Add to this the reliability features inherent in using the latest proven components: solid-state ceramic FIM IF filtering and hermetically sealed field-effect transistors circuitry.

And the Sherwood three-year parts warranty. (One year both labor and parts.)

All for just $229.95

In this inflation-ridden world, that’s not just an engineering accomplishment. It’s an economic miracle.

Write us for complete information and specifications. Sherwood Electronic Laboratories, 4300 North California Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60618.

Sherwood
The word is getting around.
Anybody can build a great receiver if cost is no object. The trick is to produce a great receiver for a popular price. One with power enough to drive even low efficiency speaker systems. (RMS output of 20 watts x 2 @ 8 ohm, 1 KHz.)

And performance specs to match:
- Harmonic distortion: 0.9% @ 8 ohm rated output, 0.20 @ 10 watts.
- Power bandwidth: 9-50 KHz @ 0.9 dist.

FM Sensitivity (IHF): 2.0 μV (—30 db noise and dist.)
- Capture ratio: 1.5 db.
- Stereo distortion: 0.6% @ 100 mod.
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at this price, a miracle.
We give you the softest soft to the loudest loud. Choose any model. You won’t get ‘clipped.’

Today’s best recordings can reproduce music’s full dynamic range, from the softest soft to the loudest loud. Most of today’s popular low and moderate efficiency speaker systems can’t. But BIC VENTURI™ speakers do.

A speaker’s dynamic range depends mainly on its efficiency and power handling capacity. Low-efficiency speakers can’t get started without a good deal of input power. And, they tend to get stifled when driven beyond their capability.

BIC VENTURI speakers are efficient! They need as little as one fifth the amplifier power of most air suspension systems for the same sound output. So, you can listen louder without pushing your amplifier to the point where it starts clipping the tops and bottoms of musical peaks.

Today’s popular, low-efficiency speakers require about a 50-watt per channel amplifier to deliver lifelike sound levels. Even our Formula 2 will deliver that same sound level with only 25 watts of amplifier power; the Formula 4 with 20 watts and our Formula 6 with only 9 watts! With BIC VENTURI, your amplifier can loaf along with plenty of reserve "headroom" to reproduce musical peaks cleanly, effortlessly. It’s as if your present amplifier suddenly became two to five times as powerful. BIC VENTURI can handle lots of power, too. A typical, low-efficiency system is rated for a maximum safe power input of about 50 watts. Feed it more power and you’re likely to push it into distortion, or even self-destruction!

With a BIC VENTURI you can turn up the power, without distortion or speaker damage. Even our compact Formula 2 can safely handle 75 watts per channel. With that much power feeding it, it will deliver 210% more sound output than a low-efficiency system will at its power limit. Drive our super efficient Formula 6 at its maximum, and it will deliver nearly 1300% more sound power! That’s the loud half of the story.

With soft music (or when you turn down the volume) you want to hear it soft. With most speakers, turn down the volume slowly and you reach a point where the sound suddenly fades out because the speakers aren’t linear anymore. But BIC VENTURI’s are. The sound goes smoothly softer, without any sudden fadeout, retaining all the subtle nuances that add to the character of the music.

But, even though BIC VENTURI speakers remain linear, there is a point where your ears do not. At lower sound levels, your ears lose their bass and treble sensitivity. So, our DYNAMIC TONAL BALANCE COMPENSATION™ circuit (pat. pending) takes over. As the volume goes down it adjusts frequency response, automatically to compensate for the ear’s deficiencies. The result: aurally “flat” response, always!

Our Formula 2 is the most efficient of its size. The Formula 4 offers even greater efficiency and power handling. And the most efficient is the Formula 6. Hear them at your dealer. BRITISH INDUSTRIES COMPANY, Westbury, N.Y. 11590. Div. of Avnet, Inc. Canada: C.W. Pointon, Ltd., Ont.
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No other receiver will keep you so busy or make you so happy.

The new Fisher 514.

Every Fisher receiver is designed for people who love to play music; but the new Fisher Studio-Standard 514 goes a step further. It's designed for the active audiophiles who get their kicks out of playing with the music, the people who can't even wait to get a new component out of the box and up on the shelf before trying it out. These are people who listen with their hands as much as their ears, and while others are snapping their fingers and stamping their feet, they're flicking switches, pushing plugs, and twirling knobs.

If you are as concerned with what goes on inside the box as you are concerned with what comes out, if you're still shifting speakers and splicing wires long after the party's over, chances are you just won't be satisfied by anything less than the Fisher 514.

We left out nothing.

Both to keep up our reputation of having the latest and the most, and to make sure that you can listen to as much 4-channel as possible, the 514 has a new CD-4 discrete disc demodulator as well as an SQ matrix decoder.

CD-4 has the potential for greater channel separation than SQ. This means that the musicians and studio people can do trickier stuff, and that listeners can wander around the room and still hear everything in its proper position.

SQ is a cinch to broadcast on FM while CD-4 is just about impossible right now; SQ is used on many more records than CD-4, and the decoding circuit doubles as a 4-channel synthesizer for stereo recordings. With the Fisher 514 you do not have to make the difficult choice between CD-4 and SQ; we give you both.

In addition to all the knobs and buttons you'd expect to find on any receiver of this caliber, the 514 has a sophisticated and highly useful "joy-stick" balance control similar to the pan pot used in professional recording studios. The joystick is much simpler to use than the two or four knobs found on most other 4-channel receivers, yet it permits extremely precise adjustments of the acoustical field to suit music, personal preference, room acoustics, or seating arrangements.

An elaborate tone control and filter system, centering on studio-style slide potentiometers, provides further fine tuning of the audio environment.

As you might expect, there are separate bass and treble controls for front and rear, but Fisher has added a midrange presence control, with maximum effect at about 1.5k Hz. It's just about the most useful and potent control you could add to a component, and can dramatically highlight a vocal performance against an instrumental background.

Although primarily designed as the control center for an elaborate 4-channel sound system, the 514 uses an exotic Fisher-invented "strapping" technique to combine front and rear amplifiers for stereo use, with a significant increase in power over what you would expect by just adding up the per-channel wattages.

What's inside.

Fisher has spared no effort to utilize the latest high-technology devices and manufacturing techniques in the 514. The FM tuner section incorporates dual-gate MOS/FETs, lumped selectivity circuitry, and a ladder-type ceramic filter to provide the highest possible signal-to-noise ratio, interference rejection, sensitivity, selectivity, and immunity to overload. A Phase Locked Loop multiplex decoder insures high separation and low distortion through temperature changes and extensive use.

The numbers.

RMS power into 8 ohms, 20-20kHz: Stereo — 180 W; 4-channel — 128 W. THD 0.5%. Price: $749.95

It comes from a fine family.

In addition to the 514, we're very proud of our new Studio-Standard models 414 ($649.95) and 314 ($549.95). They have a bit less power and not as many controls, but the music is every bit as good.

If, however, you're not ready for, or not sure about, the new CD-4 system, we strongly recommend you consider our 504X, 404X, and 304X receivers. They're identical to the "14" series models, except that instead of having a built-in CD-4 demodulator, they have space for it, and sell for $100 less. Should you wish to add CD-4 later on, any of our service stations can do the job, and the total cost of the "04X" series receiver plus decoder will not exceed the cost of the complete "14". Anybody's 4-channel receiver can be converted to CD-4 with an external add-on demodulator, but Fisher accepts an internal circuit board — for simplicity, convenience, and reliability.

For more information, write to Fisher Radio, Dept. SR-8, 11-40 45th Road, Long Island City, N.Y. 11101.

Fisher Studio-Standard Stereo/4-Channel

Studio-Standard receivers are available only at Fisher Studio-Standard Dealers. Fair trade prices where applicable.

CIRCLE NO. 15 ON READER SERVICE CARD
OPERA AND MONEY

For the past six years, the Metropolitan Opera has been putting on a late-spring "mini-season" in New York, three weeks of productions that fall after the "regular" season has ended. For this opera lover at least, it is an almost unadulterated treat. The weather is usually nice—frequently splendid, in fact—thus mitigating those perennial bugaboos, bulky transportation and bulky clothing. The audiences, too, are in a festive mood, perhaps because there are fewer sullen, put-upon New Yorkers and more eager-to-be-entertained tourists, and the singers respond by giving just a little more. Most of the superstars, to be sure, are lacking, off to Europe for their round of music festivals and Swiss-lake holidays, but we do not live by caviar alone.

I saw four productions, all of them devoted, in their different ways, to that subject (love and death) opera knows best, and I might as well include here my mini-reviews. The production of Don Giovanni was successful (Mozart's music aside) mainly for its effective costumes and still (after sixteen years) singularly communicative Eugene Berman sets. It will also be memorable as my first exposure to Frederica von Stade, the Zerlina, a young American singer of already immense authority and unquestionable promise. Thomas Stewart made a fine figure of a Don, but his peacock posturing and athletic bumptiousness were psychologically obtuse—Don Giovanni is not a narcissistic jock. Contrariwise, I found Pilar Lorengar's matronly dumpling of a Butterfly movingly drawn and ravishingly sung, but the sets just a bit Barbie-dollish. Marilyn Horne's Carmen was often gorgeous in musical terms, but not in dramatic ones. Carmen, like Don Giovanni and others of Passion's slaves, has no sense of humor, and their character is diminished by making her a Bad Girl, campy, vulgar, and petulant. The sets were ugly and inappropriate, the smugglers' scene (a film-projected cave) looking like the Dawn of Man as staged at Bayreuth, and the bullfight scene like lunch hour outside the Skoda munitions works. Der Rosenkavalier profits much from its incredibly beautiful sets, but the ensemble playing of the cast, without ever reaching Olympian heights, was quite up to them. Evelyn Lear may understand the Marschallin a little better when she is a little older, and by the same time Richard Best may have learned to refine the coarse peasant out of his Baron Ochs.

I would not like it to appear, from these cavils, that I did not enjoy the mini-season, for I did. One of opera's many pleasures is the opportunity to learn, to expand one's appreciation and understanding, even from less-than-ideal productions. But this, alas, may be the last of the mini-seasons: the Met's financial troubles, despite the influx of government money, substantial private gifts, and, of course, rising ticket prices, are steadily worsening. Expenses for the 1972-1973 season, for example, were $24,064,000, income $16,274,000. That left $7,790,000 to be made up by donors, a fund appeal based upon its underpublicized-perhaps even unimaginable—household fund drive. So the Met must stay at home; but wouldn't a tour make a little America see what this thing is all about. Would we be lucky enough to have two Avery Fishers?
The Allman Brothers Band has a great new sound. Pioneer high fidelity.

More than anything else, the Allman Brothers Band are accomplished musicians. Their success doesn't depend on sequins or serpents, or make-up, or put-on showmanship. Instead, like Pioneer speakers, they stake their fame on performance.

The Allman Brothers Band prefer Pioneer speakers because of their clarity, overall sound quality and performance. The Allman Brothers sound right to the Allman Brothers. That's simple.

There are six different musicians in the Allman Brothers Band. There are 12 different speakers in the Pioneer line. Speakers that vary because people vary, hi-fi systems vary, room acoustics vary, budgets vary and tastes vary.

Series R. These contemporary styled speaker systems bring new life to live performance. They have been praised by artists, critics, engineers and musicians for their untouched, uncolored and unusually natural performance.

Project Series. These speakers deliver maximum performance per dollar. Ideal for moderately powered stereo and 4-channel systems, these bookshelf units deliver a surprisingly high sound level while providing exceptionally wide dispersion and highs of unsurpassed quality.

CS Series. Pioneer's hallmark of engineering excellence. Here's powerfully smooth sound reproduction combined with custom-crafted cabinetry that is a reflection of the craftsmanship of an almost bygone era.

Pioneer speakers are just one element in the Pioneer audio components line — components preferred by the Allman Brothers Band. A fact you might consider when making your own selection.

U. S. Pioneer Electronics Corp.
75 Oxford Drive, Moonachie, New Jersey 07047.
West: 13300 S. Estrella, Los Angeles 90248 / Midwest: 1500 Greenleaf, Elk Grove Village, Ill. 60007 / Canada: S. H. Parker Co.

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*Fair Trade resale price where applicable.
The Carpenters

- Here we go again tossing around the merits of the music of Richard and Karen Carpenter (June). I, for one, am disappointed at opening every other issue of STEREO REVIEW and seeing the Carpenters skewered on some clever reviewer's spit.

Somewhere along the way your staff formed the corporate opinion that to be of any cultural value, music and musicians must be obscure and unacceptable to large numbers of people. In spite of what your staff may think, obscurity is not a virtue but rather a detriment. This detriment must be overcome if anyone is to receive any enjoyment from a talent. I admire the unrecognized genius who is commercially unacceptable but aesthetically pure. However, I think it is an equal feat to hit the mainstream as squarely as the Carpenters have. The degree of finesse they apply to their work—vocally and instrumentally—has so far been unmatched in my opinion. They have also served (and very well, I might add) to bring some otherwise obscure people to the forefront of the music profession. I concur with Paul Williams are but two of these people. Though their work may be sheer genius, it took a commercial vehicle to give them the lasting quality needed to make their songs the “standards” of the future. As for Mr. Reilly’s comment on the Carpenters’ lack of “growth,” I can only interpret this to mean they did not have a half-dozen practice albums before they got a good one, as with many groups. When all is said and done, history supports the theory that the mainstream has lasting power, but hundreds of amateurish, aesthetic die-hards are forgotten. Keep on pickin’, Richard; I’d love to be getting your royalty checks!

LES SUMMERS
Indiana, Pa.

- In his June Carpenters review, Peter Reilly makes the common error of the non-artist by assuming that any person should create or compose as a reflection of his generation. I think it is an equal feat to hit the mainstream as squarely as the Carpenters have. The degree of finesse they apply to their work—vocally and instrumentally—has so far been unmatched in my opinion. They have also served (and very well, I might add) to bring some otherwise obscure people to the forefront of the music profession. I concur with Paul Williams are but two of these people. Though their work may be sheer genius, it took a commercial vehicle to give them the lasting quality needed to make their songs the “standards” of the future. As for Mr. Reilly’s comment on the Carpenters’ lack of “growth,” I can only interpret this to mean they did not have a half-dozen practice albums before they got a good one, as with many groups. When all is said and done, history supports the theory that the mainstream has lasting power, but hundreds of amateurish, aesthetic die-hards are forgotten. Keep on pickin’, Richard; I’d love to be getting your royalty checks!

ROBERT REID
Weston, Mass.

Gershwin’s Second Rhapsody

- With all the activity and publicity attending this year’s seventy-fifth anniversary of the birth of George Gershwin, is there any possibility of just one new stereo recording of his Second Rhapsody for piano and orchestra? My old (circa 1954) recording with Leonard Pennario and the Hollywood Bowl Orchestra is showing definite signs of age.

M. C. MANNING
Victoria, B.C., Canada

None that we know of, but Leonard Pennario’s has just been re-released by Angel (S-36070): see page 111.

Bishop’s Mozart

- The splendid new Philips recording of Mozart’s Piano Concertos K. 467 and K. 503 with Bishop, Davis, and the London Symphony is everything Igor Kipnis says it is (May). One minor correction, however: Stephen Bishop has at least one other recorded Mozart performance to his credit, namely that of the great E-flat Trio (Kegelstatt) for piano, clarinet, and viola. K. 498. Mr. Bishop is joined by Jack Brymer and Patrick Ireland in what is surely the best performance of this work now available on records (Philips 6500 073).

JOHN C. LASISTER
Williamsburg, Va.

Open Door Policy

- I am writing in regard to the letter from William B. Jordan (June) concerning what a “classical rookie” might enjoy. I thought nothing about classical music until I heard Purcell’s Camp by Charles Ives. At that time (I was thirteen) it impressed me tremendously. I didn’t know then that this music is considered by some people not to be music at all.

Later that week I heard Karlheinz Stockhausen’s Hyperion, and I became fascinated with electronic music. I didn’t know that Stockhausen also wrote for conventional instruments, so I was disappointed when I bought the RCA recording of Kontra-Punkte.

But suddenly I became fascinated again by complex rhythms, new sounds, tone colors—the whole bit. Ives introduced me to Stravinsky, who led me to Tchaikovsky; Stockhausen’s Opus 70, belief it or not, led me to Beethoven. These composers led me everywhere imaginable: from the Mothers of Invention and the Beatles to Bach and Mozart (ah!) and also to Cage, Berio, and Boulez.

I guess what I am trying to say is, before you can begin to appreciate and pass on the tradition of timeless masterpieces to the next generation, you just have to be fascinated. It is not impossible to start with Ives and Stockhausen. You can start anywhere, and after you do, all the doors open.

JOHN ATWELL
Culver City, Calif.

Cheech & Chong

- In his review of Cheech & Chong’s “Los Cochinos” (June), Joel Vance established the fact that these two “Third World People” are nothing more than “low-wit, vile clowns.” Mr. Vance has obviously never been part of a teenage gang. Maybe he has never had any “lower class” or “street people” friends who have talked freely around him. If he had, he would appreciate the vaudeville type of humor involved in their albums. Many of the phrases and words used by these two “masters of ghetto humor” are the exact words and phrases used by so many of my old high school and dropout chums. Cheech & Chong humor is very exact and is closely related to everyday happenings that were and really are funny.

PHILIP R. MASTERS
Glendale, Ariz.

- Congratulations to Joel Vance for setting the record straight about Cheech & Chong (June). I was quite upset last time around when they were given a favorable review. What irks me is that they take such an easy approach to humor. “If we say downers, it’ll be taken as a downer.” Just like some people not to be music at all.

Mr. Vance has obviously never been part of a teenage gang. Maybe he has never had any “lower class” or “street people” friends who have talked freely around him. If he had, he would appreciate the vaudeville type of humor involved in their albums. Many of the phrases and words used by these two “masters of ghetto humor” are the exact words and phrases used by so many of my old high school and dropout chums. Cheech & Chong humor is very exact and is closely related to everyday happenings that were and really are funny.

THOMAS H. WOLFE
Chesertown, Md.

More Bix

- In reference to Thomas Hustad’s letter (June) regarding Joel Vance’s review of Dill Jones’s “Davenport Blues,” I wish to report that Ralph Sutton recorded the four Bix piano compositions in solo piano performances in the early Fifties on Commodore FL 3001 under the title of Bix Beiderbecke Suite. Further, Mr. Sutton played these pieces as they were written and, I must say, exceedingly well.

R. W. LEUTHAUSER
Warren, N. J.

Consumer Complaints

- It seems to me that the spirit of consumerism needs to be manifested by the American record-buying public. Of late the standards of quality control on the part of the larger American firms appears to have deteriorated disgracefully. Most customers count themselves lucky if technical pressing defects on new purchases leave the record playable, and I expect all of us make large numbers of trips to return those albums which are unplayable. Only a callous disregard for the welfare of the customer and a cynical estimate of his docility
You are about to be introduced to a fundamentally new concept in record playing equipment—the new family of B·I·C" turntables. You will discover in them all the superiorities of manual turntables. They are also the first belt-drive units that can be programmed to play a series of discs. A new generation of turntables has arrived.
So, we have taken an unusual step. We have created a warranty policy meant to be as solid as our turntables.

Your B·I·C 980 or 960 is fully warranted against defects in parts, materials, or workmanship for 2 full years. In addition, if it is found defective within 10 days after you buy it, your dealer is authorized to exchange it for a new one on the spot.

This warranty is the best testament to our faith in the fundamental excellence of these machines.

They are beautifully engineered and built. They represent a departure from other designs, but a departure based on simplicity and rock-solid engineering and manufacture. They eliminate the major objections which have been voiced by purists against automatic equipment.

They will be sold by leading audio specialists from coast to coast.

Your B·I·C authorized dealer will have a full-color, 26-page booklet which discusses these remarkable instruments in greater depth than we can here. If he has run out of these booklets, we will gladly mail one to you if you'll write to us at the address below.

The 980 and 960 are being delivered to your dealer now. We invite you to inspect them soon.

The 980 and 960 are identical except for the 980's electronic speed and pitch control circuitry and its lighted strob.

Accessories available include solid oiled walnut wood base—matte black molded base—and hinged dust cover.

B·I·C is a trademark of British Industries Co, Westbury, New York 11590. A division of Avnet Inc.
To play one record automatically (which we recommend for the sake of your cartridge and your records) move the program lever to "1", tap the cycle button (j) and the play-shut off cycle proceeds. Perhaps the most unique feature of the program system is that it allows you to pre-program as many as 6 plays of a single record and then shuts the machine off automatically after the program is completed.

The cycle button is worth noting in that it requires only a feather touch (90 gram pressure) and travels only .0625". It controls all functions with such light a touch that it precludes jarring of the unit plate, and accidental damage to records or stylus. Even when the tone arm is tracking, the unit can be put into "reject" smoothly, without jarring the tone arm, as frequently happens in most automatics.

For automatic play you can program 1 to 6 records. For example: to play 6 records in sequence, place them on the spindle and steady them with the clip at the outboard edge of the platter. Slide the program lever to "6", press the cycle button, and go about your business.

The 2-point record support has no sensing mechanism in the spindle. It is thus superior to other 2-point systems and completely does away with the instability and hang-ups typical of umbrella spindles. Even records with worn center holes drop smoothly.

The BIC program system is simple to operate. And it has simplified the turntable's underside to the point that the 980 and 960 are actually less complex than some manuals with automatic features which can play only a single side.

Underneath the turntable: The utter lack of confusion on the underside of the BIC turntables speaks for itself. Look under any changer or automatic turntable and you'll be amazed at the number of visible parts BIC engineering has eliminated.

There are other items under here which deserve your attention. The motor (k) is a 24-pole synchronous unit which operates at 300 RPM. Its advantage is that at 300 RPM its fundamental vibration frequencies are well below audible levels. The 1800 RPM motors used in other automatics have audible vibration frequencies. A 24-pole motor delivers a smoother flow of power than a 4-pole unit. The superiority of the BIC power unit is one of the reasons that initial lab reports on these turntables look so good.

The unit shown above is the BIC 960. If it were the 980 you would see, in addition, the solid-state circuit board which electronically governs speed and incorporates pitch control. The 980 uses electronic circuitry to lock-in speed and vary pitch. It is permanently accurate.

The mechanical "tapered pulley" pitch control's used on other machines, which inevitably go sour with age, have been eliminated.

Notice the four shock mounts (l) which form the interfaces between the unit plate and base. Four small rubber isomer shock mounts, designed specifically for these turntables. They protect the unit from external shock and acoustic feedback. More than that, they are further evidence of the care and attention which has been lavished on every detail in these machines. Compare them with the metal springs used on automatic turntables and you'll quickly see the difference.

The red cam (m) in the middle of things is made of material which is not subject to the wearing effects which metal cams suffer. The material has its own internal permanent lubricity.

The platter (n) shown in the exploded view at right represents another technical advance. Old style heavyweight platters which were used for their flywheel effect are no longer needed because of innovations in electronics and system design. The BIC turntables carry this die-cast non-ferrous, 12" platter, which has been mated by computer analysis to the rest of the drive mechanism.

A few words about our warranty: BIC is the name on our turntables. Your dealer knows the name British Industries Co., very well.

If you have any questions about the special relationship we've had with record playing components for the past 37 years, why not ask him about us. But reputation or no reputation, you may still ponder the wisdom of jumping into equipment that has not been proved in home trial: no matter how good it looks on paper.
The new B·I·C Programmed Turntables are engineered to do things no other turntables can do. In the face of more demanding cartridge designs and critical new 4-channel discs, the B·I·C 980 and 960 appear at just the right moment.

The Status Quo:

The mechanism that turns your records and carries your cartridge has become an increasingly critical part of your audio system.

More than ever before, today's turntable buyer is faced with a classic dilemma. "Should I buy a single-play manual turntable for its playback superiority?" Or..."should I buy an automatic for its superior record-handling capabilities?"

Until now, the dilemma has remained unsolved.

Enter B·I·C

British Industries Co., creator and builder of the new B·I·C turntables has been the major innovator in this field since 1936.

No company has better credentials or greater experience with record playback equipment in the components field. The best proof of that is the instruments which B·I·C now introduces.

The 980 and 960 are unique.

They have been engineered to solve once and for all the "manual vs. automatic" dilemma.

They are belt-drive as opposed to all automatic changers which drive the platter via an intermediate idler wheel.

They are powered by a 24-pole, low speed (300 RPM) motor while most automatics use 4-pole, high RPM motors.

In all three areas of function—platter drive, tone arm system, and multiple play capabilities, the B·I·C turntables offer refinements and advances which set them apart from everything else in the market. As a matter of fact, several B·I·C turntable features are not to be had on any other instrument at any price.

A Brief Introduction

The B·I·C 980 is shown above. It is identical to its companion, the 960, except for the 980's electronic drive, pitch control, and lighted strobe which are discussed later in this announcement.

You have probably already noticed its low profile. This is not an optical illusion or a styling trick. The 980 and 960 are indeed as low and trim as they appear.

This lack of bulk is your first clue that the B·I·C turntables are not merely manuals with automatic features added...that they are in fact "originals", designed from the start to be simple, as only sophisticated engineering can make them.

Moving parts found in conventional
automatics have been eliminated right and left. In the process, potential sources of malfunction have disappeared. Potential sources of noise and vibration have also been eliminated.

Operating controls are grouped in a single program panel on the right side of the unit. To say that this panel brings new logic to the turntable and new refinement and simplicity to its operation, barely does it justice.

The tone arm incorporates several dramatic improvements which set it apart from all others.

And of course you have noticed at the bottom of the page a cutaway drawing of the B·I·C platter which reveals the belt-drive mechanism. No other turntable which can play more than a single record offers belt-drive and all its advantages.

The drive system alone sets B·I·C turntables apart. But there's more.

These turntables are built entirely in the United States of American-made parts. They are built in B·I·C's own plant where all aspects of manufacturing are in B·I·C's hands. They are the first fine turntables of their type built in this country, and they meet and exceed the high standards you have come to expect only from imported equipment. Beyond what that means in technical terms, they do not come to you burdened with import duties or fluctuating exchange rates.

They are rugged. They are built of the best materials that can be had.

The 980 will sell for about $200.

The 960 for about $150.

While they are not inexpensive, they will stand stringent comparison with machines costing $100 to $200 more. Anything less, they outperform by a wide margin.
A closer look at the B·I·C 980 and 960:

The tone arm system: The B·I·C tone arm incorporates both simple refinements and radical departures from current designs. The result is a system which, in our view, better than anything else now offered. Let's review its features from left to right as you see them pictured above.

The cartridge shell (a) has two precision adjustments to combat playback distortion. In mounting the cartridge, overhang can be adjusted with the aid of a gauge which is supplied. And, for the first time, stylus angle is also adjustable, using the gauge and set-screw (b) in the side of the shell. Regardless of cartridge depth or other variables, the stylus can be set to track at precisely 15° - the forward vertical angle that generates lowest playback distortion.

The cartridge shell is securely mated to the tone arm by a fail-safe, 4-prong, side-mounted connector, and is locked in place by a threaded knob. This eliminates the potential problem of intermittent signal inherent in slide-in cartridge carriers which are used in automatics.

Even the finger lift (c) is a pleasure to use. It is a wide stainless steel arc like those on studio turntables. It is one more indication that these B·I·C turntables have been designed for the serious hobbyist.

The geometry of the tone arm brings lateral tracking error down to .3° of arc per inch, which is insignificant in terms of playback distortion. The pivoting of the tone arm produces another important result. When 6 records are played in series there is virtually no variation in tracking force from first record to last. This variation in tracking force, found in other machines, has been a major criticism of automatics.

The arm is mounted in a minimal friction gimbal and is designed to track flawlessly at forces below the lowest limits of any cartridges now available or conceivable at this time.

Anti-skating and stylus force adjustments (d, e) are mounted in tandem over the gimbal where they flank a single linear scale, calibrated in .25 gram increments. Gone are the usual separate scales for conical and elliptical styli. Selection of stylus mode is made by a separate lever (f) on the program panel at the right of the tone arm.

Cueing is viscous-damped in both directions and, for the first time, its rate can be adjusted. A small knob at the base of the tone arm (g) allows you to vary climb and descent for from 1 to 3 seconds. This adjustment is found only on B·I·C turntables. It enables the owner to accommodate his personal preference and also provides a means to compensate for variations in cueing time caused by changes in ambient temperature.

The massive counter balance (h) is completely isolated from the arm and incorporates a knurled band which makes balancing the arm fast and accurate. The entire tone arm system is protected by a safety bar which makes it virtually impossible to drop the arm on a record or on the platter.

The program system: The B·I·C turntables have been designed to play as many as 6 records in series. At the same time, the design eliminates some important criticisms which have been leveled at automatic changers in the past.

Automatic changers use a complex series of gears, cams, and levers to sense the number of records stacked on the spindle, and to activate the machine. The B·I·C design eliminates this sensing mechanism. Instead, all cycling information is set on the program panel by the operator. Many parts, a good deal of weight, noise, and vibration, are eliminated. Reliability is greatly improved.

To play one side this is all you do. If you are hooked on manual play, insert the single play spindle which rotates with the platter. Move the program lever (i) to "MAN" and place the arm on the disc. After play the arm will return to rest and the machine will shut off.

B·I·C’s 24-pole motor (left) has sub-sonic fundamental rotation frequency of 5 Hz with harmonics all below audible range. 4-pole units (right) have fundamental frequency of 30 Hz and harmonics all fully audible.
and passivity can satisfactorily explain this remarkable state of affairs.

Whenever you, as a buyer, are faced with flagrant examples of shoddy products from a particular label—say, a remarkably high percentage of bad pressings—you should declare a personal moratorium on that label, and inform the customer relations department of the company of your action. Perhaps a large enough number of these little individual embargoes would force American record companies to adopt the kind of quality control standards that have been the rule in Japan for many years. Otherwise the companies’ estimations of the docility and passivity of their buying public will prove to be well-founded.

BOB HIRSCHFELD
Berkeley, Calif.

Jokers

Congratulations and thanks to two members of your staff, Noel Coppage and Steve Simels: to the former for exposing Elton John as the joke he is, and to the latter for intervening and giving a fine review of Procol Harum’s “Exotic Birds and Fruit” (June) before the former could get his hands on it.

PETER HARTBARGER
Shelbyville, Tenn.

Fine Fiddling

If Joel Vance really appreciates “fine country fiddling,” I suggest that he look beyond Doug Sahm (“Best of the Month,” April). While everybody is busy showering attention on Sahm, dozens of really fine country fiddlers remain largely unnoticed. Fiddle music LP’s Mr. Vance (and others) might enjoy: Clark Dessinger, Fiddler (Folkways 2336); Benny Thomason, “Country Fiddling from the Big State” (County 724); Old Time Fiddle Classics, Volumes 1 and 2 (County Records); Fuzzy Mountain String Band, “Summer Oaks and Porch” (Rounder 0035).

MAGGIE COOK
Austin, Texas

Auteur! Auteur!

Joel Vance’s gratuitous dismissal of Phil Spector’s work as “aural overkill” in his review of Ike and Tina’s “Nutbush City Limits” (June) was too much to ignore. “A Hollywoodish big-for-his-size approach,” Vance called it. Funny, but Phil doesn’t look Hollywoodish! If Vance hears no more than “overkill” in the Spector “wall of sound,” he’d better have his ears and his system evaluated. One of them ain’t state of the art.

Phil Spector is a human synthesizer. He was the pioneer in utilizing the studio as an ax. I have spent hours with engineers at Sigma Sound Studios puzzling over Phil’s records. His echo techniques are still a mystery to me despite my experiments with tape delay into a chamber, delay into a plate, delay from a chamber, delayed send and return, varied echo return pan positioning, etc. And his over-dubbing: perhaps Vance knows how many guitars he has heard by the Spector wall of sound, he’d better have his ears and his system evaluated.

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DENNIS WILEN

The Editor replies: When Phil Spector did what he did is immaterial. Whether he was the first to do it is immaterial. How he accomplishes his mysterious effects is immaterial. And the number of times he has been imitated by other producers is immaterial. Only one thing counts: how it all sounds. To Joel Vance it sounds like “aural overkill.” Would reader Wilen deny Mr. Vance the privilege of having his own opinion?

ROCK-DEAT

Dan Dugan’s article on rock-music stereo systems (May) does readers a disservice by falling to warn of the hearing impairment that will be sustained if one listens to sound levels of 105-115 dB for prolonged periods. Music at such levels does feel good, I will admit, but I believe that a little sacrifice now is well worth being able to enjoy the music, say, thirty years hence.

GEOFFREY F. PRANKUS
Stotts, Conn.

The jury is still out on whether or not overexposure to loud rock music leads to hearing deficiencies. As soon as one study confirms that it does, another comes along to refute it. Perhaps we will know in another couple of decades, when the young of the coming generation start to complain that their parents don’t listen to them!

One Consumer Reports

I couldn’t help wondering, after reading his June column, what sort of gratuities or retainers the recording companies had proffered to William Anderson in order to induce him to become their James St. Clair, as it were. I have been listening to and collecting long-playing recordings for over two decades. In that period of time, I have witnessed the physical and musical quality of recordings decline almost as fast as the rate of speed the companies can, following the example of the oil companies, shift all the blame to the “vinyl shortage,” all the while cutting costs, hiking profits, and laughing all the way to the proverbial bank. With such as William Anderson as their advocate, how can they lose?

As long as I am writing, conceivably you can explain to me and your other readers why you ethnocentrically reserve the prestigious designation “classical” for what in fact is nothing more than European (or European-derived) composed musics. Ravi Shankar, for one, has often explained that the raga music he plays is as “classical” as the composed music of Europe, and there are other types of music, in other countries, that have equally well developed a body of tradition that deserves the title of “classical.” You will, of course, argue that the traditional usage dictates, etc. Likewise, the traditional usage has until recently dictated that a grown black man be considered a “boy” and a grown woman of any color a “girl.” Since these traditional usages have gone by the boards, I see no good reason for hanging onto the term “classical” to denote European composed music. The narrow biases of race and class inherent in that practice may not be apparent to the editors of Stereo Review, but rest assured, they are not mistaken in other quarters.

NEAL CORT
Oakland, Calif.

The Editor replies: Paranoia has so few pleasures that I would like to gratify Mr. Cort by reporting that my little nest is a regular blizzard of feathers delivered to me in hundred-pound lots by grateful schemers at the record companies whenever I lay a figurative posy on them. But such is perhaps because every time I do so I am promptly double-crossed by our putative reviewers, who simply will point out, with considerable ingenuousness, that such-and-so’s new “Emperor Concerto is a nekkid travesty. McCarthyism aside, however, if Mr. Cort were not so purblind a collector of conspiracies he might easily have spotted the distinction carefully made in the very first paragraph of the editorial. . . . there is indeed many a slip between the stamper and turntable for which the buyer is in no way responsible. . . . I am sorry nonetheless that his record-buving luck has been so bad—particularly since mine has been, (Continued on page 16)
Sound Design" write: and right.

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The Jupiter's perfect three-way system uses Empire's heavy 12 inch down facing woofer for bass so powerful you can feel it as well as hear it. Best of all, the sound radiates in all directions: front, rear, left and right.

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perhaps unfairly, so good . . . but there I go with another pass.

Record companies have indeed been using "regurgitated" in their product all along (though only in popular discs), and they have never made any particular secret about it. Ecological benefits aside, it (plus other shifts) has for some time enabled them to slowly cut costs without passing rising labor, materials, and other expenses along to the consumer via higher record prices. (Let Mr. Cort reflect on what he paid for records as much as ten years ago and then ask himself what other item of consumption has remained at the same price level for so long.) One of the hidden costs of such a policy, of course, is all too often quality. It is my own opinion that the industry would have done better to raise prices (they must finally do so now), but the whole question is one of hideous complexity, and perhaps not. As for the petroleum "crisis" and the "vindictive shortage," Mr. Cort may interpret as he sees fit, but what it finally comes down to is whether you believe in Amadetha's horn of plenty or not: I don't, but I suspect that those who do are manufacturing future misery for all.

In "classical," Mr. Cort is belaboring a dead horse. Of course other cultures (there aren't that many) have their classical musics too, and when the rare recording drawn from them seems to be of sufficient interest to this culture, we do review it, and in our "classical" section—examples have been the classical music of India (Ravi Shankar and Ali Akbar Khan) and of China (the Peking opera). But it is hardly surprising that our readers should, here in this Western civilization, be concerned primarily with the products of that civilization, "European" or no.

The adjective "prestigious" as applied to classical music is Mr. Cort's own evident prejudice. "Classical" sounds out weighty with "ethnocentric bias" but merely descriptive of musics that have certain techniques of composition and certain intended uses in common. The magical power of words is such that even an innocent one as "classical" may cause a temper to flare, a heart to yearn for the avenging justice of the barricades and the cleansing fire of the class wars, but it is not likely to be discarded until we have something reasonably descriptive (a good enough reason) to take its place. And, yes, we have stopped beating our wives.

Classical Murder

Yesterday I went to the Wharehouse (one of a West Coast chain of discount record stores) to buy my self-imposed quota of $20 to $30 worth of classical records. As I approached the rear of the store (a seemingly habitual abode for classical records), I saw empty shelves and boxes of unpacked records. Upon inquiring I learned that the boxes had just been packed with the remaining stock of classical records. They were being shipped back because the store will no longer carry classical records.

I don't fully comprehend this event, but I know that I don't like it. What can I (we) do about the increasing unavailability of classical records?

CHRIS BERKARIAS

Pittsburg, Calif.

Do what other minorities do: scream bloody murder, loud, long, and at concert pitch. Also organize, agitate, picket, boycott, and twist arms.
In response to the needs of the recording and broadcast industries, Stanton creates the new calibration standard....the 681 TRIPLE E....

A definite need arose. The recording industry has been cutting discs with higher accuracy to achieve greater definition and sound quality.

Naturally, the engineers turned to Stanton for a cartridge of excellence to serve as a primary calibration standard in recording system check-outs. The result is a new calibration standard, the Stanton 681 TRIPLE E. Perhaps, with this cartridge, the outer limits of excellence in stereo sound reproduction has been reached.

The Stanton 681 TRIPLE E offers improved tracking at all frequencies. It achieves perfectly flat frequency response to beyond 20 Kc. It features a dramatically reduced tip mass. Actually, its new nude diamond is an ultra miniaturized stone with only 3/5 the mass of its predecessor. And the stylus assembly possesses even greater durability than had been previously thought possible to achieve.

The Stanton 681 TRIPLE E features a new design of both cartridge body and stylus; it has been created for those for whom the best is none too good. Each 681 TRIPLE E is guaranteed to meet its specifications within exacting limits, and each one boasts the most meaningful warranty possible: an individual calibration test result is packed with each unit.

For further information write Stanton Magnetics, Inc., Terminal Drive, Plainview, N.Y. 11803.
NEW PRODUCTS

McKay Dymek
AM Tuner and Antenna

THE McKay Dymek Company, specializing in high-quality equipment for AM reception, offers two products for the AM listener: the Model AM3 AM-only tuner, and the DA3, a tunable AM antenna-preamplifier. The Model AM3 solid-state tuner has a linear tuning-dial scale, signal-strength meter, and pushbutton-selected bandwidth adjustment for improved-selectivity for minimizing interference when picking up distant stations. Local-Distance pushbuttons also switch an attenuator at the input of the tuner to prevent overload by strong local signals. The sensitivity of the AM3 is 3 microvolts for a 10-dB signal-to-noise ratio. Distortion at 1,000 Hz ranges from 0.5 per cent at 30 per cent modulation to 1.5 per cent at 80 per cent modulation. The i.f. rejection is 25 dB; the antenna-input circuit incorporates an adjustable filter for rejecting i.f. interference. The selectable bandwidths offer a choice of approximately 3,000 or 9,000 Hz. There is a fixed notch filter at 10,000 Hz providing 45-dB rejection of adjacent-channel interference.

The DA3 antenna is a shielded, rotatable ferrite-rod device mounted on a small control module containing a two-stage FET preamplifier and interference filter. A front-panel tuning knob is calibrated from 550 to 1,600 kHz. There is also a sensitivity control, and an on/off switch that connects the output to an optional external antenna in the off position. Although the DA3 is especially recommended for the AM3 tuner, it can be used with any AM tuner or receiver. Its overall dimensions are approximately 13¼ x 9 x 11 inches. Price: $127. The AM3 tuner, with wood trim pieces, measures 16 x 8 x 4½ inches. Price: $255. McKay Dymek offers both units on a ten-day free-trial basis or through a leasing plan with option to buy.

Circle 115 on reader service card

Akai GXC-75D
Auto-Reverse Cassette Deck

A NEW stereo cassette deck from Akai features Dolby B noise reduction, a tape selector with positions for low-noise and chromium-dioxide tape, and an automatic reverse function in both the playback and recording modes. The auto-reverse system employs separate capstans and two erase heads symmetrically arranged around the single glass-and-crystal-ferrite record/playback head. The system can be set for a single tape pass in either direction, a single forward-and-back cycle, or continuous cycling. With the deck in the record mode, a safety mechanism halts the tape after one forward-and-back cycle to prevent erasure of the material just recorded. Pushbuttons can override the automatic functions at any time.

In addition to Dolby noise reduction, the Akai GXC-75D has the company's ADR (automatic distortion reduction) circuit to minimize high-frequency saturation of the tape and a switchable recording-level limiter circuit (OLS). Separate dual slider controls are provided for recording and playback levels. In addition to the standard transport controls (fast speeds, PLAY, STOP, and RECORD), there are pushbuttons for PAUSE and tape direction. A memory-rewind function permits automatic return to any preselected point on the tape.

Frequency response of the GXC-75D is 30 to 16,000 Hz ±3 dB with chromium-dioxide tape (30 to 14,000 Hz ±3 dB with standard low-noise tape). The signal-to-noise ratio exceeds 58 dB with Dolby (50 dB without), and distortion is less than 1 per cent for a 0-VU recording level at 1,000 Hz. Wow and flutter are 0.1 per cent. The microphone inputs have an impedance of 4,700 ohms. The stereo-headphone jack is rated at an output of 30 millivolts with 8-ohm phones. Dimensions of the GXC-75D are approximately 18 x 5¾ x 12 inches, and its weight is about 17½ pounds. Price: $429.95.

Circle 116 on reader service card

Sansui QA-7000
Four-Channel Amplifier

THE Model QA-7000 is a four-channel integrated amplifier incorporating Sansui's most sophisticated "Vario-matrix" four-channel decoder and synthesizer. Vario-matrix is a separation-enhancement technique that is used in combination with the Sansui QS matrix decoder (essentially conforming to the standardized Regular Matrix) and a special circuit that synthesizes a four-channel program from two-channel material. The decoder can also be switched to a Phase Matrix position, which is effective in decoding SQ source material. Both the decoder and the synthesizer can be switched for a "surround-sound" presentation or for a mode that localizes the performers in the front of the four-channel sound field. The amplifier also handles discrete four-channel sources and two-channel material conventionally. At any frequency from 20 to 20,000 Hz, each of the four power amplifiers of the QA-7000 is rated at 12 watts continuous into 8 ohms, with all four channels driven simultaneously. Harmonic and intermodulation distortion are both less than 0.15 per cent at rated output. The signal-to-noise ratios are better than 70 dB for the phono inputs, 80 dB for high-level inputs.

Prominent on the front panel of the QA-7000 are four illuminated meters, with an associated rotary control to simultaneously set their sensitivities. Concentrically mounted tone-control knobs adjust the front and rear channels independently. Knob controls are also used for left-to-right and front-to-rear balance. The amplifier accepts inputs from two phono cartridges, tuner, and two high-level auxiliary sources. The Tuner and Aux inputs are in quadruplicate. Two four-channel tape decks can (Continued on page 20)
Every audiophile knows AR is famous for its superb speaker systems. Each has become the standard of the industry in its class. AR speaker engineers have designed a range of speaker systems priced as low as $69 and as high as $600. Regardless of the investment you plan, each AR speaker system will provide the greatest accuracy in sound reproduction.

The AR-2ax is a good example. This 3-way speaker system offers a well balanced, accurate and finely dispersed response over all frequencies. Natural reproduction of music without exaggeration or artificiality of sound. Separate controls on the back permit independent adjustment of the level of the mid-range and high frequencies.

You'll find it difficult, if not impossible, to find any speaker to equal its performance anywhere near its $149 price. For more detailed information, please write.

ACOUSTIC RESEARCH, INC., 10 AMERICAN DRIVE, NORWOOD, MASS. 02062
CIRCLE NO. 1 ON READER SERVICE CARD
also be accommodated, plus a single two-channel deck. Source/tape switching is provided for all tape connections. In addition, the output of one of the four-channel decks can be dubbed to the other, and the output of the matrix decoder/synthesizer can be switched to feed the record circuits of one of the four-channel decks. Front and rear stereo headphone jacks are provided. Removable jumpers on the rear panel connect the preamplifier and power amplifier sections, and switching permits the four power amplifiers to be “bridged” for two-channel operation, thus more than doubling the per-channel power output. The QA-7000 has dimensions of approximately 17½ x 5½ x 12½ inches; its weight is about 31 pounds. Price: $569.95.

Circle 117 on reader service card

B & O MMC 6000 CD-4 Phono Cartridge

- The newest magnetic phono cartridge from Bang & Olufsen offers the capability of playing CD-4 four-channel "discrete" discs at a tracking force of 1 gram. This results in part from a stylus shape that provides small horizontal and large vertical contact areas at the record groove. As with other styli that have similar configurations, the small horizontal areas permit correct tracing of the high-frequency carrier; the large vertical areas reduce tracking pressure and record wear. The stylus consists of a very small “naked” diamond bonded to a flattened surface on a solid beryllium stylus shank. Effective tip mass is 0.22 milligram. The stylus, which is an integral part of the generating system and is not user replaceable, employs an X-shaped iron armature that modulates a magnetic field brought to the pole pieces of the four output coils. Signal output of the cartridge is 0.6 volt/centimeter/dyne.

The MMC 6000 has a usable frequency response up to 45,000 Hz and within ±1.5 dB from 20 to 15,000 Hz. Stereo separation exceeds 25 dB at 1,000 Hz; slightly increased low-frequency carrier; the large vertical tracking areas permit correct tracing of the high-frequency carrier; the large vertical areas reduce tracking pressure and record wear. The stylus consists of a very small “naked” diamond bonded to a flattened surface on a solid beryllium stylus shank. Effective tip mass is 0.22 milligram. The stylus, which is an integral part of the generating system and is not user replaceable, employs an X-shaped iron armature that modulates a magnetic field brought to the pole pieces of the four output coils. Signal output of the cartridge is 0.6 volt/centimeter/dyne.

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Group 128 SD-140 Electret Condenser Microphone

- The first audio product from Group 128, Inc. is a lightweight electret condenser microphone with a frequency response of 40 to 16,000 Hz ±3 dB and a usable dynamic range of 113 dB. As

the Model SD-140, the microphone is in the form of a thin aluminum shaft (7/8 inch in diameter by 10½ inches long) with a pop/wind screen at one end and a removable black-anodized counterweight ballast at the other. A stand adapter with standard threading is also provided. A compact external power supply, connected to the microphone through a 6-foot flexible cable, energizes the electret element. The power module is 2½ x 1½ x 1½ inches. It has a gain control, on/off switch, and an integral clip to attach it to a performer's belt; it takes a 9-volt transistor radio battery. The SD-140 is an omnidirectional device with an output level of -49 dBm within ±3 dB. Maximum sound-pressure level is 140 dB, with distortion less than 0.3 per cent at a 100-dB sound-pressure level. The noise level ("A" weighted) is the equivalent of a 27-dB sound-pressure level. The unbalanced output (a standard phone jack on the preamplifier module) is suitable for use with input impedances from 250 to 50,000 ohms.

The microphone is relatively immune to shock and the effects of temperature and humidity. Its weight, without the ballast or stand adapter, is approximately 2 ounces. Price: $134.50. The SD-140 is also available in a low-impedance version with a balanced output and as an unmounted element (Model P700) that can be attached right to an instrument.

Circle 119 on reader service card

AR LST-2 Speaker System

- Acoustic Research has announced the introduction of a second "Laboratory Standard Transducer" model, the LST-2 (the original LST is now designated the LST-1). The new system employs a 10-inch woofer mounted in a sealed enclosure about 1½ cubic feet in volume; it faces directly forward. The mid-range and high-frequency drivers (three of each) are distributed over the three frontal planes of the system's enclosure, resulting in a virtually hemispherical sound-radiation pattern. They are dome designs, with diameters of 1½ inch (mid-ranges) and ¾ inch (tweeters). The crossover points are 525 and 5,000 Hz. A switch located on the front of the enclosure provides a choice of three acoustical contours: flat from 30 to 20,000 Hz; slightly increased low-frequency output; and slightly attenuated high-frequency output. Amplifier power of at least 25 watts per channel continuous is recommended to drive the speaker. The system is fused for protection against overdrive. Nominal impedance is 8 ohms; the resonance of the woofer (installed) is approximately 56 Hz. The LST-2's enclosure is solid oiled walnut, with dimensions of 25½ x 18½ x 9¾ inches. Price: $400.

Circle 120 on reader service card
The new Leslie DVX Speaker: it adjusts to the geometry of your room!

CBS Laboratories and Leslie Speakers have now developed an amazing new loudspeaker system that is... quite frankly... amazing! The Leslie DVX speaker is a unique high performance, low distortion four-way system. Its exclusive dipole coupler is swivel mounted... so that you can "aim" the mid-range and high frequency speakers to fit the geometry of your room. This dipole coupler also gives you the optimum balance of direct and reflected energy to pinpoint and anchor the stereo image in the manner intended by the recording director. The bass frequencies are reproduced by a high energy 15" woofer housed in an aperiodic 4th order Butterworth ported enclosure and descend smoothly to the lowest registers.

Leslie Speakers was the first company to introduce a truly effective "augmentation" system (the Plus 2 speaker) to eliminate the standing waves in your room. Now comes the amazing DVX speaker. D for dipolar. VX for variable axis. A whole new alphabet for sound! Hear it at your nearest Leslie Plus 2/DVX dealer.
AUDIO QUESTIONS
and ANSWERS
By LARRY KLEIN  Technical Editor

For this month's Special Speaker Issue I am going to abandon my usual Q & A format and address myself to a single pertinent and frequently asked question: How do I choose speakers for my hi-fi system?

If you've been reading audio magazines or shopping at hi-fi stores, it should be apparent that speakers are the most problematical of all components. Since speaker designers themselves frequently disagree on what qualities make a speaker good, it is no wonder that speaker shoppers are somewhat confused by the proliferation of brands and models with their conflicting claims of superiority.

To start with, let's look at the question of price. Does more expensive mean better? Not necessarily. A speaker's price is somewhat related to its design, but a speaker may have a big or little voice coil, a large or small cabinet, high or low efficiency, or two, three, or more drivers, and yet none of these design factors—or others—will automatically ensure high-fidelity results. What, then, does determine quality? The answer, I've concluded, is the critical ear of the designer—his ability to hear precisely what is right or wrong with the speaker system he is trying to put together. I say the ear of the designer rather than his knowledge because I have heard some abominable systems produced by companies with highly trained engineers and top-notch test facilities, and, conversely, I have heard some very fine systems assembled in basement workshops by accountants and school teachers. Of course, good speaker systems are most likely to be produced by someone who has a good theoretical and practical background, adequate test facilities, and a good ear.

What does someone with a good ear listen for? Basically, for "accuracy" of reproduction. I believe that it is the function of a loudspeaker to provide an accurate acoustic analog of the electrical audio signal fed to it. A speaker should have no tonal character or sound quality of its own. It should not have "presence," it should have "absence." In other words, a speaker, in itself, should be neutral. Insofar as a speaker does have some sonic character of its own, it will add that character to whatever material it is reproducing. Sometimes the special coloration of a particular speaker may enhance the sound for a given individual on a given piece of music. But, for most recordings, the speaker's contribution will probably be inappropriate and will degrade reproduction.

It takes practice to learn to detect those sonic qualities that make some speakers sound more accurate—or real—than others, and it seems odd that such judgments can be made using program material (records and tapes) that in themselves have unknown sonic characteristics. However, I suspect that people who spend time evaluating speakers develop, after a while, a sort of sonic memory of acoustic reality. The evaluation process then consists of comparing that memory with the reproduction while listening carefully for the specific characteristic ways that speakers go wrong. If this sounds like a chance, unscientific, and terribly imprecise technique, all I can say in its defense is that well-trained ears can make a fairly accurate guess as to a speaker's frequency-response curve simply by listening to a group of well-recorded discs and that judgment can be objectively validated by independent laboratory test techniques. I know this because the technical staff of Stereo Review has been involved in just this sort of procedure for many years.

There are several ways you can evaluate the performance of a speaker system in a showroom. In general, you'll find it easier to make judgments if you are listening to one speaker rather than to a stereo pair. However, the specific location of the speaker may tilt its frequency balance toward the highs or the lows (this can be tested by switching to the other member of the pair). But when auditioning omni- or multi-directional speaker systems, it is necessary to listen to them as a pair in order to evaluate their particular "spatial" qualities.

An important aspect of a speaker's bass performance is its freedom from spurious resonances. This can be tested by tuning in several FM stations and listening carefully to various announcers on the speakers under consideration. One or two of the announcers may have naturally deep voices, but if all of them sound as though they were broadcasting from the bottom of an oil drum, you can be sure that the loudspeaker under test (not the announcer) has a bass resonance peaking somewhere in the 100-Hz region. For some people this resonance provides a pleasant enhancement of the musical beat, but the price paid is loss ofupper-bass clarity and (usually) absence of genuine low bass.

To evaluate the high-frequency performance of a speaker system, listen to recordings that include lambourines or cymbals being brushed, clashed, or hit with a stick. Concentrate on the ringing or shimmering sound that is typical of these instruments. You will probably have to listen carefully for this quality in several speakers before you can easily distinguish between those that have it and those that don't. While listening for shimmer, also note the amount of record/tape noise (hiss) and distortion present. Excessive noise and/or an ear-irritating raucous quality in the highs usually result from a peak in the speaker's high-frequency response that conventional tone controls can't correct without killing the highs altogether.

Another quality essential to good speaker performance is wide dispersion—the ability to spread the higher frequencies in a broad arc across the listening room. Good dispersion provides a superior stereo image and a sense of openness and airiness. You can make a fast check for adequate high-frequency dispersion by using the interstation noise of an FM tuner (you will have to switch off the interstation-noise muting to do this). Stand directly in front of the speaker and listen carefully to the rushing, hissing quality of the noise. Then, concentrating on the hissy aspect in the sound, walk off to the left or right of the speaker system; at some point on both sides of the cabinet you will probably find that the hissy quality disappears. (The hiss may also diminish if you duck your head toward the floor.) The wider and more even the area covered by the very-high-frequency hiss, the more open and natural-sounding the speaker will be when playing music. (This test should be made only after you have already established that the speaker's high-frequency response on-axis is everything it should be. If a system is already short on highs, you may not notice any loss.)

For many speaker manufacturers, the mid-range is still a problematical area. Sometimes a system has a mid-range emphasis (a "presence" peak) built in.
that imparts a sense of projection, a front-row-center quality, to everything played through it. However, the unpleasant side-effects generated by such peaks include harshness, emphasis of high-frequency noise and distortion in the program material, and a kind of nasality or honkiness that accompanies and discolors much of the material the speaker is reproducing. I have worked out a simulated "live-vs.-reproduced" technique that makes it possible for anyone to imitate—and hence to identify—this last type of objectionable coloration.

First set up an FM tuner as you did for the high-frequency dispersion test. Then cup your hands over your mouth (as though you were trying to warm them with your breath) and make a loud "shhh" sound. Now remove your hands and make the same sound. Repeat several times until you hear the difference clearly. The hollow, rather nasal quality heard with your hands in front of your mouth is a good approximation of the coloration associated with mid-range peaks in a speaker. If you switch among a number of speakers while listening to FM interstation noise, the speakers with the nasal quality should stand out like sore thumbs (ears?). And once you know what to listen for, you should be able to detect this same defect (when it occurs) on recordings of, say, the female voice. For example, a loudspeaker with a mid-range peak will cause Carly Simon to sound positively adenoidal.

Remember that almost any irregularity in frequency response causes some coloration of the sound—and this coloration will pervade everything coming through the speaker. For this reason, it is relatively easy to determine whether the fault lies with the speaker system or with the program material, but you may have to listen to a variety of program material to be sure that you've ear-tested every frequency area of concern. Male voice is good for bass balance; female voice and horns for mid-range; and harp, castanets, cymbals, etc., are good for the highs.

As a final point I should at least acknowledge the comment that frequently follows the "What speaker should I buy?" question. How many times have you heard—or said—"I really don't have a trained ear, so I don't need very good speakers." But your ears inevitably do become "trained" to a surprising degree if you listen critically to enough music. Therefore, if you settle at the beginning for inadequate speakers, sooner or later you will find yourself somewhat dissatisfied with their sound, if not acutely irritated by it. It pays to spend time researching the test reports in this and other magazines and listening carefully in the audio showrooms. If you approach speaker shopping as something of a research project, you are most likely to make a good choice right at the outset.

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Jensen has brought music to life with years of superb high fidelity speaker systems. Listen to Serenata, a beautiful four-way, five-speaker system. The outstanding 15-inch woofer has a massive 11-pound Syntox® ceramic magnet structure. There's an 8-inch mid-range, 5-inch rear-damped tweeter, two 1-inch Sonodome® ultra-tweeters and a 5-inch tuned port for distortion-free response. And Jensen's foam Flexair® suspension. Serenata's cabinet is completely finished with matched, hand-rubbed walnut, sides and back.

Hear sound from Serenata (Also known as Model 15). It's music from Jensen.

JENSEN SOUND LABORATORIES
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CIRCLE NO. 20 ON READER SERVICE CARD
The new Micro-Acoustics QDC-1 Stereo Phono Cartridge:
It will make any well recorded LP sound exactly like its master tape.

Recently at a trade show in Chicago, we invited audiophiles to compare a master tape with a stereo disc cut from the tape. The tape and the disc were played through the same electronics and the same loudspeakers. The only difference was that a tape deck was used to play the 15 IPS master and a turntable with our QDC-1 Stereo Cartridge (Pat. Pend.) was used to play the commercial pressing. Without fail, listeners could not hear a difference between the disc and its master.

Until the advent of the QDC-1, there really wasn't a cartridge on the market that could make a stereo record sound as good as its master tape. So cartridge manufacturers didn't have to deal with an absolute standard of measurement for their product. Customers were asked to choose between the "sound" of one cartridge or another. The fact is that a cartridge shouldn't have any sound of its own. Ideally it should just be a direct link between the record groove and the preamp input. And that's precisely what the new QDC-1 is—an ultra precision component that will radically change the way all cartridges are judged.

Hearing is believing
Visit your Micro-Acoustics dealer and ask him to demonstrate our new QDC-1 cartridge (available in spherical, elliptical and Quadra Point™/CD-4 configurations). Prices range from $100 to $120. Bring a record of your own and let him show you what the QDC-1 can do for your music. For technical information and a dealer list, write to:

MICRO-ACOUSTICS CORPORATION
8 WESTCHESTER PLAZA
ELMSFORD, NEW YORK 10523
CIRCLE NO. 29 ON READER SERVICE CARD

ANTI-SKATING

I don't know how old the idea of anti-skating (or skating compensation) is, but as recently as 1966 its pros and cons were a subject of lively debate in these pages. Then as now, many of the points at issue never did get fully resolved. However, record-player manufacturers came gradually to the conclusion that skating compensation did no discernible harm (and might even do some good, at least in respect to sales), so they began including it in their products. Today it's a standard feature on most tone arms.

What is anti-skating? It is a calibrated rotational force, or torque, applied by a spring or some other mechanism within a tone arm, that tends to swing the arm away from the center of a record and out toward the edge. What purpose does it have in doing that? It is trying to precisely counterbalance an opposite force that pulls the arm away from the edge and toward the record center. The origin of this skating force is as follows:

In playing a record, there is friction between the phono stylus and the record groove that exerts a small, steady tug on the tone arm. If tone arms were straight, the tug would bear directly on the arm pivot, which would absorb it. But for reasons involving optimum tone-arm geometry (which we needn't go into here), most tone arms are bent so that the phono cartridge is angled somewhat toward the record center. This means that the tug has a force component in a direction sideways to the arm's length. And, since the arm is free to pivot sideways, it does—or tries to (actually, the stylus holds it in place by being lodged in the record groove). But on an ungrooved record the arm would "skate" rapidly inward toward the turntable spindle.

In the mono era there was no reason to be concerned about skating force. However, when the present technique of stereo-disc recording (left channel on the inner wall of the groove, right channel on the outer) was introduced along with lower tracking forces, matters changed.

The problem was that the tone arm's inward bias tended to push the stylus into the inner-groove wall and away from the outer wall. In effect, this resulted in an uneven distribution of tracking force between the two walls, with the inner wall receiving more than the necessary force and the outer wall playback suffering for lack of it. On heavily recorded passages this could actually result in loss of groove-to-stylus contact and distortion in the right channel. So anti-skating systems were devised to restore the equilibrium.

When audiophiles think about the anti-skating on their tone arms (if they do at all), it's usually just to wonder whether it's set correctly. This is a little ironic, because it happens to be impossible to adjust skating compensation for all the conditions encountered on all records. As is well known, skating force varies with tracking force. But it also varies with stylus shape, recorded level (higher levels entail "rougher" grooves with more friction), and even the vinyl formulation of the specific record (softer vinyls exert more "drag"). Anti-skating has to be a compromise between these factors.

Stereo Review usually advises that anti-skating be set to result in equal mistracking in the two channels when mistracking does occur. The adjustment requires a special test record, such as Stereophile's Model SR 12, with equal signals of extremely high levels in the two channels. In theory, at least, this method of adjustment optimizes the anti-skating for the conditions when it's really needed: that is, when mistracking is likely to occur.

Another adjustment "philosophy" recommends a setting that produces equal long-term stylus and groove wear in both channels. The average consumer lacks the means to adopt this procedure, which requires sophisticated optical equipment. However, if he follows the instructions of his record player's manufacturer he will probably come close to the correct force, which is somewhat lower than that for the "equal mistracking" test.
be discrete

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The classics from KLH. Four bookshelf loudspeakers of such extraordinary quality that each has set the standard of excellence in its price range. Pictured to the far left, our popular Thirty-Two ($62.50†). Next, the ubiquitous Seventeen ($89.95†). Up front, everybody’s favorite, the Six ($149.95†). And finally, our most spectacular bookshelf model, the Five ($225.00†). If you really want to know what KLH is all about, we suggest you listen to any one or all of these fine loudspeakers. And when you do, we suggest you also listen to our two latest models—the uncanny little Thirty-One ($49.95†); and the amazing omnireflective Twenty-Eight ($299.95†). Two new bestsellers from the folks who put big music onto little bookshelves—KLH.

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**TECHNICAL TALK**

By JULIAN D. HIRCH

- **WHICH SPEAKER SHOULD I BUY?** is one of the questions most frequently asked by readers. Of course, I also receive variations on the theme, such as "Which is better, Brand A or Brand B?" or "Which is the best speaker available?" What it usually comes down to is a request for me to make, or advise on, a decision which is as purely personal as one's choice of clothes, spouse, or hair style. I am flattered, but for a number of reasons I simply cannot give meaningful answers to such questions. Putting hair styles aside (as I have done for some years), you and I may very likely have widely divergent tastes in sound, to say nothing of fashion and marriage partners. This does not mean that some speakers are not indisputably superior to others, but when we come to the point of having to make a choice among the very fine ones, more often than not there is considerable room for disagreement.

To see why this is so, let us consider first the matter of tuner and amplifier performance. There is general agreement as to what these components should and should not do. Measurement techniques are quite well defined, so that tests of a given unit made by different laboratories generally agree closely. One would expect to find little disagreement on the relative merits of amplifiers, at least insofar as their technical performance is concerned.

Nevertheless, there are many "gold- en-eared" audiophiles who claim to be able to hear subtle differences among various models of amplifiers, differences not explainable by any measurements. I must confess that I almost never hear these elusive characteristics in my own listening comparisons. Perhaps I have a tin ear, but more likely I have merely acquired a degree of resistance to being "brainwashed" into hearing something that I really do not. However, let us, for the sake of argument, say that there is an audible difference between two amplifiers that measure the same in all areas. Let us say further that it takes the form of a subtle coloration that appears only when a specific program (such as a one-of-a-kind master tape, or an obscure and hard-to-get record) is being played through some esoteric and costly speaker available only from a handful of specialty dealers. (This may sound as though I'm exaggerating for effect, but I assure you that the exaggeration is as slight as the differences in sound that are made much of by those super-golden ears.) If one amplifier really does sound better than another, its superiority will be heard on any reason

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**TESTED THIS MONTH**

- **Koss HV/1LC Headphones**
  - **Superscope R-340 Receiver**
  - **SAE Mark IIICM Power Amp**
  - **Dokorder 7140 Tape Deck**

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ably good program played through any reasonably good speakers. Furthermore, in a test situation, the "better" amplifier should be chosen in a large percentage of cases, by audiences of trained listeners who do not know what items are being compared, in a "double-blind" test (in which even the person doing the switching does not know at any given moment which amplifier is playing). Do you know of any amplifier so superior to its competition that it could pass that test? I don't. I submit that any "superiority" so elusive that it is not reflected in the test data and does not consistently show up in a scientifically designed double-blind test is not a superiority at all.

What has all this to do with speakers? Unlike amplifiers and tuners, no two models of speakers sound precisely alike, and it does not take a trained ear to hear the differences. And, as a matter of fact, no specific speaker sounds the same in different listening rooms or even when placed in different parts of the same room. To go further, no speaker in a given placement sounds exactly the same (with a pink-noise test signal) when heard from different parts of the same room.

Tests and measurements seldom provide definitive yes/no answers with speakers. A major difficulty is that there is little agreement on what a speaker is supposed to do in many of its performance aspects. Think about that, if you will. Beyond the simplistic approach that it should "sound good," there's no consensus as to the exact properties an ideal speaker should have for reproducing music in the home. How can we possibly make tests, then, if what we are testing for is undefined?

When I hear a speaker demonstrated at a show or elsewhere, I may or may not like what I hear, but I reserve judgment until I get it into my own familiar listening environment and am able to audition it with known program material. And even if I happen to like the sound of somebody's Model 67/8X (which also measures as good as it sounds), I still would not definitively judge another speaker by how closely it sound matches that of my test sample of the Model 67/8X.

In general, what I listen for in a speaker are the faults—a little heaviness or thinness in the bass, an overly projected mid-range, high-frequency beaming, dullness or crispness, a blurring of the detail, and so forth. But I sometimes have in my listening room two speakers, neither of which to my ears has significant faults, but which do not sound precisely alike. Which is "better"? I don't know.

All of these evaluations help me to judge the sound quality of a speaker in
my room, but unfortunately it won't definitively predict the speaker's performance in your room. It is true, though, that a really good speaker (flat power response, low distortion, good transient response, etc.) will be more likely to please more people in more different acoustic environments than an inferior speaker.

My point in all this is not that speakers cannot be evaluated, but simply that they cannot be evaluated in terms of the "very best," "second best," and so on. Note that I'm also not saying that speaker choice is simply a matter of taste. Taste does enter into the sonic picture, however, in respect to how much your ears might be offended by a specific kind of sound aberration. For example, almost all really critical listeners react negatively to peaks in the area of 5,000 to 8,000 Hz. Nevertheless, as of a year or so ago, a speaker system that was notorious for this quality was also a best seller. This means that those who chose that system over its competition (1) did not hear the peak at all; (2) heard it and loved it; or (3) heard it and didn't like it, but were impressed with other some virtues of the system. To my ears (and those of the other technical staff members) the speaker system in question was simply unlistenable.

We at Hirsch-Houck Labs, and the editors of STEREO REVIEW, all other things being equal, invariably prefer the sound of a speaker that in measurement proves to have a smooth and flat frequency response. In addition, a speaker that measures flat is likely to have a better transient response and (because of the way we make the measurement) good high-frequency dispersion. Perhaps our preference for flat, uncolored sound is also a matter of taste, but it is the only kind of speaker response that gives the listener a good chance of hearing a balanced sound quality from most of today's program material.

All of this is probably small comfort to anyone who is struggling with a speaker-purchase decision and would like some definitive advice. Larry Klein's Q & A column this month should be of some help. In addition, I would suggest that you listen to a number of well-reviewed speakers in a well-equipped dealer-demonstration room—including some priced below your budget. Then try to find something in your price class that doesn't sound radically different from what you have decided is the best speaker you can compare it with. This is not too difficult, since some rather low-cost speakers have the essential sound character (barring bass and treble refinements) of some much more expensive systems. Then take a pair home (be sure you have the right to exchange them if they fail to perform as expected), and listen again. If you like them, fine. If not, try another model. Remember, you are trying to please yourself, not a reviewer or the fellow down the block with the super-deluxe hi-fi system.

If your speakers must be bought "sound unheard," you will of course have to depend on someone else's judgment. With all due modesty, I don't think you would go far wrong with any speaker favorably reviewed in STEREO REVIEW, but please don't expect us to provide the ultimate word on what speaker will provide the best possible response in every circumstance. We simply can't do it, and I don't know of any group, individual, or test lab that can.

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**EQUIPMENT TEST REPORTS**

By Hirsch-Houck Laboratories

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**Koss HV/1LC Stereo Headphones**

- **The Koss HV-1 stereo headphones**, originally reported on in March 1973, are now offered in a modified form, with a channel-level control built into each ear piece. The HV/1LC, as the latest version is known, has the essential design of the HV-1, with an "open-air" construction that makes no attempt to isolate the wearer from room sounds (or others in the room from the sound of the phones). The specifications of the HV/1LC are identical to those of the HV-1. The two models also look alike, except for a color change from black to brown and the small volume-control knob on the outside of each earpiece. The Koss phones have 2-inch Mylar diaphragms driven by 1-inch voice coils with a well-damped 200-Hz resonance. They open to the outside through slots in the plastic ear cup.

The HV/1LC phones are designed to operate from amplifier outputs of any impedance from 3.2 to 600 ohms. A 0.6-volt signal will create a 95-dB sound-pressure level (SPL) at the wearer's ears, and the phones can provide very high sound levels without damage or excessive distortion. The maximum rated SPL is 113 dB on a continuous basis, with peaks to 127 dB accommodated. The Koss HV/1LC (less cord) weighs just under 10 ounces, and the lightweight coiled cord can be extended to 10 feet. Price: $49.95.

- **Laboratory Measurements.** We measured the frequency response of the HV/1LC using a Koss-designed headphone coupler and obtained close agreement with measurements supplied by Koss. Like speakers, headphones generally show rather ragged response curves, but our test data agreed closely with that obtained on the earlier HV-1. The curve produced by our test coupler showed two dips at 2,000 and 9,000 Hz, and a smooth rolloff from 150 Hz down. Overall, the curve varied only ±7.5 dB from 20 to 20,000 Hz, which was considered rather good response for most speakers in a normal room.

For an SPL of 98 dB at 1,000 Hz, the distortion of the acoustic output was less than 1.5 percent, and at 0.08 dB it was 2.5 percent. These figures represent rather low distortion for such loud listening levels, and serve to illustrate one of the advantages of headphone listening for those who like their music at levels approaching that of an original live concert-hall performance.

Our test sample was about 4 dB less efficient than the original HV-1 tested last year. An input of 0.6 volt generated an SPL of 97 to 98 dB in the mid-range: a maximum of 104 dB was reached at 200 Hz, and the level fell at a rate of 4.5 dB per octave at lower frequencies. The electrical impedance of the phones was an almost constant 150 ohms from 20 to 20,000 Hz at their maximum level. (Continued on page 30)
How to make the sound system you bought sound like the sound system you bought.

INTRODUCING NEW TDK AUDUA OPEN-REEL TAPE.

No matter how much time, effort, or money you put into your sound system, chances are it's not giving you peak performance—the level it was designed for. Much of that gap in performance can be attributed to the inconsistencies you find in most low-noise, high-output tapes. The shape of the magnetic particles, the density and uniformity of the coating, all contribute to that total performance. And the more inconsistencies, the fewer overtones and transient phenomena you hear.

Audua's different from anything you've ever heard before. In fact, you'll probably find that it's capable of delivering the finest sound of any open-reel tape you can buy, anywhere. Even better than our own highly rated SD. That's why SD's been discontinued.

Audua was designed to provide higher output and lower noise levels. That's because TDK designed a unique process of uniformly applying Audua's ultra-fine particles. Particles that are only 0.4 microns long and with a length-to-width ratio of 10:1. In addition, that process gives Audua a significantly better high-end frequency response.

Here's why: take a good look at the two micro-photos. Audua is denser and more uniform. It can capture more delicate harmonic overtones and transient phenomena than that other premium tape.

So try Audua. It could make your sound system perform like the sound system you paid for. Or maybe even better.
control settings. Reducing the control setting increased the impedance to a maximum of 1,000 ohms at the minimum setting.

Comment. Individual volume controls for each ear make it possible not only to adjust listening levels without affecting other headphone or loudspeaker listeners, but also to trim the left-to-right balance to one's taste. We were somewhat skeptical of the utility of this feature until we tried it, and that convinced us that level controls are certainly worthwhile.

When we reported on the earlier Koss HV-1 phones, we commented on their smoothness and overall excellent sound, which we compared favorably to that of the Koss ESP-9 electrostatic phones. We repeated that listening comparison with the HV/1LC's, including the original HV-1 in the test. The surprising result was not the similarity of the HV/1LC sound to that of the ESP-9 (which we would have expected), but the fact that it sounded even better than the HV-1, and therefore even more like the ESP-9. The definition and sonic balance of these phones were most impressive, and one would never suspect from their subjective bass response that the measured curve falls off rapidly at the low end. It is entirely possible that the low-bass response of these phones is actually much better on the head than it is on an artificial test and measurement coupler. Certainly that is the way they sounded to us.

Circle 105 on reader service card

Superscope R-340 AM/Stereo FM Receiver

There are two a.c. convenience outlets, one of which is switched. In its cabinet, the Superscope R-340 is about 17 inches wide, 11 3/4 inches deep, and 4 7/8 inches high and weighs approximately 17 1/2 pounds. Price: $259.95.

Laboratory Measurements. In general, the Superscope R-340 handily surpassed its published performance specifications in our lab tests. In some cases the results were surprisingly far beyond what one would expect from such an inexpensive receiver. For example, the distortion, both harmonic (THD) and intermodulation (IM), at rated power was unexpectedly low. The IM and THD (at 1,000 Hz) were about 0.1 per cent at 0.1 watt output, about 0.06 per cent in the vicinity of 1 watt, and approximately 0.1 per cent at 10 watts. The audio amplifiers of the R-340 are rated at 10 watts per channel into 8-ohm loads, and with both channels driven we measured the power output at the clipping point (with a 1,000-Hz test signal) as 10.6 watts into 8 ohms, 11.2 watts into 4 ohms, and 7.7 watts into 16 ohms.

At 10 watts output, the distortion vs. frequency was about 0.1 per cent from 100 to 6,000 Hz, increasing to only 0.25 per cent at 20,000 Hz. Like most small receivers, the R-340 has limited low-frequency power-output capabilities, and with full power output the distortion rose below 60 Hz but was still below 1 per cent at 50 Hz. However, at 5 watts output the distortion was less than 0.2 per cent from 20 to almost 20,000 Hz (typically 0.09 per cent), and it was even lower at 1 watt.

The tone-control characteristics were conventional, but the entire control action took place in about two-thirds of the knob rotation from center position. The loudness compensation boosted low frequencies moderately and high frequencies slightly. The RIAA phono equalization was quite accurate — within ±1.2 dB.

(Continued on page 34)
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(Please print)
Dual tonearms allow the most advanced cartridges to track accurately and gently. Gyroscopic gimbal suspension as used in 1229 and 1218 is best known way to balance precision instruments. Stylus pressure, applied around pivot, keeps perfect dynamic balance. Separate anti-skating scales for conical and elliptical stylus achieve perfect tracking balance on each wall of the stereo groove.

Unlike conventional automatic tonearms, the 1218 and 1229 track records at the original cutting angle. The 1229 parallels single records, moves up to parallel changer stack. The 1218 has similar adjustment in the cartridge housing.

You’ll appreciate some things about a Dual right away. Others will take years.

You can appreciate some things about a Dual turntable right at your dealer’s: its clean functional appearance, the precision of its tonearm adjustments and its smooth, quiet operation.

The exceptional engineering and manufacturing care that go into every Dual turntable may take years to appreciate. Only then will you actually experience, play after play, Dual’s precision and reliability. And how year after year, Dual protects your precious records, probably your biggest investment in musical enjoyment.

It takes more than features.

If you know someone who owns a Dual, you’ve probably heard all this from him. But you may also wish to know what makes a Dual so different from other turntables which seem to offer many of the same features. For example, such Dual innovations as: gimbal tonearm suspension, separate anti-skating scales for conical and elliptical stylus, and rotating single play spindles.

It’s one thing to copy a Dual feature; it’s quite another thing to match the precision with which Duals are built.

A case in point is the tonearm suspension. Every gimbal is hand assembled and individually tested with precision instruments especially developed by Dual. Vertical bearing friction is specified at 0.007 gram, and quality control procedures assure that every unit will meet this specification. Only by maintaining this kind of tolerance can tonearm calibrations for stylus pressure and anti-skating be set with perfect accuracy.

Other Dual features are built with similar precision. The rotor of every Dual motor is dynamically balanced in all planes of motion. Additionally, each motor pulley and drive wheel is individually examined with special instruments to assure perfect concentricity.

Precision and reliability.

Despite all this precision and refinement, Dual turntables are ruggedly built, and need not be babyed. Which accounts for Dual’s unparalleled record of reliability, an achievement no other manufacturer can copy.

To appreciate Dual performance first hand, we suggest you visit your franchised United Audio dealer. But your full appreciation of Dual precision won’t really begin until a Dual is in your system and you hear the difference it will make on your own records. Play after play. Year after year.

United Audio Products, Inc.,
120 So. Columbus Ave., Mt. Vernon, N.Y. 10553
from 30 to 15,000 Hz. The receiver was somewhat less susceptible to interaction between cartridge inductance and phono-equalization circuits; its response fell by 1 dB at 10,000 Hz and from 1.5 to 3 dB at 15,000 Hz, depending on the cartridge used.

An input of 110 millivolts (AUX) or 1.8 millivolts (PHONO) drove the amplifiers to 10-watt outputs. The respective signal-to-noise ratios were to 78 dB and 72 dB—both very good. The phono preamplifiers overloaded at a very high 135 millivolts, giving them an exceptional signal "headroom" before distortion.

We measured the IHF sensitivity of the FM tuner as 2.9 microvolts (µV) in mono and about 7 µV in stereo. Quieting of 50 dB was reached at 4.8 µV in mono and 60 µV in stereo. The signal-to-noise ratio in mono at 1,000 µV was 72 dB, and in stereo, 68 dB. The FM distortion with a 1,000-µV test signal was 0.13 per cent in mono and 0.75 per cent in stereo. The capture ratio was 3.6 dB at 1,000 µV. AM rejection varied with signal level, measuring 34 dB at 1,000 µV and 48 dB at 100 µV. Image rejection was 54.4 dB, and the 19-kHz pilot carrier was suppressed 50 dB in the audio outputs. The alternate-channel selectivity measurements revealed a rather asymmetrical i.f. response above and below the signal frequency depending on the tuning, but it averaged about 47 dB.

The FM interstation muting operated in a gradual rather than an abrupt "on-off" manner. As the signal dropped from 26 to 14 µV, the audio volume fell off smoothly. The muting was completely free of noise and transients, and it can be switched out. The automatic stereo mono switching threshold was between 10 and 15 µV. In stereo FM, the frequency response was flat within ±0.25 dB from 30 to 6,000 Hz, rising to +2 dB at 10,000 Hz and returning to the original level at 15,000 Hz. The channel separation of this receiver was extraordinary—among the best we have ever measured in an FM tuner. From 30 to 4,500 Hz, the separation was between 42 and 48 dB, falling smoothly to an excellent 32.5 dB at 15,000 Hz. The AM frequency response was also slightly better than that of most receivers, being down 6 dB at 4,600 Hz.

Comment. In the design of an inexpensive receiver (and in today's market a $260 receiver can be considered inexpensive), several options are possible. The amplifier power can be fairly high, but may fall off markedly at the frequency extremes and have appreciable distortion at all power levels. This practice could produce some impressive ratings for advertising purposes, but not much of a receiver. Alternatively, the power output could be reduced, retaining very low distortion and other desirable characteristics of an amplifier. In the tuner section, there are similar trade-offs to be made, and certainly no one can expect a low-price tuner to match the performance of a more expensive design. Usually the reduction of tuner performance may not even be noticed in strong signal areas if the basic qualities of low noise and distortion are retained.

In our view, the Superscope R-340 represents one of the better design-vs-price compromises. Its audio section is truly excellent in every respect, and by using it with fairly efficient speakers the 10-watt limitation should not prove bothersome. In the FM tuner, selectivity and sensitivity have been sacrificed somewhat. On the other hand, it is adequate to do the job properly in most urban and suburban situations. And even the AM tuner sounded better than most.

We also appreciated the smooth "feel" and general air of quality in this receiver and its operating controls. We would characterize the Superscope R-340 as a moderately sensitive, moderately selective, low-power receiver of the highest quality. This is not a contradiction in terms. The R-340 may be inexpensive, but it is not cheap.

Circle 106 on reader service card

SAE Mark III CM Stereo Power Amplifier

THE SAE Mark III CM by Scientific Audio Electronics, Inc., is a rugged stereo power amplifier conservatively rated to deliver 200 watts per channel to 8-ohm loads over the full audio range. The amplifier circuits are direct coupled throughout except for a blocking capacitor at the inputs. The protection circuits include voltage/current limiters, thermal sensors, and a relay, activated by an elaborate electronic sensing circuit, that effectively disconnects the speakers from the amplifier in the event of any potentially damaging output signals. The relay also delays application of signals to the speakers for a few seconds after the

(Continued on page 36)

CIRCLE NO. 49 ON READER SERVICE CARD
Introducing the SL-1300. The precision of direct drive. The convenience of automation.

Now Technics adds convenience to perfection. The SL-1300. The fourth and newest Technics direct-drive turntable. And the first with convenient, fully automatic operation.

Auto-Start. Auto-Stop. Auto-Return. Auto-Repeat. And the kind of outstanding specifications that are normally found only in a manual turntable.

The SL-1300, like all Technics turntables, uses our electronically controlled DC motor. But with an improvement. The platter is part of the motor. Making the drive even more direct. It also reduces parts, increases reliability and produces an ultra-thin profile.

The gimbal-suspended automatic arm is 9 3/16" pivot to stylus. For extremely low tracking error. And its four pairs of pivot bearings increase the rotational sensitivity while maintaining flawless balance.

Our anti-skating control requires only one scale for all types of styli. While gold-plated contacts in the head shell assure reliable contact and help prevent hum.

And we haven't forgotten the more refined details. Like Memo-Repeat. So you can play a record from one to five times. Or indefinitely. There's also a new prism strobe. Two-speed variable pitch controls. Dust cover. Feedback-insulated legs. And low capacitance phono cables for CD-4 records.

The concept is simple. The execution is precise. The performance is outstanding. The name is Technics.

200 PARK AVE., NEW YORK, N.Y. 10017. FOR YOUR NEAREST AUTHORIZED TECHNICS DEALER, CALL TOLL FREE 800 447-4700. IN ILLINOIS, 800 322-4400.

Technics by Panasonic
power is turned on, eliminating the possibility of a transient "thump." The amplifier’s power supplies are also protected by four internally installed fuses.

The output stages of the SAE Mark IIICM operate with a relatively high quiescent current, effectively eliminating all traces of crossover "notch" distortion, even at very low output levels. This causes the amplifier to run moderately (but not excessively) warm during normal operation. Two large illuminated meters on the front panel indicate the power output from each channel. A control knob increases the meter sensitivity in 6-dB steps to a maximum of 24 dB. At the maximum sensitivity setting, outputs of less than 10 milliwatts can be read on the meters. Another switch reduces the input-signal sensitivity of the amplifier by up to 12 dB in 3-dB steps. Power to the amplifier is switched by a pair of on-off pushbuttons.

The heavy-duty output binding posts and phono-type input jacks are in the rear, together with a 10-ampere slow-blow a.c.-line fuse. The three-wire line cord has a three-prong plug, which serves as a reminder that the amplifier should not be plugged into a switched a.c. outlet on a preamplifier since most cannot handle the considerable current drawn by this amplifier at full power. The SAE preamplifiers (and one or two others), however, can safely control the power drawn by the unit.

The Mark IIIICM is 17 inches wide, 6 inches high, and 14½ inches deep: it weighs about 40 pounds and carries a five-year warranty on parts and labor. Price: $595. A similar amplifier (the Mark IIIC) without the meters is $850.

- **Laboratory Measurements.** With both channels driven into 8-ohm loads by a 1,000-Hz test signal, the amplifier’s output waveform clipped at 232 watts per channel. With 4-ohm loads, the power was 380 watts per channel, and into 16 ohms it was 136 watts per channel.

At 1,000 Hz, harmonic distortion was below the noise level at levels under 1 watt, and it was between 0.006 and 0.008 per cent from 1 watt to 200 watts. Just below the clipping point (230 watts) it was a mere 0.16 per cent. The intermodulation (IM) distortion was less than 0.023 per cent from 200 milliwatts to 200 watts, typically measuring under 0.01 per cent. Even at a 5-milliwatt output level it was under 0.06 per cent, confirming SAE's claim of very low cross-over distortion. Across the full 20- to 20,000-Hz range there was little variation in distortion at any power level up to 200 watts. Below 100 Hz, harmonic distortion was just over 0.02 per cent and above 10,000 Hz it was about 0.015 per cent. At most intermediate frequencies the distortion measured between 0.004 and 0.008 per cent at all power levels.

An input of 0.31 volt drove the amplifier to our reference power output of 10 watts, with the highest setting of the input-sensitivity selector. The unweighted noise level in the output was 86 dB below 10 watts, or 99 dB below the rated 200 watts. The power calibrations of the meters were generally within 10 per cent of the actual power output when using sine-wave test signals.

The frequency response of the Mark IIIICM was as flat as that of our test equipment: ±0.1 dB from 5 to 100,000 Hz, falling to −1 dB at 200,000 Hz and to −3 dB at 300,000 Hz. The square-wave rise time was between 1 and 1.5 microseconds, and was unaffected by the setting of the input-gain switch.

The amplifier's protective circuits worked well—almost too well, in fact, since the thermal cut-out shut down the amplifier frequently during our full-power measurements, necessitating a cooling off period before tests could be resumed. Of course, these tests involved conditions unlikely to be encountered when reproducing any musical program. (The action of the protective thermal sensor prevented the heat sink of the amplifier from ever becoming uncomfortably hot to the touch.)

- **Comment.** SAE emphasizes the ability of the Mark IIIICM to drive reactive loads at high frequencies and high power levels without damage or significant distortion. We operated the amplifier at full power into a dynamic-speaker load and added a 3-microfarad capacitor across the speaker terminals. It had no effect whatever on performance.

All we can say about the sound quality of the SAE Mark IIIICM is that it was notably clean and transparent at all times, and at all listening levels. Even with output-meter indications averaging

(Continued on page 38)
Why nearly every record player is like a car that doesn't steer straight.

If you've ever driven a car with badly aligned front wheels or a defective steering mechanism, you know what we're talking about.

It's a queasy feeling when you can't make the car point in the same direction as the road is pointing.

There happens to be a distinctly comparable problem with record players, except that it's a nearly universal deficiency, not just a malfunction.

Of course, in this case there's no human life at stake, only the fidelity of the reproduced sound. And sometimes the life of the record.

Like a car, the phono cartridge (or pickup head) should point where it's going. Right down the middle of the groove.

A more scientific way of saying the same thing is that the head should remain perpendicular to the line drawn through the stylus tip and the turntable spindle.

Any deviation from this ideal is known as tracking error. It's measured in degrees and it causes distortion. Inevitably.

The trouble is that there's no way to avoid tracking error and the resulting distortion with any conventional pivoted tonearm. Why? Because the head swings in an arc and is therefore at a continuously changing angle to the groove as it travels across the record.

The problem has remained fundamentally the same since the Emile Berliner gramophone of 1887. It has been minimized, thanks to improvements in tonearm geometry, but it hasn't been eliminated.

With one important exception.

In the current line of Garrard automatic turntables, the top three models are equipped with Garrard's unique Zero Tracking Error Tonearm.

This remarkable invention ends tracking error once and for all. The head is always properly lined up with the groove because it's hinged instead of fixed and keeps adjusting its angle during play. A simple idea, yes, but the engineering details took the world's leading manufacturer of turntables seven years to perfect.

The Zero Tracking Error Tonearm is a major technological coup, not just a glamour feature. You can hear the difference.

The "Acoustics" column of Rolling Stone magazine, for example, reported that the original Garrard turntable equipped with the new arm "sounded markedly 'crisper' than other turntables" under otherwise identical test conditions.

It's true. Just like a car that doesn't steer straight, tracking error can make a nasty sound.

It can even cause unnecessary record wear. The information engraved in the grooves of the new CD-4 discrete four-channel records is so finely detailed that it can be partially wiped out by a stylus that doesn't sit absolutely square and true.

Ask your nearest Garrard dealer about the Zero Tracking Error Tonearm.

It's absurd to tolerate a problem that somebody has already solved.

Top of the line: Garrard Zero 100c, $209.95. Other Garrard automatic turntables from $49.95 up.

Garrard Division of Fisher Consumer Products
100 Commercial Street, Plainview, New York 11803
50 to 100 watts per channel, which should have resulted in clipping on peaks, we could hear no change in the character of the sound (be sure your loudspeaker systems can handle this level of drive power before you try this!).

The SAE Mark II ICM is a worthy, if not inexpensive, addition to the limited number of exceptionally fine high-power amplifiers. Few audiophiles should find its power inadequate, and obviously its electrical performance in respect to distortion, noise, and so forth is at the state-of-the-art level.

Circle 107 on reader service card

Dokorder Model 7140 Four-Channel Tape Deck

The Dokorder Model 7140 tape deck has a host of features formerly available only on much more expensive machines. For example, it can record and play back simultaneously on either two channels or four channels, at speeds of 3/4 or 7 1/2 ips. It has "Multi-Sync," which is Dokorder’s term for multiple-track synchronization. This means that any of the four tracks of the recording head can be switched to function in the playback mode while a recording is made simultaneously on any or all of the other tracks. This permits each track to be recorded separately (and at different times) while keeping all tracks perfectly synchronized with each other.

The microphone and line inputs for each of the four channels can be mixed with their separate, but concentric, gain controls. The four playback-level controls are also two concentric pairs. On the lower edge of the front panel are four standard microphone phone jacks and two stereo headphone jacks (for front and rear channels). Above them are four MULTI-SYNC switches control power, tape speed, and the pause function, and there is a four-digit index counter. A two-position TAPE SELECTOR optimizes the recording bias for NORMAL and SPECIAL tapes. Individual pushbuttons (with indicator lights) can be used to place any or all channels in the recording mode (when the REC button is pressed on the tape-transport control). The transport controls are mechanically latched pushbuttons which require an appreciable operating force. Above them are the four MULTI-SYNC levers. The tape transport has tensioning levers which provide an automatic shut-off action. The head assembly plugs in as a unit for easy replacement.

The Dokorder Model 7140, with the wooden side panels supplied, is 16 7/8 inches wide, 17 7/8 inches high, and 6 3/4 inches deep. It weighs 41 pounds. Also supplied are wooden side panels for mounting, there are no mounting feet on the back panel and ventilation would probably be impaired in a horizontal position. Price: $629.95 (an optional dust cover is available for $23).

Laboratory Measurements. Over the range of the Ampex NAB test tapes, the playback frequency response at 7 1/2 ips was ±2 dB from 50 to 15,000 Hz, and at 3/4 ips it was ±1.25 dB from 50 to 7,500 Hz. Record-playback response measurements were made with Maxell UD35 tape, using the special bias setting. At 3/4 ips, the overall response was ±1.5 dB from 40 to 16,000 Hz. At 7 1/2 ips, it was ±2 dB from 45 to 25,000 Hz. The low-frequency response fell off quite rapidly at 7 1/2 ips, and less rapidly at 3/4 ips. All four channels had essentially the same frequency-response characteristics. We were able to measure only a very small difference between the two settings of the TAPE SELECTOR switch. However, the high-frequency response and overall output level were substantially better with the UD35 tape than with 3M 203, suggesting that the machine is set up to perform best with low-noise/high-output tapes.

A line input of 0.7 mV produced a 0 dB recording level, which played back with an output of 0.65 volt. The 3 per cent reference distortion level was reached at +7 and +8 dB at 3/4 ips and 7 1/2 ips, respectively. The unweighted signal-to-noise ratio (S/N) referred to this level was 55.7 dB at 3/4 ips and 59.5 dB at 7 1/2 ips. Using the IEC standard weighting for better subjective correlation, the S/N measurements improved to 62 and 66 dB. Through the microphone inputs at the maximum gain setting, the noise increased only 1.5 dB. Crosstalk between the four channels, at 1,000 Hz, was -43 to -46 dB. The tape speeds were correct for both 7 1/2- and 3 1/4-ips operation. Combined wow and flutter (with an unweighted rms measurement) was 0.1 per cent at 3/4 ips and 0.09 per cent at 7 1/2 ips. In fast forward and rewind, 1,800 feet of tape was handled in 84 seconds. Headphone volume was good, tested with both 8-ohm and 200-ohm phones. The meter ballistics were somewhat slow compared with true VU meters, so that they read about half their steady-state value when driven with a 3-second (300-millisecond) tone bursts.

(Continued on page 40)
If Beethoven were alive today, he'd be recording on "Scotch" brand recording tape.

Beethoven was a genius. But he was even more than that.
He was a pro.
He was tough and demanding.

What else would Beethoven record on?
So, next time you record something take a hint from the master.
Use "Scotch" brand—the Master Tape.

and insisted on perfection in everything he did. Just like the pros in today's music business. The people who may be putting a hundred thousand dollars on the line when they walk into a studio to put down a record.

And nearly 80% of all master recording studios use "Scotch" brand recording tape.

Buy two cassettes, get one free.
Applies to 60-minute LOW NOISE/HIGH DENSITY cassettes at participating "Scotch" brand dealers as long as supply lasts.

The Master Tape.
Because there’s no one mike for everyone, AKG makes the one mike that’s right for you.
The D-707 is a multi-purpose microphone for part-time professionals. The D-190 is a bass-boosting audio-buff pleaser with built-in on/off switch. The D-1000 features a unique mode selector. This lets you emphasize the bass, the mid and high—or the super highs.
They’re all cardioid dynamic. The most useful type for better stage, studio and PA work. The Three Miketeers will make both professionals and part-time professionals happy.
All three will withstand high sound pressure, wet vocal chords and rough handling. They all have the Hertzes, Ohms and decibels you want.
The Three Miketeers are on display at better audio and music shops. Or write to us for more information.

Dokorder Model 7140
Tape Deck . . .

(Continued from page 38)

- Comment. During our testing, every one of the Dokorder’s many controls, modes, and features worked perfectly. Despite its rather imposing appearance, it is a very easy and “un-fussy” machine to operate. As can be inferred from the test results, its sound is first rate. The tape-overload margin is considerable, when referred to the meter’s 0-dB indication, so that the recording-level settings are not at all critical. Its other characteristics, including S/N, flutter, and speed accuracy, come close to meeting the highest professional standards, and are certainly adequate for the critical home recordist for whom this machine is intended.

Listening to FM interstation hiss recorded and played back through the Model 7140, we could hear a moderate low- to mid-frequency coloration, apparently caused by a slight emphasis in response below 200 Hz. The highs were perfect at 7½ ips, and were reduced by a barely detectable amount at 3¾ ips.

Needless to say, FM music broadcasts were recorded and played back with complete fidelity.

We enjoyed experimenting with the Multi-Sync feature (this was our first exposure to this capability). For anyone interested in doing live demo rock tapes, a track-synchronizing machine has become a must. Although it lacks some of the glitter and operational refinements of some other more expensive recorders, the Dokorder Model 7140 nevertheless manages to deliver more honest performance and total versatility than we have seen in any other comparably priced machine. At its current price, particularly if you are interested in track-synced live recording, it is an outstanding value.

Circle 108 on reader service card

CIRCLE NO. 2 ON READER SERVICE CARD
A completely new standard of performance, the standard of an ESS Heil air-motion transformer, has been brought to popular sized loudspeakers with the introduction of the exciting new ESS amt 5 reference bookshelf.

A compact, convenient, and reasonably priced loudspeaker of such excellence was impossible until the latest development in ESS Heil air-motion transformer high frequency drivers - the ESS Heil air-motion transformer 'power-ring' tweeter. Created expressly for use in the amt 5, this unprecedented tweeter allows the absolute purity and exciting transient resolution of an ESS Heil air-motion transformer system to become available in the universally popular and adaptable "bookshelf" size loudspeaker. The amt 5 continues the ESS tradition of sound as clear as light, throughout its range, with a powerful new 12 inch woofer that provides deep, rich bass and clean, concise transients precisely matched to the transparency of its Heil air-motion transformer tweeter.

Whatever your taste in music, if you desire an easy listening, less expensive speaker system, you are no longer limited to outmoded and conventionally engineered products. You can now own and enjoy the accurate reproduction and built-in lasting value of an ESS Heil air-motion transformer, the loudspeaker of the future. Finally from ESS, a state-of-the-art bookshelf, the ESS amt 5 reference bookshelf.

A full color brochure describing in simple language the unique operation of the ESS Heil air-motion transformer and showing the full line of ESS loudspeakers is available, free, at your authorized ESS dealer. If you would like a brochure mailed to you, write to ESS, Sacramento.

**ESS inc. 9613 oates drive sacramento, ca. 95827**

ESS products are available in CANADA through CAZ-TECH LTD.
One of the greatest things about tape is listening to more than 20 minutes of music without having to turn a record over. Of course, with most tape recorders you’ve got to turn the reel over to play the second side of the tape.

We’ve taken care of that problem with our 4300 Automatic Reverse Stereo Tape Deck. You can put your favorite tape on the 4300 and listen to it for days without ever touching any controls. But if you do touch the controls, you can rewind or fast forward...without bothering to push the stop button between functions.

That’s because we’ve engineered a logic circuit into the touch button controls that makes it virtually impossible to stretch or break a tape. And with three motors, you get super fast and safe tape handling. If you’re really hooked on convenience, pick up our RC-140 remote control and operate the 4300 any where in the room.

Besides providing you with non-stop listening, the 4300 is still a tape recorder, and a damn good one, too. It has four heads that allow direct tape monitoring while recording, plus two direction playback. Mike and line mixing allow you to be creative by simultaneously recording from two different sources. Separate bias and equalization circuits even let you pick the type tape you want to use, standard or high-energy.

One more thing: with the 4300, you can make all your existing tapes work. No obsolescence. Check it out at your TEAC dealer soon. He’s got specs and a demonstration for you.

Another magic music machine from TEAC.
THE BEATLES: DOWN BUT NOT OUT

Eric Salzman reviews two new books

Wilfred Mellers is an English musicologist and music professor who has written a number of useful articles and books. His Music in a New-Found Land was the first major survey of American music, ironically written and first published in Great Britain. He takes popular music quite as seriously as “serious” music and has no hesitation about applying as much advanced sociological, ethnological, musicological, or theoretical/technical analysis to a pop song as to a symphony.

In principle, so far so good. I heartily approve of the way Mellers plays the game, but unfortunately his newest book, Twilight of the Gods: The Beatles in Retrospect, strikes out (or whatever the cricket equivalent might be).

Strike 1: Pretentious, foolish title.

Strike 2: Pretentious, foolish, pseudo-ethno-musicological poppycock. “[Even the harmony provoked intuitively by modal melody and blue guitar techniques effects a kind of re-Renaissance — in wide-eyed, open-eared wonder at the ‘pure’ sensuality of thirds and sixths — strictly comparable with similar effects of harmonic ‘discovery’ in African musics (especially children’s songs) and in the musics of Europe’s late Middle Ages and early Renaissance.”]

Strike 3: Pretentious, misleading “analyses,” fussy detail, and an implication of completeness when as much is omitted as is included.

The title suggests that the great gods of yesterday have reached senility and decadence. In fact, the dissolution of the Beatles as a group probably did more to keep their legend alive than continuing their collective existence might have done. Moreover, all four of them are still reasonably young and operational. Mellers does attempt to explore their first solo flights, but this aspect of the book is, of course, already out of date. The sectional titles of the book are equally dubious: “Novices’ Departure,” “Context and Death,” “Rebirth and Return of the Initiate,” and “Exit and Lament” (which mysteriously turns into “Exit and Torrent” at one point).

Ironically, with all the learned disquisitions on African children’s games, “quasi-mono-incipitations,” and “devilishly flattened trinitonal” fifths (as opposed to “godly perfect” fifths), some of the most obvious sources for Beatles music are missed: the English music hall, Yiddish musical theater, Gilbert and Sullivan, old movies, old 78-rpm pop recordings, and so forth. Mellers’ conception of Liverpool working-class culture is strictly noblesse oblige.

Perhaps the biggest problems stem from basing the musical deductions and analyses not on the music itself, first-hand, but on a series of organ arrangements that, engraven as they are here in a fine old English hand, look more like a Sir John Stainer oratorio than Lennon-McCartney tunes. Mellers constantly describes the melodies, rhythms, and chords in terms of the printed music, which is often obviously at variance with the original. (Don’t try to play along; many of the songs have been rather arbitrarily transposed to other keys.) And, although he appears to describe the complete evolution of the Beatles, he has omitted many famous songs. Any study of the Beatles—particularly one that goes into great detail describing some relatively obscure songs—that doesn’t even mention I Want to Hold Your Hand, She Loves You, Yeah, Yeah, Yeah, All My Loving, Can’t Buy Me Love, Don’t Let Me Down, I’m a Loser, Day Tripper, In My Life, I’ve Just Seen a Face, Hello Goodbye, Hey Jude, or Lady Madonna has (let us be kind) missed a thing or two. In fact, Mellers seems to have missed a couple of whole albums and more than a few singles. (The situation is complicated by what specific English albums contain—those described do not always correspond to the equivalent American releases).

The more’s the pity, for Mellers is an intelligent man who takes pop music as seriously as it ought to be taken and who has many insights to offer. But in the present context they just don’t get through: the book is all but unreadable, the analyses can be matched up with the music only with great difficulty, and, in the end, there is no real underlying point of view to tie it all together.

What a relief, then, to turn to Milt Okun’s arrangements of seventy-three Lennon-McCartney Beatles “mini-masterpieces” in the collection published by Quadrangle last December. One might complain about some of the editorial decisions (Why only Lennon and McCartney? Why only seventy-three songs when including another dozen would have meant including everyone’s favorite?), and of course no arrangements, no matter how clever, could duplicate the originals with respect to performance practice and media mixing. Still, these arrangements (for keyboard—piano or organ—with guitar chords and on two rather than the usual three staves) are quite acceptable and, if not brilliant, eminent player (where the music is transposed that fact is indicated; you can, in general, actually play along with your recordings). In spite of many early opinions, even the “Sergeant Pepper” and “Abbey Road” songs hold up extremely well without all the electronic trickery. I missed some songs—Dear Prudence and Martha My Dear and Sun King and I Want You (She’s So Heavy) and Fixin’ a Hole and Run for Your Life and I’m Looking Through You and Drive My Car and Octopus’ Garden and some of George’s contributions. But I guess you can’t have everything.

Anyway, the future of these songs is going to be as much in the playing and singing of them as in their continuing existence in the groove archives. Seventy-three songs in a well-arranged, easy-to-use, accessible songbook form is a much longer stride toward Schubertian immortality for Lennon and McCartney than all of Professor Mellers’ well-intentioned profundities.

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LAST MONTH I had a few unkind words to say about the presentation of classical music on television and about the miscalculations, by the producers, of both the strengths and the weaknesses of the medium. Though Stereo Review is concerned only peripherally with television, a simple matter of justice compels me to couple an addendum to that criticism and call some attention to what is certainly the finest, most tasteful cinematic production of a piece of classical music I have ever encountered—on television or in the theater.

The program to which I refer is a film shown on National Educational Television (WNET) in New York City on May 5 of this year. It has been shown before on other stations elsewhere in the United States and probably will be shown again. The title of the film is The Bolero, and I urge my more musically sophisticated friends not to groan and cease reading at this point, but to bear with me for a few moments. I too consider Ravel’s Bolero to be decidedly unpromising material for television presentation. I too have been bored by the performance in examinations, but as a producer of abstract shapes turn out to be the sides of Maestro Mehta’s tailcoat and the rhythmic movement is his. Artful rather than arty. The camera moves to a closeup of a string player, but once the player and the instrument on which he plays have been clearly established, the picture limits itself to the movement of the bow across the strings, not as in a detailed scientific examination, but as a producer of abstract patterns of movement related directly to the music.

It is this continuous duality of purpose that makes the film so exciting: the visual material is interesting in itself but also pertinent to what is going on musically at the moment. The verbal comments are revealing of personality but also informative about the music. The strengths of the television medium are used not only for their own sakes, but also to compensate for the weaknesses of the medium.

The film was produced and directed by Allan Miller, associate conductor of the Denver Symphony, and Bill Fertik, photographer. The editor was Sam Stein. The Bolero won an Academy Award for a live-action short subject. I cannot think of a film that deserved an award more.
Ahh, the beach and a Black & White. What could be better?

Finding the owner of a lost bikini. Arf. Arf.
ONE of the record trade magazines recently ran a cover story entitled—

"The Future of Nostalgia." And if that doesn't tell you everything you need to know about the general banality of the period we now find ourselves living through, I don't know what does. Beyond that, however, when the headline first caught my eye, I found myself having a flash of cosmic proportions, something I have not experienced since finding out that the Walrus was really Paul. And what was this blinding insight, you might well ask? All right, I'll tell you.

The Seventies are a hype. They don't exist. At least in rock-and-roll terms, there are no Seventies.

That's right, folks, we've been sold a bill of goods. Phonograph Record talks about "pop music for the Seventies." Rock Scene asks "we're into the Seventies, Are you?"—but the fact of the matter is that there is absolutely nothing new happening, and the Sixties have not yet ended. You don't agree? Well, consider the facts.

- The biggest stars in England right now are two gent's named Gary Glitter and Alvin Stardust, both safely on the wrong side of thirty, who purvey exactly the same kind of music they made in the early Sixties when (as Paul Raven and Shane Fenton) they had extremely minor careers as imitators of Eddie Cochran, who was, in turn, an Elvis imitator.
- David Bowie, who more than anyone else is responsible for the idea that the Seventies are somehow spiritually different from the Sixties (his whole career is based on an attitude of contempt for the rock of that period, perhaps a result of his own commercial failures during those years, which were not surprising given the dreck he was churning out), has a new album out. It begins with a dead-serious recitation of a ridiculous poem with apocalyptic science-fiction overtones, and, further, it's a concept album. Now, I hate to be a nit-picker, but there is absolutely nothing more Sixties than a concept album. And, of course, that whole pulp sci-fi fixation is just a watered-down rehash of stuff done in the Sixties by the Byrds, Jimi Hendrix, and, more recently, Paul Kantner of the Airplane. (And let's not forget Bowie's stage act, which is strangely reminiscent of Arthur Brown, the original Sixties madman.)
- Despite huge hyps, the American public has remained profoundly indifferent to the whole glitter phenomenon— John Denver, Loggins and Messina, and the Allman Brothers are much bigger stars than Bowie or the Dolls—and rock festivals in the old-fashioned sense are making a comeback. Watkins Glen was the clue, and if you don't believe me, then you didn't check out any of the recent In Concert shows, taped at a festival in California, which were mind boggling. Besides featuring an awful lot of boring music, the crowd and stage crew all looked and sounded as if they had just seen the Woodstock movie and remembered all the lines.
- Psychedelic music is back, only this time they're calling it jazz, and its avant-garde pretensions are just as tiresome as they were at the height of the Summer of Love. You can tell me all you want about Herbie Hancock, John McLaughlin, or Weather Report, but objectively there's almost no difference between what they're doing now and the most banal psychedelic excess of the early Dead or the Mothers. Even the technology has come full circle—what, pray tell, is the difference in sound between an Arp synthesizer and the kind of electric organ noises you can find on old Del Shannon or surfing records?
- Soul music? Are you kidding? The big new stars, like the O'Jays and the Spinners, are all aging cats who were third on the bill with the Motown All Stars ten years ago, and for very good reasons—they couldn't sing as well as the headliners.

None of this is meant as a value judgment, you understand: the question of whether or not the general level of rock and other allied forms has fallen lately is not what I'm talking about at all. (I think it has—but hell, even the level of schlock has declined—but that's unimportant.) The real . . . uh . . . bummer in all of this is that the various artists and critics who are pushing the idea of Seventies consciousness are doing us a tremendous disservice. Nothing is as dated as the recent past, someone once said, but you would think that we would have learned something in the past few years, like the danger of revisionist history. I'm thinking specifically of the prejudices that developed in the Sixties, when groups like the Beach Boys were, for a time, treated as if they were worse than antiques. The prevailing attitude in those days was that the then "new" music had somehow transcended its roots, and, in fact, that those roots were pretty crummy to begin with. We were all somehow embarrassed about early rock-and-roll and our relation to it, and the kind of Sixties snobbery that developed seemed almost amusing now. But it wasn't—perhaps you remember that although Beach Boy Brian Wilson was on the board of directors of the Monterey Pop Festival, his group was forced to cancel their appearance because of quite legitimate fears that the long-haired audience would laugh at them. Today, the Beach Boys are hip again, and that paranoia seems ludicrous: not only are we no longer embarrassed about those days and nights in the parking lot, but we realize that a lot of great—indeed, timeless—music was made in that context. Given that example, though, you would think we'd be a bit more careful about rewriting the history of the Sixties. I don't want to see a field where people can't sing anymore (never did, if truth be told), but what the hell has that got to do with music anyway? Is the Airplane's "Surrealistic Pillow" less of an album now that we don't wear love beads and caftans? Is "Sgt. Pepper" any less terrific because we don't wear love beads and caftans? Is "Sgt. Pepper" any less terrific because John Lennon doesn't have a David Bowie haircut?

T he point is that when the real Seventies arrive they won't have to proclaim themselves as such. When someone really does something new, we'll be too busy being knocked out by it to even worry about concepts like what decade this is: the fact that we do is proof enough that whatever it is we're looking for hasn't arrived, and just how desperate we all are. Just you wait—in two years Lurex tops and platform heels are going to look sillier than crewcuts and Pendletons did in 1966, and glitter will be as passé as the twist. Someone's got a lot of owning up to do, and you know who you are.
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By MARTIN BOOKSPAN

FRANCK'S SYMPHONIC VARIATIONS

The history of music is full of examples of ambitious fathers who exploited the talents of their gifted offspring for monetary gain. Leopold Mozart immediately to mind: he pushed his genius son, Wolfgang, and his somewhat less remarkable daughter, Marianne, onto the concert stages and into the imperial ballrooms of Europe at an age when both should have been allowed to enjoy the more innocent pleasures of childhood. But Leopold, a gifted musician himself, was astute enough to realize that there was a point beyond which his ambitions had to be curbed: in the voluminous correspondence between father and son (Wolfgang's constant travels as a performing virtuoso and his father's wishes until he was twenty-four, playing concerts designed to overwhelm audiences with his technical brilliance and composing flashy piano pieces for virtuoso display), there were many instances of Leopold's growing restraint in forcing his own demands or wishes upon his son.

A less benign example of parental domination was the relationship between Isaac Albéniz, the Spanish composer, and his father. The elder Albéniz subjected his son to such a brutal and senseless regimen of practice and discipline that young Isaac was only thirteen when he ran away from home for the last time and stowed away on a ship bound for the Caribbean islands.

Somewhere between the Mozart and Albéniz situations lay the relationship between César Franck and his father. Franck pére, as a matter of fact, tyrannized two sons, enrolling them both at a tender age in the Liège Conservatory in their native Belgium. When César was barely twelve, the father moved the family to Paris so that the boys might develop more quickly into Wunderkinder. César flourished at the Paris Conservatoire, but when he exhibited a marked preference for composition over performing, the father quickly withdrew him from the institution and insisted that he pursue a career as a performing virtuoso. Franck reluctantly went along with his father's wishes until he was twenty-four, composing a string of piano works that are among the glories of the literature for the instrument.

In 1884, when he was sixty-two, he composed its Prélude, Chorale et Fugue, which he conceived originally as a Buch-inspired two-part work. Once he began the composition, however, the music assumed much larger proportions: it became a complex but extremely effective and profound personal statement. In the same year came another work for this one, with orchestra, in which Franck completed his ultimate retreat from the flamboyant piano pieces of his earlier years. Titled Les Djinns, it is rarely performed, perhaps partly because the piano is treated as an ensemble rather than as a solo instrument.

These two works were followed by the Symphonic Variations for Piano and Orchestra of 1885, and the Prelude, Aria, and Finale of 1886-1887. The latter score is related to the Prélude, Chorale et Fugue in the bigness of its concept and the richness of its invention. But it is the Symphonic Variations that is probably Franck's most popular work after his Symphony in D Minor. The eminent French pianist Alfred Cortot once described it as "the most perfect... of Franck's artistic realizations. Here both balance and proportion are ideal."

A rather aggressive theme, played fortespissimo by the strings, begins the work. With a striking similarity of concept to the slow movement of Beethoven's Fourth Piano Concerto, this stern proclamation is immediately answered by the solo piano in a gentle, conciliatory manner. As the music progresses, there will be six free variations in which the solo piano is assigned many arpeggios and other digital embellishments. An exuberant rondo finale rounds off the work in great high spirits.

Among the currently available recordings of the Symphonic Variations, two strike me as having special merit, and one of these is truly outstanding. The merely excellent ones are by Robert Casadesus with Eugene Ormandy and the Philadelphia Orchestra (Odyssey Y 31274), Clifford Curzon with Sir Adrian Boult and the London Philharmonic Orchestra (London disc CS 6157, reel L 80064), and Artur Rubinstein with Alfred Wallenstein and the Symphony of the Air (RCA disc LSC 2234, cassette RK 1285). All three were recorded during the 1950's and early 1960's, with acceptable examples of stereo technology. Surprisingly, the sound on both the Casadesus and Curzon recordings holds up quite respectably. But the sound reproduction afforded Rubinstein betrays its age: the piano has a glassy tone, the strings are rather harsh and wiry in places, and the balances leave something to be desired. Still, there is a captivating sense of spontaneity and effortlessness in Rubinstein's performance. The Casadesus and Curzon performances, if lacking the degree of personality that Rubinstein gives his, are nevertheless distinguished and perceptive accounts of the music.

My favorite among all the recordings of the Symphonic Variations, however, happens to be the newest: the performance by Alicia de Larrocha with Rafael Frühbeck de Burgos conducting the London Philharmonic Orchestra (London disc CS 6818). This is a meticulously inflected performance, orchestrally as well as pianistically, with detailed attention to the architectural structure of the music. The radiant warmth and subtle shading of the playing is captured in recorded sound that is rich, well balanced, and remarkably clear.

Unfortunately, the Larrocha-Frühbeck performance has the least appropriate disc-mate of them all: the faded Khatchaturian Concerto (though it, too, receives a performance of uncommon distinction). But I have absolutely no hesitation in citing the new London recording of Franck's Symphonic Variations as my first choice—worthy having, whatever it is paired with.

There are many ways of measuring the frequency response of a loudspeaker. The trouble is, no one of them, alone, is totally informative about how a speaker will sound in normal use in a conventional living room. It is not unusual, for example, to find that a speaker system legitimately specified by its manufacturer as having a "flat" frequency response to beyond 15,000 Hz (in an anechoic test chamber) nevertheless sounds dull or muddy when listened to in the average home environment. Nor is it uncommon for a speaker moved from one room to another to undergo a complete change of sonic "personality," becoming shrill when it was once muted, or vice versa. Mind you, what we are talking about here are not subjective or psychoacoustic phenomena, but actual changes in the way the speaker is performing.

Obviously, if the sound of a speaker can change drastically in different acoustic environments, no single frequency-response measurement made in one specific environment is going to be able to tell the whole story about its audible performance. However, when we have at our disposal at least two kinds of frequency-response data, it is sometimes possible to draw a few conclusions about how a speaker will be affected by its surroundings, or at least to account for the effects of environment when such effects occur. The two different frequency measurements most often used for this purpose are referred to as the free-field axial frequency response and the power response.

The so-called "free-field axial response," which provides the frequency-response specification most often supplied by manufacturers, is usually made in an anechoic chamber with a microphone directly in front of (on the axis) of the speaker. The loudspeaker is driven with a sine-wave signal which is swept slowly from the lowest to the highest audible frequency. The variations in sound-pressure level picked up by the microphone are automatically plotted on a graph by a curve tracer synchronized with the frequency sweep. In an anechoic chamber, as its name indicates, is without echoes (sound reflections), sound radiated at other angles will never get reflected back to the microphone and therefore will not be measured.

If a loudspeaker had the same frequency response in all directions that it does on-axis, the free-field axial response would be a true indicator of its frequency performance. However, no real loudspeaker can achieve such uniformity fully. Since listening rooms are not anechoic chambers, they will reflect the sound, more or less, that the speaker emits in various directions, and therefore what ultimately reaches the listener is a mixture of direct and reflected sound. It follows from this that any measurement technique that attempts to predict a speaker's performance in a room must take these reflections into account.

This brings us to the power-response measurement, which is frequently made in a reverberation chamber. Whereas an anechoic chamber is designed to be as nonreflective as possible (ideally it should have infinite sound absorption), a reverberation chamber is designed to furnish the opposite condition—infinitely reflections and zero absorption. In a reverberation chamber, all the sound radiated by the speaker in every direction bounces around billiard-ball style, eventually reaching the measuring microphone. Such a test chamber enables one to measure all the sound radiated by a speaker, or, in other words, its total acoustic power output. This can be plotted as the power/frequency response on the same type of graph as the free-field frequency response.

To help avoid spurious results from phase interference in the chamber power-response measurement, a random-noise generator is used to supply the test signal. The generator output is fed to a variable filter that permits only a narrow band of frequencies (perhaps a third of an octave) to pass through to the speaker. This filter is tunable, and so designed that it can be automatically swept slowly through the entire audio range. The sweep is synchronized with the chart recorder (the same as with a free-field measurement), and the resulting curve shows the response of the speaker as though individual frequencies were used instead of a mixed random-noise signal. (Continued overleaf)
Although a power-response measurement taken under such conditions may seem unnecessarily strange and complex, it relates quite well to what we hear from a loudspeaker in a normal room—although, of course, a living room is neither totally reverberant nor totally anechoic, but something between the two. Normally, the sound we hear comes not only directly from the loudspeaker, but is reflected from room surfaces as well. Reflections that reach us within a short interval—from thirty to ninety thousandths of a second (30 to 90 milliseconds)—after the direct sound are not perceived as individual “echoes”; they instead fuse in a smooth blend with the first arriving sound. The reflected sound portion provides timbre and sense of space.

The representation of an oscilloscope trace in Figure 1 shows what happens to a sound produced in a living room. A loudspeaker has been driven by the single sine-wave cycle shown on the upper trace. The lower trace, taken at a representative listening position, shows that room reflections have spread the energy from the original cycle over a long period of time—approximately 65 milliseconds. This is within the “fusion-time” range, and hence what the listener hears is a composite of the speaker’s direct and reflected radiations. Any meaningful frequency-response measurement of a loudspeaker must therefore take these reflections into account. This is the merit of the power-response measurement as made in a reverberation chamber.

It should be obvious that sound that includes reflections must be affected by the acoustic nature of the materials it is being reflected from. Living room surfaces (walls, furniture, drapes, and rugs), unlike the walls of the anechoic or reverberant test chambers (which totally absorb or reflect everything down to some low frequency), are unpredictable in respect to their reflectivity at different frequencies. How does this affect the relevance of the power response?

During a fusion time of 65 milliseconds, sound travels about 74 feet. This means that in an average-size living room, the sounds finally reaching the listener will have been reflected, on the average, just about eight times. The percentage of sound reflected from (rather than absorbed by) room surfaces such as carpets, furniture, drapes, etc., may vary from 20 per cent at high frequencies to 95 per cent at low frequencies. Surfaces such as plaster walls and ceilings usually reflect over 95 per cent at all frequencies. If the less-reflective materials cover 20 per cent of the room surface area, the average reflection will vary from about 95 per cent at low frequencies to about 80 per cent at high frequencies—a difference of less than 1 dB. After about eight and a half reflections, this difference will have increased only 3 dB. However, rooms with an unusual amount of absorptive material such as heavy lined drapes, ceiling treatment, thick rugs, etc., will show greater variation—as much as 8 dB. Putting all these figures together, we find that the power response measured in a reverberation chamber will, at worst, usually be within ±4 dB of what one hears in the living room.

A power-response measurement on a single loudspeaker indicates only how it will sound in a monophonic system. To reproduce stereo and quadraphonic material accurately, the loudspeaker must provide information about space and direction. Another look at Figure 1 will give us an idea of how complex a task this is. Note that among the long train of reflections produced by the short pulse from the speaker there are some that are actually slightly stronger than the first sound to reach the listener. (The first sound, of course, is that which comes directly from the speaker.) This seems odd for two reasons: (1) sound intensity should diminish with distance, and the reflected sound must have travelled a greater distance than the direct sound; and (2) on each reflection from a room surface some energy should have been absorbed, further reducing the intensity of the reflected sound.

One good explanation for this odd circumstance is that the sound in the louder reflections had a much higher intensity at the time it left the loudspeaker than the sound that travelled directly to the listener. This often occurs when, for stereo listen-
ing, one sits off the axis of a loudspeaker which beams most of its output on-axis. Therefore, the higher-intensity reflected sound that reaches an off-axis listener may actually be the on-axis sound bounced from a hard surface. But how can the loudspeaker give us an indication of direction, when what we hear are reflections from many room surfaces, some of them being louder than the sound coming directly from the speaker(s)?

Human hearing has adapted to a reflective environment by using only the first sound in a series of identical (technically "coherent") sounds to indicate direction. However, if two coherent sounds arrive from different locations within one millisecond of each other—a condition that seldom occurs in nature—the source will appear to be between the points of origin. This is the aspect of the hearing process that recording engineers exploit to create sonic "images" of recording artists at various positions between pairs of speakers. But, useful as it is, it can also create confusion. Thus, if presented with a soft direct sound and a stronger reflection delayed in time by a millisecond or so, the ear may focus on a point somewhere between the speaker and the reflecting surface. This causes the apparent sound source to be displaced away from loudspeakers which are designed to radiate most of their energy toward the walls.

The same effect can also occur when more than one driver in a loudspeaker system radiates the same frequency at the same time, as is shown in Figure 2. This can happen in systems using multiple drivers covering the same frequency range or in the area of crossover in two- and three-way systems. If one sits at an angle such that the interference of the direct sound from the two sources causes cancellation (because of phase differences), the ear may home in on a reflection. And to compound the confusion, when the angular response of the speakers used varies with frequency, instruments may appear to wander as they change pitch.

Unfortunately, this type of loudspeaker defect will not show up as such in either the free-field or the power-response measurements. However, its presence can sometimes be detected by comparing the two. In Figure 3, the on-axis response of the speaker looks flat from 30 to 17,000 Hz, falling off only at the extremes of the audio range. In contrast, the power response, while holding up well at low frequencies, dips at about 1,800 Hz and then falls rapidly above 4,000 Hz. This could be the response of a three-way speaker system with crossovers at 2,000 and 5,000 Hz. The dip at 1,800 Hz suggests the "flat" on-axis response is actually due to on-axis, in-phase reinforcement of the mid-range and tweeter, as it was in Figure 2. The rapid drop-off above 4,000 Hz suggests that the tweeter is suffering from on-axis beaming and is radiating little energy to the sides.

From all this it should be evident that when the manufacturer provides us with the total acoustic-power response of his loudspeaker, he has done much toward telling us how it will sound in an actual room. If he further provides us with the free-field axial response, we can make a judgment about the directional characteristics of the speaker. Nevertheless, it is possible that the kind of situation shown in Figure 2 may not show up as a difference

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**Figure 2.** Interference between drivers can cause various anomalies in speaker performance. Here the off-axis output of the lower driver interferes with the on-axis output of the upper one.

**Figure 3.** On-axis and power responses of a speaker system compared. The dip in the power response at 1,800 Hz suggests interference between drivers, and the rapid roll-off in response above 4,000 Hz indicates tweeter "beaming."
between the axial response and the power response. However, the same kind of random-noise signal used for power-response measurements can disclose—by ear—such response irregularities: using an FM receiver tuned off-station to supply the random noise, and moving slowly in a circle about a yard or so from a speaker system, listen for changes in sound quality. If the radiations of the individual drivers are interfering with each other, you will hear an effect as though the sound were swishing up and down.

So far we have talked about only one characteristic of a loudspeaker—its frequency response. But the reverberation chamber helps to unravel other once-mysterious differences in the sound of loudspeakers which appear to measure identically in the anechoic chamber. One elusive characteristic is transient response. This is a measure of the ability of the speaker cone to start and stop in precise response to the controlling signal. With poor transient response, castanets, for example, will sound like maracas. This is an indication that the speaker cone has too much inertia for its operating conditions, making it hard to start—and, once moving, to stop.

Fortunately, a property which is a result of this inability to stop is discernable in the power-response curve. When hit with transient signals that activate the frequencies at which it has troubles, the speaker cone tends to resonate, producing a particular output frequency. The cone, in other words, "rings." And each combination of mass and compliance (compliance in this case is the amount of stretching the cone will do) results in such a resonance frequency. At these frequencies the efficiency is higher, resulting in peaks in the acoustic-power response that are particularly evident when noise bandwidths narrower than 1/3 octave are used as the test signal. Such peaks often do not appear in the free-field, on-axis response because they are hidden by phase interference. A smooth power-response curve is usually an indication of good transient response.

While poor transient response is indicated by peaks in the power-response curve, the curve sometimes also shows sharp dips caused by poor crossover design in a multi-driver system. However, such dips can also be caused by resonances resulting from the cone dimensions; they relate to the phenomenon called cone breakup. When properly controlled, this cone breakup actually helps to extend and smooth the frequency response of the loudspeaker, but when it is poorly controlled the different parts of the cone are putting out signals that interfere with each other. When the signal input at a frequency near the dip is strong enough, a spurious frequency—at half the input frequency—is radiated. In the jargon of the loudspeaker manufacturer, this is cone-cry, and it is indeed a forlorn sound.

Throughout this article we have been discussing acoustic power; now let us define it in practical terms. Any form of energy—electricity, light, mechanical motion, sound—can be measured in terms of the amount that flows or is transferred or converted in a given time. We call that rate of flow power, and we measure it in watts. However, our ears do not hear changes in power; they hear changes in air pressure. For a sound source—be it a loudspeaker or a musical instrument—to produce a given pressure at our ears, the amount of power it must radiate varies with the environment that must be filled up with the sound. A symphony orchestra must radiate an average of about 5 watts of sound to produce an average 90 dB sound-pressure level at a seat in a large auditorium, but a loudspeaker need radiate only 0.05 watt to produce the same level in our smaller living rooms. The early reflections shown in Figure 1 may allow a lower sound-pressure level to produce an equivalent subjective loudness—but only for reproduction of speech and some transients, not for sustained musical sounds.

A typical bookshelf speaker system has an efficiency of about 0.5 per cent. To radiate an acoustic power of 0.05 watt, it will need an electrical power drive from the amplifier of 10 watts. To properly reproduce peaks only 20 dB over the average, an amplifier with 1,000 watts output will be required—plus a speaker system that can take it. Since only 0.5 per cent of the energy going into the speaker is radiated as sound, the remaining 995 watts must be dissipated as heat somewhere in the speaker system.

Ordinarily, the peaks will be sufficiently short that heat will not build up enough to do damage, but the danger is still there. An efficiency rating based on a speaker's total acoustic-power output can make the consumer aware of this danger, as well as provide some guidance in the selection of an amplifier whose power capabilities are in accord with the needs of his speaker system. The total acoustic-power response measurement thus provides us with the other half of the picture described by the free-field response. It is another step toward providing laboratory specifications that will predict how a loudspeaker will perform in a home environment.

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The Storyteller was lying down in a chair. His feet, in boots branded with two T's over an H, were hanging over an ottoman and he was peering between them at a spectacle that simply would have outraged the secretary of the Harper Valley PTA: an ordinary twenty-seven-inch color television screen on which this big hotel in sinful New York City was imposing a closed-circuit movie rated "R" and involving a lot of running stark naked in the woods by this blonde girl one might describe as tediously confused but willowy.

Yes, we were a long way from Harper Valley, a long way from Olive Hill, Kentucky, the real-life hometown of Tom T. Hall — and 150 miles farther than that from my own old digs in that same state. Tom T. Hall did not rise; he cranked his body around and extended a hand and said, "Good to see ya." And while I was looking for a repository for my soggy jacket, finding none, and depositing it on the carpet behind his chair, Tom T. came up on one elbow and gave some woman — one of several persons in the room — a long, noisy goodbye kiss. Then he stood up and gave her another. He lay down in the chair again and told Ria McKaie, the Mercury Records publicity person, "Naw, you don't have to leave. We're not going to interview. We're just going to talk." Then he asked someone to call room service for some more of that wine, which turned out to be Paul Masson rosé sent up by the half-gallon. I was only dimly aware of all this, of course, being half an hour late and soaking wet, and thoroughly preoccupied with designing tortures of various sorts for the people who run oil companies, airplanes that don't land where or when they're supposed to, taxicabs that won't stop, and people who have nothing better to do than clog up the sidewalks when a man has to be somewhere.

We were well into that not exactly tasteless but certainly efficient wine before I tried to make sense out of present, random observations. Must have been along about then that I started to speculate that Tom T. just might have been making a bit of a show of not getting up, not having someone take the visitor's coat, doing all that loud smooching in front of.
of strangers known to be handy with typewriters, and, later, getting our wine glasses mixed up and pouring the contents of mine down his own throat . . . in which case, was he watching to see what I would do about all or part of this?

I had to reach practically across his lap to get hold of his glass, but I picked the bastard up and drained it—or "dreened" it, as they used to say in Kentucky—in one gulp, or perhaps two, and made a last-second decision against trying to flash Tom T. a knowing Good Old Boy look because, for some reason, the thing that filled my mind was the expression on my uncle's face the time he told us his stump-sucking mare had made her escape by eating the fence. There are journalists whose sensitivity to form and manners might drive Tom T. to a dramatic nose-picking demonstration or something, I fancied, and this had all the markings of some kind of test. Tom T., I thought, wanted to establish as quickly as possible—so there'd be some time left to talk about his extraordinary songwriting record—that he isn't about to brown-nose any journalists, or anybody else. Tom T., as they say down home, is as independent as a hog on ice.

It is not easy for a preacher's son from Kentucky to grow up and be so candid, but I guess Hall has worked at it, and I can see that it works in a kind of circular way to guard the salvageable portion of his privacy. Anyway, one who allows—perhaps encourages—strangers to quote him saying any damned thing that pops into his head is interesting in proportion to what pops, and Tom T. doesn't have to sweat that. He's the Storyteller, remember, and also a pretty fair ad-libber, pun-maker, joke-rememberer—hell, he's even a reader—so he would make good copy even if he hadn't written Harper Valley PTA, Ravishing Ruby, The Day That Clayton Delaney Died, Subdivision Blues, and scores of other tunes that have made the country-music hit parade at the rate of one or two a week for some thing like nine years. Mercury naturally looks at his parade at the rate of one or two a week for something like nine years. Mercury naturally looks at his string of achievements and at what good copy he generates and has visions of his CROSSING OVER, which is like having visions of untold riches ("cross-over" is the term for the manic record buying that can happen when the vast popular-music audience takes a shine to a country artist).

Harper Valley PTA crossed over for country singer Jeanie C. Riley six years ago and is still selling. Hall, who once turned down a recording contract because he figured he was doing all right as a songwriter, is less concerned about crossing over than—there's no uncanny way of saying this—doing his own thing, going his own way, hoeing his own row.

"I don't run out and buy a record to see what's quote going on unquote," he told me. "You know, sit down with a pile of records and an ounce of grass and 'get into' these latest sounds from the coast or someplace, because first thing you know we might both be doing what they're doing and nobody would do what Tom T. Hall does. I don't want to do any reactionary writing, is all. I just hear my music the way everybody else does, you know, on the radio, in the car, at the drugstore, whatever. I try to keep in touch with what real people—as opposed to pick ers—are doing, watch Walter Cronkite, read the newspaper, drink a little booze . . ."
... a premise, an idea... it has no form. It's not worded, and I don't rush it. I just let it lay there.

"I try to make whatever large statements I have to make in the form of stories involving ordinary people—I can't handle huge concepts, but I can handle two or three characters for two or three minutes.

"They asked me to write a Watergate song and I did [Watergate Blues], sort of clinically, but if I'd taken more time I could've written a real Watergate song. It wouldn't have been a big, head-on treatment: it might have taken the form of a story about a pooh bear, or a cab driver and a passenger, but it would have been about Watergate.

"I get up in the morning and I know what that's like, so sometimes I think, well, Nixon has to get up in the morning too, same way, and so did Hitler, and so does McGovern and so did Jesus—you might be able to figure out how I voted by the way I paired 'em off there—and I'm not thinking of myself on their level but trying to bring them down to mine. We have some common experiences. So I believe the actions and reactions between two individuals, two little grains of sand in this big old universe, can tell any story you have to tell, make any statement you have to make. Everything world-shaking can happen right here in this room, all the emotions. You can have World War III in an automobile accident—same emotions, same violence—as far as the individuals involved are concerned. I can't manipulate the whole world, but I can manipulate these little grains of sand."

Hall's way of doing things may rangle semi-official Nashville in many respects. He is suspected of being an intellectual, doesn't call everybody "hoss" the way simple songwriters down from the hills are expected to, and is identified with such renegades as Kris Kristofferson, Waylon Jennings, Willie Nelson, and Tompall Glaser, old boys who never set out to behave like chamber-of-commerce PR men and ain't about to start now. And certain powers in Nashville are quite image-conscious these days ("In Nashville," Tom T. says, "we're known as 'the unstables'").

His song language, rippling with the cadences and heaped up with the homilies of real people's talk, seems more at home among the old country songs, good and bad, by such people as Jimmie Rodgers and A. P. Carter than it does among the slogans and singing commercial rewrites and square-hip "cross-over" whoring in the majority of your "modern" country songs. He has the same cavalier attitude about melodies those old fellows had, too, having used essentially the same one at varying tempos for four or five songs ("Picture a daisy swaying in the breeze," he told me when I asked him about melody writing, "then picture a train wreck—somewhere between the two is the right melody for anything you've got to say"), but occasionally, as they did, coming up with a dandy that doesn't sound something like all his others.

But Hall has developed his intelligence the way the good folks back home pointed it: his becoming a storyteller rather than a dealer in abstractions, cosmic or otherwise, was the natural way to go. Larry L. King, another country boy and one of the best of us old magazine writers, put it this way: "My country forebears talked colorfully and well in their country idioms of adventures among snake-handling religious cults or experiences along the creek banks, and they provided helpful instructions in the arts of coon hunting, blacksmithing, and crop tending. It was not easy, however, to catch them discoursing on ideas." Back up in the country (Larry's from Texas), a man who wanted to make a point, teach a lesson, illuminate a concept, inspire someone, or suggest how society might be improved did it by telling a tale. That was the way Jesus did it.

And so it may come to pass that a visitor in Tom T. Hall's hotel suite hears him worry aloud about finding gasoline for his band bus by relating the parable of Waylon and the truck stop—how Waylon Jennings, not long back, set up his sound system in a dried-up truck stop and did a show for striking truckers who, in appreciation, found enough gasoline to get Waylon's bus back on the tour.

Or Tom T. may, in the preamble to one story, relate this whole other story. Getting set to tell me how he met the old black man who, with such questions as "How old you think I am?" and "You ever drink any watermelon wine?", inspired the writing of Old Dogs, Children, and Watermelon Wine (I'd heard the story before, but I wanted a crack at any fresh details that might surface), Tom T. reminded himself that this occurred "just after I gave away the P. A. system." It seems his sound system was a dud. "Must've had three grand in the son of a bitch and it still squeaked and belched and staticked all the time," he said. "We were playing at Flamingo Park there in Florida, outside the Democratic National Convention, supposedly pickin' so the kids would stay there and not go tear up the town. Damn thing was a dried-up truck stop and did a show for striking truckers who, in appreciation, found enough gasoline to get Waylon's bus back on the tour.
clean in about fifteen seconds. I was just standing there, sort of blinking at all this, when a little man came up to me, very timidly, and said, ‘Mr. Hall, ... uh, you just gave away three of my microphones.’ I’d forgot we’d rounded up some extra mikes in our efforts to balance the sound.” That was reason enough for Tom T. to go to a bar—almost anything is—and the encounter with the old man and the creation of Old Dogs followed.

“Wrote it down—this will sound hokey, now—on an airplane sick bag as I was flying back to Nashville,” he said, and did I say fresh details? “Got off the plane at 9:30, recorded the song at 10 o’clock. Ought to do more of them that way, get ’em before they cool off.”

Tom T. tends to downgrade his singing with sentences like, “I just go in the studio and do what Jerry Kennedy tells me”—Kennedy being his producer—or “I’m just another old boy who picks guitar and sings through his nose.” But in fact he has developed a reasonably on-key baritone that isn’t nearly as nasal as it appeared in his first few albums. He can sound clipped, harried, and testy, which is just the thing for the outrageous Subdivision Blues; he can sound personally hurt in something like I Flew over Our House Last Night; and he can sound several ways in between. He is more valuable as a writer, however, for nobody else is getting to the quick of rural-slanted themes as he is in songs like Homecoming, in which a picker comes home, not exactly having made it big and too late for his mother’s funeral ... in songs like Ravishing Ruby, about the waitress who’s still watching for her daddy, a trucker, who left her with the old couple who run this truck stop a long time back ... and others, lots of others.

He cranked his body around for another semiprone handshake when I left, and I left actually thinking, By George, I’ve got this old boy figured out—and it didn’t take long for that thought to leave me feeling depressed ... somehow taking it as a personal loss that there were numerous grey hairs among the brown ones on his thirty-six-year-old head, eight or ten unneeded pounds ranging themselves around his tall frame ... wishing I didn’t have a furtive, all but hidden interest in knowing what kind of marriage he and Dixie, who writes a country-music column and raises bassett hounds, have back there in the Nashville suburbs ... alarmed, at some hazy party, to find myself thinking of Tom T. Hall and Kris and Waylon and Johnny Cash and other pickers and saying into the nearest clump of heavy hitters and Kafka quoters, “The aware person’s alternatives are either (a) too much whisky, or (b) too much Billy Graham.”

But I’m better now, thank you, having realized in a brief fit of common sense that we had there a little case of identifying, or projecting, or some other of those psych terms that try to get at the notion that it wasn’t so much Tom T. that I was analyzing as it was myself. We’ve got a few things and prejudices in common, but, hell, a horseback glance at the stuff he’s written confirms he’s a much more complicated man than I could hope to unravel in an afternoon, soaked as I was by the elements, harassed by the schlock troops outside, numbed by cheap wine, and distracted by crazy naked wenches’ romping images on that once reliably bland institution of visual Muzak, the tube. As if to cap my sudden and happy collision with common sense, Tom T. Hall wrote a song that as much as says he knew all along what I was up to, so let me (as it says in a lot of old country songs and in one of Tom T.’s newer ones) leave you with this thought, as worded by Tom T. into Last Hard Town, a song about the motivations of pickers and of listeners and possibly of magazine writers, and about how they view one another:

Better than the cover of The Rolling Stone? Tom T. and his wife Dixie contemplate his name set in brass in the star-studded concrete walkway in front of Nashville’s Country Music Hall of Fame.

They came to see the people
That they thought we were
And never changed their minds.
They explained away the difference
‘Cause the folks who love a picker
Can be blind.

They misunderstood the words
But understood that our
Intentions were the best:
The thing that keeps us goin’
Is the good folks
In the last hard town we met.*

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LOUDSPEAKER FAILURE
Its causes and prevention
By Peter W. Mitchell

Can you damage your loudspeakers by playing music too loud? Yes, and you don't need a super-power amplifier to do it. Even a low-power amplifier can cause damage if it is regularly pushed beyond its maximum power-output capability. But you needn't panic; such damage doesn't happen very often. Still, for your peace of mind, as well as to protect the investment you have made in high-quality speakers, you might like to know what causes loudspeaker failure in general and what you can do to prevent it in your system. To show how and where damage can occur, we'll begin with a review of loudspeaker anatomy.

Anatomy
Most loudspeaker systems consist of one or more drivers installed in an enclosure. By driver, I mean a woofer, a mid-range, or a tweeter. The driver (see Figure 1) consists of several parts, most prominent of which is the "diaphragm," the shallow cone or rounded dome that is visible when the enclosure's grille is removed. Attached to the back of the cone or dome is a cylindrical bobbin on which is wound a coil of fine wire, the voice coil. The voice coil fits into a narrow circular slot in an assembly consisting of a permanent magnet and a surrounding structure of soft iron. The slot, or "gap," has to be narrow in order to concentrate the magnet's field on the voice coil. A circular piece of spring-like corrugated fabric, called a spider, is used to guide the movement of the voice coil so that it remains centered in the narrow slot of the magnetic assembly. Woofers (low-frequency drivers), tweeters (high-frequency drivers), and mid-ranges are all made this way, though they differ in details. (This description, of course, applies to "dynamic" speakers, which represent the vast majority of speakers sold today. Electrostatic loudspeakers and a few other novel types are constructed differently.)

The combination of voice coil and magnetic assembly constitutes an electric "motor" designed to be driven by the output of an audio amplifier. The amplifier, in sending an audio signal to the speaker system, causes an electrical current to flow in the voice coil—a small current for small signals, a rather large one for loud musical passages. The flow of the current causes a varying magnetic field to be formed about the voice coil, and this field, because...
of its interaction with the driver's magnet, causes the coil to move rapidly backward and forward (vibrate) in the magnetic assembly's slot. And since the coil is attached directly to the diaphragm, it also moves, in turn imposing its vibratory motion on the air in the form of rapid pressure variations, otherwise known as sound.

The louder the sound a given speaker system is called upon to produce, the greater must be the current flowing through its voice coil and the longer the back-and-forth motions (excursions) performed by the voice-coil/diaphragm assembly. These are the factors of most concern to us.

Types of Damage

Aside from the obvious possibilities of direct physical abuse (rupturing the diaphragm with a well-placed kick, or dropping the whole loudspeaker down a flight of stairs), there are two common sources of loudspeaker damage: excessive voice-coil excursion (especially in the woofer) and the buildup of excessive heat in the voice coil (especially in the tweeter).

- **Excursion.** For music reproduced at average home loudness levels, the back-and-forth excursion of the voice coil is only a small fraction of an inch. This usually leaves enough excursion in reserve to handle the loudest musical moments on modern recordings, or even to permit a substantial increase in the volume-control setting. But if you ever do drive the voice coil beyond its design range, several things can happen. The voice coil may be driven all the way back into the slot in the magnet structure, so that it strikes the back plate of the assembly. This voice-coil "bottoming" is quite audible, often taking the form of a rapid clacking or clicking or even a hair-raising "blatt." Another possibility is that excessive excursion will drive the voice coil so far forward that it pops out of its slot and fails to re-enter it properly. This often results in permanent misalignment. The voice coil then rubs against the internal parts of the magnet assembly, causing a scraping or a rattle on certain notes. Another possibility is that the coil could become jammed in the slot, preventing further movement altogether. Excessive excursion may also stretch or tear the fabric spider that holds the coil centered in the gap, or it may similarly damage the diaphragm where it is bonded to the metal frame of the driver. Finally, there are the wires that carry the electric current to the voice coil from the speaker's input terminals (or from the crossover); if the coil is vibrating back and forth too vigorously, these wires are flexed excessively and may fray and finally break. Figure 2 on the following page illustrates some of these mishaps.

Of these excursion problems, voice-coil bottoming in the woofer is by far the most frequent, the result of playing music too loud. The other kinds of damage mentioned above usually require drastically excessive excursion. For instance, if you install standard a.c. plugs and extension sockets on your speaker wires in order to permit convenient disconnection of the speakers for house cleaning, sooner or later someone will make the mistake of plugging a speaker line into an a.c. wall socket. The speaker will absorb over a thousand watts of power, emitting a brief but very loud death rattle—and the demise is not covered by the warranty. So if you want to have quick-disconnect plugs in your speaker lines, use any kind of connector (phone plugs or dual banana plugs) other than the a.c. type. (Incidentally, speaker drive signals themselves pose no shock hazard, so you needn't worry about exposed wires or pins as long as they don't touch each other and short-circuit the amplifier.)

- **Heat.** When you play music loud, your amplifier puts more electrical current through the voice coils of your speakers. Now, whenever an electrical current flows in a wire, some heating occurs, and the greater the current the hotter the wire becomes. This is why house wiring is equipped with fuses or circuit breakers, to stop excessive current safely before it can overheat the wires in your walls and start a fire. There's not too much danger of fire inside your loudspeakers, but it is possible, by persistently playing music at excessive loudness levels, to build up enough voice-coil heat to melt the insulation of the voice-coil wires, thus causing a short circuit, or to char the voice-coil form and the adhesive bonding the wire. Tweeters are particularly susceptible to this kind of damage, since their design requires low-mass voice coils with thin wire that heats up all the more quickly.

General Precautions

In the preceding paragraphs I may have painted a frightening picture of loudspeaker vulnerability. Actually, high-fidelity loudspeakers are not all that fragile; in fact, they could be considered the most reliable component in an audio system. But their design is optimized for reproducing recorded music in the home, and the likelihood of damage goes up when a speaker is fed signals its designer did not anticipate for it.

At mid-range frequencies, where most music (and especially recorded music) has its greatest concentration of sonic energy, a good speaker can play loud enough to satisfy practically anyone. In fact,
for much music, even small speakers can safely be driven by surprisingly powerful amplifiers.

But with loud signals at very low and very high frequencies, a speaker can run into severe problems. It is characteristic of loudspeakers that, the lower the frequency of a musical sound, the greater is the excursion needed to produce a desired sound level. A good loudspeaker can safely play tympani drum beats (with a fundamental frequency of, say, 200 Hz) as loud as you please. But to reproduce a bass drum (perhaps around 50 Hz) at equivalent loudness levels would require upwards of sixteen times greater voice-coil/cone excursion, which may run the voice coil out of the gap or "bottom" it.

Usually the smaller and less expensive a loudspeaker is, the less power-handling capacity it has at extremely low frequencies. (Don't confuse this with frequency response. There are some compact, low-cost speaker systems that respond down to the lowest frequencies and reproduce a bass drum well at musically satisfying levels in a conventionally small listening room. But they won't shake the floors nor fill a large hall with adequate bass levels.) Since excessive excursion is the result of too much signal at the lowest frequencies, woofer damage can be avoided by a straightforward rule: don't turn up your volume and bass controls too much at the same time. Feel free to use as much amplifier bass boost as you like at moderate loudness levels, and feel free to crank up the volume control to a satisfyingly loud level with just moderate bass boost. But high volume and high bass boost together are a prescription for danger. When a woofer is overdriven it may exhibit audible distress signals: clicking (voice-coil bottoming) or buzzing. If you hear these noises, turn down the controls fast!

There are other potential sources of excessive low-frequency input. If you leave the volume and/or bass controls turned up high while lowering the phono stylus to a record groove or while tuning rapidly across the FM dial, strong low-frequency pulses can be generated that may cause enormous woofer excursions and possible damage. Some tape recorders and amplifiers may also produce low-frequency thumps during switching. And, of course, connecting or disconnecting any shielded cables may produce low-frequency thumps. And, of course, connecting or disconnecting any shielded cables should never be done with the system turned on. Finally, cleaning the phono stylus with your equipment on and switched to the phono input can produce massive low-frequency signals, even if the proper technique is used (brush only from back to front, not side-to-side). If you have rugged speakers and a low-to-medium power amplifier, these various low-frequency impulses may prove to be annoying rather than dangerous. But if your amp is rated at 100 watts or more per channel, you should definitely write to the manufacturer of your speakers and inquire about fusing your speaker lines. Remember that many amplifiers can pass large signals with frequencies far above and below the range of human hearing, so it's sometimes what you don't hear that proves damaging in the end. Fuses may protect your speakers against these unperceived intruders. In addition, with all amplifiers it is wise to make a habit of turning the volume control down before operating any other control in the stereo system.

The principal factors in tweeter failure are heat and broken connecting leads. A good tweeter can accommodate astonishingly large bursts of momentary power, but sustained high-frequency signals can burn it out or cause its wires to break from continuous rapid flexing. It is fortunate that the power-handling capability of tweeters is well matched to the sonic characteristics of most music. Those instruments which can generate large amounts of high-frequency energy (bells, cymbals, and other percussion instruments) usually do so only in brief bursts with rest periods between notes. Instruments that can produce continuous high-frequency sounds (piccolos, organ, violins) usually do not do so very loudly. Most classical, jazz, and even rock music is therefore no threat to your tweeters even if played at high volume levels.

But beware of music containing repeated or sustained sounds that are both high-pitched and very loud, as these can melt tweeter voice coils at high volume-control settings. For example, in some rock recordings the engineers compress the dynamic range to a nearly constant volume level, so that your tweeters are not given time to cool between bursts of maximum energy. With these recordings you shouldn't attempt to approach the sort of sustained high loudness levels that are heard in clubs and at highly amplified concerts unless you
are confident of your speakers’ capabilities in this regard. Uncompressed high-fidelity recordings, on the other hand, not only sound more lifelike and have more impact than compressed recordings; they are also generally safer to play at high volume levels because they have a high peak-to-average ratio. Even though the peaks may draw the full power of the amplifier, they will do so only briefly, whereas the long-term average levels will be considerably lower. On the other hand, one tends to set the volume control somewhat higher for uncompressed music since the average level is lower, so when a loud, uncompressed peak comes along, it may blow the speaker fuses.

Unlike acoustic musical instruments, electronic music synthesizers such as the Moog can generate sustained high-frequency sounds at any level the composer desires, and so may exceed the performance capabilities of high-fidelity loudspeakers. Brief beeps and whistles that sweep up and out quickly are usually no problem, but if the music contains continuous high whistles, play it safe and moderate the volume level. Another way you might melt your tweeters’ voice coils is by feeding in single-frequency test tones from a signal generator or test record with the volume control turned up to help you hear the highest tones clearly. Test tones are hazardous for several reasons. First of all, unlike music signals, they are continuous, and the tweeter doesn’t get a chance to cool off between notes. Secondly, because of the nature of the human hearing mechanism, the ear finds the true intensity of single-frequency tones difficult to judge. They often sound much softer than music at the same levels, thus tempting one to increase the amplifier output to a level beyond what the speakers can tolerate. Tape recorders that let you hear the tape output to a level beyond what the speakers can tolerate. Another way you might damage your tweeters’ voice coils is by feeding in single-frequency test tones from a signal generator or test record with the volume control turned up to help you hear the highest tones clearly. Test tones are hazardous for several reasons. First of all, unlike music signals, they are continuous, and the tweeter doesn’t get a chance to cool off between notes. Secondly, because of the nature of the human hearing mechanism, the ear finds the true intensity of single-frequency tones difficult to judge. They often sound much softer than music at the same levels, thus tempting one to increase the amplifier output to a level beyond what the speakers can tolerate. Tape recorders that let you hear the tape output to a level beyond what the speakers can tolerate. Another way you might damage your tweeters’ voice coils is by feeding in single-frequency test tones from a signal generator or test record with the volume control turned up to help you hear the highest tones clearly. Test tones are hazardous for several reasons. First of all, unlike music signals, they are continuous, and the tweeter doesn’t get a chance to cool off between notes. Secondly, because of the nature of the human hearing mechanism, the ear finds the true intensity of single-frequency tones difficult to judge. They often sound much softer than music at the same levels, thus tempting one to increase the amplifier output to a level beyond what the speakers can tolerate.

If you find that, at the loudness level you enjoy, the sound takes on a biting, harsh, or gritty texture it lacks at lower levels, then you may be driving your amplifier into distortion. The strident quality is caused by clipping, which generates lots of spurious high-frequency energy. (“Clipping” is what an amplifier does to the musical signal when driven beyond its rated power output.) If you find this biting edge on the sound attractive (some do) and continue operating your stereo system this way, you are gambling with the life of your tweeters. They can reproduce short bursts of high-frequency energy brilliantly, but a continuous diet of clipping distortion is murder. This is a situation where a high-power amplifier, reproducing the signal loud and clear, can actually be safer than a lower-power amp which is continuously driven into distortion. According to one manufacturer, more tweeters are damaged by moderate-power amplifiers than by super-power amps operating cleanly. Therefore, as you turn up the volume, listen to the quality of the sound. As long as it sounds at least as clean as it did at lower levels, you’re safe. But the intrusion of an edgy or distorted quality that gets rapidly worse as volume increases is a danger sign.

Incidentally, if your amplifier has provisions for plugging in an electric guitar or electric bass, don’t play such instruments loudly through your stereo speakers. Recordings of these instruments (which have been subjected to various limiting processes) can safely be played through high-fidelity speakers, but special instrument speakers are needed to handle the direct output from the electric instruments themselves unless they are played very softly. Of course, if you want to play even recorded rock music at the loudness levels encountered in the front row at a rock concert, you need speakers designed specifically to produce those sound-pressure levels. Practically no conventional high-fidelity loudspeaker can.

Specific Tips

As I have indicated, high-fidelity loudspeakers made by reputable manufacturers can safely be used with amplifiers of any power rating to play most kinds of music as loud as most people want to hear it in their homes. Much of the time, there is no need to be at all concerned with the power-handling capabilities of loudspeakers. But if you want to protect your speakers from accidents and from extreme conditions, follow these sensible rules:

1. Don’t install standard a.c. plugs on your speaker wires.
2. Be alert for the danger signs of an overdriven stereo system: clicking or buzzing from the woofer, and strident or gritty treble that clears up at lower loudness levels.
3. Turn down the volume when changing records, tuning FM, flipping switches, fast-winding a tape, etc.
4. At high volume levels don’t use excessive bass boost, especially with small speakers.
5. Don’t play FM interstation hiss or high-pitched electronic music at very loud levels, and don’t play test tones at even moderately loud levels.
6. If you are using a very high-power amplifier, follow your speaker manufacturer’s recommendations about fusing. (There’s no easy formula for calculating the proper fuse for a given speaker.)

Peter Mitchell, an astrophysicist with the A VCO Everett Research Laboratory, is president of the Boston Audio Society and co-moderator of a Boston FM program devoted to audio matters.
How to get next to your very own NEARPHONES
A midsummer project for the demon audiophile

By Larry Klein  
Technical Editor

The young lady who graces our cover this month is sitting in one possible version of a build-it-yourself nearphone listening chair. The term "nearphone" was coined by Peter Tuppan, an acoustician with the firm of Bolt Beranek and Newman, and the nearphone approach has been explored by other researchers in past years. But since the design demands that nearphones be either part of a piece of furniture or take the form of a rather ungainly speaker arrangement, the nearphone configuration reached the market only in an expensive but good-looking chair manufactured by Lee West, Inc. (2824 Metropolitan Place, Pomona, California 91767). However, there's no magic element in the design, and following the simple instructions below should enable you to convert any suitable chair (or small
enclosed area) into an inexpensive nearphone “environment.”

The theory behind the nearphone is gratifyingly simple. It not only combines some of the best features of earphones and conventional loudspeakers, but also eliminates some of the faults inherent in both. Today’s better stereo headphones have evolved to a state of sonic excellence, and in respect to distortion and frequency and transient response, they sound quite as good as the finest speakers and are a lot less expensive for the sound quality delivered. However, as most headphones users are aware, discs and tapes are not normally recorded in a way that is particularly compatible with headphone listening. Not only is the stereo stage created by headphones distributed variously and unnaturally across your brow, your pate, or the nap of your neck, but in addition the performer’s placement rotates in a very un-certhall-like way as you turn your head. It is for perfectly valid psychoacoustic reasons, therefore, that some people find earphone listening most unpleasant, and quite apart from the possible physical discomfort of having to wear a device on the head. Judging by the sales figures, however, those who find headphones sonically unbearable—or physically unwearable—are in the minority. Or possibly the discomforts experienced are more than compensated for by the joys of hearing a frequency response unaffected by poor room acoustics and of being able to deliver to the ears a loudness level that if attempted with loudspeakers would provoke unpleasant reactions from the neighbors.

Since the nearphone listener hears what acousticians refer to as the “on-axis near-field” of the speakers, a very smooth, extended, and low-distortion response can be obtained from inexpensive drivers installed in simple baffles. This is true because large movements of the speaker cones (a prime source of distortion) are not required, nor is wide dispersion. Too, resonances from the baffle and, of course, room effects are avoided. One 6-inch or larger single-cone, full-range driver can be used for each channel. (Lafayette, Radio Shack, Olson, and others sell such units for under $20 a pair.) Avoid two-way systems unless the woofer and tweeter are mounted coaxially. Many of the better car-radio speakers made by Jensen and others should do a fine job either mounted in their original baffles or installed in home-built baffles. You can pay up to $50 a pair for these, but the special virtues, in a car, of the more expensive units are not really needed in nearphone application, mostly because the speakers won’t be driven as hard.

For reasons similar to those that enable headphones to deliver an “impossible” low-frequency response given the limitations of their “baffle” dimensions, nearphone speakers can do very well with an open-back flat baffle with, say, a foot or so frontal area and perhaps 8-inch sides. The larger the drivers used and the closer they are to the ears, the less is required from the baffle.

The speakers should be mounted at ear level and as far forward as possible, but tilted so they are aimed directly at the ears of the listener. For a four-channel speaker arrangement, simply move the two rear speakers about until you achieve the most pleasing channel-to-channel balance. As a possible bonus, anyone outside the nearphone field will hear the music at background level, while the nearphone listener hears a satisfyingly loud performance.

The connections to your amplifier are conventional. Use the amplifier’s remote-speaker terminals or buy or construct (see the diagram at left) a switch setup that will permit you to hook in the nearphone speakers. Wire in a stereo level control (actually a pair of concentrically mounted L-pads, available from most parts suppliers) between the amplifier output and the speakers. This will enable you to adjust both the overall level and the relative balance between the nearphone drivers. Set the amplifier controls so that the nearphones are playing slightly louder than you would normally use them, and then make fine adjustments with nearphone pads. Note that if you use the L-pads turned down more than 50 per cent while the amplifier is turned up, you may overheat the pads. Quadraphonic nearphones will require four level controls, of course.

If the preceding instructions seem somewhat skimpy, it’s mostly because the best procedure to follow is one of trial and error. Adjust the speakers’ positions for the best effect before fixing them permanently in place. There are no rules to follow other than those given above, and when you get things right, the sound quality will really surprise you.
MADY MESPLE
A French soprano scores a classical "breakout"
By Henri-Louis de La Grange

"MUSIC is not only my occupation. It is my passion, my reason for existing!" says French singer Mady Mesple. "But if I were to be reborn, I would like to be a man—and a conductor." Few other sopranos in history would, I think, have made such a statement, especially those who venture into the lofty regions above the staff, regions reputedly inhabited only by scatterbrains. But Mme. Mesple is not a usual sort of soprano, nor a usual sort of woman, as her abruptly challenging candor demonstrates.

When I interviewed Mesple in her New York hotel shortly after her debut at the Metropolitan Opera earlier this season, she answered my questions and told me the story of her life in the simplest, most straightforward way. Her love of music stems from her background and early youth. She was only four years old when her parents took her to the opera for the first time. It was a performance of Faust at the Capitole Theater in her native city, Toulouse. Was it an instant revelation? "Not at all," Mesple replied. "I was scared to death because I had been told that I would see the devil in the flesh. I kept asking my parents why the tenor ‘couldn’t speak.’ They explained that he was an Italian singing in his native language, but I was deeply disturbed just the same."

Mado, as she was then called, was lucky to have been born in Toulouse, which is probably the only city in France with a real singing tradition. Music was the cause of her parents' meeting and subsequent marriage, since both were members of the same choral group. Because of this, it was Mado's early wish for a singing career immediately encouraged. She seemed surprised by my question. "Not in the least! My mother had a lovely voice when she was young, but my grandmother wouldn’t hear of a singing career for her: ‘That milieu of gypsies is not for us!’" My mother felt the same way. She was sure that artists were all people of dubious morals, and she wouldn’t accept the idea of my appearing on a stage."

Such prejudices are by no means unusual in France, the country which nearly denied a Christian burial to its greatest playwright, Molière, because he died an actor.

Fortunately, young Mado’s early passion was for music, not the theater, and she was allowed to start solfège (vocal exercises and sight-singing) at the age of four. Quite soon, she decided that she wanted to be a singer, but her passion for music and a precocious talent for sight-reading nearly destroyed all chances of a career. When she was nine, she was given some opera scores and spent most of her time at the piano, singing all the parts. Why should she be content with Marguerite and Carmen when Don José and Mephisto were also fascinating characters? Soon these became her favorite roles, with disastrous effect on her fragile young voice. Mado’s solfège teacher sounded the alarm and warned her that if she continued all hope of a career would have to be abandoned.

Later the young soprano studied harmony at the Toulouse Conservatory, intending to move to Paris and become a concert pianist. This dream was never fulfilled, but she did pursue her piano studies long enough to make a living for a short time as an accompanist and jazz performer. By then she was already seriously studying singing with Madame Izar, a former operetta soprano and the wife of the director of the Capitole. The Izars became the young girl’s patrons, mentors, and close friends. After consent had been obtained from Mesple’s family, partly by force (Mado proved her determination by running away from home) and partly by deceit (she promised her mother her vocal abilities would be displayed only in church or during first-communion banquets), Madame Izar, a Belgian, obtained the young singer’s first engagement in Belgium. "I shudder when I think how bad I must have been. There I was in Liège making my stage debut as Lakmé (of all parts), wearing eccentric costumes (a white gown with bright red sunflowers in the first act, spangles in the second) designed by a friend of mine, a Toulouse Beaux Arts student! All I knew about stage performances was that I must walk on and then walk off after I had sung.”

The performances must have been at least vocally satisfactory, however, for Mesple was engaged by the Liège Opera and sang a number of roles there. Nevertheless, the theatrical and musical experience thus gained did not greatly increase her self-confidence, and when she later auditioned with 180 other singers for the Brussels Opera, she was so sure she had failed that she did not even bother to consult the list of the five winners—on which her name came first. Later, when she went to Paris, a similar lack of self-confidence led her to wait for several weeks before using the letter of introduction which Madame Izar had written to the director of the Opéra. After her first audition there, she was engaged at once, but rather than the happy fulfillment of a lifelong dream, this heralded a period of complete stagnation. The Opéra was then passing through one of its saddest periods in its long history. Most of the huge company seldom—or never—appeared on stage, although they drew regular salaries.

"One day," Mesple recalled, "I met the administrator in one of the corridors. He had never heard of me and asked me who I was."

To make matters worse, Mesple, who had married in the meantime, had been very ill after the birth of her daughter. Her voice had suffered greatly: the high notes, E and F above the staff, were still there, but little else. For several months, whenever she sang in public, her vocal production was insecure and she suffered lapses of memory. So Mesple started to reconstruct her entire technique with the help of Janine Micheau, her teacher at that time.

Her gloomy period finally came to an end, and Mesple regained full control of her vocal means, but still no one at the Opéra seemed to remember that she existed. Joan Sutherland had been invited to sing Lucia in Paris and the
entire Covent Garden production had been imported for the occasion. After Sutherland had sung her scheduled performances and returned to England, a responsible French administrator suddenly realized that the sets were in Paris for a year and that the Opéra possessed a suitable tenor (Alain Vanzo) and a fine baritone (Robert Massard) for Lucia. Mesple was the only possible choice for the title role, and one day, arriving for a rehearsal, she saw her name printed on a poster which announced the next Lucia performance. She had hardly ever sung in the larger house, the Opéra itself, but only at the Opéra-Comique, and this seemed the chance of a lifetime. But she wasn’t happy, she was furious. She had never sung Lucia in Paris and felt it would be folly to improvise such an important debut. She therefore declined the honor and made her Paris début in the role only several weeks later. Very soon she found herself singing it regularly, as well as Gilda in Rigoletto and the Queen of the Night in The Magic Flute.

Mesplé has also made a name for herself as a concert and opera performer of some difficult avant-garde works. Was she really well-disposed toward the music of this century? “Not a bit,” she answered. “My first modern role was Hilda in Henze’s Elegy for Young Lovers. I usually learn new parts very quickly, but three months before the première I still hadn’t managed to memorize one single phrase. I decided to give up. Then the director of the Nice Opera, where the performance was to take place, told me he would find a German soprano to sing the role in French since ‘once again it appeared that French singers were not responsible professionals.’ I was deeply mortified, of course. Then I thought of Fischer-Dieskau, who had created the leading role in this opera and must have liked it since his motives could not have been money or fame. So I decided to persist and finally discovered that I enjoyed the part.

“Shortly afterwards the viola player Serge Collot brought me a new score by one of the most brilliant younger composers of the French school, Betsy Jolas. It was a quartet for strings and voice. The idea interested me, and I accepted right away. Betsy made a few alterations to suit my voice, and rehearsals began. It was one of the worst ordeals of my life. Betsy’s ear is flawless, and she was never satisfied with anything but complete perfection. Sometimes after practicing for two hours with the trio, I felt as if my brain would explode, and I still wasn’t sure of myself!” Betsy Jolas’ quartet had an immediate and tremendous success at its première, and so did Mesplé, whose performance was a triumph of accuracy and musicianship. She later sang the work in England, Switzerland, and Spain and recorded it for Pathé Marconi (the French affiliate of EMI). “It is so beautifully written for the voice that I never feel tired after a performance,” Mesplé said. “All the ‘friends’ who told me that modern music would ruin my voice must be disappointed!” Since then Maurice Ohana, Patrice Mestral, and Philippe Capdenat have all dedicated compositions to Mesplé, and she has sung Varèse and Schoenberg at the Domaine Muscal, an association founded by Pierre Boulez to further contemporary music.

Before I interviewed Mesplé, Boulez told me that her accuracy of pitch had dazzled him during two performances of Schoenberg’s Verkérmachacht for which he had recently engaged her in London. When I repeated Boulez’s comment to her, Mesplé replied, “Perfect pitch? Not at all. I don’t have it and never have had it. Boulez is wrong. My solfège teacher had told me that my pitch was perfect, but Madame Izar patiently convinced me otherwise. It was a painful realization, but I suddenly understood that the placing of a note could alter its pitch. Intonation is still my main concern when I practice. The Doll’s Aria in Hoffmann, for instance, is not difficult vocally, but to get each note exactly right is another matter. Every time I sing it, I am afraid.”

When I asked her which past and present singers had been her models, Mesplé mentioned two French coloraturas, Lily Pons and Gabrielle Ritter-Campi, as well as the Spanish soprano María Barrientos, whose fast and accurate vocalises she finds unsurpassable. María Callas was also a leading influence because of her way of giving dramatic meaning to every musical phrase. Among her favorite artists, Mesplé also named Barbra Streisand, whose performance in Funny Girl she considers an invaluable lesson for classical singers.

“My life? My plans? Please talk to my manager. I forget so much. Yes, there was Moscow last May, but I wasn’t happy at the Bolshoi. I felt that most of the people attended more out of a sense of duty than for the love of music.” Mesplé’s busy schedule has recently included singing several roles in Buenos Aires as well as Milhaud’s Christophe Colomb in Brussels. After a 1973 tour of Russia, Hungary, Poland, and Rumania, she returned to France to record four operettas—Jean-Robert Planquette’s Les Cloches de Corneville, André Messager’s Véronique, Louis Ganne’s Les Saltimbanques, and Charles Lecocq’s La Fille de Madame Angot—and some arian recitals. Among her records available in the United States are an album of Strauss waltzes, an album of French arias, Villa-Lobos’ Bachianas Brasileiras No. 5, Rossini’s Guillaume Tell, and several works by Erik Satie (all on the Angel label) and a complete version of Lakmé (Seraphim).

About America, Mesplé made only favorable comments. The New World is not a new experience for her. Before her début at the Met as Gilda in Rigoletto, she had already sung in Miami (Lakmé and Philine in Mignon), Washington (Le Comte Ory), and Chicago (The Magic Flute). “What about the Met, then?” was my last question. “Did you find it very large, cold, and inhuman as has been claimed?” “No, I didn’t,” she replied. “In fact, my work there will remain one of the most pleasant memories in my entire career. The atmosphere, both backstage and in the auditorium, is extremely warm, much more so than in Russia. Here, at least, I feel that people attend the opera because they want to hear the music and the singers. I was particularly happy to make my debut with Serge Baudo conducting, since I have often sung with him in Lyons.” Obviously, Mady Mesplé loves America, and one explanation is that American audiences love her. In Seattle, after a local disc jockey had programmed her Angel disc of Strauss waltzes, record shops had difficulty keeping the album in stock, and the Seattle audience took her to its heart when she later appeared with the Seattle opera company. A popular disc “breakout” is not all that unusual, but when was the last time a classical disc scored one?

Henry-Louis de La Grange, a French scholar educated partly in the United States, is the author of the definitive biography of Gustav Mahler, of which volume one was published last fall.
STEREO REVIEW'S SELECTION OF RECORDINGS OF SPECIAL MERIT

BEST OF THE MONTH

CLASSICAL

SARTI'S UNPRETENTIOUSLY MAGNIFICENT RUSSIAN ORATORIO

Musical Heritage Society brings to light an enchanting work by a Mozart contemporary

GIOSEPE SARTI (1729-1802) was an Italian composer of considerable accomplishment and great charm. He is remembered today only because Mozart, who liked both him and his music, used a tune from his Fra i Due Litiganti il Terzo Gode in his own Don Giovanni (it is played by the stage band during the banquet scene) and for a set of keyboard variations. Newell Jenkins once recorded a Sarti Concertone per Piu Strumenti Obbligati for the Haydn Society, but a new Musical Heritage Society disc of his Russian Oratorio (derived from the catalog of the German publisher L. Schwann) constitutes this composer's entire active discography at present. Perhaps it won't quite set off a wholesale Sarti revival, but it might well become this year's "sleeper"—even rock-crazed pre-teens succumb to it without a struggle, and stern musicologist types find themselves going back to it again and again for the sheer fun of it.

Sarti held many posts throughout Europe during his lifetime, and though he died in Berlin on his way home to Italy, his last dozen years or so were spent in Russia, initially in the service of Catherine the Great, later with Prince Potemkin and the Emperor Paul as his patrons. He composed some colorful works to Russian liturgical texts, including a Te Deum (for the victory at Ochakov in 1789) which anticipated Tchaikovsky's 1812 Overture in its use of bells and cannon. The Russian Oratorio (it seems to have no more specific title) evidently relates to Easter: the text is from the Good Friday Vespers and Psalms 67 and 150. The large orchestra includes a pair of piccolos apart from the flutes and four each of clarinets and horns, as well as a prominent organ, a harp, and percussion. The music itself is a fascinating blend of Italian and Russian elements, recalling some of Vivaldi's festive works and yet superbly suited to the Russian text.

Following the splendid orchestral overture, the double chorus is featured in all the remaining numbers but one: the soloists appear only in that penultimate section, a delectable trio with a lovely violin solo. The final chorus, on Psalm 150 ("Praise the Lord . . . with fanfares . . . with harp and zither . . . with drum and horn . . . with lyre and flute . . . with crashing cymbal . . . "), is an incredible swirl of inventive instrumentation, exultant choral writing, and majestically propulsive rhythm. Sarti does not use actual cymbals, but lets the triangle represent them, and this—combined with the dancing piccolos as the crescendo of hallelujahs mounts and the melodic figure in the timpani echoes the words of praise—serves to underscore the ingratiating naïveté that lends the work its Russian flavor. The oratorio achieves an unpretentious magnificence, more like a warmhearted fairy tale than any conventional treatment of...
sacred texts—or so it seems in this joyous, almost ecstatic performance, apparently recorded in a huge church whose acoustic provides the ideal frame for both the grand effects and the intimate ones.

The brief fugal *Gospodiin Pomiluj Ny* (the Orthodox equivalent of a Kyrie—the transliteration in contemporary Russian would be *Gospodi Pomiluj Menya*) is an attractive little encore, but it is the marvelous final chorus of the oratorio itself that will be encored on most turntables. And if I were you, I think I'd lay in a supply for Christmas.

RICHARD FREED

SARTI: Russian Oratorio; Gospodiin Pomiluj Ny. Alena Mikova (soprano), Vera Hublekova (mezzo-soprano), and Maria Mrzavova (contralto), in oratorio; Czech Philharmonic Chorus, Prague; Bratislava Radio Orchestra, Václav Smetáček cond. MUSICAL HERITAGE SOCIETY MHS 1735 $3.50 (plus 75c shipping charge, from Musical Heritage Society, Inc., 1991 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10023).

PREY AND AMELING: THE BEST IN LIEDER

Two new discs of Schumann and Schubert are the kind that makes a critic's work easy

LIKE Hans Hotter and Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau before him, Hermann Prey is now indulging in the privilege (for him) and the luxury (for his listeners) accorded to exceptional song recitalists—that of re-recording his earlier interpretations. The procedure is understandable: every conscientious artist restudies his repertoire; searching for new approaches and finding fresh insights are part of artistic growth and responsibility. There are any number of interpreters, of course, from whom one attempt suffices for a lifetime, but Hermann Prey is of a different breed. And, fortunately, interpretive growth has not been accompanied in his case by the frequently unavoidable vocal decline. Now in his mid-forties, Prey is at his artistic zenith: his sonorous baritone sound is as warm and rich as ever, attractive over the entire compass, and controlled by exceptional expressive powers.

Two Philips discs devoted to songs by Schubert and Schumann document this happy state of affairs. Prey's new *Dichterliebe* stresses the elegiac aspects of these beautiful Heine-Schumann songs (while understating their bitterness) more than his earlier version (Vox 5562, deleted) did. Enhanced by tempos that are a shade slower than ideal, the cumulative effect will appear to some as overly sentimental. The singing, however, is so consistently beautiful in tone, sensitively graded dynamically, and superbly clear in enunciation that criticism is easily disarmed. The eight Schubert songs on the disc are among the greatest. The two "Wanderer" songs are given the same lyrical—and I would agree that these are perhaps a shade over-sentimental—treatment that characterizes the *Dichterliebe* cycle. *Die Forelle* and *Auf dem Wasser zu singen* are rendered with a lightness and charm few male interpreters are able to bring to these delicate pieces. *An die Musik* is the only disappointment. It lacks spirituality and involvement, and it is indifferently sung. Leonard Hokanson accompanies the singer superbly throughout the entire recital.

The second disc is all-Goethe, all-Schubert, but only half-Prey, since one side is devoted to "feminine" songs interpreted by soprano Elly Ameling. It was a happy idea to include the seven songs inspired by Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister* and to have the two artists share them. Prey delivers the three "Songs of the Harper" with a moving elegiac feeling, holding his tone level down to a range between mezzo-forte and pianissimo. A mellow approach characterizes the entire side, including even the stormy *Erlkönig*. The drama emerges through the music, and there is no resort to devices of exaggeration, no distortion of the vocal line. This is not the only way to interpret the song, to be sure, but it is an eminently persuasive one. Karl Engel's accompaniments are effective.

Elly Ameling is the kind of singer who makes a critic's work very easy: her singing is all enchantment and deceptive simplicity. The legacy of Elisabeth Schumann and Elisabeth Schwarzkopf is in good hands. Since the accompaniments of Dalton Baldwin are all one could ask for, I can say that

HERMANN PREY: new approaches, fresh insights
these two discs are representative of the highest level of lieder-singing being offered today.

George Jellinek

SCHUMANN: Dichterliebe, Op. 48. SCHUBERT: Der Wanderer; Die Forelle; Auf dem Wasser zu singen; An Sylvia; Lachen und Weinen; Lied eines Schiffer's an die Dioskuren; Der Wanderer an den Mond; An die Musik. Hermann Prey (baritone); Leonard Hokanson (piano). PHILIPS 6520 002 $6.98.

SCHUBERT: Four "Mignon" Lieder; Die Liebende schreibt; Nähe des Geliebten; Heidenröslein; Liebhaber in allen Gestalten. Elly Ameling (soprano); Dalton Baldwin (piano). Three "Gesänge des Harfners"—Der Sänger; Erlikönig; Ganymed. Hermann Prey (baritone); Karl Engel (piano). PHILIPS 6500 515 $6.98.

PROFITS OF SCHOLARSHIP: A ROSSINI RARITY UNEARTHED

Philips presents the recording debut of a "scandalously operatic" Messa di Gloria

The Messa di Gloria of Gioacchino Rossini was first performed on March 24, 1820, in the Church of San Ferdinando in Naples and was thereafter almost totally forgotten. Unlike the Stabat Mater and the Petite Messe Solennelle, which date from the years of the composer's retirement, this Mass was composed at the height of his operatic career.

As a newly released British performance for Philips attests, it is an extraordinary combination of unabashedly operatic music—Rossini actually reused some of its ideas in The Siege of Corinth and William Tell—with serious orchestral-and-choral writing that suggests Beethoven, Haydn, or even Handel. The arias, some of them complete with cabalettas, are scandalously operatic—and are very likely what caused the work to be so neglected. In contrast, the "serious" writing is extraordinarily imposing and intense. If you can accept these startling contrasts—the Mass as a dramatic work filled to the brim with expressions of joy and anguish—then there is enormous pleasure to be gained from this music.

The credit for reviving this unusual work must go to Herbert Handt, an American tenor active for many years (primarily) in Europe. The phenomenon of a singer-conductor is a relatively new one (tenors Sherrill Milnes and Placido Domingo come to mind). Handt, who has an excellent reputation as an interpreter of early and recent music, began a second career as a conductor a number of years ago, specializing at first in early Italian music. Perhaps one now ought to add a third skill: in the process of singing and conducting early music he also became something of a scholar and editor (he is a friend and neighbor in Italy of Haydn scholar H. C. Robbins Landon). Since Rossini's manuscript of the Messa di Gloria is lost, it was to some degree necessary to prepare a practical edition for performance, and Handt has done this with skill and evident affection. One expects that he would be knowledgeable about the handling of the voices, but his instrumental conducting is equally impressive. The music has buoyancy, fervor, and even a certain grandeur. With the exception of an exaggeratedly Italianate tenor (Rossini loudly deplored the appearance in the mid-nineteenth century of this kind of singing), the soloists are excellent and the playing equally so. An attractive recording.

Eric Salzman

ROSSINI: Messa di Gloria. Margherita Rinaldi (soprano); Ameal Gunson (contralto); Ugo Benelli and John Mitchinson (tenors); Jules Bastin (bass); B.B.C. Singers; English Chamber Orchestra, Herbert Handt cond. PHILIPS 6500 612 $6.98.

THROWING SOME LIGHT ON THE VELVET UNDERGROUND

Mercury's two-disc album of live performances ought to help set the . . . er . . . record straight

Poor Lou Reed is competing with himself again—commercially, that is—since a new album of previously unreleased Velvet Underground performances follows hot on the heels of his recent
“Rock 'n' Roll Animal,” a situation similar to the one he was in when Atlantic released Brigid Polk’s cassette of the Velvet’s engagement at Max’s Kansas City at the same time RCA was pushing his first solo album. Much as Lou would probably prefer it, the Underground just won’t go away. And frankly, if you feel (as I do) that Lou has been generally making an ass out of himself since their demise, and that “Animal” was just too slick a presentation of songs that walk a thin line between being moronic and sublime terrifying, then you’re going to dig the hell out of this new record. I certainly do.

The Velvets were always a puzzle; depending on how your glands reacted, they were either a classic hard-rock band, an amateurish bunch of musical cretins, the ultimate in avant-garde music/theater, a New York street gang with a taste for esoteric oldies, a sinister collection of transvestite speed-freak/junkies, or a pop-oriented bunch of sentimental balladeers. Perhaps their appeal was simply that nobody was ever really sure what they were. Which might also account for the fact that they were never as big with the public as with the critics, although at one time (around 1966-1967) you were just as likely to hear their first album at student parties as you were to hear, say, the Stones. At any rate, in 1969, at various gigs in Texas and San Francisco, someone (perhaps at their record company, although this is all very mysterious) made a series of high-quality, honest-to-god stereo performance tapes of the band (by now sans Nico and John Cale), and somehow Mercury has gotten the rights to them and has seen fit to release them. I can only describe this as a public service.

So what do we get? Most of the band’s best numbers, some previously unrecorded gems featuring Lou at his most corny and charming (Over You) and some early thoughts on tunes later resurrected on the solo albums. The results are by and large incandescent; Lou’s vocals are great—comparisons with the limp, mannered shouting he displayed on “Animal” are ludicrous—and the rest of the crew is in fine form. The guitar work (by Lou and Sterling) is sensitive and propulsive, Doug’s bass is melodic and rock steady, and Maureen’s drumming maintains its usual level of Neanderthal primitiveness. Especially revelatory is the version of Heroin; without Cale’s devastatingly atonal viola obligato to contend with, Lou sings it almost prettily, and the result is a much more seductive—and therefore more terrifying—reading than even the classic original. This cut alone is worth the price of admission.

The lesson of all this is that Lou Reed is (was?) one of the great rock singer/songwriters, and that in the Velvet Underground he found the perfect musical means to express his not inconsiderable ideas. This new set is a gas, one of the best live rock albums of this or any other year, and if it’s not quite as good as “Loaded” (the band’s penultimate studio statement, where their raunch was even more completely distilled) it’s damn close, and that’s saying something. If your only exposure to Lou has been his increasingly disappointing post-Velvet work, then “1969 Velvet Underground Live” will come as a remarkable surprise. If you’re already a fan. I don’t have to tell you. For both factions, as well as those who just like first-rate rock-and-roll, the bottom line is get it.

Steve Simels

THE VELVET UNDERGROUND: 1969 Velvet Underground Live. Lou Reed (guitar and vocals); Sterling Morrison (guitar); Doug Yule (bass and vocals); Maureen Tucker (percussion). Waiting for My Man; Lisa Says; What Goes On; Sweet Jane; We’re Gonna Have a Real Good Time Together; Femme Fatale; New Age; Rock and Roll; Beginning to See the Light; Ocean; Pale Blue Eyes; Heroin; Some Kinda Love; Over You; Sweet Bonnie Brown; It’s Just Too Much; White Light/White Heat; I’ll Be Your Mirror. MERCURY SRM-2-7504 two discs $7.98, MC8-1-7504 $6.98.

POCO IS ENOUGH

Holding on, but not holding still, as their move into “straight” rock demonstrates

Poco loses key members the way I lose ball-point pens, but the group hangs in there. Latest to depart, as this is written, was Richie Furay, founder

Rusty Young, George Grantham, Tim Schmit, and Paul Cotton

74
(no less), chief songwriter, and chief singer—and their new album for Epic, the first without him, is just fine. One reason is that Jack Richardson’s production, moving Poco away from country-rock into solid rock, has taken well. And the major reason for that happy condition must be the versatility of Rusty Young, the pedal steel player who has made his seemingly specialized instrument fit so nicely into the changing arrangements and has improved on other instruments (banjo, dobro, electric guitar, etc.) as well.

But there are other important reasons too, and they are named Paul Cotton, Tim Schmit, and George Grantham. Furay’s singing is missed, but not all that much; lead guitarist Paul Cotton is improving as a singer, and Schmit (bass) and Grantham (drums) are still hitting those castrati notes on the vocals. Furay seems to be missed more in the harmonies—they seem to have a little less sheen—than in the solo singing. Schmit, who has written a whole string of lifeless songs, has two winners here—Krikkit’s Song, excessively wordy as usual but nice, and Skatin’, a fine rocker with some thought put into a thematic interplay between words, melody, and arrangement.

The whole of side two is a delight, the album ending with two of Cotton’s strongest songs: Angel, beautifully acoustic and spiked with a delicate, almost silky electric guitar part, and You’ve Got Your Reasons, wherein he does some adaptation of Dave Davies’ or Pete Townshend’s chime chords in just the right way. Poco is no longer the first and best country-rock band. What it is now is one of the very few so-called “straight” rock bands that can keep me listening, when I’m not being paid to listen, all the way to the very end.

Noel Coppage

POCO: Seven. Poco (vocals and instrumentals); Burton Cummings (keyboards); other musicians. Faith in the Families; Drivin’ Wheel; Skatin’; Rocky Mountain Breakdown; Krikkit’s Song; Angel; Just Call My Name; You’ve Got Your Reasons. Epic KE 32895 $5.98. EA 32895 $6.98. ET 32895 $6.98.

JOAN BAEZ: “GRACIAS A LA VIDA”

Her voice is as fresh as a deep-canyon waterfall in a new Spanish-language album

Joan Baez’s “Gracias a la Vida” is her finest album in years (and it has indeed been some little time since the last one). In it she displays again that fabulous natural musicality and that electrifying intensity with a lyric, both projected through a voice that catches at the heart in a way that is almost literally enchanting. She is singing in Spanish this time—it could just as well be Urdu for all I’d care—as a tribute to her father (“he gave me my Latin name and whatever optimism about life I may claim to have”), and the result is a triumph.

Her voice sounds as fresh—and refreshing—as a deep-canyon waterfall, even in the heavily dramatic El Preso Numero Nueve (Prisoner Number Nine) or De Colores (In Colors), a song associated with the United Farmworkers Union in America (Joan Baez remains political, no matter what the language). But it spirals into an ethereal beauty in the title song, in the traditional El Rossinyol (The Nightingale), and in the lovely folk song Paso Rio (I Pass a River), so tenderly and feelingly sung it would melt a stone.

If you like Joan Baez, chances are this album has already been added to your collection. If you don’t like her (and I suspect that many don’t—for reasons that have little to do with music), try it anyway. You can throw the English-translation sheet away and rejoice in the loveliness of the sound. The production (by Ms. Baez and Henry Lewy) is admirable, and Tommy Tedesco on lead guitar is nothing short of terrific. Joni Mitchell makes a brief appearance on Dida, confirming and elevating my already high regard for her taste.

Peter Reilly

JOAN BAEZ: Gracias a la Vida. Joan Baez (vocals and guitar); orchestra. Gracias a la Vida; Llego con Tres Heridas; La Llorona; El Preso Numero Nueve; Guantanamera; Te Recuerdo Amanda; Dida; Cucurrucucu Paloma; Paso Rio; El Rossinyol; De Colores; Las Madres Cansadas; No Nos Moveran; Esquinazo del Guerrillero. A & M SP 3614 $5.98.
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STEREO REVIEW
POPULAR DISCS AND TAPES

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

BADFINGER: ASS. Badfinger (vocals and instrumentals). Apple of My Eye; Get Away; Icicles; The Winner; Blind Owl; Constitution; When I Say; and three others. APPLE SW-3411 $5.98, ® 8XW-3411 $6.98, ® 4XW-3411 $6.98.

BADFINGER: Badfinger. Badfinger (vocals and instrumentals). I Miss You; Shine On; Love Is Easy; Song for a Lost Friend; Why Don't We Talk; Island; Matted Spam; Where Do We Go from Here?; and four others. WARNER BROS. BS 2762 $5.98, ® M8 2762 $6.98, ® M5 2762 $6.98.

Performances: Hello—goodbye
Recordings: Both very good

It's a real moving experience. Badfinger leaving Apple and signing up with Warner Brothers, and sorting through references to it in their last Apple and first Warners recordings is, as such pastimes go, much less boring than the double crostic in Saturday Review/World. And the music isn't bad either. Badfinger always struck me as the favorite rock-and-roll band, the apple of my eye. But the time has come for us to part.

The second song goes on at some length about how the writer (listed as all of Badfinger) just has to get away. Then the first track of the Warners album is I Miss You, which doesn't actually say anything directly about Apple or the Beatles but makes a body think, particularly when it is followed by a title like Where Do We Go from Here? or by the lyrics of Matted Spam (by Pete Ham) that say a frame of mind has "locked me outside of my own rock-and-roll." And then—probably think I'm making this up—back on "Ass" there's a nice rocking song called Constitution whose words seem to apply nicely to the music game. "I could sing the blues anywhere...I could paint my face, if I wanted. . . ." What makes this poignant is the fact that Badfinger still sounds like the late early Beatles. And it's still a little band, and the thematic stuff is encased in good, fairly light rock-and-roll in both albums: the last Apple one being a little more tuneful and the first Warner Brothers one being a little more imaginative. The latter has some steel-band backing in one cut, a beautiful multi-acoustic guitar treatment in a pretty song called My Heart Goes Out, and other small suggestions that someday Badfinger may try to sound a little less like the Beatles—but there's also Shine On, a lovely song written and performed just about exactly the way George Harrison, probably the focal point of all the father figuring of the past few years, writes and performs "Badfinger" does, however, have the first "flash forward" I've ever heard in a record album: sound effects of someone walking down a sidewalk or across a parking lot and entering a building in which we hear the first moments of Badfinger's recording of Why Don't We Talk being played on a radio or juke box or other low-fi device. Then we flash to the present and hear Badfinger's recording of the song firsthand. Maybe it won't dazzle Robert Altman—maybe it won't even dazzle Mike Nichols—but it does show that Badfinger is staying loose and continuing to practice on the old footwork. Happy housewarming, lads.

N.C.

JOAN BAEZ: Gracias a la Vida (see Best of the Month, page 75)

MAGGIE BELL: Queen of the Night. Maggie Bell (vocals); orchestra. Caddo Queen; Souvenirs; Oh My My; The Other Side; Trade Winds; and six others. ATLANTIC SD 7293 $6.98.

Performance: Not quite together yet
Recording: Excellent

Maggie Bell has been around a while. She played the Mother in "Tommy," was with Stone the Crows, and has twice been winner of the English Melody Maker readers' poll. The talent she displays here more than lives up to her credentials: a strong, exciting voice, urgent projection, and a dynamic sense of lyric. She races through the eleven tracks here with an energy and vitality that I haven't heard since Joplin, and when she does bring it off completely, as she does in Oh My My and Yesterday's Music, she is galvanizing.

The rub (and isn't there always one?) is that there is a pussyfooting air to a great deal of

Explanation of symbols:

- = reel-to-reel stereo tape
0 = eight-track stereo cartridge
® = quadraphonic disc
® = reel-to-reel quadraphonic tape
® = eight-track quadraphonic tape
® = quadraphonic cassette

Monophonic recordings are indicated by the symbol $.

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

AUGUST 1974
the arrangement and production work. Everyone seems to realize that Bell could be The Next Big Star, and consequently everything sounds a little sanded-down, a little varnished, and a little on the safe side. Bell herself seems to suffer from this kid-glove handling, and often the parts (her voice a la Commercial Queen) as if there were someone looking over her shoulder. Too bad, because I don’t think Star Department adds a thing to her performances.

By all means listen to the album — Bell really is good. But also hope that she has the good sense to listen to all of the advice offered her and then proceed to follow her own instincts.

P.R.

BLUE SWEDE: Hooked on a Feeling. Blue Swede (vocals and instruments). Destiny: Never My Love; Silly Silly; Pineapple Rally, and six others. CAPITOL ST-11286 $6.98, © 8XT-11286 $6.98, © 4XT-11286 $6.98.

Performance: Good Recording: Good

Blue Swede is a group from (where else?) Sweden, and they are incredible in at least one respect: they have mastered Rock English and its enunciation so perfectly — or at least Bjorn Skifs, who does most of the lead vocals, has — that it would be impossible on casual hearing to identify them as being from the land of the Bergmans and the blondes. Unfortunately their material and their performances are routine even by American standards, which are pretty low lately.

A quick analysis should sink softly into the devaluation horizon I expect that more of these imported groups will be appearing. I’ve already gotten a press release from Vienna about a red-hot new act called Hedy and the Lammers, singing their big hit Man tut was man kann. Can’t wait.

P.R.

DAVID BOWIE: Diamond Dogs. David Bowie (vocals and guitar); Mike Garson (keyboards); Herbie Flowers (bass); Tony Newman and Aynsley Dunbar (drums). Future Legend: Diamond Dogs; Swine Thing; Candida; Rebel Rebel; and five others. RCA CPL 10576 $6.98, © CPS1 10576 $7.95, © CPK1 10576 $7.95.

Performance: Ho hum Recording: Good

I’ve been re-reading all my Bowie reviews from the last year or two, and they’ve struck me in retrospect as pretty vicious: granted, I find his personality repellent, and feel that he’s been an almost totally negative influence on the young. This, my friends, is the thing. Perhaps I’ve been unfair. Okay then, let’s really try to like David’s new album, which appeared on all his other albums, was the one with the smarties all along; the arrangements on “Diamond Dogs” are uniformly blah, and the production (also, for the first time, a one-man job by the artist) is so restrained as to be nonexistent. The songs themselves are merely silly, unless you’re impressed by love poems to lizards.

CAPTAIN BEEFHEART The crazy uncle in the attic

There is, however, one exception to all of the above: Rebel Rebel, as you probably know by now, is a dynamite little piece of catchy Sixties rock-and-roll, and it’s sung and played with real conviction and fire. I will reassert the temptation to observe that if the Easybeats had done it, it would have been a classic, and simply mention that, sadly, this is a different version from the one RCA has put out as a single. The Rebel Rebel is shorter, more elaborate, and done overall — grab it, and save your $6.98.

Sorry, David, I really tried this time. Too bad, since I was in the mood, that you didn’t.

Steve Sinels

MARKABLE MUSIC: crude, delicate, hearty, ball- ring, direct, and fuftive, all tinted with a car- toonist’s sense of movement and a child’s de- light in the sound of words.

Beefheart has been variously described as ominous, benign, and “strange.” He may not even be a musician at all. He may simply have wanted to bring music (and music acting) as the quickest way to get yourself known as a performer. I think Don Van Vliet (the Captain’s real name) would have made a mighty good juggler, puppeteer, ringmaster, or whoever it was of those uncles who are always sneaking up to the attic to look out because he’s such fun and makes more sense than other grown-ups do. At any rate he is a marvel.

The Captain is on a new label, and musical- ly he has returned to something like what the Magic Band was playing in 1965, when he started writing and recording his own materi- al. But not quite. There was something “strange” about listening to Beefheart in 1965. He was widely thought to be either highly confused about what he was doing or five years ahead of his time (it turned out to be the latter). His remarkable voice, capable of producing both an oratorian bass and a piercing, pinched tenor, his invention of a yodeling gulp for syncopated vocal percussion, his shapely enunciating with the English language, his early combination of two distinct influences — Delta blues and the jazz sax of John Coltrane — all added up to wonderment.

Five years later, progress being what it is, he was probably fifteen years ahead of his time. His music sounded like a tribe of Ubangis whose study of the twelve-tone scale had been interrupted by the drunken delights of an unbroken series of Polish weddings. Was it true that he accepted into his band only people who did not know how to play music? Were his tunes and arrangements gibberish? Was he lucky enough to be making so many mistakes all at once that it sounded like what he knew what he was doing? Or was it a sort of music — like Whitman’s poetry — that has to await the invention of new standards so that it can be appreciated?

Shortly after these experiments, the Captain began saying that he was “going to write some really commercial stuff” (at which his followers and acquaintances scoffed, “He’s been saying that for years!”). But in his last two albums for Reprise — “The Spotlighted Kid” and “Clear Spot” — he was moving in a pop direction. With “Unconditionally Guar-anteed” he seems to have arrived. The songs are short, danceable, and carefully arranged. The Captain’s vocals are — I am not the best judge but have tried. Even his harmonica, of which he was a British master, has been softened, although it is still very bluey. But this is not to say that the efforts here aren’t Beefheartian. He is one of those artists who may make con- cessions of their own free will, but who are constitutionally incapable of compromising. He is also one of the very few figures in rock I have mentioned into music (although I doubt that Beefheart is “rock” any more than, say, Gershwin was “jazz”). Whether his musical history is so interesting that it is worthwhile to waste even an afternoon trying to understand him. Taken together, they are like the last edition of Leaves of Grass — something you would not want to read all the way through because you would get tired of tricky old Walt changing his mind and tinkering with various modes of address to the reader. But sampled judiciously, Beefheart’s (so far) collected works are

(Continued on page 82)
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CIRCLE NO. 25 ON READER SERVICE CARD

AUGUST 1974
CANDIDE:
The best of all possible musicals
Reviewed by Paul Kresh

Mark Baker (Candide) and Maureen Brennan (Cunegonde) get in touch with their audience

My poor backside had scarcely recovered from an hour and three quarters without intermission spent on a tiny wooden stool in the midst of a jam-packed audience in what was once the orchestra of New York’s Broadway Theatre watching the celebrated revival of Candide when particularly the album of the complete production arrived. I chose the best-padded armchair I could find and settled back to enjoy in comfort this two-record replay of the whole show, complete with dialogue. I was not disappointed, and I don’t think you will be either. For this musical adaptation of Voltaire’s ever-popular satirical novel subtitled L’Optimisme, a long hoot at the Pollyanna creed of Leibniz that “all is for the best in this best of all possible worlds,” also turns out, with its sparkling, refurbished Bernstein score and its new hook by Hugh Wheeler, to be the best of all possible musicals.

The first Broadway version of Candide, a “comic operetta” that opened to an icy critical reception in 1956, had been smothered under the ministrations of too many master chefs—Lillian Hellman, Richard Wilbur, John Latouche, and Dorothy Parker all involved with the book and lyrics, Tyrone Guthrie’s super-staging at the Martin Beck, an overly operatic approach to Bernstein’s exuberant score for his third musical following On the Town and Wonderful Town. This time Wheeler (who wrote the book for A Little Night Music) has gone back to Voltaire for the plot and wit of the satirical travesty, Bernstein has handed over a stack of songs deleted from the first production, and Stephen Sondheim has written additional lyrics. With the character of Voltaire brought in as “recurring narrator” and the hero Candide and his beloved Cunegonde restored from middle age to their teens, all works smoothly now and come off brilliantly. To those of us who over the years have worn out our copies of the original original-cast recording starring the late Max Adrian, Robert Rounseville, Barbara Cook, and Irra Petina, the new Candide comes across as virtually a brand-new show.

When the imperturbably optimistic tutor, Dr. Pangloss, his pupil Candide, and the high-born Cunegonde set out, singly and together, on their global journey of disastrous discoveries, Candide as staged at the Broadway Theatre takes place all around you — there are platforms over your head, drawbridges, ramps, and runways everywhere, the orchestra is planted in four different parts of the house, jungle vines descend over your ears, and twenty-three actors playing eighty-five roles bob up all over the place. In his production for records, Thomas Z. Shepard has tried to convey this feeling of movement and of being in the center of the action; to a surprising degree, in terms of sheer sound, he has succeeded. When Candide is reunited in Lisbon with his master after an earthquake, only to be dragged off for punishment by the Inquisition at an auto-da-fé (“What a day, what a day for an auto-da-fé”), the feeling of presence is remarkable. When the Old Lady appears to comfort the hero after Dr. Pangloss is hanged and Candide himself is flagged, they make their entrance into Cadiz to the tune of I Am Easily Assimilated with an amazing degree of realism. Above all, the wholesome decision to record the entire show this has been done before to advantage with The Most Happy Fella and the original-London-cast recording of Man of La Mancha on Decca as well as with ABC’s Two Gentlemen of Verona results in entertainment that never flags or pulls.

Aside from the production values of the album this version—winner of the New York Drama Critics Circle and five Tony Awards—captures far more widely the opportunities Bernstein seized in his music, garbed in its scintillating Hershy Kay orchestrations to parody the musical styles of the tango, waltz, barcarolle, Turkish harem music, and eighteenth-century pastoral in a constantly engaging, mocking musical treatment. This is a score far more sophisticated in terms of musical development than any comparable one in the repertoire: the overture alone rivals the masterpieces of its genre and already is something of a classic in its own day. Most appealing of all are the performances by the cherubic Mark Baker as Candide; by Maureen Brennan as the baron’s china-doll niece Cunegonde, whose apparent frangibleness is belied by her ability to survive brothel slavery, rape on the high seas by Barbary pirates, and even the final death of the cow on which she and Candide had built their hopes for the future in the Garden of Eden: by June Gable as an infinitely adaptable lascivious Old Lady, complete with “high middle Polish” accent; by Lewis J. Stadlen as the undiscouragable Dr. Pangloss, as Voltaire himself, and in several other, smaller roles. In fact, by just about everybody in the huge, agile cast.

In the earlier recording (which keeps appearing and reappearing — now in the regular Columbia, now in the Columbia Special Products catalog— a little the worse of late for artificially induced stereo), Robert Rounseville as Candide and Barbara Cook as Cunegonde provide giddily musical thrills throughout, Max Adrian is a suitably irresistible Pangloss, and Irra Petina singing I Am Easily Assimilated is simply beyond comparison.

There is a qualitative difference between these two recordings; the newer one is superbly presented, but the older one is really sung; perhaps it is sung too full-bloodedly (which may have contributed to its box-office failure), but it is exhilarating nonetheless. The original disc of Candide was a fantastic accomplishment for its time and deservedly had a runaway success despite the theatrical debacle. I would hate to be without it, the vitality and the verve of the new one notwithstanding. One other factorcompels ownership of both: although several new songs (Auto-da-Fe, Sheep’s Song, Constantinople, and others) have been added, two particularly fine songs from the original production have been deleted in the new one (Eldorado and What’s the Use?). Candide is probably Bernstein’s best composition to date; two recordings of it seem hardly too many. The first is a legendary and unique classic. The new one sets the standards for original-cast recordings, in regard to performance, production, and technical quality, at a new high from now on.


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* For a description of the research, see the article entitled, “Sound Recording and Reproduction,” published in TECHNOLOGY REVIEW (MIT), Vol. 75, No. 7, June ’73. Reprints are available from BOSE for fifty cents per copy.

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fascinating, and “Unconditionally Guaranteed” belongs in the canon.

And may I take this occasion to congratulate the Captain on the first ten years of his odyssey, and to wish him as many more as it pleases him to take? I knew you were out there, Don. J.V.

CHICAGO: Chicago VII. Chicago (vocals and instrumentalists). Skippy Boy; Call on Me; Wishing You Were Here; I’ve Been Searchin’ So Long; and eleven others. Columbia C2 32810 two discs $11.98, C2A 32810 $9.98, C2T 32810 $9.98

Performance: Background Recording: Excellent

All things considered, I think I’d rather spend time with the Chicago Seven that appeared in Judge Hoffman’s court than with this album that bears the same name. Chicago doesn’t really even make music, much less rock music. Instead, they make a series of hip-sounding excesses that come across as more like background “music” for a TV commercial advertising a motor bike, a new yogurt, or some other trendy product for the with-it consumer. Play any band here and you end up with the same mental picture: long hair (carefully tousled), patched jeans, and the smug smile of contentment urging you to BUY.

That the record public continues to buy, and BUY. Chicago’s pop is one of those mysteries surely being probed at this moment in places like the Harvard Business School. The production, superb as usual, probably has something to do with it.

P.R.

COMMANDER CODY AND THE LOST PLANET AIRMEN: Live from Deep in the Heart of Texas. Commander Cody and the Lost Planet Airmen (vocals and instrumentalists); crowd at the Armadillo World Headquarters in Austin (noise). Armadillo Stomp; Good Rockin’ Tonite; I’m Comin’ Home; Down to Seeds and Stems Again Blues; Runnin’ through the Sage; Lihty Sallye Walker; Git It; Oh Momma, Momma: and five others. Paramount PAS 1017 $5.98, C 8091 1017 $6.98, C 5091 1017 $6.98

Performance: Head-down slamming Recording: Good

This was recorded live in Austin, Texas, and is an overaggressive windbag of an album. The crowd’s enthusiasm, the expression of which cuts down nicely on the amount of mediocre rock you might otherwise have to listen to, since cheering takes up maybe twenty percent of the grooves, asserts that, for all our kidding of Texans, we’ve got to admit they’re not easily bored. There is some positive feedback from the audience, and I’m forced to admit that Commander Cody’s bunch is no slimmer live than it is in the studio—hell, even admit the band is exceptionally tight on the beat, for what’s that worth—but the vocals are still incompetent, the steel guitar is still cruelly overplayed, and the material worse. But there’s a handful of songs guaranteed to set you romping and stomping. Commander Cody, under the title tune are delightful.

Regardless, Kiki is damn good; she has a rich, strong, and very womanly voice, with plenty of power when she needs it. In “Lovin’ and Free” she doesn’t need it as often as I would like, but when she does, she acquires herself splendidly— I’m thinking especially of Supercool, a wry little put-down of a jive type, in which she rides effortlessly over a rockin’ heavy backdrup provided by Eton John and bond. Most of the rest of the material is much less aggressive and more like what people seem to expect from “girl singers,” but even there Kiki demonstrates a soulfulness that makes the rest of them sound puny. The buckings, by the cream of the British session cats (Elton’s band and various Fairport Conventioners) is splendid, and the production (by Elton) is George Martin-made.

I will conclude by mentioning that Kiki, once upon a time, was one of the very few white artists ever signed by Motown, which should be credentials enough for anybody. Since releasing the cover of a Jackson Browne song I’ve heard or expect to, and that she reminds me vocally of a female John Lennon. I think I’m in love. Steve Simels

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

KIKI DEE: Loving and Free. Kiki Dee (vocals); Elton John (keyboards); Davey Johnstone (guitar); Dee Murray (bass). N.I.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

KIKI DEE: Loving and Free.

This is a pretty nifty album on all counts, not just for the love songs and ballads, but even for the lesser material. To be more specific, I assume Kiki is working her way up the charts in a bid to become a major singing star. I believe she has a strong likelihood of doing just that if she can hang on to her producer Elton John. After all, he’s the one who got her started.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

DR. JOHN: Desitively Bonnaroo. Dr. John (guitar, vocals, keyboards); Allen Toussaint (keyboards, percussion); other musicians. Quitters Never Win; Stealin’; Mos’ Scroous; (Everybody Wanna Get Rich) Rite Away; RU 4 Real; Can’t Git Enuf; Desitively Bonnaroo; and five others. Atco SD 7043 $5.98, TP 7043 $6.97, CS 7043 $6.97

Performance: Excellent Recording: Excellent

Dr. John’s latest outing includes more delicious New Orleans gumbo music than did his last album (with which I wasn’t thrilled—but don’t listen to me; it was the biggest commercial success he had). This one combines just enough soul-pop with the real thing, and there are half a dozen songs guaranteed to set you romping and stomping. Mos’ Scroous, (Everybody Wanna Get Rich) Rite Away, and the title tune are delightful. Stealin’ is a folky-blues remarkable for its catalog of things normal people will do (“like stealin’ med’cine the sick”), and RU 4 Real contains some marvelous lines. The rhythm section—Leo Nocentelli, George Porter, Jr., Arthur Neville, and Joseph Modeliste—are all New Orleans men and used to be known as the Meters, under which name they had several instrumental hits in the late Sixties. According to the album cover, Modeliste plays “trap drums,” which is almost a forgotten skill these days. What it means, basically, is that graceful but fairly complex rhythms are played on the cymbals with no more than perfunctory attention paid to the rest of the drum set. Trap playing was less unusual some years ago, but since the days of the big bands, drummers have been expected to do much more than play a simple fill or two. But Dr. John is not rock. He is a subtle blend of many styles, which is what New Orleans is all about, musically and as a city.

Allen Toussaint, a greatly gifted man, has again arranged and produced. With a hit album behind him, he and Dr. John have apparently relaxed their concern about making dead-on soul-pop records and have arrived at a juicy happy medium that satisfies both pop and commercial success he’s had). This one combines just enough soul-pop with the real thing, and there are half a dozen songs guaranteed to set you romping and stomping. Mos’ Scroous, (Everybody Wanna Get Rich) Rite Away, and the title tune are delightful. Stealin’ is a folky-blues remarkable for its catalog of things normal people will do (“like stealin’ med’cine the sick”), and RU 4 Real contains some marvelous lines. The rhythm section—Leo Nocentelli, George Porter, Jr., Arthur Neville, and Joseph Modeliste—are all New Orleans men and used to be known as the Meters, under which name they had several instrumental hits in the late Sixties. According to the album cover, Modeliste plays “trap drums,” which is almost a forgotten skill these days. What it means, basically, is that graceful but fairly complex rhythms are played on the cymbals with no more than perfunctory attention paid to the rest of the drum set. Trap playing was less unusual some years ago, but since the days of the big bands, drummers have been expected to do much more than play a simple fill or two. But Dr. John is not rock. He is a subtle blend of many styles, which is what New Orleans is all about, musically and as a city.

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DOOBIE BROTHERS: What Were Once Vices Are Now Habits. Doobie Brothers (vocals and instrumentalists). Another Park. Another Sunday. Eyes of Silver; Black Water; Spirit; You Just Can’t Stop It; Flying Cloud; and six others. Warner Bros. W 2750 $6.98, L 32810 two discs $11.98, C2T 32810 $9.98

Performance: Good Recording: Good

The trouble with rock-and-roll these days
that you can pass yourself off as an Important Artist simply by playing it; the form has become more important than the content. To add to the trouble, a better than average band (such as the Doobie Brothers) gets lost in the amorphous mass of rock along with both the stellar and the lousy groups.

The Doobies combine enough of the jive of current rock with enough talent to make them worth listening to twice. But thrice? Most likely nay; they are good, but not that good. It may be, years from now, that one or more of them will turn up as a member of a killer band that won't quit. It's been known to happen. In the meantime, the Doobies are a good group, and you could do a lot worse. Small praise?

Cold comfort? Look about you these days—baby, that is rock-and-roll. Especially when, as in this particular case, the album title is better than the music.

J.V.

ARETHA FRANKLIN: Let Me in Your Life. Aretha Franklin (vocals and piano); orchestra; Let Me in Your Life; A Song for You; Oh Baby; I'm in Love; and seven others. ATLANTIC SD 7292 $6.98.

Performance: Spotty
Recording: Good

If Aretha gets any grander the only thing left for her will be an official coronation. Here she's awash in fur's and diamonds on the cover, and mostly orb and sceptering it in the music itself (With Pen in Hand and A Song for You). The only time she really confirms her place as a superstar and one of the great influences in modern pop singing is in Stevie Wonder's Until You Come Back to Me, I had put the record on and, becoming bored with all the posturing, gone into another room. Suddenly that magical fifth track started and my head turned as completely around (well, almost) as that kid's in The Exorcist. She was tearing Wonder's song apart and putting it back together again as only she can, and I was as enthralled and impressed as I was when I first heard her years ago at the Village Gate. Unfortunately, the rest of the album seems to veer between the throne room and a gospel antechamber. Aretha-won't-you-please-come-home?

P.R.

GRAND FUNK: Shinin' On. Grand Funk (vocals and instrumentals). Shinin' On; The Locomotion; Little Johnny Hooker; Mr. Pretty Boy; and four others. CAPITOL SWAE-11278 $6.98. ® 8XZ-11278 $7.98, © 4XZ-11278 $7.98.

Performance: Loose, looser...
Recording: Good and loud

Grand Funk is the best-known and most successful example of a group that has musically prospered since its members stopped taking themselves seriously. Looking back on their career with Terry Knight as their manager/producer, it is now doubtful that they ever wanted to seem so stuck on themselves. Knight's press agency was brilliant and offensive; he concocted the success of the group by emotionally manipulating both Grand Funk and their audience. Yet what an irony that the man who so hurt and embittered Knight, inspiring him to take his revenge on music and their audience, was the same man to whom Knight turned to punish Grand Funk when they grew weary of him. That such a phenomenon as Grand Funk should begin and end because of the mutual hostility and need of Knight and Allen Klein (the former manager of the Beatles—Paul McCartney dissenting—and the Rolling Stones) is worthy of stone tablets.

But how different and how much calmer things are since Todd Rundgren became Grand Funk's producer. He has enabled them to relax, to have fun, to grow. Surely only this talented young man could have convinced Grand Funk to do a perfectly acceptable version of that old groin-grinder The Locomotion, originally cut in the very early Sixties by the forgotten Little Eva, and co-written by the then-apprentice songwriter Carole King (is there any truth to the legend that Little Eva was actually the downstairs maid of Ms. King's parents?).

Grand Funk has prospered under Rundgren, who has not only maintained their unbroken streak of gold albums (this is the, what? twelfth?) but also gave them their first gold single, We're an American Band. Much more, he has given them his sense of adventure. They are now boyish and exuberant, where before they were bratty and pompous. As a band they continue to improve. J.V.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

HOLLIES: Hollies. Allan Clarke (vocals); Bernie Calvert (bass, vocals); Tony Hicks (guitar, vocals); Terry Sylvester (guitar, vocals); Bobby Elliot (drums, vocals). Falling and the Rolling Stones) is worthy of...
OVER HERE! IS MELLOROONEY

Reviewed by Roy Hemming

In a pinch, two Andrews sisters (Patty and Maxene) are quite enough.

Well, all right now. It would seem that most of those early 1940's "B" movie musicals (the ones that used to fill out the double-feature bills at the nabes) have long since gotten lost on the back shelves of Hollywood's vaults. They rarely show up on TV (perhaps because their sixty-five-minute running time is too short for standard TV movie-programming slots), and they're not the sort of flicks that film societies tend to build "artistic retrospectives" around. But, no, they're not dead. A variation has turned up quite alive on nostalgia-prone (at least for a time) Broadway, kicking up a storm of boogie-woogie and jitterbug beats and melloroney quips, and starring the two surviving Andrews Sisters. Their new show, Over Here!, may well be one of the slickest, peppiest, most entertaining "B" movies ever made, with a lightweight plot involving a World War II troop train en route from L.A. to New York with an assortment of GI's and civilian entertainers—plus Mitzi the Nazi Spy.

Inevitably, the Columbia original-Broadway-cast album can capture only the show's sounds; missing therefore are all the unique visuals from zoot suits and drape shapes to numerous other vignettes of the life styles of the Forties. And, as in most of those "B" movies from which Over Here! is descended, the sounds just aren't that memorable on their own. To be sure, the brothers Sherman (Richard M. and Robert B.), whose film-composing credits include Mary Poppins, Tom Sawyer, and Chitty-Chitty Bang-Bang) have captured the flavor of the era perfectly in their music and lyrics, as have orchestrators Michael Gibson and Jim Tyler. Each of Over Here's songs is original, yet they all sound as if they were meant to exactly like something you've heard before. The problem is that, while this works on stage in tandem with the show's lively settings and costumes and Will Holt's original book, the album's derivative sounds merely remind you of the better Dorsey, Miller, Knapp, and yes, Andrews Sisters songs that are still in circulation on discs and tapes. One exception: the song called The Good Time Girl (in the album, that is; it is listed more candidly in the theater program as The V.D. Polka). Its beat may be straight out of several old-time hits, but the lyrics are the sort that never, never get on the air or into the movies in the Forties!

Patty and Maxene Andrews (LaVerne, the other sister of the original trio, died six years ago) sing with their usual irresistible buoyancy and warmth, though their voices are considerably huskier than they used to be—a condition probably not helped by today's engineering fidelity, in contrast to recording standards of their former heyday. And when they launch into the show's final song, No Goodbyes, you can't help hoping that they mean every word of it, that they'll go right on singing and entertaining in their inimitable way for a long time to come.

Janie Sell's show-stopping Wait for Me, Marlena comes across delightfully in the album, as does Samuel Wright's Don't Shoot the Hooey to Me, Louie. However, the show's big band—so effectively placed on stage during the performance—suffers throughout the recording from the closer-up studio miking of the singers.

The album package itself is skimpier than Columbia's standard; it could certainly have had a page or two of photographs to at least give something of a feeling of the show's lively visual sense of its period. Even so, fans of the Andrews Sisters, fans of the show, and fans of the Forties will find the album version of Over Here! melloroney enough.


The Hollies have been among the half-dozen most important British rock groups for many years, not by being good regularly but by periodically agitating the imagination into concocting a fanciful notion of what they could be if every little thing fell into place. This album, something of a comeback, is the Hollies doing fantastically. It is not a great masterwork—even if it were in every other way, it could drag its lyrics to the pinnacle—but it has some great stuff in it that eggs the listener into imagining improvements in the weaker stuff and what would happen then. The singing, thanks in part to Allan Clarke's return to the group, is about as good as rock-group vocal harmonizing can get—lighter than the Bee Gees, warmer than Badfinger, more versatile than Poco, cleaner than the Byrds, able to leap tall buildings with a single bound. Tony Hicks and Terry Sylvester are surprisingly good with the guitars, too, when they have ideas. The material lacks depth, but some of it will give avid listeners a good run for a month or so. The Air That I Breathe is clearly the best song, a dandy that comes on grandly elated with itself but is so stylish and graceful it turns that into a positive attitude. It will even be forgiven by our critics for being as commercial as gits in Valdosta. Don't Let Me Down is a nice long-time-on-one-chord kind of mood thing, brilliantly arranged, and Rather Lucy is most appealing among four that really could be little harder. But there are some time-wasters in there, too, including one with a lot of ping-pong-jazz on the piano and including some rather drawn-out tunelessness before the good things begin on side two. Not a great album, but to improve on it much would be too.

But you see what kind of thinking it inspires. Damn Hollies, messin' with my head again.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

JANIS IAN: Stars. Janis Ian (vocals and piano); orchestra. Stars; Sweet Symphony; Dance with Me; Page Nine; Jesse; and five others. EPIC KE 32574 $5.98, ©EA 32574 $6.98, ©ET 32574 $6.98.

Performance: Excellent Recording: Excellent

Seven years after the success of Society's Child, a watershed topical song written when she was fifteen, Janis Ian is back, at the age of twenty-two, with songs composed during her own private season of hell. Always one of the most sensitive of composer/performers, often hypersensitive in live performance, she has at last stopped meandering artistically and come to some positive conclusions: yes, the public will eat you alive if you let it, but she still wants to be a Star; yes, she was deeply in love (You've Got Me on a String). However, she's still looking around (Sweet Sympathy) and, though he's gone she's still in love (You've Got Me on a String). However, she's still looking around (Sweet Sympathy) and has a pretty good idea of what kind of life she wants with any new love (Page Nine), and, what-the-hell, life goes on anyway (Applause). The old bitter club is evident only once here, in Dance with Me, in which her fury over the contemporary American scene can send smoke spiraling out of your speak-
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ers. It’s very strong, tough stuff, and it makes
Lauro Nyro and some of the other female
composers of protest songs sound like the
bluestocking mumblers of bitchery that they
often are (I loved it).

Unfortunately there still lingers an air of
veiled contempt, a touch of the common
scold, about Ian’s performances which often
contradicts the more positive sense of the lyr-
ic. I don’t mind it, but I know that others do
and will be turned off by it. But this is an
album definitely worth listening to nonetheless,
most importantly as an opportunity to hear a
real artist struggling to sort out and to commu-
nicate through a morass of negative and posi-
tive emotions. Ian is trying her damndest to
mellow, and except for that one track here she
seems to be succeeding. Her next job is to
achieve a more relaxed recording manner.
’Cmon baby, smile!  
P.R.

MAHALIA JACKSON: The Life I Sing About.
Mahalia Jackson (vocals and narration). I’m
Gonna Live the Life I Sing About in My
Song; Childhood Memories; Blacks in New
Orleans; New Orleans Music and Musicians;
Funerals in New Orleans; Didn’t It Rain; and
six others. CAEDMON TC 1413 $6.98.

Performance Revealing reminiscences
Recording: Good

Mahalia Jackson sat in the “gaudy green
and gold plush living room” of her Southside Chi-
cago home talking into a small Wollensak tape
recorder on a table near her. The year was 1958,
and she was going to make a movie about
her life with the help of producer Jules Victor
Schwerin, who had made a documenta-
ty called Indian Summer about the battle of
people in the Catskill Valley to keep their
lands from being flooded, and was equally
able to create a companion piece on the subject
of “black people of the Mississippi Delta in the
vortex of social change.” For three days the
gospel singer talked about her life, about
growing up in New Orleans and the early in-
fluences of her mother, “Pussy” Smith and her
Rainey; she spoke of the brutality of the
police who would “run colored people in
” on the slightest pretext and beat them sense-
less, of the murders white men could commit
and get away with during the Mardi Gras sea-
son and how the victims were black, of church influences on her music, and why she
never would agree to sing jazz or blues or any-
thing but gospel. The movie was never made.

The tape recording was saved. The woman
who made it is gone now, but Caedmon ac-
quired the tape and has done a fine job of pre-
senting the material on it interspersed with
(pieces from the vaults of Columbia) of some of the songs that made Miss Jackson’s reputation—“I’m Gonna Live the Life I Sing
About in My Song; Didn’t It Rain, God Put a
Rainbow in the Sky, ” and “Don’t It Rain.”

She frequently performed it in those days) and
identified with Richie Havens, of course, but
Thompson says this taping got bumped out of
the lineup of the first album, “Jefferson Air-
plane Takes Off,” although the airplane fre-
cently performed it in those days) and Go to
Her, which had (reasonably) been scratched
from the already ballad-heavy “Surrealistic Pillow.” Those weaker moments I mentioned
include Up or Down, written by Jorma’s
brother Peter, whose inanities should not be
taken seriously. In place of Paul Kantner’s
tuneless jousts with sci-fi, Thompson says
was “more or less a jam” following a late-night
“Surrealistic Pillow” recording session. It
features singing by Jorma Kaukonen, harp
by John Hammond, and guitar by Jerry Garcia,
and all are tremendous. The cut doesn’t over-
power everything else, but it helps validate
the album and helps offset some of the weaker

GRUNT CYLI-0437 $6.98, © CYSI-0437
STereo
Performance Marvelous
Recording: Very good
Now this is the way to go in there and pillege
those vaults. None of these selections has
been in an album before, and six (if one be-
lieves Bill Thompson’s excellent liner notes
seven, if one believes some of the ads) are
being released for the first time in any form.
The one that steals the show is In the Morn-
ing, a rakish blues thing Thompson says was
“more or less a jam” following a late-night
“Surrealistic Pillow” recording session. It
features singing by Jorma Kaukonen, harp
by John Hammond, and guitar by Jerry Garcia,
and all are tremendous. The cut doesn’t over-
power everything else, but it helps validate
the album and helps offset some of the weaker

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

IAN MATTHEWS: Some Days You Eat the
Bear and Some Days the Bear Eats You.
Ian Matthews (vocals, guitar), other musicians.
Times: ’55; I Don’t Wanna Talk About It: A
Waiting Goodbye; Keep On Sailing; Tried So
Hard, Dirty Work; and four others. ELEKTRA
75078 $5.95.

Performance Classy
Recording Excellent

The sound Ian Matthews has developed for
his albums is smooth and flowing. He sings
harmonies with himself, holds notes a split
second longer than one expects, backs himself
with lazy, tasteful, sometimes contrapuntal
steel-guitar lines, and knows just how to make
everything else ease back a little so that even
a simple, easy acoustic guitar lick can have
maximum effect. Unfortunately the sound can
put the whammy on surprise and has a level-
ing effect; it brings down Jesse Winchester’s
Bliss, in this case, by about as much as it
improves such a methodical song as Gene
Clark’s Try So Hard. But Matthews is still
tinkering with it, having tried weaving Lynn
Dobson’s unpretentious sax and some re-
spectable Charlie McCoy-influenced harp by
Joel Tepp into this one. Tinkering must be the
explanation for the appearance of his fine
song, Keep On Sailing, in its second succes-
sive album. He hasn’t changed it much, sing-
ing perhaps a tiny bit slower and with less
harmonizing, and trading the minor backing
role of a piano for the minor backing role of
the sax—and, yes, bringing up the acoustic
 guitar (by Andy Roberts this time) in just the
right places. Tepp and guitarist Danny Weis
add more spice than one would expect, given
the stylized overall sound, to fine back-to-
back versions of Danny Whitten’s I Don’t
Wanna Talk About It and Matthews’ A Wait-
ing Goodbye. Matthews is not a prolific writ-
er, but he his great taste and high intelligence,
and I could see someone similarly equipped
picking up one of his songs thirty years from
now and running through it with mumbles.

I suggest you check out any “serious” review-
der and Matthews’

GRUNT CYLI-0437 $6.98, © CYSI-0437
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lieves Bill Thompson’s excellent liner notes
seven, if one believes some of the ads) are
being released for the first time in any form.
The one that steals the show is In the Morn-
ing, a rakish blues thing Thompson says was
“more or less a jam” following a late-night
“Surrealistic Pillow” recording session. It
features singing by Jorma Kaukonen, harp
by John Hammond, and guitar by Jerry Garcia,
and all are tremendous. The cut doesn’t over-
power everything else, but it helps validate
the album and helps offset some of the weaker

IAN MATTHEWS
Great taste and high intelligence

selections. All of side one is a delight, with
Grace Slick’s predecessor, Signe Anderson,
heard a few times and Airplane founder Mar-
ty Balin working his vocal specialties into
such stuff as High Fliyin’ Bird (irrevocably
identified with Richie Havens, of course, but
Thompson says this taping got bumped out of
the lineup of the first album, “Jefferson Air-
plane Takes Off,” although the airplane fre-
cently performed it in those days) and Go to
Her, which had (reasonably) been scratched
from the already ballad-heavy “Surrealistic Pillow.” Those weaker moments I mentioned
include Up or Down, written by Jorma’s
brother Peter, whose inanities should not be
allowed to go on for six minutes. and another
of Paul Kantner’s tuneless jousts with sci-fi,
Have You Seen the Sauciers. Grace’s Mexico
is not exactly momentous, either, but it is
slightly innovative, in a nutty sort of way,
melodically.

A neat thing, though, is how it all fits to-
gether into an album. I’ve heard “concept
albums whose parts didn’t relate as well, and
needless to say, I’ve heard countless rock-
and-roll bands in recent years that never dreamt of playing this well, and never will.

N.C.

BUZZY LINHART: Pussy Cats Can Go Far.
Buzzy Linhart (vocals, guitar): orchestra.
Shoo That Fly; See You Again; Friends; The
Justice Game; There It Goes Again; and six
others. ATCO SD 7044 $6.98, © TP 7044
$6.97, © CS 7044 $6.97.

Performance Hippity-hop
Recording: Excellent

It would take a worse grouche than I am not to
be entertained by Buzzy Linhart’s bouncy
songs and hippity-hop performances. Shoo
That Fly, for instance, is a cheerfully off-the-
wall idyll about nothing very much at all that
is performed by Linhart as if he believed every
word. South of Again, “a medium Fox Trot,”
is plumbly bowed by Buzzy as if he were
trying to make out in some Palm Court
with Marguerite Dumont. Not that his lyrics
don’t often make a looney sort of sense—
eventually. That I can’t remember a damned
one of them in any way lessen my pleas-
ure while listening to the album; that I occa-
sionally enjoy digging down the absolute mid-
dle-of-the-pop-road on a pogo stick also
doesn’t bother me in the least. And if you
think there aren’t any bigger grouches than I,
then you check out any “serious” review-
er’s opinion of Linhart: the lip-curl of disdain
will spread from here to Berkeley. Anyway, I
had fun. So will you.

P.R.
VAN MORRISON: It’s Too Late to Stop Now. Van Morrison (vocals): instrumental accompaniment. Ain’t Nothin’ You Can Do, Into the Mystic, I Believe to My Soul, Domino: I Just Wanna Make Love to You, Bring It On Home. Saint Dominic’s Preview, Listen to the Lion, Here Comes the Night, Veterinarian’s Song, Caravan, Cypress Avenue; and six others. WARNER BROS. 28762 2CD $11.98, 8 8XT-11266 $6.98, 8XT-11266 $9.97, 6 157660 $9.97.

Performance: Monotonous
Recording: Good

I haven’t followed Van Morrison’s career closely, but I remember him as the lead singer of Them (Gloria, Here Comes the Night), then as a solo (Brown Eyed Girl), and as one of the discoveries on the late Bert Berns’ Bang Records label. Morrison moved to Warner Brothers around 1967 and changed his style of songwriting from more or less straight-ahead pop-rock to introspective jazz-blues. Though he has prospered as a rock artist, he is really a white blues singer with an overlaid jazz style.

Since the late Sixties and early Seventies, when he reached a peak with the delightful After the Rain, he has had artistic ups and downs. This album, a live program of his hits and better liked tunes, doesn’t settle anything. His vocal work is strong and sturdy, but after one side of this four-side set everything he does sounds the same. It is something like reading too much George Bernard Shaw. The band behind him is excellent, particularly saxist Jack Schroer. The arrangements are very good, but the wonderful extended riff in Into the Mystic sounds watery compared to the studio version on the “Moondance” album.

For the umpteenth time, I must complain about live albums. Readers should know, if they don’t already, that live albums are usually released because (1) the performer is too lazy or messed up to get in the studio and do a real session; (2) the performer and the label are renegotiating the contract and playing Mexican stand-off; (3) the performer has left the label, and the company, not having enough studio recordings in the can, tells the engineers to pull those tapes of the Pomona Trade School concert; or (4) the performer has a sensitive ego and will not allow his singles to be collected into a “greatest hits” package. I wouldn’t swear any of this has anything to do with this album, but I’m very suspicious.

MARTIN MULL: Normal. Martin Mull (vocals, guitar): orchestra. Rome and Bored, Drunkard’s Waltz, Ego Boogie, Woodstock Samba, Wood Shop; and eight others. CAPITOL CP 1026 $6.98.

Performance: Good
Recording: Good

Any album that states in its liner notes that “This album contains no cheap shots at the Carpenters or Carl E. Simon” can’t be all bad. “Normal” is boring at times, perhaps, and not painted enough or good enough, but it’s still a fair amount of fun. Martin Mull comes closest to real humor in his Dialing for Dollars, in which a man explains that he will be on Easy Street once he gets a call from that quiz show, in which a man explains that he will be on Easy Street once he gets a call from that quiz show, and how he even has had an extension put in the bedroom so he won’t miss the call when it comes. The biggest problem is that Mull’s powers of characterization are not all that strong. Mild fun.

ANNE MURRAY: Love Song. Anne Murray (vocals): instrumental accompaniment. Love Song, Just One Look, Another Pot o’ Tea, Children of My Mind, Real Emotion; and five others. CAPITOL ST-11266 $5.98, 8 8XT-11266 $6.98, 4XT-11266 $6.98.

Performance: Great, but...
Recording: Very good

Anne Murray continues to sound great and continues to be directed or managed or produced in a way that strikes me as too narrowly exploitative. Her albums continue to be slapped together with the kind of thinking that is apparent in the slapping together of Tom Jones’ albums—which from here looks shallow and concerned only with quickie commerce. Usually this is not a very grave sin in pop music, because what the hell, in ten years nobody will remember many of these so-called stars anyway; but in this case it involves the managers’ failure to realize what a rare talent they’re guiding, and the responsibility that implies. What we perceive is Annie represented one way to the country music audience, another way to American pop music, another way in Canada.

Consequently her albums try to cover several bases in diverse ways in a shotgun production approach that always hurts them. This one starts out with a string of trivial, hacked-out songs that do only one thing for the ear: being badly written, they sometimes call for awfully high or awfully low notes, and we get to hear Annie hit those. Dead on. (Continued on page 90)

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AUGUST 1974
Gordon Lightfoot is not an Indian. Of course, not, but in the early-morning stupor perhaps the thought did flicker that, maybe, his having a name like that and being from Canada, well... Marjorie Harris, journalist, caught this droll wink of a moment and inked it in; an old copy of Maclean’s magazine preserves it in a paragraph about Lightfoot mingleing with the audience at the Cellar Door Club in Washington, D.C.: “We sat down at a table and one of the very cool, self-poiseded girls sitting there looked him straight in the eye in her American way and asked, ‘Are you an Indian?’”

The question is not simply brazen, nor simply “American”; it’s also wistful—marking not the first time, not by a long shot, that a cool, unthinking stare connected back to a dreamy romantic soul. It would seem more romantic, you see—at least to self-posessed youngsters who have had glancing encounters with the “noble savage” motif a few times in assigned readings but have not grappled with the philosophical intricacies of this on into the night—if Lightfoot were an Indian... if his hometown (Orillia, Ontario) were in the frozen wilderness instead of being a civil little place on a nice lake 180 miles nearer to the equator, for God’s sake, than Bob Dylan’s hometown ( Hibbing, Minnesota)... if Lightfoot had learned a few guitar chords at the feet of some magnificent, tragic hobo instead of learning to sight-read music in a conventional, middle-class piano-lesson grind... if he had come to us scarred and leathery from the highway rather than posed and sharp from a showbusiness career kickoff as a chorus singer (and—ta-da!—hoofers) in the Canadian television series “Country Hoe-down.” But it wouldn’t work, for Lightfoot, were he any of those things, wouldn’t be one of Us.

By Us I mean the mongrels and hybrids who can have no very profound racial self-image, noble, savage, or otherwise, but who do get around, who have developed a wide-angle cultural view—imprinted, perhaps, with a ghostly and rosy after-image of nobility. It’s unofficial, naturally: people like Crowell and Jefferson bounced royalty out of the spotlight and put Us in the Egalitarianism business, and we not only see the logical in their arguments but bore each other silly by endlessly and piously repeating them during business hours. But when we get home and put our feet up, and toy with our closet yearnings... A child can, had jolly well better, follow the thread that runs through ugly duckling stories, enchanted frog stories, sleeping beauty stories, Cinderella stories. “You, Too, Can Be Queen for a Day!”, Horatio Alger. Rags-to-riches is a poor way of stating it, nobody-to-somebody is closer to the quick. Gaining wealth makes scorekeeping easier, but gaining class is the thing. When I was a child, one could easily see the branch line running through the modern updatings of the finished product, or at least the knight-errant model of it: the Lone Ranger, Batman (Bruce Wayne was an aristocrat), Wyatt Earp, and, speaking of Canadians, Sergeant Preston of the Yukon. Virile men every one, but also dignified. Patricians. I never doubted they would know which fork to use.

Gordon Meredith Lightfoot would too, if one can judge that sort of thing from the way he looks, the way he sounds, and the way he writes. His vocals are virile in that gentle, classily way our little systems are set up. His language takes into account our long-standing prejudices toward sound and cadence (Poe made available some of his insight into this in his account of how he contrived The Raven’ “L”-sounds and “R”-sounds are naturally pleasing to us, and so forth). Lightfoot’s music is similarly struc-tured within traditional feelings about which way lies man’s “higher” potential, for beauty, enlightenment, cleanliness, etc., of which, one hopes, work out to melodies fit for kings.

Lightfoot is not only faithful to the old parameters without thinking it all through (if he were an Indian, he could think about it, and there, as we always say at this point, is the rub), but he is good at it. In our terms, he’s Significant: I don’t know how many songs he has written, but he has recorded (as this is written) 103 of his own songs in nine studio albums, one live album, and two “greatest hits” things, and maybe fifteen, maybe twenty of those have some chance of staying lit when pumpkin hour comes to such names as Arlen, Porter, Dylan, and Lightfoot. I think at least five Lightfoot songs—Early Morning Rain, The Way I Feel, For Loving Me, Canadian Railroad Trilogy, and Circle of Steel—are going to cast long shadows as long as men’s homes are their you-know-whats.

Lightfoot’s shortcomings, naturally, are more nearly the result of being than doing. Our vision tends to build up a soft layer of schmaltz around the edges; when maidens become as fair as we think we want them, they also become bland. The intervals of our traditional folk melodies are—compared to the slippin’, slurrin’, ozin’, slidin’ that some other folks like in a melody—rather formal and impersonal in their prettiness. Noticing this, perhaps subconsciously, we tend to make it worse by bringing in something like a swirl of strings to warm things up. Lightfoot started doing that when he encountered John Simon, producer of his third album, “Did She Mention My Name?”, and has been tinkering with it fairly regularly since. The timeless themes and grand schemes he often tackles also tend to impose a stylized, depersonalized tone between artist and listener. Lightfoot writes a serviceable sea song, for example—Christian Island, Yarmouth Castle, Ode to Big Blue—but I cannot, to use Hemingway’s test, whether he’s writing what he truly feels or what he’s supposed to feel about the subject. For what it’s worth, I did read, again in Macleans, that he has a special fondness for the Maritime Provinces. Songs about traveling (all of Us do get around) appear in his repertoire almost as frequently as love songs do, and in the self-evaluative travel music—songs like Don Quixote, Ordinary Man, Hi-Way Songs, Somewhere USA, and Minstrel of the Dawn, in which Lightfoot examines the troubadour’s way of life—he is one of Us at our best: compassionate, eloquent, but direct and honest, too, and smoothly, efficiently intelligent. But in the workingman’s songs, such as Boss Man, Cotton Jennie, and Mother of a Miner’s Child (Canadian Railroad Trilogy, performed best in the live album “Sunday Concert,” is more like a sweep-of-history overture), Lightfoot seems to know just enough about the subject to sound well-meaning but in general, even though Jenny has a beat that won’t quit. The other side of our fantasy about receiving the ultimate, well-deserved kiss, shedding the warts, and walking off with the princess may be this exalting we do of the little man—coping with the present, drawn-out (how
Lighfoot is of course aware of his own special gifts, that a measure of bigness is achieved, and now and then he'll go on a little show off (and perhaps himself) what the pop-music equivalent of the eighty-yard run looks like. The very first album, "Lighfoot," is crammed with biggies, but those had been stockpiled and previously recorded by such people as Ian and Sylvia, or Peter, Paul and Mary, or Marty Robbins. The old unconscious exercises of the eighty-yard run makes of the first album, "The Way I Feel" (neither is easy to find in disc form now, but United Artists has out eight-track tape versions of both, designated U8084 and U8085, respectively), for which Lighfoot decided to write something in a minor key and came up with a Minor Ballad — in what sounds like C Minor — an extraordinary melodic achievement for a folkie. Not only does it refuse to roll over and sound nice, but it does not do the melody do right by its subject, line by line, note by note, but it is a thing of unearthly, almost painful beauty. As a way of coming down, Lighfoot follows it on the album with Go Go Round, which is just that, a round about order. But it's beautiful, and infinitely poetic, concerned with putting fairly nary words in a comfortable, natural-sounding graphic images complete with good color. He is not just another one of Us. He's a distillation, a refinement; his work does not amplify our romanticisms flaws to the degeence it amplifies our lyricism, even though it may be inevitably hemmed in by the ultimate distortion in our pretty vision. There's a lot of room in there, and he knows how to work in it. Knowing his work is not the same as knowing Lighfoot, but my suspicion, based on his work, is that he realizes all that. He may even have being having a little — shall we say quixotic? — fun with it on some dim, early-morning-first-cup-of-coffee level of awareness when he thought up the song title You Are What I Am.

Lighfoot, you see, is not just a figure for you and me to contend with but one for our children to contend with also, and may be their children. He may be one of Us, but he is not just another one of Us. He's a distillation, a refinement; his work does not amplify our romanticism's flaws to the degree it amplifies our lyricism, even though it may be inevitably hemmed in by the ultimate distortion in our pretty vision. There's a lot of room in there, and he knows how to work in it. Knowing his work is not the same as knowing Lighfoot, but my suspicion, based on his work, is that he realizes all this. He may even have being having a little — shall we say quixotic? — fun with it on some dim, early-morning-first-cup-of-coffee level of awareness when he thought up the song title You Are What I Am.

LIGHTFOOT: Rich Man's Spiritual; Long River; The Way I Feel; For Loving Me; The First Time; Changes; Early Morning Rain; Steel Rail Blues; Sixteen Miles; I'm Not Sayin'/Ribbon of Darkness; Apology; Bitter Green; Ballad of the Yarmouth Castle; Softly; Boss Man; Pussywillows, Cat Tails; Canadian Railroad Trilogy. United Artists UAS 6672 $4.98, © UST 662C $7.95, © U8143 $6.98, © K0143 $6.98.

THE BEST OF GORDON LIGHTFOOT: Go Go Round; Softly; The Way I Feel; For Loving Me; Early Morning Rain; I'm Not Sayin'; Black Day in July; Canadian Railroad Trilogy; Did She Mention My Name? Bitter Green; Pussywillows, Cat Tails. United Artists UAS 6754 $4.98, © UST 6714 B $6.95, © U8218 $6.98, © K0218 $6.98.

GORDON LIGHTFOOT: Sunday Concert. In a Windowpane: The Last Children; Leaves of Grass: I'm Not Sayin'/Ribbon of Darkness; Apology; Bitter Green; Ballad of the Yarmouth Castle; Softly; Boss Man; Pussywillows, Cat Tails; Canadian Railroad Trilogy. United Artists UAS 6714 $4.98, © UST 6714 B $6.95, © U8162 $6.98, © K0162 $6.98.

CLASSIC LIGHTFOOT: The Last Time I Saw Her; Walls; Rosanna; Home from the Forest; If I Could; Something Very Special; Affair on Eighth Avenue; Mountains and Marian; Long Way Back Home; Ballad of the Yarmouth Castle. United Artists UAS 5510 $5.98, © U8272 $6.98, © K0272 $6.98.

GORDON LIGHTFOOT: Sit Down Young Stranger. Minstrel of the Dawn; Me and Bobby McGee; Approaching Lavender; Saturday Clothes; Cobwebs and Dust; Poor Little Allison; Sit Down Young Stranger; If You Could Read My Mind; Baby It's All Right; Your Love's Return; The Pony Man. Reprise MS 6932 $4.98, © B 6392 $6.95, © M8 6392 $6.95, © M5 6392 $6.95.

GORDON LIGHTFOOT: Summer Side of Life, 10 Degrees and Getting Colder; Miguel: Go My Way; Summer Side of Life; Cotton Jenny; Talkin' in Your Sleep; Nois Visions Ensemble; Some Old Loversman; The Evergreen Hill; Love of Maple Syrup; Captain Now figures. His response to the enormous pressure on people in his line of work (and mine) to be *H*1*P* back there at the turn of the decade was to make a "Nashville" album, "Summer Side of Life," which did list in its credits such names-fa- rair-and-old as Charlie Young, Ken But- trey, Charlie McCoy, Vassar Clements, and the late Junior Huskey, but Lightfoot didn't "go Nashville"—Nashville "went Lightfoot." He kept his good friends and sidemen, Shea and Haynes, prominently in the forefront, and altered his songwriting style not one iota. And, since the Nashville cats prowlings around the edges did scratch away some of the schmutz, and since the songs are strong ones, it may be the best Lightfoot album of all. Time will most likely choose between it and whatever fully real- ized work spins off of "Old Dan's Records," an album fairly pulsating with hints and suggestions. "Sundown," which followed "Old Dan's Records," is no help in determin- ing exactly which direction Lightfoot is going to take. But it is an excellent com- posite of several directions he has taken before. Well, time is working for him.

GORDON LIGHTFOOT: Lazy Mornin'; Wherever and Why; The Last Time I Saw Her; Black Day in July; May I: Magnificent Outpouring; Does Your Mother Know; The Mountain and Maryann; Pussywillows, Cat Tails; I Want to Hear It from You: Something Very Special; Boss Man; Did She Mention My Name? United Artists UAS 6649 $4.98, © U8107 $6.98, © K0107 $6.98.

GORDON LIGHTFOOT: Big Train Home: Unsettled Ways; Long Thin Dawn; Bitter Green; The Circle Is Small; Marie Christine; Cold Hands from New York; Affair on Eighth Avenue; Don't Be Me Down: The Gypsy; If I Could. United Artists UAS 6672 $4.98, © UST 662C $7.95, © U8143 $6.98, © K0143 $6.98.

GORDON LIGHTFOOT: Go Go Round; Softly; The Way I Feel; For Loving Me; Early Morning Rain; I'm Not Sayin'; Black Day in July; Canadian Railroad Trilogy; Did She Mention My Name; Bitter Green; Pussywillows, Cat Tails. United Artists UAS 6754 $4.98, © UST 6714 B $6.95, © U8218 $6.98, © K0218 $6.98.
Grady’s Another Pot o’ Tea demonstrates how some writers can genuinely blow it from sheer carelessness: after inventing a good line, “... I’m in love with the Irish accent to your stories.” Grady cheapened it by sticking it in the middle of a chorus and using it three times. Someone like Gordon Lightfoot, who really knows how to write songs, would have used it once. Song selection in most of Anne’s albums seems to have been based on which writers were considered “hot” at the moment, emphasis on moment. One result in this case is that a pleasant lightweight, Watching the River Run and Midnight Rider, has to carry a much heavier aesthetic responsibility than it should—it should be on an Anne Murray album, perhaps, but as a breather—and the best moments come when the “who’s hot” question doesn’t apply, in the simple blues-gospel riff for Backstreet Lovin’, whose freedom from cuteness and other self-conscious baloney allows Annie to see if she can muscle her way into the place where they have all those flatted thirds and sevenths, and where Bonnie Raitt and Maria Muldaur have taken up most of the show room, and, by God, Annie does it.

This is not to say there aren’t pleasant moments in the other songs—just that they occur while the songs obviously are nose-diving into oblivion. You Won’t See Me—certainly not Lennon-McCartney in a serious bid for immortality. Send a Little Love My Way, a Mancini-David movie tune, is forgiven up to a point because it is a specialized period piece, but it is back-dated nonetheless.

Murray’s being used as if there’s always tomorrow in which to get around to digging out the great songs and making the classic recordings that are possible with her talent, and that she will be remembered by if she is remembered. In my own life. I have not found tomorrow to be that reliable. 

N.C.


POCO: Seven (see Best of the Month, page 74).

Performance: Interesting.

Recording: Good

For the last fifty years the English class sys-

system and its Establishment have been under such assault in story, drama, and song by such a variety of people that the assaults themselves have become that most cherished of English things—a tradition. That the assaults could often be seen in later, punchier years carefully making their way down the stairs of White’s Club or some other bastion of privi-

lege, after a three-claret lunch, probably on their way to receive a knighthood, doesn’t seem to alter the public’s fascination with them in their iconoclastic heydays. (Would you believe Sir Mick Jagger?)

Alan Price is one of the better butters. His work has a fine edge of angry satire, par-

particularly in the group of songs he labels Yest-

terday, The Jarrow Song, the story of a hun-

gry march, is very effective, as is Left Over

People, but the other four songs leave the dis-

tinct impression that Eleanor Rigby has mar-

ried Bertolt Brecht—and not for the better.

Today, the second side, is much livelier going, especially You’re Telling Me and City Lights.

In all, it’s an album by someone who is trying to say too much too quickly from a sar-

donic stance that in itself becomes a cliché. Price still needs to see the kind of plot direc-

tion that Lindsay Anderson provided for him in On Golden Man! The music Price wrote for

that film didn’t quite stand up on record (though it worked beautifully in the film) and

neither does this “theatric” attempt. One thing that I don’t doubt, my opening remarks

aside, is Price’s sincerity. Whether or not he

will become a composer-performer of any real

influence is still an open question.

P.B.

CHARLIE RICH: Very Special Love Songs.

Charlie Rich (vocals, piano), orchestra. Cam

Mullins arr. A Very Special Love Song; Why

We Go Somewhere and Love; Take Time to

Love; A Satisfied Man; A Field of

Yellow Daisies; Why, Oh Why; and four

others. Epic KE 32531 $6.98, © EA 32531

$6.98, © ET 32531 $6.98.

Performance: Spectacular.

Recording: Good

Charlie Rich and his previous album, “Behind

Closed Doors,” which I found to be as excit-

ing as a cup of tea into its third day of cool-

ing, won just about every I’ll thang at the latest Academy of Country Music awards

bash—everything except the “entertainer of

the year” designation for Charlie. That went

to Roy Clark, of Hee Haw fame.

It now becomes necessary for me to invoke
good old boy language, for I’m bound to say

that what the ACM says is good country mu-

sic don’t mean diddly, and something like that

ought to be said plainly. Don’t know as I’d go

along with Hank Williams entirely (“Man’s
got to have mule manure on his boots to play
country”), but one just has to accept Kris

Kristofferson’s broader gauge: “If it sounds
country, it’s country.” Who could argue with

that, eh? Okay, then, Hoss, I put it to you:

Does Charlie Rich sound country? Does Roy

Clark? Or do they sound like Sandler and

Young separated and each in his own way

trying to emulate Dean Martin?

That’s not very nice, actually; Charlie Rich

is a capable singer, and I did enjoy Big Box

Man, which he did when he was somewhat

funker. Nowadays he seems to be the ideal of

some Nashville vice president who’s been

worrying about “respectability” and “image”

for as many years as he’s been trying to forget

there is such a thing as mule manure. Charlie

(and Roy) is good for Nashville’s image, some

thoughts who can want that. Charlie for accepting

the crown of a kingdom he isn’t in? This is

another middle-of-the-road album, with all the

cascading strings and oooh-aaing choruses

too feevee variety show producer could want.

Couple of decent ballads in there, and of
course there’s only one country. Jazz singer phrasing can do to de-corn the lyrics of

Almost Persuaded. There is that. There is also the likelihood that the album is ahead of

its time in a pretty depressing way: when the country is all suburbs, everyone’s roots

will lead to music like this.

N.C.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

SIEGEL-SCHWALL BAND: The Last Sup-

mer. By Loganberry Siegel (piano, harmonica)

Jim Schwall (guitar, vocals); Rollow Radford

(bass, vocals); Shelly Plotkin (drums). Rock

Me Baby; You Don’t Love Me Like That; I

Won’t Hold My Breath; The Sun Is Shining;

Don’t Let Us Down. Warner Brothers. WOODEN

NICKEL BWLI-0288 $5.98, © BWSI-0288 $6.95, © BWL1-

0288 $6.95.

Performance: Dazzling.

Recording: Excellent

Unless fate is kind this will be my last rave

review of the Siegel-Schwall band, the re-

markable Chicago blues quartet that could be

(Continued on page 94)
NOW YOU CAN RECORD ON A DOLBY CASSETTE DECK FOR 2 STRAIGHT HOURS WITHOUT FLIPPING THE TAPE.

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THAT'S (MGM) ENTERTAINMENT!

The roar of Leo the Lion and the sound of all those enduring musicals are heard again in the land

Reviewed by Peter Reilly

Leo the Lion’s tail has been dragging now for so many years that at any mention of the studio he symbolizes, the toothless old cat looks embarrassedly and disdainfully away. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer is, to all intents and purposes, only nominally still in the picture-making business. Huge sections of the enormous Culver City lot have been sold to real-estate developers: the lavish costumes and elaborate sets have been auctioned off; the executive offices in the Thalberg Building are emptied of showmen, replaced by accountants and other experts in the dismantling of corporations. One thing these experts realize is the value of the Metro legend as old Hollywood’s biggest, richest movie studio with an unmatched roster of contracted star performers (“More stars than in the heavens” was, I believe, the old slogan). It is an asset that they have exploited endlessly, and it serves again as a magnet for the decoration of Metro’s new Grand Hotel in Las Vegas, where you can feed coins into the slot machines under the blown-up limpid gaze of a Garbo in Camille or a slightly cross-eyed Norma Shearer in Romeo and Juliet. Alas, poor Leo, we knew you well.

But recently the rarest and most potent of cutnips has arrived in the form of That’s Entertainment!, a joyous compilation of clips from Metro musicals from 1929 to 1958, and it is reported by those who sat behind Leo at a recent screening that the old boy wept tears of happiness. The sound-track album from this film pastiche is an equally pure delight, not just for nostalgia-philes or “film” historians, but for anyone who remembers when movie musicals were mass escapist entertainment. Yes, they were as mindless and ephemeral, for the most part, as a game of bean-bag, but they were always beautifully crafted and peopled with stars, dramatic and musical, who had been molded into genuine folk heroes and heroines. For those who don’t remember, lay down your copy of Siddur, forget your obligation to be perplexed by everything going on currently (the tag line on the advertisements for That’s Entertainment! is “Boy, do we need it now!”); ask yourself if it is at all possible that perhaps Tolkien might just have been influenced by Walt Disney; thus free yourself from any lingering guilt about intrinsic “cinematic” worth, and enjoy, enjoy!

Enjoy the pleasures, for instance, of what I gather are previously unreleased tracks from the early and mid-Thirties: the mighty Joan Crawford walloping across I’ve Got a Feeling for You from Hollywood Revue of 1929 or Heigh Ho, the Gang’s All Here from 1933’s Dancing Lady (featuring Fred Astaire in his first screen role) in a frantic, flapper frenzy; Jean Harlow, her game but lockjawed attempt to imitate the then-fashionable Gatsbyish Lara-tuna never more hilarious, as she confides, sounding to modern ears strangely like William F. Buckley, “…and Oi ken take ye awn the chin, becaus O’im Reckless …” from naturally, the picture of the same name; the amazing Eleanor Powell tap-toeing her way through Rosalie (a song L.B. Mayer commissioned Cole Porter to write as closely parallel to Rose Marie as the laws of plagiarism would allow since the Romberg operetta had been a big hit for him the year before), Bing Crosby, still very much the big singer in Going Hollywood from 1933; Cary Grant, faking his way through Did I Remember from a 1936 Harlow epic called Sizze; and even Clark Gable, making a hash out of Puttin’ on the Ritz, which was exactly what the plot of Robert Sherwood’s Idiot’s Delight demanded of him in his role as a broken-down song-and-dance man.

As musing as these excerpts are, they are historically side glints, since the “Metro musical,” as we know it, didn’t really become an entity until the advent of 1939’s The Wizard of Oz. What probably brought it about was L. B. Mayer’s ascension to absolute control of MGM after the death of Irving Thalberg. L. B. was foremost a showman, whereas Thalberg had always been a creative producer as well as a great admirer of the literate sheen and gloss of the New York theater tradition. He was more interested in the dramatic film with endless redraws by internationally known experts; he hired by the handful, than in escapist entertainment—unless it were sophisticated comedy, preferably high, and inevitably English. So, while Warner’s (sixtieth anniversary was saluted here last month) ground out the brassy, fast-paced, and often surreal Busby Berkeley phantasmagorias, while Twentieth Century Fox rushed Shirley Temple and Alice Faye into one vehicle after another, and while over at RKO they were producing the big-budgeted musicals series (films that surely transcend being called “musicals”): they are works of art. Metro stayed aloof. Oh, L. B. had the hugely successful Jeanette and Nelson, but they, after all, did “opertettas” in keeping with MGM’s, and Thalberg’s, “prestige” image.

With Thalberg’s death, the approach of war and the audience’s demand for escapist fare, L. B.’s ability to at last follow only his own instincts, plus the emergence of producers such as Arthur Freed, who were able to capture the ear of the front office for support of their projects, and a talent pool of young musical performers, both the times and the box-office high, and inevitably fresh, in some cases prodigiously gifted (Garland and Rooney), young musical performers, both the times and the box-office atmosphere were right for what was to become the “Metro musical.”

There is only one excerpt here from Wizard, a medley by Garland, Bert Lahr, Ray Bolger, and Jack Haley including Over the Rainbow, but it is good enough to indicate why this movie has been seen by more people than any other in film history (a fact, and another example of TV-your-magic-spell-is
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everywhere). It was a marvel in 1939 and it is a marvel now.

Mickey Rooney and Judy Garland were teamed in a series of musicals—Babes in Arms, Babes on Broadway, and Strike Up the Band—and there are excerpts from all of them here. Despite the horror stories that have emerged about them, none of what were essentially still kids—the twelve-hour-a-day work schedules, being brought to the studio hospital to be sedated for a few hours and then awakened by handfuls of "uppers" to be back on the set—Garland and Astaire emerged across as truly endearing performers, Garland’s voice strong and enthusiastic. Rooney with a show-biz brat elan still unsurpassed.

Garland grew and grew as a musical artist, as the excerpts here show, from the 1944 Under the Bamboo Tree (with Margaret O’Brien) from Vincente Minnelli’s charming, and visually stunning, Meet Me in St. Louis, to the bravura Get Happy from Summer Stock, made in 1950 and Garland’s last film. (She did most of the pre-recording for Annie Get Your Gun before she was fired; whatever happened to those tapes?)

If Garland was the only authentic artist to emerge from the Metro musicals (Astaire came from an established star in the late Forties; Gene Kelly’s best work has been in the field of choreography and direction, and as a performer he has always had a certain coldness; the Sinatra of these films was still far away or a skinny juvenile singing-lead; and Crosby was an exclusive Paramount property from the mid-Thirties on), there is still a bounty of other entertainment to be heard on these recordings. How about froggy-voiced June Allyson doing That’s Swell from Word’s In a Little Girl in Old parsley with Peter Lawford in the Varsity Drag from Good News a year earlier? Not bad at all. Or that Harz Mountain canary Jane Powell twittering It’s a Most Unusual Day—and making you enjoy it? Or Debbie Reynolds with her actual chronological youth cutting up with Carleton Carpenter in Aha Daba Honeycomb from 1930? Or Kathryn Grayson, the prima donna with the itsy bitsy soprano (who, in profile, and no matter how the costumes tried to camouflage it, could have given Jane Russel a run for the measurements trophy at the drop of a deep breath), singing to stalwart, stalid, Howard Keel that they should only camouflage it, could have given Jane Russell itsy bitsy soprano (who, in pronunciation to sing Hallelujah. All cheerful, all wholesome, surrounded by a really mammoth orchestral sound, and all singing and dancing as if their contracts depended on it, they deliver one of those finales that was supposed to—and oddly enough often did—send audiences home in a happy glow. The glow and the bloom soon wilted at MGM, where this kind of film was already on the way out, but this number is so archetypal in its very lack of distinction that it probably sums up the whole era of light-hearted fluff better than anything else could.

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excellent even if it didn’t try and, since it does try.
S. Miller, as explained, has的确, but I have heard that before; on
other such occasions they changed their minds and hung around a while longer. I pray
it may be so now.

Siegel-Schwall is one of the few groups as glib on live albums as they are in the studio. This collection was recorded at The Brewery in Lansing, Michigan, and the well-known Quiet Knight in Chicago. Among the highlights: Rollof Radford’s pinched, intense vocal in Rock Me Baby, with the longest pause before finishing up a tune that I’ve heard on any record. This is the dramatic pause deliberately stretched beyond its utmost limit: it is high comedy, like Jack Benny’s stare at an audience before delivering the punch line they have all heard before and can’t wait to hear again. Siegel-Schwall’s audience goes delightfully berserk. Further highlights: Jim Schwall’s funny You Don’t Love Me Like That, with its parody of blues-song sexual symbolism, Corky Siegel’s piano in The Son Is Shining, which develops a blues-funk crescendo like the dawn coming up like thunder, and Siegel’s wonderful harmonica in Hey, Billie Jean.

I hope this is not the last album from Siegel-Schwall, but even if it is, there are three albums that preceded it, and to have heard all four is a gift. I am grateful.

J.V.

STEELEYE SPAN: Now We Are Six. Steeleye Span (vocals and instruments). Thomas the Rhymer; Two Musicians; Edwin; Twinkle Twinkle Little Star; Seven Hundred Acres; The Mooncoin Jig; Drink Down the Moon; Now We Are Six; Long A-Growing; To Know Him Is to Love Him. CRYSTALS CHR 1053 $5.98.

Performance: Good
Recording: Very good

This album’s flaws may make it a collector’s item, as Steeleye’s inventiveness may yet prove legendary. Meanwhile, it has to spend some of its time on a piece of documentation of the way business exploits art. Record contracts call for an orderly scheduling of things, and the creative juices just don’t flow that way. The album is padded. Twinkle Twinkle Little Star? To Know Him Is to Love Him? Composers are very much into it as music—they’re no longer valid—and we can generate enough ambient noise around here without wasting such a talented group on the project. Besides, the Spector song is cast in a key that’s weird for Maddy Prior, and considering her vocal range, that’s hard to do. David Bowie can play the sax, though, if that’s what it’s all supposed to prove.

The title “song” is more padding, even if it does help mention that a drummer has been added to Steeleye’s group. It’s a panche of “traditional riddles” set to music, a coupling that improves neither the riddles nor the music: Long A-Growing disappoints me, although it is a fine old song existing in several versions; Steeleye simply didn’t choose one of the nice versions told folksy types will remember a more interesting incarnation entitled Daily Growing and probably identify it with Sandy Paton, but the loveliest recording of it appears on Joan Baez’s second album and is entitled The Trees They Do Grow High. Two Magicians is long and repetitive. (High). Two Magicians is long and repetitive.

But finally, after many small disappointments, we come to the meat, which is everything else. Those five songs, one an instrument, seem to be what Steeleye actually had in the way of material when the schedule called for churnering out another album—if, that is, one comes to expect from them albums of the quality of “Below the Salt” and “Parcel of Rogues.” A few more months, maybe weeks, and who knows how this one would have turned out?

N.C.

STEELEY DAN: Pretzel Logic. Steely Dan (vocals and instrumentalists). Rikki Don’t Lose That Number; East St. Louis Toodle-oo; Parker’s Band; Barrowford; Through with Bucz; Pretzel Logic; and five others. ABC ABCD-8084 $4.98.

Performance: Erratic but fine
Recording: Clean

I much admired Steely Dan’s last album, mostly for a tune called Pearl of the Quarter.

There isn’t another such stunner this time around, but the band is still one of the most marvelously inventive to appear since rock took a nosedive some four years ago.

The trouble with the effort here is that most of the tunes seem to be working prototypes. Maybe an idea used in one of them will result in a gem two or three albums hence, but for the moment Steely Dan is treading water. I listen to the instrumental performances and the colorful arrangements and I’m impressed. But the lyrics huiffe me; maybe they know what they’re talking about, but I can’t get a clue.

There are, however, two songs well worth hearing. One is Parker’s Band, which at first sounds like another of those damned rock-and-roll heel-taps to get it on and boogie-down but on second listening is a nice historical piece, set in the Forties, urging other musicians to hurry to Birdland so they can sit in with the great Charlie Parker. The other is an entirely charming version of Duke Ellington and Bobber Miley’s East St. Louis Toodle-oo, taken at a sunny tempo with the wah-wah guitar imitating Miley’s muted trumpet solo and a country steel guitar playing the bridge. The pianist comes in for a chorus and plays very much like Fats Waller. As the end, the drummer hits the biggest cymbal he can find, a la J. Arthur Rank, in cute mimicry of Ellington’s “jungle sound” of the Twenties and Thirties.

Steely Dan’s musical joke is in the best of taste. Though they are treading water, I would rather hear Steely Dan do that than hear most bands at full stroke.

J.V.

CAT STEVENS: Buddha and the Chocolate Box. Cat Stevens (vocals, guitar, keyboards); Alan Davies (guitar, vocals); Gerry Conway (drums); Alun Davies (guitar, vocals); Bruce Lynch (bass); other musicians. Music: Oh Very Young; Sun/C79; Ghost Town; Jesus; Ready; King of Trees; A Bad Penny; Home in the Sky. A & M SP 3623 $5.98, © VT 3623 $5.98, © CS 3623 $6.98, © KQ 53623 $7.98.

Performance: Disappointing
Recording: Very good

Why am I, at this late date, feeling grumpy about how coy/dumb a Cat Stevens album title can look in the right light? Why do I keep remembering the instrumental temperament of this album as a shouting match between the drums and piano when it is plain, when I am listening to it, that there is texture, there is a remarkable amount of lyricism, and there are a few melodic ideas, at least, that are almost worthy of “Tea for the Tillerman”? I think my impressions of “The Foreigner,” which certainly was foreign in the recorded messages of Cat Stevens, are having some carry-over here, and it may be that either Stevens or the interests of fair play any good, I sort of cringe every time logic calls for the post-“Foreigner” Stevens to make one of those grungy collisions with a piano keyboard, with pilotless explosion to match. And I must say he could have done himself some good, even among people who weren’t exposed to “The Foreigner,” if he had defied logic (or at least predictability) a few times.

All right. Carrying on or not, Oh Very Young is quite a nice (if unsurprising) song. Sun/C79 carries on the semi-hysterical side of Stevens with a fair amount of grace, even if the synthesizer part does sound grafted on, and King of Trees has elegance, Home in the Sky charm, and not only because they are cast in the finery that was, and may again be, the undesirably attractive thing Stevens taste aside. And Ready is a dud, with many a collision with the English language as well as the keyboard—“I love love I love I’m ready to love” indeed. Music isn’t much better. A Bad Penny isn’t so hot, and Jesus and Ghost Town are awful in other ways. I think “The Foreigner” was an experiment, which, on balance, probably shouldn’t have been immortalized in vinyl. But it was a worthy exercise for the doer of it, while too much of this album—considering the source—seems like simple sandbagging.

It’s time, I think, for certain gifted persons—and not just Cat Stevens—to stop inflating the value of their tiniest whims and get back to hard work.

N.C.

B. W. STEVENSON: Calabasas. B. W. Stevenson (vocals and guitar); orchestra. ANNA-LISA; We Had It All; Roll On; Dry Land; Song for Kate; and five others. RCA APL 1-0410 $5.98, © APL 1-0410 $5.98, © APR 1-0410 $5.98, © A1P 1-0410 $7.95, © APT 1-0410 $7.95.

Performance: Arid
Recording: Poor

This is a strangely dry and lifeless album from a performer whose previous work I have admired. Stevenson seems to be skimming his material, and the production is so poor that he...
Bobby Womack: Lookin' for a Love Again. Bobby Womack (vocals and guitar); orchestra. Doing It My Way: Let It Hang Out; Point of No Return; Copper Kettle; and six others. United Artists UA-LA-199-G $6.98. \( \text{Performance: Entertaining} \) \\ \[ \text{Recording: Very good} \]

Bobby Womack’s talents aren’t very deep, but he does manage to be consistently entertaining. In his own material (Doing It My Way, or Let It Hang Out), projecting a free and easy approach set against some flashy arrangements, he’s quite striking. But in Copper Kettle, or Don’t Let Me Down, written by others, he elides most of the meaning while still offering a good enough musical performance. Extremely fine Muscle Shoals engineering and sound.

This is an interesting album by a highly literate young woman who tends to amuse herself at great length. She writes most of her material and often hits it on the nose (bloodying it in the process), as in her description of a now grown child actor in the title song. When she gets into introspection (I Have, or Into Feeling Lonely), the results aren’t really all that spectacular.

She has a fine, dry lyric sense, however; there is a lot of fun in If Only You Were Robertson Young, and a lot of unclothing whimsy in What Kind of Shoes Does September Wear? The music, unfortunately, never gets much beyond the tinkle tinkle of the I-feel-swell or I-feel-lousy kind of accompaniments all too common on first albums. Nice try.

(Continued from page 96)

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THE VELVET UNDERGROUND: 1969 Velvet Underground Live (see Best of the Month, page 73)

BOBBY WOMACK: Lookin’ for a Love Again. Bobby Womack (vocals and guitar); orchestra. Doing It My Way: Let It Hang Out; Point of No Return, Copper Kettle, and six others. United Artists UA-LA-199-G $6.98. \( \text{United Artists UA-EA-199-G $6.98} \) \\ \[ \text{Performance: Entertaining} \] \\ \[ \text{Recording: Very good} \]

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HAMPTON HAWES: *Plasin’ in the Yard*. Hampton Hawes (piano); Bob Cranshaw (electric bass); Kenny Clarke (drums); Pink Peaches; De Dee; Stella by Starlight; and two others. Prestige P.10077 $5.98.

Dexter Gordon: *Blues à la Suisse*. Dexter Gordon (tenor saxophone); Hampton Hawes (piano); Bob Cranshaw (electric bass); Kenny Clarke (drums); Gingerbread Boy; Some Other Spring; and two others. Prestige P.10079 $5.98.

Gene Ammons: *Gene Ammons and Friends at Montreux*. Gene Ammons (tenor saxophone); Hampton Hawes (electric piano); Bob Cranshaw (electric bass); Kenny Clarke (drums); Kenneth Nash (congas); Nat Adderley (cornet); Cannonball Adderley (alto saxophone); Dexter Gordon (tenor saxophone).

Hampton Hawes is not delivering the promises he made a few years back when he was recording for the Contemporary label.

Adding Dexter Gordon to anything has got to be an improvement, as indeed it is on the quartet album, and even though Gordon not playing at full capacity he easily outshines Gene Ammons’ performance on the last album. The “Ammons and Friends” set is somewhat lithiumed up by the addition of Gordon and the Adderley brothers on one long track, "Trents Bleu. (It is small consolation, but the music within this album is infinitely superior to the cover, a horror on a par with the worst of the old Savoy gospel albums.)"

It is a sound unduly harsh, let me say that these are not bad albums—but the Dexter Gordon set is a good one—but none of them give us what we might expect from the artists featured. What they do give us is what we have unfortunately come to expect from festival recordings. C.A.

**Recordings of Special Merit**

**Milt Jackson:** Goodbye. Milt Jackson (vibraphone); Hubert Laws (flute); Cedar Walton (piano); Ron Carter (bass); Steve Gadd (drums); with Freddie Hubbard (trumpet); Herbie Hancock (piano), and Billy Cobham (drums). on SKJ only. Detour Ahead: Old Devil Moon; Opus De Funk: Goodbye. SKJ CTI 6038 $6.98, CTC 6038 $6.95, © CTI 6038 $6.95, © CTC 6038 $6.95. Performance: Excellent.

Thirteen years ago, Riverside Records sent me to Chicago to produce a series of albums. The result was disastrous because my bosses, in a classic case of false economy, furnished me with engineers who not only disliked the music I was recording but had hitherto worked only on flushing toilets, squeaky screen doors, and other sounds of the home. I daresay it would take a similar situation to come up with a Milt Jackson/Hubert Laws recording that was anything less than excellent.

Masters of their respective instruments, they flourish amid the illustrious company that completes the quintet heard on these selections. SKJ, recorded a year earlier (in December 1972) is a pleasant diversion in the middle of side two, with some fine solo work by Freddie Hubbard and Herbie Hancock, and with Billy Cobham on drums. "Goodbye" is indeed a good buy. C.A.

**Oregon:** Distant Hills. Paul McCandless (oboe, English horn); Ralph Towner (guitar, piano, trumpet); Glen Moore (tbass, violin, flute, piano); Colin Walcott (sitar, tabla, clarinet, piano, marimba, guitar, drums). Aurora: Dark Spirit; Mi Chinita Suite: Distant Hills; and three others. Vanguard VSD-79341 $5.98. Performance: Indecisive.

Friends who’ve been in that part of the country since I have tell me that Oregon the state has signs up at its borders saying “Nice place to visit but we wouldn’t want you to live here” or something like that—and Oregon the jazz combo seems to be telling me something of a similar nature. The Paul Winter Consort, which either is no more or drastically altered, seeing as how most of its members now call themselves Oregon, was a sort of psyche. (Continued on page 99)
The trick is to find a high-quality quad receiver at a low price. We think we have that receiver. In fact, we think we have four of them, each one an outstanding buy within its price category. They're all listed below with their prices and most important specs. All you have to do is decide which one is best for you.

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The man who invented American popular singing

Der Bingle's early jazz years in a new Columbia album
Reviewed by Joel Vance

There are also some damned good performances that still stand up, even though they were recorded nearly fifty (!) years ago, and some that are timeless.

Just what Crosby was able to do for a song is demonstrated in Baby Oh Where Can You Be; which was recorded in 1929. To prove that the melody isn't much, listen to Fats Waller's piano solo of it recorded in the same year (RCA LPV-562): the tune just isn't there. But add Crosby's vocal and, despite the semi-sappy lyrics, it comes alive; it's believable, he makes it work. His feeling for jazz as a popular music—which it was in the Twenties—is perfectly demonstrated in Taint So Honey. Taint So; recorded with Whitman's band when the great Bix Beiderbecke was on that band's brass section. And what Sinatra was able to do ten years later was pioneered by Crosby on Can't We Be Friends. A well-chosen date recorded with Duke Ellington's Orchestra in 1932, when Ellington was winning fame with his lush "jungle" sound. It probably galled the Crud, which allowed Sinatra to portray himself as the sassy boyishness of a legendary man.

The release of the collection has apparently been hanging fire for seven years, since the liner notes by Larry Carr (who selected and collated the material) are dated December 20, 1967. Most of the material has long been out of print, and some of it has never before been issued. It takes Crosby through his earliest days, when he was working with the Rhythm Boys as a singer for Paul White- man, the leading (and most innovative) big-band leader of the time, and from there on to solo fame. There are moments in the album that are charming because they present the snobbishness of a legendary man, Louis Blues, by then a weary chestnut, but they performed it with the attack and grace for which Ellington was always remembered. Crosby's style is not compatible with the Duke's. Though, for they were both highly individual artists creating their own art forms. To make matters worse, the time itself was, as it was a song of the moment and he added a bridge in tango style for com- merciality's sake. Only Tessie Smith could make a performance of it a work of art. No white singer has yet been able to bring it off, but Crosby comes as close as any of them has. Ellington's band is marvelous, and Crosby is doing his best, with the best of intentions. Two takes are included here: he muffs the lyrics in the first, making it a song about a girl by a girl, but in the second he is more relaxed and so is the band. From a his- torical point of view, St. Louis Blues is prob- ably the most valuable song in the collection because it shows how two great artists make the best of a bad situation.

Crosby's scat vocals appear throughout the album. Many of them have only a kind of period charm and would be dismissible were it not for Crosby's being one of the few white vocalists who would even attempt them with any hope of success. For Bix, as I recall, this was an epiphany. It is fascinating to speculate about what jam sessions he wound up at and how many times he, along with other notable white musicians working in or passing through New York, found themselves up at Fletcher Henderson's house for a dawn breakfast in Harlem.

Sinatra has often acknowledged that Crosby was his inspirational model. He took the conversational vocal further than Crosby did, he achieved scat singing in a new Columbia album

Bing Crosby: The Bing Crosby Story—The Early Jazz Years, 1928-1932. Bing Crosby (vocals); instrumental accompani- ment, including the orchestras of Paul White- man, Duke Ellington, Don Redman, the Dorsey Brothers, and Lennie Hayton; the Rhythm Boys; Joe Venuti and Eddie Lang; the Ipana Troubadours; others. Miss- issippi Mud; Wa-Da-Da; 'Taint So. Hon- orably the most valuable song in the collection for which Ellington will always be remem- bered. Crosby's style is not compatible with the Duke's. Though, for they were both highly individual artists creating their own art forms. To make matters worse, the time itself was, as it was a song of the moment and he added a bridge in tango style for com- merciality's sake. Only Tessie Smith could make a performance of it a work of art. No white singer has yet been able to bring it off, but Crosby comes as close as any of them has. Ellington's band is marvelous, and Crosby is doing his best, with the best of intentions. Two takes are included here; he muffs the lyrics in the first, making it a song about a girl by a girl, but in the second he is more relaxed and so is the band. From a his- torical point of view, St. Louis Blues is prob- ably the most valuable song in the collection because it shows how two great artists make the best of a bad situation.

Crosby's scat vocals appear throughout the album. Many of them have only a kind of period charm and would be dismissible were it not for Crosby's being one of the few white vocalists who would even attempt them with any hope of success. For Bixo- manics like me, there is a loving tribute to Beiderbecke from the days when he was with the Whiteman band. Bix's 1928 derby-hat- muted solo in Sweet Sue is recalled—in its entirety—by Crosby's scatting and a simply astonishing piano solo by Hayton. The song sounds like Bix and Fats Waller at the same time. This song was performed for the sheer joy of it, and it is superb.

Despite its glories, this collection does not contain all of the best early Crosby, some of which is available in "Paul White- man and His Orchestra, Featuring Bing Crosby" (Columbia CL 2830), "Paul White- man, Volume 11" (RCA LPV-570), and "Bing Crosby: Rare Early Recordings, 1922-1933" (Biograph BLP-CL). But as a tribute to and further proof of Crosby's cas- trual, determining genius, "The Bing Crosby Story" is a real treasure.
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DELIUS' KOANGA

At the outset, the first recording ever of Frederick Delius' opera Koanga (Angel SBLX 3808, recorded under the auspices of the Delius Trust) displays more than a slight similarity to another durable product of nineteen-
teenth-century Southern culture: Asa Cond-
tier's Coca-Cola. Neither is exactly intoxicat-
ing, but both are curiously refreshing to the
And by act three we are reminded that it was in
France that Delius rounded off the writing of
the score, for the fire of cognac has unmis-
takably crept into it.
Koanga is, of course, a by-product of De-
lius' exposure to the superficially languor-
ous but basically fervid and schismatic life of the
South, which he experienced at first hand dur-
ing his residence there between the ages of
twenty-two and twenty-four. The first, more
famous part of the visit was spent near Jack-
sontville, Florida: the later, less picturesque
portion in Danville, Virginia. The time was
between 1884 and 1886, and not only were
there ex-slaves living out difficult lives on all
sides, but the physical facts as well as the spir-
tual remnants of the plantation culture were
visible wherever Delius traveled.
The literary impulse for Koanga was de-

tailed in The Grandissimes by the popular
American novelist George Washington Cable
(whose knowledge of life in New Orleans and
surrounding Louisiana also supplied the back-
ground for Henry F. Gilbert's The Dance in
Place Congo, produced as a ballet at the Met-
ropolitan Opera House in 1918). But Delius
had already heard the tale of the ferociously
proud African who resisted slavery from
Florida Negroes who had learned it firsthand
when New Orleans was the port of entry for
slave traders. Delius had also learned "slave"
songs, or what more recently have been called
"spirituals," from the same informants. What
brought all this together and fired his creative
impulse were the powerfully poetic and richly
human elements in Cable's retelling of the
tale.

In Dahomey, Africa, Koanga was a prince of
his realm and a priest of Voodoo Manian.
This made him infinitely preferable as a po-
tential husband, in the eyes of the mulatto
Palmyra, to her pursuer Simon Perez, over-
seer of the American plantation on which the
attention is inevitably directed toward one
particular facet of his music—Delius' harmo-

cy or Stravinsky's rhythm" (in Music Ho!,
page 308). But it is certainly a sign of greater
weakness when a composer lacks "anything" to
draw our attention. Nonetheless, to be brack-

ted with Stravinsky in 1934 (when Lam-
bert is on record as declaring that it is a
"typical mistake", if not the "ultimate error.")
Sir Thomas Beecham, Delius' lifelong sponsor and benefactor, probably knew the
composer's works better than any contempo-
rary, and I have a clear recollection of his
marking: "I would take a wager that I could
write out from memory the orchestral score of
Strauss' Ein Heldenleben with a minimum of
error. I wouldn't take such a wager with any
major work of Delius. Too much change, too
much that is unpredictable in the voice lead-
ing."

Once under way (which is to say at about
the middle of side two, and much as Puccini
struck his lifetime stride in Manon in the sec-
dar act of Manon Lescault, Koanga is re-
plete with instances of Delius' devising mirac-
ulous options—and almost always taking the
least expected of them. There are fine spots
in act one (especially a quintet at its close,
where the Koanga-Palmyra match has been
made and those affected by it express their
conflicting emotions), but it is only with the
middle of side two and not much as Puccini
struck his lifetime stride in Manon in the sec-
dar act of Manon Lescault, Koanga is re-
plete with instances of Delius' devising mirac-
ulous options—and almost always taking the
least expected of them. There are fine spots
in act one (especially a quintet at its close,
where the Koanga-Palmyra match has been
made and those affected by it express their
conflicting emotions), but it is only with the
superb aria by Palmyra just before her wed-
ing, the infectious La Calinda that follows,
and Koanga's outburst after Palmyra's abduc-
tion that we begin, aurally, to sit up and wait
expectantly for each new turn of the drama to
unfold, for its music to take flight.

As Koanga picks up and advances what
was best in the Florida suite of a few years
before (with its less-developed version of La
Calinda), so Koanga itself set in motion a
host of impulses that soon became fulfillments
Sir Charles Groves is conductor in Angel's
recording of Delius' powerful opera Koanga.
in other works. Do you admire On Hearing the First Cuckoo in Spring? You will find its predecessor in a nocturnal moment shortly after the curtain rises on act three (page 106 of the vocal score). Do you fancy the nature poet in Delius? Koanga is an opera played entirely outdoors, with never an indoor scene of any kind. Neither Salomon Jadassohn nor Carl Reinecke, with whom Delius “studied” at the Leipzig Conservatory, would find a trace of their beloved textbook counterpart in Koanga, but it is filled with a polyphony of orchestral colorations, vocal values, and dynamic pulsations, alive and functioning before Klangfarbenmelodie had even been born. Mahler hadn’t yet met Alma at this time, and Schoenberg was still working in the bank.

For those who persist in asking the question “Where did all this come from?” the only reasonable answer can be, “From the grace of God.” Florida itself begins with a section not unlike the Morning in Peer Gynt by Delius’ dear friend Grieg, and it is not without a suggestion of Rustle of Spring by Christian Sinding, with whom Delius passed some student days in Leipzig. But in neither case is Delius imitating; rather, he is already doing their thing his way. In Koanga it is amusing to observe that when the hero takes a vow to be true to his voodoo deities, the orchestra endorses his determination with a descending dorse - his voodoo deities, the orchestra endorses his determination with a descending.

A separate article could be devoted to the new libretto by Douglas Craig and Andrew Page, who produced Koanga for Sadler’s Wells in 1972. In an introductory note in the printed libretto supplied with the album, they undertake to assure the reader that Koanga is good despite the weaknesses they enumerate. But they obfuscate the issue with references to changes and insertions in the score, all dating back to the early years of the century and all included in the piano-vocal score published in 1935 (a year after the composer’s death). And they do not mention the insertion of a high B-flat as Palmyra’s dying note in place of the mid-range one Delius originally wrote.

The new version of the text, admittedly necessary because the one set by Delius was contrived by several hands, none of them skilled, has some oddities of its own. I have in mind particularly the rendering of one key line of Palmyra’s — “Africa! land of my fathers” — as “Africa! land of his fathers” (meaning Koanga’s fathers). It could be that they were mindful of the subplot in which it is disclosed that Palmyra was the issue of a white father and a black mother, but, for purposes of identifying herself with Koanga and Africa, the use of the first-person possessive was certainly poetic — as if speaking of “forefathers” — and not merely familial.

Claudia Lindsey (Palmyra) and Eugene Holmes (Koanga) also starred in the production of Koanga presented by the Opera Society of Washington in 1970. Pictured is the wedding scene.

All is redeemed, however, by the splendor of the performance, especially the staunch sound of Eugene Holmes as Koanga and the charming personality that shines through the Palmyra of Claudia Lindsay (both were in the Washington production). The temptation to say, of Koanga, “What a role for Paul Robeson—or for Kenneth Spencer or William Warfield—in his prime” is offset by the evidence Holmes provides of eventually qualifying to be the next in that great line. The subordinate participants are all excellent, likewise the blend of sound contrived by Christopher Bishop (recording producer), Christopher Parker (balance engineer), and John Willan (assistant producer).

A final cautionary note: adherents of opera as drama should lift the stylus from the groove after Palmyra’s death; the epilogue reprising the scene of the opening, with the white folks listening to Uncle Joe, is just too anticlimactic. Strangely, though, Delius’ skill in regaining that mood musically is equal to the task! The musical strengths of this work are often as unexpected as they are undeniable.
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Performance: Very good
Recording: Good

On the evidence so far, Robert Silverman is the most noteworthy keyboard talent Orion has introduced. His following up his Copland and Schumann recordings with one devoted to Bartók gives some indication of the range of his sympathies, and the performances here more than sustain the impression of depth, technique, and overall maturity left by his earlier ones. The Bagatelles have been recorded infrequently enough to qualify as something of a novelty, and the piano version of the Dance Suite has evidently not been recorded before at all. The latter is interesting to hear once or twice, especially when it is as well played as it is here, but it is not the sort of thing one would rush to hear again, for, as John Downey acknowledges in his very detailed annotation for the recording, "the keyboard version cannot compete in brilliance and color with its orchestral brother...."

The piano sound is quite good, but the surfaces could be quieter. R.F.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT


Performance: Stunning
Recording: Excellent

Noel Rogers
A supple and impassioned soprano

The fifty-two-year-old Jack Beeson, whose brief opera based on William Saroyan's Hella Out There made it all the way to educational television and is available on the Desto label along with his taut and suspenseful full-length Lizzie Borden, has come up with another operatic thriller with an enormous potential for wide popularity in The Sweet Bye and Bye. Once again he has built a taut musical melodrama inspired by a newspaper scandal of the Twenties—this time, one suspects, the story of evangelist Aimee Semple McPherson, whose exploits provided the tabloids of her day with the stuff of many a juicy headline.

In Kenward Elmslie's fast-moving and eminently singable libretto, Sister Rose Ora Easter, the allegedly virginal founder, president, and "Beloved Leader" of the Lifeshine Ark and the Lifeshine Radio Hour as well as editor of the Happy Hymnal and Monthly Digest, has pretended to drown herself in the ocean off the beach in Atlantic City in order to run off with a local confidence man named William Wilcox with whom she has been conducting a secret love affair. As the action unfolds, from the Atlantic City boardwalk to a New York penthouse to the "Miracle Room" where Sister Rose Ora's possessive mother commits a murder rather than countenance the ruin of her evangelical operation, the stage is alive with suspense and surprises.

Those familiar with Beeson's earlier scores will find here once more the same open, innocent charm, the same certain hand in evoking the emotional possibilities of lurid situations, the same crackling orchestration, and something new as well: a probing for the emotional undertones that lend the most naive aspects of the story a powerful kind of poignancy. Bee-son has made the most of the opportunities in Mr. Elmslie's text to compose choral settings of impressive beauty, and it is to his credit that he has resisted the two most obvious temptations of the entire enterprise: to compose pastiches echoing Twenties jazz, and to parody the evangelical Baptist singing style. He has avoided both paths rigorously, devising instead music in the frank, direct idiom he has made his own, and building scene by scene to the cinematic climax in a musical language that owes nothing whatever to parody. The librettist, too, has avoided the easy line of caricature which the situation might have invited, choosing to keep Sister Rose Ora's possessive mother a sympathetic fellow with honest intentions. Nor is Mother Rainey, for all her Momist oppressive ways, quite the pat figure she might have turned out to be in less sensitive hands.

To clinch the effectiveness of The Sweet Bye and Bye there is the perfectly stunning production by the Kansas City Lyric Theater under Russell Patterson, the company's general director, who has supervised over seventy different productions and conducted more than two hundred performances—including

Explanation of symbols:
- reel-to-reel stereo tape
- eight-track stereo cartridge
- stereo cassette
- quadraphonic disc
- reel-to-reel quadraphonic tape
- eight-track quadraphonic tape
- quadraphonic cassette

Monophonic recordings are indicated by the symbol #

The first listing is the one reviewed; other formats, if available, follow it.
works by Samuel Barber, Carlisle Floyd, Victorio Giannini, and Robert Ward—in the past fifteen seasons. Noel Rogers is an impassioned Sister Rose Ora and uses her supple soprano to enormous advantage. As Mother Raimey, who prefers death to the disgrace of her order, mezzo-soprano Caroline Conn is as overbearing and as menacing as she ought to be, but never allows the matron of the flock to turn into a comic-strip Katisha. Tenor Robert Owen Jones, with some of the most lyrical passages to make his own in a juicy role, and in some lovely duets with Miss Rogers, is thoroughly persuasive—as, indeed, are all the other members of an economically employed cast who represent members of the Lifesine Ark, bathing beauties, beauty judges, and other natives of the early-Twenties movie set. A complete libretto and a folder of information about the participants (though none about the composer or the librettist) are provided. And the recorded sound is first-rate.

P.K.

RECORDINGS OF SPECIAL MERIT


Performance: Highly polished

Recording: Good, but . . .

Twenty years ago the distinguished Végh ensemble recorded all the Beethoven quartets but the sound was flat and mechanical. This new edition is more than a welcome addition to the catalog. The performances are both vigorous and technically competent, allowing the listener to enjoy every nuance of the music. The recording is well balanced, with each instrument clearly heard. The overall sound is warm and rich, with excellent stereo imaging. A must for any Beethoven quartet collection.

BELLINI: Norma. Beverly Sills (soprano), Norma; Shirley Verrett (mezzo-soprano), Adalgisa; Enrico Di Giuseppe (tenor), Pollicone; Paul Plishka (bass), Oroveso; Delia Wallis (soprano), Clotilde; Robert Tear (tenor), Flavio; John Aldis Choir; New Philharmonia Orchestra. James Levine cond. ABC STEREO TREASURY ATS 20017-3 three discs $17.94.

Performance: A Beverly-Shirley show

Recording: Good

The Norma of Beverly Sills and the Adalgisa of Shirley Verrett are the principal ornaments of this album. Their glisser deserts a worthier setting.

No one since Maria Callas has revealed as much as Beverly Sills does here of Norma's woman, illuminating her pride, her conflict, her vulnerability. Miss Sills' interpretative artistry is particularly moving in the episodes relating to Norma's maternal feelings: the poignancy of a phrase like "Sento un diletto ed un dolore insieme d'esser madre" (Act 1, Scene 5), the despair projected into the recitative "Darmo un entrama" (Act II, Scene 1) speak volumes. Nor are the big vocal challenges slighted. The "Casta Diva" is majestically and eloquently phrased at a slowish tempo in the "original" key of G (though reverting to the more traditional F Major for the allegro section). She invests her part in the "In mia man" duet with audible suffering and makes the most of the arching melody of "Deh, non volevi vittime" just before the final ensemble. The hardiness of resolve in Norma's character—required in her entrance monologue "Sediziose voci" and in some of her dialogues with Pollione—is not Miss Sills' strong suit, nor are her sustained notes always firmly controlled. Some fluttery tones and several acidulous high notes cause her achievement to suffer. In her confrontation with the Sutherland and Caballé Normas in purely vocal terms. In comprehension and dramatic projection, however, Beverly Sills surpasses both divas.

Shirley Verrett as Adalgisa is a worthy partner. Like Sills, she is always dramatically alert and able to invent the role with a real personality. Miss Verrett is not as natural a Bellinian as her colleague, but her musicality allows her to assimilate the style. She manages the tessitura bravely, bringing a high C that is firmer than Miss Sills'. Although the blend of their vocal timbres is not ideal, the superior artistry of the two singers brings off their joint scenes extremely well. My only complaint about Miss Verrett's performance is a minor one: she often takes aerdale into notes instead of attacking them directly.

These two ladies are the show as far as I am concerned. Enrico Di Giuseppe and Paul Plishka, two serious artists, labor commendably at tasks that are a shade beyond them. The Clotilde is fine, the Flavio is inadequate. Neither of these artists is a major problem, however. The conductor, alas, is.

(Continued on page 107)
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CIRCLE NO. 34 ON READER SERVICE CARD
THE BEST OF HOFFNUNG: A SALUTARY REVIVAL
Reviewed by James Goodfriend

It must be the major weakness of Baker's Biographical Dictionary of Musicians that there is no entry for Gerard Hoffnung. Hoffnung, who died in hisforties in 1959, was a conscientious performer on the bass tuba, a musical cartoonist of considerable genius, and the creator, directly or indirectly, and through the medium of various "Hoffnung Music Festivals," of some of the greatest moments music has ever known. A number of those moments are to be found on a new single release, selected and reissued from the previously issued albums of Hoffnung Festivals, all of which are now, alas, out of print.

There are two principal things that differentiate Hoffnung-inspired humor from most of the lesser attempts to be funny through serious music. One of them is the basic respect for music that underlies all the comedy. The other is the incredible level of talent that goes into the joke. One feels only respect for Dennis Brain and awe at his feat of rendering a movement of a Leopold Mozart horn concerto on a length of garden hose. One laughs, certainly, but the laugh is as much one of delight as of humor. Hoffnung never tried to parlay amateurish inadequacies into a joke; the professional competence of everyone associated with his festivals is uncompromising.

So is their devotion to music. The satire on Viennese twelve-tonal music (The Barber of Darmstadt) is by a composer who, in his own serious music, uses the techniques of the Viennese twelve-tone composers. The Grand, Grand Overture is by one who well knows the métier of occasional music. The humor and the satire, therefore, are from the inside. There may be a little egg on Beethoven's face at the finish, but his image does not lie in shards while the barbarians dance around it.

My own favorite moments here include Dennis Brain's trill on the hosepipe, the first entry of the Hoover vacuum cleaners in the Grand, Grand Overture, virtually all of the "Tchaikovsky" Sugar Plums by the recorder consort, and, above all, the final entry of the trumpet in the Leonore No. 4 Overture, featuring, I would guess, every trumpet, cornet, and Boy Scout bugle within a hundred miles of London. For such items, among others, "The Best of Hoffnung" is as vital a record to own as almost anything in the basic repertoire.

Among the virtues of James Levine's leadership is his insistence on firm rhythmic definition—a welcome tendency in an opera that is often betrayed by flaccid conducting. Just the same, the flowing, elegiac world of Bellini's melody is clearly not this conductor's domain. Even in the hurly-burly of early Verdi, the crudities permitted here would be considered excessive, particularly those savage fortissimo chords slashing, like thunderclaps, into tender cantilenas. There is also much coarseness in the orchestral tone as a result of improperly balanced chords and inexact ensemble, particularly in the passage leading up to "Casta diva" and in the allegro section following it ("Fine al vito"). Some of the conductor's tempo miscalculations are also damaging: Pollione's entreaty appealing to Adalgisa is deprived of its implicit tenderness, and the trio "Oh di qual sei tu vittima" is turned into a fast and heavy-footed mazurka.

This kind of restless and inappropriate leadership prevents me from recommending the album, but I urge ABC to issue a disc of highlights, encompassing as much of Sills and Verrett as possible, for these two artists do honor to Bellini.

G.J.


Performance: Good
Recording: Excellent


Performance: Vigorous
Recording: Electronically simulated stereo

Neville Marriner's pairing of Bizet and Prokofiev represents two kinds of neo-Classicism: a mid-nineteenth-century French Conservatoire version and an early-twentieth-century nose-thumbing Russian version. It makes a charming program in the St. Martin's high style. No whiff of academia here. The Bizet is bright, lively, jaunty, exhilarating, and, if a hair short of perfect polish, nevertheless a great pleasure. The Prokofiev is less successful. Bizet dances, Prokofiev plods. Curious. The recording is superb, perfectly balanced and as free of extraneous noise as you could wish.

There was no particular need for Everest to resurrect the ancient Bizet and Schubert recordings by the late René Leibowitz. Though the interpretations are strong and musical, there never was such an orchestra as the Paris Philharmonic, and there is not much good that one can find to say about the playing of whatever orchestra it is on this disc. Simulated stereo is like simulated sex; not very satisfying to anyone.

E.S.

BUSONI: Indian Diary (see TCHAIKOVSKY)

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AUGUST 1974
The simple beauty of Buxtehude’s cantatas had a profound effect on the history of music but not on posterity. Our idea of the Baroque cantata comes from the more developed, more complex, and, yes, more dramatic works of J. S. Bach. Buxtehude learned from and imitated his distinguished predecessor, but, as with all his music, his cantatas are much more highly embellished than the simpler forms of the age.

Buxtehude’s position as organist and music director in Lubeck was one of the most prominent in Germany, and he directed a musical establishment in which practical music for the church and concert music were inextricably interwoven. He was a genuinely popular composer, and his church cantatas speak with a dignity and simplicity that is closer to folk tradition than to the complexities of traditional counterpoint, vocal virtuosity, ornamentation, operatic drama, or display.

Nevertheless, in spite of their immense appeal, these works are not very well known today. The works recorded here are solo cantatas with supple vocal lines supported by a surprisingly rich instrumentation. All of them have their attractions, but the knockout number is undoubtedly “Herr, auf Dich traue ich”—“In Thee, O Lord, I put my trust.” The performances and recordings—originally released in Germany by Cantate—are excellent. Emilia Petrescu, a singer not previously known to me, has an attractive voice very beautifully used. Klaus Martin Ziegler is responsible for the excellent integration of the organ continuo with the idiomatic instrumental playing. Phrasing and tempo are full of life: the music breathes. Good, clear sound. E.S.

CAGE: Six Melodies for Violin and Keyboard (see CRUMB)

CARISSIMI: Judicium Salomonis; Jephe


Performance: Faint praise
Recording: Audible splices

Carissimi was an important and probably great composer. I say “probably” because nearly all his work is forgotten, and even the moving and dramatic Jephe is known largely through dubious editions and performances. But Carissimi, who worked in seventeenth-century Rome, probably much set the form of the sacred music drama and, through his fluid and expressive handling of recitative, arioso, and chorus, had an enormous influence on opera and oratorio well into the nineteenth century.

This recording of Jephe, although far from misrepresenting the work, is not going to spark a Carissimi revival. The singing is unremarkable and unidiomatic. We know enough about Baroque ornamentation—even in the still-mysterious seventeenth century—to state confidently that no respectable singer would have left out all those juicy appoggiaturas, wonderful cadential trills, and other Baroque-era bric-a-brac, any more than Bernini would have left the water out of his fountains. The recording has some odd acoustical perspectives and an embarrassing splice or two.

The Judgment of Solomon is a curious work, possibly not by Carissimi at all. It may have been written by his pupil Cesti, himself a significant figure in the history of music and music drama. It is in fact somewhat different from the version known to me, has an attractive voice very beautifully used. Klaus Martin Ziegler is responsible for the excellent integration of the organ continuo with the idiomatic instrumental playing. Phrasing and tempo are full of life: the music breathes. Good, clear sound. E.S.
is turning up on discs with greater regularity recently than the music of almost any other living composer. Mekrokosmos—the illusion to Bartók is quite intentional—is a set of twenty-four piano pieces arranged in two zodiacal cycles and endowed with such individual character that it is sometimes difficult to pick up the thread of the music. Crumb's mystically vibrating fortepiano. E.S.

The Theatre Wurlitzer Resounds. Angel!


DEBUSSY: Four Early Songs (see FLAGELLO)

DEBUSSY (arr. Tomita): Snowflakes Are Dancing (sic); Reverie; Gardens in the Rain; Clair de Lune; The Engulfed Cathedral; Passe-angers that featured the era's best rats, marches, and waltzes.

Performance: Inscrutable

Recording: Overdone

Hard on the heels of the announcement that "Switched-on Bach" has passed the one million mark in sales (the second—Van Cliburn's Footprints in the Snow, 1958), Torrence has at times programmed a sort of electronic disc—Wuorinen's intense, expressionist solo piece, The Long and the Short, or even some of the more avant-garde works of Crumb, acutely sensitive to the unpleasantly mechanical rhythms of most such electronic ventures, has at times programmed a sort of rubato into the music. Unfortunately, mechanically produced rubato is mechanical itself, and the net effect is that of an improperly

marketing of a chrome-plated mousetrap is not enough for them; they want to be congratulated on its aesthetic qualities as well.

No way! Whatever appeal the record has for college freshmen, there is no doubt that its musical values are nil. Mr. Tomita's vision of Debussy is secondhand from third-rate film background music, and Debussy's notes are purely an excuse for sound effects that would not be out of place supporting a winter werewolf romance. Those readers old enough to remember the Theremin will find its ghastly imitation of a human voice imitated here in turn by the Moog—with the modifications that the "soprano" seems to be singing through clenched teeth, and her nonverbal meanderings reveal, at times, an Oriental infection. The echo of a rather nasty mountain snowstorm insinuates itself every now and then, and we are occasionally offered the sound spectacle of an emphatic whistler, and one piece has for background a continuous noise that reminds me of nothing so much as the sound of the passing of a New York Central train as heard from the parlor of a house built too close to the railroad tracks.

Connoisseurs of electronic techniques will find here that the Moog can do all sorts of tasteless things they had not imagined it capable of before, and they will also find that Mr. Tomita, acutely sensitive to the unpleasantly mechanical rhythms of most such electronic ventures, has at times programmed a sort of rubato into the music. Unfortunately, mechanically produced rubato is mechanical itself, and the net effect is that of an improperly
regarded motor—which is very unnerving.

The CD-4 quadraphonic recording poises the listener at the center of this whirling mass of musical gibberish. The acoustic ambiance resembles that of the Holland Tunnel, and one has the acute feeling that something, somewhere, is going to break. As a matter of fact, the rear speakers in my rig fairly frequently broke up under the onslaught of a lot of high-energy mid-range sounds (something that had not happened to me with any other four-channel disc I have played, CD-4, SQ, QS, or whatever have you). And, though this may be due to deficiencies in my equipment, I have the feeling that the disc has been grievously overstuffed.

It should be noted that neither Kubelik nor Stokowski takes the repeat in the first movement. Czech musicians have assured me that Dvořák wrote in first-movement repeats for the sake of clarity of line. (In his spoken "Outline of Themes" Stokowski confidently identifies themes "of Indian origin," "of Negro origin," etc; We know the themes were all Dvořák's own, but if Stokowski had said "character" instead of "origin" he would not have been able to mark all. The voice of the conductor at forty-five, in any event, is unmistakably recognizable to anyone who may have heard him speak at twice that age: it is a warm and heartful voice.

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"Sea Drift" is something else again. Most English commentators regard this, rather than "Song of the High Hills," as the finest of the jazz-like Delius scores. Certainly the composer's response to Walt Whitman's poetic recollection of his boyhood experience of loss and separation gave rise to music of a special richness and poignancy. However, I find it an extraordinarily difficult work to realize sensitively, partly because of the problems of balancing the baritone soloist—narrator with the orchestra, and partly because of the difficulty of realizing satisfactorily stereophonic ambiance, and Sir Charles Groves does elicit a fine performance.

As for the recording, it is rather as one might expect, the music gains enormously in the second symphony from the short list of preferred recordings. The New Philharmonic performance was taped last July; unencumbered by concern over 78-rpm side length, it has a smoother flow than its predecessor and breathes a bit more comfortably, but there is a remarkable consistency in Stokowski's approach after forty-six years—a majestic and convincing approach which includes a striking regard for clarity of line. (In his spoken "Outline of Themes" Stokowski confidently identifies themes "of Indian origin," "of Negro origin," etc; We know the themes were all Dvořák's own, but if Stokowski had said "character" instead of "origin" he would not have been able to mark all. The voice of the conductor at forty-five, in any event, is unmistakably recognizable to anyone who may have heard him speak at twice that age: it is a warm and heartful voice.

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Performance: Lost cause
Recording: Okay

Nicolas Flagello's "The Land" is a rich, sirupy setting of six nature poems by Alfred Lord Tennyson, no less. Tennyson's concept of the countryside is literary and secondhand enough, but at least he knew what a throttle is and what it sounds like. Flagello's throttle sounds exactly like Shrove tide carnival in St. Petersburg. The throttle is fife and drum perhaps.

The Pergolesi piece and the little-known Debussy songs are performed in arrangements by Mr. Flagello, the whole constituting a very curious package indeed.

FRANCK: Symphonic Variations (see The Basic Repertoire, page 51)


Performance: Half-and-half
Recording: Very good

GERSHWIN: A Self-Portrait in Sound; Piano Roll Medley—Rialto Ripples (On My Mind the Whole Night Long)/Ter-Oddie-Um-Bun-Bun; Fascinating Rhythm; Liza; I Got Rhythm. George Gershwin (piano), Porgy and Bess: Introduction: Summertime; A Woman Is a Sometime Thing; Finale, Scene One, Act One; My Man's Gone Now; Bess, You Is My Woman Now. George Gershwin (piano and vocals); Abbie Mitchell (soprano); Edward Matthews (baritone); Ruby Elzy (soprano); Todd Duncan (bass-baritone); Anne Brown (soprano); orchestra, George Gershwin cond. Mark 56 Records 467 $5.98 (available from Mark 56 Records, P.O. Box One, Anaheim, Calif. 92805).

Performance: Documentary
Recording: Well-preserved

The Angel collection of Gershwin music for piano and orchestra, released a number of years ago by Capitol under the romantic title "Gershwin by Starlight," represents the sumptuous Hollywood approach to Gershwin which substitutes sugar for salt and dresses up the music in a tuxedo. The concert opens with the Cuban Overture, written after the composer spent a brief vacation in Havana in 1932. But is this the Cuban Overture? Not quite. It is a setting by Greg McRitchie that transforms the piece into a rhapsody ("fresh new rhapsodic arrangements for piano and orchestra," it said on the old Capitol cover) full of elaborate decorations that deplete the simple energy of the work and slow it down to an un-Gershwinlike exercise in schmaltz. The same thing happens to the music from Porgy and Bess, which Mr. McRitchie was also allowed to lay his hands on. When will conductors find Gershwin's own intelligently constructed suite of music from his opera and start playing what he wrote, instead of all these improvements that get in the way of his genius? The performances of the Second Rhapsody and the I Got Rhythm Variations are something else again, since they are played as Gershwin wrote them. The Second Rhapsody started out as music for a cityscape sequence in a movie called Delicios, for which one minute of the music finally was used. Gershwin got permission from Fox to extend the piece into a concert work. He called it everything from Manhattan Rhapsody to New York Rhapsody to Rhapsody in Rivets before it was premiered as Second Rhapsody in 1932 by the Boston Symphony under Serge Koussevitzky. The critics loved it, but for some reason the work is seldom played. This version with Pennario as soloist and Newman conducting is the only recording of it available, and it is worth buying the whole album for. I have heard it played less sentimentally than it is here, but at least it's intact, and its lovely, misty blues melody deserves a place in any Gershwin collection.

The playing of the clever and endlessly inventive I Got Rhythm Variations, on the other hand, is unbuttoned, idiomatic, and one of the best in the catalog. So it's two up and two down on this Angel reissue.

The percentages are somewhat better on a new release from Mark 56 Records. The "crisp, jaunty, sure, and distinctive" Gershwin touch Edward Jablonski speaks of in his informative liner notes is in evidence throughout this mixed bag of treasure from various vaults. Gershwin wrote Rialto Ripples in 1916 in collaboration with Will Donaldson, and the history of American music contains some tedious arguments about just how much of this "piano rag" is Gershwin's. In addition, one could dispute to little avail about the speed at which this piano roll ought to be played.

(Continued on page 114)

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The finest hour of Bandstand Baroque revived

Reviewed by Robert Offergeld

It is seldom that one and the same recording offers us grand nostalgias, a blaze of instrumental fireworks, and, in stylistic terms, a gallery of high-comedy charades and impersonations—all of it conducted with musicological responsibility and unfailing high spirits. The new Nonesuch release in which all this does happen is a sort of two-artist, one-record revival of Bandstand Baroque at its wildly ornate best, and I expect to meet nothing else half as entertaining between here and the coming Bicentennial.

Ready for it or not, what we have here is nothing less than the return in glory of the long-gone virtuoso cornet, for god’s sake, and it breaks my heart that W. C. Fields isn’t here to make a movie around it. Nonesuch calls this gorgeously nutty adventure “Cornet Favorites,” and both terms of this title are precise. With one exception, the pieces were all written specifically for that stubby little valved horn with the voice of murky gold and the treacherous intonation—an admittedly cranky but gregarious and widely beloved instrument that no trumpet can ever quite replace. And of course the pieces were all written specifically, the album’s liner notes, and this somberly notes that his widely noted poetic faculty is not at all inconsistent with a streak of robust comedy.

Mr. Bolcom also does, and does handsomely, the album’s liner notes, and this is not the least interesting aspect of the production, for it opens wide a chapter in American musicology that has been virtually ignored.

To begin with, consider how little we know of the great cornet soloists themselves. In the eighties and nineties some of them were all but national figures, bandstand heroes at innumerable county fairs, political conventions, seaside entertainment piers, centennial expositions. It is true that musicians today dimly recall the names of the stellar ones: Bowen Church, Walter Rogers, Jules Levy, Frank Simon, Herman Bellstedt, Herbert L. Clarke, among others. Many of them were alumni of Patrick Gilmore’s great Civil-War-era band or of Sousa’s later ones (a few of the great cornet virtuosos were, in fact, exact contemporaries of America’s first great piano lion, Louis Gottschalk), and we also know amusing anecdotes about their fantastic personal vanity, their glinting uniform forms, their hilarious professional rivalries, their ferocious mustaches. But the one book that made a real beginning at pulling the whole extraordinary story together, *Pioneers in Brass* by Glenn Bridges, is now ten years old and out of print.

Then there is the little matter of repertoire, which not unexpectedly came mainly from the ambitious and madly contentious virtuosos themselves, and consequently is pretty fantastic in several ways, beginning with titles. When did you last hear Herbert L. Clarke’s From the Shores of the Mighty Pacific-Rondo Caprice? As Mr. Bolcom remarks, Clarke took the “curious rigid form” of the cornet solo about as far as it could go (it usually consisted of a sort of triptych, being a set of variations on a rondo installed grandly between two monumental solo cadenzas), and although we can legitimately make certain assumptions about its probable evolution, nobody has yet made extensive demonstration of it in print.

As a matter of even stranger fact, relatively little, considering the importance of the subject, has been done in America about the larger genre of which the cornet solo is properly a part—namely, that genre called by the French *la musique légère*, which is music described as “light” not because it is organically less sound or morally less sincere but because it is designed to help the human race celebrate its less weighty moments. Sousa and Victor Herbert are only two of America’s great masters of the genre, and happily “Cornet Favorites” contains several grand examples of lesser talents that certainly qualify in the broader field.

The earliest piece in the album is Fantaisie and Variations on “The Carnival of Venice” by Jean Baptiste Arban, who wrote it in 1864, when he was professor of cornet at the Paris Conservatoire. Arban also wrote a celebrated cornet method that surprisingly enough is still standard, and his Fantaisie and Variations must be very near the outer limit of what one mortal can do with a horn.

The album’s latest piece in the direct tradition is Frank Simon’s Willow Echoes, composed in 1918, or just about ten years too late for Virgil Thomson to have heard it in his childhood. Yet the last piece, chronologically on the program, which is Thomson’s At the Beach—Concert Waltz (composed in 1929 and arranged for trumpet in 1949) turns out in a way to be music about all the rest of the program—a love song to music of the larger genre, to the seaside music of that vanished world, and the sounds that Messrs. Schwarz and Bolcom invest it with are not a whit less than ravishing.

nini-type trumpet virtuoso in his twenties who is already a legend where legends grow slowest, which is to say in the shop talk of his professional peers. Mr. Schwarz’s demonic roulades, trills, scales, and arpeggios, not to mention his hair-raising prodigies of double and triple tonguing, are supported joyously at the piano by composer William Bolcom, who when necessary evokes no end of proper brass-band pom and grandiloquence, but who also is right up there with Mr. Schwarz in passages of heart-rending but manly pathos. Mr. Bolcom, who is thirtyish, is no slouch himself in the legend department, as you know if you’re in touch with ragtime piano (Nonesuch 71257), and he reveals here that his widely noted poetic faculty is not at all inconsistent with a streak of robust comedy.

The earliest piece in the album is Fantaisie and Variations on “The Carnival of Venice” by Jean Baptiste Arban, who wrote it in 1864, when he was professor of cornet at the Paris Conservatoire. Arban also wrote a celebrated cornet method that surprisingly enough is still standard, and his Fantaisie and Variations must be very near the outer limit of what one mortal can do with a horn.

The album’s latest piece in the direct tradition is Frank Simon’s Willow Echoes, composed in 1918, or just about ten years too late for Virgil Thomson to have heard it in his childhood. Yet the last piece, chronologically on the program, which is Thomson’s At the Beach—Concert Waltz (composed in 1929 and arranged for trumpet in 1949) turns out in a way to be music about all the rest of the program—a love song to music of the larger genre, to the seaside music of that vanished world, and the sounds that Messrs. Schwarz and Bolcom invest it with are not a whit less than ravishing.
By coincidence, a quite other kind of cornet recording deserves mention here if only for the magnificent sound of its concluding piece, which is an arrangement, presumably by Greig McRitchie, of the old gospel hymn Amazing Grace. The album is from Paramount and is entitled — you may not be prepared for this — "Jack Daniel's Original Silver Cornet Band in Concert," and I hasten to add that the band is indeed the house ensemble of that venerable and historic distillery than which there is no nobler name in the annals of Tennessee sour mash. The liner notes do not fully describe the band, or even name its performers, but I judge from certain clues that it consists of three cornets, two altos, a tenor, and a baritone, plus — and this I'm sure of, because the liner mentions finding the instrument in Reno, Nevada, in what sounds like a hockshop — a superb old E-flat helicon bass, so called because the horn actually encircles the person playing it. It was also called the "rain-catcher" because its bell pointed upward, and in early American comic drawing it is often represented as being full of water, occasionally also being the tenement of surprised frogs, fishes, and other beasties.

The tune used for Amazing Grace in JDOSCBIC is the plainly Scottish one in the Methodist Hymnal that is identified only as "Early American Melody." And if Mr. McRitchie's arrangement of Listen to the Mocking Bird, for example, may strike you as insupportably cute, his version of Amazing Grace is something else. It is as simple, strong, and touching as some primitive legend from the morning of faith, and after you hear the noble, darkly gorgeous sound that the Jack Daniel ensemble produces for it, you may agree that it was a great mistake ever to supplant the old helicon bass with the sousaphone. You may also switch hopefully to you know what brand of sour mash.

CORNET FAVORITES. Clarke: From the Shores of the Mighty Pacific—Rondo Caprice; Sounds from the Hudson—Valse Brillante; The Débutante—Caprice Brillante; The Bride of the Waves—Polka Brillante.

JACK DANIEL'S ORIGINAL SILVER CORNET BAND. There'll Be a Hot Time in the Old Town Tonight! The Bear Went over the Mountain! Ta-Ra-Ra-Boom-Te-A! Hail, Hail the Gang's All Here (medley); I Had a Dream Dear; The Whistle and His Dog; Paddlin' Madelin' Home; Aura Lee; You and I; Listen to the Mocking Bird; Shenandoah; Row, Row, Row; Tennessee Waltz; Waiting for the Robert E. Lee; On the Banks of the Wabash; Dixie; Bonnie Blue Flag (medley); Amazing Grace. Greig McRitchie arr. PARAMOUNT PAS 6093 $5.98.
GILBERT AND SULLIVAN: The Mikado
John Wakefield (tenor), Nanki-Poo; Marion Studholme (soprano), Yum-Yum; John Holmes (bass-baritone), Mikado; Clive Revill (baritone), Ko-Ko; Jean Allister (contralto), Katisha; Denis Dowling (bass-baritone), Pish-Tush; Patricia Kern (mezzo-soprano), Pitti-Sing; Dorothy Nash (soprano), Peep-Bo; Sadler’s Wells Orchestra and Chorus, Alexander Faris cond. 2940 A Prosperity Ave., Hollywood, Calif. 90028). $7.95 (from Stanyan Records, Box 2783, Chicago). Performance: Superfluous but stylish.

Mikado
The Mikado is an opéra comique in three acts and a prologue by Sir Arthur Sullivan to a libretto by W. S. Gilbert, based on The Mikado of John Holmes, whose bass-baritone is ripe and lusty but whose licentiousness is milky and water compared to those of Durrell Farnecourt, Donald Adams, and Owen Brannigan, heard respectively in the Richmond, London, and Angel complete recordings. The orchestra and chorus under Alexander Faris are suitably brisk and exuberant, bringing out all the brasses of Sullivan’s score to excellent advantage and the recorded sound is good; there is no text—which is rather chintzy. Performance: Excellent.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT
HAYDN: Quartets for Flute, Violin, Viola, and Cello, Op. 5: No. 1, in D Major (Hob. II:D9); No. 2, in G Major (Hob. II:G4); No. 3, in D Major (Hob. II:D10); No. 4, in G Major (Hob. II:J1). Vienna Philharmonic Chamber Ensemble. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2530 360 $7.98. Performance: Graceful. Recording: Excellent.

The six quartets for flute and strings attributed to Haydn (only two of the six are absolutely authenticated) were most likely written during the composer’s earlier Esterházy years. They are cheerful, charming works in the popular galant idiom, highly melodious and ideal for late-night listening. All six works used to be available on Angel S16226 in an extremely brilliant performance by Jean-Pierre Rampal and the Trio à Cordes Francais, but that disc seems to have been deleted from the catalog. The present group, members of the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, take slightly more leisurely tempos and a few additional repeats omitted by the French players, thus managing to include only the first four quartets in their album, but their style is far more intimate in this material. Everything here is relaxed, splendidly balanced as to ensemble, and utterly convincing. Performance: Excellent. Recording: Very good.
in 1955 for the U.S. Commission for UNESCO, is one of William Schuman's most dramatic and effective scores, reflecting what Schuman would call his "unabashedly" affirmative outlook in the form of a highly virtuosic concerto for orchestra. That Columbia retired its pre-stereo recording of Ormandy's superb performance was regrettable; that no one has yet come forth with a new stereo version seems incredible. CRI has now taken over the Columbia tapes and done an exceptionally successful job of "electronic enhancement"; it is one of this label's finest rescues and, under the circumstances, hardly less significant than a brand-new production.

While the reappearance of the Cedron emission is what excited me, the other side of this disc is by no means a mere makeweight. One of these days. I suspect, there is going to be an explosive breakthrough for the music of Andrew Imrie in the concert programs of our major orchestras, and his Third Symphony, composed for the Halle Orchestra in 1970, is the sort of work that could help bring that about. Like the Violin Concerto, it is not only original in its language and brilliantly put together, but very openheartedly communicative. Farberman and the London Symphony give it a first-rate performance that is very well recorded.

While the disc merits the most enthusiastic recommendation, I would like to register a complaint about the labeling. It is only by reading the respective composers' program notes that one learns that each of these works is in three movements. This assuredly basic information is not given on the disc labels or the liner heading, and the markings of the symphony's movements are not identified even in Imrie's notes. And the silly puff about the LSO states that the orchestra's "distinguished history became a matter of international interest when André Previn became its principal conductor." Anyone ever hear of Pierre Monteux?

R.F.

LISZT: Transcendental Etudes; Six Consolations; Liebestraum No. 3. Jorge Bolet (piano). RCA CRL 2-0446 two discs $11.96.

Performance: Blockbuster
Recording: Hard as nails

LISZT: Grosses Konzertsonate; Valee d'Obermann; Ballade No. 2, in B Minor. Frederick Marvin (piano). GENESIS GS 1048 $5.98.

Performance: Formidable
Recording: Very good

Liszt's twelve Transcendental Etudes in their final 1851 realization are pretty much the ultimate test for piano virtuosity in the heroic-romantic manner. To twentieth-century ears, the musical substance varies in quality from fustian (Mazeppa) and sentimental (Ricordanza) to the most fascinating and brilliant in rhythm, tone-color, and harmonic daring (No. 2 in A Minor, No. 10 in F Minor, Feux Foyelets, Harmonies du Soir, and Chasse Neuvre). Except for Mazeppa, where Liszt turned the piano into the equivalent of a full orchestra (the piece later became No. 6 in the series of thirteen symphonic poems), the Transcendental Etudes are wholly pianistic in style—and a pianist has to be a combination of keyboard tiger and poet to play them all with complete success.

In the tiger department Jorge Bolet is second to none. Indeed, he is the only pianist I have ever heard bring the Mazeppa off with total conviction, thanks to his unbelievable command of velocity and rhythm and a singular flair for the special type of quasi-operatic rhetoric in which Liszt steeped his more obviously dramatic works. Bolet also excels in the satanic aspect of Liszt's musical language, as in his incredible performance of the Paganini-like Etude No. 2 in A Minor. That he is not altogether lacking in the poetic virtues is revealed in the fine total gradations achieved in his playing of the Consolations (why weren't these separately handled?), of which the popular No. 3 emerges as the best and least cloyingly sentimental. For me, however, the poetic aspect of the Transcendental Etudes is still best set out in Vladimir Ashkenazy's London disc, which offers seven of the series, by and large the seven best. Ashkenazy takes no back seat to Bolet in the virtuosity department, and he does convey far more effectively the atmospherics of the Harmonies du Soir. But it is the difference in recording techniques that is largely responsible here: Ashkenazy's piano is recorded very richly, with the low end of the keyboard favored somewhat, while Bolet's made-in-Spain taping stresses the upper-middle keyboard range to a point where the ear rebels in fatigue by the end of Etude No. 12. A good dose of mid-range cut at 2000 kHz improves the sound of Bolet's disc a great deal. There are no such problems with Frederick Marvin's Genesis disc, for it was engineered by one of the finest sound-men around, Richard C. Burns, whose Overtone Records.

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produced during his New Haven days, were among the gems from the independent labels of the monophonic era. Microphone placement seems may distant from the piano, but the balance between keyboard registers is flawless.

Frederick Marvin, who in the past has done noteworthy recordings of little-known works by Soler and Schubert, shows himself the equal of any of the main keyboard colleagues when it comes to the Liszt repertoire, and there is also poesy aplenty in his pianism. All three of the super-formidable works essayed by Mr. Marvin display extreme contrasts between the piano as Romantic singer and the piano as choral-percussive orchestra. One can well understand why Liszt later recast the Grösses Konzertisofo for two pianos (as the Concerto Páthétique), for here is more than twenty-two minutes of finger-busting passage work and fistfuls of chords that would be enough to defeat any pianist in concert performance, but might be feasible with the aid of tape-recording technology.

Vallee d'Obermann, the sixth and most ambitious of the nine pieces that make up the Swiss Year of the Anciennes de Pélussin, is more scenic evocation, but a cosmic meditation inspired by passages from a novel of Étienne Pivert de Senancour. Marvin takes a decidedly broader view of the music than Vladimir Horowitz (on Columbia MFS 757), who traverses the Lisztian cosmic landscape in thirteen minutes as against Marvin's nineteen! Where Marvin's Obermann is a haltingly brooding creation, Horowitz's is more like Byronic and Promethean, and his reading of the music is much more closely related to declamatory speech rhythm than Marvin's.

The one real problem I have encountered with the Genesis disc is faulty pressing: my review copy has a badly off-center side one.

MAHLER: Das Klagende Lied. Heather Har- per (soprano); Norma Procter (contralto); Werner Hollweg (tenor); Netherlands Radio Chorus; Concertgebouw Orchestra, Amsterdam, Bernard Haitink cond. PHILIPS 6500 587 $6.98.

Performance: Excellent
Recording: Orchestra at expense of voices

Das Klagende Lied is perhaps the penultmate expression of that spirit of fairy tale and dark legend that dominated so much of Central European artistic expression in the nineteenth century. (The "ultimate" work in this genre is Schoenberg's Gurrelieder.) It is early Mahler—its first version was completed as early as 1880, when he was only twenty—but it is in no sense an immature work. The texts, elaborated by Mahler himself from a story by Ludwig Bechstein, are not exactly kiddie stuff. A minstrel carves a flute out of a bone which turns out to be that of the king's brother. The bone-flute, all by itself, proceeds to sing a merry song at the king's wedding about how the brother was murdered by the bridegroom, a revelation so shocking that it brings down the very castle walls on the jolly throng.

The version here is the revised score in which Mahler himself omitted the original first section. Mahler rather elaborately divided the texts between the three soloists and chorus, with a wealth of melodic expression and dramatic contrast that seems always to the point. This is an excellent performance with some attractive, intense singing and playing. In my opinion, though, the recording is really too beautiful. The lush resonance around the voices makes the low-midrange more muddied and often submerges the chorus in a sea of orchestral sound. Occasionally even the solo voices seem to lack profile. In spite of this, I wouldn't hesitate to recommend the piece and the performance, and I should add that the recording, in as quiet a pressing as you could wish, has an extraordinary dynamic range.

E.S.

MAHLER: Das Lied von der Erde. Richard Mazos (tenor); Olga Dorag (contralto); Czech Radio Symphony Orchestra, Václav Jiřáček cond. OLYMPIC 8110 E $2.98.

Performance: Vital but cut
Recording: Early-Fifties public performance?

The legend "distributed by Everest Records" on the record sleeve and the curious Pearl Buck-style translation of the title as "The Good Earth" immediately arouses doubts and suspicions about this recorded performance. In truth, there is fashion, no texts, translations, or biographical material on the performers are given anywhere, nor is the source of the recording identified. Furthermore, the names of the soloists and conductor are nowhere to be found in the directories and catalogs at my disposal at the New York Public Library. Private Czech sources, however, have confirmed that Václav Jiřáček is a real person and that he is the conductor of the Czech Radio Symphony Orchestra. That being so, the soloists too, despite the equal unfamiliarity of their names, are probably who they are said to be. The source of the recording, though, remains a mystery. Since the disc has been released (along with other Mahler records by Jiřáček) simultaneously with a half a dozen records formerly on the long defunct Oceanic label (ca. 1953), could all these Jiřáček recordings have been tapes rejected for release by Oceanic for technical deficiencies?

The singers are good ones, the tenor showing a less strain than most in the cruel testisna of the opening of the Trinklied. The conducting too is solidly in the Central European Mahler tradition, judging from what can be heard through a good bit of variable background noise and fluctuating recording levels, all subjected to "electronic stereo" processing. While the vocal portions are complete here, there are gaps (apparently edited from or not recorded on the tape) in the orchestral interlude midway in the first movement and in the lengthy corresponding interlude in the finale, here cut by a full three minutes.

The general quality of recorded sound calls to mind much of the work done on German Magnetophon recordings in the early Fifties, and a telltale bit of flutter in the solo clarinet might support that thesis.

D.H.

MAHLER: Symphony No. 6, in A Minor. Czech Radio Symphony Orchestra, Václav Jiřáček cond. OLYMPIC 8101/2 two discs $4.98.

MAHLER: Symphony No. 7, in E Minor. Czech Radio Symphony Orchestra, Václav Jiřáček cond. OLYMPIC 8102/3 three discs $5.98.
Jiříček cond. OLYMPIC 8106/2 two discs $4.98.


Performances: Good Recording: Not good

The Boult, Schwarz, and Mitropoulos recordings in the Everest set have been available on their own for some time, and their virtues have been acknowledged; what is intriguing is that theirs are the only performers’ names listed here; the cover information reads “and other well known conductors,” but the disc labels fail to disclose their identities or those of the ensembles and soloists involved in their performances. Since Olympic is an Everest label, comparison of the three Jiříček and Seventh with those in the big set was indicated, and they are indeed the same. I suspect the Second is from the same source, but Nos. 3 and 4 have me stumped: their vocal portions are sung in Russian, and my only guess, based on nothing substantial, is that they are broadcast performances conducted by Kiril Kondrashin. (In the Moscow Philharmonic performance of No. 4, conducted by David Oistrakh on Melodiya/Angel SR 40076, Galina Vishnevskaya sings in German.)

Aside from the dubious satisfaction afforded by these guessing games, there is little here to entice the listener. Jiříček shows a very good feeling for the Mahler idiom, but the sound of his recordings and the Russian (?) ones is too wretched to put up with; one begins to wonder if the taping was done by a blowhard who has a short-wave buff in California instead of the Czech Radio’s own engineers in Prague. For Mahler, of all composers, that just won’t do. Nor will much else in the make-up of these discs: the Fourth and Seventh with those in the big set are different, and the second is the same, but Nos. 3 and 4 have me stumped: their vocal portions are sung in Russian, and my only guess, based on nothing substantial, is that they are broadcast performances conducted by Kiril Kondrashin. (In the Moscow Philharmonic performance of No. 4, conducted by David Oistrakh on Melodiya/Angel SR 40076, Galina Vishnevskaya sings in German.)

Somehow there must be a way—brilliant mikado—of making this music come clean!

This is an exciting performance on a grand scale, but I find the recording a muddle. Wyn Morris, a product of South Wales, the Royal Academy of Music, the Berksire Music Center, and Cleveland (where he studied with George Szell and conducted the Cleveland Chamber Orchestra), is the founder of the Symphonica of London, which kicked off its career with this modest offering.

The virtues of the recording can be found in the exceptional breadth and excitement of it all. Morris launches the interplanetary orbits of this musical cosmos with a really large-scale time and space sense. But not even the talented Mr. Morris makes more than the usual continual fortissimo choral shouting match out of the first movement. A big problem here and all the way through is the lack of presence and clarity in the voices. The sense is that of everyone straining at the extremities of his resources but lost in the glorious recorded haze. I would like to be able to comment on the quality of the singing—the choral work and, in particular, the various soloists—but, except for certain passages, I am actually not quite sure what is going on. I see four times as much in the score as I can hear. I am not faulting Morris particularly for these problems—every other recording of this work that I have heard has the same difficulties. Somehow there must be a way—brilliant mak ing, multitrack recording, quad playback, the works—to make this music come clean!

Yet, I must also insist on the extraordinary dynamic quality of the performance, which does come through with great strength. Morris has the sense of the whole, and, working in long takes and with a careful, brilliant control of tempos, he builds up immense power. What details emerge—largely orchestral, occasionally vocal—are impressive, and there is, at the very least, a feeling for line and phrase that takes us to those outer regions where Mahler wanted us to go. Some day I would like to hear all—or at least some large part—of this music. In the meantime we have it in this dynamic and spiritual sense in this performance. English texts only.

E.S.
Harry Partch wrote *The Bewitched*, a dance-satiré, in an abandoned shipyard in Sausalito, California, between 1952 and 1955. It was performed (and recorded) at the University of Illinois in 1957 during a brief period when Partch was "in residence" at that school, and it is one of the few of his works ever to have been performed in New York.

The reason for the rarity of performances of Partch's music is easy enough to explain: he composes for the unique instruments he himself invented and constructed. Unique is the right word, in most cases, there is only a single example of each instrument in existence. *The Bewitched* features his Cloud Chamber Bowls, Spoons of War, Marimba Eroica, Boo, Diamond Marimba, Surrogate Kithara, Harmonic Canon, and Chromelodeon—machines as beautiful and exotic (to hear and to see) as their names—as well as a few more familiar types. The musicians who play the instruments are not merely accompanists to the drama of this piece; they are protagonists. In addition to contributing to the visual impact of these extraordinary constructions by playing them on the stage, the instrumentalists also form a vocal Chorus of Lost Musicians who experience various uncommon misadventures of modern life: "Three Undergrads Become Transfigured in a Hong Kong Music Hall" and "A Soul Tormented by Contemporary Music Finds a Humanizing Alchemy" and "Visions Fill the Eyes of a Defeated Basketball Team in the Shower Room" and "The Cogstitions Fill the Eyes of a Defeated Basketball Chorus of Lost Musicians who experience various uncommon misadventures of modern life and spiritual transformation. And his theater, again like his music, is anti-specialized, anti-tragic, and very much conceived as an antidote to the ills and woes of technological civilization.

Partch has been pursuing his musical and dramatic ideas for lo, these many years in virtually complete isolation from the fashionable trends of modern art. His aesthetic of nonspecialization, the rhythmical-percussive qualities of his music, the handmade beauty of the instruments (sight and sound), the utter simplicity of the melodic elements—harmony and polyphony—seem scarcely to exist for him—are all expressions of an idea of the role of art in relation to community and basic human needs, notions that might have been thought—at least—until quite recently— to have long since disappeared in sophisticated technological society. Partch's assertion of these needs is a remarkable achievement, particularly in view of the fact that modern institutions and social forms seem incapable of responding to such proposals. Hence the particular importance of sound recordings in disseminating his music and ideas. Partch himself seems to have realized this quite early, and for many years he issued his own recordings on the Gate 5 label—named for the shipyard gate in Sausalito. The original recordings have long since become unavailable, but Composers Recordings Inc. has been performing a signal service in reissuing them.

The recording of *The Bewitched* is of special note for several reasons. This is a recording—first-rate, it must be said—of the original performance, only part of which was issued by Gate 5. It is, then, the first complete release of the original tapes, and, even though (read: words) "rechanneled for stereo," it is still a remarkably successful achievement in sound. Unlike the stage work, the vocal elements are relatively subordinate, and it is the quality of the instrumental sound that must carry the work. And it does indeed carry it, in terms of both performance and quality of recording. Why a recording of doggedly anti-technological music made at a university in 1957 and rechanneled for stereo by CRI more than fifteen years later should sound so much better than a lot of fancy items being processed these days is one of the mysteries of technological culture. But it does.

I don't think anyone could follow the argument of *The Bewitched* just by reading Partch's vastly amusing, philosophical, poetic, often incomprehensible notes, but in a way the music—wonderfully banal ("primitive," if you like), yet basic, rich, magical, and even complex in its simplicity—tells its own story. I cannot imagine how anyone who can—or will—listen with open ears, who can re-create for himself the receptive attitude of childish wonder, can be anything but entranced and delighted with it. It's very healthy stuff, too. In today's supermarket of heavily processed and overpackaged goods, Harry Partch provides real organic food.

PARTCH: *The Bewitched*. Freda Schell (voice); University of Illinois Musical Ensemble. Colin Davis cond. Composers Recordings Inc. CRI SD 304 two discs $11.90.

**Harry Partch**

Organic food for souls tormented by contemporary music

Reviewed by Eric Salzman

***

The technical production is good, and the album is attractively packaged, but it cannot be recommended against the magnificently conducted Giulini set (Angel 3605, with Sutherland and Schwarzkopf as two unbeatably keen Tenors), the meticulous and Klemperer reading (Angel 3700), with Nicolai Ghiaurov's irresistible Don Giovanni in the (tenor), Don Ottavio; Luigi Roni (bass); Commendatore; Kiri Te Kanawa (soprano), Don Ottavio; Wladimiro Ganzaroli (bass). Leporello: Richard Van Allen (bass); Masetto; Mirella Freni (soprano), Zerlina. Chorus and Orchestra of the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden. Colin Davis cond. PHILIPS 6707 022 four discs $27.92.

Performance: Good but not exceptional

Recording: Very good

The merits of this new Don Giovanni are considerable, but two weighty factors keep it from attaining true distinction: a routine Don and a lackluster leadership, that, for all its impressive qualities, fails to be consistently pleasing.

To take the positive aspects first: the Elvira of Kiri Te Kanawa is a decided winner. Her lovely tone and refined technique are constant throughout, and interpretively she gains momentum as she progresses. The entrance aria could do with more incisive nuance, and the little arietta "Ah fuggi il traditor" (No. 8 in the score) is neutralized by the conductor's overfertempo, but everything coalesces in "In quali eccessi, o Numi," which passion and coloration enhance the radiant tone quality. Stuart Burrows offers a Don Ottavio that at least matches, and probably surpasses, his counterparts on currently available recordings in terms of elegance, agility, and accuracy. Mirella Freni is a torturous and attractive Zerlina, and Luigi Roni is a commanding Commendatore.

Wladimiro Ganzaroli avoids foobyness, but he is not humorless—his is a Leporello solidly vocalized, and his frequent prophetic tones come off to good advantage alongside the frequently unfocused ones of Ingvar Wixell's Don Giovanni. The latter, being a good actor, may be more effective on stage. In this context, though, he is short on magnetism and tonal allure, and such a Don Giovanni is in deep trouble even before the Commendatore's visit.

The Donna Anna of Martina Arroyo is somewhat miscast; Insufficient vocal agility, which defeated this gifted artist in *I Vespri Siciliani*, is again a problem. Her projected tones come off to good advantage alongside the frequently unfocused ones of Ingvar Wixell's Don Giovanni. The latter, being a good actor, may be more effective on stage. In this context, though, he is short on magnetism and tonal allure, and such a Don Giovanni is in deep trouble even before the Commendatore's visit.

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MOZART: Sonata in D Major for Two Pianos (K. 448); Sonata in C Major for Piano, Four Hands (K. 521). Christoph Eschenbach, Justus Frantz (pianos). DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2530 285 $7.98.

Performance: Strong, simple
Recording: A bit dull

K. 448 is Mozart's only work for two pianos; its companion is the last of five sonatas for one piano, four hands. Both can be classified with late, vintage Mozart, more strictly comparable with some of the later concertos than the solo sonatas. Whereas the solo sonatas belong in the realm of chamber music, these works have a rather public display character. Mozart was equally adept at both kinds, and these sonatas are close to the top of the rather small list of great works in the four-hand keyboard genres.

Christoph Eschenbach and Justus Frantz are two very capable young German pianists who take this music seriously and with simple, straightforward feeling. Perhaps something is missing here—today we consider Mozart a plain speaker, but in his own day he had a reputation for embellishing a point now and then. These are strong, clean performances which give off a bit of sparkle if not a lot of wit. Where cool, suave playing is required—the last-movement allegretto of the C Major Sonata is the best case in point—the performers are at their best. The recorded sound is on the dull side, especially in the two-piano work, where the problems of separation and spatiality—composed into the music by Mozart, but not easy to deal with even in stereo—do not seem to have been entirely solved.

RECORDER OF SPECIAL MERIT
MOZART: Symphonies: No. 1, in E-flat Major (K. 16); No. 4, in D Major (K. 19); No. 5, in B-flat Major (K. 22); No. 10, in F Major (K. 74); No. 44, in D Major (K. 81/73L). Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields, Neville Marriner cond. PHILIPS 6500 532 $6.98.

Performance: Ideal
Recording: Superb

This is the first volume of what promises to be a series of early Mozart symphonies. The numberings to which these youthful works have been subjected have been a source of considerable confusion ever since it was discovered that some of the earliest were not written by Mozart and that in addition to the usual forty-one symphonies there were several others. Thus, this disc contains Symphonies No. 1, No. 4 (really Mozart's second work in this form), No. 5, No. 44 (K. 73L, composed in 1770), and No. 10. Although I presume that a second disc will take care of some of the other symphonies composed between No. 5 and No. 10, I rather regret that Philips has not seen fit to record and press them in chronological order, if only to help collectors keep things straight on the shelf.

Musically, these pieces are of course a far cry from the Mozart of the later symphonies, but there are astonishing moments nonetheless: it is certainly disconcerting to hear such well-put-together sounds as the opening movement of K. 16 and realize that they are from the pen of a boy who was just turning nine. It is also fascinating to note the development between even such neophyte pieces as the first two symphonies, written in 1764-1765, and the Tenth Symphony, just slightly more sophisticated, of five years later.

These works have all been recorded previously, but I do not believe they have ever been given as scintillating and sparkling a performance as Neville Marriner and the Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields give them here. The ensemble itself is simply sensational, the prominent high horn parts brilliant, and the expression of lyricism wonderfully refined. I am also delighted to hear them use a harpsichord continuo (after all, if it's proper in Haydn...). And the sound reproduction is faultless. I.K.


Performance: Very good, and yet...
Recording: Excellent

In a recent review of Philips' reissue of Colin Davis' 1962 recording of the two symphonies that fit between the two on this record, I found the performances "forceful, crisp, dramatic, tightly controlled—and a little austere." These new performances are a little austere, too; they are, in fact, unremittingly solemn. I get the impression that Davis is trying to force both works into a tragic mold which the music itself resists. (The minuet in

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The Jupiter seems not only devitalized, but jarringly plaintive. I’m sure many will welcome this record as representing a fresh view, however, and anyone so disposed will find much to admire in the polished playing, the firm rhythms, the clarity with which the most minute felicities of Mozart’s scoring are revealed. I can only say that I find more not only to admire but to enjoy in Eugen Jochum’s Jupiter (Deutsche Grammophon 2530 357) and in several other versions of the Prague—including Davis’ own earlier recording with the English Chamber Orchestra on L’Oiseau-Lyre SOL-266.

R.F.

PEROGESI: Salve Regina (see FLAGELLO)
POULENC: Four Easter Motets; Four Christmas Motets (see STRAVINSKY)

PROKOFIEV: Symphony No. 1, in D Major, Op. 25 (see BIZET)

RIMSKY-KORSAKOV: Le Coq d’Or; The Legend of the Invisible City of Kitezh and the Maiden Phoebe (orchestral excerpts); Alexei Korolov (bass), Odlov; Yuri Yelinkov (tenor), Gvidon; Alexandre Poliakov (baritone), Aphon; Leonid Kittorov (bass), Polk; Gennady Pishchoev (tenor), Astrologer; Antonina Kleshechev (alto), Amelina; Nina Poliakova (soprano), Le Coq d’Or: Klara Kadinskaya (soprano), Queen of Shemakha; Choir and Opera-Symphony Orchestra of the All-Union Radio, Alexei Kovalov and Yevgeny Akulov cond. (sic). WESTMINSTER GOLD WGST-8241-3 three discs $8.96

Performance: Very Russian
Recording: Voices clear, orchestra distant

I don’t know what dark recesses this recording came out of or even how antique it actually is, but, making due allowances, it has a good deal in its favor. The allowances that must be made are as follows: distant orchestral sound, generally low recording levels, and all-around poor production featuring no libretto and no liner information at all. What you get, once past the allowances, is a thoroughly Russian version of a most extraordinary and baffling opera. There is no question that the sound of the Russian words and Russian singing fills the recesses of this work with vocal color and complements the richness of Rimsky’s orchestration. And there is something quite satisfactory about the singing, which is strong, focused, and without any fat. The women’s sound is a little edgy for my taste, but all of it is quite striking. The chorus, as might be expected, is excellent. All the voices are recorded quite far forward, and the striking melodic character of the work is well brought out. But the lack of clarity in the orchestral sound is a disappointment with orchestral music as rich and colorful as this. Nor is the orchestral playing very remarkable from a technical point of view. Nevertheless, the larger sense of the music is excellent. These musicians play and sing not notes but phrases: they make not patterns but pictures.

Unfortunately, production reaches a low level in more than one sense. The recording is cut at levels that dip into the surface noise, which is at times considerable. The sixth-side material—orchestral music from another Rimsky opera, The Invisible City of Kitezh—is inadequately described on the label and unmentioned anywhere else! The information level of the packaging is so low that one doubts even the little that is provided. For example, is Aleksei Kovalov a co-conductor of the performance? (does it really take two conductors to produce one Russian opera?), or is that merely a misprinted, misplaced reading for the name of the principal bass singer?

E.S.

ROSSINI: Messa di Gloria (see Best of the Month, page 73)


Performance: Respectable
Recording: Generally good

From its beginnings as a company devoted chiefly to piano-roll reissues, the West-Coast label has been branching out into the general concert repertoire, orchestral and otherwise. This recording of the Saint-Saëns “Organ” Symphony originated with the Studio Two label in England in mid-1973 and offers a perfectly respectable and well proportioned ending by the French conductor who has been musical director of the City of Birmingham Orchestra since 1969. The sonics are amply resonant and reasonably clear in texture, if a bit lacking in violin “bite.” The sonority of the organ is properly imposing in both the quietly lyrical slow movement and the brazen finale. The stereo spread and depth are most effective. Nevertheless, the performance as such is no match in terms of dramatic impact for RCA’s twelve-year-old Munich-Boston Symphony version, and the older recording still holds up remarkably well, despite its relatively flat perspective. I still opt for RCA and Munich.

D.H.

SARTI: Russian Oratorio; Gospodin Pomiluy Ty (see Best of the Month, page 71)


Performance: Impressive
Recording: Excellent

The more I hear the Schoenberg First Quartet the less I understand it. The work is gigantic in size: a single super-post-Wagnerian forty-five-minute movement which, after the density and inertness of its opening D Minor tune, seems to allow itself the possibility of going anywhere and everywhere in the most complex ways. The music is all based on the economical use of a limited number of basic ideas expressed, used, and re-used in one combination another, thus anticipating the elements of Schoenberg’s later twelve-tone music. But the possibilities still seem infinite, and there is the sense that this particular work or performance has merely exposed a few of the endless combinations.

None of my questioning of the work is to be construed as a criticism of the LaSalle Quartet. Quite the contrary, they succeed in dealing with the many complexities and discontinuities of the piece—which is constantly changing tempo, texture, and character—in very convincing ways. The many technical problems are under excellent control, the rich and colorful string writing is set forth in all its variety, and the inward, expressive moments are quite beautiful. In the end, the glory of this music is simply the sheer beauty and lushness of its sound.

E.S.

CIRCLE NO. 46 ON READER SERVICE CARD

STereo REVIEW
SCHUBERT: Lieder (see Best of the Month, page 72)

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

SCHUBERT: Lieder. Gretchen am Spinnrade; Der Tod und das Mädelchen; Lachen und Weinen; Die junge Nonne; Der König in Thule; Mignon's Song; Frühlingsglaube; Am Bach im Frühling; Die Rose; Auf der Donau; Des Mädchens Klage; Im Abendrot; Romanze; An die Nachtigall; Ave Maria. Christa Ludwig (mezzo-soprano); Irwin Gage (piano). DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2530 404 $7.98.

Performance: First-rate singing
Recording: Not quite first-rate

For reasons best known to Miss Ludwig and Deutsche Grammophon, about half of this program duplicates the artist's recorded recital (Angel 36462) released some six years ago. It would have been more rewarding, certainly, to hear material previously unexplored by this remarkable mezzo; on the other hand, Christa Ludwig's Schubert interpretations are the kind that can be enjoyed over and over again.

Comparison being really unavoidable in this case, I must observe that, while the singer is in fine form here, it is the Angel disc that shows her at the very pinnacle of her artistry. Her new versions of Gretchen am Spinnrade and Ave Maria, both taken at a somewhat faster tempo, do not match her previous ones in richness of tone and refinement of detail. (The Ave Maria on the Angel disc is simply stunning.) Nonetheless, I have nothing but praise for her singing in the present sequence: it is warm, eloquent, and committed throughout, and her choice of such relatively unfamiliar songs as Auf der Donau, Die Rose, and Der König in Thule enhances the recital.

Irwin Gage's accompaniments are certainly competent but frequently unassertive. He is also a shade casual with his ornamentations, as witness the turns in Frühlingsglaube. Nor is the accompaniment helped by the reproduction, which is veiled and diffuse insofar as the piano sound is concerned. In short, this is quite a good release, but it could have been magnificent.

G.J.

SCHUBERT: Symphony No. 1, in D Major (see BIZET)

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

SCHUBERT: Vocal Quartets. Der Tanz; Des Tages Weihe; Hymne an den Unendlichen; An die Sonne; Begräbnislied; Gott im Unendlichen; Lebenslust; Gebet. Elly Ameling (soprano); Janet Baker (contralto); Peter Schreier (tenor); Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau (baritone); Gerald Moore (piano). DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2530 409 $7.98.

Performance: Effective
Recording: Excellent

First the duets and trios, now nine vocal quartets are among the treasures Deutsche Grammophon has recently brought to light from the bountiful Schubert legacy. Nearly all of these quartets were originally written for mixed chorus rather than four vocalists, and some of the weightier poems do seem to call for bigger sonorities. Just the same, they can be effectively rendered by a solo quartet of this distinction.

(Continued overleaf)
The pieces are certainly minor Schubert, even though the poems (by Schiller, Klopstock, and some lesser lights) are generally solemn and uplifting. All are skilfully written for all its length. *Gerber*, the longest and most elaborate of the nine, is beautifully contrived for the voices (this one was written for four solo voices—indeed,* The Three Riders*, 1863)—and very much so, as it happens, the *Esterhazy Castle of Zseliz* in 1824). The performances are just about what we can expect from four outstanding singers and a peerless accompanist. G.J.

**SCHUMANN**: *Credendum* (see IMBIE)

**SCHUMANN**: *Dichterliebe*, Op. 48 (see Best of the Week, page 72)


Performance: **Competent**

Recording: **Good**

The two *Liederkreise* of Robert Schumann—Op. 24 was inspired by poems of Heine. Op. 39 by those of Eichendorff—both originated in 1840, the composer's great "year of song." Although they might seem preordained to share the same disc, the fact is that they have seldom been coupled. The infrequently recorded Op. 24 is currently represented only by Fischer-Dieskau's performance (Deutsche Grammophon 139 109). There are three recordings of Op. 39, which singers prefer for a very good reason: it contains some of the most effective Schumann songs, such as *In termezzoo*, *Walddenkrieger*, *Mondnacht*, and *Freihings nacht*.

I would like to say that this Argo disc combining the two attractive cycles fills the gap well, but it does no such thing. Robert Tear is a musically, tasteful, and cultivated singer with a good command of style and language, but his voice lacks sensual appeal. Competitive versions of the Eichendorff cycle by Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau (Anger), Christa Ludwig and Walter Berry (Deutsche Grammophon), and Anna Reynolds (Oiseau-Lyre) are all preferable, in that order. G.J.

**SMETANA**: *Choruses. The Three Riders: The Renegade* (two settings); *The Peasant*; *Our Song*; *Festive Chorus*; *Song of the Sea*; *The Renegade* (two settings); *The Peasant*: *Our Song*; *Dedication; The Prayer; My Star; The Swal lows Arrived; The Sunset*. **Czech Philharmonic, Josef Veselka cond. SUPRAPHON 720 720 S5.98**.

Performance: **Excellent**

Recording: **Excellent**

Stravinsky would have loved this recording of his Mass. Only in England can one find choirs with as pure and heavenly a sound as this one, and that is the sound that Stravinsky wanted for his treble voices. The tenor and bass sections of this choir are equally good, and the winds of the London Sinfonietta are first-rate. Stravinsky might have wanted a crisper recorded sound—that was his particular taste in all musical matters—but most listeners, myself included, will be very happy with the combination of richness and bended clarity that characterizes Merton College Chapel, Oxford, and which suits this intense, slow-moving music very well.

If the Stravinsky Mass emerges not as the dry exercise it sometimes seems to be, but as one of the few really deeply felt religious works of the century, no small credit is due to Simon Preston, the organist and choirmaster at Christ Church Cathedral, who is making quite a reputation for himself in a modern version of a grand old English tradition. Preston knows how to match up the rich, big sound of the English choral society with the more modern taste for a clean sound and a high degree of musical intensity and insight. The result here is a twentieth-century musical fresco of really grand dimensions.

The Poulenc *a cappella* Easter and Christmas Motets make a logical reverse for the Stravinsky Mass, although I don't think they are musically in the same class. The religious part of Poulenc's musical personality was as real and important as his better-known irreverence and wit. But even at his most intense—in the anguished of the Easter Motets of the late 1930's or the celebration of the 1952 Christmas Masses—and even then with the most beautifully phrased performances, there is an old-fashioned, sweet harmonic sameness that I find does not hold me after a while. At any rate, though, these are all exceptional performances, and everything "sounded." E.S.

**SUBOTNICK**: 4 *Butterflies*. Created by Morton Subotnick on the Electric Music Box. **COLUMBIA M 32741** S5.98.

Performance: **Purely electronic**

Recording: **Tape-to-disc**

Morton Subotnick, one of the important American electronic music and multimedia composers of the past decade, is now associate dean of the School of Music and director of electronic music at the California Institute of the Arts, that legendary innovative center near Los Angeles funded largely by Walt Disney money. I don't know what the Electric Music Box is, but I would guess that it is a synthesizer with sequencing circuits—something like the Buchla (which Subotnick used in earlier works) or the later Moog models. The butterfly idea works here by analogy with the larvacocon-butterfly cycle of transformation, the final state of free flight being unexpected and yet inherent in the earlier form. It has been a while since a purely electronic record has turned up, and in a way the piece has a curiously old-fashioned and even "neoclassical" sound. I'm not offering this observation as criticism; on the contrary, it is meant to suggest the musicianly nature of the work, which is apparent all the way through. It is interesting to observe the evolution of Subotnick's electronic work from the kind of automated pop sound of *Silver Apples of the Moon* to the more elaborate orchestral sound of its successors to the rather clear, almost chamber sound of this work. Perhaps more than in any previous electronic work of Subotnick, there is a quality of sound fantasy that is engaging. As in a lot of recent American music, there is an Eastern character to this fantasy: a nature/number meditation of a rather subtle variety. In spite of the butterfly analogy, I'm not sure that the music really has any sense of development—that it gets anywhere—but it just is in quite an attractive way. E.S.

**TCHAIKOVSKY**: *Sonata in G Major*, Op. 37.

**BUSONI**: *Indian Diary*. Stephen Manes (piano). **ORION ORS 74154** S6.98.

Performance: **Good**

Recording: **Flawed**

Orion has always shown enterprise in its piano recordings, and this disc is a fine example of imaginative programming: two works no one has ever heard, and most of them the major solo piano works of one of the great composers of orchestral music. The only other stereo recording of the G Major Sonata is in the first of Michael Ponti's Tchai kovsky sets, Vox SVBX 5435. The only other current version of the Busoni *Indian Diary* (Gunnar Johansen on his Artist Direct label.) Stephen Manes does not sound as if he had
simply walked into the studio and sat down to play these pieces, but had actually lived with them and got inside them. Unfortunately, the sound appears to be ever so slightly distorted (a little flat, a little quavery), and the surfaces are rather gritty. Perhaps not all copies are so affected: this sort of thing turns up in releases from various companies from time to time, and it often happens that the only flawed copies are the ones that go to reviewers. If the repertoire appeals to you, it might be wise to check out a copy before purchasing it.  

R.F.


Performance: Amiably lyric  
Recording: More space than presence 

Although its opening movement is true, in its fashion, to the symphonic conventions, Tchaikovsky's *Polish* Symphony strikes me as essentially balletic in feeling, though none the less enjoyable for that. Moisei Atzmon offers an amiable, sensitive, lyrical, and loose-jointed reading of this rather loose-jointed work. The impression is reinforced by the recording's somewhat overspacious ambiant sound, which, I would guess, emanates from the Singakademie rather than the Sofiensaal; the Vienna Philharmonic usually favors as a taping locale. The end result may be pleasing to the ear, but it is not very revealing of the music's texture and rhythmic bite—a most important element of the polonaise-style finale. The orchestral playing, notably in the solo wind department, and the subtleties of phrasing achieved in the middle three movements (there are five in all) are among the better aspects of Mr. Atzmon's reading, but the work as a whole needs the lift and drive that Lorin Maazel gave it in his 1965 recording for London with the same orchestra.  

D.H.

**VANHAL: Concerto in E Major for Double Bass and Orchestra (see DRAGONETTI).**

**WUORINEN: The Long and the Short (see CRUMB).**

**YUN: Gasa (see CRUMB).**

**COLLECTIONS**


Performance: Good  
Recording: Good 

This is a well-conceived and unconventional program—with the exception of the Bartók Roumanian Dances, these selections are hard to come across, even on records. All are folk-derived or folk-inspired except the Kodály Adagio, which is the slow movement of an uncompleted sonata. The Adagio is also the only selection here that was conceived for violin and piano, though this version of Dohnányi's *Ruralia Hungarica* was originally written for violin and orchestra, is the composer's own masterly transcription. There is nothing wrong with the other transcriptions, either, by the way. They are by Joseph Szigeti, André Gertler, and Robert Gerle himself, all authoritative interpreters of Bartók and Kodály. 

The idiomatic command essential to a good performance of these intensely nationalistic pieces is a positive element of this recording. Gerle is Hungarian by birth, and Benoit, an American, demonstrates his understanding of the idiom in his cimbalom-like articulation of the piano part in the Dohnányi slow movement. These are eminently virtuosoic pieces, not at all easy to play, and there are a few untidy moments (mainly of chordal intonation) here and there. The music, however, is very enjoyable and refreshingly unusual. The disc is a reissue of Westminster 17150, with good sound and surfaces, but the ending of the *Ruralia Hungarica* appears to have been poorly edited.  

G.J.

**RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT**


Performance: Excellent  
Recording: Excellent 

This is a welcome and valuable collection of pieces rarely encountered (except for the Haydn) in concerts or on records. It would be worth its price for the Gershwin *Lullaby* alone, a subtle and intriguing eight-minute work composed about 1919 (when Gershwin
was twenty-one) and never recorded before. But the Lullaby may not be the only "world premiere recording" in the album, which happens to be a more imaginative compilation than Columbia's misleading labeling of the Schubert item, in particular, suggests. It is listed as "Quartettsatz in C Minor," but what one hears is not the familiar work of 1820 so titled; only by noting the Deutche number (103 instead of the expected 703) and studying the anonymous annotation is one able to identify this music as a Grave and Allegro composed a half-dozen years earlier and put into performing condition by Alfred Orel as recently as 1939.

This complaint is hardly a minor matter, since it is quite conceivable that several collectors might be inclined to pass up the record in order to avoid duplicating the much-recorded Quartettsatz (D, 703)—ironically unaware that what they assume to be that work is actually one that is available on no other disc. The Haydn, listed only as "Amandante und Minuet" on the disc label, at least gets a parenthetical mention of its official title on the liner, but pinning down the Mendelssohn entry is made gratuitously troublesome by Columbia's omission of its opus number.

All of this is irksome, but of course it is what is in the grooves that really matters. These interesting and attractive works draw very affectionate and communicative playing from the Juilliard Quartet (vintage late 1960's, when Raphael Hillyer was still the group's violinist), and the sound is first-rate too. R.F.


Performance: Individual
Recording: Good

This memorable concert in Carnegie Hall, on March 2, 1969, found the beloved Jennie Tourel in the characteristic form of her twilight years. She has an attractive range and a diminished control over tone color and intonation, but there are still glimpses here of former glory: the exquisite pianissimo ending of O Quando Je Dors, or the haunting effect that permeates the Rachmaninoff song. Her charm, vivacity, and natural theatricality never deserted her, and they give the entire recital a festive aura. The program, too, honors an artist whose range of interest was extraordinary and for whom, and for whose audience, every concert was an exciting adventure. There are, of course, when only lovely contours are provided by Miss Tourel, and the mind must fill them in with nuances remembered from earlier and more bountiful times. Leonard Bernstein adjusts his accompaniments sensitively and lovingly to his friend's singing; the music and the enthusiasm of the audience reaction are captured in good, warm acoustics. G.J.
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AUGUST 1974
TAPE-RECORDER HYGIENE

Apart from inquiries about specific product recommendations and the integrity of the Watergate tapes, the subject most of my readers ask about is how to care for their recorders and tapes.

In addition to routine household dusting, recorders need two kinds of periodic cleaning: physical and magnetic. The tape has yet to be made that does not shed some of its oxide particles with every playing, and unfortunately these tend to accumulate on tape heads and guides, pressure pads, and the capstan/pressure-roller drive system. If not removed, this debris can cause slippage in the drive mechanism. The resulting wow and flutter is heard as inconstancy or "graininess" in pitch. In addition, the oxide accumulations on the heads cause momentary "drop-outs" in the signal and loss of treble response.

Happily, the solution is as near as a bottle of isopropyl or rubbing alcohol and an ordinary cotton-tipped swab. If the tape you use has a black oxide, you will have to look more closely to see the chocolate-colored band that develops on the head covers (you should have done this from the immediate vicinity. Remove the head covers (you should have done this when you purchased your recorder off and removing all tapes from the machine and the job is done. Note: to avoid any danger of scratching the tape heads, it is a good idea to put a piece of plastic tape over the tip(s) of the degaussing magnet. (Because of differences in physical design, not every tape-head demagnetizer will be able to get to the heads of every recorder. Check with your dealer to make sure that there is no potential problem.)

For most audiophiles, lubrication of a recorder is best left to a yearly visit to the service technician. Too much is as great a danger as too little! Obviously, though, bearings and sliding and rotating surfaces must have lubricants. If you want to do the job yourself, follow the manufacturer's instructions carefully. Tape care is no less important. Always keep tapes in their containers when not in use, and put tape reels on edge—not piled atop one another. I recommend the professional practice of leaving tapes in a played, not a fast-wound condition, for the latter tends not only to create an unevenly wound tape "pack," but also to put internal stresses on the tape layers that may cause damage. For the same reason, it's a good idea to play—not rewrite—a tape at least twice a year. Avoid storing tapes next to a radiator, in the immediate vicinity (within 2 to 3 feet) of strong magnetic fields (loudspeakers, motors, or power transformers in hi-fi equipment), or in a car trunk during warm weather. Given proper care, your tapes should outlast their owner!
"Where's the flute Henry?" my wife complained constantly. I was about ready to leave her. Then we saw a Marantz dealer. He told us that separation of sound is a true test of a speaker system. He suggested we put Marantz and other popular speakers to the test by listening to a familiar recording so we'd be able to hear for ourselves that it's the speaker and not the recording that makes the difference. Oh, what a difference Marantz made! What we thought were two oboes were clearly an oboe and a flute. And that barbershop quartet...well, they're really a quintet.

The proof is in the listening. And that's where Marantz design concepts come into play. The transducers in Marantz speaker systems are engineered to handle an abundance of continuous power, so you get distortion-free sounds that are as pleasing as a nibble on the ear.

We bought the Marantz Imperial 5G Two Way Speaker for just $99. Perfect for our budget and it delivers fine sound separation even with minimum power equipment. And there are five other quality Marantz speaker models starting as low as $59 and all are available with the new Marantz acoustically transparent foam grill.

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Of course, to hear the new Koss Decilite™ driver elements, you'll have to slip into a pair of Koss HV/1A High Velocity Stereophones. Or try the new Koss HV/1LC with volume/balance controls. Either way, just ask your Audio Specialist. He'll be happy to let you hear them. And he'll probably tell you how Koss accoustically tunes each High Velocity Stereophone at the factory. He'll point out too, the soft accoustical foam ear cushions that rest gently against your ears. Not to mention the beautiful ebony teak and champagne gold styling with grained inlays. But what you'll notice most is the incredible difference in sound. And that's worth hearing.

KOSS stereophones from the people who invented Stereophones.