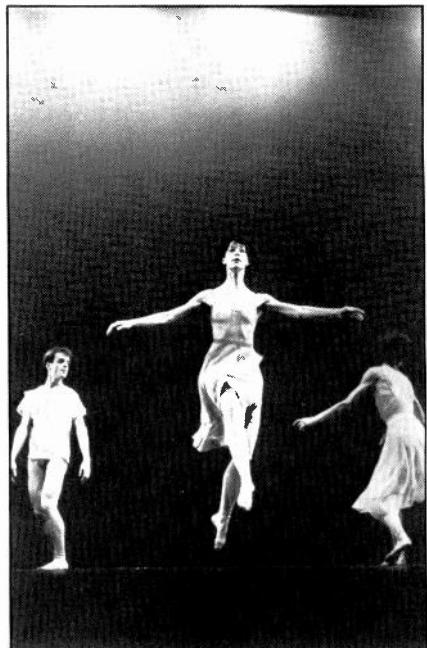
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Cavalcade: a New York City premiere by Lubovitch



Bequest with Foltz, Levey, Koren

pany at street level on the main stage and the Viola Farber Dance Company performing downstairs as part of the new Dance Umbrella series in an area called The Space.

If Farber's choreography in its energy and thrust can be likened to the throw of a javelin, Lubovitch's by contrast seems like the unreeling of a spool of silk. The sensuous aspect of his work is crystallized in *Marimba*, a company work set to the warm monotony of Steve Reich's *Music for Mallet Instruments, Voices, and Organ*. Here dancers as a group seem to melt rather than move across the floor in slow-motion progression, while individuals appear less to propel than to uncurl themselves in space. This can become deeply monotonous, as it threatens to do in *Marimba*, but Lubovitch pulls it back from that brink with a shift in pattern or a change in dynamics. In the new *Cavalcade* (also set to Reich) he achieves much the same result by spiking the enveloping softness of the piece with a series of short—almost violent—solos.

Seductive as these works can be, I prefer the odd-ball and original humor Lubovitch musters for the new *Beau Danube*. In this one the curtain goes up on a summery backdrop of a

formal garden against which are posed Norah Reynolds, Rob Besserer, John Dayger, and Douglas Varone. For no discernible or meteorological reason it is also snowing, and as the Strauss waltz surges, this *ménage à quatre* behaves like a demented four-part pretzel. The group shifts constantly but never fragments, and within a minute or two relationships are established and dis-established so that it is perfectly clear who is interested in whom and who is not interested at all. *Beau Danube* comes off as a *tour de force*, but better than that, it is the funniest piece of the season.

Farber's class act

Viola Farber's company probably has as minuscule a budget as any of the small modern companies, but Farber barely notices as she proceeds to put on a class act. For instance, every piece on her program was accompanied by live music, ranging from the weird but stimulating sounds produced on a battery of percussion instruments by composer Jean-Pierre Drouet to the Riverside Trio playing Mendelssohn.

It was to the Mendelssohn (Trio in D minor, No. 1, Op. 49) that Farber set a new company piece called

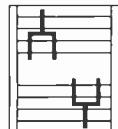
Bequest and in it rather over-reached herself: invention flagged over a dangerous stretch of the score and I question whether Farber's high-intensity approach—subdued here but still seeming to lurk in wait for an opportunity to pounce—is suitable to so romantic and lyric a partner. On the other hand, *Tea for Three*, another new work, played marvelously against the unexpectedness of Bizet's *Jeux d'enfants* suite (in a four-hand arrangement for pianists Alan Evans and Moshe Goldberg). This was Farber in her best crazed-waif style, with guest Sarah Stackhouse as a perfect foil. Farber is especially appealing in her dotty roles because somehow it always seems like such a rational way for her to be behaving.

The new opening work, *Bright Stream*, was cheerful in temper and athletic in action and appropriately set to composer Alan Evans' pop-oriented piano score. However, the most impressive item on the program was Farber's *Ledge*, created in 1979 in inspired partnership with composer Drouet. Rich in ritualistic intensity, it was danced with hair-raising fervor by Michael Cichetti, Robert Foltz, Anne Koren, Karen Levey, and Joel Luecht. MA

Performance Art: The Secret's in the Mix

Art, music, and theater combine and complement

Joan La Barbara



There is an area of music that fuses so well with its counterpart in the art world that often the work can be classified as art or music or both; it is the area of "performance." Years ago we might have called some of these events "happenings" or "music/theater pieces," but now the term used most frequently is "performance," sometimes "performance art." Over the past few months I've attended a number of "performances," illustrating the mixing of many elements that is part and parcel of the genre.

"She's Wild"

She's Wild (performed to a sold-out house in San Francisco's Performance Gallery in January and later at The Kitchen Center in New York), combined elements of theater, music, stories and poetry, props and slides. The participants worked in the laid-back Bay Area style in which they made a studied attempt never to appear to know where they were headed on stage and never seemed to make any intentional action. The music combined electronics with soft cowboy-style country rock, and the verbal element included spoken texts, song lyrics, and staged dialogue.

The performance began very casually. Taped sounds of animals and ambient noises were already playing as the audience entered. The cast was sitting around a table, talking, sometimes walking about in a somewhat self-conscious manner to perform a task. A woman approaches the stand-up microphone and recites in an effective sing-song manner, accompanying herself with a cocktail shaker filled with pebbles—a speech-



Behrman: electronic wizardry

Alan Tannenbaum

song about a party, seemingly simple and innocuous at first. Then her manner changes abruptly to evil mixed with fear and timidity: "It's the Donner Party!" The audience roars and we're off into an entertaining, satirical romp that waves America's pioneer cannibal troupe like a banner.

The satire goes far further, though it does spend a good deal of time on the Donner history. One curious segment had a man, woman, and small child bundled in overcoats and blankets, huddled near a projected slide telling the story of the mishap. Unfortunately, the slide was projected too small to be readable by most of the audience. Many of the sketches had to do with excess, a woman talking about how many fur coats she owned, another talking about her packs of horses, another about record contracts—all women,

all tinged with success but tainted by the manner in which the success was achieved (strange concepts for a presumably feminist group of writers, Terri Hanlon and Fern Friedman of the Evah Sisters, a California-based performance group).

Another strangely self-satiric note was sounded in the cowboy song about how to keep outsiders out, how to keep Easterners from invading the Western domain. "Why, let them know we eat meat. Human meat!" Enough to scare any life-protecting, self-respecting invader away. One wondered if they weren't alluding to the self-protective artistic community in the Bay Area and the sense of many Eastern artists that their work goes unnoticed, their presence unacknowledged in the area. The cannibal joke was carried into most sketches, including a satire about consciousness-raising adult seminars that none of the participants dared leave since the leader was known to eat a particular meat.

Electronic wizardry

David Behrman and Paul De Ma-Drinis, two notorious dabblers in electronic wizardry, brought forth their latest gadgets. Behrman has invented a kind of stick instrument resembling an electric bass guitar, which is battery powered and has all of the electronics in a small, neat, see-through plexiglass box; it is played by touching small metal wires on the fingerboard. The wires, when touched, interrupt whatever music the box is putting forth, and a new "tune" is heard. It was designed as an instrument that "anyone can play," according to Behrman.

Continued on page 24

Music of the Americas

OAS recordings: a gold mine for public schools

Charles B. Fowler



One reward of the immigration of Latin American and Caribbean people to the United States is the musical culture they bring with them. These countries and islands have a captivating and compelling popular, classical, and folk music culture that easily holds its own in the world's repertoire. Schools and colleges can draw upon this vast resource to broaden musical tastes and to teach cultural understanding and respect.

A series of excellent recordings of this music is being produced by the Organization of American States (OAS). These recordings, reasonably priced at \$3, should be in every music library, and many of them would provide excellent material for use in public schools. Ten albums have been produced since 1977, and more are in process. Efrain Paesky, producer of the series for the OAS, says, "At present we don't have much interchange between our countries. Through this series it is possible to make the many fine composers and musicians in these countries known in the United States and throughout the Americas."

Educational purposes

Paesky acknowledges that "One of the most important purposes of the series is for educational use. The recordings provide people with the opportunity to know the culture of other countries. Our aims," he says, "are not commercial, but we do strive for quality. The music and the performers must represent the best whether the field is popular, classical, or folk." The recordings released to date give admirable representation to the music of OAS's twenty-eight-member countries.

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Caribbean songs reveal African-influenced percussion

When it comes to ethnic or folk music, of course, authenticity is everything. Here the choice of performers and music is stunning. The Singers of the National Dance Theatre Company of Jamaica prove just right for the album *Traditional Songs of the Caribbean* (OAS 004). These songs, many in English, are delightful and catchy with appropriate accompaniments. The liner notes—unfortunately there are not more in the series like these—tell us, "The music of the Caribbean has developed as a result of the polyglot peoples of the area, but it is to Africa that we owe the dominance of percussion—the polyrhythms and polymetric organization, the call and response type sing-

ing found both in ritual and social traditions." This recording would brighten anyone's musical collection.

Los Mensajeros del Paraguay (OAS 006) presents one of the most popular folk groups in Paraguay singing thirteen popular songs, many of which are lively polkas, galops, and guaranias. The group consists of two guitars, a harp, and a singer, although everyone sings. These songs ring with the vigor of rural and forest life in the tropics.

Soledad Bravo, a folksinger who has been compared to Joan Baez, sings *Cantares de Venezuela* (OAS 010). She interprets with earthy assertiveness the tender and violent emotions of Venezuelan popular songs.

NELLY AND JAIME INGRAM
DUO PIANISTS (PANAMA)

INFANTE CORDERO POULENC PINTO

STEREO
OAS-003

ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES
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Panamanian pianists: scintillating discoveries

Her voice, which has the ebony richness of an alto clarinet, is backed up elegantly by guitars.

The classical slant

Among the classically oriented recordings is the *Symphony Orchestra of Brazil* (OAS 002), a finely hewn group, conducted by Isaac Karabtchevsky. While the selections include the familiar *Bachianas Brasileiras No. 4* of Heitor Villa-Lobos, the recording also presents two almost unknown works, *In Memoriam* by Marlor Nobre and *Asymptotic Interactions* by Claudio Santoros, one of the most widely recognized living Brazilian composers. The first of these appears to be an eerie probing

into the mysteries of death. Nobre's music and orchestration are colorful, inventive, and wholly refreshing. Santoros' piece, composed in Paris in 1969, is an engaging adventure in timbers that evokes the feeling of electronic music without using electronic sounds. Since such music is rarely programmed, it is a service—and a distinct treat—to have it available in recorded form.

Raquel Boldorini (OAS 004), a pianist from Uruguay, plays music by three composers from her country (Ipuche-Riva, Tosar, and Cluzeau-Mortet), and pieces by Plaza-Alfonzo (Venezuela), Ponce (Mexico), and Ginastera (Argentina). As Peter G. Davis said in his *New York Times* re-

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view, "Miss Boldorini's bejewelled playing could hardly be more expert or sympathetically in tune with the material."

Another recording presents *Nelly and Jaime Ingram* (OAS 003), duo pianists from Panama playing a program of music by Manuel Infante of Spain, Roque Cordero of Panama (now professor of composition at Illinois State University), Octavio Pinto of Brazil, and Francis Poulenc of France—the last evidently because there is not an abundance of Spanish music for two instruments. There are some scintillating new discoveries here, played with much spark and verve.

In commemoration of the *International Year of the Child* (OAS 007), the D.C. Youth Orchestra is featured in a special program of music written especially for young musicians by outstanding composers of the Americas. The Honorable Alejandro Orfila, Secretary General of the OAS, says, "This recording is an excellent example by which to stimulate the creation of youth symphony orchestras in all of the countries of the Americas."

In addition to these discs there are *Latin American Choral Songs* (OAS 009) performed by the Chamber Choir of the National Symphony Orchestra of Costa Rica; *Latin American Art Songs* (OAS 001) sung by soprano Carmina Gallo accompanied by Jaime Leon on the piano, both Colombian artists; and the *National Orchestra of Spain* (OAS 008) playing four works by older generation Spanish composers. The strong cultural ties between Latin America and Spain justify Spanish music being included in the series.

Discs for 1981

The OAS plans to produce ten new recordings each year, an ambitious undertaking. This year's albums will feature the works of *Three Chilean Composers* performed by the Symphony Orchestra of the University of Chile; *The Classical Guitar in Latin America* which includes works



Los Mensajeros del Paraguay: ringing with tropical vigor

from Mexico, Uruguay, Venezuela, Cuba, Argentina, and Brazil performed by the winner of the International Contest for Guitar; a popular recording by the *Orquesta del Tango de Buenos Aires*, which includes some of the finest musicians in Argentina; and a recording of the October *Hommage to Alberto Ginastera* at the John F. Kennedy Center which will include his Sonata for Cello, Op. 49 and his *Serenata* for Chamber Orchestra, Baritone, and Cello.

The educational value of the series could be substantially enhanced if more background information were included. "The original idea," Paesky says, "was to have a booklet with each recording, but our budget made this impossible. We are planning to have prominent musical authorities in the various countries write about their music and musicians." This will be a welcome addition to what is a major and highly worthwhile effort.

Such efforts on behalf of the arts are not new to the OAS. Almost every Wednesday evening since 1934, this organization has presented a free concert in the Pan American Union's Hall of the Americas introducing many performing artists of the Americas to Washington audiences, as well as the works of many of the hemisphere's composers.

Certainly one of the most spectacular of OAS' musical accomplishments has been the organization of a regular Inter-American Music Festival about every three years to showcase the new works of many composers of the Americas. The first festival took place in 1958. Many compositions have received world premieres during the festival and many other works have been heard for the first time in the United States.

In addition to these activities, the OAS published a considerable amount of music by composers of the Americas from 1957 to 1975 in issues of its Inter-American Music Bulletin. The OAS has been instrumental in advancing the art of music and improving the condition of artists and composers of the Americas.

Much of this activity was initiated by Guillermo Espinosa, former chief of the OAS technical unit on music, a dynamic man who retired in 1976. Paesky, an Argentinian, succeeded Espinosa and has been attempting to carry on his fine work. With this recording series as an indication, he will do well.

The series, or individual discs, can be ordered directly from the Technical Unit on Performing Arts, Organization of American States, 17th Street and Constitution Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006. **MA**

Patrick J. Smith
Editor

The Letters of Claudio Monteverdi.
Translated from the Italian and introduced by Denis Stevens
 Cambridge University Press. 443 pages, \$45.
Reviewed by Nicholas Kenyon



Monteverdi's correspondence—126 letters, in this new edition—is the most comprehensive, illuminating, and exciting collection that survives from any pre-eighteenth-century composer. In later ages Mozart and Busoni would show in their letters something of the same ability to capture the pressing everyday concerns of composers, revealing the circumstances in which they worked, their opinions of colleagues, patrons, performers, and—fleetingly, sometimes unintentionally—their creative worries, hopes, and aspirations. But Monteverdi stands alone in earlier music in having had so much of his letter-writing preserved for posterity.

A reliable English edition of Monteverdi's letters has been needed for very many years. A primary problem has been that there existed no reliable Italian edition. When Denis Arnold and Nigel Fortune published *The Monteverdi Companion* in 1968 (Norton), they wrote that a comprehensive English edition of the letters "is long overdue, and indeed is in active preparation." To fill the gap, they translated some forty letters—but had to rely on the Italian transcriptions of Malipiero (published in 1929), whose inadequacies had long been realized. Denis Stevens has gone back to the sources, and has transcribed every letter anew from the Italian, a task which involves a formidable amount of interpretation, sensitivity to handwriting styles, to punctuation conventions, and above all an awareness of Monteverdi's quite special sort of eloquence.

At all points, Stevens defends

Monteverdi against the charge of being unintelligible or confusing; he has, says Stevens, simply been misunderstood: "All the so-called 'Monteverdi errors' derive from scholars who transcribed his handwriting incorrectly." It is unfortunate, then, that economics prevented Stevens from including his own Italian versions of the letters along with his translations, so that they could be compared with extant Italian transcriptions. Page references are provided to all Italian printed versions of the correspondence, and the fact that Domenico de' Paoli's Italian edition, more satisfactory than the others, appeared while Stevens was still at work, in 1973, also lessens the need for the Italian originals. But it is still a little deflating to be told simply that wherever Stevens's English does not match published Italian versions, "the explanation may be found in some word or phrase which has consistently been misread."

Stevens' work has taken a long time. (As he puts it, somewhat oratorically, "The foolhardiness of superannuated youth persuaded me that the task could be finished in fifteen months, but a life divided between teaching, research, performing, travelling, and a zestful family decreed that the term would be fifteen years.") It was worth waiting for. The thoroughness of the work, and the sheer density of detail in the accompanying commentaries, persuades one that Stevens has weighed the meaning and the importance of every tiny phrase and inflection in these letters. He may not be correct in every instance: only time, and Italian scholars, will tell. Each of the 126 letters has a separate introduction; where there is a considerable time-span since the previous letter, he fills in the biographical blanks: letter 82 has five-and-a-half small print pages to set the thirteen-line letter in context. Personalities are introduced; features of local life that have puzzled other commentators—clothes, money, feast days—are all meticulously explained. Most important of all, the

letters have been translated in a style which makes no allowance for mere ease of reading, so that all Monteverdi's quirks of phrasing, sentence and paragraph construction are preserved. Comparing these translations with the few in *The Monteverdi Companion* (which served an invaluable function in their time), the immediate impression is that slightly bland, balanced writing becomes revealed, in Stevens' new version, as spiky, intense, passionate, rushing to make its points, full of strength and conviction. And so the man comes to life.

"Suddenly from a field adjoining the main road there came two men of a brownish complexion, not much beard, and of medium height, with a long musket apiece (the flint-wheel type) and its firing pin down. . . . And making me kneel down as soon as I had alighted, one of the two who had the muskets demanded my purse, and other demanded the cases from the courier. . . ." (13)

"The very great need in which I find myself, Most Serene Lord, having necessarily to provide my poor house with bread, wine, and many other things; and being impoverished mainly by having to educate my sons . . . for whom, on account of the dangerous liberty here in Venice, I have been bound to maintain a tutor, and in addition by the high cost of living which prevails in the city—all this impels me to beg you . . . that you do me the favour of ordering that at least the money from the past three semesters be handed over to my father-in-law. . . ." (20)

"I, Claudio Monteverdi, Director of Music at St Mark's . . . come humbly unto your presence to set forth to you how Domenico Allegati, a singer at St Mark's, a bass—yesterday morning, before the great door of that church . . . spoke these exact words: "The Director of

Music belongs to a race of big cut-throats, a thieving, cheating he-goat...." (125)

Plus cq change: muggings, inflation, the cost of private education, and rebellious musicians are all here. In the early letters we read of Monteverdi's humiliations at Mantua as he tries to obtain money due to him; in later letters, when Mantua tries to tempt him back, his security of tenure at St Mark's and his freedom of action are contrasted vividly and eloquently with life under the Gonzaga rule, where a change of ruler or just a change in mood could mean that he would be out of a job. Monteverdi is wily about money, and sensitive to the fluctuating exchange rate of Italian currencies (*plus cq change*....).

The tribulations of everyday life provide one aspect of Monteverdi activities revealed in his letters; the practical business of performing his music is another. In the long exchanges with Striggio over the opera *La finta pazza Licori*, we find revealing comments on singers:

"I took note of what your Lordship proposed for the young bass ... although it is true that he performs with assurance, he sings nevertheless in a somewhat melancholy manner; and regarding the ornaments, he does not separate them too well, because he fails most of the time to join the chest voice to the middle voice...."

And there follows a fascinating disquisition on the importance of a smooth link between chest and middle registers in producing ornamentation that "comes off both sweetly and separated." (Stevens' transcription has altered considerably the intelligibility of this passage.) We read about his insistence on full rehearsal, proper preparation of scores (*plus cq change*). We read about negotiations with wind players: "The father and two sons who play all the wind instruments would each like 12 scudi a month. I objected to this at once, and told them that His highness

would go up to eight...." (*plus*...) We read how Monteverdi liked to hear madrigals performed: "I shall have the theorbos played ... to the accompaniment of the wooden organ (which is extremely suave) and in this way Signora Adriana and Don Giovanni Battista will sing the extremely beautiful madrigal *Ahi che morire mi sento*." We read of practical difficulties in stage performances; "The ensembles described ... are all low-pitched and near to the earth, an enormous drawback to beautiful harmony since the continuo instruments will be placed among the bigger creatures at the back of the set—difficult for everyone to hear, and difficult to perform within the set." (Stevens here uses a radically different interpretation of *armonie* from that in the Arnold/Fortune version, which can now be seen to garble the sense and leave out the last phrase altogether). In the most famous passage in that same letter, we learn something of Monteverdi's attitude to the art of composition—the centrality of human emotion.

"The winds have to sing. ... How, dear Sir, can I imitate the speech of the winds, if they do not speak? And how, can I, by such means, move the passions? Ariadne moved us because she was a woman, and similarly Orpheus because he was a man, not a wind. Music can suggest, without any words, the noise of winds ... but it cannot imitate the speech of winds because no such thing exists."

Here, as throughout this comprehensive edition, Stevens appears to be minutely sensitive to the nuances of Monteverdi's meaning. What these small extracts cannot convey is the way Stevens reflects the marvelous large-scale rhetorical structure of the long letters, with their massive one-sentence paragraphs and strange constructions. Stevens analyzes one of these letters most valuably; more analysis, and some background information on the art of rhetoric in writing (as in music)

would have been welcome. Stevens has given us a major contribution to scholarship. If it is marred by one thing, that is his continual criticism of the blindness of his predecessors and the righteousness of his own ways. He refers to *The Monteverdi Companion* only to argue with it, and never refers to, or cross-references, its version of the letters. Others, he says, have "totally" misunderstood things; or have "total" unfamiliarity with the autographs; this becomes wearying. The final reflection, considering how carefully these rich and fascinating letters were preserved, must be: why on earth didn't someone take as much care of the music? Then we might still have *Arianna*, *Andromeda*, *La finta pazza*, *Le nozze d'Enea*, *Proserpina rapita* and others to set beside Monteverdi's extant, unchallengeable dramatic masterpieces of the early musical Baroque.

Maria Callas,
by Arianna Stassinopoulos
Simon and Schuster, 383 pages,
\$15.95.

If the Maria Callas pictured in this biography were the only Callas, one could well wonder why all the fuss. For this biography is a resolutely worm's-eye view, and if it contains more and greater detail than any previous work, including a cache of letters heretofore not made public, and if Stassinopoulos' judgments of character (especially of Aristotle Onassis and Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis) strike one as correct, the book is little more than elevated gossip which only tangentially impinges upon Callas as a singing actress.

As is well known, Callas was two personalities, the onstage and the off-stage, hitched by a singleness of purpose and a bulldog tenacity. She was, and through her recordings remains, an astounding opera singer, whose career directly influenced the history of opera performance, if not the history of opera. Off-stage, however, she was the darling of the gutter press and, like the long-forgotten

Queen Soraya, a guaranteed hot newsstand seller because of her fights, tantrums, and flamboyance. There is little doubt that her checkered upbringing influenced her adult life, and that the emptiness of her later years, spent chasing Onassis and the chimera of her past operatic career, reveal a flawed and vulnerable psyche at odds with her strength onstage. It is the stuff of pathos, and that is the key: what was transformed into tragedy onstage, through the medium of the characters of Violetta or Lucia or Tosca or Norma—at least while the voice lasted—was only pathetic off-stage, and it is the concatenation of this long-drawn-out pathos which is the focus of the biography.

The music, of course, does enter in, but Stassinopoulos doesn't have much idea about what Callas was as an opera singer, and relies on quotes rather than understanding to portray this aspect of the prima donna. And this procedure disturbing.

In the appendix Stassinopoulos lists the books she consulted, and for each chapter details the specific sources. She says she did "personal interviews, private conversations, tape recordings and my own correspondence" in constructing the book. Yet swatches of Chapters 7, 8, 9, and 10, which detail the height of Callas' operatic career, are taken directly, word for word, from Gerald Fitzgerald's chapter in his and John Ardoin's book *Callas* (Holt, Rinehart and Winston), and other swatches are but slightly paraphrased. Similarly, portions of Henry Wisneski's book *Maria Callas* (Doubleday) are taken over with minimal change. In none of the chapter sources, as opposed to the general bibliography, are these books cited. Insofar as the quoted interviews are concerned, therefore, time and again Stassinopoulos has given the impression that she herself interviewed the figures concerned, when in fact the quotes are lifted directly from Fitzgerald's chapter, and left uncredited.

Maria Callas has received a great amount of ballyhoo, and several is-



Callas: a bulldog tenacity

sues of *People* magazine have been devoted to excerpts from it. That forum is its proper home.

P.J.S.

Louise Farrenc, 1804-1875; Composer, Performer, Scholar

by Bea Friedland

UMI Research Press, Ann Arbor, 269 pages, \$34.95.

Reviewed by Karen Monson

This is not the story of a composer whose genius lay undiscovered and unappreciated because of sexual discrimination. Bea Friedland's book is, rather, the story of an *illustres inconnues*, a *Kleinmeisterin*, one of those figures somewhere near the middle of the pyramid of artists who serve to elevate the Bachs and the Beethovens of an era—or, in this case, the Chopins and the Mendelssohns.

During the Bourbon restoration and the reign of Louis-Philippe, pleasure-seeking Parisians spent their leisure hours deciding which of the dozen regularly performing musical theaters in their city they would grace with their presences that evening; or, less frequently, choosing to hear a virtuoso violinist or a singer of *romances*,

Karen Monson, formerly music critic of the defunct Chicago Daily News, is director of the Arts Center of Scottsdale, Arizona.

for a tad of variety. It is hard for us to realize that, barely more than a century ago, the principal locale for performance of instrumental music of the abstract, "academic" genre was the salon. Sonatas, quartets, and even symphonies were almost relegated to the musical underground.

But such were the tastes and fancies of Paris ca. 1850. And much as it may gall females today, it sounded like high praise when, in the fall of 1847, Maurice Bourges boldly cited the accomplishments of several women who were composers in the pages of the *Gazette Musicale*. "People look upon a learned woman as a magnificent weapon," wrote Bourges, "artistically wrought, admirably polished and of exquisite workmanship; it is a collector's item for exhibition to the curious, having no function, and which is useful neither for war nor the hunt—any more than is a riding-school horse, even the best-trained in the world." The writer went on to defend the achievements of Pauline Duchambre, Loïsa Puget, Sophie Gail and, especially, Louise Farrenc, calling the last the "embodiment of the highest symphonic talent . . . whose symphonies a great many male composers would be proud to have written."

Jean-Louis Dumont Farrenc was born in Paris on May 31, 1804, the daughter of a court sculptor, and sister of the celebrated Auguste Dumont, whose "Le Génie de la liberté" still tops the Bastille column in the city of his birth. The first in her privileged and noteworthy family to dedicate herself to music, instead of the visual arts, Louise interrupted her studies with Antonin Reicha to marry Aristide Farrenc. She was seventeen. Aristide was to have gone into business, but the young husband turned his attentions to music, first as a flutist, then as a publisher and, ultimately, as a musicologist and editor. The marriage was the kind of which most couples can only dream; husband and wife grew up together, shared interests, encouraged and abetted each others' careers, and

weathered the tragic death (at the age of thirty-two) of their only child, Victorine, whose skills as a pianist had promised to outshine her mother's.

The death of her daughter marked a turning point in Louise Farrenc's life. Before Victorine began her awful decline, the mother had divided her time among teaching at the Conservatoire (for a lower salary than her male colleagues received for the same services), playing the piano at intimate gatherings, and composing. Her works include a number of piano pieces (principally études and variations), three symphonies, two overtures, a good deal of chamber music, and an unfinished piano concerto which, in Miss Friedland's opinion, would have turned out to be the *magnum opus*. While Victorine was mortally ill and in the few years following her death, Louise Farrenc concentrated exclusively on teaching, and despite the many signs that indicated that she might have become a composer of international repute, she gave up her creative endeavors.

Meanwhile, though, Aristide Farrenc turned from publishing to editing, and became interested in early keyboard music, lost and forgotten works for the predecessors of the piano. His wife came to share his interest, and she presented a series of marvelously-called "séances historiques du piano," including works of Frescobaldi, Couperin, Scarlatti, and their contemporaries. Louise also helped her husband edit what eventually turned out to be a series of twenty volumes of keyboard music, the first to stretch back to the earliest days of writing for the instruments. When Aristide Farrenc died, his wife went on with the work. It was this contribution to scholarship and performance, and not her ability as pianist, teacher, and composer, that made Louise Farrenc's name familiar to generations of students after her death in 1875.

Judging from the many examples in Miss Friedland's book and from the few existing recordings,

New Music

Continued from page 17

De Marinis' contribution was a game board which he played with a wine glass. Each time he lifted and replaced his glass, the music changed. Behrman and De Marinis also played piano for Anne Klingensmith's country songs and accompanied an East Indian-like chant on electronic stick and mini-computer/synthesizer sound generators.

Julia Heyward

While De Marinis and Behrman came to performance from the music world, Julia Heyward (who attracted overflow crowds to The Kitchen Center in January) came to sound from the art world. Her extended vocal techniques rely heavily on the fluttery yodel she has devel-

Louise Farrenc's music is well crafted, often elegant, sometimes imaginative, and ultimately unobtrusive. Mendelssohn's lesser works come to mind immediately; so does some Schubert and, more rarely, Schumann and Beethoven. Interesting though it might be to hear Louise Farrenc's symphonies, the Nonet, and the piano works, it is hard to believe that the musical world has missed its big chance because it has ignored the *œuvre*.

And the strongest reservation that must be mentioned as regards this book has to do with the fact that Miss Friedland, whose scholarship appears to be sound and sure, has not presented her case in a way that convinces even the most sympathetic reader that she herself would make much effort to promote Louise Farrenc's work and memory. The author's presentation is cool to the point of making the reader sometimes wonder, Why? Why the effort? Louise Farrenc was a remarkable woman, to be sure. But so, I like to think, were a lot of them. **MA**

oped, and not much else. Musically, she leans on the rock treatment provided by sidemen. Her performance is sometimes arresting. The opening figure of a giant-headed elephant person, who ranted and raved about being "President of the Union," was a clear G.O.P. reference, not simply another elephant man character. Sadly, that was all of the live performance of Heyward's show. We were then shown an interminably long video tape with sound broadcast separately on large audio speakers to improve the quality. Her commercial effort is planned to capture the new and growing videodisc market.

In mixing slickly filmed video with vast borrowings from commercial television (including a shameless rip-off of Lilly Tomlin's five-year old child-character, Edith Ann), and utilizing rock settings of repeating patterns, Heyward turns what might have been a giant leap forward for the art world into this new medium into a sad copy of what has already failed to satisfy the more astute consumer. The visuals are quite arresting: Heyward in a pig's head buried to the neck in sand as crows and seagulls peck at the sand around the head, incanting ominously, "We know how you feel. Don't let anger use you, use anger"; surreal elements of people in animal costumes and large stuffed animals and garishly dressed party-goers all mingling in a disco-like environment; balloons floating on a fixed grid in a pool with the camera rocking like a boat. Throughout, I had the uncomfortable sensation of being manipulated.

After the video tapes, Heyward sang a bit with a rock group from Boston. She used echo often and alternated between yodel-fluttering and yelling. It was not a new theme, or a new twist on an old one, just an ill-fated attempt.

Some mixing and cross-overs work quite well and serve the ends of the piece; others seem to miss the mark by assuming that any craft is easily adaptable. **MA**

Young Artists of 1981: Talent to watch for



Jean Kopperud

wick Gallery, and a New York recital last March; he is forming a new string trio with violist Toby Appel and cellist Colin Carr. . . . Pianist Diana Kasco, born in Rio, completed her studies at Juilliard. A prizewinning international recitalist, she has released a DG recording of Liszt and Chopin. . . . Pianist Ian Hobson, an Eng-

Beverly Hoch



Clarinetist Jean Kopperud, a Juilliard graduate, made her New York solo debut this year. She was a soloist in the premiere of Thea Musgrave's *Christmas Carol* with the Virginia Opera, and is a regular guest with the Philharmonia Virtuosi. . . . Soprano Beverly Hoch earned her M.M. degree from Oklahoma City University and made her New York debut last season as a winner of the 1979 Young Concert Artists International Auditions. Next fall she sings in a Lincoln Center Stravinsky-Haydn festival. . . . Violinist Peter Oundjian, an international competition winner, is in the Master's program at Juilliard, where he is concertmaster of the orchestra. He performed a solo recital at London's War-

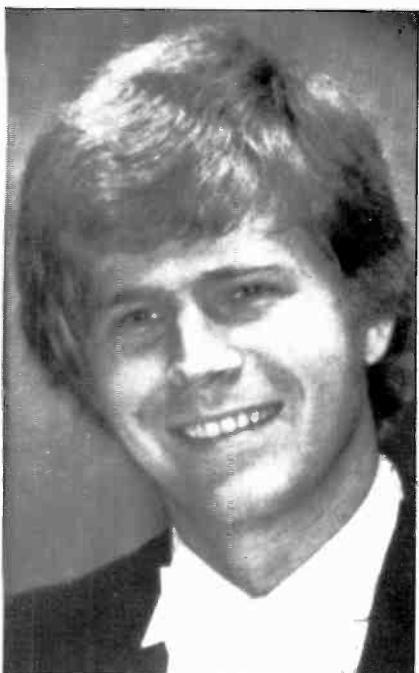
Peter Oundjian



Diana Kasco

lishman and Cambridge University scholarship student, received a D.M.A. degree from Yale in 1978; he won 2nd prize in the 1980 Arthur Rubinstein Competition in Israel, where he played six concerts this spring. In October he will appear in concert in London's Elizabeth Hall.

Ian Hobson





David Leisner

Guitarist David Leisner, a Wesleyan graduate who teaches at the New England Conservatory, made his New York debut in 1979 and accompanied himself in songs of Charles Ives. His recording and his Theodore Presser edition of the music of the 19th-century composer J.K. Mertz were released this spring.... Soprano Gail Dobish studied at the Royal Academy of Music in London, the Music Academy of the West, and Juilliard, where she has sung leading roles in America Opera Center productions; she has also been featured in contemporary music at Aspen, and was a finalist in this year's national Met Auditions.

Pianist William Tritt, trained at the University of Montreal and Indiana University, has made two tours of France and in 1980 toured as guest soloist with the National Arts Centre Orchestra in Western Canada. He has recorded Schumann and Liszt with major Canadian orchestras for the CBC.... Pianist Panayis Lyras, born in Athens, received his M.M. degree from Juilliard in 1977 and won the Three Rivers Piano Competition the next year. He has performed with the orchestras of St. Louis, Baltimore, and Pittsburgh, and last year made his Utah debut in the new Bicentennial Arts Center in Salt Lake City.... Flutist Tacy Edwards, once first-desk player with the Kansas City Youth Symphony, began touring as a soloist in 1976 and has traveled as far afield as Hong Kong. Her repertory ranges from Quantz to the contemporary.

Gail Dobish



William Tritt



Panayis Lyras

Tacy Edwards





Robert Schwartz

Ronald Thomas



Pianist **Robert Schwartz** began his studies in Sacramento before going on to Indiana University and to Paris on a Fulbright Fellowship, where he won the Ravel Prize in the Concours Marguerite Long. Last year he earned an MM from Juilliard. He will make his New York solo debut in 1982. . . . Cellist **Ronald Thomas**, born in Kennebunk, Maine, studied with Lorne Munroe and David Sover before launching a solo career in 1974 at the age of 19. Orchestral engagements include Philadelphia and St. Louis, and he gave a recital at the Metropolitan Museum last February. . . . Violinist **Joey Swensen**, New York-born and Juilliard trained, made a successful Copenhagen debut last summer at 20, and this summer participates in the Italian Spoleto Festival and tours the Continent with the Marlboro players. Next season he will give a New York recital at the 92nd Street "Y."



Joey Swensen

Rebecca Cook



Marie Josée Simard





David Sampson

Composer David Sampson, a Curtis grad presently pursuing an M.F.A. at Hunter College, received an ASCAP award and a Fontainbleau Music School Scholarship. His composition for the Dorian Wind Quintet was premiered in May.... Soprano Katherine Terrell, recipient of the Herman Geigor-Torel Operatic Scholarship, made her New York debut in *La Rondine* at the American Opera Center. She will sing the role of Micaela in *Carmen* at the St. Petersburg Opera in Florida.



Katherine Terrell



Terri & Anita Pontremoli

Violinist Terri Pontremoli and pianist Anita Pontremoli studied at the Cleveland Institute, Yale University, and the Verdi Conservatorio in Milan, and have toured the country as a chamber duo. Their repertoire ranges from Bach to Ives, and they performed the Ravel and Franck sonatas in Cleveland, where they both teach at the Cleveland Institute of Music.



Steven & Carolyn Warner

Violinist/violist **Stephen Warner** and pianist/violinist **Carolyn Gadiel Warner** comprise the Cleveland Duo, a twosome that performs a varied repertoire including violin sonatas and works for two violins or violin and viola. Both Carolyn and husband Stephen are violinists in the Cleveland Orchestra, and perform as guest soloists with various ensembles.... Violinist **Marie-Annick Nicolas** studied at the Paris Conservatory, and received the Grand Prix Jacques Thibaud and the Grand Prize of the Tchaikowsky Competition in 1974. She made her American debut with the San Diego Symphony, and has appeared with the Denver and Long Beach symphonies.



Marie-Annick Nicolas



Nancy Hermiston

Soprano **Nancy Hermiston** made her Houston Grand Opera Debut in 1981 as Adele in *Die Fledermaus*, and has performed the roles of Adina and Violetta in Cincinnati and Zerlina and Susanna at the Canadian Opera. Future engagements take her to the opera companies of Pittsburgh, Rochester, and Syracuse. . . . Pianist **Jose Ramos-Santana** made his debut at the age of 12 at the Institute of Puerto Rican Culture. He has received the Van Cliburn Piano Award and the American Music Association Award in Cincinnati, and has performed with the St. Louis, Brevard, and Santa Cruz symphonies.



Jose Ramos-Santana



Marcy Rosen

Duo Guitarists **Gregory and Geoffrey Bonenberger** studied with Segovia, Alirio Diaz, and Oscar Ghiglia, and each was graduated from Yale. They formed a duo in 1977 and appeared as featured artists at the Carmel Classic Guitar Festival, and have since performed at the 92nd Street "Y" music series in New York.



Gregory & Geoffrey Bonenberger

Cellist **Marcy Rosen**, a graduate of the Curtis Institute, has performed with the orchestras of Philadelphia, Dallas, Phoenix, and Fresno, and has toured Italy, Austria, and Holland in concert. She records for Columbia Records, the Marlboro Recording Society, and None-such records. . . . Concert saxophonist **Robert Black** studied at the Interlochen Arts Academy and Northwestern University. He has appeared on French National Radio and with the Bordeaux Symphony, as well as the St. Louis and Chicago Civic orchestras. He is a member of the Chicago Saxophone Quartet.



Robert Black



Ronit Kalisky

Coloratura soprano **Ronit Kalisky** received her training at the Rubin Academy in Tel Aviv and at Northern Illinois University. She performed the role of Queen of the Night with the opera company of Philadelphia and on the PBS broadcast of the Pavarotti masterclass. . . . French pianist **Pascal Devoyon** was the silver medal winner of the 1978 Tchaikovsky Competition and won prizes in the Leeds, Viotti, and Busoni Competitions. He has an exclusive three-year contract with ERATO/RCA records, and will perform at the Kennedy Center in 1982.

Laura Hunter, saxophonist, and **Brian Connally**, pianist, perform as the Duo Vivo. As winners of the Concert Artists Guild award, they made their New York debut last March to excellent critical response. . . . Cellist **William De Rosa**, a student of Leonard Rose, was the youngest participant in the 1978 Tchaikovsky Competition and the first prize winner of the 1979 Gregor Piatigorsky competition. He performed last fall at Isaac Stern's Carnegie Hall Celebration. . . . Guitarist **Steven Suvada**, trained at the Chicago School of Music, has performed in a variety of settings in

Steven Suvada



Hunter, Connally



Pascal Devoyon

that city—as soloist with the DePaul University Guitar Ensemble, before the Chicago Artists Association, and with the Chicago Opera Studio production of *The Barber of Seville*.

William De Rosa



Tulsa Spotlights Young Artists

TV, Press, and Arts Center Combine to Present New Talent

John Toms

Everyone accepts the fact that stars of the high school football team are paraded on TV and the sports pages, and that they walk off with full college scholarships, room, board, and pocket money.

In contrast, a string student, the concertmaster of the high school orchestra who has practiced long, lonely hours and whose parents have spent a considerable sum of money for lessons, sees his name in the local paper once, after he has won a top rating in a state contest. If he happens to have the potential of an Isaac Stern, he will land a scholarship and additional funds at a recognized music school. But young musicians with somewhat less potential have to scramble for financial help. Local groups—even national organizations—sometimes make small grants, but then expect the recipients to play at their “May Meeting” or national convention without remuneration.

Some needed recognition

A way to better the financial problem hasn't been found as yet, but KTUL-TV in Tulsa, the *Tulsa Tribune*, and the Tulsa Performing Arts Center Trust Authority have come up with ways to promote young artists and give them some needed recognition.

It began in May 1980 when KTUL agreed to feature a young artist once a week in a three-minute segment during the evening news. Private teachers (although their names

John Toms, music critic of the Tulsa Tribune, was responsible for the inauguration of the KTUL-Tribune series he describes here, and selects the performers for the Tulsa Performing Arts Center series. He was for many years a singer, teacher, and director of choral music.



High school senior Kelly Parker taped by Ruth Small

are not mentioned on the air or in the paper) and music departments of the two local universities, Oral Roberts and Tulsa, recommend young instrumentalists. They are auditioned, and those who qualify are selected for the program. Approximately eighty percent make the show, and they have ranged in age from ten to twenty-five.

The programs are taped, not at KTUL's studio but in the formal surroundings of a large home that was willed to the Tulsa Arts and Humanities Council. Each program includes a very brief interview, which is heard on the telecast with the music in the background. Two of the TV programs have featured ballet dancers, and two have presented the paintings and sculptures of high school artists.

About forty-five minutes are spent taping each program. The performer is shot from various angles, and the tape is then carefully edited.

The final result appeals to both eye and ear. At the time of the taping a *Tribune* photographer takes a picture that is published the day of the telecast. A lengthy cutline reports some of the performer's accomplishments. From the outset, public response to the program has been good. The initial series ran until June 1, and the second series will begin in September.

Noontime spinoff

On February 4, 1981, an extension of the KTUL-Tribune project made its debut. On that day, the first fifty-minute “Brown ‘Bach’ It” program was heard at noon in the foyer of the Tulsa Performing Arts Center. The Center is conveniently located in the downtown business district, which allows office workers and others to bring their brown bags and lunch while listening to a recital by

Continued on page 34

Chamber Music—a Total Immersion

Cleveland Institute Seminar takes the best players and plunges in

Frank Hruby



Frances Rowell auditions

Louis Peres



David Soyer of Guarneri Quartet leads a session

Some of the auditioners came in so nervous they could scarcely get the words out of their mouths. Others, cool cookies, evidently viewed the whole procedure as simply another chance to play their instruments—were eager, in fact, to play for someone who had a vested interest in hearing them. In all but a very few cases, however, these applicants, ranging in age from sixteen to twenty-four, played their violins, violas, and cellos with enormous skill as they competed for the fifty available slots in the Cleveland Chamber Music Seminar sponsored and administered by the Cleveland Institute of Music.

Frank Hruby is music editor and critic of the Cleveland Press.

The Eighth Annual Seminar, held this season at the Institute from December 27 to January 4, attracted nearly three hundred talented students to the four regional auditions presided over by David Cerone, chairman of the Institute's string department and a violinist of national repute. Cerone in these efforts is assisted by Alan Harris, head of the cello department. These two have watched the number of applicants rise from two hundred in 1973 to the present number, and I asked him whether this was at least in part an indication that the dearth of string-instrument players, so pronounced a decade or two ago, was over.

"No doubt it is easing," he said. "But it is more than mere numbers:

in fact, the numbers are very misleading. The rise of a hundred applicants really translates into a rise of five hundred, when you take quality into account. Back then we and our effort were virtually unknown, and students who happened to hear of us applied regardless of their level of advancement. Teachers at first didn't know what kind of standards we expected to maintain or whom we were specifically aiming at for enrollment. Almost from the moment the first seminar was concluded and word began to spread as to what we were really doing here, the level of applicants leaped significantly as teachers began on their own to exclude those who were not ready for us. Furthermore, they were encouraging their

better students to apply, now that they could see the importance of this total immersion in chamber music playing."

"Total immersion" is not far from the truth: the students start right in playing virtually from the instant they check in on the first day. They are given particular works to prepare and then must undergo the scrutiny of the master teachers, who know the literature inside out.

Most of them go right on playing after they go back to their dorm rooms at the end of the day. It is not exceptional for a threesome or foursome to get together and play until 3:00 or 4:00 in the morning.

A demanding faculty

Satisfying the master teachers is not an effort to be taken lightly. In addition to Cerone and Harris and a large portion of the Institute's string faculty—many of whom are members of the Cleveland Orchestra—there are such internationally renowned musicians as Joseph Gingold, former concertmaster of the Cleveland Orchestra under George Szell and now a distinguished professor of violin at the University of Indiana School of Music; Mischa Schneider, cellist of the old Budapest Quartet; and members of the Guarneri String Quartet. The latter group comes in for three days of coaching and for a benefit concert, open to the public, to help raise funds to keep the project going. All these celebrities, I might add, donate their services for this cause, the only one of its kind, so far as is known, in the world.

At the New York auditions, which I attended and which took

place in mid-October (others were held in Philadelphia, Bloomington, Indiana, and Cleveland), there were eighty applicants, most of whom came from Juilliard, the Manhattan and Mannes Schools of Music, Yale, and the New England Conservatory, plus several from private teachers in the area. Among the eighty were three already-formed quartets, which played both as quartets and as individuals. The general format of the auditions was as follows:

Cerone takes over with the vio-

linists and violists, Harris with the cellists. Each player plays short segments of several prepared solos, usually without comment from the judges. Then he is given three excerpts from the standard trio and quartet literature to sight-read. Occasionally a player will indicate that he has already worked at the given piece so that it is not strictly sight-reading. This does not excuse him from playing the example; it simply means that the scrutiny will be even more acute.

Continued on next page

University of Southern California School of Performing Arts/School of Music



The Class of Jascha Heifetz

Applications for admission and scholarships are now being accepted for the 1981-82 Masterclass of Jascha Heifetz. Auditions to be arranged.

Applications may be obtained by writing to:

USC SCHOOL OF MUSIC

Booth Hall 112

Los Angeles, California 90007

Instant absorption

During this latter part of the audition, Cerone or Harris will make comments not so much to correct notes, rhythms, or phrasings, but to see how well the performer responds to suggestions. For in the relatively short ten-day seminar period, there is little time for a player to practice something which is difficult or not going well. Suggestions or corrections as to bowings, dynamics, and "spirit" must be instantly absorbed into the mental computer and then acted upon quickly.

"We are able to be this demanding now because the quality of applicants is rising so fast that people who came as participants as recently as two years ago sometimes cannot make it a second time," says Cerone. "Our commitment, after all, is to help develop the finest chamber music artists possible, not to teach them how to play their instruments."

Two-thirds of the applicants are women, a proportion which holds very well for the acceptees. Another proportion evidenced is that applicants generally show up in numbers roughly equal to those of the standard string quartet make-up: two violins to each of viola and cello.

In any event, as the fifty winners are chosen, they are placed by Cerone and Harris into quartets or trios before the seminar opens, according to the level of advancement and personality insofar as that can be readily determined.

The lucky fifty must pay their travel expenses, and the rest is on a full scholarship basis—in the best sense of the word; that is, on talent, skill, and achievement rather than the latter-day "economic need."

Accepting the winners is the easy part for Cerone and Harris. Turning down the non-accepted is increasingly difficult, for the judges as well as the disappointees. But by then they have already benefitted, by getting a better glimpse of the kind of competition they will meet in their future careers. **MA**



D'Ann Decker and David McGill rehearse for "Brown Bach It"

James Mixon

Tulsa Young Artists

Continued from page 31

young artists.

It was with the knowledge of the KTUL-Tribune project that the program committee of the Tulsa Performing Arts Center Trust petitioned the board of the Robert E. Palmer Endowment Fund for a grant to finance the new noontime series. Money was provided for ten programs contingent on their being presented before June 1. The pilot series attracted audiences, and the project will be continued in the fall of 1981.

Again, musicians are auditioned, but most are selected from those who have appeared on the KTUL-Tribune "Young Artist Series." If a young performer's repertoire allows, he or she is engaged for an entire program, but in most instances, two performers share a program. The concerts are handled in a businesslike manner: the performers sign agreements and are paid a fee.

Happy discoveries

Besides the good talent that has come to light, the KTUL-Tribune and Performing Arts Center pro-

grams have discovered some exceptional young artists. The most outstanding, perhaps, is high school senior David McGill, who at seventeen is acting principal bassoonist with the Tulsa Philharmonic Orchestra. If all goes well, he will attend Curtis Institute this fall. Jennifer Wagener is another. A fifteen-year-old sophomore, Jennifer plays second violin in the Philharmonic.

Three top-notch pianists who have played on the TV program have turned out to be composers as well. All won first place in their divisions of the 1981 Music Teachers National Association Composition Contest. James Wu, a sixth grader from Bartlesville, Oklahoma, won the award for elementary school composers. Michael McVay, from Tulsa, won the junior high award and Eric Simonson, from Claremore, Oklahoma, the senior high award.

Station KTUL, the *Tulsa Tribune*, and the Performing Arts Center have hit upon a way to give special recognition to young artists, and give the community a boost as well. The idea may spur interest in other communities—in which case many promising musicians may find their path a little easier. **MA**

Two at New York City Opera

“Mary, Queen of Scots” & “Attila”—a heroine and a hero

Martin Mayer

“Mary, Queen of Scots”

Not having seen either the Virginia or the San Francisco production of Thea Musgrave's *Mary, Queen of Scots*, I found it hard to work up much feeling pro or con about the New York City Opera presentation of the work at its last, rather sparsely attended performance on March 14. The piece clearly proves that Miss Musgrave's business is writing operas: she does it smoothly and reasonably effectively, the right bits of business coming out of the right boxes at the right time. The problem is that the opera reveals no reason for having been written other than the fact that it comes from an atelier that turns out operas: nothing in the music or the libretto (also by Musgrave) shows any great interest in the characters as individuals. I make exception for Darnley, the Queen's lover and consort, whose badgerings of the Queen at the opening of the second act are done with an intensity that argues a certain fascination with this kind of beloved scoundrel. Rico Serbo's rather whining tenor captures a character considerably more interesting than the Mary portrayed in Ashley Putnam's clear soprano. His gestures are a little too big, but director David Farrar has given outsize movements to everyone.

Dramatically, the work suffers from the vagueness of its heroine, who sometimes has the gumption to face down her brother and banish Bothwell and tell her lover to sober up—but sometimes collapses into tearfully expressed needs for “protec-



Putnam and Fredericks

spairing aria in the last act, which has considerable cadential feeling, and the aforesaid duet for the Queen and Darnley. The acidified old galliards are charming—and are splendidly danced, by the way, in an apparently authentic choreography by Wendy Hilton. (Miss Putnam, who tends to move rather stiffly as an actress, dances with delightful grace.) The orchestral menace is standard stuff of its kind (rushing drumbeats and growling bull fiddles); the arias are ariosos, gratefully written, without unexplained giant skips, but neither particularly expressive nor particularly memorable.

An orchestra that sounded rather economy-sized for this work in this hall handled Musgrave's wind-dominated, often imaginative orchestration with great competence under the baton of Peter Mark. The Virginia Opera sets by Miguel Romero seemed a little small for this stage, with side towers that were mere flights of stairs and served no purpose. The costumes by Alex Reid were lovely.

“Attila”

Verdi's *Attila* is a piece of junk, but it is junk by a master, and pure, wasted genius carries the spectacle through its first act (broken into two acts at the City Opera). Nothing can save the last act, however; even Verdi was finally worn down to routine rum-tum-tum by the silliness of the story and its cardboard characters and by the recrudescence of identical implausible situations to fill in the time. That the City Opera made something of a popular success with this hokum is a tribute to a lot of people—to Lofti Mansouri's vigorous

tion” by these same males. Nor does there seem to be any tension within her between the two attitudes. A conception of Mary Stuart as an innocent may or may not have something to recommend it as revisionist history (I wouldn't have the foggiest), but it doesn't make for interesting theater. And the libretto, while sound enough in structure, suffers from a few verbal infelicities, most seriously the repeated choral cries of “Abdicate, Mary” in the next to last scene. Couldn't we have had a “Death to the Queen” or something else a little more populist?

Musically, too, the work lacks high points—excepting Mary's de-

Martin Mayer, former music critic for Esquire, is the author of books on law and banking.



Ramey: individual timbre and bel canto flexibility

direction, to Ming Cho Lee's entirely flown sets and associated drops, to Hal George's super barbaric costumes, and especially to three of the performers: Sergiu Comissiona in the pit, Samuel Ramey and Marilyn Zschau on stage. I saw the March 17 performance.

It's Ramey who gets the bravos and Ramey one remembers, for he is a great operatic bass with an individual timbre, bel canto flexibility, a gift for invariably musical phrasing, admirable diction, and a lean body that does what he wants it to do. (In the second and third acts he plays mostly naked to the hips, giving student singers a chance to study pectoral breathing at its most effective.) His fourth-scene dream of terror, musically and dramatically the most effective number in the opera, was a

model of how such an aria should be played and sung. He may have overacted in the crowd scenes, making like heap big Hun, but it is hard to think of a reason why he shouldn't have.

Still, I was most impressed by Comissiona, whom I had never before heard in an opera pit. All these early Verdi operas (and the Donizetti and Rossini repertory) are really conductor's pieces: they simply drag, in the absence of imaginative, smartly accented, propulsive conducting. Nicolas Rescigno has been demonstrating the point all season across the plaza. Without rushing matters in the least—allowing breathing space to the soprano's lovely cavatina in the third scene—Comissiona kept the dance rhythms pulsing in the orchestra and helped the cause by bringing forward

any bit of instrumental variety Verdi offered him. If he got more out of Ramey than the other singers, it was because there was more to get.

Marilyn Zschau as the preposterous Odabella was a considerable success if never a triumph. The voice is big in its rather different registers (though not well supported at the bottom; one worries a little, listening); flexible; and projected with that slightly hollow feel that gives apparent emotional intensity to what is really just firecrackers. She also has an individual and not unattractive appearance, with an oversized, expressive mouth, and she times her motions well. If she could also lock the voice onto the right pitch, she would, I think, make a major career. At that, she is more accurate than some prominent sopranos now before the public; but the hunch here is that the greater exactitude possible to her is also necessary.

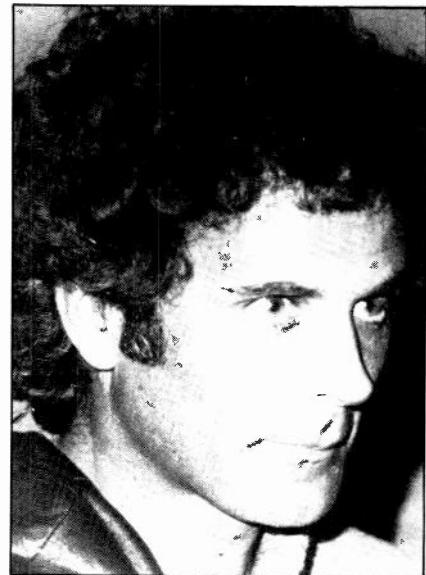
The other *primi* were not quite so successful. Enrico DiGiuseppe did his usual, careful, small-scale, unexciting tenor bit; Richard Fredericks was unfortunately woolly in both tone and pronunciation. In the supporting role of Uldino, Attila's slave, who has nothing hard to do, tenor James Clark gave indications that he could successfully handle more.

The orchestra played extremely well for Comissiona, delivering when needed a Verdian string wash more powerful than I have ever heard from that pit. The chorus, too, rose to a new standard: the fourteen voices of refugee monks opening the second scene made more noise, and more musical noise, than forty-voice choruses have been producing this season at the Met. The only failure (apart from that of librettist Temistocle Solera all those years ago) was in the ballet, messily choreographed by Margo Sappington and even more messily danced. **MA**

Debuts & Reappearances



Rose rehearsing Erb's Concerto: audacious and ear filling



Davies: inspired by the sea

Akron



Akron Symphony: Erb Concerto for Keyboards and Orchestra [premiere]

The concerto form received a healthy shot in the arm on March 24 in Akron's Edwin J. Thomas Performing Arts Hall when Donald Erb's Concerto for Keyboards and Orchestra was given its premiere by American pianist Jerome Rose, conductor Louis Lane, and the Akron Symphony Orchestra. Erb has always displayed an uncanny ear for refreshing and inventive instrumental ideas and textures, and in this new work he extends the boundaries of the concerto in audacious directions.

The Concerto for Keyboards and Orchestra is cast in a typically classical three-part structure, while its substance is distinctly contemporary, built of pyramidal effects, punctuated gestures and full orchestral clusters which exert a cataclysmic, often mesmerizing impact upon the listener. The work centers around a

soloist who splits his duties between a grand piano, an electric piano and a celesta, two of which occasionally are struck simultaneously. The orchestra, actually a collection of soloists in this case, boasts a large percussion section including vibraphone, harmonicas, and water tumblers.

Erb's sixteen-minute score, which exudes a palpably nervous energy, proceeds in orchestral chatters, trills, murmurs, and slides as the keyboard soloist interjects his own insistent declamatory outbursts, mysterious brushstrokes, and propulsive cadenzas. It is a beautifully crafted, ear-filling work.

Rose seemed completely at home with the concerto's demanding pyrotechnics, moving dramatically and smoothly from keyboard to keyboard. Lane, who has been a champion of Erb's music ever since his years with the Cleveland Orchestra, gave the piece a colorful, powerful reading, and the Akron Symphony responded expertly.

Immediately following the Erb, Rose returned to offer Saint-Saëns' Piano Concerto No. 2 in G minor.

Unfortunately, the juxtaposition of widely disparate works didn't give the soloist enough time to shift stylistic gears. Although Rose's concept was thoughtfully and dynamically shaped, his playing wasn't quite secure enough to allow this music to rise to its modestly charming ends. Beethoven's Second Symphony began the evening in a spirited though unpolished performance.

DONALD ROSENBERG

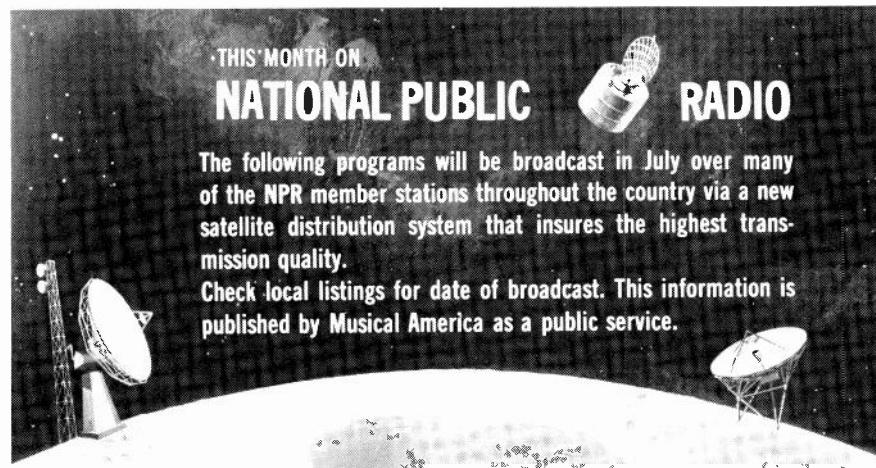
Boston



Boston Symphony (Ozawa): Davies Symphony No. 2 [premiere]

Listening to Peter Maxwell Davies' New Symphony No. 2, it is helpful to know something of the composer's personal history. The symphony, given its world premiere February 26 by the Boston Symphony Orchestra, has everything to do with his life in a tiny cottage on the remote Orkneyan island of Hoy.

At the foot of the cliff below his window, Davies can see that crucible



CONCERT GUITAR

Narciso Yepes: Works by Luis de Narvaez, Alonso de Mudarra, Gasper Sanz, Albeniz, Granados, Turina, Leonard Balaia and Francisco Tarrega.

Oscar Ghiglia: Works by J.S. Bach, Sor, Ponce, Donatoni, Rodrigo, and Gastelnuovo-Tedesco.

Robert Guthrie: Works by Handel, Villa-Lobos, de Fueullara, Scarlatti, and Berkeley.

Sergio Abreu & Alice Artzt (Double Bill): Abreu performs works by Scarlatti, Purcell, J.S. Bach, and Rodrigo; Artzt performs Twenty Variations and Fugue on "Folias d'Espagne" by Ponce.

INTERNATIONAL CONCERT HALL

Mstislav Rostropovich conducts the National Symphony Orchestra: Works by Leo Sowerby, George Whitefield Chadwick, Charles Tomlinson Griffes, and Edward MacDowell's Piano Concerto No. 2 (Bradford Gowen). (Taped Feb. 1981)

Lothar Zagrosek conducts the London Sinfonietta: Works by Mozart, Iain Hamilton, Aarre Merikanto, and Arnold Schoenberg. (Taped Sept. 9, 1980, Helsinki Festival)

Tibor Varga conducts the Orchestre de Chambre de Detmold et Ensemble du Festival de Sion: Works by Ernst Krenek, and Mendelssohn; concertos for Violin, Piano & String Quartet by Mendelssohn and Chausson. (Tibor Varga, violin, Roberto Szidon, piano); (Taped Aug. 22, 1980, "Festival Tibor Varga")

Wolfgang Sawallisch conducts l'Orchestre de la Suisse romande: Klaus Huber's "... ohne Grenz und Rand ..." ("Christoph Schiller, viola"); Works by Pierre Wissmer and Rudolf Kelterborn; Conrad Beck's Concerto for Wind Quintet & Orchestra (Suzanne Huber, flute; Roland Perrenoud, oboe; Richard Pawlas, Clarinet; Roger Birnstingl, bassoon; Kurt Hanke, horn); and Ernst Pfiffner's "... et aperut oculos ..." (Pierre Andre Blaser, Anton Diacon, Rudolf Leuenberger, Beat Sporrer, Kurt Widmer, vocalists). (Taped June 16, 1980)

NPR RECITAL HALL

"Our Musical Heritage": The Musicrafters led by Vincent Patterson; Martha Steiger, soprano; Louise McClelland, mezzo-soprano; Stanley Cornett, tenor; Loren Jacobson, baritone; and Ruth Ann McDonald, piano. Works by J.S. Smith/J.P. Sousa, Thomas Comer, Henry Russell, Dave Braham, Holloway/Knaebel, Dudley Buck, James A. Bland, H. Wakefield Smith, Dillon Brothers, Gus Edwards and others. (Taped Feb. 3, 1981, Library of Congress, in honor of the 150th anniversary of the protection of music under United States Copyright Law.)

Leonard Raver, organ, Gordon Gottlieb, percussion, and Zina Jasper, narrator: Raver performs works by Louis Marchand, Richard Feliciano, J.S. Bach, and Charles-Marie Widor. Also, "Galactic Novae," opus 136 by Gardner Read (Gordon Gottlieb, percussion) and William Albright's

"The King of Instruments" (Zina Jasper, narrator). (Taped March 12, 1981)

Los Angeles Vocal Arts Ensemble with pianists Armen Guzelimian & Raul Herrara: Works by G.F. Handel, Mozart, Brahms, Haydn, and Rossini. (Taped June 13, 1980)

New England Conservatory Contemporary Ensemble conducted by Larry Livingston: Matthew Rosenblume's Harp Quartet; "Arcs," by Stephen Scott; "Periphony," by George Heussenstamm; "Inventions, Contours and Colors," by John Heiss; and Christopher Rouse's "Mitternachtlieder" (Leslie Guinn, baritone). (Taped Dec. 7, 1980)

THE NEW YORK CITY OPERA

"Giulio Cesare" by Handel: Ralf Weikert, conductor. Gianna Rondi as Cleopatra and Robert Hale as Caesar. (Taped Nov. 1980)

"La Bohème" by Puccini: John Mauceri, conductor Diana Soviero, Riccardo Calleo, and Dominic Cossa in the leading roles. (Taped Nov., 1980)

"Attila" by Verdi: Sergiu Comissiona, conductor Samuel Ramey as Attila, and Marilyn Zschau as Orabella. (Taped March, 1981)

"The Merry Wives of Windsor" by Nicolai: Julius Rudel, conductor. Bass William Wildermann sings Falstaff, with Carol Vaness and Rosemarie Freni. (Taped Dec. 1980)

SAINT LOUIS SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Raymond Leppard, conductor: Works by Handel, Elgar, and "Romantic Fantasy" by Arthur Benjamin (John Korman, violin; Joan Korman, viola); (Taped Jan. 17, 1981)

Robert Shaw, conductor: "Elijah" by Felix Mendelssohn (Esther Hinds, soprano; Florence Kopfleff, alto, Gene Tucker, tenor; John Cheek, bass), with the Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra, Thomas Peck, director. (Taped Jan. 23, 1981)

Leonard Slatkin, conductor: Works by R. Strauss and Beethoven, the world premiere of Concerto for Harpsichord by Richard Rodney Bennett with the composer as soloist. (Taped Dec. 12, 1980)

Leonard Slatkin, conductor: Works by Mozart and Stravinsky's music with three solo voices for the ballet "Pulcinella" (Brenda Boozer, soprano; Neil Rosenshein, tenor; Don Studebaker, baritone). (Taped Jan. 1981)

SAINT PAUL SUNDAY MORNING

Sharon Isbin and Jeffrey Van: Solo and duet works of the classical guitar.

Members of the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra: Works under the direction of Bill McGlaughlin.

The New World String Quartet: Works by Haydn, Joplin, Gershwin, and Bartok.

The Deller Consort: Vocal consort music of the Renaissance and Baroque eras.

where the Atlantic and North Sea meet, "with all the complex interweaving of currents and wave shapes, and the conflicts of weather that such an encounter implies." And this always-changing life of the sea permeates the new score. Written in the traditional four movements, the work exemplifies Davies' uniquely reinterpreted tonality: the symphony, he states, is in B minor, but he uses the tritone E-sharp rather than the traditional F-sharp as the dominant, and the ear does not really perceive tonal centers or the movement away from and back to them. The symphony takes both pictorial and architectural inspiration from the sea. There are sonic effects that suggest the glitter of sea spray or tumultuous storms. And some of the musical contours are patterned after the different wave shapes which Davies has observed in his close scrutiny of the water.

Commissioned by the BSO as part of its Centennial celebrations, the symphony was tailor-made for that ensemble. Davies had heard the orchestra during the 1979 Edinburgh Festival and wrote virtuoso parts for many of the principal players, particularly percussion, flute, and trumpet. In some ways, he also wrote a virtuoso part for the conductor, Seiji Ozawa. The music is of great rhythmic complexity, with complicated, shifting metrical patterns, and there is probably no one better able than Ozawa to deal with such rhythmic difficulties.

Perhaps the work's greatest problem, however, is its length. The composer estimated a playing time of thirty-six minutes, but the first performance took nearly fifty minutes. And it seemed that each movement, although opening with music of considerable interest and beauty and striking effect went on longer than the development of those ideas could sustain. It will be interesting to see if, in future performances, orchestras play the work at a quicker tempo and if that contributes to a greater sense of cohesion and concentration.

ELLEN PFEIFER

Continued on page 40

For Chamber Music: A "New Direction"

On Martha's Vineyard, the Millenium Ensemble can run the gamut

Theodore W. Libbey, Jr.

The idea, say Christopher Kendall and Tony Ames, is to create a home for their concept. The home they think they have found is on Martha's Vineyard. The concept goes by the ambitious designation "Millenium Ensemble." For the chamber music faithful and chamber musicians, it may be the new way to spell "relief."

Ames, thirty-eight, and Kendall, thirty-one, are two of Washington's most active musical entrepreneurs. They co-founded the 20th Century Consort in the fall of 1975, and landed a series of grants to keep the group alive prior to its designation in 1978 as the resident ensemble of the Smithsonian's Hirshhorn Museum. In short order the two parlayed the Consort's success, and that of the Folger Consort—an early music group which Kendall had formed from Antioch College classmates and others as the resident ensemble of the Folger Shakespeare Library—into the beginnings of a new concept in chamber music programming.

The idea was to maintain a loose affiliation of musicians, many specializing in separate areas of the repertory, some crossing over, but all involved in presenting concert programs that cover the entire spectrum of written Western chamber music.

First offspring of the original nucleus of musicians from the 20th Century Consort was the Romantic Chamber Ensemble—formed in collaboration with the Naumburg Award-winning Emerson String Quartet in 1979 and designated a resident ensemble at the Smithsonian. Similarly, a group calling itself



Hesperus: one of the five featured groups

Hesperus evolved as an offshoot of the Folger ensemble in 1980, and dedicated itself to the Baroque chamber repertory. New musicians are constantly being involved in the various groups' activities, but the basic armature is in place and consists of Washington professionals.

"We were of the opinion," says Ames, "that it wouldn't suffice, in view of the tensions in chamber music today, if we stuck necessarily to single-issue performance groups. We thought a comprehensive chamber music entity, along the lines of the Millenium Ensemble, would have the best chance of ultimately surviving, and of hopefully getting chamber music to go in a new direction. With this sort of arrangement we can do practically anything. On the fund-raising side, we have a program that speaks to all of these areas—early, baroque and classic, romantic, contemporary—which improves the chances for a successful response across the board, and is likely to create new funding because of the interest people have in the idea and its novelty."

Mr. Libbey is music critic of the Washington Star.

A thousand years of music

To bring groups specializing in the performance of a thousand years of music together, in one place and at one time, has not been easy—even if some of the musicians do double duty as performers with different groups. But on Martha's Vineyard, the Millennialists found an attractive location and a potential audience of singular promise.

"We were interested in doing something that would appeal to the island," Ames points out, "that would add to the cultural life there, offer something to the residents and the state that doesn't already exist, help the economy, attract the more sophisticated visitor. The best way was to establish a residency—because it is a residency, an association—as the basis for a music festival."

As for the programs themselves, and the aims of the festival, Kendall stresses the comprehensive nature of the package as its leading asset. "The format is a chronological line," he says, "with lecture-recitals and seminars in history and performance

practice following the course of the programs. We will have the five component groups—the Folger Consort, Hesperus, the Emerson String Quartet, Romantic Chamber Ensemble, and 20th Century Consort—presenting five programs encompassing the chamber music of the last thousand years essentially, although in fact we're starting this summer with the troubadour/trouvere repertory, so it doesn't quite go back a thousand years. On the other end is a work written last year—in other words, the music goes all the way up to the present decade, so that the audience will be able to experience in a single continuum an enormous range of great chamber music."

Highlights of 1981

Kendall says that highlights of the festival this summer will include the "Paris" Quartets of Telemann, Beethoven's first Rasumovsky Quartet, Brahms's *Liebeslieder Waltzes* and Clarinet Trio, two new songs by Pulitzer Prize-winning composer Joseph Schwantner, Stravinsky's *L'Histoire du soldat*, and George Rochberg's *Electrikaleidoscope*. Among the performers who will be featured, Kendall singles out clarinetist Loren Kitt, soprano Lucy Shelton (winner of the 1980 Naumburg Award), pianist Lambert Orkis, and tenor David Gordon.

The festival will offer three performances each week, one program new and two repeats, at various locations on the island. The first programs will be presented July 27-29, and thereafter performances will take place each Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday through August 26.

"There's a special satisfaction for all the musicians involved," says Kendall, "in bringing their efforts together . . ."

" . . . at the beach . . ." Ames interrupts.

" . . . in a festival where cross-fertilization of musical ideas is cultivated . . . in a hothouse atmosphere," Kendall finishes, smiling as he carries the horticultural metaphor to the

Debuts & Reappearances

Continued from page 38

New York

Gary Steigerwalt, piano

The young American pianist Gary Steigerwalt presented a richly rewarding recital at Abraham Goodman House on March 29 proving that variety can be not only the spice of life but the essence of a fine concert. The program opened with a rather stiff reading of Haydn's F major Sonata, L. 38. However, the three Rachmaninoff *Etudes-tableaux* which followed showed the pianist's true strengths. He has a big sound that is consistently beautiful and never harsh or grating. The most difficult music flowed easily without a sense of strain amidst the hail of notes.

Steigerwalt presented the premiere of Iain Hamilton's Third Piano Sonata. It is a subtly structured, six-movement work in which variants of the first two movements return as part of the final two movements. Between these pairs is an eloquent slow movement and a brilliant cadenza. The uncomplicated harmonic language is quite neo-classical, and full advantage is taken of the piano's virtuoso and coloristic possibilities. This

point of absurdity.

Regaining seriousness, Ames presents a summation of the festival's importance:

"The character of the thing is its absolute uniqueness—in other places chamber music is being presented in many ways, but this idea is not being focused on as an organizational approach. As a programming concept it's unique—having specialist groups which can give a first-rate presentation of the whole continuum. As far as I know, there is nobody else who can do this. Why, we can take an idea right back to the Middle Ages, and carry it forward to today if we want to." **MA**



Steigerwalt: a rare insight

hauntingly beautiful work was performed with much bravura, passion, and an insight rarely transmitted in first performances.

Thereafter the program was divided between the frequently heard and the rarely encountered. Chopin's F sharp minor Polonaise was thoroughly rousing, benefitting from a lush *forte* and crisp finger articulation. The mazurka section was subdued rather than dance-like, a welcome contrast to the stormy outer sections. A powerful, broad reading of the C minor Nocturne followed.

The recital closed with a thrilling performance of Brahms's Sonata in C major, Op. 1, one of the most unjustly neglected keyboard masterpieces. This fiery work demands great stamina to articulate many pianistically awkward, yet gorgeous, ideas. This came with seeming ease, along with powerful lyricism, warm expanse, and abundant excitement. Again, the most musically satisfying sections were the most difficult. The filled octaves of the third movement and the thirds coupled with leaps conveyed their force not simply through execution but through the emotionally varied presentation.

A single reservation applied to the entire recital: the sense of grandeur often lacked much tonal variation. Steigerwalt is an unusually gifted pianist—if he broadened his coloristic spectrum he could become a pianist of the first rank.

JOHN MCINERNEY

erick also ran his wars, but music remained very close to his heart. He played his flute—rather well—several times every day and took it, together with a traveling harpsichord, even into the field. In the 1750s the affairs of state, the organization of the first modern standing army, and of course the wars gradually left less time for his music, and in 1756 he laid down his flute and stopped composing.

Though his role in the history of German music is an important one as a knowledgeable patron who furthered music in many ways, it is very difficult to judge the true musical capabilities of this brilliant but very capricious monarch. An autocrat of the first water, he nevertheless believed in the tenets of the Enlightenment; he was a German patriot who detested the German language, and all his correspondence and other writings were in French; he exchanged letters with Voltaire and other French philosophers and greatly admired French culture, though he hated the French. The contradictions are just as astonishing when it comes to music. He adored Italian music yet disliked Italian musicians and would not let an Italian composer into his new opera house; all the Italian operas performed there were written by Germans. He apparently appreciated polyphony, vide his interest in "the old Bach," but never resorted to it, nor would he permit his court composers to use it, except in church music. His taste in music was ultraconservative, yet long before Gluck he decided that the da capo aria should be abandoned in favor of the two-part cavatina and so ordered Graun. He played only his own works and those of his favorite, Quantz, who composed close to 300 flute concertos for his master. (No wonder he was such a conservative; 300 Quantz concertos would drive a deep furrow into anyone's brain!) This caused such monotony at the daily concerts held at the palace before supper that the fine musicians in his service began to drift away.

Of the four symphonies, well played in this recording by the Munich Pro Arte Orchestra under the direction of Kurt Redel, Nos. 1, 2, and 4 are from Frederick's apprentice days; they are authenticated and surprisingly good for an amateur. One's first suspicion is, of course, that his teachers had something to do with these works. But this proud and willful man, who prescribed to his musicians how they should compose, would not have stood for any such assistance, so we must accept them at their face value. The symphonies are Italianate, melodious, and euphonious; their construction is less than simple, but they hang together. No. 3, which I judge to be a later work, is close to the *empfindsam* style, almost reaching the early Mannheimers.

Frederick was a knowledgeable patron who furthered music in many ways.

Whatever our opinion of this man, he was a musician, and if his music is restricted in scope and fervor, it is because of his philosophical belief that music, unlike literature, should not deeply touch the soul, but should entertain, give solace after a day's hard work. His music is suitable for that. This is an interesting release, backed by a life story that is more than interesting; it should please those who like to study the byways of music history.

P.H.L.

GLUCK: *Orfeo ed Euridice*.

CAST:

Euridice	Veronika Kences (s)
Amore	Mária Zempléni (s)
Orfeo	Julia Hamari (ms)
Hungarian State Opera Chamber Chorus and Orchestra, Ervin Lukács, cond. [János Mátýás, prod.] HUNGAROTON SLPX 12100/1, \$19.96 (two discs, manual sequence).	

Gluck's *Orfeo ed Euridice* used to be considered the "first" opera in the repertory canon; in the last twenty years, however, not only the works of Monteverdi—*L'Incoronazione di Poppea*, especially—but several of Cavalli have pushed back the frontiers with performances here and in Europe. I suspect that future productions of this great work will continue to be scarce, partly because Gluck's brand of music, which depends heavily on the maintenance of line, is out of favor nowadays, and the type of singer who can do it full justice no longer exists. In addition, conductors see in this, his most popular opera, a sort of pleasant baroque pastoral with dramatic overtones, and they play it, if not with the Romantic swooniness of yesteryear, with a sort of finicky chamber ballet feeling that is likewise inappropriate. The only conductor who truly combined the work's inherent searing passion with its ethereal qualities was Toscanini, and he recorded only the second act. In the current catalog, Georg Solti (London OSA 1285) and Charles Mackerras (Vanguard HM 66/7) bring life to it, while Renato Fasanò (RCA LSC 6169) takes the more traditional, thin-blooded route.

This performance, nicely played and straightforwardly sung (with appoggiaturas but without embellishments), is well within the pastoral tradition. Erwin Lukács uses the Bärenreiter edition of the original 1762 Vienna score.

I won't go into the complicated history of performance editions of *Orfeo*.

excellently delineated in Max Loppert's chart in Alan Blyth's *Opera on Record* (Hutchinson, 1979). Essentially, the 1762 first edition was written for male alto, but in 1774 Gluck revised and to some extent reorchestrated and enlarged the opera for tenor voice for Paris. The later version is in every dramatic way preferable because of the new music and because of the fundamental rethinking of the original. The only question is whether the role of Orfeo should be taken by a tenor or a female alto. Mine is currently a minority view, but what Gluck accomplished in tauter dramatic pacing defines the distance between the early reform precepts and a work that, in the 1774 form, looks directly past its eighteenth-century vantage point to the drama of the nineteenth century and works like *Fidelio*. The extension of the cadence in "*Che farò senza Euridice*" takes up only a few bars of music, yet that highlighting of Orfeo's anguish is so powerful and so poignant that in musico-dramatic terms it renders the 1762 edition a musicological curiosity. This is the very stuff of music-drama, and to put it aside in favor of the earlier edition is, frankly, inexplicable.

Even if you prefer the "pure" form of the opera, the Hungaroton performance does not offer much. Lukács now and then wakes up and lends the music some urgency, but for the most part he plays it as *Tafelmusik* of an inoffensive sort. The ferocious sforzando string chords at the beginning of the second-act hell scene never come to the fore, and time and again Lukács misses the drama in the music. It cannot too often be reiterated that Gluck's lesser stature as an inventive composer becomes crystal-clear only when the drama built into his works is shortchanged. Apart from opera and some ballet music, Gluck's music doesn't exist as music in the way that, say, Rameau's does.

Julia Hamari has a warm and lovely mezzo, but as an artist she doesn't come within a mile of Orfeo. She imparts no feeling of loss at the beginning of the opera, no sense of hurling herself at the demons in the hell scene (the epithets "*furye*" and "*larve*" are rendered as if transacting a business arrangement), and above all, no transcendent anguish when she loses Euridice for a second time. Gluck is supposed to have told the castrato Guadagni to "shout Euridice's name as if you had suffered a real loss" in "*Che farò*," and anyone familiar with Callas' recording knows exactly what is required; for Hamari it is all a pleasurable tour of some quaint musical countryside. Moreover, she lacks the attention to word—and to word within a continuing musical line—that must inform this role. Nor does she embellish: the three stanzas of the Act I aria

Critics' Choice

The most noteworthy releases reviewed recently

BEETHOVEN, MOZART: Keyboard Works. *Bilson.* NONESUCH H 71377, N 78004, Feb.

BRAHMS: Orchestral Works and Concertos. *Furtwängler.* EMI ELECTROLA 1C 149-53420/6M (7), April.

BRAHMS, SCHUMANN: String Quartets. *Guarneri.* RCA ARL 3-3834 (3), April.

BYRD: Motets (10). *Byrd Choir, Turner.* PHILIPS 9502 030, May.

CELIBIDACHE: Der Taschengarten. *Stuttgart Radio, Celibidache.* INTERCORD INT 160.832, May.

CLEMENTI: Piano Sonatas (3). *Horowitz.* RCA ARM 1-3689, May.

CORIGLIANO: Clarinet Concerto. *Barber:* Essay No. 3. *Drucker, Mehta.* NEW WORLD NW 309, April.

DEBUSSY: Preludes, Book I. *Arrau.* PHILIPS 9500 676, June.

GOLDMARK: Die Königin von Saba. *Takács, Jerusalem, Fischer.* HUNGAROTON SLPX 12179/82 (4), April.

GOUNOD: Mireille. *Freni, Vanzeno, Van Dam, Plasson.* ANGEL SZCX 3905(3), June.

HAYDN: Great Organ Mass. *Academy of Ancient Music, Preston.* OISEAU-LYRE DSLO 563, March.

HAYDN: Salomon Symphonies, Vol. 1. *Royal Philharmonic, Beecham.* ARABESQUE 8024-3(3), June.

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STRAVINSKY: Le Sacre du printemps (arr.). *Atamian.* RCA ARC 1-3636, April.

VERDI: Un Ballo in maschera. *Milanov, Bjoerling, Panizza.* MET 8(3), June.

DENNIS BRAIN: Unreleased Performances. ARABESQUE 8071, May.

THE MANNHEIM SCHOOL: *Cammerata Bern, Furi.* ARCHIV 2723 068(3), June.

EZIO PINZA: The Golden Years. PEARL GEMM 162/3(2), Feb.

MAURIZIO POLLINI: Piano Music of the Twentieth Century. DG 2740 229 (5), March.

RÓZSA, WAXMAN, WEBB: Film Music. ENTR'ACTE ERM 6002, March.

"*Chiamo il mio ben,*" at least, need the kind of restrained variation that Marilyn Horne gives them in the Solti recording. There the music comes to vibrant life.

Veronika Kincses brings some welcome ardor to the role of Euridice and handles the Act III recitatives (the 1762 version has lots of recitatives!) with a sense of character; Mária Zempléní is okay as Amore. The sound is likewise adequate, if not particularly spacious, and the set comes with a sextilingual translation and a very detailed article on the opera and its background. **P.J.S.**

HAYDN: Piano Trios (4).

Mozartean Players. [Marc J. Aubort and Joanna Nickrenz, prod.] ARABESQUE 8123-2, \$17.96 (digital recording; two discs). Tape: 9123-2, \$19.96 (two cassettes).

Trios for Flute, Cello, and Piano: in G. H. XV:15; in D. H. XV:16. Trios for Violin, Cello, and Piano: in D minor, H. XV:23; in C. H. XV:25.

Haydn's piano trios on original instruments: Why? Haven't the elegant and brilliant performances of the Beaux Arts Trio told us everything we need to know of this music? Well, as the Mozartean Players convincingly demonstrate here, they haven't. The Beaux Arts accounts are splendidly refined, but their balance is curious: an artificially restrained cello; a rich, prominent piano; a silky violin. With original instruments, the cello dominates the bass line, the violin cuts through the piano treble tone, and so only the independent parts of the keyboard line really come through the strings. A solo with accompaniment becomes a true trio, and all the instruments can play out boldly.

Having said that, I would not automatically prefer the Mozartean Players to the Beaux Arts, for the latter are among the best chamber music players in the world. But this set can be strongly recommended, for it offers a good choice of works, and half the performances are excellent—the two trios with flute, in which Rebecca Troxler plays delightfully and deftly. In the trios with violin, Richard Luby's tone is forced and acid. Myron Lutzke, a most effective cellist, articulates sharply and shapes each phrase well. Steve Lubin's forte piano sounds better than on his recent solo Mozart disc (Spectrum SR 125, February)—and this whole album is better recorded—but there is still the strange uneven note on the piano that disrupts an eloquent slow movement. His playing is rhythmically subtle, however; I like the hesitations in the famous Hungarian Rondo movement.

The musical gems here are the two eloquent, long-breathed adagios of the violin trios and the perky, surprising finales of the flute trios. There is too much on the sleeve about "a matrix of silence"

and "a special *rapprochement* to the Classic aesthetic" and too little about the works. When were they written, for heaven's sake? H. C. Robbins Landon gives 1790 for the flute trios and 1794-95(?) for the violin trios and suggests that his Doblinger complete edition numbering be followed instead of Hoboken. The equations are H.15/16 = Nos. 28/29; H.23/25 = Nos. 37/39. Future releases, please note. **N.K.**

JANÁČEK: From the House of the Dead.

CAST:

Alieia	Jaroslava Janská (s)
Harlot	Eva Zikmundová (ms)
Filka	Jiří Zahradníček (t)
Skuratov	Ivo Zidek (t)
Tall Prisoner	Vladimír Krejčík (t)
Old Prisoner	Beno Blachut (t)
Voice/Cherevin	Zdeněk Svehla (t)
Shapkin/Kedril	Zdeněk Souček (t)
Shishkov	Václav Zítek (b)
Goranchikov	Dalibor Jedlička (b)
Chekunov/Don Juan	Jaroslav Souček (b)
Commandant	Antonín Svorec (bs-b)
Short Prisoner	Richard Novák (bs)
A Vienna State Opera Chorus, Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, Charles Mackerras, cond. [James Mallinson and Michael Haas, prod.] LONDON LDR 10036, \$21.96 (digital recording; two discs, automatic sequence).	

Decca/London's laudable series of Janáček operas under Charles Mackerras' direction is developing into a phonographic landmark of major significance. Not only were the first two issues, *Kátya Kabanová* and *The Makropoulos Affair*, superb performances, but they presented the scores in editions that faithfully followed the composer's original intentions. As is often the case with a creative original, Janáček has received a great deal of well-meant but misguided "assistance" over the years, principally through extensive reorchestration but also, in some instances, through reordering of scenes and wholesale recomposition. It seems odd that a composer who died as recently as 1928 should be subjected to such treatment, but even his earliest champions apparently felt that, for all his genius, there was something essentially amateurish about his singular dramaturgy and idiosyncratic conception of orchestral sonority, lapses that could easily be put to rights by slicker, more conventional minds. These London recordings provide a corrective to such mistaken thinking.

Aside from the posthumously produced *Osud* (*Fate*), no opera in the Janáček canon has suffered more at editorial hands than *From the House of the Dead*, no doubt because the composer died a month after completing the score and the first performance was prepared without his supervision. Two of his pupils, Břetislav Bakala and Osvald Chlubna, apparently even thought that the master

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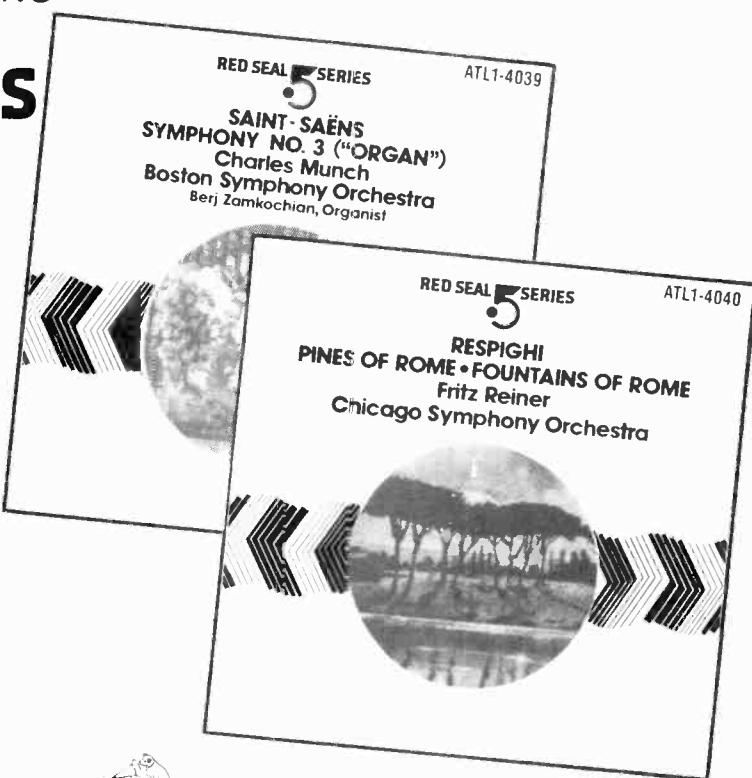
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CLASSICAL Record Reviews

had not in fact finished the opera, for they proceeded to romanticize the orchestration, thicken the wind parts, add some verbal padding to the vocal lines, and tack on an "apotheosis" final chorus. This corrupt edition held the stage for some thirty years and may be heard on a long-deleted Epic recording, a live performance from the 1954 Holland Festival.

In 1961, Rafael Kubelik conducted his new version of the opera in Munich, restoring Janáček's original bleak ending, as life in the house of the dead returns to depressing "normalcy," and removing many but not all of the Bakala-Chlubna accretions. Supraphon's recording (50705/6) made a dozen years ago utilizes the composer's finale, but otherwise ignores Kubelik's revisions and sticks to the touched-up score. Now we have a performance based strictly on the manuscript, a new edition by the British Janáček scholar John Tyrrell, who painstakingly sorts out the textual problems in his excellent liner notes to London's recording. At last it is possible to hear *House of the Dead* in all its spare, stark, and uncompromising majesty.

Given this opera's unusual theme, structure, and musical fabric, one can perhaps understand those early editors' puzzlement over the composer's true intent. Janáček had tackled unorthodox material previously—the animal opera *The Cunning Little Vixen* and *The Makropoulos Affair*, with its decidedly unlyrical plot based on an involved legal proceeding—but *House of the Dead* would appear even more unsuitable for the musical stage. Drawn from Dostoevsky's autobiographical novel about his experiences in a Siberian labor camp, the libretto offers no story line as such, merely vignettes of prison life loosely framed by the arrival and release of the nobleman Alexander Petrovitch Goriachikov, a character scarcely developed at all. Except for a brief appearance by a prostitute, there are no women's roles, and the erotic element that Janáček conjured up so powerfully in all his previous operas is lacking completely.

The very absence of women in this intolerable Siberian hell becomes just one dramatic tool in Janáček's scheme, an unflinching examination of humanity at the abyss. In Dostoevsky's book, the composer found the distillation of the basic theme that concerned him in all his operas, human beings in *extremis*, wretched, pathetic, and contemptible perhaps, but never without value—"in every creature a spark of God" is the famous inscription he wrote on the score. Much in Janáček's distinctive treatment of the subject was suggested in his earlier operas; in fact, the memory of past events, a narrative technique used so effectively as far back as *Jenůfa*, here be-

comes the crux of the entire opera.

The principal "events" in each act are narratives by various convicts describing the circumstances that led them to their present situation. These flashback revelations are in essence mini-operas as we hear in detail how Skuratov murdered his beloved's fiancée, how Luka (Filka) was driven to stab his sadistic commanding officer, and how Shishkov cut the throat of his faithless wife. These central monologues are surrounded by the commonplace routines of prison life, briefly dispelled by the prisoners' pantomimic entertainments of Act II. Every word and action in this typically economic scenario serve an interrelating function, building to Shishkov's twenty-minute life story that culminates in his recognition of the dying Luka as his wife's lover. This agonizing moment is the cathartic climax of the opera, followed by Goriachikov's release and the symbolic flight to freedom by the prisoners' pet eagle, now cured of his lame wing. Here the bowdlerized version inserted the optimistic choral peroration. Janáček, however, ended the opera with coruscating march music as the remaining prisoners are led back to work—the pain of life in the house of the dead continues, and as Michael Ewans eloquently writes in his study of Janáček's operas, "the march seems to echo on, radiating outwards from the world of the prison into our own."

Given Janáček's concerns as an opera composer to intensify the expressive force of human speech through musical means, *House of the Dead* stands as an inevitable conclusion to and crowning achievement in his life's work. Some will always question the aesthetics of his manner, a style of text setting that is so relentlessly faithful to spoken inflections that it seems to negate the very basis of opera as a lyrical expansion of verbal communication and interior emotion.

There is really no answering such subjective matters of taste; Janáček's personal voice, with its concentrated song-speech, often gnomic vocal lines, and restless orchestral mosaics, never was the stuff of conventional opera writing, and it will always grate on unreceptive ears. For the rest of us, *House of the Dead* remains a very special luminous work, even within the context of Janáček's other operas, for it is here that he fulfilled himself most totally, an opera he was compelled to compose "as if I had to account for my life."

London's recording continues the high standards previously set in this series, further enhanced by the company's clean digital sonics. The cast comprises native Czech singers—not always the most exact and reliable performers of Janáček, as we have come to hear from Supraphon's pioneering versions, but far more carefully precise on this oc-

House of the Dead stands as a luminous achievement in Janáček's life's work.

casion without losing an ounce of dramatic involvement. Mackerras' conducting of the Vienna Philharmonic is little short of brilliant, and his stabbingly unsentimental interpretation penetrates right to the heart of the music. Record companies are constantly being accused of crass commercialism, so congratulations to London for lavishing its resources on a project that, while it may not line the company's coffers, makes an invaluable artistic contribution to the recorded literature.

P.G.D.

MOZART: Concertos for Piano and Orchestra (4).

English Chamber Orchestra, Murray Perahia, piano and cond. [Roy Emerson, prod.] CBS MASTERWORKS M 35828*/869*. \$9.98 each. Tape: MT 35828*/869*. \$9.98 each (cassettes).

Concertos: No. 8, in C, K. 246*; No. 12, in A, K. 414*; No. 22, in E flat, K. 482*; No. 27, in B flat, K. 595*.

MOZART: Concertos for Piano and Orchestra: No. 14, in E flat, K. 449; No. 26, in D, K. 537 (Coronation).

Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, Tamás Vásáry, piano and cond. [Cord Garben, prod.] DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2531 207. \$9.98. Tape: 3301 207. \$9.98 (cassette).

MOZART: Concertos for Piano and Orchestra: No. 20, in D minor, K. 466; No. 22, in E flat, K. 482.

Emanuel Ax, piano; Dallas Symphony Orchestra, Eduardo Mata, cond. [Peter

Dellheim, prod.] RCA RED SEAL ARI 1-3457 \$9.98. Tape: ARK 1-3457. \$9.98 (cassette). MOZART: Concertos for Piano and Orchestra: No. 17, in G, K. 453; No. 27, in B flat, K. 595.

B Walter Khen, piano; Minnesota Orchestra, Stanislaw Skrowaczewski, cond. [Marc J. Aubort and Joanna Nickrenz, prod.] CANDIDE CE 31119. \$4.98. Tape: CT 2275. \$4.98 (cassette).

The last fifteen years have brought an awakening of Mozartean perception. In a general sense, today's performers (and listeners) have a far keener concept of appropriate classical sonority—the strings leaner and better contoured, the important woodwind contributions more prominent. And whereas even such past "stylists" as Artur Schnabel and Edwin Fischer engaged in practices we now know to be incorrect (their profound musicianship was another story), today we almost routinely encounter trills properly begun on the upper auxiliary, stylistically apt cadenzas where Mozart left none, stark cadences filled out with flourishes, and passagework convincingly embroidered.

But the more deeply we explore Mozart's keyboard concertos, the more problems come to the fore. While the solo concertos of Bach, Handel, and Vivaldi differ little from the concerto grosso—the solo emerging from and rejoining the tutti in a continuing dialogue—some of Mozart's sublime creations set up a dramatic rivalry (the relatively early K. 271, for example, and the later K. 466, 467, 488, and 503). Yet many other mature Mozart concertos—such as K. 414, 449, 453, 456, 459, and even his last work in the genre, K. 595—hew closer to the baroque ideal: all are basically intimate essays. And some concertos—and isolated episodes of still oth-

ers resolutely defy pat classification.

The question is not so much whether to use a chamber ensemble or a full symphonic orchestra (as many musicians would have you think), for it is pretty much agreed that Mozart's orchestra was small by nineteenth-century standards; even such scores as K. 467 and 503 can be dealt with quite adequately with a reduced complement. Nor is the issue really that of a division of roles between soloist and conductor: There are sound reasons for conducting these works from the keyboard, aesthetic as well as historical. (A greater stylistic unanimity can presumably be achieved by having the orchestra's role shaped by the same mind that governs the soloist's passagework.)

But here is a crucial point: While the Mozart concertos may not all be motivated by the traditional rivalry between piano and orchestra, still, for all their chamber-music-like details, they are *not* chamber works. A dichotomy between solo and tutti *must* be maintained—and was maintained in most of the old-school performances, whether conducted from keyboard or podium. In Dohnányi's early version of the G major, K. 453 (reissued on Past Masters PM 8), and in Fischer's self-conducted 1953 live recording of K. 482 (Bruno Walter Society IGI 329), the soloist eventually dominates the orchestra, his belated entry reshaping the previously heard material with more freewheeling authority and subjectivity. In the Schnabel/Sargent K. 459, the pianist and conductor evidently had different notions about appoggiaturas, and the tactful rebuke, far from proving hurtful, injected a lively note into the dialogue. Ego was undoubtedly involved here, but it was turned to good effect (as it was not in the

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CLASSICAL Record Reviews

ragged Larghetto of Schnabel's K. 595 with Barbirolli).

Murray Perahia's unfolding concerto cycle for CBS is an interesting case: He is a topflight virtuoso, and his concert performances of many of these same concertos are stellar examples of the traditional approach in full sway. But the recordings offer an alternative way, that of the chamber music player par excellence. This is not to denigrate either the English Chamber Orchestra's execution (of high excellence despite some tendencies toward low-keyed flaccidity that a chauvinist might call typically "British") or Perahia's technical competence as a conductor. He elicits precise attacks and releases and judicious balances. But he doesn't think like a maestro; he seems altogether more interested in sharing his views with his colleagues than in imposing his will upon them. His apparent total disinterest in domination makes some of the performances too civil and emotionally inconclusive. The sense of fulfillment is most apparent in the works that need a touch of authoritarian drama: though his K. 466, 467, and 491 are certainly examples of high artistry, they are disappointing alongside his broadcast tapes of K. 466 (with Solti and the Chicago) and 467 (Maazel and the Cleveland) and his live account of K. 491 (with Musica Aeterna). In all three concert performances, he played more assertively, with stormier inflections and much more powerful, cumulative phrase tensions. I hope that he will one day be given the opportunity to re-record some of the larger concertos on a grander scale.

Perahia's K. 482 is a total success. While working within the imposed chamber music dimensions, he subtly suggests the needed element of expansive grandeur. Granted, the opening orchestral exposition lacks the full weight that Rodzinski, for example, achieved in his memorable New York Philharmonic broadcast with Landowska (Desmar IPA 106/7), but the sound is sturdier than the English Chamber Orchestra's norm for this series. CBS's sensible mastering—with this lengthy work's Rondo allowed to spill onto the second side—doubtless lends a helping hand: the dynamic level is higher and the contrasts are more robust. Perahia's solo work here is an absolute delight, with a witty edge, an enlivening spontaneity, and for all its careful planning, a seemingly improvisatory freedom (a perfect demonstration of "freedom through discipline"). In K. 595, though, the performance is a bit cool emotionally, and there is an element of feathery preciousness (e.g., those barely audible, albeit beautifully articulated, runs accompanied by the whispered pizzicatos in the first movement). In fairness, such details might have

sounded magical rather than effete had surfaces been truly quiet; as it happens, pops and splutters from CBS's review copy rudely dissipate the mood. The two earlier concertos, K. 246 and 414, are rendered with grace and unpretentious finesse. Both are completely in the domain of the chamber orchestra and thus respond well to Perahia's intimate, elegant treatment.

Although Vásáry's performances are nominally chamber-size, the combination of the pianist's taut, brilliant tone, the orchestra's ultradisciplined execution, and DG's close (and consequently keen-edged) engineering gives a large-scaled, symphonic effect. The approach works splendidly in K. 537, the so-called *Coronation* Concerto. His red-blooded energy and champagnelike glitter fully realize the pomp while giving a clearer picture of the artfully concealed stature and substance. This interpretation, as impressive as any I've heard, causes me to re-examine my long-held opinion of the work as the coldest and most superficial of the late Mozart concertos. K. 449 is rendered in much the same manner, and here the result, for all its bite and expertise, is rather charmless and ham-fisted. Moravec (Quintessence PMC 7107), Perahia (M 34219), Peter Serkin (RCA ARL 1-1492), and Rudolf Serkin (with the Busch Chamber Players on Turnabout THS 65058; with Alexander Schneider and the Columbia Symphony on CBS MS 6844) all offer more relaxed, lilting renditions of this essentially gracious work.

Emanuel Ax and Eduardo Mata give an excellent account of the D minor, K. 466, with the conventional division of roles. Ax, basically a lyrical player whose temperament impresses as solid rather than fiery, works up considerable vehemence and energy, particularly in the Rondo. Mata, by providing strong rhythmic pulse and a granitic sobriety, ably asserts and establishes the aura of classical order. K. 482 also gets off to a promising start, with the bassoon line even more solidly registered in the opening tutti than it is in the CBS edition; but despite the well-regulated poise of his passagework, Ax seems slightly more constricted here than in K. 466—altogether too circumscribed emotionally and a little too flat coloristically. Perhaps the work is a more recent addition to his repertoire. Though this is certainly an agreeable, musicianly performance, I miss the scintillation and freedom of the Perahia and Landowska editions. RCA's sound could stand more airiness and dynamic range, but the reproduction is well balanced and full of effective instrumental detail.

Turnabout offers a more resonant, spacious pickup for Klien and Skrowaczewski. Here, again, is a virile, "big or-

chestra" sound (though, in fact, these recordings are probably all made with reduced forces). Skrowaczewski's approach is strictly disciplined and tonally ample—a somewhat more genial variant of Szell's. He includes the "extra" bars in K. 595's first movement (as does Perahia) and in the same concerto, Klien (again in company with Perahia) fills out certain sparsely outlined phrases. The Austrian pianist, an experienced Mozart practitioner, attacks both concertos in a vigorous, assertive manner. While he sounds a bit hard-toned and lacks the finesse of Perahia, Curzon, or Gieseking, his cleanly delineated phrases and lack of sentimentality are welcome. The Turnabout pressing is first-class.

Klien utilizes Mozart's cadenzas, as does Vásáry in the first movement of K. 449. Vásáry plays his own interpolations in K. 537, as does Ax in K. 482. In K. 466, Ax opts, as did Perahia earlier, for Beethoven's cadenza in the first movement, but whereas Ax plays an abbreviated version of Hummel for that concerto's Rondo (it still goes on for too long), Perahia's original one smacks, ironically, of the bypassed Beethoven. Perahia's cadenzas for K. 482 are "after Hummel," and in the remaining works, he plays Mozart's additions. **H.G.**

MOZART: *La Finta giardiniera*, K. 196; *Idomeneo*, K. 366. For a review, see page 50.

MOZART: Sinfonia concertante for Oboe, Clarinet, Horn, and Bassoon, in E flat, K. 297b*; *Idomeneo*: Ballet Music, K. 367: Nos. 1, 2.

A. Randall Wolfgang, oboe*; Jane Hamborsky, clarinet*; William Purvis, horn*; Frank Morelli, bassoon*; Orpheus Chamber Orchestra. [Judith Sherman, prod.] NONE-



Murray Perahia: a topflight virtuoso

SUCH D 79009, \$11.98 (digital recording). Tape: D1 79009, \$11.98 (cassette).

A few years back, especially in Russia, conductorless orchestras (including even some of large size) were in vogue. And for a time after Toscanini's death and the dissolution of the NBC Symphony, many of his players participated in the concerts and recordings of the conductorless Symphony of the Air. As a rule, however, the practice is possible—over any considerable interval, at least—only for smaller, chamber orchestras. The leading example today is the Orpheus ensemble, some twenty-five members strong. Based in New York, it has per-

formed successfully worldwide since 1972.

This is the orchestra's debut recording, a most attractive one, both for its admirably blended, warmly eloquent Mozartean performances and for its no less admirable, translucent (Sony) digital sonics. Not the least heartening aspect of this post-Sterne-era Nonesuch production is its maintenance of high standards, not only artistic and technical, but musical—illuminating jacket notes that include full source and bibliographical information on the music. Annotator Derrick Henry is particularly interesting in discussing the long debate over just how much of the K. 297b Sinfonia concertante, as we know it, is Mozart's and how much the work of later editors.

Whatever changes—other than the substitution of clarinet for flute in the solo woodwind quartet—may have been made in the original 1778 version (the autograph copy of which has long been lost), they don't seriously alter the basic character of this engaging music or cloud the enjoyment of modern listeners. The work has been recorded often, usually with bigger-name soloists than the Orpheus ensemble's own first-desk players. (The 1974 Marriner/Academy version, Philips 6500 380, probably is a preferred connoisseur choice.) But among the more Romantically expressive (if not exaggeratedly so) interpretations, this one ranks quite high—indeed, at the very top for recording excellence. Its deftly played solo parts receive due prominence without obtrusive spotlighting.

Mozart dashed off the *Idomeneo* ballet music—those "confounded dances"—under pressure while the opera itself was already in rehearsal (January 1781). Orpheus plays the major part of it, the first two, much longer, sections, with

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even more verve and infectious relish, whetting one's appetite for a quick provision of the remaining three shorter movements. In both works, the disc edition has been processed at a fairly high level, but the modulation level of the ferric-tape cassette seems just right; in every other respect the two editions are sonically identical.

R.D.D.

RAVEL: Daphnis et Chloé: Suite No. 2. DEBUSSY: La Mer.

A London Symphony Orchestra, Charles Mackerras, cond. [Victor E. Sachse and Clyde P. Rolston, prod.] CENTAUR CRC 1007. \$14.98 (digital recording) (Centaur Records, Inc., P.O. Box 23764, Baton Rouge, La. 70893).

RAVEL: Bolero*; Pavane pour une infante défunte*; Daphnis et Chloé: Suite No. 2^t.

A St. Louis Symphony Chorus¹ and Orchestra, Leonard Slatkin, cond. [Robert Woods, prod.] TELARC DG 10052. \$17.98 (digital recording).

London Symphony Orchestra, André Previn, cond. [Suzi Raj Grubb* and Christopher Bishop[†], prod.] ANGEL SZ 37670. \$9.98. Tape: 4ZS 37670. \$9.98 (cassette).

RAVEL: Orchestral and Vocal Works.

Nadine Denize, soprano*: Orchestre Philharmonique de Lille, Jean-Claude Casadesus, cond. HARMONIA MUNDI FRANCE HM 10.064. \$10.98. Tape: 40.064. \$10.98 (cassette). (Distributed by Brilly Imports, 155 N. San Vicente Blvd., Beverly Hills, Calif. 90211.)

Daphnis et Chloé: Suite No. 2. Pavane pour une infante défunte. Shéhérazade.* Mélodies Hébraïques.*

RAVEL: Bolero; La Valse*; Daphnis et Chloé: Suite No. 2^t.

B.R. Hallé Chorus¹ and Orchestra, John Barbirolli, cond. EVEREST 3471. \$4.98. Tape: 3471. \$5.98 (cassette). [**From VANGUARD 177 SD, 1965.]

RAVEL: Bolero; Rapsodie espagnole; Alborada del gracioso.

A Dallas Symphony Orchestra, Eduardo

Mata, cond. [Jay David Saks, prod.] RCA RED SEAL ARC 1-3686. \$11.98 (digital recording). Tape: ARK 1-3686. \$9.98 (cassette).

One of the most striking of all the fabulous Diaghilev/Ballets russes productions was the *Daphnis et Chloé* of June 8, 1912; yet now even the legendary Fokine choreography, Nijinsky and Karsavina dancing, and Bakst scenery and costume design have come to be almost completely eclipsed by the music of Maurice Ravel. Generally acclaimed as his magnum opus, the score remains unmatched in the whole orchestral repertory for its inspired reconciliation of seemingly conflicting elements (a pastoralism more of Versailles than of Greece against an orgiastic frenzy more Oriental than Attic) and even more for its kaleidoscopic tonal coloring and white-hot sonic incandescence. Properly "performed, not interpreted" (as the composer himself demanded) by an empathetic conductor with a large virtuoso orchestra and chorus, *Daphnis et Chloé* can be an incomparably thrilling experience, as much felt as heard.

Given such sonic luminosity and energy potentials (to say nothing of the electrical rhythms, ravishing melodic motifs, and melting harmonies!), it's scarcely surprising that this score has been unexcelled for testing and demonstrating the full color and power capacities of audio technology at each major stage of its development. Thus the milestone recorded versions of the complete ballet: the 1955 stereo first by Charles Munch and the Bostonians for RCA Victor (not released on stereo disc until 1960); the 1975 quadraphonic firsts by Jean Martinon and the Orchestre de Paris (Angel S 37148) and by Pierre Boulez and the New York Philharmonic (CBS M 33523; available only in stereo); and the 1980 digitally recorded first by

Eduardo Mata and the Dallas Symphony (RCA ARC 1-3458).

No true Ravelian can be fully content with anything less than the complete score, of course, yet the work is most widely known in concert and on records by its Second Suite. This is not a concert condensation, but the unaltered third (last) section of the original work, different only in that the wordless choral parts may be replaced by instruments—at incalculable coloristic loss. It comprises three closely linked sections (with the ballet's poignantly yearning main motif heard in the first two): "Daybreak," at first iridescently shimmering, then resplendently expansive; "Pantomime," languorously sensual and antiquarian, with wayward, rhapsodic shepherd's piping (solo flute; later, the husky-voiced alto flute); and "General Dance," breathlessly whirling (5/4 time), whipped on by Scheherazadean trumpets in complete Dionysiac intoxication.

Ever since its legendary Koussevitzky/Boston concert performance was first brought to records in late 1929 (sadly inadequate as mono recording technology and 78-rpm shellac discs were then), this suite has been a favorite of both the public, for its irresistible aural stimulations, and audiophiles, as a display vehicle for the most up-to-date playback systems. Now we are proffered (as if to "knit up the ravell'd sleeve" of 1981 cares) a widely varied batch of five Second Suite recordings, providing further potent evidence of this glowing music's ability to italicize every distinctive strength (and weakness) of the different audio technologies, digital systems, and recording philosophies.

Let's begin by discarding the Barbrolli/Hallé reissue, a coarsely recorded, prosaic performance (in its disc edition, poorly processed) commendable only for its inclusion of the choral parts. Neither of the other analog versions here includes a chorus, and one of them, André Previn's for Angel, leaves me cold. Its sonics, though acceptably warm and bright, aren't exceptional, and the stolidly contrived reading never catches fire.

The imported Harmonia Mundi release, however, is a multifaceted delight. Young Jean-Claude Casadesus (yes, a relation of the French pianistic family) is patently a talent and personality of unlimited potential, and he lifts the Lille Philharmonic, which he has headed since 1976, well above the level expected of a provincial orchestra. His reading of the suite is idiomatic, sensitive, and infectiously zestful, with climaxes as dramatically fiery as in any earlier analog recording. Except for a suggestion of woodwind-solo spot lighting, the audio engineering is first-rate. I'd rank this near the top of the Second Suite analog

discography—a bit below the 1971 Boulez/Cleveland version (CBS M 30651), which features a chorus and offers superior orchestral polish. But such quibbling is pointless, since this release is in any case a Ravelian must for its overside song cycles.

Which brings us to the two digital suites, which represent (like the earlier Mata complete ballet) an undeniable breakthrough into new sonic dimensions. To be sure, the recording of Charles Mackerras' London Symphony performance—superbly authoritative, evocative, and above all, dramatic—is slightly flawed by some overresonant edging of ff high strings and by a slightly dry acoustical ambience. But neither minor defect approaches the gravity of those in the earliest digitals, and in addition to the characteristic lucidity of inner details, there is well-nigh overpowering sonic weight, impact, and blazing incandescence. For sheer physical sensationalism, as well as perfectly proportioned realizations of both structural design and poetic eloquence, this *Daphnis* Suite is magnificent. All that's lacking are the choral parts and a genuine French accent.

Leonard Slatkin and his St. Louis Symphony also lack the accent, but in most other respects, they and their Telarc engineering (Soundstream digital) are strong just where the Centaur forces and engineering (system unspecified) are relatively weak. There is a most atmospherically evocative and (in the "Danse générale") urgent chorus; the sonics match the upper-register sweetness and overall warmth of the best recent digitals; and if young Slatkin doesn't demonstrate as tautly assured control as the veteran Mackerras, he and many of his players bring more grace, personal relish, and above all, disarming freshness to their performance. Though not quite as spectacular as the Centaur, for many listeners this version may well prove more seductive.

Since the Second *Daphnis et Chloé* Suite runs fairly short (Mackerras, 15:35; Slatkin, 15:50; Previn, 17:13; Casadesus, 17:20), these programs are filled out with other selections—all by Ravel, except for Debussy's *La Mer* on the Mackerras/Centaur disc. That warrants almost exactly the same high praise and relatively slight reservations as his Ravel: The emphasis is less on the work's expected impressionistic pictorialism than on its symphonic integration and dramatic grip, too often slighted, which belie the composer's own ironic subtitle, "three symphonic sketches." Though I still cling to the more warmly poetic and Gallic 1976 account by Martinon (Angel S 37067), this is surely the most robust and stormy since Toscanini's of 1950—and how that read-

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ing needed the digital sonics exploited so effectively by Mackerras!

The most frequent program addition is of course the warhorse *Bolero*—here in two negligible analog and two first-rate (interpretatively as well as sonically) digital recordings. The Barbirolli/Everest *Bolero* is as perfunctory as his *Daphnis* Second Suite and *La Valse*. It probably dates from about 1965 also but apparently wasn't then given U.S. release. The cassette edition, though quieter than the disc, awkwardly splits *La Valse* between two sides. Previn's *Bolero* is tiresomely draggy (17:15!), with oversize solos and brutal vehemence toward the end. In marked contrast, Slatkin (16:16) offers fresh verve and consistent grace, with woodwind and brass solos that, though deftly rhapsodic and distinctively colored, are more uniformly phrased and freer from individual mannerisms than almost any I've encountered.

And in an entirely separate program from those featuring the *Daphnis* Suite, Mata and the Dallas Symphony present a gleamingly crystalline digital *Bolero* that, without ever seeming pressed or hurried, is brisk (14:47) and enlivened by a quite electrical sense of urgency. It is coupled with perhaps the highest-voltage *Alborada del gracioso* on record, plus a crisply etched *Rapsodie espagnole*: in the latter, only the quieter lyrical moments have been done more magically by others. These surprisingly French-flavored performances and ultravivid sonics are captured—somewhat to my surprise—every bit as well in the ferric-tape cassette edition (the digital origins of which aren't even acknowledged in the labeling) as on the disc.

Then there are several new attempts at the *Pavane* (written for, some readers may need to be reminded, a dead princess, not a dead infant), the haunting little elegy that despite—or perhaps because of—its simplicity is rarely played satisfactorily. Previn's version simply plods; Casadesus's, disappointingly stodgy, suffers also from blowzy solo horn qualities; Slatkin's relaxed yet flowing reading and Telarc's richly warm digital recording are far more pleasing, although there have been even more Romantically evocative interpretations and horn playing in the past.

But the prize added attraction here is the second side of the Harmonia Mundi disc. That stars the Paris (and Met) Opera soprano Nadine Denize in two Ravel song cycles: the incantatory *Deux Mélodies Hébraïques* of 1914 and the better-known *Shéhérazade* of 1903, with its incomparably exotic Oriental sorcery in the long first song, "Asie." Denize's huskily seductive voice and exquisitely subtle yet tautly controlled artistry—enhanced by well-nigh ideal



HENRY GROSSMAN

Dylana Jenson, a promising youngster, at Sibelius sessions with Eugene Ormandy

orchestral playing and recording—combine to make these versions ineffably moving. Helpfully accompanied by the original texts, they warrant ranking right up with, if not above, the finest of even the most memorable earlier recordings.

R.D.D.

SAINT-SAËNS: Introduction and Rondo capriccioso, Op. 28—See Sibelius: Concerto for Violin and Orchestra, Op. 47.

SIBELIUS: Concerto for Violin and Orchestra, in D minor, Op. 47. **BRUCH:** Concerto for Violin and Orchestra, No. 1, in G minor, Op. 26.

Shizuka Ishikawa, violin; Brno State Philharmonic Orchestra, Jiří Bělohlávek, cond. [Jan Vrána, prod.] SUPRAPHON 1110 2289. \$9.98.

SIBELIUS: Concerto for Violin and Orchestra, in D minor, Op. 47. **SAINT-SAËNS:** Introduction and Rondo capriccioso, Op. 28.

A Dylana Jenson, violin; Philadelphia Orchestra, Eugene Ormandy, cond. [Jay David Saks, prod.] RCA RED SEAL ATC 1-3972. \$15.98 (digital recording). Tape: ATK 1-3972. \$15.98 (cassette).

SIBELIUS: Concerto for Violin and Orchestra, in D minor, Op. 47. **SIN-DING:** Suite for Violin and Orchestra, in A minor, Op. 10.

Itzhak Perlman, violin; Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, André Previn, cond. [Šuvi Raj Grubb, prod.] ANGEL SZ 37663. \$9.98. Tape: 4ZS 37663. \$9.98 (cassette).

Over the years, the Sibelius violin concerto has become part of the standard repertoire, and in the process of assimilation, a facile expertise has gradually replaced the sense of magnitude and aspiration that characterized some of the distinguished early interpretations (even, to a degree, the incandescent reading by Heifetz and Beecham, still unsurpassed in virtuosity). These performances are fairly typical: all three show musicality and technical brilliance, yet where is the challenge, the nobility of

spirit? Only one, the version by the twenty-seven-year-old Japanese virtuoso Shizuka Ishikawa, compensates for the reduced framework and lack of epic power with real lyric intensity.

Ishikawa's playing has a patrician sensitivity and a finespun involvement that are affecting and surprisingly apt. Even more than in her recent Tchaikovsky (Supraphon 1110 2460, February), her small-scaled but magnificently accurate playing has rapt concentration and an altogether convincing intimacy. The first two movements are especially captivating; and though the finale seemed a bit rushed and matter-of-fact on first hearing, it, too, proved more convincing with greater familiarity. The Bruch G minor, in Ishikawa's hands, has lovely intimacy and taut grace. The Brno State Philharmonic may be no world-class ensemble, but under Jiří Bělohlávek, it supplies discreet, tonally solid support. Moreover, the Supraphon recording, engineered with slight acerbity and cleanly etched detail, is the most interesting of the three sonically. (For a musician, telling instrumental clarity and relevant detail are always more *interesting* than smooth homogeneity and cosmetic gloss.) By any reckoning, this is a distinguished release.

Dylana Jenson may not have quite the lapidarian technical polish and interpretive character that Ishikawa manages, but the nineteen-year-old American's debut is nonetheless promising. Supported by Eugene Ormandy's solid accompaniment and the Philadelphia's heft, she already shows an impressive command of executant problems, and much of her performance has appealing honesty and sincerity (particularly the Adagio, which she declaims with a firm, dark tone and an openhearted lack of sentimentality). This is one of the first releases in RCA's premium-priced audiophile series, pressed in Germany by Teldec; the processing is indeed superlative, with absolutely silent surfaces and even,

CLASSICAL Recitals and Miscellany

undistorted response. But the digital sound is a bit too boomy, with insufficient light and shade to "dig the sound out." The flute's relevant comments are audible yet ever so discreet, and the timpani thwack announcing the third movement's second subject is similarly relegated to the background. Part of the problem may be Ormandy's generalized view of Sibelius' scoring, for the Saint-Saëns makeweight has more compelling definition. It, too, is excellently and straightforwardly played.

Both Itzhak Perlman and André Previn have recorded the Sibelius before: the violinist for RCA about fourteen years ago with Erich Leinsdorf and the Boston Symphony (AGL 1-1529), the conductor with Kyung-Wha Chung in her debut for London (CS 6710). For all its expertise and fine recorded sound, the new performance remains rather tensionless. Perlman's tempos have broadened considerably, and in place of his earlier cool objectivity, he cultivates an eclectic romanticism that generates warmth like an electric blanket. He has developed a slight but annoying mannerism, stretching phrases with a predictable rubato, and he uses somewhat more vibrato than he used to, which adds to the impression of well-regulated routine. Previn, too, did better the first time around; without Ormandy's compensating solidity of bass, he puts detail into soft focus and smoothes away the grit of Sibelius' orchestration to the music's detriment. This is by no means a coarse, overexpressive reading like those of Zukerman/Barenboim (DG 2530 552), Belkin/Ashkenazy (London CS 7181), or Fontanarosa/Talmi (Peters PLE 074), but it lacks the diamond-hard bite and character of such versions as the classic Heifetz/Beecham (Seraphim 6022) and the more recent Accardo/Davis (Philips 9500 675). In fact, the coupling is wiser than the mainstay: Perlman's Sinding is almost as breathtaking as the unique Heifetz/Wallenstein mono account if a shade gentler—perhaps a plus in the lyrical movements but not in the first, with its bustling moto perpetuo. **H.G.**

SINDING: Suite for Violin and Orchestra, in A minor, Op. 10—See Sibelius: Concerto for Violin and Orchestra, Op. 47.

Recitals and Miscellany

LE CHANSONNIER CORDIFORME

Emma Kirkby, soprano; Margaret Philpot, alto; John York Skinner, countertenor; John Elwes, tenor; David Thomas, bass. Consort of Musicke. Anthony Rooley, dir. [Meriden Winding, prod.] OISEAU-LYRE D 186D4.

\$39.92 (four discs, manual sequence).

The Consort of Musicke has recently completed its long and important series of the music of John Dowland in Oiseau-Lyre's Florilegium series. Unlike the Academy of Ancient Music on the same label, it has not rushed off into popular fields like Handel and Mozart that guarantee large sales; its activities in earlier music are altogether quieter. Indeed, it is not always easy to obtain the Consort's new releases—which include music by William Lawes and two fine recitals called "My Lady Musick" and "Pastoral Dialogues" in this country.

One new boxed set has arrived, however. *Le Chansonnier cordiforme* is devoted to a complete recording of one manuscript of medieval music. The prospect sounds daunting, yet this is a most unusual manuscript, and it makes an exceptionally rewarding set of records. The most immediately attractive aspect of the manuscript is not musical, but visual: It is shaped like a heart and, when opened, looks like two hearts linked in love. As David Fallows, who supervised the recording and wrote the excellent booklet, remarks, this image is central to the music of the period. It looks as if this was not a manuscript to perform from, but a fair copy made as a keepsake for a nobleman: Jean de Montchenu, bishop, politician, and warrior. It probably comes from the time when he was associated with the house of Savoy, an important center of fifteenth-century song.

Because it was compiled to include all the favorite songs in the current repertory, several classics appear, and there is remarkably little dead wood. Dufay, Busnois, and Ockeghem are represented; there are some anonymous settings, some that are difficult to attribute, and some by that fascinating group of continentally oriented English composers, Robert Morton, Walter Frye, and John Bedyngham. Most songs date from the decade before the manuscript was compiled, around 1470, but some go back forty years earlier. Italian songs come first, then French; they tell of the joys and pains of courtly love with an unrestrained depth of feeling.

The performances mirror the seriousness and intensity of the music. There is no attempt at kaleidoscopic variety of color, an instrumentation is established for each song and retained throughout. Voices are used solo or in pairs; they include the bright eloquent soprano of Emma Kirkby and the dark reedy bass of David Thomas (a little restrained here for my taste), both familiar from other Consort recordings. A most welcome newcomer is the alto Margaret Philpot, with a rounded, intense, and direct voice that provides some of the most beautiful moments of the set in Frye's "Tout à par moi" and Morton's "Le souvenir de vous



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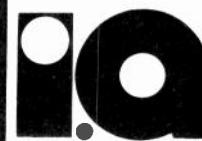
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me too." The Consort is joined by a group of instrumentalists who play clearly and with restraint.

I cannot judge the finer points of the performance or of the editions used, but the set as a whole seems to me a model of what the recording of medieval music—and early music generally—should aim at: a thorough exploration of one rewarding repertory, which allows us to enter into its spirit and to live and breathe, for a moment, the musical life of one short time in history. One reservation: There is only a single reproduction in color of a page from the cordiform manuscript, on the cover, and the black-and-white ones are too small to read. We must hope that a complete facsimile will appear, perhaps when Fellows issues the music in the editions of the late Comtesse de Chambure, which he is preparing for publication. N.K.

pansive, diversified score of genuine symphonic mettle (most of which, in the film, is drowned out by the roar of airplane engines and the explosion of ammunition). From the measured, chauvinistic main-title tune to the pounding ostinatos and glissandolike effects for the numerous action sequences, he offers an aurally satisfying compendium of the many sophisticated devices used so effectively by better-known film composers such as John Williams and Jerry Goldsmith. Scott clearly has talent and expertise in abundance; the only element lacking is a profile of his own, which may evolve in time.

It's a pleasure to see such a seasoned and respected film-music veteran as Elmer Bernstein once again rising to a novel challenge with his uncompromisingly symphonic score for *Zulu Dawn*, an English historical drama set during the days of waning imperial glory. For this "African western," he takes the basic components of his tried-and-true *Magnificent Seven* sound, strips them of their American overtones, and skillfully grafts them onto a new locale. Making brilliant use of the African melos and its instrumental colors, as well as a barbaric warrior chorus, he unfolds a spectacular panorama: clashes between armed hordes, with relentless Stravinskian rhythms; jingoistic marches; and delicate nature-painting, with woodwind and harp filigrees. The first-class performance and recording come from an enterprising new label, which has also issued two highly acclaimed Ennio Morricone scores, *Days of Heaven* and *La Cage aux folles*.

Alex North is another front-rank film composer whose recent assignments have not always called upon all of his gifts, but the second side of *Carny* (Side 1 is all low-down rhythm-and-blues attributed primarily to collaborator Robbie Robertson) demonstrates that he hasn't lost his inimitable touch. Using an assertive contrabassoon, a wayward calliope, the cacophonous chatter of an agile woodwind choir, and what sounds like an electric accordion, the score—basically chamber music—recalls his *Streetcar Named Desire* and *Rainmaker* music: Despite its sharply etched evocation of a sleazy milieu, ambivalent passion, and edgy despair, it still retains the poignancy of his lyrical compassion. The orchestrations of Henry Brant and Angela Morley are marvelously pointed and apt, and the recording is more than adequate.

All three of these interesting though unheralded discs will amply reward the intrepid collector and are highly recommended.

P.A.S.

42ND STREET. For a review, see page 48.

CLASSICAL

The Tape Deck

Critiques of new open-reel and cassette releases by R. D. Darrell

Digital Promise

If you're one of those who have been as much antagonized as impressed by the first digital recordings—if you object to their obsessive emphasis on sonic sensationalism, often find their high frequencies overintense and their acoustical ambiances icily bleak—relief is at hand. In tape domains alone (while we still await the first DBX-encoded musicscapes featuring digital recordings, as well as the first digital/superchromium audiophile series from RCA and Vanguard), there's persuasive evidence of digital's new directions and broader appeals in Nonesuch's debut list and in the first Philips and latest London examples. The common elements are a lessened preoccupation with showpiece materials (or treatments), sweeter yet no less brilliant highs, and acoustics truer to auditorium sound if still only slightly warmer—all without diminishing digital's quintessential ultralucidity.

Nonesuch's first digitally recorded, ferric-tape cassettes (\$11.98 each) feature various chamber ensembles and a solo harpsichordist. The latter is Igor Kipnis, in an all-Soler recital (D1 79010) presenting the extraordinary eleven-minute *Fandango* and ten sonatas, just one of which (the chipper R. 84) is duplicated in the only other all-Soler tape program, Fernando Valenti's for Advent (E 1050). I prefer Kipnis' greater zest here, his less heavy-handed playing throughout, and his better-varied selections, with poetically introspective (R. 18, 71, and 74) as well as swaggering bravura works. The full frequency and dynamic ranges of the big Rutkowski and Robinette harpsichord are captured without any sense of strain. Indeed, the only disappointment is the inexcusable omission of the disc's notes by Judith Robison (Mrs. Kipnis).

The ensembles range from a conductorless orchestra (some twenty-five strong) through a vocal group to a violin-piano duo. The first is the acclaimed Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, starring its own skilled woodwind soloists in Mozart's K. 297b Sinfonia concertante and the first two sections of the *Idomeneo* ballet music, all bewitchingly recorded (D1 79009; cf. disc review). Brahms's

Opp. 52 and 65 *Liebeslieder Waltzes*—delectable sentiment to some tastes, distasteful schmaltz to others—are only routinely sung by the Los Angeles Vocal Arts Ensemble but admirably accompanied by pianists Armen Guzelian and Raul Herrera (D1 79008). And both fiddler Sergiu Luca and pianist Anne Epperson are Romantically fervent in notably warm and well-balanced performances of the Schumann and Mendelssohn violin sonatas (A minor, Op. 105, and F, unpublished, respectively), too seldom heard, plus three dreamy Romances by Clara Schumann (D1 79007). But again, there are no notes or (for the Brahms) texts.

The initial digitally recorded Philips Prestige Box is, like DG's, an opera led by Herbert von Karajan, this time with Viennese forces in Verdi's *Falstaff* (7654 060, three cassettes, \$29.94). But here the conductor's expected domination is challenged by the veteran Giuseppe Taddei, still superbly vital in the title role. Others in the cast sing with less distinction, but the intricate ensembles and the polished orchestral playing are well served by the recording and tape processing. In any case, this is the only *Falstaff* on tape—chromium, at that, although like DG's *Magic Flute* (3382 001), it calls for the standard playback equalization (i.e., 120 microseconds rather than chromium's usual 70). The rationale for this policy escapes me.

Philips' first single features Colin Davis and the Concertgebouw in a Mussorgsky-Ravel *Pictures* (7300 829, \$9.98) that follows hard on the heels of the Solti/Chicago digital/ferric taping for London (LDR5 10040, \$10.98). These pose only a seeming contradiction to my assertion that digitalism is outgrowing its original preoccupation with warhorse music. For quite unlike the first two, overtly spectacular, *Pictures* (Telarc and Denon disc editions only), both new readings stress the score's Slavic pictorialism and fairy-tale magic rather than its bombast and ferocity. Here digital technology is devoted to enhancing the music's poetry and atmospheric sorcery rather than its melodramatic impact. Davis' approach is exceptionally restrained yet incomparably enchanting and uniquely rich in

humor; sonic weight and power, un-stressed here, are allowed more demoniac expression in his filler, *Night on Bare Mountain*. Georg Solti and the Chicagoans are never quite as delicately and dreamily evocative, but they, too, hold their strength mostly in reserve. This version, also more poetic than dramatic though more closely miked, is coupled with Ravel's own imaginative scoring of his *Tomball de Couperin* in a scarcely Gallic yet delectably colored and animated performance.

London's progress in digital expertise is evident, too, in the more natural high-end brilliance of its first Prestige Box (2LDR5 10015, \$21.96). The box itself is scaled down to fit just two cassettes; the music is Shostakovich's long-deprecated Seventh (*Leningrad*) Symphony plus a four-part *Age of Gold* Suite. But it's the performance—the first Seventh to be released here in years, and now the only taping—that's an ear-opening, mind-changing revelation. For this supposedly vulgar music is thoroughly illuminated by that most elegantly eloquent of conductors, Bernard Haitink, here with the London Philharmonic. The symphony still makes unconscionable demands on listeners' patience, but now those who stick with it will feel more rewarded than ripped off.

Slick Operators

Complete operas and oratorios are more vividly recorded, with finer orchestras and choruses, than ever nowadays. But the dominant stars are virtuoso conductors—and if you know them, you know just what to expect. This is true not only of Karajan's *Falstaff* and *Magic Flute*, but also of his *Tosca* (DG 3370 033, \$19.96); Lorin Maazel's *Luisa Miller* (DG 3370 035, \$19.96); and Raymond Leppard's *Samson* (RCA ARK 3-3635, \$29.94). The greater overall distinction of Carlo Maria Giulini's *Rigoletto* (DG 3371 054, \$29.94) gives it partial exemption from this blanket criticism, while idiomatic authenticity and programmatic novelty redeem the 1976 Pathé-Marconi recording of Auber's *Manon Lescaut*, which costars soprano Mady Mesplé and conductor Jean-Pierre Marty (Arabesque 9059-3L, \$21.94). **HF**

BACKBEAT®



From left: the late Columbia president Goddard Lieberson, (unidentified), Davis, Macero, and Dave Brubeck, in 1961

Miles Davis in the Sixties

"Directions" is a valuable, sensitive compilation from his most productive period.
by Don Heckman

Miles Davis: Directions

Jim Fishel, Joe McEwen, &
Stan Tonkel reissue producers
Columbia KC2 36472 (two discs)

THE SIXTIES started out with plenty of fire and fury for the jazz world. Just when bebop and its associated musical forms were gaining widespread accep-

tance, Ornette Coleman arrived with his patented brand of "free jazz," setting off temblors of controversy. Leading a generation of new young faces, he in effect announced that the rules of the game had been changed.

The jazz establishment reacted in various ways. Sonny Rollins, just emerging from a self-imposed sabbatical,

couldn't decide whether to continue in his familiar hard bop style or to test the waters of chordless improvisation. John Coltrane and Eric Dolphy listened long and hard and decided, finally, to follow their own muses. Others were content to argue about the "validity" of Coleman's music and about whether or not a jazz player had to be able to play "changes" (i.e. chord patterns) to be considered a legitimate improvisor.

Oblivious to the whole controversy, totally content to do *his* thing, was Miles Davis. The young Turk of the late Forties and the ballad darling of the Fifties was moving into yet another stage. As the decade began with its various "happenings," mixed media events, and free jazz styles, that stage seemed conservative by comparison. But by the end of the Sixties, it had taken him close to the outer limits of jazz.

For that entire period, Davis was under contract to Columbia Records. The relationship, especially when he

worked with producer/musician Teo Macero, was a particularly felicitous one. Unlike many jazz musicians, Miles was treated with the respect due a major artist; he generally controlled both the number and the nature of his sessions, and releases were made with his approval. This was perhaps his most productive period, and a large amount of material from it was never released. Some of it didn't achieve what the trumpeter had in mind; much of it did, but there was simply too large a quantity to release at the time.

Recently, Columbia has been mining that rich lode of material, with—until this collection—fairly uneven results. Last year's "Circle in the Round," for example, was a poorly conceived package—some of it very good, some of it almost embarrassing. 1977's "Water Babies" was better, possibly because it concentrated on Davis' fine groups from the 1967-68 period. "Directions" is vastly superior for two significant reasons: One, it covers a productive decade in efficient chronological order and, two, the tracks have been carefully selected, with virtually none of the throwaways that have marred previous Davis collections from the label.

The two-disc set starts with Miles's first session in the Sixties, one which would complete his three-LP recording with Gil Evans. *Song of Our Country*, a rare Evans original, was intended for inclusion in "Sketches of Spain"; in fact, its Spanish touches are few and far between, and the general mood is far closer to that of the "Miles Ahead" album. Still, the collaboration had a salutary effect upon both men's creativity and it is fascinating to hear yet another sample of their work together. The piece is not particularly distinguished, but Miles's playing, all long notes and odd chord intervals, provides wonderful insight into his sometimes-misunderstood harmonic imagination.

"Round Midnight" represents Davis' fifth or sixth recorded version of the Thelonious Monk classic, and this is not one of the better ones. Recorded "live" at the Blackhawk in April of 1961 with Hank Mobley, Wynton Kelly, Paul Chambers, and Jimmy Cobb, it looks straight back to the past—unusual for Miles. Clearly he had explored the tune as thoroughly as he ever wanted with his mid-Fifties John Coltrane band.

"So Near, So Far," recorded in April of 1963 with a band that included West Coasters Vic Feldman and Frank Butler, provides an alternative to the reading on "Seven Steps to Heaven," recorded a month later in New York. This one has neither the rhythmic panache nor the improvisational fire of the later one, but it is interesting to compare them. By simply shifting the rhythm from 4/4 to 6/8

Why is there no credit for Teo Macero, the original producer of most of these tracks?

and having tenor saxophonist George Coleman play an obbligato line against the long-noted melody, Davis quite literally gave the tune new life.

The late Sixties

No pieces are included from the period between April, 1963 and May, 1967, and this represents a serious flaw. By the time Miles recorded saxist Wayne Shorter's sensuous ballad *Limbo*, in 1967, both his playing and that of his band—which now included drummer Tony Williams, keyboardist Herbie Hancock, and bassist Ron Carter, as well as Shorter—had changed dramatically. This was probably the best of his bands, and it's hard to understand why "Directions" overlooks the steps that led to its stunning tightrope walking expertise as exhibited on *Limbo* (especially in view of the presence of Buster Williams as a replacement for Carter). Surely alternate takes or unreleased originals from this period were available. If not, then some explanation should have been provided.

Water on the Pond and *Fun* date from late December, 1967, and early January, 1968, a time in which Davis was making bold incursions into electric music and rock. (This was also the period that produced the lengthy, stunning *Circle in the Round* on the album of the same name.) Both pieces represent

Miles's effort to merge his complex melodic-harmonic ideas with an upfront rhythm style. On *Water*, Joe Beck's guitar is added to the group—mostly in an unusual melodic unison with Carter's bass. *Fun*, a lightly Latin-tinged line in a fairly complex 6/8, is a marvelous example of Davis' successful blending of jazz and rock, although Williams' drums (badly recorded) are too busy for the piece. Though the album credits call for Hancock on "acoustic piano," he is in fact playing an electric, an early example of the instrument's use by the Davis band.

By the end of 1968, Davis was well into his electric phase, expanding its potential by using two electric pianos in conjunction with their acoustic counterpart. Two versions of Joe Zawinul's *Directions II* and his *Ascent* were recorded on November 28 of that year. The former is typical of the repetitious works Zawinul was writing at the time. (He clearly was fond of it, since it became Weather Report's set-closing number.) The piece is dominated by a recurring 8/8 bass figure which, despite its energy-producing qualities, tends to keep the proceedings moored in one position. Davis is nonetheless sensational on both takes, playing with an aggressive tone and a free-floating rhythmic feel. *Ascent* is notable primarily for the dreamy interaction between the electric keyboards of Chick Corea and Hancock and Zawinul's acoustic piano. Shorter's soprano saxophone provides the solo highlight—a rear-vocal, gorgeously emotional improvisation that brings life and feeling to the piece's impressionistic underpinnings. Davis enters dramatically near the end of the piece, his sensuous style recalling, anachronistically, the ballad performances of the mid-Fifties. (This time the album notes identify Dave Holland as playing "electric piano": he is playing electric bass.)

Moving into rock

Duran, recorded in February of 1970, tilts the scale heavily toward rock. Dave Holland's electric bass line is repetitive and blues-hued; guitarist John McLaughlin interjects feedback comments; and drummer Billy Cobham, sounding a bit confused, tries to lay on a heavily back-beated percussion accent. Davis intelligently handles the proceedings like just another blues date. The problem—and it is one that became increasingly obvious as Miles moved closer to the rock orbit—is that the blues, rudimentary though they may be, have at least three harmonic gear shifts. *Duran* has none, and even Davis' legendary melodic inventiveness can't make something interesting out of the deadening ostinato patterns of his accompaniment. (Continued on page 90)



Davis: content to do his thing

BOB PARENT

Delbert McClinton

A honky-tonk swain,
blue-eyed soul shouter,
and southern rocker
finally reaches center stage.
by Sam Sutherland



McClinton: "The real sound comes out of the end of a dude's fingers"

YOU DON'T NEED to see Delbert McClinton's weathered, slightly craggy features or watch his assured command over an audience to realize that this is no rookie. If *Giving It Up for Your Love* has made his name new to radio playlists and pop charts, his voice alone bespeaks years of experience: Flattened by a West Texas drawl, the instrument conveys a wide range of passion while sustaining a laconic reserve that no freshman could hope to feign.

Depending on when you first heard his work, you might think of McClinton as a honky-tonk swain, a blue-eyed soul shouter, or a southern rocker. In fact he is all of these—a modern southern musician who unself-consciously melds white and black root styles into a personal synthesis that sounds earthy while employing a broad range of techniques.

Hearing McClinton's unalloyed drawl wrap itself around classic country metaphors or open into a fervent blues wail may give the impression that he's a rustic deeply rooted in one locale. In fact, his regionalism resembles that of the '40s and '50s blues titans who were among his earliest models. Like B. B. King, T-Bone Walker, and Jimmy Reed, he is a deft conceptualist who has built his signature from a variety of different regional styles. His music owes its origins to the sea of voices filtering through a radio, beamed from thousands of miles away, rather than from some picturesque local avatar of blues or country.

"I was brought up in Lubbock, Texas, and of course you couldn't get anything there but pop music," he recalls, sitting in a Beverly Hills hotel bar and belying his hard-living image by sipping a cup of coffee. "We moved to Fort Worth, and when I was around thirteen or fourteen I realized that by staying up late you could get all these great stations—the Wolfman up from Mexico, WLS out of Chicago, Rudy's Record Shop from Nashville."

The common denominator was post-war rhythm & blues, then metamorphosing into what would be lionized and vilified alike as rock & roll. Like many young southern whites, McClinton was more attracted to hard-scrabble blues and early rock than the bathetic white pop of the '50s, and when he made his local debut as a singer at the age of seventeen, he was already gravitating toward rock's fusion of white and black southern roots. "I heard a lot of country music, of course, when I was little," he says. "But when I started playing, we were really into rockabilly. Immediately after that, it was basically Jimmy Reed and Junior Parker."

Working day jobs and playing in a succession of bands, he finally joined one lineup that endured long enough to win a residency at an area roadhouse. "We

DEBORAH FENGOOLD

were the house band at Jack's Place," he explains. "Backing the blues acts that came through. Jimmy Reed was real popular there, and people like Sonny Boy Williamson, Lightnin' Hopkins, Bobby Blue Bland, and Big Joe Turner would come and play."

Jack's classic image of boisterous mayhem was apparently well-earned. "It was a little place in a suburb south of Fort Worth," Delbert recalls, "and we were all under drinking age. If the mule was kicking in the neon sign outside, we knew it was all right to come in, because there wouldn't be a raid that night."

The nights at Jack's were crucial to his later work and its grounding in the blues: "Jimmy Reed would sometimes bring a bass player, but otherwise we were the band. That's when I picked up the harp [harmonica]. Remember *Fannie Mae*? Well, Buster Brown was what got me interested in the harmonica."

His singing was the centerpiece of his first locally recorded single in 1960, a cover of Williamson's *Wake Up Baby*, which became the first record by a white to be aired on KNOK, a Fort Worth black station. But it was as a mouth harp stylist that he made his first pop impact: Bruce Channel's *Hey Baby* carried his signature harmonica fills around the world when it became a major hit in 1962.

Channel's success as a rocker doubtless tempted McClinton, but one key to his prolonged obscurity is his abiding sense of blues conservatism. Helming a string of Texas bands, he remained rooted in Fort Worth despite one overseas tour with Channel. During the '60s, rock bloomed into a vivid, even flamboyant music propelled by technology, yet McClinton remained true to his instincts. Even today, he eschews heavy-handed effects from his players, invoking the raw authenticity of the early rock blues: "The real sound comes out of the end of a dude's fingers. I guess that's why that old music, when it was recorded that way, even with all the flaws and the limitations of the technology, still sounds good now."

Toward the end of that decade, frustrated by his inability to broaden his audience, McClinton grew restless. A sometime partner, Glen Clark, had moved to Los Angeles, and in 1970 McClinton followed in a scenario not unlike some of his own songs' plot lines: "I was in Fort Worth, and Glen called and told me to come up here to Los Angeles. I came out with this woman I'd been having a hot affair with, and we traveled here on her divorce money."

"The money and the love affair both fizzled out about the same time, but I was writing a lot of songs, so I guess I got something out of it."

More important, the partnership

One key to his obscurity is his abiding sense of blues conservatism.



Backstage at the Lone Star in N.Y.C.

C.O.D., Clark's own *Sugar Daddy* and *I Don't Want to Hear It Anymore*, and some new McClinton works. Although he broadened his style to reconstitute his early blues skills and even added traces of rock and disco, the three albums ("Victim of Life's Circumstances," "Genuine Cowhide," and "Love Rustler") were destined for the cutout bins.

When he moved to Capricorn Records, he found himself surrounded by more empathetic southern players and label personnel, and he optimistically entitled his next set "Second Wind." That work, his first with members of the Muscle Shoals Rhythm Section, was followed by an even stronger exercise in tough-minded modern r&b, 1979's "Keeper of the Flame." His own strong writing was as usual balanced against solid covers. ("I'm proud of the way I've always interpreted songs," he admits, with good reason.) But Capricorn itself was floundering in financial difficulties.

All of this has made the past year's reversal of luck that much more heartening. Passed on by several companies, he teamed up with the new Muscle Shoals Sound label, distributed by Capitol. The Section's Barry Beckett and the crack playing of the group helped to change Capitol's mind about McClinton's potential, and when "The Jealous Kind" was released late in 1980, the label put its weight behind both album and single, the romping, Stax-styled *Giving It Up for Your Love*.

"The Jealous Kind," which departs from earlier McClinton records by sticking strictly to outside material, traveled to the Top 40 on the pop LP charts. And though the current soul revival doubtless contributed to making *Giving It Up* his first Top 10 hit, McClinton has no intention of narrowing his focus. "I've got an endless bunch of ideas on how I want to record," he says, clearly ready to take advantage of his hard-won celebrity. "I want to make an album of just me singing and a piano, because I don't think people even know what that combination can sound like anymore—they don't know you can be entertained by just a vocal and piano."

He also talks excitedly of tackling a collection of jazz standards against a big-band backdrop modeled on Duke Ellington's bands. The prospect seems less surprising when one considers the subtle vocal nuances that have long embellished his work and the crack musicianship of his seven-piece band.

His decision to leave Fort Worth and move to Los Angeles might be a dangerous move for a younger, less fully realized artist. Somehow McClinton's current resolve and well-earned confidence after an often turbulent personal life and career makes it clear he won't disappear into chic conformity.

BACKBEAT Records



HUGH CRAWFORD

Gary U.S. Bonds: a revival accomplished with integrity and style

Bonds Meets the Boss

Springsteen joins forces with the master of fraternity rock.

by Mitchell Cohen

Gary U.S. Bonds: Dedication

Miami Steve & Bruce Springsteen, producers. EMI America SO 17051

Even in mint condition, the great singles of Gary U.S. Bonds—*Quarter to Three*, *Dear Lady Twist*, *Seven Day Weekend*, etc.—sounded as though Coca-Cola and cigarette ashes had been spilled all over them. Their muddy raucousness was part of their charm, a charm that seemed far from recapturable in this high-tech age. That's why "Dedication" is such an unexpected delight. It's a rare comeback, one that has both modern vitality and the artless spirit that made those early records such a kick. The album isn't flawless (who needed to hear Bonds cover Jackson Browne's inflated ode *The Pretender?*), but its combination of gritty

r&b and 1962 fraternity rock is practically irresistible.

Credit Miami Steve Van Zandt and Bruce Springsteen with the impetus and knowhow behind this creative recovery. Springsteen and his E Street Band—in their cheerier moods—owe a lot instrumentally to such records as *School Is Out* and "Dedication" shows genuine affection for, and understanding of, Bonds's old and new strengths. Van Zandt has contributed one ballad, *Daddy's Come Home*, that is a revelation in the hands of Bonds, who never had a chance to emote so forcefully in the past. As producer/arranger, Van Zandt frames members of the E Street Band around the singer for fine remakes of songs by Lennon/McCartney (*It's Only Love*) and Dylan (*From a Buick Six*).

This Little Girl, *Your Love*, and

Dedication, all written and co-produced by Springsteen, are the heart of this LP. Springsteen is at his loosest, working within the strictures of the rock-single genres that formed his personality, and not burdened by the weight of his own themes. Each of his three songs, plus his duet with Bonds on the Cajun classic *Jolé Blon*, has its own sparkle. The title track comes closest to the rent-party atmosphere of Bonds's oldies; *Your Love* features a knockout horn chart and some superb soul vocals with Ben E. King and Chuck Jackson, and *This Little Girl* rocks with a confident swagger. Most attempts at reviving dormant rockers are sad prop-up jobs, but "Dedication" is a model of how it can be done with integrity and style.

Concerts for the People of Kampuchea

Chris Thomas, producer
Atlantic SD 2-7005 (two discs)
BY MITCHELL COHEN

Music made in support of humanist causes automatically puts one on the defensive, for criticism of its quality could imply criticism of its polities. And albums compiled from multiartist benefit concerts often assume an audience homogeneity that just doesn't exist anymore. A number of people who wouldn't have minded hearing Tom Petty and Bruce Springsteen on the "No Nukes" album couldn't abandon aesthetics by buying a record that also included Graham Nash and James Taylor—no matter how vehement their stand against nuclear energy.

"Concerts for the People of Kampuchea," recorded in the last days of 1979 in London to aid UNICEF's relief efforts, doesn't pose quite so difficult a crisis of conscience. Its old-guard meets young-turk spectrum of U.K. rock has been selected and programmed with an eye toward compatibility. The four sides include one each by the Who and Paul McCartney & friends, and one that moves energetically from the Pretenders to Elvis Costello (basically a cameo appearance) to Roekpile. But if you admire the vigor of the Clash and the cockeyed-cockney disco/jazz of Ian Dury, and you can't abide the feverish idioey of Queen, that's too bad. They're snuggled together on Side 3.

If one can ignore Queen, and forgive the Who for a quartet of redundant performances (they've even brought



Dexys Midnight Runners: very white and very English

Tommy out for the occasion, the boring twit), there's a good deal of music on "Kampuchea" that would be worth listening to even if starvation weren't the issue. On *Little Sister* (the old Elvis tune), Robert Plant joins Rockpile, and his vocal posturing is actually fun, for a change. The Pretenders and the Clash handle themselves admirably, and Dave Edmunds and Rockpile do a ripping *Crawling from the Wreckage*. McCartney's side is an enjoyable mini-concert that goes from bouncy renditions of *Get to Get You Into My Life* and *Coming Up* to a stately *Let It Be*, with a version of *Lucille* in between that gathers about twenty musicians on stage. Most all-star benefit bashes wind up with some obligatory let's-all-join-in numbers, and "Kampuchea" is no exception. But better McCartney and his Rockestra

paying homage to Little Richard than the skeighty-eighth chorus of *Will the Circle Be Unbroken*. This is an album with at least a modicum of rock-sense to go along with its charitable aims.

**Dexys Midnight Runners:
Searching for the Young Soul Rebels**
Pete Wingfield, producer
EMI America SW17042
BY STEVEN X. REA

Dexys Midnight Runners are to American '60s soul music what the Clash is to roots rock: skinny English kids aspiring to evoke the mythos and meaning of a bygone era—an era that reached its peak when these guys were still in diapers. That's not to suggest that bands like

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DMR aren't capable of transcending their sources (the Clash certainly has), only that there are traps inherent in this kind of musical excavating that sometimes open up right underfoot.

"Searching for the Young Soul Rebels" starts with a blast on *Burn It Down*, and for a while things bode well. The horn section of tenor saxophonist J.B., alto saxist Steve Spooner, and trombonist Big Jimmy Paterson fires off an invigorating volley that recalls the Apollo soul revues of Sam & Dave, Aretha, et al. But by the time the first side is over, singer-songwriters Al Archer and Kevin Rowland's material has become tedious. The lyrics bog down in pseudo-socio-political diatribe, and they're delivered in an Anglo-and-angry wail that the soul riffing simply doesn't accommodate.

So it's no surprise that the LP's best track, *The Teams That Meet in Caffs.* is an instrumental, one that features a swelling cop-show-type theme. As for the rest, the thrills are few and far between. *I'm Just Looking* sounds like Eric Burdon & the Animals doing weird things to Lesley Gore's *You Don't Own Me*; *Seven Days Too Long* is a flaccid Four Tops-inspired ditty; and *I Couldn't Help It If I Tried* is just a dead-on-its-feet slow blues.

The problem with Dexys Midnight Runners (who have reportedly undergone major personnel changes since this debut) is that for all their combined enthusiasm and reverence for the Tamla/Motown/Stax stars, they come off very white and very English. They are reaching for something beyond their grasp: it's not their fault that they aren't black, but ultimately there's no point in listening to them when you can listen to James Brown.

The Jags: No Tie like a Present

Alex Sadkin, producer
Island ILPS 9655
BY STEVEN X. REA

The Jags could very well make inroads in American Top 40 where their obvious influences—Elvis Costello and the Jam—have thus far failed. This fivesome (reportedly reduced to the songwriting duo of John Alder and Nick Watkinson after "No Tie like a Present" was released) are the Billy Joel of British new wave: unabashedly imitative, unashamedly bombastic, and unarguably adept at coming up with several assertive, likeable numbers.

Like their Costello-meets-the-Byrds debut single, *Back of My Hand*, their second LP boasts a potential hit, entitled *The Sound of G-o-o-d-b-y-e*. It's a swift, compact pop powerhouse about "lost loves" and "foreign affairs," hurled



Lane: something important to say

headily along by the bass and drums of Michael Cotton and Alexander Harvey Baird, respectively. The chorus, sung in Nick Watkinson's Costello-derived voice, is a classic little piece of rock: "G-o-o-d-b-y-e, that's what the girls keep sayin' to me." *Silver Birds*, a Ventures-inspired instrumental that evokes all sorts of misty-eyed memories of hokey '60s movie scores, is the album's other small gem.

As for the remaining eight tracks, never mind: A superfast version of Cat Stevens' *Here Comes My Baby*, an I-hate-English-schools Paul Weller rip-off (*I Never was a Beachboy*), a "meaningful," five-minute saga of life on the road called *Another Town, Another Place*, an obligatory reggae track (*Small Change*), and so on. Fast, furious, and boring as all get-out.

The Jags have no shame. Comparisons to Costello at every turn are inevitable: Watkinson is simply blatant about reproducing his vocal inflections, his double-entendre lyrics, his stuttering spew of alliterative, tongue-twisting words. Unfortunately, while they may have the technique down solid, the Jags have nearly nothing new to say. Which is why they might find themselves enjoying an AM hit in this country—dumb lyrics and a catchy tune have always been a sure formula for success.

Greg Kihn Band: Rockihnroll

Matthew King Kaufman, producer
Beserkley BZ 10069
BY MITCHELL COHEN

It only takes a few minutes into "Rockihnroll" for the personality of Greg Kihn to come into clear focus. If you aren't familiar with any of his five previous albums, this one makes a well-defined introduction to a rocker who combines a self-aware romantic bent with old-fashioned pop punk and an amiable, if not far-ranging, vocal approach. The first two songs, both catchy in typical Kihn fashion, tell it all: *Valerie* finds him haunting the places where the object of his affections (who doesn't know he exists) is likely to be, knowing full well that he doesn't stand a chance of snaring her; on *The Breakup Song*, he's listening to rock oldies at the end of an affair, lamenting that "they just don't write 'em like that anymore."

"Rockihnroll," probably Kihn's best album since the overlooked "Next of Kihn," doesn't suffer from the thinness of sound and unevenness of material that have often marred his other LPs. With the precise guitar leads of Dave Carpender, the steady drumming of Larry Lynch, and Kihn pushing himself vocally, the album comes close to the rock punch that has made the Kihn Band a local live favorite in Northern California. His style is best suited to slightly moony songs like *The Girl Most Likely*, Tommy Roe's *Sheila*, and *When the Music Starts*, songs on which he displays his kinship to such sources as the Beach Boys, Tom Petty, and Ricky Nelson.

Usually, Kihn's heart-on-the-sleeve pop has an edge that keeps his more mopey songs from getting whiny, but he does have to guard against his penchants for lyrical overstatement and needlessly dramatic arrangements. *Womankind*, a well-intentioned feminist ode, comes off as simplistic and out of kilter with his boyish image. *Can't Stop Hurting Myself* and *Nothing's Gonna Change* steer dangerously close to the overwrought side of Kihn. But on the whole, the album is a classy example of his straightforward, engaging brand of rock & roll.

Robin Lane and the Chartbusters: Imitation Life

Gary Lyons, producer
Warner BSK 3537
BY CRISPIN CIOE

Robin Lane and the Chartbusters' debut LP was distinguished by its quirky, very affecting modal melodies, best encapsulated in the group's independently-released single, *When Things Go Wrong*.

which initially brought them to the attention of Warner Bros. Lane's brooding sensibility nicely matched the bitter-sweet folk/rock of that first album; their second, "Imitation Life," takes her and her band in some very different directions.

Producer Gary Lyons, best known for his work with such heavily metallic titans as Foreigner, has gone for—you guessed it—a much harder sound on about half of this LP. At times, the aural landscape on Side 1 is just too overbearing and pedestrian for Lane's special writing and singing gifts. On *Send Me an Angel*, for example, the vocals and drums are so deeply bathed in reverb that it all sounds like a legendary lost track from a Patti Smith LP.

Side 2 hits a stride more in keeping with the group's initial direction. The chiming twelve-string guitars, lovely melodies, and great back up vocals are all in place again, with Tim Jackson's drums riding like a strong undertow beneath cresting waves. One song in particular, *Solid Rock*, captures Lane's musical essence as well as anything she has done. An '80s counterpart to the Byrds' classic *Turn, Turn, Turn*, the song's frankly devotional lyrics aren't in the least overbearing or preachy. Rather, this tale of a very personal spiritual experience carries a resonance that is utterly captivating.

There are some other memorable moments: The vocals on *Pretty Mala* phase in and out like wreaths of smoke, recalling the Left Banke's use of harmonies, and *Idiot* is catchily evocative of the same era without sounding merely derivative. But *Solid Rock* carries the most emotional weight and furthers the notion that Robin Lane has something important to say in pop music.

David Lindley: El Rayo-X

Jackson Browne & Greg Ladanyi, producers. Asylum 5E-524
BY SAM SUTHERLAND

David Lindley's nine-year tenure as Jackson Browne's strong right arm makes it easy to forget that he was already a seasoned, crazy-quilt musical synthesist before they teamed. As a member of Kaleidoscope, Lindley ranged through a dizzying itinerary of ethnic and modern sources in developing the multi-instrumental style so integral to Browne's stage and studio work.

His solo debut is consequently anything but second-generation Jackson, nor is it an exercise in guitar technique or a laundry list of obscure musical references. Lindley has devised a deceptively simple, coherent ensemble style as good-hearted and unpredictable in its main suit as his Hawaiian lap steel guitar or

fiddle descants are on Browne albums. Instead of grandstanding, he emphasizes tight rhythmic interplay. The context is lilting, modified reggae that only occasionally breaks its loping pace to accommodate a whiff of 4/4 rock blues or a Cajun waltz.

Points of reference lead to Ry Cooder, a peer and sometimes partner. (Lindley has appeared on Cooder's last two LPs.) But if Lindley's Lotusland reggae employs the same liquid electric guitar and off-center percussive accents, as well as the skills of several other Cooder associates, Lindley's character carries the net effect elsewhere. His choice of material and alternately sweet and laconic vocal delivery give the record the same loopy charm as his weird falsetto on Browne's live renditions of *Stay*.

A key to that mood is songwriter Bob "Frizz" Fuller's three oddly affecting pop reggae songs. The sly opening track, *She Took Off My Romeo*, seamlessly fuses pure soul vocal harmonies with Lindley's uptown reggae inflections on the verses. Otherwise, the set places much emphasis on old rock and R&B chestnuts rewired with reggae syncopation. At worst, the music is politely infectious (*Bye Bye Love*); at best, it can be stunning.

Twist and Shout sounds like an unholy alliance between Toots and the Maytals and Joe "King" Carrasco; it is laced with reedy Vox organ (shades of Sam the Sham) and uses the original Isley Brothers' guitar riff—this time with a Mexican lilt. The old gem *Mercury Blues* would be merely a routine (albeit clangy) hard-guitar reading were it not for Ras Baboo's wild abandon on percussion. And Lindley's reggae reworking of the Temptations' *Don't Look Back* actually conveys that song's calm resolve more effectively than the Stones-produced Peter Tosh reading, which sounds pompous by comparison.

Lindley plays guitar, fiddle, whistles, bass, and such exotic axes as bandura and Divan Saz (which sounds more like a piece of furniture than an instrument), but nowhere does instrumental flash overshadow the songs. Producers Browne and Greg Ladanyi have helped Lindley craft a debut that's far more than a curiosity or a rock footnote: It's a highly individual work recommended for listeners who like both verve and intelligence in their rock.

The Lounge Lizards

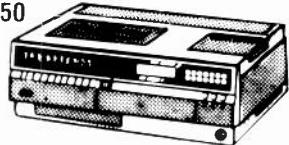
Teo Macero, producer
Editions EG EGS 108
BY STEVEN X. REA

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clothes—drab, thin suits and seedy white shirts—and their music. This New York quintet, fronted by saxman John Lurie, trades in a smooth brand of '50s-style jazz, then, like some double-jointed acrobat, bends it over backwards and contorts it. The music is like '50s b&w television (*Incident on South Street*, *Au Contraire Arto*, and others sound like variations on *Theme from Peter Gunn*); it evokes black jazz on the one hand and the high-strung anxiety of five white, avant-garde New Yorkers on the other.

With the exception of *Harlem Nocturne* and two Thelonious Monk tunes—*Well You Needn't* and *Epistrophy*—Lurie composed or collaborated on all the material. They are short, assured pieces, ranging from plush, cocktail-lounge stuff to wailing, frantic punk/jazz to emotive, tonal music reminiscent of Charlie Parker and Sonny Rollins. *Incident on South Street* is cool and tense, Lurie's saxophone riffing like a silhouetted figure against the intractable backdrop of brother Evan Lurie's piano and guitarist Arto Lindsay's frenetic, angular noodling. *Do the Wrong Thing* is a stop-and-start, herky-jerky number, sporting a screechy, scratchy guitar and a nerve-racking, high-ended keyboard. *Conquest of Rar* represents the ultimate in synchronization, as five players besiege its music with one mind.

On tracks like *Wangling*, when Lindsay's guitar gets dissonant and weird, Lurie's resonant reed work veers the Lizards back to a mellower, more melodic groove. Drummer Anton Fier (who moonlights with nerd-rockers the Feelies) is a surprisingly sympathetic jazz drummer, employing lots of hushed cymbals and displaying an easy agility with the shifting, often frenzied rhythms. Steve Piccolo's bass provides the necessary sense of continuity; when the other players get frazzled and start unwinding, Piccolo's loping bass hangs in there to usher them back.

One look at the Lounge Lizards is enough to tell you that these guys are into image, but one listen is proof that there's plenty of substance to go with the style. They can be funny (*Fatty Walks* is as cartoonish as Pink Panther music) and they can be scary (*You Haunt Me*), but they also happen to be very good.



Martyn: insidious guitar work

talkin' blues. Eleven records down the line, "Grace & Danger" marks another stage in Martyn's evolution from folkie to jazzbo; his voice is huskier and more muffled than ever, his music shaded with all sorts of jazz coloration, his guitar work lean and insidious.

On "Grace & Danger" Martyn is accompanied by the subtle, inventive bass of John Giblin, the laidback drumming of Phil Collins, and the cool electric piano and stark synthesizers of Tommy Eyre. Together with Martyn's acoustic and electric guitars, this accomplished trio succeeds in dissolving the perimeters around the nine songs, concocting one moody blur of blues, jazz, and electro-rock—a hazy amalgam of Skip James, Billie Holiday, and Gary Numan.

Some People Are Crazy and *Sweet Little Mystery* are lyrical, slow-motion pieces, with Martyn grumbling and mumbling his way through rich, resonant grooves. When he hooks up his Echoplex, the guitar changes personalities, issuing forth wiry, extended notes that answer themselves in a phased cascade of rhythms. On the title track, with its Afro-jazz beat, and on the thudding,

minimalist reading of Delroy Wilson's reggae classic, *Johnny Too Bad*, the electric guitar is truly dark and evil. The most understated and intriguing work here is *Save Some (for Me)*, an upbeat, repetitive composition propelled by stop-and-start percussion and strange coffee percolator electronics. Above it all, Martyn's wry, earthy vocals croon off into a hushed, ethereal stupor.

It appears that Martyn is destined for a life of cult artist status. Despite an occasional cover version by someone like Eric Clapton, his recordings have failed to create any sizable market. Granted, the eccentric, oftentimes melancholy music is hard to get a handle on, but it's also worthy of far more attention than the Briton has received. "Grace & Danger" probably won't do anything to change things, but one can always hope.

The Rumour: Purity of Essence

Arranged by the Rumour

Hannibal HNBL 1305

BY CRISPIN CIOE

The Rumour has never quite sustained enough uniqueness to float a viable career as a self-contained band, but by dint of sheer musicality and rapport it has stayed together for years, providing studio and live-performance backup for Graham Parker, Carlene Carter, Nick Lowe, Rachel Sweet, Garland Jeffreys, and others. It has released occasional solo efforts, and "Purity of Essence," in its own modest way, keeps alive the notion that this is one of the tightest, most tastefully hard-rocking bands extant.

First coming to prominence during England's early '70s "pub rock" era under the name of guitarist Brinsley Schwarz, the band has at various times included Nick Lowe and Ian Gomm, and today its music sounds like a compressed and tightly-wound parallel to Lowe's irony-laden, short-form approach to the pop song. Without a keyboard player, the quartet's basic attack is more rhythmically pointed, with Schwarz's and Martin Belmont's two-guitar pyrotechnics more crystalline and prominent than ever. The band lacks a virtuoso lead vocalist, but, as with Dire Straits, it hardly matters, since its ingenious songs and impeccable playing more than compensate.

Houston is a deadpan soap opera about love and death in the Sun Belt, seen from the jaundiced point of view that only an Englishman could have of Texas: the guitars provide twangy counterpoint to the nouveau-Everly Bros. harmonies. During *Falling in Love with a Dream*, the loping guitars beautifully comment on lines like "nights spent awake, silent TV screen...." The band

John Martyn: Grace & Danger

Martin Levan, producer

Antilles AN 7081

BY STEVEN X. REA

"London Conversation," John Martyn's first album, came out thirteen years ago. It was a straightforward folk outing, a kind of British Tom Rush affair, complete with a Bob Dylan song and some

even comes through with a rocking cover version of the Spinners' *Rubber Band Man*, the guitars once again personalizing the music completely. "Purity of Essence" sounds like it was recorded live in the studio, with a minimum number of takes per tune. When a band is as good as the Rumour, such a no-frills approach to recording is entirely justified.

Andy Statman: Flatbush Waltz
Andy Statman & John Carlini,
producers. Rounder 0116
BY SAM SUTHERLAND

Thanks largely to the warm response accorded David Grisman's sly "dawg" ensemble stylings, the mandolin seems to have graduated from its country cousin status to a position more befitting its transcontinental origins. Smaller labels such as Grisman's own Kaleidoscope have featured the instrument in innovative settings to a point where it's only slight overstatement to suggest that the hills are alive with the sound of eight-stringed virtuosos, plucking and strumming new hybrids of jazz, classical, and bluegrass.

None of these new mandolinists acquits himself more winningly than Andy Statman, whose first album maps out as vast a musical territory as any record yet to emerge from this school. Unlike his peers who stress the bridge between jazz and country, Statman has focused more on the instrument's link with classical and European music, the latter evoked both through its shared sonorities with more exotic cousins like the bouzouki or balalaika, and through Statman's compositional mien.

The ensemble settings on "Flatbush Waltz" range from small group to a virtual chamber orchestra, and Brooklyn-born Statman makes these generic leaps with aplomb. On the title tune he balances his instrument against violin for a piquant sound that makes the listener think more of Georgia, U.S.S.R., than any American landscape. Instead of emphasizing the finger-picked rhythm patterns that have earned the mandolin a rightfully secure niche in country string bands, Statman frequently breaks loose into wiry single note obbligatos, stretching the instrument's comparatively modest sustaining capability.

Production is excellent throughout. The various ensembles are placed in an open, clear sonic field, allowing Statman's crystalline harmonies to shimmer even against the more complex scope of the larger groups. Highlights also include *East Wind Blues* and the challenging *Fanfare*, but virtually every track provides a satisfying glimpse of an original new talent.



Statman: a new original talent

**George Wallace:
Heroes like You and Me**
George Wallace & Lennie Petze,
producers. Portrait NJR 36579
BY STEVEN X. REA

Back at Seventeen, the opening track of singer-songwriter George Wallace's debut LP, is a small gem: a great anthem of adolescence that lumbers into flight like some jumbo jet rolling down the runway. "Just a couple crazy mothers at seventeen/With the baddest pair of triggers you ever seen/We was all gettin' high off the signs in the sky/Back at seventeen" sings Wallace, summing up in one coolly crafted chorus the cocky idealism, the drug-induced dreams of teenage-dom. Through a droney chime of guitars and keyboards, propelled by a chunky bass and steadfast drums, he spews forth a succession of succinct, tender images in a thin, appealing voice, capturing all the fears and aspirations of a kid during "the last year I was home."

The same thematic thread runs through most of "Heroes like You and Me," *Talk to Me*, which bounces along

in a Randy Newman-meets-Supertramp mode, deals with adolescent sexual longing and fantasies; *Gotta Get Outta Here* expresses the need for escape and independence, to "break from the weight of the world on my back." By the final song, *Larger than Life*, he has jumped into the future ("I got a 1999 Cadillac car") but the same psychological undercurrents remain.

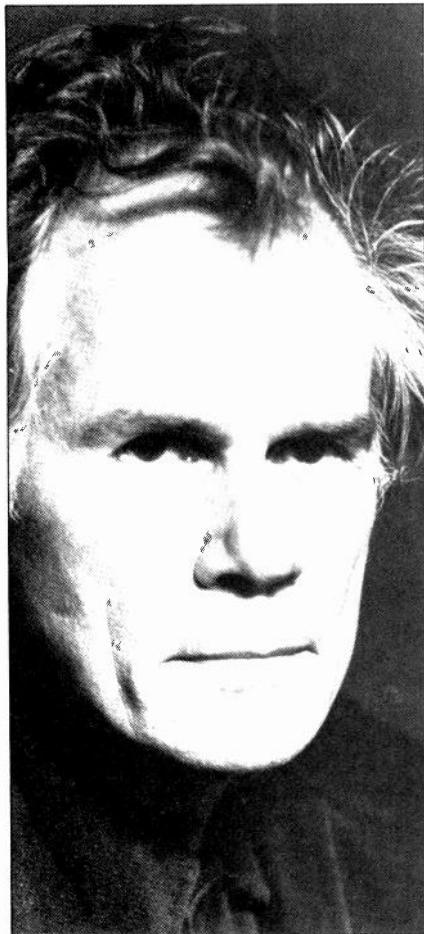
Wallace manages all the keyboards, guitars, and bass parts on his own (helped out on drums by Jimmy Bralow and on saxophone by Mark Rivera). His musicianship is hard to fault—especially the keyboard work, which ranges from folksinger simplicity (*Romeo's Home at Last*) to electronic space music à la Pink Floyd (*Stand Up*). On *Larger Than Life*, the influence of 10 CC emerges as a gaggle of guitars, synthesizer, grumbles, and sound effects launch into a sci-fi frenzy. Wallace is also a fine lyricist: a subtle irony pervades his words, a keen wit keeps his pictures sharp.

"Heroes like You and Me" is by no means perfect. Wallace and Lennie Petze's production is hampered by a muddy mix, and too many of the songs develop the same way. Still, it is a significant first outing: few songwriters can bring to mind Jackson Browne and 10 CC on the same record and maintain their own identity while doing so. George Wallace is someone to look out for.

Jazz

**Charlie Barnet:
Live at Basin Street East**
Alastair Robertson, producer
Hep 2005 (Zim Records, P.O. Box
158 Jericho, N.Y. 11753)
BY JOHN S. WILSON

No one projected the joy of jazz more warmly than Charlie Barnet, both as a band leader and as a consistently exciting driving saxophonist. After he gave up his big band in the Fifties, he occasionally put together temporary groups such as the one on this disc. The set was recorded on December 24 and 25, 1966 at Basin Street East in New York with one of Barnet's finest lineups: Clark Terry plays an early version of *Mumbles* and does a wonderfully curvaceous flugelhorn solo on *I Can't Get Started*; Richie Kamuca's tenor solos glide with a swinging momentum; pianist Nat Pierce fills the spaces with touches of both Basie and Ellington; Willie Smith leads the saxophones and blends his own musical personality with Johnny Hodges' on *Jeep's Blues*. This was the last recording for Willie, and, for young trumpeter



MacDermot: an interesting shot

Randy Brecker, the first with a major name.

With so many stars on hand—Jimmy Cleveland and Snooky Young among them—Barnet gives himself less space than he otherwise might. But there are some samples of his urgent, chopping style on tenor and, on *Satin Doll*, his soprano comes poking through in a shy variant of his tenor swagger. His introductions sound like those of a pulled-together Eddie Condon and underline the festive spirit of the occasion. This is the way big bands used to sound.

Al DiMeola, John McLaughlin, & Paco DeLucia: Friday Night in San Francisco

Al DiMeola, John McLaughlin, & Paco DeLucia, producers. Columbia FC 37152

Leo Kottke: Guitar Music

Leo Kottke, producer
Chrysalis CHR 1328
BY SAM GRAHAM

The gathering of Al DiMeola, John McLaughlin, and Paco DeLucia is a Gui-

tar Player subscriber's dream come true. Those who are impressed and delighted with sheer technical brilliance will no doubt afford "Friday Night in San Francisco" godlike status.

Guitar crazies, however, are probably about as far as this all-acoustic record's appeal will go. The truth is, there are only so many jaw-dropping speed runs one can take, even when three acknowledged virtuosos are spitting them out at one another like gun-slingers out to prove who's the fastest. After a point, tedium sets in and stays.

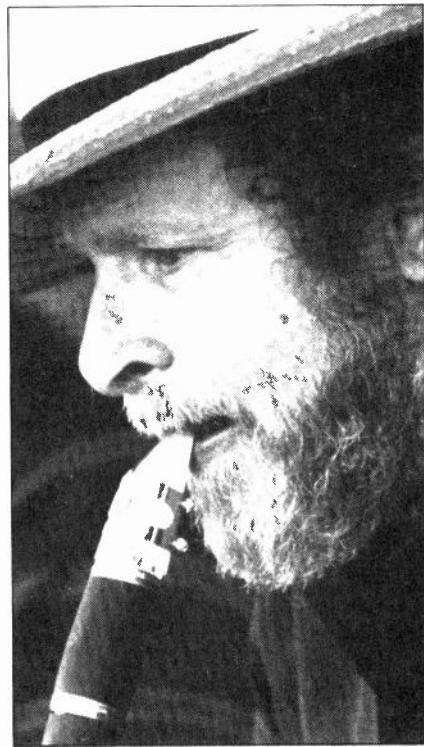
Only *Fantasia Suite* and *Guardian Angel* are trios; the other three tracks are duets in various configurations of players. McLaughlin and DiMeola manage a few moments of humor—a little blues (maybe even a quote from *Rollin' and Tumblin'* by McLaughlin), a little *Pink Panther* theme—and some genuine interplay during *Short Tales of the Black Forest*. But the material, most of it Spanish-flavored, is usually little more than scaffolding for the awesome yet ultimately tiresome soloing. One needs virtuoso ears to take in many of the arranged sections, let alone the individual breaks. Mere mortals are hereby warned: This album may impress you, but it sure won't win your hearts.

Leo Kottke's "Guitar Music" has a greater chance of doing so. His first all-solo, nonvocal effort in many years boasts few surprises—his ringing, fingers-of-steel picking attack, lubricious slide, muted pizzicato, and other effects are by now very familiar. But Kottke is a great guitarist who doesn't need to show off. As always, he has chosen his material thoughtfully; the bulk of it is his own, including a long suite on Side 1, and his choice of covers displays winning imagination and resourcefulness. Kottke is one of the few players around who can interpret the Everly Bros. (*All I Have to Do Is Dream*), Santo and Johnny (the immortal *Sleep Walk*), and the Sons of the Pioneers (*Tumbling Tumbleweeds*) as if he'd written the tunes himself.

Woody Herman: The Third Herd, Vol. 1

Woody Herman & Howie Richmond, producers. Discovery DS 815 (Discovery Records, Box 48081, Los Angeles, CA. 90048)
BY JOHN S. WILSON

Woody Herman's practice of numbering his various Herds started in 1944-45 with the First, continued through the Second in 1947, and ended with the Third, which was active from 1952-53. These recordings of the Third Herd were originally made for Woody's own label, Mars, which he formed when Columbia re-



Wilber: a keynote for the WDO

jected the tapes for not being exciting enough.

It's a strange criticism, since these performances show the band to be one of his best. It has a warm, strong ensemble sound, a knowledgeably swinging attack that is understated yet provocative, and some beautifully formulated arrangements by Ralph Burns. (Burns brings in echoes of the Sauter-Finegan Orchestra, which he also wrote for Sauter at the time.) Strong soloing is provided by Don Fagerquist on trumpet, Urbie Green and Carl Fontana on trombones, Arno Marsh on tenor sax, and Nat Pierce on piano.

Woody solos on alto sax on Sauter-Finegan-esque arrangements of *I Love Paris* and *The Moon Is Blue*; his singing is open and affecting, particularly on *Blues in Advance*, a song with a slow cowboy lope that has a haunting charm. This was a period in Woody's chronology that, from a recording standpoint, has been fuzzy. "The Third Herd, Vol. 1" is a start on filling in the gap.

Ray Linn and the Chicago Stompers: Empty Suit Blues

Albert L. Marx, producer
Discovery DS 823
BY JOHN S. WILSON

Thanks largely to their colorful personalities, Ray Linn's Chicago Stompers have managed to avoid falling into Dixieland clichés, despite what their name

might imply. The strong man of the group is trombonist Bob Havens. Havens is really a remarkable musician in that he has retained an honest, outgoing attack in spite of some banal years in New Orleans with Pete Fountain and a virtual lifelong membership in Lawrence Welk's band. Pianist Dave Frishberg's light-fingered approach and sly, shifting ideas are consistent bright spots throughout "Empty Suit Blues," as are the mellow sounds of Eddie Miller, the old Bob Crosby tenor man.

Linn's strong, full-toned trumpet sounds relaxed and unforced, and he has given himself some excellent showpieces in his arrangements of *Memories of You*, *Empty Suit Blues*, and, in particular, *Nobody Else but Me*. Mary Ann McCall, who performed so well with Woody Herman and Charlie Barnet in the Forties, sings on three numbers. The years have not been kind to her instrument, and she sounds hoarse, husky, and limited in range. She still has her instinct for phrasing, but the voice can no longer carry out what the musical imagination dictates.

Galt MacDermot:
New Pulse Jazz Band
Kilmarnock 72008 (Kilmarnock
Records, 12 Silver Lake Road,
Staten Island, N.Y. 10301)
BY JOHN S. WILSON

Galt MacDermot's New Pulse Jazz Band consists of three woodwinds, trumpet, trombone, keyboard, bass, and drums. Though the voicings are often reminiscent of the Alec Wilder Octet and the Raymond Scott Quintet, the rhythmic foundation is—as the ensemble's name indicates—a heavy pulse, which frequently sounds West Indian. At the same time, an oom-pah, marching-band feel weaves in and out of the proceedings. The rhythmic elements are at their most typical on *Send Me You*, which moves like a duck with a piping waddle and a grumpy, muttering melody that is unaccountably graceful and floating.

MacDermot is best known as the composer of *Hair*, *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, and, before that, the jazz hit *African Waltz*. But rather than falling back on his laurels, he has developed a style here that is just far enough off several beaten tracks to be an entity of its own. For the most part, it is a very limited style, though the possibility for a future broadening can be heard on Side 2's *New Pulse I*. The piece opens up the stylized settings of the first side to give a jazz saxophone free scope and to adapt the rhythmic pulsation to slightly different accents. And even if the New Pulse Jazz Band should turn out to be a one-shot effort, it's an interesting shot.



Kotke: no need to show off

NY5: Music for Violin & Jazz Quartet
Michael Cuscuna, producer
JAM 001
BY DON HECKMAN

It's hard to understand why Polish violinist Michal Urbaniak hasn't made a bigger splash in the waters of American jazz. By any standards, he deserves a place in the top level of improvisers: He is imaginative, he has a thoroughly integrated understanding of blues inflections, and he plays with the confident rhythmic swing of, I hesitate to say it, a native-born American jazzman. True enough, the violin never has been a target of opportunity for most young jazzmen. Stuff Smith did it justice; so did Jean-Luc Ponty and Stephane Grappelli. But the tainted status of outsider and (to quote *Downbeat's* wonderfully misnamed category) "miscellaneous instrument" has stuck to Paganini's marvelous box whenever it has been associated with jazz.

I've heard Urbaniak play every flavor and variety of crossover jazz—sometimes sensationally—and suspected he

might be a pretty effective mainstream campaigner, too. "Music for Violin & Jazz Quartet" provides the evidence. He is backed by as fine a hard bop rhythm section as one could ask for: Ted Dunbar on guitar, Kenny Barron on piano, Buster Williams on bass, and Roy Haynes on drums. He not only proves the validity of his credentials but demonstrates how much life remains in the neglected corpus of jazz from the '50s and early '60s.

Three Horace Silver tunes, appropriately, are the heart of the album—*Yeah, Silver Serenade*, and *Cookin' at the Continental*. The first is a quick, bright, and alive performance. Its harmonies move quickly, first chromatically, then through several cycles of fifths. But none of it intimidates Urbaniak, who floats like a zephyr above the churning rhythm. On *Silver Serenade*, the violinist overdubs four parts, harmonizing the perky melody with a second not unlike that of updated Four Brothers. Silver's happy, uptempo blues, *Cookin' at the Continental*, triggers a dramatically traditional solo from Urbaniak, with brief statements from Barron, Williams, and Dunbar in the best hard bop tradition.

Stanley Turrentine's *Sugar* sounds familiar even on first hearing and is given an appropriately dark and keening reading. Urbaniak sounds content with the minor harmonies; curiously, the expected gypsy phrases never emerge and he remains anchored in the mainstream. Wayne Shorter's *House of Jade* is less interesting, perhaps because the line itself sounds so inconclusive. The remaining pieces, all Urbaniak's, are also somewhat of a letdown. The melodies seem derived from preset harmonic schemes. (This is particularly true of the ballad *Pretext*.) The net result is a diminishing of intensity; even the other musicians lose the spark ignited by the Silver tunes.

Call it a 7 on a scale of 10. Most important, "Music for Violin and Jazz Quartet" reminds us that Michal Urbaniak is a jazzman of the very first order.

Art Pepper: Winter Moon
Ed Michel, producer
Galaxy GSY 5140
BY DON HECKMAN

Saxophonist Art Pepper's maturing years are proving to be his best. Plagued by devastating personal problems throughout much of the '60s and '70s (well-chronicled in his frank autobiography, *Straight Life*), Pepper has put together a string of increasingly impressive recordings in the last few years. Still not an absolute top-level creative force, he is nonetheless provocative, especially when playing traditional material. Such

(Continued on page 87)

BACKBEAT

Music in Print

Newly published collections of popular music Reviewed by Elise Bretton

Disney Stays Safe; Streisand Stays Slick

Disneyland:
The 25th Anniversary Songbook
Walt Disney Music/Big 3
39 songs, \$8.95

Today's trendy set considers Walt Disney films to be high camp, and the man himself has been characterized as a penny-pinching, right-wing union buster. Nevertheless, Disneyland and Disney World are packing 'em in, and since no one has yet proved that Donald Duck is really a CIA agent, I guess the world of Disney is still safe for children and believers.

The Disney song catalog is among the industry's most extensive. This particular collection is limited to the fare programmed for the streets of Disneyland, much of which is Academy Award calibre: *Chim Chim Cheree*, *Some Day My Prince Will Come*, *Candle in the Wind*, *Zip-a-Dee-Doo-Dah*, and *Whistle While You Work* are a few. Printed in blue ink on fine stock, adorned with photographs, commentary, and an illustrated map of the premises, this is a beautifully produced package.

The Doobie Brothers:
One Step Closer
Warner Bros., 9 songs, \$8.95

Doobie melodies flow and swirl more or less scalewise in a hypnotic torrent. As the boys have seventy fingers and you have only ten, you would do well to absorb their newest LP aurally before purchasing this matching folio. Your friendly transcriber requires you, this time around, to play rhythm as well as melodic accompaniment while singing; it can get very frustrating.

Earth, Wind & Fire: Faces
Columbia Pictures, 15 songs, \$9.95.

Soul disco, like April in Paris, cannot be reprised. And when it is transcribed, no

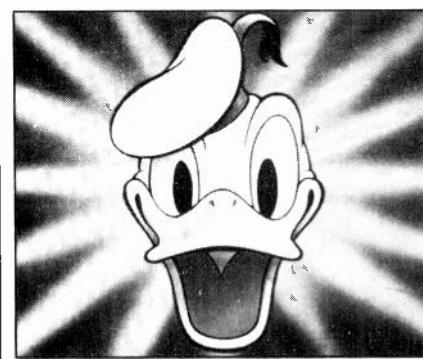
matter how accurately, no pianist I know would want to tackle all those syncopated eighth and sixteenth notes while singing in the funky, get-down style that makes Earth, Wind & Fire the nation's No. 1 nonet. When a folio's engraver is unable to squeeze more than two printed measures into each 7½-inch wide music stave, you can be sure you're in for a strenuous session.

The Idolmaker: Music from the Original Motion Picture Soundtrack
United Artists/Big 3, 10 songs, \$5.95
Xanadu: From the Original Motion Picture Soundtrack
Big 3, 10 songs, \$5.95

The Jeff Lynne/John Farrar *Xanadu* score is as fluffy as the film's star, Olivia Newton-John. If you happen to have a small roller rink in your living room, the tunes could be quite serviceable. The music from *The Idolmaker*, on the other hand, is integral to the story line, which deals with the grooming and packaging of teenage rock stars. It's a period piece, and Jeff Barry's music and lyrics are quite accurately tinged with the sound and mood of the mid-'50s. Barry was turning out hits records at that time, so he knows whereof he writes.

The Phil Keaggy Songbook
Cherry Lane, 26 songs, \$7.95

This item could be the start of a new trend. Writer/performer Phil Keaggy's milieu is Christian rock, the printed rendering of which is usually only available in church-affiliated book and record stores. But the widely-distributed hand that is helping Keaggy disseminate his message is none other than Cherry Lane Music, publishers of such irreverent col-



Disney's Donald Duck—high camp

lections as "Kiss Unmasked."

Keaggy's sincere songs are exquisitely transcribed for voice and keyboard, with chords for the guitarist. Worthy of mention is the folio's size, 8½ by 11, as opposed to the standard 9 by 12. If you are into this kind of music, the volume is a work of art.

Kiss Unmasked
Cherry Lane, 11 songs, \$6.95

The wizards of Cherry Lane have cleaned up Kiss's notated act. Rather than printing each and every yowl, yammer, groan, and grunt they herein provide clean, uncomplicated two-line piano-vocals. Not to worry, fans—the arrangements are faithful, measure for measure, to the group's recorded sound. So, if you play this music and you still don't like what you hear, you can't blame it on the transcriber.

Barbra Streisand: Guilty
Chappell Music/Hal Leonard
9 songs, \$7.95

Oh, that her too, too solid ego would melt away and resolve to the talent we once respected. Our Brooklyn-born Venus has fly-trapped the Brothers Gibb into creating this doleful documentary for her, and it isn't even worth its weight in lawyers' fees. I know that *Guilty* and *Woman in Love* are chart hits, but the remaining material is spongy and not up to standard.

Top Hits of 1980
Warner Bros., 19 songs, \$5.95
Sailing and More Mellow Gold
Warner Bros., 33 songs, \$7.95

"Top Hits of 1980" includes such current chartbusters as Irene Cara's *Out Here on My Own*, Jackson Browne's *That Girl Could Sing*, Bob Seger and the Silver Bullet Band's *You'll Accomp'ny Me*, and Randy Meisner's *Deep Inside My Heart*. "Sailing and More Mellow Gold," also from the Warner Bros. print factory, features those same five songs, in addition to Paul Simon's *One-Trick Pony*, Barry Manilow's *One Voice*, and the Manhattans' *Shining Star*, to name only a few. It also contains a number of warhorses (*Evergreen*, *Feelings*, etc.), so check the table of contents before purchasing.

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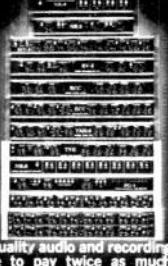
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(Continued from page 83)

is the case on "Winter Moon," and the accompaniment of a small string ensemble proves a particularly felicitous setting for his warm, luxurious sound.

His improvisations, however, are something else. Pepper has a laidback herky-jerky melodic style not unlike Lester Young's but he lacks Prez's easy way with a phrase. On the contrary, his lines are all bursting bits and fragments—rhythmically interesting in a sort of explosive fashion, yet diminished by their adherence to a strong, diatonic flow. He rarely does more than circle cautiously around the more complex chord progressions, usually preferring to stick close to the basic key signature.

Bill Holman's string arrangements are competent, and he manages to get an impressively large sound from eight violins and two cellos. Three charts by Jimmy Bond lower the quality level considerably, bringing to mind the string sections behind, say, John Davidson at Las Vegas.

The worst track is *The Prisoner*, a silly, harmonically deficient melody that apparently and appropriately was the theme for *The Eyes of Laura Mars*. It is notable mainly as an example of Pepper's great difficulty with double-time figures. He sputters and spurts and attempts to save things with a few uncharacteristic (for him) avant-garde honks that startle, but don't help. *Here's That Rainy Day*, a marvelous old Jimmy Van Heusen tune, has also been treated shabbily, both by Bond's unsympathetic orchestration and Pepper's tight, repressed solo.

Things improve considerably with *Our Song*. That Pepper is almost purely an emotional artist is made clear on this piece. It's an original, and it obviously holds a significant reservoir of feeling for him. He also sounds fine on another original called *That's Love*. Actually not much more than a straight-ahead blues, the piece nonetheless shows the effective manner in which Pepper's economical phrasing can work. His clarinet on *Blues in the Night* is equally pleasing, giving just the right jab of piquancy.

The best tracks are Hoagy Carmichael's lovely *Winter Moon* and Harold Arlen's *When the Sun Comes Out*. Everything comes together on *Moon*—good song, good chart, confident improvising from Pepper—all of it triggered by the piece's changing rhythm patterns and by Holman's atmospherically moody strings. *Sun*, not quite as good, starts strong with Pepper's powerful solo, then falters when the tries to fill space at the end with "modern" sound effects.

"Winter Moon" is not an even out-

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(Continued on next page)

Continued from previous page

ing by any means. But it's an honest one, and I doubt that Pepper could play any other way.

The Widespread Depression Orchestra Featuring Bob Wilber: Rockin' in Rhythm
Anders R. Ohman, producer
Phontastic 7527
BY JOHN S. WILSON

When Bob Wilber first turned up in the mid-'40s, instead of diving into the latest jazz style (bebop), he explored older, more traditional genres as if in preparation for perpetuating the personal style of his teacher, Sidney Bechet. Wilber's presence on this disc lends a provocative sense of continuity, since the Widespread Depression Orchestra is a young jazz group whose customary source material is a music that predates Wilber's start—the black bands of the '30s and '40s.

On "Rockin' in Rhythm," WDO focuses on Duke Ellington. Wilber, of course, is steeped in Ellingtonia and has transcribed and reorchestrated many of the Duke's pieces (particularly those for small group). As a result, he lends a depth and assurance to the proceedings not as evident on the recordings the band has made on its own. He is also a master of Johnny Hodges' soaring, full-voiced style on alto saxophone; his only current challenger is WDO's Michael Hashim.

Wilber contributes only three arrangements to this album of exceptionally good performances. The WDO has developed its own group of increasingly able arrangers, particularly pianist Michael Ledonne and tenor saxophonist Dean Nicyper. The former has written a superb chart for *Rockin' in Rhythm*, and Nicyper gives *Alabama Home* the rhythmic drive and structure of *Caravan*. Though Wilber is featured throughout, WDO vocalist/vibraphonist Jon Holtzman (who has since left the band) sounds superb; his outgoing singing has never been recorded so well.

CRITICAL COMPONENT
(Continued from page 44)

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Distortion

Not surprisingly, mistracking or severe resonance problems will generate audible distortion, as will serious an-

gular misalignment (lateral, vertical, or otherwise, of more than a few degrees) of the stylus relative to the groove. Otherwise, you shouldn't hear anything amiss, notwithstanding the grossness of cartridge distortion figures compared to those for, say, amplifiers. You should bear in mind, however, that while capable of better overall performance, modern line-contact styli are more critical of imprecise alignment than spherical or even elliptical styli.

When everything is done right, today's best cartridges are capable of astonishing performance. And, to the great good fortune of the budget-conscious, most manufacturers make second-best cartridges nearly as good as their top-of-the-line models. As in the past, we will see evolutionary improvements in the technology as manufacturers continue to chip away at the problems attending the reproduction of analog discs, until the final quantum jump is made into the new world of fully digital audio. **HF**

A PRO'S APPROACH
(Continued from page 42)

use isopropyl alcohol, but avoid rubbing alcohol, which includes scents and other "impurities." To apply the cleaner, Nortronics cotton swabs are favored because their tips don't shed as much as those of ordinary drugstore swabs, and the long wooden handles are ideal for cleaning hard-to-reach places. (They're the only swabs that can reach the heads in my car deck.) The TDK HC-1 head cleaner cassette is good for interim cleanings, when there isn't time for alcohol and swabs.

Engineers at WFMT find that most open-reel tape machines do not need head demagnetization. If you think that the heads on your deck do, the R. B. Annis Company of Indianapolis makes a good heavy-duty demagnetizer. Cassette decks sometimes pose special accessibility problems, for which Nakamichi offers a small hand-held unit. Certainly the most convenient head demagnetizer, especially for use in the car, is the TDK HD-01. Contained entirely within a cassette shell, it performs its chore quickly and automatically.

WFMT records and edits more tape than most recording studios. We purchase our blank Ampex tape in pancakes on hubs and wind it onto our own reels. This saves considerable expense. If you use a lot of tape for home recording, you can do the same thing, though you probably will have to buy tape by the carton to get it on hubs. Polyline makes excellent inexpensive plastic reels. Metal reels don't increase performance level—only price—but poor-quality plastic reels can compromise performance. In particular,

look for flat, parallel flanges.

Since we edit tapes of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and Lyric Opera of Chicago, nothing less than perfection will do. Aluminum EdiTall blocks are glued to all of our tape machines. We use ordinary single-edge industrial razor blades to cut the tape and an unbranded splicing tape. We were quite partial to Scotch 632 splicing tape, but it has become difficult to find. Never use a splicing machine: They make terrible splices and damage the tape, and the splicing tape can gum up the tape heads when improperly applied. (Our splicing tape is 3/16 inch wide, so when properly applied, it's a safe distance from the tape edge.) If you're serious about editing, stick with EdiTall blocks.

There are editing blocks for cassette tapes, too, but most people don't edit cassettes—only repair them. When my car deck ate a favorite tape, I discovered the simple and inexpensive Scotch Cassette Editing and Repair Kit. It contains a hex driver for winding the cassette, a splicing block, pre-cut splicing tape, and long sticky tabs for reaching into the cassette shell and pulling out the broken tape. I've rescued quite a few cassettes with this small tool.

If you're an ambitious home recordist and make live recordings, a few accessories can make the job easier and the sound better. Vibration can sometimes create strange gremlins in the bass region that muddy the sound of condenser mikes. Professionals use expensive spider-type shock mounts that are both fragile and bulky. Since WFMT does a lot of live remote recording where it's difficult to carry these around, we use the Shure A-53M shock mount: a rubber doughnut that holds the mike. On multi-mike recordings, tangled cables tend to make it difficult to tell which cable goes to which mike. Beyer and Audio-Technica both market mike cables in a rainbow of colors, so you'll always know which mike is plugged into which input.

The metering systems of some tape decks and mixing consoles leave a lot to be desired. Accurate level displays that are easy to read can actually improve a recording by letting you know what's really going onto the tape. The Audio Technology 510B LED display is a useful, though expensive, little box with dual rows of green, yellow, and red LEDs that indicate recording levels when calibrated to your deck.

WFMT improvises many of its own accessories. You may want to do the same, particularly if commercial products don't quite meet your needs. There is a variety of speaker stands in wood, plastic, and rubber, and most work about equally well. If you're not terribly concerned about decor, bricks or cinder

blocks do the same job for less. Just remember to place some cardboard or fabric between the bricks and your speakers to avoid damaging the wood finish. WFMT has even used cardboard boxes for temporary speaker stands.

Acoustics are difficult to deal with, but now there's an accessory that can make your system sound better by making your room sound better, and it's not an equalizer. If you line the walls in the vicinity of your speakers with Sonex acoustic foam, early reflections from the speakers are dramatically decreased. The result is cleaner sound with better imaging; if you are using a stereo image enhancer, the foam will improve the illusion dramatically. Attractively patterned in triplets of miniature "anechoic" wedges, the Sonex foam comes in rolls or squares and is easy to install. About \$175 worth will treat an average room. WFMT is experimenting with it in studios and control rooms.

If you bought all the accessories mentioned here, it might cost as much as a small stereo system. But with none, you might not hear all that your system is capable of. Be selective in purchasing your accessories, or you may run into my problem: I've run out of places to put everything.

HF

The Value of a Long-Term Appraisal. This inside look at WFMT provides a unique opportunity to evaluate tape and record care accessories over the long term. When we at HF—or, for that matter, any other audio magazine—"test" these types of accessories, we can only comment on whether or not they work in the immediate sense. WFMT presents an equally valuable, though obviously somewhat subjective perspective. And that HF's test results ("Phonographic Prescriptions: Do They Work?", May 1980) and WFMT's preferences agree in many cases is of considerable interest.

—Ed.

SAMUEL BARBER

(Continued from page 47)

Stage Works

Barber's two ballet scores, *Medea*, Op. 23 (1946), and *Souvenirs*, Op. 28 (1952), are entirely antithetical in character—one a mythic tragedy, presented as a psychodrama; the other an urbane parody of a modern dance suite—yet both are indebted to Stravinsky. In *Medea*, Barber seems to have come to terms with dissonance (methodically relying on seconds, sevenths, and ninths as both melodic and harmonic elements), using it to much better effect than in the Second Symphony. Composed for Martha Graham, the work concludes with a violent, primal "Dance of Vengeance" that cannot fail to bring to mind sections

of Stravinsky's *Sacre*. Barber made two concert arrangements of *Medea*. The first, from 1947, is a seven-movement suite. The Howard Hanson performance (Mercury SRI 75012) is a tepid affair; Barber's own version, from the 1950 London sessions (Everest 3282), is far superior. However, the suite itself is not nearly as compelling as the pared-down 1955 arrangement, the more concise, single-movement *Medea's Meditation and Dance of Vengeance*, Op. 23a (1955). Schippers' version on *Odyssey* (Y 33230) is excellent, but as in the Second Essay on the same disc, there is a sonic flaw (this time a drop in loudness) at one of the climaxes. There are no competing versions.

Souvenirs had its genesis as a set of piano duets, which Barber orchestrated at the request of Lincoln Kirstein, then director of the New York City Ballet. The movements include a waltz, a schottische, a pas de deux, a hesitation-tango, and a galop, each treated somewhat in the manner Stravinsky treated Pergolesi's original in his recasting of *Pulcinella*. The José Serebrier/London Symphony recording (Desto DC 6433) is a good representation of this partly humorous, partly nostalgic score.

"Opera," said Barber, "is the slipperiest thing you can get into. There are more excuses for not doing it, or for doing it badly. But I've always been a sucker for opera—it's terribly exhilarating when you finally hear and see it onstage, with all the costumes and lights. I wrote *Vanessa*, actually, without a commission. I just wanted to see if I could write an opera. I remember bringing the score to Rudolf Bing, at the Met, and having to play it for him on the piano, singing all the parts, while he turned pages. That was not an easy job. No. [Gian Carlo] Menotti did not have any input into the music: He was busy with projects of his own, so he wrote the words in a notebook and sent them over to me. Of course, I would always show him the music once I wrote it. He's a wonderful critic—he has a superb sense of line."

Barber's piano audition was enough to persuade Bing to stage *Vanessa*, Op. 32 (1957), at the Met, and it was a resounding success, winning the Pulitzer Prize in 1958. It is a poignant, intriguing work about a woman who, having waited twenty years for the return of an old lover, receives his son (Anatol) as a house guest and falls in love with him. Anatol, meanwhile, promptly seduces Vanessa's niece (Erika), and when Vanessa and Anatol marry and leave for Paris, Erika secludes herself in waiting, just as Vanessa had done. The score is one of Barber's strongest and most passionate, and although the vocal lines are often more declamatory than was his

wont, there is also plenty of soaring vocal melody; the quintet in the fourth act is marvelous. The only recording is the 1958 Dimitri Mitropoulos/Metropolitan Opera set (RCA ARI 2-2094) with Steiner as the definitive Vanessa, Rosalind Elias a fine Erika, and Nicolai Gedda as Anatol. Although the sound is starting to show signs of age, the superb performance is enthusiastically recommended.

A Hand of Bridge, Op. 35 (1958), was written for a program of short operas presented at Spoleto. Between the superficial movements of a card game, we hear the inner anxieties and fantasies of the four players. This is an attractive and entertaining little work that deserves to be heard more often. Golschmann includes it on his Barber disc (Vanguard VSD 2083).

When the Metropolitan Opera's move to Lincoln Center was imminent, it

C Stage works

MERCURY SRI 75012 *Medea*, Op. 23: Suite; *The School for Scandal* Overture, Op. 5; Symphony No. 1, Op. 9. Eastman-Rochester SO, Hanson.

EVEREST 3282—*Medea*, Op. 23: Suite; Symphony No. 2, Op. 19. New SO of London, Barber.

ODYSSEY Y 33230—*Medea's Meditation and Dance of Vengeance*, Op. 23a; *The School for Scandal* Overture, Op. 5; *Adagio for Strings*, Op. 11; *Essay for Orchestra*, No. 2, Op. 17. New York P. Schippers.

DESTO DC 6433—*Souvenirs*, Op. 28. London SO, Serebrier. (Also SURINACH: *Spells and Rhymes*. Harkness SO, Mester.)

RCA ARI 2-2094 (2)—*Vanessa*, Op. 32. Steiner, Elias, Resnik, Gedda, Tozzi; Metropolitan Opera Ch&O, Mitropoulos.

VANGUARD VSD 2083—See Choral Works.

RCA LSC 3062—See Vocal Works.

commissioned Barber to write an opera for the opening of its new house. That work, *Antony and Cleopatra*, Op. 40 (1965-66), more ambitious and more colorful than *Vanessa*, had a libretto by Franco Zeffirelli, after the Shakespeare play. Unfortunately, the opera was a dismal failure, the only major disappointment in Barber's career. Immediately after the opening, he went to the Italian Alps, where he spent five unproductive years. The two excerpts from *Antony* that Price has recorded (RCA LSC 3062) do not explain much about the opera's failure; indeed, they show the kind of dramatic expressivity one would expect. There is hope for *Antony*, though: In 1975, Barber reworked the score, with some help on the libretto from Menotti, and the new version has been presented with success at Juilliard and in Paris. According to friends of the composer, Barber spent a great deal of time during his last few weeks listening to tapes of the Paris performances. Perhaps the time for

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a complete recorded *Antony* has come.

Finally, I simply point out that listeners interested in hearing a fair sampling of Barber in good (if not always the best) performances can do so without spending a fortune. A broad, economical selection would include: Schippers on *Odyssey Y 33230*; Measham on *Unicorn RHS 342*; Golschmann on *Vanguard VSD 2083*; Brownridge on *Hyperion A 66016*; Steber and Price on *Odyssey 32 16 0230*; Isaac Stern/Leonard Bernstein and Browning/George Szell on *CBS import 61621*; and for good measure, *Vanessa* (RCA ARL 2-2094). You end up with all three Second Essays, and you miss a few gems, but that selection affords the most Barber for the least money. **HF**

MILES DAVIS

(Continued from page 73)

The peculiar starts and stops toward the front of his solo may or may not have been intended; to this listener they sound like the result of a confused session—as does much of the track.

Konda, recorded in May of 1970, shortly before "Miles Davis at the Fillmore," is considerably more interesting despite a particularly blatant tape edit. The addition of Airto Moriera on Brazilian percussion brings a much-needed element of textural variety to the rhythm section, and Keith Jarrett's presence on electric piano (a rare event) helps provide the kind of harmonic reference points Davis works with best. McLaughlin is surprisingly, but pleasantly, discrete and Davis' electric trumpet improvisation, simple though it may be, becomes more interesting with each new hearing. (Annotator Bob Blumenthal's liner notes err in listing a bass clarinet on the track: he was probably confused by Davis' octave-doubling on the trumpet. Blumenthal also indicates that the drums at the end of the track are Jack DeJohnette's, even though he is not listed in the personnel. Given the percussion style, it seems more likely that the trap drummer is Airto, who then overdubbed the Brazilian percussion effects.)

The final track, *Willie Nelson*, dates to February of 1970, putting it out of chronological sequence with the other pieces. The rock influence again is strong, but it is not abetted by the peculiar mix: Drums are on one side (no spread), guitar on the other, and bass in the middle. The effect is, to say the least, schizophrenic. This time, however, Miles's intensity, coupled with DeJohnette's steaming, extremely propulsive drumming, makes the piece work very well, indeed. It is also helped by a defined sectionalization, usually related to bassist Holland's alternating melodic patterns. They may not be models of

complexity, but they provide interesting shifts to avoid the rhythmic boredom of some of Davis' work from this period.

Still, despite the success of a piece like *Willie Nelson*, Davis' infatuation with rock in the late Sixties and early Seventies too often came off like a ten rounder between Muhammad Ali and a featherweight. The density of his musical imagination was simply too much for the material he was dealing with. So why did he do it? Why did he shift from the solid jazz roots of his mid-Sixties, Shorter-Hancock-Carter-Williams axis to the high decibel sounds of his Fillmore band?

For a lot of reasons—some musical, some having to do with the complex personality of a gifted performer. Davis saw what happened to most jazz giants in the rock decade and he was determined not to let it happen to him.

Even more important, I suspect, was his long fascination with *progress*; the perception of himself as one who never looks back, who is always trying something new, who is constantly in the vanguard of contemporary musical thought. (He is, for instance, quite apt to shrug off questions about his days with Charlie Parker. "Why do you want to talk about that old stuff?" he usually says. Yet I can recall a time when he astonished me by digging up—totally without urging—an old tape of his performance with the Dizzy Gillespie big band in the late Forties. "How do you like those high notes?" he asked.)

Somewhere along the way, the single-minded energy of his belief that doing something new was always better than doing something old led him onto the wrong track. Both he and the musicians around him were powerful enough to make something out of the simplistic rock elements they chose to employ, but the results were usually triumphs of technique and style over content. When it worked (as on *Willie Nelson*) it did so as jazz in a peculiar environment rather than as a blending of disparate disciplines. Davis didn't go as far out of bounds as some of the avant-gardists who started the Sixties with him, but he too wound up out of touch with some of the essential verities of jazz.

Even so, "Directions" is a welcome release. (But why is there no credit for Macero, the original producer of most of these tracks?) Certainly the sound of Miles wrestling with the rhythms of rock, no matter how out of joint the results might be, is considerably more provocative than a vast number of new jazz releases that come to mind. And news that he is back in the studio is heartening indeed. Given his penchant for progress, it will be interesting to hear if his musical ambitions will once again take him back on the jazz track. **HF**

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For more information and the name of your local dealer, dial toll-free 1-800-528-6050, Ext. 1401. In Arizona, 1-800-352-0458, Ext. 1401.

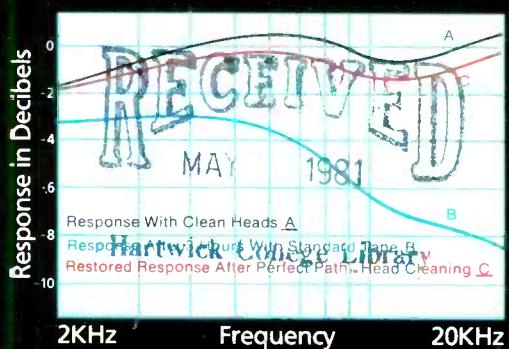
BOSE
Better sound through research.

The First Discwasher Tape Accessory



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' 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.

**discwasher®
PERFECT PATH™**

Discwasher, Inc., 1407 N. Providence Rd., Columbia, MO 65201