Pioneer believes that any objective comparison of quality/performance/price between our new SX-1010, SX-939 and SX-838 AM-FM stereo receivers and any other fine receivers will overwhelmingly indicate Pioneer's outstanding superiority and value.

**Our most powerful ever.**
Pioneer uses the most conservative power rating standard: minimum continuous power output per channel, into 8 ohm loads, across the full audio spectrum from 20 Hz to 20,000 Hz.

Despite this conservatism, the SX-1010 far surpasses any unit that has come before it with an unprecedented 100 watts of power per channel, minimum RMS, at no more than 0.1% total harmonic distortion. Closely following are the SX-939 (70 watts RMS per channel, minimum) and the SX-838 (50 watts RMS per channel, minimum), both with no more than 0.3% total harmonic distortion. Dual power supplies driving direct-coupled circuitry maintain consistent high power output with positive stability. A fail-safe circuit protects speakers and circuitry against damage from overloading.

**Outstanding specifications for flawless reception**
FM reception poses no challenge to the exceptionally advanced circuitry of these fine instruments. Their FM tuner sections are designed with MOS FETs, ceramic filters and phase lock loop circuitry. The result is remarkable sensitivity, selectivity and capture ratio that brings in stations effortlessly, clearly and with maximum channel separation.

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<th>SX-1010</th>
<th>SX-939</th>
<th>SX-838</th>
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<tr>
<td>FM Sensitivity (IHF)</td>
<td>1.7μV</td>
<td>1.8μV</td>
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<td>Selectivity</td>
<td>90dB</td>
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<td>Capture Ratio</td>
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<td>Signal/Noise Ratio</td>
<td>72dB</td>
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**Total versatility plus innovations**
Only your listening interests limit the capabilities of these extraordinary receivers. They have terminals for every conceivable accommodation: records, tape, microphones, headsets — plus Dolby and 4-channel multiplex connectors. Completely unique on the SX-1010 and SX-939 is tape-to-tape duplication while listening simultaneously to another program source. The SX-838 innovates with its Recording...
There can be only one best.
The finest stereo has ever known.
3,025 possible tonal compensations with unique twin stepped tone controls
(SX-1010, SX-939)

Sector that permits FM recording while listening to records and vice versa. Up to three pairs of speakers may be connected to each model.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INPUTS</th>
<th>SX-1010</th>
<th>SX-939</th>
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<td>Tape monitor/4-c.</td>
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<td>Auxiliary</td>
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<td>OUTPUTS</td>
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<td>Speakers</td>
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<td>Tape Rec./4-ch.</td>
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<td>Noise reduction</td>
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<td>4-channel MPX</td>
<td>1</td>
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Master control system capability

Pioneer's engineers have surpassed themselves with a combination of control features never before found in a single receiver. All three units include: pushbutton function selection with illuminated readouts on the ultra wide tuning dial, FM and audio muting, loudness contour, hi/low filters, dual tuning meters and a dial dimmer.

Never before used on a receiver are the twin stepped bass and treble tone controls found on the SX-1010 and SX-939. They offer over 3,000 tonal variations. A tone defeat switch provides flat response instantly throughout the audio spectrum. The SX-838 features twin turnover bass and treble controls for more precise tonal compensation for room acoustics and other program source characteristics.

In their respective price ranges, these are unquestionably the finest values in stereo receivers the world has ever known. Audition their uniqueness at your Pioneer dealer. SX-1010 - under $690*; SX-939 - under $600*; SX-838 - under $500*.

Prices include cabinets.

Also quality-built and more moderately priced.

Pioneer's line of receivers presents equally outstanding values starting at under $250. Shown here are the SX-535 - under $300*; SX-636 - under $350*; SX-737 - under $400*. All with cabinets.

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*The value shown is for informational purposes only and includes the following cabinet construction: SX-1010, walnut veneered top and side panels; all other models use walnut grained vinyl top and side panels. The actual resale price will be set by the individual Pioneer dealer at his option.
The best way to listen to a speaker is with your eyes open.

All speakers are not alike. Even speakers that appear similar can sound very different.

For example, when you compare a B·I·C VENTURI speaker system with others, you'll be astonished at how much more sound it delivers...even from a modest amplifier.

Behind the speaker grille you'll see the Venti name over a cabinet slot that looks like a bass reflex "port" but isn't. "Bass reflex" speakers, whether they use slots, holes, or shelves, merely resonate an enclosure to a single frequency, achieving bass emphasis only at that one point.

The opening you see on a B·I·C VENTURI cabinet is the terminus of the Venturi path inside the enclosure (U.S. Pat. 3892288). It works as an acoustic transformer to produce bass energy as much as 140 times greater than would otherwise be achievable from a woofer alone in the same size cabinet.

Oscilloscope photos reveal that a B·I·C VENTURI speaker actually eliminates harmonic distortion from reproduced tones, literally purifying the sound and resulting in clean, tight and extended reproduction. That you can hear!

Notice the square-shaped mouth of the exclusive BICONEX" midrange horn (pat. pend.). This unit is exceptionally efficient. It has remarkably smooth, uncolored response because of its unique conical/exponential flare. It is made of an inert substance to avoid "ringing" and spurious resonances. But, equally important, it provides wide-angle dispersal of sound in both horizontal and vertical planes, making speaker positioning non-critical. There is a super tweeter that operates in only the last octave for accurate musical timbre.

Even the control panel on the front of the baffle board contains a surprise. It controls an exclusive built-in device (pat. pend.) which compensates for the normal loss in hearing of bass and treble tones, (figure C) at various listening levels. Regardless of amplifier loudness settings, you hear all the music, all the time. This is accomplished automatically with the switch in the "on" position, or, you can adjust tonal balance manually for the type of music you play or the kind of sound you prefer.

There's really much more to B·I·C VENTURI speakers such as how they compare with other design types in performance, and the way they function in a high fidelity system.

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GUSTAV MAHLER, SYMPHONIST, IN UTAH
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Different, but equally valid views of Mozart from Kraus and Balsam

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Hirsch-Houtck Laboratory test results on the Hitachi D-3500 cassette deck, Shure M95ED phono cartridge, Rectilinear 5 speaker system, and SAE Mark IB preamplifier

TURNTABLE BASICS
A little preliminary homework will make you a lot smarter in the market

BEST RECORDINGS OF THE MONTH
POPULAR DISCS AND TAPES
CLASSICAL DISCS AND TAPES

EDITORIALLY SPEAKING
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR
TECHNICAL TALK
THE SIMELS REPORT
GOING ON RECORD
THE OPERA FILE
THE BASIC REPERTOIRE
CHOOSING SIDES

COVER: Design by Borys Patchowsky; photo by Bruce Pendleton

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The Dual 1249. It will give you more reasons than ever to own a Dual.

For several years, independent surveys of component owners—audio experts, hi-fi editors, record reviewers, readers of the music/equipment magazines—have shown that more of them own Duals than any other turntable. This is quite a testimonial to Dual's quality performance, reliability and fully automatic convenience.

We believe the new 1249 will add even more serious music lovers to the roster of Dual owners, as it provides every feature, innovation and refinement long associated with Dual turntables plus some new ones. And all in a newly designed chassis that complements the superb design and meticulous engineering of the 1249.

The low-mass tubular tonearm pivots in a true four-point gyroscopic gimbal suspended within a rigid frame. All tonearm settings are easily made to the exacting requirements of the finest cartridges. The tonearm is vernier-adjustable for precise balance; tracking pressure is calibrated in tenths of a gram; anti-skating is separately calibrated for conical, elliptical and CD-4 styli.

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Of course, if you already own a current Dual, you won’t really need a new turntable for several years. However, we would understand if you now feel you must have nothing less than the new 1249, $279.95, less base.

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CIRCLE NO. 50 ON READER SERVICE CARD
CASSETTE PROGRESS

No one, in all likelihood, is born a skeptic, though life surely teaches us skepticism in a hurry. Thus, perhaps even before we find out about Santa Claus, we discover that small boxes do not always contain good things. But only a confirmed doubter, far gone in refined and practiced incredulity, will have made a more sophisticated discovery about boxes than the fault may lie not with the contents, but with the box itself, the packaging. The tape cassette would seem to offer some proof of this thesis: a marvel of electronic and mechanical ingenuity, it is both aurally and visually attractive—but it is, well, just too small.

Now there are advantages to smallness, certainly, easy portability and spatial economy principal among them, but it seems to me that the cassette does suffer, as the aspirin box once did, because of its size. It is, for example, an apparently irresistible temptation to the light-fingered shopper, with the natural result that retailers have to keep their little boxes locked up in sales-limiting look-but-don't-touch cases—rather like penny candy. And they are only slightly easier to keep track of at home, even though you may have gone to the trouble and expense of building or buying tricky storage cabinets. Another problem, particularly with classical tapes, has been the difficulty of providing "jacket" notes, librettos, lyric sheets, translations, and the like in that capacity cannot be read without a magnifying glass and on paper that will still fit into the tiny boxes. This impasse has generally been avoided in practice, as tapesters know, by omitting the notes. The multiple set has also been a poser for cassette producers—you can get a lot of music on one tape, but not yet a full-size opera, Passion, or oratorio. The solution so far with the few multiples we have seen (issuing companies have mostly abstained, of course) has been to squeeze two, three, or four cassettes into one fat little box—and there's just no way you can keep it from mucking up your standard one-cassette storage system if you have one.

What to do? Why, here up that little box, of course, and that is just what Deutsche Grammophon has recently done with the first U.S. release (twenty-four titles, more to follow) in its "Prestige Box" series. They aren't really boxes at all, but rather books which open to reveal libretto (and/or notes) in a pocket on the left, the two (or three, or four cassettes into one fat little box—and there's just no way you can keep it from mucking up your standard one-cassette storage system if you have one.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Words, Words, Words

I have made a game of covering your reviewers' initials at the end of reviews and guessing who generated each one. Noel Coppage's are eminently detectable and delectable no matter what the subject. And he has finally exposed himself literarily with his article on country-music word play (July). His own writing always seems to be characterized by a quick pun or some down-home metaphor that immediately makes the reader feel something, probably the same something he felt when he wrote the piece. I have been following N.C.'s reviews since I lived in Whitesville, Kentucky, so I know about the goit-on-the-church-in Dundee, the Fordsville Trojans, the Laws brothers' gas station and all: thus when I read Noel's work I always seem to reach an empath. I would like to see him explore further the use of authentic Southern regional accents in both country and pop music. It might do a lot toward justifying them as viable means of communication rather than evidence of humble intellect.

Patrick Hardesty
Chesterfield, Mo.

Noel Coppage would have us believe that country music is the last great repository of Original Clever Lyrics but fails to make a case in his article, "Words, Words, Words" (July). His examples of supposedly great one-liners are mostly contrived, cutesy puns and goofy melo-drama. Lyrics like "I got tears in my eyes from layin' on mah back, ka-ryin' in bed over yew' and those in Lynn Anderson's "Rose Garden" make the vast majority of country music garbage. I just don't feel like picking through the haystacks of junk for the needles of brilliant wit.

K. A. Boriskin
Milford, Mass.

Mr. Coppage replies: Has Mr. Boriskin ever heard I Overlooked an Orchid While Looking for a Rose?

The Eagles

It's a shame that such smooth-skinned softies as Steve Simels can make such rash comments about country-rock groups ("The Proficient Eagles," August). Perhaps he'd have a different viewpoint if he was out picking up rocks in the hot sun with the rest of us country folk. Country rock hasn't reached a "dead end"; Mr. Simels' car merely ran out of gas at the city limits.

Richard Quemere
Graves Mill, Va.

The Teaneck Terror (Steve Simels) should stick to reviewing (and dreaming about) the Rolling Stones and the Kinks, his two pet bands, and leave the serious work for his able staff, who generally seem to have a bit of understanding of and insight into the various kinds of popular music. His attack on the Eagles (August) and on country-rock in general is typical of most East Coast, city-bred, rock-and-roll fans' attitudes. They smile scornfully at the merest mention of the word "country," envisioning either "Hoo-Haw" or Tex Ritter without the slightest knowledge or appreciation of the culture that produces music like the Eagles'. The "Cosmic Cowboy" image Mr. Simels ridicules is not some PR hype for a bunch of painted, screaming, "decadent-chic" clowns, but a way of life. I wonder if Mr. Simels has ever seen a tequila sunrise after camping out in the desert—one that wasn't poured into a glass. I wonder if he has ever seen the sage and the cactus and the "million stars" at night or a horse that wasn't in a race or under a cop—or even a live country-rock band. The Eagles portray the West in much the same way the Allman Brothers Band represents the South with their dancing, thinking, and loving music, each a style within a style.

Kenneth M. Leonard
Tucson, Ariz.

Mr. Simels replies: This cowboy business strikes me as being about as silly as the old "Can white men sing the blues?" argument that used to rage in the pages of Rolling Stone. Nonetheless, as far as the Eagles go, I'd like to just mention that Glenn Frey was born and bred in Detroit, cut his musical teeth on the kind of hard rock represented by Detroit bands like the MC 5, and has stated that he agreed to call the group the Eagles because he thought it sounded like the name of a street gang! So much for his firsthand knowledge of tequila sunsets. I suspect the "country" influence on the Eagles music has as much to do with Asylum Records' David Geffen's business acumen as anything else. In any event, it is role playing that we get on albums like "Desperado," and, unlike Mr. Leonard, I just don't find the Eagles believable in the part. This is a problem I never had with, say, Gram Parsons or the Byrds. Has Mr. Leonard heard the Byrds' "Sweetheart of the Rodeo?"

Steve Simels' review of the Eagles' "One of These Nights" (August) could only have resulted from hearing the title song too many times on the radio. The Eagles have developed into one of our finer bands, and they have made it apparent that terms like "country rock" should have been done away with long ago. If Train Leaves Here This Morning and Peaceful Easy Feeling from their first album are forgettable, I would like to know what isn't. Could it be that Mr. Simels is upset that the Eagles now command a larger audience than his beloved Byrds ever did?

Bob Silvey
North Hollywood, Calif.

To answer Steve Simels' question in his review of the Eagles (August), I care very much if I ever hear Tequila Sunrise again. It is a beautiful song and I'm going to play it right now!

Angela Rotondi
Bloomfield, N.J.

Mr. Simels replies: Mr. Kuris is right, of course, but I was referring not to the vocal harmonizing, but the bell-like guitar harmonic George hits at the end of his solo.

The Pop Crew

Thank you for Steve Simels. He has proven himself to be one of the most interesting and knowledgeable critics in the business. He is a little overly subjective, to be sure—but that's a hell of a lot better than some of our stuffy, boring L.A. critics. His article on the Rolling Stones (August) was truly sensitive and totally devoid of all the groupie nonsense which has become the standard fare of many. Your whole crew of pop reviewers deserves a lot of credit for making intelligent, thoughtful, and lively reports. Keep them coming!

Matt Wright
Los Angeles, Calif.

I'd always suspected Popular Music Editor Steve Simels had more taste than he let on to—and "My Front Pages" (August) confirms that. I can dig it all, especially Carly Simon's legs.

Paul Falon
Ann Arbor, Mich.

Stones, Stones, Stones

Despite the fact that the Stones are one of the biggest hits of this century, Steve Simels is content to laud their self-important, ultra-chic talent in his August column. Somehow he sees his way past flatted interviews and twelve-fifty seats at the Garden and finds something worth getting ecstatic over. I pay my respect to the roots, but I cannot possibly accept the Rolling Stones as all the rock world can offer until the "third coming" is upon us. The "third coming" died stillborn when the world realized that David Bowie can't sing
without an eight-track at his side. The Rolling Stones are no more than a parody of the bands making a living being parodies of the Rolling Stones.

DENNIS MCGRATH
Kendall Park, N.J.

Mr. Simels replies: Well maybe, except that few of those bands are making a living.

Minnesota Microphones

David Hall's article "The Minnesota Orchestra's Ravel" (August) leaves me rather confused. On the one hand he says "here are clarity... and a wonderful sense of space" and "Solo-instrument aural 'placement' is precise and clear... while the larger ensemble textures come through with fine transparency..." On the other hand, he complains that in Daphnis et Chloé, La Valse, Alborado del Graciioso, etc., there is an apparent lack of "sonic focus."

Now what exactly is "sonic focus," later on also described as "precise focus"? Surely Mr. Hall does not mean that all sections in a symphonic orchestra should be miked and recorded separately in order to obtain a "clarity" which is not in the score to begin with. This would be hard to believe, as Mr. Hall has been an ardent proponent of the so-called one-microphone technique for classical recordings. In fact, the entire four-record Ravel set (Vox QSVBX 51300) was done with the same microphone placement. Once the balance in the control room was arrived at, dynamics and balances were adjusted internally within the orchestra as required. Sonic differences from one piece to another fortunately reflect Ravel's intentions rather than the producer/engineer-helping-along syndrome.

Finally, Mr. Hall is quite wrong when he says that the a cappella choir in Daphnis "should sound totally disembodied rather than so uncomfortably close." The superb St. Olaf choir was placed in the twentieth row of the audience for quad rear channels to get the distant effect needed. Disembodied no, distant perhaps, although the choir in performance is right on stage with the orchestra.

MARC J. AUBERT
New York, N.Y.

Mr. Hall replies: All of which goes to show, "syndrome" or no, that different producers might record the same work differently.

Massenet Mania

In view of the present Massenet revival, STEREO REVIEW readers might be interested in the Massenet Society. This organization was founded by soprano Stella Wright, whose sole interest is to perform rare Massenet works. If you'd like to join, write to Miss Stella Wright, Flat 2, 79 Linden Gardens, London W2C 4, England.

GERALDINE SEGAL
Randallstown, Md.

Pulitzer Performance

A small correction in the information regarding Dominick Argento (August, "Musical Honors"): his song cycle was premiered by Janet Baker in Orchestra Hall in Minnesota but with the piano accompaniment of Martin Issep, as scored, and not with the Minnesota Orchestra. At a reception after the première, I asked Mr. Issep if he might consider an orchestration, as it seemed the texture of the piano part might lend itself to this treatment.

(Continued on page 12)
However, after talking at length, we both agreed that the work is more effective as Mr. Argento conceived it, and thus the Minnesota Orchestra will probably not have an opportunity to perform it in the future. As a further footnote, Miss Baker’s recital was presented by the Schubert Club of St. Paul, which has been in continuous operation for more than ninety years and which presents several distinguished artists in recital each year.

DONALD L. ENGLE
President, Minnesota Orchestra
Minneapolis, Minn.

Hairy Loudspeakers

- Ralph Hodges’ “Audio Basics” for August was probably the most concise and definitive report ever made on the hairy subject of loudspeakers. It is a gem like this that makes the other eleven issues worth waiting for. The “Speaker Placement” article by Roy Allison was also a winner.

And while I’m on the line, the July issue was outstanding because of the troubleshooting chart. This is an invaluable guide for the novice, who just has to be grateful that some previous-know-it-alls have developed a respectable sense of system analysis for the beginner with a problem. I still believe a basic guide to understanding is what works ...and what sells. So thank you once again ...a fine effort.

RICHARD MUELLER
Tampa, Fla.

Good Soldier Kurka

- I enjoyed reading Paul Kresh’s review of Robert Kurka’s The Good Soldier Schweik Suite (August). However, Mr. Kurka did not die at fifty years of age as noted, but at the impossibly young age of thirty-three or thereabouts. The music world lost a great talent and a warm, gentle, and very bright young man as I knew him.

ELINOR KLEINER MARKS
Summit, N.J.

According to Baker’s Biographical Dictionary of Musicians, Mr. Kurka, born December 22, 1921, died December 12, 1957.

Rossini’s Stuffed Turkey

- I was delighted to see in Managing Editor William Livingstone’s July Opera File some interest in Rossini and some justice done to his reputation. I am even more delighted to know that Mr. Livingstone is a Rossini enthusiast, and I share his fervent hope that Le Comte Ory will be reissued. Among the other operas we need to have recorded is Armida, which Cristina Deutekom sang at some festival half a dozen years ago in a kind of marvel and yodel. The tunes are delicious. And how about Tancredi, the original home of “I Tanti Pulciti”? Is the rest of it up to that aria?

Rossini said that after he became successful he went only three times in his life: when his first opera was performed, when he heard Paganini play the prayer from Moses, and when a turkey stuffed with pâte de foie gras fell overboard at a picnic on the water. A man with that kind of taste deserves all the support we can give him.

LOUIS T. MILIC
Bratenahl, Ohio

Gloria Gaynor Again

- Concerning the little brouhaha in your letters column about the Gloria Gaynor album “Never Say Goodbye,” I’d like to point out how unusually successful it is as disco music. Instead of a token dance cut, the whole album was conceived from that perspective, and the producer did not bother with the subtleties that make a record listenable while lounging in one’s living room. Judging from the reactions of the disco crowd, what is important are thick textures and a relentlessly danceable beat. Eight Voice of the Theater horns blasting onto a dance floor tend to overwhelm subtlety and precious detail. Those who have no inclination to throw dance parties needn’t bother with this “wired-up Martha Reeves.”

DARRELL THOMAS
Vacaville, Ga.

Ray Noble

- Peter Reilly disparages the Pasadena Roof Orchestra in his August review as an apparent “attempt to parody the old and very great Ray Noble Orchestra” and wonders why EMI doesn’t release some of this “splendid orchestra’s” recordings. No doubt it has escaped Mr. Reilly’s notice that five of this album’s discs of Ray Noble’s Orchestra have in fact been issued in the U.S. by Monmouth—Evergreen in collaboration with EMI. They provide a fine sampling of Ray Noble’s brilliant arranging gifts. Al Bowlly’s (this is the correct spelling, not Mr. Reilly’s Bowley) truly imitable vocals, and the band’s great performances. Here are the “elegance” and “heart” Mr. Reilly laments as being absent from the modern-day product.

WALTER DIEHL
Great Neck, N.Y.

Mr. Reilly replies: I am happy to know that Mr. Diehl’s favorite orchestra (and mine) can be heard again, and sorry that spelling was never my best subject. But “Bowley” still looks a little peculiar, doesn’t it?

Composer as Interpreter

- Igor Stravinsky spoke often and at length about the composer’s role as the only valid “interpreter” of his own works. Thus it is certainly surprising that Columbia would discontinue recordings of such vital works as Threni, Agon, Persephone, Canticum Sacrum, and the two larger works for piano and orchestra. Also, no longer available to complement Robert Craft’s Russian performance of Les Noces is a composer-conducted one (sung in English) with, as pianists, composers Samuel Barber, Aaron Copland, Lukas Foss, and Roger Sessions. If one performance of Le Sacre du Printemps can exist in no less than five formats, the reissuing of these other works must be possible.

MICHAEL CLAY BRUNSON
Monroe, La.

Well, ninety-five per cent of classical releases don’t break even; perhaps this Sacre does. Music Editor James Goodfriend will be examining the implications of this interesting little statistic in his Going on (off?) Record column next month.

One More for Rodrigo

- Regarding David Hall’s July article on Rodrigo’s Concierto de Aranjuez, there is one other 1959 recording, an absolutely unique and superb transcription for trumpet and orchestra by Miles Davis and Gil Evans. Davis’ horn has a nerve-ic ing quality unfathomable by any guitar recording I have yet heard.

JOHN HOGL
San Jose, Calif.

STEREO REVIEW
If you want a better receiver... build it yourself.

(We've made it even easier, in the Heathkit AR-1500A)

How to improve a classic

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Our new phase lock loop multiplex demodulator maintains excellent separation at all frequencies, not just 1000 Hz so FM stereo will sound even better. And the new multiplex section requires only one simple adjustment.

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OCTOBER 1975
SAE Mark XXV
Stereo Power Amplifier

At 300 watts per channel continuous into 8-ohm loads, both channels driven, the model Mark XXV is SAE’s largest stereo power amplifier. Rated power is available over a bandwidth of 10 to 30,000 Hz with a maximum of 0.1 per cent harmonic distortion and 0.05 per cent intermodulation distortion. An input of 1.5 volts drives the amplifier to full output, and the input impedance is 50,000 ohms. The signal-to-noise ratio is greater than 100 dB. The amplifier has a minimum damping factor of 150.

The Mark XXV has two large front-panel meters for indicating output levels, calibrated both in watts and decibels. Three rows of pushbuttons set the gain of each of the two channels (0, –3, –6, or –12 dB) and adjust the meter sensitivity (0, –6, –12, or –24 dB). Internally, the Mark XXV employs eight output transistors per channel, wired in a series-parallel configuration. A cooling fan is mounted in the heat-sink assembly for forced air circulation through the fins. A relay with a 5-second delay before activation is installed in the speaker lines to prevent turn-on transients from reaching the speakers. The amplifier is available in both consumer (Mark XXV, shown) and professional (Mark 2500) versions, the latter with rack-mounting slots and black face plate and handles. Price: $1,250. A wood cabinet is $44 extra.

Circle 115 on reader service card

Ohm G
Speaker System

The new Model G speaker system from Ohm Acoustics has what is called an “abbreviated” Walsh driver measuring just 8 inches in diameter and 9 inches in height, as compared with the 12 x 16-inch dimensions of the Ohm F driver. As in the Model F, the driver operates according to the “wave-transmission-line” principle. Voice-coil impulses travel downward through the inverted cone as concentric ripples: their velocity in the cone material and the included angle of the cone are so related to the velocity of sound in air that a phase-coherent acoustic waveform is generated. Radiation of the driver is omnidirectional in the horizontal plane, and the Ohm G enclosure has grille-covered openings on all four upper sides to permit this.

The Ohm G differs from previous Walsh designs in its low-frequency propagation. In stead of a sealed cabinet, the Ohm G employs a 1.05-cubic-foot enclosure with a 10-inch passive radiator. In normal installation the passive cone faces the rear wall; it has significant output only at 64 Hz and below. At lower frequencies the passive radiator is responsible for most of the system’s output, which has the effect of reducing the excursion requirements for the Walsh driver and appreciably increasing the electro-acoustic efficiency of the system.

The frequency response of the Ohm G is 32 to 19,000 Hz ±4 dB; impedance ranges from 4.3 to 18 ohms, with a nominal rating of 6 ohms. In an anechoic environment the Ohm G produces an 87-dB output at a distance of 1 meter with a 1-watt input at any audio frequency above 30 Hz. The enclosure is rectangular, with dimensions of 12½ x 35 x 11½ inches. Optional finishes are oiled walnut veneer ($350) or walnut-grain vinyl ($300).

Yamaha Model B-1
Stereo Power Amplifier

Yamaha’s new Model B-1 power amplifier is an all-FET (field-effect transistor) unit employing the newly developed vertical power FET’s in output and driver stages. Benefits attributed to FET circuitry include high linearity with reduced generation of high-order distortion products within the amplifier, lower negative-feedback requirements with consequent improved electrical stability, and superior transient response and thermal stability.

The B-1 is constructed on a chassis measuring 18 x 6 x 11½ inches, with completely separate power supplies for each channel. Parallel inputs permit either direct coupling from the preamplifier or the more conventional capacitive coupling. The amplifier also has a subsonic filter acting below 10 Hz with a slope of 18 dB per octave. Spring-loaded connectors for five pairs of speakers are provided, and these are intended to be switched by an optional control panel (the Model UC-1) which has controls, acting at the amplifier inputs, for matching the acoustic levels of the speakers. The UC-1 has connectors that plug directly into the front face of the B-1, or it can be used as a remote-control unit linked through an 18-foot cable that is supplied. Also incorporated in the UC-1 are peak-reading meters for the two channels, calibrated in decibels and watts, and power and filter switches that take over these functions from the corresponding controls on the B-1 itself.

Rated power output of the B-1 is 150 watts per channel, both channels driven simultaneously into 8 ohms, from 20 to 20,000 Hz. Harmonic and intermodulation distortion at rated power are 0.1 per cent (0.04 per cent or less at lesser power outputs). The signal-to-noise ratio (A-weighted) is 110 dB. The amplifier’s damping factor with 8-ohm loads is 100 at 1,000 Hz, and the input impedance is 50,000 ohms with a sensitivity of about 0.75 volt for full output. The B-1 weighs 96 pounds. Price: $1,600. The optional UC-1 control panel (18 x 6 x 23/4 inches) costs $250.

Circle 116 on reader service card

Garrard Z2000B
Automatic Turntable

A novel belt-drive system recently developed by Garrard is one of the principal features of the new Garrard Z2000B automatic turntable. The belt is not turned directly by the motor pulley, but is instead driven by an intermediate idler. This permits the use of a simple, mechanical speed-change and fine-tuning mechanism (a stepped, tapered motor shaft bearing on the idler) such as is found in many idler-driven automatic turntables.

The Z2000B is a two-speed (33⅓ and 45 rpm) model with a built-in illuminated strobecope to assist in adjusting its vernier speed control at the two speeds. A stack of up to six discs is accommodated on its two-point support system, and a manual spindle that turns with the platter is included for single-play operation. The main controls of the turntable are three lever tabs to select manual or automatic operation, cue the tone arm (the cueing mechanism is damped in both directions of travel), and initiate and interrupt automatic play. The platter is an 11½-inch nonferrous casting that weighs 5 pounds; it is driven by Garrard’s familiar Synchro-Lab motor. An improved version of the Zero Tracking-Error tone arm is also used in the turntable. The magnetic anti-skating system is now calibrated for elliptical and CD-4 styli, and a resettable stylus timer has been added to indicate how many disc sides have been played (alerting the user to have his stylus examined (Continued on page 16)
Turn on the Fisher.

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at regular intervals. The rumble level of the Z2000B is -64 dB (DIN B weighting), and wow and flutter are 0.06 and 0.04 per cent, respectively. The motorboard, measuring approximately 15 1/4 x 14 1/4 inches, requires clearance of at least 3/4 inches above and 3 inches below for installation. Price: $229.95. A wood base and dust cover are optional and available at $15.95 and $9.95, respectively.

Circle 118 on reader service card

3M Cassette Edit/Repair Kit

A compact splicing and repair kit for cassettes, self-contained in a narrow 5 1/2-inch plastic splicing block, is being marketed by 3M. Inside the hollow block (with removable cover) are six short lengths of splicing tape, plus six adhesive-tipped picks that can be inserted into a cassette to grab and withdraw a broken tape end. Splices can then be made on the block, or editing can be done with the assistance of a single-edged razor blade. One end of the block is molded into the form of a hex spindle for rotating the cassette hubs by hand. The 3M kit comes blister-packed on a cardboard sheet with complete illustrated instructions included. Price: $3.10.

Circle 119 on reader service card

Pioneer HPM-200 Speaker System

The high-polymer film electro-acoustic transducer developed by Pioneer and first used in a stereo headset has now found application in a new speaker system, the Model HPM-200. The high-polymer material exhibits a piezoelectric effect when an a.c. voltage is applied, expanding and contracting in the plane of the film's surface. Pioneer has formed sheets of the film into upright cylinders. The expansion and contraction of the film causes the cylinder to pulse radially, producing sound.

Two HPF drivers (large and small) are employed as tweeters in the HPM-200; they operate at 2,000 Hz up to a crossover between them at 5,000 Hz. Since they are omnidirectional in the lateral plane, they occupy an upper section in the 32-inch-high enclosure with acoustically transparent openings on all sides. The system also uses a 2 1/8-inch soft-dome tweeter for the range from 710 to 2,000 Hz and two 10-inch woofers with different resonance frequencies, each in its own sealed sub-enclosure. The cones are composed of a mixture of conventional pulps and carbon fibers, which are said to provide exceptional rigidity. One woofer covers the range from 25 to 100 Hz while the other operates from 35 to 700 Hz.

The HPM-200 has a frequency response of 25 to 25,000 Hz and a power-handling capability of 100 watts continuous, 200 watts program. Nominal system impedance is 6 ohms (5.5 ohms minimum). Crossover slopes at all dividing frequencies are 12 dB per octave. The speaker is designed to be used in a conventional system or to be tri-amplified by means of an electronic crossover, with separate power amplifiers driving the woofers, mid-range, and tweeters. The HPM-200's floor-standing enclosure has a cloth grille in a shallow V configuration with the driver-mounting panel angled slightly upwards. Dimensions are 29 x 32 x 19 inches. Controls on the system adjust the outputs of the HPF tweeters separately over a ±3-dB range in five steps and the mid-range output over a ±1.5-dB range in three steps. Price: $500.

Circle 119 on reader service card
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Double-Dolby Dubbing

Q. Consider the following situation: I want to dub a Dolbyized reel-to-reel tape onto a cassette. Should I decode the signal from my open-reel machine and then re-encode it with the Dolby circuits in my cassette deck, or should I feed the Dolbyized open-reel recording into the cassette machine with all Dolby circuits switched off? I've tried it both ways, and the best results occur when I activate the Dolby circuits in both units. In other words, I decode the Dolbyized reel-to-reel tape and then encode the signal as it is being fed into the cassette. However, this seems like unnecessary processing. Is it?

A. Your observation is correct; best results are achieved in duplicating tapes when you decode the Dolbyized signal and then re-encode when making the copy. Although this may seem like a redundant process, it is necessary because accurate decoding of a Dolbyized signal can only be achieved if the decoder "tracks" the encoder in both signal level and frequency. When you copy a Dolbyized signal, the odds are that it is recorded on the new tape at a higher or lower level than on the original tape. This can confuse the Dolby decoding circuits, because the Dolby-level reference point has shifted. In addition, any frequency aberration that occurs in the signal after the encoding (because of the use of a hotter tape for the copy, for example) would be emphasized by the decoding process. In short, if an encoded signal is not fed to the decoder circuits at exactly the same reference level at all frequencies that it had when encoded, then the Dolby circuits simply cannot react properly. The result is a diminution of the noise-reduction potential of the Dolby circuits and some high-frequency boost (or loss) in playback of low-level (soft) audio signals.

Distorted Views

Q. Much of the equipment evaluation in your magazine is based on the degree of deviation from the accurate reproduction of a sine wave. The various modes of distortion are given in percentages of such deviations. Yet, isn't it true that any musical instrument manifests at least some distortion of the sinusoidal waveform and isn't such deviation to be expected? Although such deviations from an ideal sine wave may be measurable in a laboratory, they have absolutely no meaning in musical listening enjoyment. The ear is the only final judge.

A. Mr. Kosolapoff's letter shows a basic confusion between sound production and reproduction. It is true that one rarely finds a pure sine wave (meaning a tone without any harmonic content) among natural sounds or even those produced by musical instruments. However, this fact has nothing to do with what we demand of our audio equipment. Ideally, a component should be able to do a perfect job of amplification, transformation of any audio signal, whether it be a sine wave from a signal generator, a trill from a Stradivarius violin, or the mating call of an impassioned yak. My definition of "perfect" is this context is: good enough that trained critical ears cannot detect any difference in quality between the component's input and output signals. Note that there is no attempt to define in numbers how good is good enough. We just don't know enough about the sensitivities of the ear to various kinds of waveform distortions to state with assurance, for example, that 5 per cent of any given type of distortion is audible or inaudible and under what circumstances. Of course, it's easy enough to determine that gross distortions of one type or another are readily audible, but when you get below 5 per cent or so, then the nature of the distortion, the complexity of the program material (or test signal), the acuity of the listener, and the ability of the other components to pass on whatever fine distinctions the listener, and the ability of the other components to pass on whatever fine distinctions the listener, and the ability of the other components to pass on whatever fine distinctions exist, can play a determining role in whether or not a measurable distortion is also audible.

To return to Mr. Kosolapoff, he almost touched on a matter of real concern to many audio engineers: the validity of the commonly used test signals as indicators of component quality. All of the distortion test procedures work the same way. A signal (or signals) of known characteristics is fed into the component. The signal(s) at the output of the component is analyzed to determine the degree to which it has been undesirably modified by the action of the component. Although the percentage numbers provided by the analyzing instruments do correlate somewhat with the perceptions of trained listeners, the correlation is far from absolute. Many investigators think the problem arises from lack of a test signal that properly simulates the characteristics of music. Others feel that the available test signals are adequate, but that the effect of the component on them is not analyzed in sufficient detail to disclose the audibly significant factors. Both may be right. Given all of the above, we've come to an area where Mr. Kosolapoff and I agree. For the present, the ear is the final judge. But, unfortunately, the acuity, the consistency, and the "taste" of the ears making the judgment must also be carefully evaluated, and that is a whole 'nother ball game.

Equalization for 78's

Q. I am taping a number of 78-rpm discs and am trying to locate a listing of the old equalization curves used by the various recording companies so that I can compensate for them with my graphic equalizer. Do you know where I could find such a list?

A. For any listeners, the search for the "correct" recording and playback equalization seems to have achieved the status of a holy quest. But consider: every time a recording engineer or producer twitches a frequency-equalization knob during the recording or mixing process he is, in effect, injecting his own deviation from the recommended RIAA (Recording Industry Association of America) equalization curves. And any time you second-guess the engineer (it is frequently necessary to do so) by adjusting your tone controls, you are in a sense departing from his notion of the proper RIAA equalization.

During the 78-rpm days and the early LP days, the recording-equalization situation was quite chaotic. There were at least seven or eight different equalizations in common use, and many preamplifiers had two separate controls—one to set the low-frequency turnover and the other the high-frequency rolloff—to be manipulated according to the recording company's notion of how it should be done. Frequently, a change in chief engineers would result in a change in a company's record equalization: the same record label might therefore require any of several different equalizations, depending on the date of a particular pressing.

In the light of all this, it seems pointless to be concerned about duplicating the original specified equalization for each specific disc. But there are other considerations also. All these discs were engineered to play through what would today be thought of as very low-fidelity phonographs. The equalizations employed were intended to get the best possible performance despite the technical recording and playback limitations of the day. It doesn't necessarily make sense therefore to duplicate the old equalization curves when the disc is going to be played through modern equipment.

Why not simply adjust your equalizer until you get the best possible sound from each disc as heard through your system and make your tapes using those settings? If that idea strikes you as cheating or diminishing the "authenticity" of the original, then I would suggest that your only recourse would be to find a phonograph of the same vintage as your discs and do a "live" recording of its acoustic output.

Incidentally, I'm sure that you are aware that many of the old 78's were recorded at exactly 78 rpm. Therefore, if the music seems a little sharp or flat, try adjusting the playing speed slightly up or down before applying the equalization.

G. M. Kosolapoff
Auburn, Alabama

John Kador
Durham, N.C.
BOSE ON QUALITY

The 1801® Power Amplifier.

Much of the quality that distinguishes a truly outstanding electronic instrument from the average product goes unseen. It lies in the concern and skill of the design engineer, conservative rating of components, and extreme care in manufacturing.

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The DC300A is fully protected against shorted loads, mismatched connections, overheating and excessive line voltage, input overload as well as RF burnout. And this amp will drive any type load, resistive or reactive.

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The DC300A's reliability is legendary. Leading big name rock groups demand DC300A's because of their rugged ability to withstand long punishment and still produce flawless sound. And major recording studios insist on Crown to keep time losses at a minimum. The professionals know from experience Crown's unqualified dependability.

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Crown's unique warranty covers not only parts and labor but round-trip shipping for three years. These shipping costs are an important factor in our warranty, and it is not surprising that no other amplifier manufacturer offers this service.

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CROWN
CIRCLE NO. 12 ON READER SERVICE CARD

GLOSSARY OF TECHNICAL TERMS -22

- **Micro-** is a prefix meaning one millionth, as in a microvolt (millionth of a volt). A micron is a millionth of a meter.

- **Mil, milli-** both mean one thousandth. A mil is one thousandth of an inch—a familiar unit in specifications of tape thickness and phono-stylus dimensions. The prefix milli- (millisecond, millivolt) designates one thousandth of whatever unit of measure it is attached to.

- **Mix (or mixdown)** is the process of combining two or more audio signals in carefully chosen proportions to create a single signal with the desired instrumental and frequency balance. The device usually used for mixing—as well as the person doing it—is called a mixer.

- **Mixer**, an audio control unit whose basic function is to combine two or more audio signals into a single composite signal, is most familiar to audiophiles in the form of a microphone mixer. Such a unit permits the outputs of a number of microphones to be adjusted in level and combined (mixed) for recording on one or two (or four) channels. The simplest mixers are small, passive (that is, not powered) units; the most elaborate are the large mixing consoles, used in sound studios, which can reduce sixteen or more inputs to two or four channels, adding equalization and artificial reverberation to each input when desired.

- **Modulation** is the imposing of a signal on some type of transmission or storage medium—a radio carrier, record groove, magnetic tape, etc. Occasionally you'll encounter references to an unmodulated record groove (meaning simply a straight, smooth groove with no audio information inscribed in it) or an unmodulated radio signal (meaning that the carrier embodies no audio signal in the form of frequency or amplitude modulation). On the other hand, 100 per cent modulation means that the medium is carrying the strongest signal it is capable of handling or, in the case of radio, the strongest signal legally allowed. (Modulation also has a specific musical meaning: a change of key within a piece of music.)

- **Mono** is a word freely used as a substitute for monaural, which is unacceptable to careful users of language, and monophonic, which is correct but somewhat unfamiliar to many readers. In either case it means single-channel sound, in contrast to stereophonic (two-channel) and quadraphonic (four-channel).

- **Moving coil, moving iron, moving magnet** are all designations for different types of transduction systems used in generating the electrical output of a magnetic phono cartridge. All magnetic cartridges derive their outputs from the relative motion of a magnetic field and a coil of wire. Sometimes the stylus moves the magnet, sometimes it moves the coils, and sometimes it moves a soft-iron "armature" that varies the magnetic flux impinging on the coils.

- **Multipath** refers to the reception of the same radio signal (by a receiving antenna) from several different sources at the same time. Typically, one source is the direct broadcast from the transmitting antenna, which follows a straight-line path to the reception site. The other sources are reflections of the signal, usually caused by large natural objects or structures in the vicinity, and frequently arriving from other directions. Thus a single broadcast can find its way to the receiver via multiple paths.

Multipath reception is undesirable because the reflections, having traveled a longer distance than the direct signal, arrive "late" at the receiver and interact with the direct signal in ways that cause noise, distortion, and loss of stereo separation. Practical cures for multipath include use of a directional receiving antenna, a reception site free of reflection-causing objects, and a tuner with good interference rejection.

STEREO REVIEW
Many receivers may give you all this. But they cost a lot more.

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At $229.95, the SA-5150—one of four new Technics stereo receivers—gives you more power and less THD than the five best selling brands do at a comparable price (16 watts per channel, minimum RMS, into 8Ω from 40Hz to 20kHz, with no more than 0.8% total harmonic distortion).

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PLL improves stereo separation by maintaining precise phasing in FM. And to help keep distortion down to a point where you won't hear it (0.4%), the SA-5150 uses flat group-delay ceramic filters in the IF section. There's also a sophisticated front end that delivers a selectivity of 70dB, 1.9 μV sensitivity and a capture ratio of 1.8dB.

So if you want a receiver with large capacitors in the power supply. Direct coupling. Phase Lock Loop in FM. And 16 watts RMS at $229.95. There's only one receiver you want. The SA-5150.

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

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Technics by Panasonic

CIRCLE NO. 51 ON READER SERVICE CARD
While everyone is still trying to make V-FETS at any price, we now make them at a lower price.

When Sony introduced the first amplifiers with vertical field-effect transistors last year, the reactions were nothing short of incredible.

Consumers wrote in asking where they could hear the equipment. Audiophiles demanded to know where they could buy it. And our competitors wanted to know how they could make it.

In fact, the only problem was that more people couldn't afford the $1300 price.

So, we at Sony decided to do something about it. And what we've come up with is our new $400 V-FET integrated amplifier, the TA-4650. The TA-4650 is quite an advanced little piece of equipment. Because the V-FET isn't just another combination of gadgets, or a souped-up version of the same old thing. It's a completely new device that combines the good points of both bi-polar transistors and triode vacuum tubes. Without suffering the drawbacks of either. Because it's made with V-FETS, the TA-4650 gives you a new level of highly defined triode sound; along with the efficiency and stability found only in solid state devices. The TA-4650 delivers 30 watts per channel, minimum RMS at 8 ohms, 20Hz-20kHz with no more than 0.1% total harmonic distortion.

It has a direct coupled power amplifier stage. As well as direct coupled FET amplifiers in the tone control and buffer stages.

Its bass and treble controls have a turnover frequency selector that starts at 250Hz/500Hz for bass and 2.5kHz/5kHz for treble.

Its volume control is equipped with a switch for 20dB muting. And it has a level control memory device so volume can be set at any predetermined point.

But as good as our new V-FET amplifier is, we're just as proud of the components we make to go along with it.

Our ST-4950 AM/FM stereo tuner, for example, has a MOS FET front end, uni-phase solid state filters and IC's in IF stages. This allows an FM capture ratio of only 1.0dB, selectivity of 80dB and an S/N ratio of 70dB. The ST-4950 also has a phase-locked loop (PLL) MPX section. Which means you get excellent stereo separation and low distortion.

Of course, if you're going around looking for a turntable, by all means take a look at our PS-4750 (cartridge sold separately). It has a direct drive servo motor with a wow and flutter rating of only .03%.

It's base and platter are made from molded compound instead of metal, so resonance has been greatly reduced. It also has air-damped cushions, which compensate for warpness in records (again reducing resonance). The end result is a much cleaner sound.

It's no accident that Sony makes the world's first commercially available V-FET equipment. Or that we have matching components good enough to complete your system.

You see, we've got more solid state audio experience than anyone else. We've been at it for twenty years. For proof just stop by your Sony dealer. And use your ears.

CIRCLE NO. 46 ON READER SERVICE CARD
New, improved oxides and smoother, more uniform coatings seem to get the major share of tape publicity today, but a reader inquiry prompts me to consider what these marvelous materials are, literally, based upon.

For twenty years acetate tape film has held its own with the slightly newer polyester backings, but recently the latter have taken over almost completely. My correspondent has heard, however, that polyester stretches more than acetate, so that a taped voice and music commentary will gradually fall out of synchronization with his home movie and slide shows.

This concern is given apparent credibility by the fact that you can often snap an older cellulose acetate tape apart cleanly, put the broken ends together in a splicing block, apply a splice, and never hear the break. Try the same trick with polyester-backed tape, and you end up with an elongated length of useless tape that must be cut out at both ends, resulting in a permanent loss of the material in the stretched section. This is progress?

Actually, it is, for my reader combined several partial truths to reach the false conclusion that acetate was the better tape base. First, it is true that, being plastic materials, acetate and polyester will stretch when sufficient force is applied to them. Up to a point, however—about 5 per cent elongation—they will return to their original length when the force is removed, and the important fact to note is that in this vital area polyester is 15 to 20 per cent stronger than acetate. Moreover, the tape tensions on a properly adjusted recorder don’t come close to causing a 5 per cent elongation except, perhaps, on the very thinnest tapes (for example, a C-120 cassette or “triple-play” open-reel tape), where prestretched (“tensilized”) polyester base is always used.

Second, and more important in keeping a tape at a constant length, is the fact that acetate is about eight times as susceptible to the humidity in the air as polyester is. A roll of polyester tape that might change length (and thus running time) by two seconds with a 60 per cent change in humidity would change about seventeen seconds if acetate were used. And that’s not all. Suppose you make a recording in the summer when the relative humidity is a dripping 95 per cent.

At this point the cellulose has soaked up moisture from the air and expanded about as much as it can. As you record, the tape is taken up at normal tension. Then, however, you put it away and get it out on a winter’s evening, when the humidity may have dropped to around 15 per cent. During the storage interval the tape has lost its summer moisture and contracted, creating an enormous internal pressure—perhaps enough to exceed the elastic limit of the inner layers, thus permanently deforming them. Conversely, if you record in the dry winter and then try to fast-forward the tape in the summer, it may have become so loose that it will “cinch,” that is, form a series of accordion-like pleats in the middle of the reel. Polyester is not totally immune to humidity changes, but in addition to its greater tensile strength it’s eight times more resistant to humidity effects than acetate.

Third, acetate tapes contain a plasticizing agent which, with age, tends to dry out. This makes them stiff and brittle, so they may break (cleanly, to be sure), when subjected to much less than the force needed to make a fresh tape reach the critical 5 per cent elongation point. Polyester needs no plasticizer, and so resists the aging process better. Which is probably one reason for the “clean break” reputation of acetate. Fresh acetate will stretch about 25 per cent, polyester about 100 per cent before breaking—both well beyond the elastic recovery limit. The other is that the slightest edge damage (such as a nick) will cause acetate to break very easily, but affects polyester far less. All in all, then, the shift to polyester is one more layer added to tape progress.

At Frazier, we build loudspeakers to deliver the very finest sound. Matchless sound. We’ve been designing speakers to deliver that kind of excellence for over 30 years.

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We have a unique line of loudspeakers to suit your every mood and every decor. From the Concerto, with smooth as silk reproduction with a 10” heavy duty woofer and special high frequency horns, to the Seven, with a 12” woofer, two 4” midrange speakers and two special high-frequency horns. Frazier also offers the incomparable Super Midget, Monte Carlo, Mark IV-A, Mark V and Mark VI.

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For a demonstration on the loudspeaker, with the difference, see your nearest Frazier dealer today.
As we continue along the cycle, the stylus reverses direction and moves negatively with increasing velocity, again reaching a maximum when it crosses the zero axis one half-cycle after the start. The process continues through the completion of the cycle, and through any subsequent cycles.

Shown below the groove-modulation sketch in Figure 1, and on the same time scale, is the electrical output waveform of the cartridge (which is proportional to the instantaneous velocity). At the crest of the cycle, where the velocity is zero, the signal output is zero, and it reaches its maximum levels at those times when the waveform passes through the zero

The peak amplitude of the modulation, measured in centimeters (cm), is \( A \). The rate at which the stylus moves from side to side (its velocity in centimeters per second or cm/sec) obviously changes constantly with its position along the recorded cycle. At time \( t = 0 \), the beginning of the positive half-cycle, it is a maximum, as shown by the fact that the slope of the tangent to the waveform at that point is greatest. At the peak of the sine wave, the velocity is zero; although the record continues to move past the stylus at a constant rate, the stylus motion at right angles to the line of the unmodulated groove (which generates its output voltage) is zero at that instant.

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disc, the 1,000 cycles will occupy a distance of 21.8 cm, giving a wavelength of 0.0218 cm.

Figure 2 shows how the same number of cycles recorded at different record radii have different wavelengths (the wavelength is the distance between successive positive or negative peaks of the signal). Note that, although the wavelength near the outside of the record is more than twice as great as that near the inside, the groove is moving past the stylus at a correspondingly greater speed, so the frequency (as well as the recorded velocity and thus the cartridge output voltage) should be the same at both points.

Some recordings are said to have a constant-amplitude response over a certain frequency range, and a constant-velocity response over other parts of the range. A constant-velocity recording, as its name suggests, should deliver a uniform output at all frequencies when played with a velocity-responding (magnetic) cartridge. But this is not really ideal. If we assume that there is a peak groove amplitude of 0.001 cm at 1,000 Hz, the velocity is a reasonable 6.3 cm/sec. If the same velocity is maintained at higher frequencies, the amplitude at 20,000 Hz will have dropped to only 0.00005 cm. Even though that should yield the same output voltage as the 1,000-Hz signal, the normal surface roughness of the vinyl groove wall can generate sufficient noise in the cartridge output that its signal-to-noise ratio (S/N) will be seriously degraded with such a low-amplitude recorded signal. At the other end of the audio spectrum, as we go down in frequency, the amplitude of the signal becomes very large, reaching 0.05 cm at 20 Hz. While it might be possible to record such a high amplitude, a very wide groove spacing would be needed to avoid interference between adjacent grooves, and this would be uneconomical in terms of the disc's playing time.

The solution is to change from a constant velocity to a constant amplitude characteristic at suitable frequencies, maintaining a reasonable balance between the two, so as to achieve the desired playing time per side, a satisfactory S/N, and a maximum velocity within the capabilities of most cartridges. Normally this transition takes place below 500 Hz and above 2,120 Hz. Between those limits, the constant-velocity recording characteristic is used. The output decreases by half with each octave of frequency below 500 Hz, and doubles with each octave increase above 2,120 Hz (slopes of 6 dB per octave).

Such a recording, played with a magnetic cartridge and an unequalized amplifier, would sound very shrill and lacking in bass. For this reason, the amplifier introduces a standard playback equalization (RIAA) which boosts the lows at a 6-dB-per-octave rate below 500 Hz and cuts the highs at the same rate above 2,120 Hz. The result is the modern LP recording process, with an essentially uniform frequency response over the full audio range, a quiet background, a playing time of up to one-half hour per side, and maximum velocities that can usually be tracked by any reasonably good phono cartridge.

Obviously, this has been a very simplified treatment of a rather complex process, and the exceptions to these "rules" are legion. Nevertheless, an understanding of the fundamentals should help anyone to interpret and appreciate the specified and measured performance of phono cartridges.
cassette where the conventional record/play head goes, the two distinct gaps being close enough to share the cassette's built-in pressure pad. The playback gap is 1.2 microns (µ) wide, while the head's recording gap is 4 µ wide, both dimensions being optimum for their application. There are separate recording and playback electronic sections, including separate Dolby encode and decode systems for both functions (Hitachi refers to these as "Double Dolby"). This permits a program to be recorded with Dolby encoding and monitored from the tape in decoded form with the correct frequency balance and improved signal-to-noise ratio.

The tape transport is driven by a four-pole hysteresis-synchronous motor. The controls are fairly conventional "piano keys" along the front edge of the horizontal control panel. The STOP/EJECT key stops the transport when pressed once: releasing it and pressing again ejects the cassette. It is possible to go from normal speed to fast speed in either direction or to shuttle between the two fast-speed modes without using the STOP button, but the tape must be stopped before it can be put into PLAY or RECORD. A hinged cover in front of the cassette door lifts to expose the heads for cleaning. On the sloped rear of the panel are REC (record) and PLAY signal lights and the pushbutton reset indicator. To their left are two large illuminated level meters.

Along the left front of the panel are six slider level controls - two each for the line and microphone inputs (which can be mixed) and two for playback-output level. The pushbutton (power) switch is at the left front. A row of six large pushbuttons behind the level slidertells the status of monitor (from source or tape), input select (line only, or line and microphone mixed), Dolby, tape bias, and equalization for "normal" and chromium-dioxide tape), memory (an automatic stop in rewind at the point where the index counter reads 0000), and meter. The last, in its vu position, gives the meters the ballistic properties of a true Vu meter, while in the peak position they have a very fast rise and a much slower decay time, permitting them to respond to very brief program peaks. The status of each button is indicated by an adjacent light. With CrO₂ (chromium-dioxide) cassettes having the special rear-edge-notchng (most current production does), the CrO₂ bias and equalization are selected automatically when the cassette is inserted. There is no way to defeat this action manually unless the notch itself is blocked by a piece of tape.

Recessed into the front of the recorder's wooden base are the microphone and headphone jacks, an MPX button that cuts off input signals above 15,000 Hz to prevent FM pilot-carrier leakage from affecting the Dolby system, and the Dolby calibration controls. The ability to monitor from the tape while recording makes the Dolby calibration a very simple process - the noise-reduction system can be adjusted for any kind of tape in a few seconds. In the rear of the machine are the line inputs and outputs, a DIN socket, and a switch that permits the Dolby calibration a very simple process - the noise-reduction system can be adjusted for any kind of tape in a few seconds. In the rear of the machine are the line inputs and outputs, a DIN socket, and a switch that removes the source program from the line outputs. The Hitachi D-3500 is approximately 17 inches wide, 11 inches deep, and 5½ inches high; it weighs about 15½ pounds. Price: $399.

● Laboratory Measurements. The playback frequency response of the Hitachi D-3500 was measured with the Teac 116SP (CrO₂, equalization) and Nortronics AT-200 ("standard" equalization) test tapes. The CrO₂ test-tape response was within ±2 dB from 40 to 10,000 Hz, the "standard" tape response was smooth and free of sharp peaks or dips, but sloped downward slightly with increasing frequency above 1,000 Hz and showed the expected rise below 200 Hz because of the older equalization characteristic of the Nortronics tape. Referred to the 1,000-Hz level, it varied -0.15 to -6 dB over the range for which the tape's equalization is correct.

All tests of the recorder's overall record-playback response were made with Hitachi "Low Noise" (LN) and "Chrome Dioxide" (CrO₂) cassettes, which were supplied with the machine. Both were C-90 cassettes. The response with the LN tape was ±1.5 dB from 30 to 12,500 Hz at a -20-dB level. It dipped to a minimum at about 15,000 Hz, and then rose at higher frequencies. From 20 to 20,000 Hz, the variation was only about ±3 dB. The CrO₂ tape gave an extremely flat response: ±2 dB from 30 to 18,000 Hz and ±3.5 dB from 20 to 20,000 Hz. The 0-dB response curves, as expected, rolled off at a much lower frequency than the -20-dB curves, but unlike the usual case, neither fell below the -20-dB response for any significant frequency range: even more surprisingly, the LN tape had at least as good a 0-dB response as did the CrO₂ tape.

The MPX filter had almost no effect in the audible range, reducing the 15,000-Hz output only about 1 dB, and, as it should, it attenuated the 20,000-Hz response by about 20 dB. The Dolby tracking was good, with an effect of less than 2 dB on the response at any frequency when the Dolby system was used during recording and playback at levels of -20 and -30 dB.

A line input of 45 millivolts (mV) produced a 0-dB recording level, and the line inputs overburdened at a safe 3 volts. The microphone sensitivity for 0 dB was 0.26 mV, but the microphone preamplifier overpowered at a rather low 19 mV, which means that external attenuators should be used with high-output microphones. The output from a 0-dB recorded signal, which also read 0 dB during playback, was 0.78 volt. The headphone volume was quite low with 200-ohm phones.

The total harmonic distortion at a 0-dB recording level was 1.4 per cent with LN tape and 2.1 per cent with CrO₂ tape. The reference 3 per cent distortion level was reached at a high +6 dB with LN tape and +2 dB with CrO₂ tape. The unweighted signal-to-noise ratio of both tapes, referred to those levels, was 51 dB, and it improved to 56 dB with IEC "A" weighting. With the Dolby system in use, this improved further to an impressive 65 dB, one of the best S/N measurements we have measured on a cassette recorder.

A standard Dolby level tape gave a +2-dB reading, coinciding with the Dolby marks on the recorder's meters. In the vu mode, the meter ballistics were close to those of a true Vu meter, with a rapid rise and return on 0.3-second tone bursts and an overshoot of about 10 per cent. In the peak mode, the meter read 100 per cent of its steady-state value on the

The head arrangement of the Hitachi D-3500 appears conventional despite the "3-Head System" marking. However, the center head has four separate record and playback gaps.

(Continued on page 30)
Dolby FM is happening

Remember the first time you came across Dolbyized cassettes? And how surprised you were that music could sound so good in such a convenient form?

Well, now the same principles are being used to improve FM broadcasting. The audible effect of the Dolby system as used to improve FM broadcasting. The Dolby FM is an improvement we think you will soon be wanting to check out the new generation of receivers with built-in Dolby circuitry. Some Dolby licensees are already producing their new models, and others have new designs in the pipeline.

Dolby FM is an improvement we think you will appreciate. And it's happening.

If these prospects excite you, we think you will soon be wanting to check out the new generation of receivers with built-in Dolby circuitry. Some Dolby licensees are already producing their new models, and others have new designs in the pipeline.

Dolby FM is an improvement we think you will appreciate. And it's happening.

As you can hear for yourself, a Dolby FM signal is compatible. In fact, most people find it a better signal even when received on their normal equipment without Dolby decoding.

However, you may be the kind of person who likes to take advantage of every opportunity for improvement. If you use Dolby circuitry during reception, you can bring the signal even closer to the quality of the original source material.

As of August 1975, over 100 US stations have purchased the Dolby Model 324 or 334 FM Broadcast Encoder. (The encoder accurately compresses the signal in accordance with the Dolby B-Type characteristics and changes the effective transmission time-constant to 25 microseconds. At the same time, the station eliminates any high frequency limiting required previously.)

As you can see from the table, the signal is compatible. In fact, most people find a better signal even when received on their normal equipment without Dolby decoding.
burst, and returned to zero quite slowly (with a time constant on the order of a second or two). Wow of the transport was unmeasurably low (0.01 cent, which is the residual of our test equipment), and the unweighted rms flutter was 0.14 cent. In fast forward, a C-60 cassette was handled in 74 seconds, and rewinding required 81 seconds.

- **Comment.** When we received the Hitachi D-3500 for testing, we did not know its price. From its features, we judged that it would be an excellent value at $500, and estimated that it would sell between $500 and $550. Needless to say, we were surprised by its very modest (by today's standards) cost.

The D-3500 is a very easy, unfussy machine to use. Once the Dolby system is calibrated (it takes less time to do than to describe), it handles like any other cassette recorder. When we first used the monitor button to compare the original and recorded programs, we had to use the pause lever to convince ourselves that we were really hearing the playback from the tape and not merely the input signal. In every case where we recorded from a disc or an FM broadcast, there was no audiably detectable difference between the signal from the source and the signal played back from the tape! Even when recording interstation hiss from an FM tuner, we heard only the slightest modification of the hiss frequency spectrum.

We preferred to use the peak meter mode exclusively, seeing no advantage to the VU mode. When the maximum peak meter reading is kept below 0 dB, there is almost no likelihood of tape saturation or distortion; with VU indications, the "safe" readings must be kept considerably lower and are not as unambiguously related to the recorder's or the tape's limits.

The Hitachi D-3500 would seem to be an excellent choice for the cassette enthusiast who is not quite enthusiastic enough to invest several hundred dollars more than the price of this recorder, yet would like to enjoy the benefits of separate recording and playback heads (which are every bit as applicable to cassette recording as to the open-reel format).

As far as we can tell, nothing has been skimped on this machine, which has just about every useful feature we have seen on competitively priced two-head machines, with the possible exception of FM Dolby decoding and solenoid-operated controls. We would gladly sacrifice these features, attractive as they are, in favor of top-quality three-head cassette recording, with full "Double Dolby" circuitry, at a $400 price. No doubt there will be others coming to somewhat the same conclusion.

*Circle 105 on reader service card*

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**Shure M95ED Phono Cartridge**

- **Some of the design improvements that went into Shure Bros.' V-15 Type III have now been incorporated into a new phono cartridge, the M95ED.** Billed by Shure as their "second-best" cartridge, it is available at a price substantially below that of the V-15 Type III Improved—indeed, Shure states that the high-frequency tracking of the M95ED is equal to that of the Type III Improved.

However, the M95ED has been given the sonic character of the latest V-15 Type III. Earlier Shure cartridges typically had a slight dip in the upper mid-range of a couple of decibels, whereas the Type III (and the M95ED) have a virtually flat response throughout the audible range. The physical appearance of the M95ED is also similar to that of the V-15 Type III, including the integral swing-away stylus guard. According to Shure's data, the tracking ability of the M95ED at 1-gram force is about equal to that of the V-15 Type III operated at 0.75 gram. Price: $59.95.

- **Laboratory Measurements.** The Shure M95ED was tested in the tone arm of a typical high-quality record player. Initial tracking tests showed that it could trace the high-level low- and mid-frequency portions of the Cook Series 60 and Fairchild 101 test records at 1 gram, and we used that force in our subsequent tests. At 1 gram, the 300-Hz test bands of the German Hi-Fi Institute test record were tracked at a 60-micron (µ) amplitude; at the 1.5-gram maximum rated force, the cartridge tracked the 90 µ band (this is a severe test of tracking ability).

The output at a standard velocity of 3.54 centimeters per second (cm/sec) was 4.3 millivolts per channel. A 1,000-Hz square wave showed several cycles of ringing at the stylus resonance frequency of about 20,000 Hz.

The M95ED's high-frequency tracking ability was evaluated using the 10.8-KHz tone bursts of the Shure TTR-103 test record, and it proved to be one of the better cartridges we have tested in this regard. Intermodulation distortion measurements, using the Shure TTR-102 record, indicated that the distortion (Continued on page 32)
Instant Success—the NEW
Stanton Gyropoise* turntable

Look at all these quality features, many of them exclusively ours!

1. Gyropoise*: frictionless magnetic suspension of the platter.
2. Die cast aluminum T-Bar for sturdy structure.
3. 2-Speed changer for 33 rpm and 45 rpm playback.
4. 24-Pole synchronous high torque motor.
5. Belt drive for noiseless operation.
6. 12" die cast machined high polish aluminum platter.
7. Unipoise*: single point tone arm suspension.
8. Anti-skate control adaptable to all types of styli.
10. Stylus force slide (range 0 - 4 grams).
11. Stanton state-of-the-art stereo or discrete cartridge.
12. Viscous damped cueing control for featherlight lowering of stylus.
13. Handsome walnut veneer base (comes complete with dust cover).

ADDITIONAL FEATURES:
(a) Comes equipped with low capacitance cables
(b) Wow and Flutter—≤ .07% din 45507 weighted
(c) Rumble—≤ −60 dB din 45539 weighted

It's the important exclusive features that make the difference. Only Stanton Turntables have Gyropoise*, the patented frictionless magnetic suspension bearing—thus the platter makes no vertical contact with the body of the structure. This isolation eliminates vertical rumble.

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CIRCLE NO. 44 ON READER SERVICE CARD

OCTOBER 1975
was low at normal recording levels, and it remained an impressively small figure, even at a 1-gram tracking force. The intermodulation distortion measured by the TTR-102 remained low with recorded velocities as high as are likely to be encountered on conventional music discs.

Shure cartridges require a relatively high capacitive load (400 to 500 picofarads) for flattest frequency response. We checked the response with a 200-pF load (the turntable's connecting cables) and again with added capacitance to bring the total to about 440 pF. With the lower capacitance, there was a peak of about 4 dB centered at 16,000 Hz; the higher capacitance flattened the curve to an excellent ±1 dB from 40 to 17,500 Hz, dropping slightly to ~4 dB at 20,000 Hz. The channel separation was excellent, exceeding 30 dB up to about 2,000 Hz, and gradually falling to 17 dB at 10,000 Hz and 5 dB at 20,000 Hz. The separation characteristics of both channels (as well as their frequency responses) were identical.

- **Comment.** A comparison of their published specifications suggests that, except for an increase of 400-Hz tracking ability from 22 to 24 cm/sec, the Shure M95ED and M91ED are very similar. This, of course, does not take into account their rather different upper midrange frequency-response characteristics. In an A-B comparison between them, we could hear their distinctly different tonal qualities. The M91ED had a slightly heavier, warmer sound, while the M95ED seemed brighter and—at times—crisper and better defined. The differences were slight, and in our opinion they were not of the magnitude that would establish one of the cartridges as clearly superior to the other.

With the Shure “Audio Obstacle Course—Era III” record (TTR-110), all selections except the sibilant test were tracked at their maximum levels at the 1-gram test force. A trace of “sandpaper” quality was heard on the two highest levels of the sibilance test, and was not removed by increasing the tracking force to 1.5 grams.

Our view is that the Shure M95ED falls very neatly into the gap between the M91ED and the V-15 Type III. Its performance in most respects is closer to that of the V-15 III, but its cost is not! For those who prefer the more “forward” sound of the V-15 Type III, but are unwilling or unable to make the considerable investment in that cartridge, the M95ED would seem to be an ideal choice. It has the general sound quality of the V-15 Type III, and most of us will rarely encounter recordings that demand the superior tracking ability of the latter. Best of all, we note that the M95ED is available with substantial discounts from a number of dealers, making it an exceptionally attractive value.

Circle 106 on reader service card

Rectilinear 5 Speaker System

crossover at 10,000 Hz to a 1-inch dome super-tweeter. Except for the woofer, each driver is permitted to operate over its full range above its low-frequency crossover. The frequency balance of the system is set at the factory by means of two screwdriver-slot adjustments in the rear of the cabinet. These are sealed to discourage tampering.

The Rectilinear 5 is nominally a 6-ohm system, rated for use with amplifiers delivering from 30 to 250 watts per channel. It is protected by a 3-ampere fast-blow fuse, and a clip in the rear of the cabinet holds a spare replacement fuse (a handy touch we would like to see adopted more widely).

The oiled walnut cabinet is 25 by 15 by 14½ inches and weighs about 55 pounds. The black cloth grille is removable, and the system can be installed horizontally or vertically. Although it is described as a “bookshelf/floor” system, few bookshelves are deep and sturdy enough to support this speaker. Recognizing this, Rectilinear offers an optional “dispersion base” for floor mounting. This tilts the face of the speaker upward about 10 degrees for more effective dispersion, and it is claimed to minimize room boundary effects on the mid-bass response. The Rectilinear 5 sells for $299, and the optional tilt base is $20.

- **Laboratory Measurements.** The composite frequency-response curve (roughly corresponding to the total-power response of the Rectilinear 5) was flat within ±2.5 dB from 38 Hz to 6,000 Hz and had a broad rise between 6,000 and 17,000 Hz. Overall, the measured total response variation of +5 dB from about 40 to 20,000 Hz represents a much better than average flatness for a loudspeaker in a “live”-room measurement. The bass distortion was about 1 per cent between 80 and 100 Hz (at a 1-watt constant input) and increased smoothly to a mere 5 per cent at 20 Hz, except for an inaudible rise to slightly below 4 per cent at 40 Hz. With a 10-watt input (a very loud level) the distortion was roughly twice as great as with a 1-watt input.

The minimum impedance of the Rectilinear 5 was 5 ohms at 100 Hz and above 15,000 Hz. The maximum was 10 ohms at the bass resonance of 40 Hz, and the average was about 8 ohms over most of the audio range. Although many speaker manufacturers would probably call this an 8-ohm speaker, we commend Rectilinear for their more realistic rating.

For an acoustic-suspension system, the Rectilinear 5 was quite efficient, producing a 92-dB sound-pressure level (SPL) at a distance of 1 meter with 1 watt of random-noise input in the octave centered at 1,000 Hz. Its tone-burst response was very good, with nearly ideal bursts at low and middle frequencies and only minor—and inaudible—ringing following a 5,000-Hz burst.

- **Comment.** The simulated live-vs.-recorded listening test confirmed the essential flatness (Continued on page 36)
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and lack of coloration of the Rectilinear 5. The high-frequency emphasis revealed by our measurements added a trace of sparkle at the highest frequencies which could be removed, if desired, by a cut of 2 to 3 dB at frequencies above 8,000 Hz. The dispersion of the system was also very good, and without recourse to any special dispersion-enhancement design techniques.

We were especially interested in the relative performance of the Model 5 compared with the very early original Rectilinear Model III which earned itself a rave review in 1967. (Since that time the III has undergone numerous revisions and is now known as the IIIA). The measured curves of the original III and of the 5, though quite similar in their overall shape, indicate a slightly crisper sound in the Model 5. And when we made an A-B comparison against a pair of our Model III's, that is just what was heard. Not only is the Rectilinear 5 a trifle brighter at the extreme top end, but it has better dispersion and a much more powerful deep bass. Although it is a smaller system, the Model 5 has an acoustic-suspension woofer that is clearly able to go down lower in the audio spectrum, and with less distortion, than the ported woofer of the III. There was a notable absence of mid-bass coloration or "boominess," combined with a potent low-bass capability.

All in all, the Rectilinear 5 is a distinct improvement over its predecessors in the line, apparently without sacrifice of any their desirable qualities. We think it is noteworthy that this has been accomplished without a price increase, and with a substantial reduction in cabinet size.

**Circle 107 on reader service card**

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**SAE Mark IB Preamplifier**

The rear apron of the SAE Mark IB, in addition to its basic input and output jacks, has a second pair of main outputs and a pair of outputs for driving the vertical and horizontal inputs of an oscilloscope. A pushbutton switch in the rear provides the option of increasing the overall preamplifier gain ten times (20 dB) should the available gain be inadequate.

A cable assembly supplied with the Mark IB carries the power-amplifier speaker outputs into the preamplifier via a four-pin socket. Heavy-duty binding posts are provided for connection to the speaker systems. There are six switched a.c. outlets (rated for a total of 1,000 watts) and two unswitched a.c. outlets. The satin gold-finished front panel of the SAE Mark IB is 17 inches wide and 5¾ inches high, and the chassis extends 10½ inches behind the panel. The unit weighs 20 pounds. An accessory wood cabinet is available. Price: $750.

- **Laboratory Measurements.** With the front-panel gain switch set to its mid-position (0 dB), the volume control at maximum, and the rear gain switch at ×10, the input level required for a 1-volt reference output was 1.75 volts (aux) and 14 millivolts (mV) at the phono inputs. Setting the gain to +24 dB (the maximum) raised these figures to 98 mV and 0.78 mV, respectively. In both cases, the phono-input overload was a very safe 82 mV.

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The output noise was unmeasurable through the high-level inputs, being less than the 100-microvolt lower limit of our test equipment. This translates to better than −80 dB referred to 1 volt. Through the PHONO input, the noise level was 75 dB below 1 volt, or 83 dB below the Mark IB's rated 2.5-volt audio-signal output.

The output clipped at 12.5 volts into a high-impedance load and at 11.4 volts into the 10,000-ohm rated minimum load. The harmonic distortion at 2.5 volts was 0.025 per cent at 20 Hz (including hum components) and about 0.0075 per cent at all frequencies up to 20,000 Hz with the hum filtered out (this "hum," of course, was far below audibility and was significant only in comparison to the minuscule distortion of the preamplifier). Intermodulation distortion was 0.025 per cent at 0.1-volt output, less than 0.01 per cent at outputs of 1 volt or slightly more, and 0.021 per cent at the rated 2.5 volts. Just below clipping, at 10 volts output, the IM was still only 0.2 per cent and the harmonic distortion was 0.067 per cent.

The equalizer response curves conformed to specifications and should make it practical to correct for many room and loudspeaker aberrations in a manner not possible with less elaborate "tone controls." The RIAA equalization was extremely accurate, within ±0.5 dB over the entire audio range, and we were pleased to see that equalization was essentially independent of cartridge inductance, which affected the response by less than 1 dB at 20,000 Hz.

Comment. When it comes to operating and control flexibility, the SAE Mark IB has few peers. The tape-recording hobbyist in particular can not only dub with ease between as many as three machines, but he can insert the equalizer into the recording path at the touch of a button. The equalizer, of course, is at the heart of the Mark IB's performance capability. In our view, the seven specific bands chosen by SAE are an ideal compromise between the ten or more bands of an octave equalizer (which can be quite cumbersome to adjust) and the simpler five- or three-band versions offered by some manufacturers. The controls are easy to adjust, they produce immediately audible effects, and they are actually able to equalize the response of many speakers effectively. (For example, we were able to make some fairly good but undistinguished speakers sound very much like our flat, calibrated laboratory reference models.)

Although the Mark IB offers more gain-setting options than we can recall seeing on any other preamplifier, most of them are in the "set and forget" category. It is doubtful if the distortion or noise characteristics of the preamplifier could be degraded significantly by any possible combination of these control settings. If they are adjusted so that the main volume control has adequate range, they are correct.

The speaker-switching arrangement, although it necessitates bringing even more wires to the rear of the preamplifier than would otherwise be required, gives the system the output flexibility of a good receiver, which is one of the few features not usually available to the user of separate components. All in all, our tests and use reveal the SAE Mark IB to be a truly excellent (albeit somewhat expensive) performer that ranks among the finest available components.

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Yes, the whiskies in J & B are rare indeed. But the essence of J & B Rare Scotch is in our uncompromising quest for perfection. For more than 100 years, no one has ever matched the rare taste of J & B. And never will. That's why J & B has it. And always will.

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Circle 108 on reader service card
the Heil air-motion transformer...

clearly superior!

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“Does it have a Heil?” This is the question more and more audiophiles are asking. Does it have a Heil air-motion transformer in it? Why? Because if it is not a Heil air-motion transformer, it’s not a state-of-the-art high fidelity loudspeaker. Because anything else is behind the times, outdated in design, obsolete even before it was built.

This is a fact governed by the laws of physics, not by mere opinion. The Heil air-motion transformer marks a new era in loudspeaker technology and a new freedom from the problems of speaker mass and inertia. The Heil air-motion transformer is as radical a departure from conventional “air-pushing” speaker designs as the jet engine was from the propeller. And for the same reason. Where before the driving force of an airplane engine merely served to turn a heavy propeller, which reacted poorly with the air, the jet engine obsoleted propellers by applying the driving force directly to the air itself for a far superior energy transfer.

So it is with the Heil air-motion transformer. Instead of the driving force moving a “voice coil” conductor that moves a cone or dome that sets air into motion by “pushing” back and forth against it, the Heil air-motion transformer applies the energy flowing through its conductor directly to the air as a squeezing pressure potential and therefore eliminates the losses and inaccuracies introduced by transferring energy through a heavy solid to the air.

For a dramatic example of how a squeezing pressure is more effective than pushing, when it comes to moving a light substance like air, try to “shot put” a cherry pit. The “pushing” action does not send the pit very far or very fast because most of the energy is wasted in moving your “heavy” arm and hand so that very little goes into actually moving the pit. But now put the cherry pit between your thumb and forefinger and squeeze. The pressure of your fingers creates a force whose potential is transferred directly to the cherry pit as motion and it accelerates away from your finger much more effectively than with the large “shot put” push.

Heil air-motion transformer speaker systems have no “voice coil,” no cone or dome surfaces, no forward-backward “pushing” motion and achieve their direct transformation of energy through a unique folded diaphragm that “squeezes” air. These Heil air-motion transformers can actually set air into motion five times faster than the movement of their own diaphragms. The results: instantaneous acceleration and a level of performance that approaches theoretical perfection.

Don’t undertake an exercise in futility by listening to yesterday’s loudspeaker designs. Only the Heil air-motion transformer gives you the dynamic transient attack, incredible purity, and pinpoint stereo imaging of tomorrow’s recordings. Now you'll find two new Heil air-motion transformers in an exciting new loudspeaker marque: the FORTURA PEDESTAL SERIES and FORTURA BOOKSHELF SERIES. These truly advanced systems can be heard by visiting any of the FORTURA dealers shown in the partial list below, dealers perceived as the FORTURA PEDESTAL SERIES and FORTURA BOOKSHELF SERIES. These truly advanced systems can be heard by visiting any of the FORTURA dealers shown in the partial list below, dealers perceived as true audio authorities.

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WELL, there's nothing particularly earth
shaking happening right this minute, pop-wise, and so I thought I'd just share with
you the ramblings of my reasonably idle mind
once again. It's too hot in this July heat wave
for a think piece anyway.

To start off, a few predictions (and if I get
all of them right, I'll be sure to say I told you
so). First: Bruce Sprittsteen's third album,
which I have heard most of in rough mixes
and which will be available in the stores by
the time you read this (I promise a full-scale
review of it next month) will once and for all
establish him as
the artist of the decade. The
record is as staggering a musical and lyrical
achievement as that of any other artist in the
last fifteen years. This is something quite
precise to the kind of publicity machinery that
Brian Epstein masterminded for the Fab
Four—television saturation, the whole business
— and there are those who are convinced
that it sounds like he still has room to grow.
Further, songs like Born to Run
are going to prove as important to the Seventies
(and with this record, for my money, they've finally ar-
ived) as Satisfaction and Like a Rolling
Stone were to the Sixties: Springsteen is going
to reach that many people.

Second: Patti Smith, whose debut album
will be out late in the winter, has an almost
equal potential, and in some ways she's al-
mOST more interesting than Bruce, if only be-
cause she could be the first woman in rock to
have an audience as broad as that of Dylan,
Elvis, or (to go from the sublime to the ridicu-
loss) Elton John, and without compromising her femininity one whit. Her appeal is prob-
ably going to cut both ways—that is, she'll be a
sex symbol for both sexes the way Jagger is.
Beyond that, though, she's really terrific. She
and her band are very strong—her one record-
ing so far, a limited-edition single of Hey Joe
with a lyric revised to include musings on Pat-
ty Hearst, is so powerful that you don't even
notice the lack of drums—and she truly un-
derstands rock-and-roll (in much the same way Springsteen does). That is something
we've never gotten from a woman before, and
certainly not from any of the other so-called
artists who have emerged thus far in the de-
cade (the Bowies, the Dyan Fergers—you
name them). She's going to get an enormous
hype, of course, and that may put some peo-
ple off. And the fact that she's signed with
Clive Davis and Arista Records worries me—
I'm afraid they'll try to clean up her act, turn
her into some kind of assembly-line type like
Melissa Manchester. But, with any luck, her
debut album should be an absolute stunner.

Third: By the time this appears, the Bay
City Rollers will have either bombed out or
taken our teenyboppers by storm; my guess is
the former. The Rollers, who are currently
the biggest thing in England since You Know
Who, are planning to hit this country with
precisely the kind of publicity machinery that
Phil Spector songs with vocals reminiscent of
the Fab Four—television saturation, the whole business
— and there are those who are convinced
the formula will work again. I doubt it, for a
variety of reasons.

For one thing, American teenagers, even
the really young ones, are far more sophisti-
cated musically today than their English
counterparts; besides, with rare exceptions,
Americans have never been as pop crazy as
the English (remember the Teddy Boys? The
Mods? The Rockers? The Skinheads?) be-
cause they don't have to be. English kids need
constant new and different sensations because
their lives are so drab, their opportunities so
limited: art school if they're lucky, rotten jobs
if they're not. But this country, shortcomings
and all, is just too big and affluent to support a
climate for real pop mania. Anyway, if some-
one is going to fill that Osmonds/Partridge
Family gap the Rollers are trying to squeeze
into, I suspect it will be an American act that
American kids can relate to: the Scots-plaid
Rollers, with or without sporran, tam, and
dagger, strike me as far too archaic a phe-
nomenon to make a splash here. Incidentally,
their record is absolutely worthless—very
poorly done remakes of old Four Seasons and
Phil Spector songs with vocals reminiscent of
the most cloying moments of the Monkees' Davy
Jones. In other words, whether they
make it or not, they are no Beatles.

I prognostications out of the way, and
moving right along, I'd like to mention
(briefly, believe me) that everything I said
about the Stones' performances in the August
issue should have been raised to the nth de-
ger. I saw their closing night in New York,
and it was—flat out—the greatest rock-and-
roll show I've ever witnessed. Ron Wood and
Keith Richards were so good together it was
frightening. Jagger was in top form, Bill and
Charlie played like men possessed, and, in
general, I've never heard music like that from
anybody, including the Rolling Stones. I sug-
gest we all send their management threatening
letters if there isn't a live album fast.

Finally, I'd love to tell you some Brownsville
Station stories, but most of the ones they
told me are unprintable. I met the group at
their New York hotel recently (after a local gig with Slade), and despite my well-known aversion to interviews, I found them the most
charming, funny, and approachable rock peo-
ple I've yet met. (Those who know them only
through their TV appearances or such AM hit-
singles as Making in the Dark) (I should try
to find a copy of their now-deleted first album on
Warner Brothers; it's a minor classic.)

The band is a quartet again, and they're
very interested in having people take them a
bit more seriously as musicians; their latest
album, which (sorry, guys) I personally don't
like, is a bit more mature than most of
their others, and as it was the first they've
ever made under the lack-of-pressure condi-
tions bands dream about, the care involved in
its production really shows. But no matter;
as people, they are totally crackers and therefore
absolute delights.

We talked a bit about their days as local
sensations at the tail end of the great Det-
roit/John Sinclair hype. "We were really poor,"
guitarist Cub Koda told me, "and our
manager would get us two offers for an eve-
nine—a hundred dollars for a gig at a high
school, or a freebie political benefit, and we
used to say 'We'll take the hundred dollars
and then go out and vote.'" They confirmed
some rumors (yes, they assured me, the MC 5
were really as great a band as Michigan resi-
dents still insist) and debunked some of the
legends that have followed them around (they
were not, as one rock journal reported, ever
beaten up in a parking lot by a Detroit band
called the Frut, supposedly the worst group in
the history of rock and proud of it). Best of all
(from my point of view, anyway), they read
Stereo Review. But the group's drummer, Henry
Weck, won my simple heart immediately when he
quoted from some of my reviews, and it turns
out we have similar musical heroes (he adores
Ray Davies and Procol Harum's B. J.
Wilson).

But the big surprise came when I asked the
band if there was any professional ambition
they would like to see realized. Their answer?
To make a record with—are you ready?—the
remaining members of the Benny Goodman
Quartet. Just imagine—this raucous, high-
energy rock band mugs a secret session in
SDENT with Goodman, Teddy Wilson, and Lionel
Hampton. It just goes to show, as Chuck Ber-
ry so sentiently observed some years back,
that you never can tell.
With an Empire wide response cartridge.

A lot of people have started "trackin'" with Empire cartridges for more or less the same reasons.

**More separation:** "Separation, measured between right and left channels at a frequency of 1 kHz, did indeed measure 35 dB (rather remarkable for any cartridge)." *FM Guide, The Feldman Lab Report.*

**Less distortion:** "The Empire 4000D/III produced the flattest overall response yet measured from a CD-4 cartridge—within ±2 dB from 1,000 to 50,000 Hz." *Stereo Review.*

**More versatile:** "Not only does the 4000D/III provide excellent sound in both stereo and quadriphonic reproduction, but we had no difficulty whatever getting satisfactory quad playback through any demodulator or with any turntable of appropriate quality at our disposal." *High Fidelity.*

**Less tracking force:** "The Empire 4000D/III has a surprisingly low tracking force in the ¼ gram to 1 ¼ gram region. This is surprising because other cartridges, and I mean 4 channel types, seem to hover around the 2 gram class." *Modern Hi Fi & Stereo Guide.*

For the complete test reviews from these major audio magazines and a free catalogue, write: Empire Scientific Corp., Garden City, N.Y. 11530. Mfd. U.S.A.

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**Choose the Cartridge Designed to Play Best in Your System**

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(White) (Yellow) (Black) (Clear) (Blue) (Green) (Red) (Smoke)

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MODERN MUSIC: WHERE WE ARE

It is the inevitable duty of every age to make value judgments about the artistic products of its own time, judgments that will be passed upon by posterity with the same critical eye and ear as the art itself. The good citizens of Leipzig in the early eighteenth century, for example, who were unfortunate enough to have put down their judgment in writing for all future ages to see, will probably never be pardoned for their estimation of Telemann and Graupner as being superior to Bach. Mid-Europeans of the nineteenth century get high marks today for their appreciation of Beethoven—at least up to his late works. But they fail miserably, in our eyes, for their estimation, or lack of estimation, of Schubert—he was ignored until Robert Schuman discovered him and told the world what it had been missing. One could also cite (with less ease) composers praised to the skies by their contemporaries whose work is all but defunct today. But it is a hard thing to assess art contemporaneously, and it is harder now than ever before, simply because there is so much more of it than ever before.

An assessment as such was probably not what was in the minds of the directors of the Fromm Music Foundation at Harvard when they sought, through a mail survey, to get some opinions on the music of our time. What they asked for, in a letter addressed to 1,600 composers, conductors, performers, critics, educators, and others, was a list of "works of quality from the last forty years which you believe have not been performed with any frequency or which have not been performed at all." Their stated purpose in making and publishing the results of this survey was "to help bring this worthy but neglected repertoire into the mainstream of our musical life" by encouraging performing musicians to use the list as a means of extending their own repertoires. Limited in scope though it may be, no one can question the worthiness of the endeavor.

What the foundation came up with, however, can be read in different ways. Over three hundred people replied and the replies were then tabulated, individual works receiving an A, B, or C rating for their frequency of citation. An A means that one to four people listed the work; B, five to eight; C, nine or more. I wish that they had given the actual number of citations rather than categorical approximations, but even so, it seems to me that what we have is a vote, from a musically sophisticated segment of the population, on what is believed to be important in the music of our own time, for virtually all modern music is performed relatively infrequently, and almost all of it can therefore be considered eligible for such a list. There are some few pieces that do get their fair share of performances (certain works by Bartók, Stravinsky, Copland, Orff, Shostakovich, Prokofiev, and others), and that alone demonstrates our feelings about them. But out of the thousands of others, this survey can indicate what we feel is important (the interpretation is my own, and I take responsibility for misunderstandings and error) and tell us, essentially, where we are in music. Where are we?

Prepare for a few surprises. First of all, a lot of works were mentioned that were written more than forty years ago, signifying one or both of the following: (1) people felt strongly enough about certain pieces to consciously disregard instructions; (2) much of the music of more than forty years ago is still so little accepted that, even in the minds of musical sophisticates, there is a vagueness about just how old or new it is.

There were, also, an immense number of works listed with A category ratings (the total response included 2,207 works by 686 composers, according to the introduction to the published results). Many of these are the result of composers' suggesting their own works (perfectly legitimate) or the individual enthusiasms of only a couple of listeners.

The B ratings are interesting in that they permit us to see how many modern works have made something of an impact on their time, but it is the C ratings, I think, that identify those works we currently feel to be our most important musical works of art. They are as follows:

- Milton Babbitt: Relata I*
- Alban Berg: Violin Concerto (1935)
- Luciano Berio: Circles
- Luciano Berio: Sinfonia
- Pierre Boulez: Plä, Plä, Plä
- Pierre Boulez: Le Marteau Sans Maître
- Elliott Carter: String Quartets Nos. 1, 2, 3
- Elliott Carter: Variations for Orchestra
- Elliott Carter: Piano Concerto*
- Elliott Carter: Concerto for Orchestra
- Elliott Carter: Double Concerto
- Mario Davidovsky: Synchronisms (numbers not specified)
- Lukas Foss: Time Cycle (chamber version)*
- Lukas Foss: Time Cycle (orchestral version)*
- Roy Harris: Symphony No. 3
- Paul Hindemith: Mathis der Maler (opera)*
- Charles Ives: Symphony No. 4 (1910-16)
- Donald Martino: Mosaic*
- Wallingford Riegger: Symphony No. 3
- Carl Ruggles: Sin Treurer
- Arnold Schoenberg: Five Pieces for Orchestra (1909)
- Roger Sessions: Symphony No. 2
- Roger Sessions: Violin Concerto
- Karlheinz Stockhausen: Gruppen
- Igor Stravinsky: Agon*
- Igor Stravinsky: Requiem Canticles
- Edgard Varèse: Déserts
- Anton Webern: Concerto for Nine Instruments

(The last of these was listed twice under different names, receiving an A and a B, thus essentially adding up to a C.)

Of course, one has to pay more attention to the inclusions than to the omissions (Cage? Henze? Penderecki?), but there is still enough that is unexpected to exercise the mind. Some of the various avant-gardes are well represented, but then there are those retrospective choices too: Harris, Reiger, Ruggles, perhaps even Sessions. And Mathis der Maler: everyone who sees it agrees it is a master-piece, but one so rarely gets the chance to either see it or hear it. And Schoenberg's Five Pieces: the work is sixty-six years old, obviously established in reputation but not at all in the concert hall. And then we have the dark horses: Davidovsky's Synchronisms, Foss' Time Cycle, Martino's Mosaic, even Babbitt's Relata I instead of his better-known Philomel or Vision and Prayer. These are not well-known pieces even by reputation, even among the music fraternity. But, obviously, an important segment of the musical elite thinks they should be.

I might point out that all but six of these works are currently available on records (those that are not are starred). It is, perhaps, just as incumbent upon us, as music listeners, as it is on performers to increase our familiarity with the music of our own time and find out just where we are—or at least where some people think we are.
THE BOLSHOI: ON STAGE AND ON DISC

The announcement that Hurok Concerts was bringing the Bolshoi Opera here from Moscow this summer for the company’s first visit to the United States did not send opera fans running through the streets gleefully shouting “The Russians are coming! The Russians are coming!” We had gotten all excited about such announcements several times before, and the Russians invariably canceled.

The Bolshoi Ballet, which preceded the opera company, dampened enthusiasm with their very disappointing season—ugly sets and costumes and abysmal new choreography. Then, too, aside from Boris Godunov, Russian opera has never been popular in this country, and aside from the impressive basses, Russian singers’ voices often sound acid and edgy to Western ears.

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But now that it’s all over, I wish I had made some such extravagant gesture, because I’m never going to be able to thank them enough for those four weeks of fascinating performances. I was genuinely surprised that I liked them so much, and I couldn’t seem to get enough of them. They brought productions of six operas from their own national repertoire: Moussorgsky’s Boris Godunov, Tchaikovsky’s Eugene Onegin and Pique Dame (The Queen of Spades), Prokofiev’s The Gambler and War and Peace, and a brand new opera by Kirill Molchanov, The Dawns Are Quiet Here. The opportunity to see any one of them without having to go to Moscow would have been an occasion for rejoicing, but they brought six!

All the performances I attended were distinguished by an overwhelming sense of stylistic authority about direction and production details right down to the last prop. And down to the last super the performers looked absolutely right. Why not? They were Russians playing Russians and singing their own music in their native language. The Bolshoi chorus is the best I have ever heard—how they made the rafters ring in Boris Godunov and War and Peace—and their orchestra and conductors are topnotch.

The Bolshoi is a great ensemble company, and in their New York performances the overall level of acting was extraordinarily high, especially in the small character parts. It was as though every single member of the company felt that his contribution, no matter how small, was vital to the performance, and every once in a while you could spot a major soloist in a tiny role. The leading baritone Evgeni Kissalo, for example, turned up as one of five Jesuits on stage briefly in the Kromy Forest Scene in Boris.

The names of a few of the fifty-seven principal singers listed alphabetically in the programs were dimly familiar from Melodiya recordings, but most of them were unknown quantities. After a week or so of performances it became clear who the stars were. Public favorites in New York were the mezzo Elena Obraztsova, who had a big success as Marina in Boris Godunov and other roles, the tenor Vladimir Atlantov, who has a surprisingly Italianate voice and temperament, and the baritone Yuri Muzurok, who is simply fabulous.

I now think Russian sopranos have been unjustly maligned in the West. The Bolshoi’s prima donna, soprano Tamara Milashkina, has a definite Slavic tone color, but it’s not hard on the ears, and it sounds quite idiomatic in the Russian operas. As for those impressive basses the Russians are famous for, they seem to have run out of them for the moment. Although very convincing dramatically, the ones who sang the title role in Boris Godunov here did not come up to the vocal level we expect in the West.

I am not fond of Boris—I don’t like operas with no real love interest, operas in which the actual protagonist is something like the city of Paris or the people of Russia—and I had already done my duty to Boris this year by attending the Met’s acclaimed new production with Martti Talvela. Nevertheless, despite some vocal shortcomings, this Russian Boris was one of the most enjoyable operatic performances I’ve ever seen. I felt completely transported in time and space. You could almost smell the incense in the cathedral. Hurok’s ads for the Bolshoi season said: “There is nothing in the world to match the splendor and scope of these magnificent productions.” I wouldn’t go quite that far, but the Boris was good support for the claim.

I feel more strongly about the Tchaikovsky works—Pique Dame is my favorite Russian opera—and I was fortunate to hear it sung by Milashkina and Atlantov and to hear them with Yuri Mazurok in Eugene Onegin. Vocal-ly, dramatically, and vocally, Onegin was the best of the six works the Bolshoi performed here. It looked like a lovely Chekhov play, and the company acted it that way.

Prokofiev’s War and Peace blew my mind. I have not taken so much delight in discovering a twentieth-century opera since my first Turandot—at moments it is reminiscent of Turandot. I never knew Prokofiev had written so lyrically for the voice, and I was moved by the big patriotic scenes, which some people found propagandistic. In reviewing an exhibition of nineteenth-century French historical painting at the Metropolitan Museum this summer, art critic David Bourdon wrote: “One of the revelations of the show is seeing how much blatant propaganda a painting can successfully sustain.” I submit that War and Peace is a great enough work of art to sustain
any amount of propaganda. It was not a Communist tract, but an expression of the Russians' love for their country, and it made me wish native faultfinders would allow us the luxury of such patriotism in this country.

An opera that cannot sustain its burden of patriotism and propaganda is The Dawns Are Quiet Here, which is about an all-girl anti-aircraft unit in World War II and the noble deaths of four of them. It reminded me of all those 1940's war movies on late-night TV — Veronica Lake in So Proudly We Hail — and Molchanov's score sounded like a very efficient movie soundtrack. Though it was interesting to learn what a new Soviet opera looks and sounds like, one was quite enough.

With the exception of The Dawns, the Bolshoi visit was cultural exchange of the finest kind, and as my excitement mounted, it seemed there were Russians everywhere. Right next door to the Met., at the State Theater, the American Ballet Theatre was presenting such defectors as Rudolf Nureyev, Natalya Makarova, and Mikhail Baryshnikov. Alexander Solzhenitsyn was in town warning Americans of the world-wide danger of Soviet power. Out in space Apollo astronauts were meeting the Soyuz cosmonauts, and an exhibition of paintings from Russian museums opened at the National Gallery of Art in Washington.

I am told that Washington's music critics took a unanimously positive view of the Bolshoi Opera. New York's critics were divided. Harold Schonberg and the others who reviewed the company in the Times were rather cool to the Russians and wrote guarded or picky reviews that I found, well, mean-spirited, and in New York magazine Alan Rich seemed almost hostile. The Bolshoi was championed in the New Yorker by Andrew Porter, who got sufficiently worked up to list aria titles not just in Russian but in Cyrillic type, and by the Post's critic Harriett Johnson, who seems to me more and more the one who really calls the shots on vocal music.

I got sufficiently worked up to listen to all my Russian opera records again. Although there is no substitute for seeing productions like the Bolshoi's, you can get a very good idea of the way they sound from discs. You could start with a single disc, "Stars of the Bolshoi" (Melodiya/Angel SR 40050), but only one side is excerpts from Russian opera, and Milashkina, Atlantov, and Mazurok are represented only by excerpts from Aida, Pagliacci, and Faust. If you are willing to gamble on a complete opera recording, I would recommend first the Bolshoi's Eugene Onegin (Melodiya/Angel SRC! 4115) with Vishnevskaya, Atlantov, and Mazurok, conducted by Mstislav Rostropovich. It's excellent. So is War and Peace (Columbia/Melodiya M4 33111) with Vishnevskaya, Kibkalo, and many others, conducted by Alexander Melik-Pashayev.

The complete recording of either Onegin or War and Peace will cost you about the price of a ticket to a Bolshoi performance and will repay your investment for years. Hurok Concerts cannot have made money on the Bolshoi's visit (they charged only $10 more than normal Met prices for an orchestra seat), and it is generally supposed that the agency underwrote the Bolshoi visit for reasons of prestige.

It was the dream of the late Sol Hurok to bring the Bolshoi Opera to America. He died March 5, 1974. I wish he had lived to see his dream come true. The Bolshoi's visit made me glad I'm alive, well, and living in New York.
Scratch almost any orchestral musician and you will uncover a frustrated chamber-music player. Behavioral psychologists might have a field day with this fact, but the chief reason seems fairly obvious: constant involvement in orchestral performance demands a self-abnegation on the part of the individual musician that is not too far removed from self-destruction. Playing chamber music, on the other hand, elevates each single performer to a position of spotlighted importance. Added to this is the pleasure to be derived from a cooperative joint effort involving relatively few other participants.

The riches and the glories of chamber music literature are boundless. Composers over the years have reserved some of their most deeply felt and intensely personal thoughts for the chamber music medium. Some of the most sublime musical inspiration ever conceived in Western culture is to be found, for example, in a Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, or Rachmaninoff string quartet. Some works, such as Schubert’s C Major String Quintet, seemingly have the power to transport performer and listener alike to another realm of existence altogether.

Then there are other works that delight through the sheer exuberance, the animal good spirits of their expression, while being at the same time so ingeniously crafted and so rich in invention as to astound us with their musical perfection. Such a work, surely, is Mozart’s Clarinet Quintet in A Major, my nomination as the work in the chamber-music repertoire to serve as an introduction to the genre for the newly-interested enthusiast.

During the last decade of his life, Mozart lived in Vienna. Anton Stadler, the superb principal clarinetist of the court orchestra, quickly became a close friend of the composer, and it was from Studler that Mozart learned the capacities and limitations of the instrument. Mozart, in turn, produced for Stadler a whole series of works that are among the chief glories of music: these include the Trio for Clarinet, Viola, and Piano, the Clarinet Concerto, and of course the Quintet for Clarinet and Strings.

There are a number of excellent recorded performances of this music available currently, chief among them being the performances that feature the two leading British clarinetists of our time: Jack Brymer and Gervase de Peyer. Brymer plays with the Allegri String Quartet (Philips 6500073), and de Peyer with members of London’s Melos Ensemble (Angel S 36241). Both, coincidentally, couple the quintet with the Clarinet, Viola, and Piano Trio on their discs. If I prefer de Peyer’s performance to Brymer’s, it is by the slimmest of margins, and only because de Peyer invests his playing with a shade more personality.

Among other available recordings of the quintet, I would single out for special praise those involving leading clarinetists in American symphony orchestras: Harold Wright, principal clarinet with the Boston Symphony, and Peter Simenauer, associate principal clarinet with the New York Philharmonic. Wright’s (Columbia MS 7447) is the product of recording sessions held at Rudolf Serkin’s summer musical oasis in Marlboro, Vermont, and his associates in the performance are among the finest chamber players in the world. The 1976 updating of the Basic Repertoire is now available in convenient pamphlet form. Send 25¢ and a stamped, self-addressed #10 (9½ x 4¼ in.) envelope to Diane Nakamura, Stereo Review, 1 Park Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10016 for your copy.
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OCTOBER 1975
Nashville's Fan Fair

Country music is the only organism in the American culture that could put on such a show

By Noel Coppage

Four of them drove down from Sleepy Eye, Minnesota.

The announcer, reading notes passed up from the audience, read that, and about "a whole airplane load of folks all the way from Norway." Others had come from Germany, Switzerland, England, New York, Philadelphia, and, among other places, Fitchburg, Massachusetts, where a country-music disc jockey sometimes brings his small son to the studio and the people out in radio land get to hear him tell the lad to be quiet. By bus and by car they came from every state known to man, including Ohio, which sends more citizens to the Grand Ole Opry every Saturday than any other state (averaging 91 more than Indiana and 169 more than Tennessee), and one sturdy little clump of folks rode down from Buffalo, through all kinds of rain and lightning, on motorcycles. There were enough Okies from Muskogee to start a football league and, according to another note, three half-breeds from Holland, Michigan.

It seemed important on and off the stage, this matter of communicating how far they had come and how much or how little trouble it had been to find shelter for themselves and their machines. They had accomplished a pilgrimage, with the help of air-conditioned Chevys and Ramada Inns, the main thing about a pilgrimage being the common reverential attitude that attends it, and they were entitled to savor it. That it was a sure-enough pilgrimage all right was verified by the way the people who run country music and the people who make it (artists, they are invariably called) bent back and strained blood vessel for five days to woo them, these fans, these folks, in ways you don't often see 12,000 people wooed. (Continued overleaf)
Nashville

The International Country Music Fan Fair is what they call the event, and Nashville naturally is where they hold it, every year as soon as the planting is done; country music is the only organism in the American culture that could or would put on such a show. It is sponsored jointly by the Country Music Association, whose members are creating whether giving awards to such pop stars as John Denver and Linda Ronstadt is the way to keep country music "country," and by the Grand Ole Opry, an institution threatening to become as big as the telephone company. The fair, the fourth-year version that I saw, was something like an old-time camp meeting (with dinner moved up from the ground to the Municipal Auditorium plaza deck, but with a tent top shading it all the same), something like a music festival, something like a pep rally, something like a family reunion, something like an overgrown Tupperware party, and quite a lot—embarrassingly enough for some of us—like Norman Rockwell's vision of small-town America as drawn up twenty years ago and updated in the most casual and offhand manner. It was, in short, a gentle rebuff to anyone taken with the coastal notion that radical changes in recent years have shaken up the whole country. And it was also like what you always get at the end of a pilgrimage—a veritable orgy of church attendance. Nashville, way ahead of any of the rest of us, long ago dubbed its Opry and, by implication, its whole self "The Mother Church of Country Music."

Country fans from all over go down or up to Nashville and gorge themselves until they sit down, feasting, feasting on the sight, sound, smile, touch, smell, and signature of artist upon artist upon artist. For it is also like a giant autograph party in which the teenagers are outnumbered by middle-aged moms and pops. The fans' favorite part of it, obviously, is, as a Missouri woman put it, "maybe the best chance you'll ever get to see them up close, shake hands with them, have your picture taken with them—if you can fight your way through the crowd."

It is difficult to tell whether the performers enjoy this mingling all that much, although they smile all the time and would say, in public, yes, they do. But we do know what Sigmund Freud said the goals of the artist are, and I doubt he'd have taken it back had he guessed how Nashville would use the word artist; their goals, he said, are money, fame, and beautiful lovers. I don't have to tell you that some artists, a lot of artists nowadays, consider signing autographs for grown people and making small talk and grinning at Instamatics a pretty tame way of moving toward those goals.

But in country music the artists court right back when the fans make overtures. Or before. The Fan Fair is a concentrated place where, wildly outnumbered, they court back pretty hard. Artists were beaming and hugging chubby ladies from Arkansas and Wisconsin while Instamatics and Pocket Instamatics clicked and flashcubes whirled and blasted, whirled and blasted. Jim Ed Brown stood up on the desk at his booth to fans could see him better; another artist's fan club was offering free memberships, no dues at all, limited time only, you understand, to anyone who'd come by and sign up; even Roy Acuff, the King of Country Music, had stopped by to sign programs, I was told, for those pure enough in spirit (they did not include me, alas) to crawl out at a decent hour and get down to the shindig early. Ernest Tubb, swamped by a hundred each of cameras and persons around his booth, demonstrated a remarkable ability to detect when any camera was about to go off, flashing his famous Texas grin in the nick of time. Most of the fair was held at the Municipal Auditorium, apparently because it has a larger seating capacity than, say, the new Opry House at the new amusement park, Opryland. The new Opry House was the site, however, of the very first Fan Fair program, the bluegrass show and the last one, a fiddlers' contest. Downtown, the record companies took turns putting on shows from ten in the morning until midnight for two days and then until late afternoon on Saturday, the Opry itself being available for its usual two sittings on Saturday night. The basement of the auditorium was where the booths stretched out farther than you could throw a cob, and banners were unfurled, baubles glittered, pretty girls smiled, little hurt. Fan-club booths with half of nearly every general non-name artists' entants had to dig to reme Delaney was, but their kids, with her name on them), and where, any minute, a Big Favor, stop by for an hour or so of autographing, chatting, and posing close-hug with anyone nervous enough to ask. It was where dreams were realized in the flesh, and where a certain, relatively paltry, amount of disillusionment was suffered having to do with hairpieces and wrinkles. This was where courage was worked up, gods were approached, requests were blurted out, grins were grinned, and trinkets (a Tom T. Hall Sneaky Snake, for example, or a heavy-duty Faron Young shopping bag or a dancing wooden doll with your choice of an Archie Campbell face or a Grandpa Jones face) were bought cheap or, at the rare booth, acquired free—the best I could do in that area were some Tompall and Waylon stickers for my guitar case and a raffle coupon that might win me a Japanese pickup truck.

Free buses ran from the auditorium to Opryland, to the Hall of Fame, and to the old Ryman Auditorium, former site of the Opry, near as tacky a Broadway as ever belted an Athens of the South. A young man with the gentle demeanor and new clothes of a deacon was there to help the bus riders keep it all straight. "As soon as that bluegrass show is over," he said that first day, "you get back to Area Three of the parking lot. I mean go straight back; don't piddle around the Opryland gift shops or you might miss the last bus."

As it turned out, there was time for piddling, as some of the acts, including Lester Flatt (who was about to undergo open-heart surgery), didn't make it. But Bill Monroe and his Bluegrass Boys were
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THE TAPE THAT'S HEARD AROUND THE WORLD
there, and Bill’s son James and his band were there, and that seemed appropriate, with Father’s Day approaching. James showed he can pick the guitar, too, and Bill sent the first chills scraping along from coccyx to coiffure when he introduced Kenny Baker as “the greatest fiddler in bluegrass music” and, with some magnificent back-up runs from Baker, tore into Muleskinne Blues, which he’s been doing since 1939.

Opryland is a theme park, “the home of American music,” providing periodic live performances of various popular musics in appropriate settings (a “New Orleans” area for Dixieland, and so forth), and of course has an assortment of rides and things to shoot and throw at. The place can park 8,000 automobiles at a time, is lavishly landscaped, and is as neat as a pin, its walkways and crannies constantly patrolled by girls with sunny olive uniforms, nice legs, dustpans, and broom-like things. All this from one little old radio show . . . although, if you really want to talk history, the whole powerful country-music industry owes much, many personal fortunes as well as heritage, to an insurance company: it was National Life and Accident that put WSM into operation on October 5, 1925, and the station put the Grand Ole Opry on the air as soon as possible, November 28 of that year.

The record company shows started with Columbia’s at ten o’clock in the morning, not one of my best hours but not an unusual one for Charlie McCoy, the legendary harmonica player and almost-as-legendary leader of studio sessions, he usually starts his day that early. Wearing an off-white leisure suit (it was a big summer for leisure suits, you may recall) and a railroad cap, McCoy guided a band of studio cats through a tricky series of break swaps and key modulations—and the truth is no other band I heard during the fair was as tight as this one, or as willing to take risks. “I like being here among my heroes.” McCoy said, and played his extraordinary, wind-breaking version of Orange Blossom Special. Young fellows like David Allen Coe and Eddie Rabbit showed what the new breed of country star is like—heavily influenced by Waylon Jennings is what he seems to be like—and Bob Luman demonstrated playing an un-miked guitar.

And there was Connie Smith, with her fine, clear, robust voice and her religion; later that night I heard her tell Ralph Emery on WSM that she no longer testifies every time she gets up on stage, “but every other song I do is a religious one—and if it bothers folks that probably means the spirit of the Lord is getting to them.” And there was Buck Owens with the power of television behind him, hitting the stage in a burst of energy and selling, slicker than a lightning-rod salesman, a set plainly based on old rock-and-roll songs such as Roll Over Beethoven and Johnny B. Goode. It seemed to matter less what Buck did than what Buck clearly is, an earthly, witty old country boy who always seems to enjoy himself.

Bobby Bare, during the RCA show, did something you might think under the circumstances couldn’t be topped. After singing a Billy Joe Shaver tune and Mel Tillis’ famous Detroit City (which Bare mostly made famous), he brought out, to sing one song each, his wife Jeunie, his daughter Carrie, his little son Bobby Junior, and his tiny son Shannon. After they’d wrapped it all up by singing, together, Singin’ in the Kitchen, the audience thundered and thundered and the announcer was moved to comment, “You’ll never see anything like that anywhere but in country music. You’ll never see it in rock, I’ll guarantee you.”

But nobody topped Loretta Lynn—her head fans, the Johnson girls, are more famous than a lot of performers who’ve had hit records—for she had two booths operating on her behalf downstairs and the biggest crowd down there of anyone. During an International Fan Club Organization banquet, to which ladies wore what in that part of the country are called “formals” and gents pretty much stuck with leisure suits, it was announced that Loretta had won one more thing, a popularity poll conducted by Music City News; her frequent duet partner, Conway Twitty, was the readers’ favorite male vocalist.

And nobody really upstages Chet Atkins. Even though this was a little too early to loosen up and then tell the folks, “We’re comin’ up on the Bicentennial, so I’m going to play you a little patriotic medley,” and all he had to do was make sure he started it with Dixie. Still, that wasn’t really all he did; a childhood so poor as to include malnutrition lies in his background, and that kind of qualification never completely stays out of the way a person plays a guitar. And Jerry Reed was too busy playing the devilish gomemack (“You ain’t heard nothin’ yet—I’ll have you throwin’ babies up in the air . . .”), too busy shooting up on the folks’ laughter, to notice who was upstaging whom.

“Fan-club booths beckoned on behalf of nearly every name artist . . . .”

The most sentimental stage show was a first-time feature called the Reunion. Pee Wee King sang Slowpoke and introduced Floyd Tillman, who wrote Slippin’ Around, and Ray Whitley, one of the first Hollywood cowboys brought in to be on the Opry. Whitley was paid $350 for writing Back in the Saddle Again and helping Gene Autry buy all the saddles, boots, pickup trucks, jerky, and baseball teams any old cowpoke could want. Joe and Rose Lee Maphis (parents of Jody, Earl Scruggs’ drummer) did Hot Time in Nashville, mainly an excuse for a blazing fast solo by Joe on his double-necked electric guitar. Minnie Pearl introduced the Fruit Jar Drinkers, regulars for all the Opry’s fifty years, and Aleyone Beasley, the Opry’s first female singer, and Fiddlin’ Sid Harkreader, seventy-seven, who played a tune he made famous during the first year of the Opry, Mockingbird Breakdown, and drew a great, emotional roar from the crowd.

“Bobby Bare . . . did something you might think under the circumstances couldn’t be topped.”

OCTOBER 1975
fame, and there was Whitey Ford, the Duke of Paducah, still oddly sophisticated and corny at the same time. And there was much ado in tribute to the late Bob Wills, creator of country swing, big dance-band country (who managed to get a snare drum on the Opry stage, past the late George D. Hay, the Solemn Old Judge who ran things; Ford said nobody, in fifty years, has been allowed to use a full set of drums in the Mother Church). Leon McAuliff, playing the pedal steel from a standing position, narrated the tribute, and a few of Wills’ Texas Playboys performed: drummer Smokey Dacus, fiddler Johnny Gimble, vocalists Laura Lee McBride and Leon Rausch. The Reunion didn’t quite pack the house the way the record-company shows had, but it had the most intense, attentive audience I’ve seen at anything in a long while.

Many celebrants, though, were still punishing their feet downstairs, trying for two or three more autographs. The circular shape of the basement area, the milling crowd, the colors and sounds, and such distractions as the golden tresses of Barbara Mandrell combined to mess up one’s sense of direction down there. I stumbled across an old friend, singer Marti Brown, whose little girl, Leah Ann, was flying an Ethel Delaney balloon.

“Now people are going to think I’m Ethel Delaney,” Marti said. As we talked—about how many fans were in wheelchairs, which Marti noticed, and about how several of them were really temporary unrecognized; asked Mc Coy if he’d tried the new Golden Melody harps and was told he liked the case they come in; saw where one could acquire Jerry Reed’s “I’m a Coonass” stickers that were plastered everywhere; caught a glimpse of Tanya Tucker, whose club had brought in a replica of a rumble-seat roadster as a prop relating to one of her songs; went out for some fresh air and saw Jerry Clower in a yellow (double-knit but non-leisure) suit about to be approached by seven persons on the streets of Nashville: ducked back in for the drink in Municipal Auditorium, a Pepsi, and finally found it.

The booth was impressive, designed to represent an old cathedral-style radio with the grille cloth removed so you could see Bill Anderson (famous for Po’ Folks, of course, and recently as the writer of the outrageous Between Lust and Watchin’ TV) and his trusted aides inside it. But it was the little sign beside the booth that got my attention, and not the content of that but something in the style of the lettering. Now where?... Ah, yes, in a department store: it was that odd, shy kind of lettering they use on the little signs in department stores, such as... I read: “Bill Anderson and J. C. Penney welcome you to the Fan Fair.” And under that: “Bill Anderson’s wardrobe by J. C. Penney.”

Well! That is the interior of the country for you, isn’t it? But hold on, now; Bill’s threads looked all right, as good as now your television watchers and bowlers, farmers and shopkeepers, coon hunters and good old boys, the Elks, the Eagles, and the Odd Fellows. The best show is still out West. The Fan Fair does teach a little something about how country fans have changed—about the acceptance of long hair and beards and other such liberations; hell, the truck drivers are sporting whiskers these days—but it seems to teach more about the similarities, the constancy of country fans old and new. I think this lesson involves some kind of bent physics impregnated with sociology that seems to postulate that the land, all that distance from the sea, somehow soaks the urgency out of incoming messages (concerning man’s cosmic predicaments or, for that matter, his mealy triumphs) before they reach these hinterlands. I do not know how the land does this, but the television and electronics we’ve been led to believe are a chaos of chaotic and leveling and unstoppable, but the land always has been quite something. I do know there’s more optimism back in there than you’ll find on the coasts. They know about the corruption and the downturn of economic indicators (including a slight dip in country record sales) and they don’t claim to be smarter than the slick politicians, but they also seem to know there’s strength in being a Mass of Methodists, as Mencken called a high percentage of their grandparents; these other matters are just too short-term to fool with. They watch Cronkite, but they don’t treat the news of the day as some kind of damned bottle to suck on. So it’s about as easy to find a genuine pessimist at an affair like the Fan Fair as it is to find someone who’d rather discuss abstractions, ideas, than something he can feel and see and, better still, manipulate, such as a car. A man and a woman (it usually takes both, still, so they still tend to stay married) can manipulate the land to an extent, order their relationship with it when the weather permits, while their seaboard cousins can’t do much with the ocean except fish in it and contemplate it, which is bound to lead to abstractions because the thing is so big and mysterious, and in all this stuff may lie profounder influences than we realize.

The best thing about the Fan Fair, one may then say, was that it showed America’s regions still working. The development of the nondescript, general, grey hybrid culture is not zinging along at the coasts. They know about the corruption and the downturn of economic indicators (including a slight dip in country record sales) and they don’t claim to be smarter than the slick politicians, but they also seem to know there’s strength in being a Mass of Methodists, as Mencken called a high percentage of their grandparents; these other matters are just too short-term to fool with. They watch Cronkite, but they don’t treat the news of the day as some kind of damned bottle to suck on. So it’s about as easy to find a genuine pessimist at an affair like the Fan Fair as it is to find someone who’d rather discuss abstractions, ideas, than something he can feel and see and, better still, manipulate, such as a car. A man and a woman (it usually takes both, still, so they still tend to stay married) can manipulate the land to an extent, order their relationship with it when the weather permits, while their seaboard cousins can’t do much with the ocean except fish in it and contemplate it, which is bound to lead to abstractions because the thing is so big and mysterious, and in all this stuff may lie profounder influences than we realize.

The best thing about the Fan Fair, one may then say, was that it showed America’s regions still working. The development of the nondescript, general, grey hybrid culture is not zinging along at the clip I had thought it was. We may yet pass 1984 with a little diversity still in us. At least they haven’t taken all the country out of the country fan. True, there don’t seem to be many old-time, hillbilly-style, actual genuine hicks left, at least not out on air-conditioned pilgrimages. But back in Ohio and Tennessee and Fitchburg and Sleepy Eye, they’ve still got some folks.
"flawed in the worst place a movie about Nashville could be"

And Then There's "Nashville"

If you get your media from New York, and if Dr. Pavlov's experiments meant anything at all, then when I say "Robert Altman's Nashville," the word "Masterpiece!" should explode in your mind like the Shea Stadium scoreboard going off when one of the Mets hits a home run. You've had the kind of conditioning people used to think should only happen to a Russian dog, but which is not all that unusual nowadays. The New York-based, New York-biased movie critics haven't gone around the bend like this (that is, together, or, as some might put it, in a pack) on a movie since...well, since Peter Bogdanovich's The Last Picture Show. You will probably be able to remember The Last Picture Show if you can slip into a black-and-white mode of thinking about another non-New York place, Texas, and concentrate about medium to medium-well.

One can understand it, though: Robert Altman probably is the one American director capable of a masterpiece. In fact, he may already have come at least as close to that as Citizen Kane did—but it wasn't Nashville, it was McCabe and Mrs. Miller. Now there the overlapping dialogue, the unobtrusive precision of the television-documentary-style camera work, and Altman's fondness for a "natural" episodic, nonlinear replacement for the tele-beat plot all worked together beautifully, and the central theme was of classically tragic proportions...and the evocation of it was so understated yet concentrated, so robust yet elegant, that the pain of it may actually stick with me the rest of my life. Individual critics here and there praised it highly, but they never ganged up for a concerted push, and the public wouldn't or couldn't deal with McCabe in significant numbers.

But Nashville's social implications—since it deals with Making It and (new wrinkle) not only that but Making It in a Middle American City—are easier and a lot more fun to write about than are McCabe's sad conclusions about each person's essential isolation, and before a political science professor could jerk his knee the Opp Ed writers, such as Tom Wicker, started getting in on it, rambling on about stock-car racing and other signs of America's "heedless vitality," which you've got to admit is kind of a cute phrase. The right wing played its part too, with a surprising piece extravagantly praising the film in William Buckley's National Review.

So far, you say, this is sounding dreadfully familiar: New York has elected something new to celebrate and here we go again, and at least Cythyl Shepherd isn't in this one. But I, perhaps under the influence of Altman's antistorytelling technique, have let us get ahead of ourselves. Altman being Altman, you don't want to be reactionary and prejudge the thing (even though that will save you a lot of time if you have to deal again with Bogdanovich or Mike Nichols or other recent Big Apple anointees). We had the subject and the director for something extraordinary. I kept thinking, recalling the feeling for authenticity at which Altman excels—how depressingly muddy the Korean mud was in M*A*S*H, or how bloody the blood was, and how absolutely convincing the deep-bogging Northwest snow and the under-construction frontier village were in McCabe. The connective tissue for a movie about making it in Tennessee of course is country music, and if Altman could get that right the way he had gotten visual connectives right in other movies...well.

Well. The first jolt was the ABC Records soundtrack album, which came to my town before the film did. The collection of songs and performances sounded like some kind of parody of country music (except in one or two cases involving Keith Carradine, who's supposed to be doing folk-rock, or something vaguely like it). The tone of the reviews and columns had led me to expect songs and performances that represented country music (that were as good, bad, and mediocre as it really is and which, individual aesthetic differences aside, could be taken easily enough for the real thing), to expect—Altman being Altman—the ring of authenticity. The soundtrack album, if that were the case, should stand up with other country anthology albums (Epic's "Country 45's," for example) and hold its own, for the movie was supposed to be that important. But alongside albums like that, the soundtrack was not only aesthetically inferior, it sounded amateurish, dated (in the uninformmed sense), and everywhere superficial, as if made by outsiders and Johnnycome-latelyes.

Still, there was the question of how the film intended to use the music. It was possible it had to be this way, somehow, for the story to work. But seeing the film didn't convince me it had to be that way. Nashville turned out to be visually superb, an object lesson, technically, in how to handle complicated scenes on location, and it did seem that the words, at least, of some songs did relate to the story images in fairly subtle ways typical of Altman—but there is no getting around the fact that the movie is flawed in the worst place a movie about Nashville could be flawed: in its music. Anyone reasonably familiar with the music Nashville actually makes will find himself having to make too many allowances, help the movie too much, during the music scenes. The actors and the songs themselves mostly wrote are almost never very convincing in such scenes.

Altman has shown the bias that prevails every day in high-school and college theater productions, the idea that acting is more difficult than anything else, the idea that leads to trying to get music out of actors when it might be more sensible to try to get acting out of musicians. Without getting into just how much we may have romanticized and consequently overrated acting, it is an inescapable truth that we all do a little of it almost every day, every time we weasel out of an invitation and don't give the real reason, every time we appear (starting in the second grade or earlier) interested in some subject that bores the hell out of us, and so on. But we can't all sing, and very few of the mediocre singers among us could pass ourselves off for a minute as established professionals who've been making a good living at singing for a long time. It was considerably easier to make allowances for John Denver's acting in an episode of McCloud, for example, than it has been to tolerate, let alone believe, Dennis Weaver's so-called singing in two or three subsequent variety shows and an awful single or two. Television (where Altman got his start) routinely operates on the assumption that anybody can sing," meaning Lorne Greene, Telly Savalas, Sammy Davis Jr., anybody (television even assumes Jack Palance can play the harmonica), but television is only doing in quantity what the movies—perhaps drama itself—started a long time ago. Surely you
remember those awful scrapings wrung from the throat of Gene Kelly.

Nashville has tried toying with that assumption a few times, but it has never really stuck. Nashville's music works only occasionally, even as part of the non-plot—the song that precedes the climactic killing of the Butler, Ronee Blakely's My Idaho Home (probably the best of her songs in the bunch; at least it sounds as if it is based upon real memory in stead of adopted character memory), does fit as only a piece of "original material" would. Karen Black, of all people, wrote the one song, Memphis, that might be taken for real (you used the old test of waking up a country fan in the middle of the night) for a current product of Music Row. For the Sake of the Children, written by Richard Baskin, the film's music arranger, and by someone identified as R. Reichel, isn't too bad, but it sounds like a country song of twenty years ago, and Con-way Twitty alone, with his tricky new recastings of the eternal triangle, has made such simplistic treatment of the old generalities obsolete.

Similar small judgments abound: Henry Gibson, playing Haven Hamilton, "the king of country music," introduces Keep a-Goin', which he and Baskin wrote, and what he says about it leads you to believe it is the song that made him, years ago, and is the one fans still identify with him. But it turns out to be one of those quickie throwaways of the sort producers keep finding for Olivia Newton-John. Country audiences back when grey-at-the-sidewhams Hamilton made it—which would be vaguely relative to the time when Roy Acuff, the real-life "king," made it—wouldn't have clung to such a song in a steady, tradition-cultivating way, as they glommed onto The Great Speckled Bird. The tune (for the purposes of our story, anyway) might have been a mild hit forgotten in two weeks, but it simply could not have been the trademark of the genre's Big Honcho. Blakey, the only actor-writer-singer with appreciable experience at writing and singing in places like coffee houses where they don't assume anybody can sing, makes a pretty good start on country feeling with the title Tapedeck in His Tractor, which you learn to love, but real country stars -male ones, that is - use instruments (among other things) at least as props. The real "king," Acuff, plays the fiddle, after a fashion, or sometimes he will do yo-yo tricks, and as the song ends he likes to balance the violin bow on his nose.

Nashville is a good movie (as was The Last Picture Show) in view of how much pretending we have to do to help other movies along. Altman's attention to the visual details serves it well (although I think the edited version we get to see could have used some shots of Tapedeck street, downtown, one of the "other Nashvilles"), and nowhere does he bother the job the way other directors regularly do. You will perhaps recall that Fear Strikes Out had Anthony Perkins, who is a pretty good actor but who throws like a girl (the way girls used to throw), anyway, playing Jim Piersall, who probably had the best throwing arm of any outfielder then in the American League. Altman's "singers," who are supposed to be able to carry a tune, do come reasonably close to carrying one. It's the understanding of subtle truisms about the music itself that fails, and one of the results is that the movie appears, unintentionally or not-to be saying something on the side about how cynical all Nashville is about the music itself. There is plenty of cynicism in that city, of course, and the Middle Americans who populate the area do look more gawky and awkward than New Yorkers and Californians in the act of practicing the big hustle. But the music is taken seriously a reasonable percentage of the time (how else could the studio sidemen have gotten so good?), and when Loretta Lynn defends her decision to record a song like The Pill she is either genuinely exercised and wide-eyed or she is one hell of an actress. And I don't think Altman-unlike some of the critics and columnists-is merely out for the sport of beating up on the New Kid; he does not have a reputation for cheap shots.

No, I think Nashville is to Altman as Sanctuary was to William Faulkner, a contrivance containing a little bit of everything and designed to attract a lot of attention and make a lot of money, which should have the effect of generating the really dangerous hustlers—the so-called businessmen who run the industry off his back and, in the process, garner a little more attention for the rest of his work. I don't say Altman designed it that way consciously, as Faulkner said he did with Sanctuary, but I do have some hope that Nashville may do for M*A*S*H and M*A*S*H II what Sanctuary did for Absalom, Absalom and As I Lay Dying.

"Karen Black, of all people, wrote the one song that might be taken for a current product of Music Row.

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The excitement was clearly evident in Maurice Abravanel’s voice. “Yes, we are the first American orchestra to have recorded all the Mahler symphonies. And I’ve just received the news that our complete set has been chosen by the largest record club in Switzerland and Germany as the one it will offer. That is quite an honor for us. I’m sure they could have made as good a deal for the recordings made by orchestras and conductors that are much better-known in Europe. But they chose us—from Utah. I am most happy.”

Abravanel’s Mahler recordings with the Utah Symphony Orchestra have stacked up a number of other firsts. Not only are they the first all-American set (Bernstein’s and Solti’s were both recorded partly in America, partly in Europe), but the Abravanel-Utah versions of Mahler’s Seventh and Eighth Symphonies were the first studio recordings of these mammoth works by anyone (earlier releases had been based in whole or in part on live concert performances in Europe).

For Abravanel himself, the Mahler cycle marks the culmination of a love affair with Mahler’s music that goes back to his youth. “I first heard Mahler in Berlin when I was nineteen,” the tall, wiry, seventy-two-year-old maestro recalled recently in an interview in New York. “I was absolutely struck by it. A short time later, I heard the Eighth Symphony. That did it! I fell in love with Mahler and promptly went out to buy every score of his that I could get my hands on. I was just a kid, a student in Berlin, and I went without lunches for three months so I could buy those scores.”

Berlin in the 1920’s has other vivid memories for Abravanel, memories of events and encounters that were equally influential in his career: it was in Berlin that he first met and studied with Kurt Weill and Bruno Walter. “Bruno Walter helped me a great deal ‘way, ‘way back, and he was the one from whom I learned Mahler,” Abravanel said with the combination of warmth and animation that marked almost all the comments he made during our interview. “Before I conducted the First Symphony for the first time, he and I went through the score as he sat at the piano. He would say to me: ‘This is what Mahler told me.’ It was an unforgettable experience. I think the things we learn when we are very young stay closest to us throughout our lives. They’re in our blood.”

How then, I asked, would he compare his approach to the Mahler symphonies with those of Bernstein, Solti, Haitink, or others who have also recorded complete sets? Abravanel seemed a bit reluctant at first to answer, but then plunged in. “We are all different because we are different men. I’m not as theatrical as Bernstein—although that is certainly a great and special quality of his; in my book he is a genius. I think I’m more of a romanticist in the traditional sense than some of the younger conductors who have also recorded Mahler. I learned the tradition from musicians who knew Mahler and worked with him. I think I bring that to the music.”

“Today there are many conductors who play just the notes [of any piece], which was the prevalent idea Stravinsky peddled from the 1920’s on. I believe a performer must put all his heart and soul into whatever he does. The combination of the composition and the convincing performer—this, to me, is music. I agree with Gide when he talks about the ‘part of God’ in art. One always does more than one thinks he’s doing. I believe there exists for every artist—whether a sculptor, an actor, or a musician—something beyond the technical ability, something in your heart.”
For this reason, Abravanel is not particularly bothered by the fact that his Utah recordings "compete" in the commercial world with those of more famous orchestras led by more famous conductors. "When I perform Mahler, I know it is music that has long been a part of me, that I know well, and that I believed in long before many others did. So I do not feel I am 'competing' against anybody!"

Abravanel was born in Salonika, of an old Spanish family. "One of my ancestors was Don Isaac Abravanel," he says. "He was quite a guy in his time—a minister to Portugal at the age of twenty-one and then chancellor to King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella. He left Spain at the time of the Inquisition, although the king asked him to remain. One of his sons was invited by the Sultan Suleiman to settle in Turkey—to help lure trade away from Spain and Portugal, and also from Venice and Genoa, which he did very successfully." Eventually the family settled in Salonika, which was under Turkish rule at the time. "But our family traditions remained Spanish. I remember my mother singing Spanish folk songs to me as a child. And she cooked Spanish."

As Abravanel neared school age, his father, a pharmacist, moved the family to Lausanne, Switzerland. For several years the Abravanels lived in the same house as Ernest Ansermet, the Swiss conductor who later founded the Orchestre de la Suisse Romande but was then chief conductor for Diaghilev's Ballets Russes. "Ansermet took me for my first sleigh ride!" Abravanel cries out, as if suddenly remembering a long-forgotten joy. "And we used to play piano four-hands. He was an even worse pianist than I was!"

"I also remember piano run-throughs at the house with Milhaud for La Bœuf sur le Toit and with Stravinsky for L'Histoire du Soldat. Stravinsky came there often, as he lived about a five-minute train ride from Lausanne. The first staged performance of L'Histoire, in fact, was given almost entirely with students from my school."

Abravanel's own music studies began at age nine. "My sister had started piano lessons, as did all the dutiful daughters of middle-class families. I think I enjoyed her practicing more than she did. I was in love with the minor scale especially; I thought it was too beautiful for words. The piano teacher was our governess, a very good-looking blonde from Munich. So maybe that also had something to do with my eagerness to take piano lessons!"

"I would go to all the concerts I could as a teenager. I remember once riding on the back seat of a motorcycle all the way to Geneva—in the dead cold of winter—to hear Lohengrin. I knew then that music was my life. I think I also realized I was too dumb to do anything else! I had to be a musician or nothing."

From Lausanne, Abravanel went to Berlin to study. "Someone recommended me to a brilliant young student of Busoni's—that was Kurt Weill. He taught me counterpoint and harmony." Over the next twenty-five years Abravanel's career was linked closely (though not exclusively) with Weill's. They left Germany together in 1933. "It was two weeks after Bruno Walter was forbidden by the Nazis to conduct."

They went to Paris, where Abravanel became a conductor for the Ballet Balanchine for a year, leading, among other things, the premiere of the Brecht-Weill "ballet with song" The Seven Deadly Sins. He also helped Bruno Walter prepare Don Giovanni at the Paris Opéra and alternated with Walter in conducting it.

He went to Australia with the British Covent Garden Opera company and stayed on there for two years as head of the Sydney Orchestral Society. He came...
to the United States in 1936 when he was invited to conduct at the Metropolitan Opera in New York, and he remained at the Met for several seasons. "I once conducted seven performances of five different operas in nine days," he says. "I think it's an all-time endurance record for the Met."

In America he also continued his close friendship with Kurt Weill. "One of the first things I mentioned to Edward Johnson, who was then general manager of the Met, was that he should do one of Weill's operas. He was shocked. He knew only The Three-Penny Opera and felt it had no place at the Met." Weill, of course, went on to compose numerous works for Broadway—and Abravanel became music director for most of them, including Knickerbocker Holiday, Lady in the Dark, One Touch of Venus, The Firebrand of Florence, and Street Scene (the last has since entered the repertoire of the New York City Opera). "You know, Weill's style did not change as much in America as most people seem to think," Abravanel declares. "He was always his own man, writing his own way. He tried very hard to write 'Broadway music,' but he never really did. If you compare some of the music of One Touch of Venus, for example, with the Berlin pieces, you'll see that Weill was always Weill no matter where he was. He was a great human being as well as a musical genius."

I asked Abravanel, since he's the conductor of most of the original-cast recordings of Weill's Broadway works, why he hasn't recorded some of Weill's purely orchestral works. "Frankly, because no one has asked me to record them," he replied, "but I've played the Second Symphony, the Violin Concerto, and the Walt Whitman Songs in Salt Lake City with great success." Abravanel's Broadway credits also include Billy Rose's Seven Lively Arts, a 1945 revue that mixed two very unlikely composers: Cole Porter and Igor Stravinsky. "It was a wild combination," Abravanel recalls. "And it had the most beautiful showgirls this side of heaven!"

In the years following World War II, the Broadway whirl began to pall for Abravanel. "At first it was very exciting," he admits. "The concert life was fantastic in New York—the best anywhere. You could hear Bruno Walter on Monday night, Rubinstein on Tuesday, Koussevitzky on Wednesday, Fritz Busch on Thursday, Stokowski on Friday, and so on and on, night after night. You went from peak to peak. But after a while, you began to lose all perspective. You could only remember how great something was for twenty-four hours—until the next great concert erased its memory. I decided I wanted to settle down with an orchestra of my own somewhere away from all that."

The Utah Symphony provided just that opportunity. Since 1948, Abravanel has been its music director—the longest permanent tenure of any conductor in America today other than Eugene Ormandy (who's been in Philadelphia since 1936). Over the years, Abravanel has built the Utah Symphony into an internationally respected ensemble, especially well-known for its more than eighty recordings for Vanguard, Angel, and other labels—many of them first recordings of works by such diverse composers as Handel, Grieg, Honegger, Gottschalk, Satie, Vaughan Williams, Mahler, and an American composer Abravanel believes deserves a much wider hearing, Henry Lazarus.

"Music should be a counterpoint to the time in which it is created. All this talk about 'relevance' is wrong."

At a time when more and more conductors seem to be splitting their time between two orchestras, Abravanel insists that he is monogamous. "Even in Mormon territory I believe in one wife and one orchestra. It is my life's blood. I love every member of the orchestra."

The orchestra gives about one hundred eighty concerts over a forty-week season each year, eighteen to twenty different programs. Abravanel conducts most of them. All are taped for rebroadcast by independent radio stations throughout the country. "Almost every concert in the Mormon Tabernacle, which seats 5,000, is sold out," Abravanel says proudly. "We also record in the Tabernacle." Abravanel, who is not a Mormon, says, "The church has been very generous to the orchestra and to me personally. We have the use of the Tabernacle for our concerts completely free of charge—an enormous contribution. And in twenty-eight years there has never been a single instance of the church saying 'we want you to do this' or 'we don't want you to do that.'"

Abravanel is unhappy, however, about some of the attitudes other orchestras have about programming today. "In Berlin a few years ago," he reports, "I proposed opening a program with Weber's Oberon Overture, and they said 'You can't do that—it's pops.' Since when is Weber only 'pops'? It is good music, beautiful music. It was good enough for Furtwängler and Hindemith." He finds the same attitude applies to works by Gershwin and Weill. "You know, there's a lot of snobbery around music circles, and it's a pity. I think it's a great mistake to ban from regular symphony concerts those pieces which please all kinds of audiences. It's silly. "People go to concerts to be moved," he continues. "I think one of the big problems with music today—why there is such a gap between the creators and their audiences—is that form has become more important than content. In an age of computerization, I believe the role of music should be away from computerization. The role of music should be to cultivate depth, which the technological brain cannot do. Music should be a counterpoint to the time in which it is created. All this talk about 'relevance' is wrong. If it were right, someone should have asked Shakespeare 'who cares about a black man in Venice, or teenage lovers in Verona, or a crazy Dane?' In very quiet times, mankind needs tragic art—and that's why Mahler was 'rediscovered' in the 1950's. But in hard times, art should be consoling."

Who, then, does Abravanel think will be the next major composer to be rediscovered? "Bruckner," he replied immediately. "No question about it. Bruckner is the next man for America because there is a crying need for spirituality in America. Mankind, the human animal, always needs something to hold on to. It can be religion, or patriotism, or science and progress—but there must be something. Right now, America doesn't have anything to hold on to. Formal religion doesn't seem to mean that much to most people anymore, which is very regrettable in my view. People also have mixed feelings on what patriotism means, or even science.

"Bruckner is spiritual in an agonized way—yet so much simpler to understand and more monolithic than Mahler. His music is mystical and full of faith. That's why I think America will grab on to him."

Abravanel feels even more strongly that the potential audience for good music in America has only just begun to be tapped. "Recordings have done a lot," he says, "but one thing we must be to give every citizen a chance to hear good music 'live.' That's why I love touring with the Utah Symphony—to all kinds of towns that most people have never heard of. The response we get is wonderful! There is something happening in America artistically, musically, that is unique. It's a great time in our history and I'm excited to be part of it!"
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THE CLUB. A GREAT DRINK ANYWHERE.
I suppose that when you have a friend sixty-three years older than yourself you should be prepared to hear the worst. Still, when the Austrian Embassy phoned last June 27 to inform me that Robert Stolz, last of the Viennese “Waltz Kings,” had died, it came as a real blow. The irreplaceable Maestro, who would have been ninety-five in August, had just arrived in Berlin to conduct a new series of quadraphonic albums—latest additions to a personal catalog that began in 1904 with a wax cylinder recorded in Vienna with soprano Selma Kurz.

Besides conducting and recording, Stolz somehow found time to compose two thousand songs, one hundred film scores, and fifty operettas of his own. As a boy his family friends included Brahms, Humperdinck, Bruckner, and Johann Strauss, Jr., and it was Strauss who, in 1899, persuaded him to forsake serious music for operetta and the waltz. From then on his course was set. After turning the century as a wandering Kapellmeister (operetta tours in Brno, Maribor, Salzburg, Petersburg, Moscow, and Odessa—along with a stint as a bordello pianist and circus bandmaster in Berlin and many other colorful misadventures), Stolz became conductor at Vienna’s famous Theater an der Wien just in time to direct the original production of his friend Franz Lehár’s Merry Widow and to ride the crest of the second great wave of Viennese operetta successes—which included, of course, a number of his own.

In 1929 he made more music history with his waltz theme for Zwei Herzen im Dreiviertel-Takt (Two Hearts in Three-Quarter Time), the song that launched the “talkies” in Germany and, on the basis of sheet music sold, is second only to Strauss’ Blue Danube in global popularity. (You still stumble across it in the damnedest places; I heard it on Radio Moscow last summer, being played with predictably mechanical gusto!)

Although safely “Aryan” himself, Stolz repeatedly risked his life smuggling Jews out of Nazi Germany, and, when Hitler seized his native Austria, he voluntarily migrated to America. There, at sixty, he started a new career in Hollywood, in time winning two Oscar nominations for his film music, besides reviving the American taste for Viennese operetta in several successful cross-country tours. After the war, he caught the first plane back to Austria and started all over yet again; he remained an active and beloved artist to the day of his death.

Robert Stolz was a brilliant conductor in the Johann Strauss tradition and a prolific composer of everything from a one-act opera on a solemn religious theme (Die Rosen der Madonna) to Europe’s first popular foxtrot (Salome), which, under different titles, reappeared as a global bestseller three times in three generations. But, to many Europeans, he also came to be a kind of symbol. The gentle, generous, and impishly humorous little Maestro was a pleasant reminder that decency—while it usually takes quite a bit of buffeting along the way—sometimes enjoys the final victory, outlasting the periodic tides of barbarism that threaten to destroy what is best in art and human values alike. To the end, he had a special gift for stubbornly enriching what was best in a score, or smoothing over the rough parts. He had the same gift for life, whether sipping wine with his charming wife, Einzi, and a few friends in his Grinzing villa, penning sprightly memoirs, or greeting thousands of his fans on the street as he did in Stuttgart just a few days before his death. As both a musician and a man, he warrants remembrance.

Stolz on Disc

- The Musical Magic of Vienna: RCA Red Seal, VCS-6804, a massive six-record anthology of the best Viennese light music from Lanner and the Strausses down to Lehár, Kalman, Fall, and Stolz. played by the Vienna Symphony, Robert Stolz conducting.

- Wiener Blut: Everest Opera Series (S-472), a two-record set (Stolz’s rousing direction of the posthumous Strauss operetta masterpiece with a fine cast including Rudolf Schoel, Margit Schramm, and Hilde Gueden).

- Everest has also released two-record sets of other major operettas conducted by Stolz, including Friedermaus, Gypsy Baron, Beggar Student, and Merry Widow. Stolz’s European releases run into the hundreds on EMI, Eurodisc, Mercato, Amadeo, and many other labels, often available here from import firms. In addition BASF, for which Stolz conducted many albums in the last few years of his life, has distributed several of them in America—for example, Kaiserwalzer, BASF 29-21122-3. Blumenlieder. BASF 20-21458-3. and Tango Festival, BASF 20-21347-1.
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A self-cooling, hysteresis synchronous type with an inside out rotor, drives the platter with enough torque to reach full speed in one third of a revolution. It contributes to the almost immeasurable 0.04% average wow and flutter value in our specifications.

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

The Main Bearing
The stainless steel shaft extending from the platter is aged, by alternate exposures to extreme changes in temperature, preventing it from ever warping. The tip is then precision ground and polished before lapping it into two oilite, self lubricating bearings, reducing friction and reducing rumble to one of the lowest figures ever measured in a professional turntable: -63 dB CBS ARLL.

The Suspension
Piston damped, 16 gauge steel coil springs cradle the arm and platter. You can dance without your stylus joining in.

The Tonearm
The aluminum tubular design boasts one of the lowest fundamental frequencies of any arm, an inaudible 6 Hz. Acoustic feedback is unheard of, even with gain and bass turned all the way up. The vertical and horizontal bearing friction is 1 milligram. This allows the arm to move effortlessly, imposing only the calibrated anti-skating and tracking force you select.

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Empire's best, the 4000D/III, wide response cartridge is a standard feature. The capabilities of this cartridge allow you to play any 4 channel or stereo record at 1 gram or less. And the frequency response is an extraordinary 5-50,000 Hz, with more than 35 dB channel separation.

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The coordinated anti-skating adjustment provides the necessary force for the horizontal plane. It is micrometer calibrated to eliminate channel imbalance or unnecessary record wear.

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The diagrams above illustrate the various turntable drive systems in common use. Belt drive is shown in (A); (B) shows the idler-drive system popular in automatic turntables; in (C) a combination of belt and idler drive is used; (D) is direct-drive.

Julian Hirsch focuses on

TURN TABLE BASICS
for the component shopper

GLOSSARY:
RECORD-PLAYER TERMS

- **Acoustic Feedback**: In some installations, or rooms, sound (traveling through the air or by way of the floor or cabinet) may vibrate the record player in such a way that the cartridge will generate an output voltage. The result is called acoustic feedback, which is heard as a loud rumble or howling sound, particularly when the speakers have good bass response and are played at a high level. Even before it reaches the distress level, acoustic feedback can muddy the sound.

Good installation practice requires that the record player be isolated from the speakers to the greatest possible extent. However, record players differ widely in their ability to resist external vibration. Some are mounted on highly compliant “feet” that isolate the entire unit from the shelf or other support. Others depend on springs or similar isolators between the turntable mounting board and the player’s base. Frequently the arm and platter bearing are mounted as a subassembly on a rigid frame or plate, and the combined structure is suspended from the mounting board (this helps to prevent the movement of one relative to the other).

- **Flutter**: A rapid pitch fluctuation in reproduced music, caused by pulsations of the turntable speed. Flutter occurring at a low rate is called “wow,” from the characteristic sound it imparts to steady musical tones. At higher rates, the effect is of a “gargling” or roughness. Wow and flutter are often combined into a single flutter measurement, which may be weighted to emphasize the most objectionable flutter rates (around 5 to 10 Hz).

- **Rumble**: A low-pitched sound, caused by mechanical vibration acting on the turntable and tone arm. This vibration may occur at the rotation frequency of the motor, the idler, the platter, or multiples of any of these frequencies. Rumble often sounds like power-line hum, but it disappears when the pickup is lifted from the record. Weighted rumble measurements discriminate against subsonic frequency components, which cannot be reproduced by loudspeakers or heard by the human ear. However, such frequencies can override an amplifier or speaker and impair the reproduction of higher frequencies, so that an unweighted measurement is also informative.

- **Servo Control**: A technique by which the output of a device is compared with the input signal or with a reference quantity, and the difference between the two is used to force the output into conformance with the input or reference signal. In the case of a turntable, the reference may be a precisely regulated voltage and the output feedback signal a variable voltage proportional to the turntable speed. Any difference between the two voltages varies the driving signal to the motor (and thus its speed) until they are nearly equal, thus maintaining constant turntable speed under conditions of varying line voltage or record load.

A servo-controlled tone arm senses any departure of the arm from tangency with the record groove. Such a departure causes the arm to move in such a way as to restore tangency.

- **Skating Force**: When a cartridge is mounted at an offset angle in a pivoted tone arm, friction between the stylus and the record material creates a force component directed toward the center of the record. This effectively adds to the tracking force on the inner groove wall (left channel) and subtracts from the force on the outer (right channel) groove wall of the record. If the cartridge is being operated near its minimum tracking-force limit, this can cause mistracking and distortion on the right-channel program. As an alternative to increasing the total vertical force (which may exceed the maximum rated force for the cartridge or result in excessive tracking force on the inner groove wall), an equal and opposite force can be applied to the pickup through an anti-skating system.

There is no agreement as to the “correct” amount of anti-skating compensation. A small amount will keep the pickup from moving inward when it is placed on a rotating ungrooved record. However, the friction in a record groove is higher, so that more force is needed to equalize the wear on the two walls of the groove and on the stylus. Still more force is needed to provide equal tracking ability in both channels at high recorded velocities. But as long as the anti-skating compensation is not excessive, thus producing a net outward force, any amount is beneficial.
Turntable Drive Systems

In the better turntables, the platter on which the record rests is machined alloy so that it will not attract the magnet present in most phono cartridges. Platter weight may be anything from less than 2 pounds to as much as 9 pounds, and the heavier platters are often touted by their manufacturers as providing superior performance. This is not necessarily true, since mass is by no means the only—or even the most important—requirement for state-of-the-art turntable performance.

Several types of turntable drive systems are commonly used, each having its pros and cons. Potentially, the least expensive (and therefore the most widely used in the lower price ranges) is the idler drive, usually in conjunction with a four-pole induction motor turning at about 1,800 revolutions per minute (rpm). The rubber idler wheel, which serves to "gear down" the motor-shaft speed to the 33 1/3 or 45 rpm of the platter, contacts both platter and motor shaft directly. Unfortunately, this tight mechanical coupling can transmit to the platter and record whatever vibrations and speed fluctuations there are in the motor. For this reason the better idler-drive machines use very well made, specially designed motors that are relatively vibration free and whose speed is completely unaffected by a.c. line voltage changes. In this higher price range ($130 and up) rumble and flutter are likely to be lower than in the less expensive players driven by simple and more cheaply made induction motors. Paradoxically (since they are least likely to need it), the players with true constant-speed motors often have vernier speed adjustments that let the user vary the speed a few per cent above and below the nominal value.

Modern high-quality record players are almost equally divided between single-play and multiple-play types. The multiple-play machines used to be known as record changers or automatic turntables. Changars are all "automatic" in the sense that the user does not have to handle the tone arm, but most single-play units also have some degree of automation. In its simplest form, this may be nothing more than an end-of-record arm lift, perhaps with a simultaneous motor shut-off, but the trend seems to be toward fully automatic operation, equivalent to that of a record changer, except that the record doesn't change.

Almost every record changer also has a manual mode and a short, stubby shaft to replace the "umbrella" or angled spindle commonly used to support a stack of records and drop them in sequence. This versatility does not come without cost. In general, a belt drive is mechanically simpler and transmits less flutter and rumble to the platter than an idler-drive system (although there are exceptions to this); most single-play turntables use belt drive. Usually the belt is driven by a synchronous motor turning at a speed in the 300- to 600-rpm range. This places the basic vibration (rumble) frequencies below audible limits (5 to 10 Hz). A disadvantage of the belt system is that it transmits a limited torque to the platter, and this may prevent it from operating conventional record-changing mechanisms. However, several manufacturers have recently succeeded in developing sophisticated belt-driven record changers.

The most sophisticated drive system is direct drive, in which a special low-speed motor rotates the platter directly at the playing speed. Direct-drive turntables have nearly ideal characteristics, but they may be costly. Only one direct-drive record changer has been manufactured, and it is considerably more expensive than the best of the conventional-drive changers. All the direct-drive turntables (and some of the best belt-driven units) use a servo system to maintain their speed at a constant value and to reduce flutter to an almost unmeasurable level.

Rather than becoming involved in mechanical details, the buyer should remember that competition is keen in the record-player field and for that reason overall quality is usually directly reflected in selling price. Each manufacturer has therefore chosen the drive system—or systems—that will, in his judgment, provide the best performance in a given price range. Of course, price does not correlate 100 per cent with quality, but it is certainly an excellent reference point from which to start—at least when dealing with turntables.

At a given selling price, it is almost certain that a single-play unit will be superior in some aspect of its construction or performance to a multiple-play changer (though this superiority will not necessarily be in an audible area). Conversely, while there are record changers whose quality matches or surpasses that of many single-play models, they are usually quite expensive. The message is plain: if you do not really need a record changer, you can either save money or get a "better" product for the same money in a single-play turntable.

Since the turntable and tone arm are functionally separate, it is perfectly possible for a superior turntable to be paired with an exceptional tone arm, or vice versa. This usually makes it difficult to state with confidence that player A is better than player B, except when both of its components are plainly superior.

Turntable Features

Performance aside, what features should you look for in a turntable? Almost every modern record player operates at both 33⅓ and 45 rpm, and this reflects the facts of record production. However, the nature of the repertoire on 45's and the inconvenience of playing them singly would probably make a record changer fitted with a large-diameter automatic spindle the best choice for playing them. In addition, since the special calibration/test discs supplied with most CD-4 components also operate at 45 rpm, it is desirable to have that speed available even on a single-play turntable if you are gearing up for four-channel. If you decide on a record changer, you will want to consider the maximum number of records you will likely play automatically at any one time. Current models can handle stacks of four to ten 12-inch long-playing records, with six being the most common number.

A turntable with vernier controls for fine adjustment of speed should have illuminated stroboscope markings located so that they can be viewed while a record is being played. Some models have the stroboscope markings at the center of the platter, where they are not visible when a record is in place. This is less desirable, except when the unit is servo driven so that its speed is not affected by the drag of the stylus in the grooves of the record.

Most record changers and semi-automatic single-play turntables have a control that must be set to index the arm for the required record diameter. If you play only 12-inch LP's this is of little consequence, but if you have appreciable numbers of 10- or 7-inch discs, you may wish to consider one of the few players that choose the proper index point auto-
Some designs use pushbuttons rather than levers or sliders to control the automatic and semi-automatic functions. The anti-skating force control can be a rotary knob, an adjustable slider (see right), or a hanging counterweight. All the new players have separate anti-skating calibrations for conical and elliptical styli, a few for CD-4 types.

Tone Arms

Although tone arms come in a variety of shapes, almost all are basically metal tubes, pivoted near one end on low-friction bearings, and supporting the phono cartridge at the other end. The different tone-arm configurations ("S" bends and the like) derive from the requirement (for proper tracking) that the cartridge be offset at an angle to the line joining its stylus to the horizontal pivot. Any well-designed arm can play a record with negligible tracking error if the phono cartridge has been installed correctly.

A counterweight at the rear of the arm balances the mass of the cartridge and forward portion of the arm, and the necessary vertical tracking force is applied by a slight readjustment of the weight or by a spring. Usually a calibrated scale shows the force in grams. These scales differ somewhat in convenience and accuracy, but almost all are sufficiently accurate for their purpose. Lower-price record changers sometimes lack calibrated force scales and tracking force must be set up with a separate gauge.

Every offset tone arm is subject to a skating force that tends to swing the pickup in toward the record center. This can cause uneven record and stylus wear, and sometimes distortion in one channel when playing heavily recorded passages. Practically every record-player arm has some form of anti-skating compensation using springs, magnets, levers, or hanging weights. The several systems differ in their effectiveness and accuracy, but since the amount of compensation required with any player or record can only be approximated at best, most of them are quite satisfactory.

Every arm should have some device that allows the pickup to be lifted from the record automatically by moving a lever or pressing a button and then (ideally) returned to the same groove area. On most of the better record players, the arm lift is dampened, providing a slow, gentle rise and fall that does not jar and shift the pickup, even if it is done rapidly. Some arms are pulled outward during their descent by the anti-skating force. This can negate much of the usefulness of a cueing lift, so check its accuracy before buying.

Some low-price record changers do not permit completely free arm movement, and may apply undesirably high forces to the stylus when the mechanism that raises the arm at the end of a record operates. Fortunately, good players are virtually free of such effects and can be used safely with the highly compliant and delicate styli in today's cartridges. An important feature is the quality of the tone arm's bearings, which vary from simple point-in-cup pivots to precision ball bearings or knife edges. The record-player manufacturer will usually rate his arm for use with cartridges operating above a certain minimum tracking force, and it is wise to stay within these limits (and to keep well above the lower limit, if possible). The particular pivot principles used is not important; how well it works is.

On any record changer, the angle between the arm (and cartridge) and the record changes as the record stacks on the platter grows higher. Theoretically this could slightly increase the distortion by altering the vertical tracking angle of the cartridge, but a more serious problem is the possibility of the cartridge body's touching the record when playing the last record of a stack. Two slightly different steps have been taken by record-changer manufacturers to correct this condition at least partially. In one the cartridge holder is tilted in the vertical plane by means of a knob or lever so that it remains parallel to either a single record or to a record at the center of the maximum stack height. Another system raises the entire tone arm to achieve the same result. Both systems are equally effective. Needless to say, this problem does not exist with single-play units.

There are a couple of radial-tracking tone arms (integrated with high-quality turntables) that move in a straight-line path across the record and are free of the tracking-error, vertical-angle, skating, and mass problems of other arms (a radial arm is always tangent to the groove and has no tracking error or skating force). These arms are servo-driven, and the players using them are expensive.

Performance

The performance specifications of two record players can be compared only if they were measured in the same manner; unfortunately, there is so far little standardization of test methods within the industry. Valid comparisons can be...
made between different record players when tested by the same laboratory (as in the Hirsch-Houck Laboratories reports in Stereo Review), or between different models from the same manufacturer. However, one cannot assume that a turntable from company A, advertised as having 5 dB less rumble than one from company B, is actually lower in rumble. It could even be higher!

Rumble is expressed as a number of decibels (dB) below some reference recorded velocity level. Often the reference velocity is unspecified, but most common values fall within a few decibels of each other. However, most manufacturers use a weighted measurement, sometimes without specifying the weighting curve. (Weighting minimizes the low-frequency noise contribution on the basis that it is less likely to be heard). It is not unusual for a weighted measurement to be as much as 30 dB lower (better) than an unweighted measurement, so be sure you are not comparing "apples and oranges"—different kinds of weighted or weighted and unweighted figures, that is—when judging turntable specifications.

Wow and flutter are different audible manifestations of the same problem—a rapid and periodic speed fluctuation of the turntable. At low fluctuation rates, the "wow" imparted to the sound is unmistakable, but at high rates the flutter effect may be so small as to fall below detectable "muddying" of the sound. Usually the two are combined in a single flutter measurement, which may be peak or rms (root mean square), weighted or unweighted (Hirsch-Houck Labs measurements are unweighted rms). Unweighted flutter readings are always higher than weighted readings, so be careful when comparing these published figures as well.

Individuals differ in their ability to perceive flutter, but it is safe to assume that a turntable with less than 0.1 per cent unweighted flutter (many are this good or better) will not introduce audible flutter. At 0.2 per cent, critical listeners will usually hear flutter on some program material, and the 0.3 per cent or greater flutter of some low-price record players is unacceptable for music listening.

Most tone-arm specifications mean little by themselves, since ultimate arm performance depends on the cartridge used in it also. In a way this is just as well, since almost no quantitative data, other than physical dimensions, are published by most tone-arm manufacturers. The aspects of tone-arm performance that will be of most concern to the user are the "handling" characteristics—smoothness of operation of the cueing device, the shape of the finger lift, and so forth.

Rarely will a record-player manufacturer refer to his product's immunity to acoustic feedback. Many otherwise satisfactory players cannot be used in proximity to speakers having a strong low-bass output, except at reduced listening levels, without annoying and potentially destructive (to the speakers) acoustic feedback. On the other hand, some record players are nearly immune to feedback. Test reports provide some guidance in this matter, and the advice of a reliable dealer can be very helpful.

Other Factors

There are a number of factors not covered by most specifications that can influence the performance or convenience of use of a record player. In the case of a record changer, the ability of its dropping mechanism to function with records having slightly out-of-tolerance center holes or thicknesses is obviously important, though quite difficult to assess. If you have some records that have been troublesome on another changer, take them to the dealer's showroom and try them on any model you are considering buying.

Some early record changers earned a reputation for rough handling of records and cartridges. Today's models—even the inexpensive ones—are at least as gentle as the hand of a skilled human operator, and some are considerably better than that. In fact, one is less likely to damage a valued record or cartridge with a good modern changer than with a manual record player.

Unless the record-player manufacturer specifically states that his tone-arm wiring capacitance is low enough for use with a CD-4 quadraphonic cartridge, you can assume that it is not. Unfortunately, some players are claimed to be "CD-4 compatible" but still require a different kind of cable between the record player and the demodulator to achieve the necessary low capacitance. If CD-4 is a part of your present or future plans, be sure to check this point, since it may not be practical to rewire a tone arm at a later date.
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STEREO REVIEW'S SELECTION OF RECORDINGS OF SPECIAL MERIT
BEST OF THE MONTH

Carl Orff's Der Mond: The Zesty Sizzle of Refreshingly Audacious Orchestral Sonorities

Though more like a morality play than an opera, Carl Orff's Der Mond was expressly written for the stage, unlike Carmina Burana, the composer's first major work, which had immediately preceded it. Associating the two is inevitable, however, for Der Mond has very much the same musical characteristics as its predecessor—simple diatonic melodies, ostinato rhythms, heavy reliance on percussion—and in much the same proportions. What it does not have is any of the excesses of Orff's later work, which have caused even some of his most enthusiastic partisans to develop second thoughts about him.

First of all, Der Mond is fun to listen to. It is lighthearted, musically light-textured, fast-moving, and brief enough that its high energy level will not exhaust you. Orff has deftly alternated singing and speaking lines in the vocal parts, and his orchestration is zesty, refreshing, and full of surprising sonorities—even the most recklessly audacious effects delight the ear. There is no thought of a unified style—the music evokes in turn the spirits of oratorio, operetta, cabaret, even Bavarian folk song—yet the composer not only makes it all hang together but work with a virtuoso flair.

There is a story, too, and the scholarly annotations that accompany Philips' new recording of the work take its symbolism very seriously. It is about four country lads who steal the moon from a neighboring village. In time, they grow old and die, each taking his share of the moon with him to the beyond. After some complications, St. Peter intercedes and eventually returns the moon to its rightful position in heaven. I have streamlined the plot in the interest of avoiding tedium (Orff himself adapted the libretto from one of the Grimm fairy tales), and suggest that you try not to take it too seriously either. Only the music matters, and if you respond to Orff at all, you'll find that Der Mond matters a great deal.

It would be impossible to overpraise the achievement of conductor Herbert Kegel and chorus master Horst Neumann for their work in this recording: the music sizzles with excitement, and the unconventional orchestration is captured in sharp detail. Eberhard Buchner, whose role here is similar to that of one of Bach's Evangelists, delivers his high-lying music exquisitely, and Reiner Süss...
does justice to both the majestic and the coarse elements of "Petrus" expertly. The rest of the cast forms a good ensemble—no more, indeed, is expected of them. I heard one bad tape splice on side one, but the sound otherwise is just about perfect. George Jellinek

ORF: Der Mond Eberhard Büchner (tenor), Narrator; Reiner Süss (bass), Petrus; Helmut Klotz (tenor); Horst Lunow (baritone); Fred Teschler and Armin Terzbachian (bass); the Four Fellows: Wilfried Schauel (baritone), a Farmer; others. Leipzig Radio Chorus and Symphony Orchestra, Herbert Kegel cond. Philips 6700 083 two discs $15.96.

A Hearty Welcome to The Poetic Emanuel Ax, Latest Laureate Of the Keyboard

EMANUEL AX is the twenty-six-year-old, Polish-born, American-trained, First Prize winner of the Artur Rubinstein International Piano Master Competition held in Israel in 1974. Although the winners of major competitions are frequently rushed by record companies to produce another Tchaikovsky First or Rachmaninoff Third, few competitions carry a recording contract as an intrinsic part of the prize. This one does, and it obviously helped Mr. Ax to dodge the inevitable demand for more hackneyed repertoire in his just-released first recording on the RCA label. Not that the Chopin B Minor Sonata on side one is not already over-represented in the catalog; but it would take a frugality beyond my imagining to refuse to duplicate that piece to obtain the exquisite pianistic pleasures on side two.

Mr. Ax's Chopin is capable, musicianly, neat, and reserved; it is a performance no one need be ashamed of, but I would be less than candid if I said that it did not strike very many sparks for me. The other side of the record is quite unique; no one who studied with Mieczyslaw Munz, as Ax did at Juilliard, could possibly be without it. But Ax is a far more skilful colorist—and color is obviously important to him—than most young virtuosos. Polish or otherwise. His Liebesbotschaft has all the inner voices (and the outer ones) and a different color for each, a strikingly gorgeous arrangement of sounds. But, beyond the colors, Ax produces phrasings—the way Schnabel produced phrasings. It would not be quite correct to say that he makes the music sing. He sees through the Lisztian transcription to the Schubert underneath, yes, but what he gets out of it is more akin to an undiscovered impromptu or moment musical than to a Lied. In other words, he has the phrasings of Schubert's own piano music, and so what we hear seem not to be Lisztian transmogrifications (except in places) but new keyboard masterpieces of Schubert's maturity. If all this sounds like a rationalization of having fallen in love with this performance, so be it. You listen to it; you'll fall in love with it too.

Liesebotschaft is the best, but Horch! Horch! Die Lerch! gets some beautiful playing too. The other two are less apt as transcriptions, but again Ax does lovely things with the phrasings. Of the echt Liszt material, Gnomereigen gets an amply virtuosic and musically sensitive performance, and the etude has all fingers flying—but with a vital trace of stands to gain from that, as some of our really good troubadours take to musicianship the way others, who could sort of sing and play, used to take to relevancy and all that.

Some noticed long ago that Goodman was a fine guitarist, of course, but the evolution that's going on is a matter of where they, the troubadours, put the emphasis, not where we put it. Songwrit-


Steve Goodman: One of the Best—And He Continues To Get Better

ARE there no more worlds for a troubadour to conquer? Was Alexander the Great really crying because he felt self-parody was about to set in? Well, weep not: Gordon Lightfoot was not merely passing the time when he said what he's trying to do now is to refine what he's been doing, that a good song will last and one's performance of it can always be improved. Steve Goodman's new Asylum album, "Jessie's Jig & Other Favorites," shows graphically how you and I and everyone I can think of stands to gain from that, as some of our really good troubadours take to musicianship the way others, who could sort of sing and play, used to take to relevancy and all that.
MICHEL LEGRAND AND LENA HORNE: a brilliant match

ing hasn't been shelved or anything (Goodman wrote three new songs for this album and helped write another), it's just that the execution of it, making it sound right, is being brought up to snuff here and there as talent permits. Goodman's talent is ultrapermissive in this case: his vocal sound is not lovely, and you may not have thought of the lad who wrote City of New Orleans as a singer, but here he has written and (carefully) selected more just so he could sing, it seems, and he never sang (or, for that matter, played) better. His interpretation of friend John Prine's Blue Umbrella uncovers the song's basic spirit better than Prine's more urgent, more aggressive vocal did (and one of the things we need to be rid of is the silly idea that a song's writer can always sing it better than anyone else can), and his delight in finding Mike Smith's nifty song Spoon River may be the energizing force behind the way he and his backers perform it. Something certainly is. And did I say guitarist? Nobody, regardless of his reputation for relevancy, would record It's a Sin to Tell a Lie in this day and age unless he could do something out of the ordinary in performing it, and Goodman's unaccompanied picking is so far out of the ordinary that all my calluses went into shock.

Performance means with other people, though, by and large, and Goodman has been as successful at picking out the other people as he was at picking out the songs. Jethro Burns—know who he is? He's the Jethro of Homer and Jethro, the comedy team, but Goodman apparently noticed that Burns has also been one of the better mandolin players around for years. Then there's Saul Broudy, whose stylized harmonica line does so much for Spoon River and (Goodman's best new song) Lookin' for Trouble. And I could go on. Mama Don't Allow It is a little threadbare, even it if isn't often done in a country-swing scramble like this, but call it an error on the side of growth. The album, on the whole, finds Goodman taking risks and, as the fellow says, picking them clean.

STEVE GOODMAN: Jessie's Jig & Other Favorites. Steve Goodman (vocals, guitar); Steve Burgh (guitar); Jethro Burns (mandolin); Saul Broudy (harmonica); Vassar Clements (fiddle); Hugh McDonald (bass); other musicians. Door Number Three; Blue Umbrella; This Hotel Room; Spoon River; Jessie's Jig (Rob's Romp, Beth's Bounce); It's a Sin to Tell a Lie; I Can't Sleep; Moby Book; Lookin' for Trouble; Mama Don't Allow It. ASYLUM 7E-1037 $6.98.

The Art of La Belle Lena:
Far Too Special To Categorize

THERE has never been much doubt among those who care about such things that Lena Horne is one of the most beautiful women of our time. Opinions have always differed sharply, however, as to how good a singer she is. "If you've never seen her, then you really can't appreciate her on records," runs one argument. Another has it that she may be a great and neglected stylist, but that just about everyone copied her unique phrasing and tigerish delivery for so long that it became impossible to appreciate the lustrous original, obscured as she was by garish imitations. It is, I think, fair to say that she is far too special a talent to categorize easily, hard to deny that her sensational looks may well have worked against the success of her recording career. In three and a half decades of recording, Lena Horne has never been a really hot commercial chart star, but I for one wouldn't want her to be—taste and style have never been mass-market specialties, as a quick look around at any form of the entertainment business will affirm.  

(overleaf)
Waylon Jennings: Suddenly a Low-pitched Baritone Is the Voice to Have

WAYLON JENNINGS is one of the most important and influential singers of his time. Poets as well as musicians are in awe of him, and he's number one with my friend Vicki and with Vicki's grandmother. That's good enough for me. That and what I hear; one would not have thought such a voice were possible, and one still has trouble believing he can do so much with it. You've already heard his influence in pop music, though; suddenly a low-pitched baritone is the kind of voice to have. The other thing I hear, speaking of influence, is that if Waylon wants to grow a beard, well, by God, Waylon grows a beard; you have to be pretty rugged to practice individualism in the country-music business, although (thanks to Jennings) you don't have to be quite so all-fired rugged as you once did.

Several of his previous albums have been hurt by erratic song selection, but in RCA's new "Dreaming My Dreams" Jennings has smoothed that out pretty well. He does repeat the trick of including a song that's so difficult to sing that others don't dare try it ("I've Been a Long Time Leaving", one of the strange early songs by Roger Miller), but, being Jennings, he pulls it off, making a semi-rousing success of it. Let's All Help the Cowboys is a simple three-chord country song (C-F-G, if that saves you some time), but it has such charm that, well, I couldn't do anything else until I'd sat down with the guitar and learned that little sucker. The song that gives the album its title is clearly an outstanding one: you can hate country music and still love it. Waymore's Blues (Waylon was renamed Waymore and made a character in Ladies Love Outlaws, which Lee Clayton wrote for him sometime ago), a Jennings original, is the kind of up-tempo thing we always hope the fast ones will turn out to be, and is approximately where one notices the carefree, hell-for-leather way some of those old guitars are being played. Jennings is one of the rare good singers capable of playing his own lead guitar, and his stuttering lick mingling with, say, Randy Scruggs' little thousand-note runs is the kind of combination that keeps instrumental breaks witty and surprising. High Time (You Quit Your Low-Down Ways), whose country clichés are maybe a little too commonplace, too everyday, is the album's low point, but it isn't serious enough about being a sad country song to keep this album from being one of the year's better recordings.

Noel Coppage

WAYLON JENNINGS: Dreaming My Dreams. Waylon Jennings (vocals, guitar); James Colvard (guitar, vocals); Randy Scruggs (guitar); Larry Whitmore (guitar); Duke Griss (fiddle); Ralph Mooney (steel guitar); Richie Albright (drums); Charlie McCoy (harmonica); other musicians. Are You Sure Hank Done It This Way; Waymore's Blues; I Recall a Gypsy Woman; High Time; I've Been a Long Time Leaving; Let's All Help the Cowboys: The Door Is Always Open; Let's Turn Back the Years; She's Looking Good; Dreaming My Dreams with You; Bob Wills Is Still the King. RCA APL1-1062 $6.98, © APK1-1062 $7.95.
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AVERAGE WHITE BAND: Cut the Cake. Average White Band (vocals and instrumentals), School Boy Crush; If I Ever Lose This Heaven; Cloudy; Groovin' the Night Away; and six others. ATLANTIC SD 18140 $6.98, © CS 18140 $7.97.

The Average White Band is anything but that. Hailing from Scotland (except for drummer Stephen Ferrone, an Englishman of Jamaican ancestry), these six men—both vocally and instrumentally—sound closer to Detroit than Dundee. We have heard a young English lady named Jo-Ann Kelly gurgle and bottleneck her way through the repertoires of aging black blues men, and the term "blue-eyed soul" was applied to such white artists of the last decade as the Righteous Brothers and the Magnificent Men, who had incongruity to thank for some of their wide appeal. But the AWB makes them all pale by comparison. They have a smattering of Earth, Wind & Fire and a bit of BACHMAN-TURNER OVERDRIVE; and six others. ATLANTIC SD 18140 $6.98, ® MC R4-1-1027 $7.98.

AVERAGE WHITE BAND: Main Course. The Bee Gees (vocals and instrumentals), Jive Talkin'; Wind of Change; Songbird; Fanny; All This Mak-

Performance: The way they were Recording: Very good

The remarkable durability of the Bee Gees suggests they're pretty good at charting the audience's zig-zagging (some would say tick-

the second side (Country Lanes) that you hear what we used to call a Bee Gees song, instant-

Performance: Chart-busting Recording: Good

The return of Blood, Sweet & Tears, reunited with vocalist David Clayton-Thomas, will undoubtedly reap some financial profit for those involved, but it makes no artistic waves. The sound is pretty much the same as it was before, which isn't bad, but it will come as a disappointment to anybody who had expected this regrouping of BS&T to reflect some kind of development. The program relies heavily on outside material, from the Blues Image's Ride Captain Ride to Lennon and McCartney's Got to Get You into My Life and veteran bluesman John Lee Hooker's One Room Country Shack, which Clayton-Thomas performs in uncon-


PERFORMANCE: The CAPTAIN & TENNILLE: Love Will Keep Us Together will probably be a Golden Oldie by the time you read this.
Would that it were right now! The Captain & Tennille's performance of this Neil Sedaka gem is a good-humored, commercially zowie job. But enough is enough. The radio hums with it, TV shows seem to find it impossible to fill their time slots without at least a token appearance by the duo, meritless lip-synching away. The rest of the album doesn't quite live up to the title song, but it does provide a lot of warm-voiced singing by Toni Tennille and some inventive and colorful playing and arranging by the Captain. (Y'see, Rona, in real life the Captain is Daryl Dragon—iswear-wound—!—the son of Carmen Dragon. Oh, all them nights in the Hollywood Bowl? They maintain a terrific commercial sound, and no matter how tired I am of their hit I have a feeling that I'd better get used to them because they are bound to be back again and again.

The color photo features two of the most gorgeous creatures I've seen. Tennille and the Captain look okay too, but I think I'm in love with their companions.

DR. HOOK: Bankrupt. Dr. Hook (vocals and instrumentalists): orchestra. Levitate; Only Sixteen; Cooky and Lila; The Millionaire; and eight others. CAPITOL ST-11397 $7.98, © 8XT-11397 $7.98, © 4XT-11397 $7.98. Performance: Heavy-footed. Recording: Good.

What we get here is some clumsy foolin' around by a group with two feet. Even given a funny enough song such as Everybody's Making It Big But Me, Shel Silverstein's sardonic and witty tale of a have-not in the conspicuously consuming pop world of the haves, Dr. Hook mangles it with a paratroop-booted vocal by Rick Elswit and an instrumental arrangement apparently left over from a Minnie Pearl session. With other, more run-of-the-mill stuff, such as Cooky and Lila or Waps, the results are as lively and interesting to listen to as the sounds of the Invisible Man jogging around the house.

FREDDY FENDER: Before the Next Teardrop Falls. Freddy Fender (vocals, guitar); Donny King (bass); Chester Vaughn (drums); Randy Cornor (guitar); other musicians. Roses Are Red; I'm Not a Fool Anymore; Please Don't Tell Me How the Story Ends; I Love My Rancho Grande; Wasted Days and Wasted Nights; and six others. ABC-DOT DOSD-2020 $6.98, © ADT 8310-2020 H $7.98, © ADT 5310-2020 H $7.98. Performance: Good. Recording: Very good.

Freddy Fender (Baldemar Huerta) has been in the brig and in the slammer, was a migratory farm worker, and was a Chicano trying to get into country music before Johnny Rodriguez could reach around a guitar, so don't talk to Fender about a checkered life. The one thing that does it for such a B-scripted life story is a big hit, and he finally has one to his credit—the title song here—and we're now in the post-hit shake-down period in which he will find his own audience. His is the fat-man tenor sort of voice, with more of the flavor of Old Mexico in it than I hear Rodriguez putting into the honky-tonk and overalls ditties of country—and there's more of it in the instrumental backing, too, which is mixed well below the loudness of his voice. But Fender's tremolo (and it is insistant but not grotesque) won't loosen the screws in the mike stand the way Glenn Yarbrough's does and clipped phrasing need to be matched to the song more carefully than is usually the case here. The ones that work well are the title hit and Wasted Days and Wasted Nights, a song Fender first recorded sixteen years ago. Much of the rest is the result, I think, of rushing out an album to take advantage of the hit single. Fender is almost certain to be back with better albums.

STEVE GOODMAN: Jessie's Jig & Other Favorites (see Best of the Month, page 72). Performance: Good. Recording: Good.

The Guess Who is refining its new, more sophisticated sound and continues to get some of the best rock singing from Burton Cummings (and some crazy piano playing), but this album catches the songwriting in an old pose. Indecisive, that is, shading toward banalishness. The overall sound of the recording isn't bad at all, but if you try really paying attention to a particular song, watch out. Coons on Sunday, for example, is a waste of a good title for many reasons and one of them is so obvious you can but wonder about the writers. The very first line goes "... you gonna laugh now that you fell down?," but the melody doesn't take the inflection up. The way the inflection has to go if the listener is to know it's a question; it takes it down. It's a small thing, but one a conscientious, half-awake songwriter would fix. Then there's the lecturing tone that got into Guess Who songs of old, making a fairly spectacular reappearance in Rich World—Poor World. And Rosanne is catchy but turns into a tiresome simpleton after it repeats the same stuff a few times. There is one, Dreams, that does seem to have engaged Cummings and co-writer Domenic Troiano, and it has a certain charming audacity about it—albeit it too has hack marks where its details ought to be. The flaws aren't actually ruinous—no song fails completely—but they are bothersome and they do interfere with any effort you might be making to concentrate on how well this band has learned to play and sing.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

TOM T. HALL: I Wrote a Song About It. Tom T. Hall (vocals, guitar); Charlie McCov (harmonica, ines); Jerry Kennedy (guitar); Bob Moore (bass); Buddy Harman (drums); Pig Robbins (piano); other musicians. Deal, From a Mansion to a Honky Tonk; The Girl Who Read the Same Book All the Time; The Trees in Philadelphia; I Like Beer; Sad Song for My Friend; and five others. MERCURY SRM-1-1033 $6.98, © MCR-1-1033 $7.98, © MCR-4-1033 $7.98. Performance: Excellent. Recording: Excellent.

Some of them you can count on. Tom T. Hall always comes up with something, so now if
the commotion concerning Deal dies down, there could be an equally impressive chuckling and smacking of chops over I Like Beer—and that still leaves the better stuff for private discoveries. The Singer’s Song, The Girl Who Read the Same Book All the Time, Lying Jim—these aren’t great or formidable songs, but each one is capable of actually engaging a person’s mind. and they all come in Hall’s language. which is easily the most nearly accurate language going into any kind of region-speaking lyrics I am allowed to hear. Hall’s singing ability is limited, but his baritone sound is pleasing and he knows precisely what he wants to communicate. which gives him a head start over many singers. Jerry Kenney’s production, involving judicious use of Charlie McCoy’s excellent back-up harmony and of Kennedy’s own fine guitar, is consistent good through Hall’s albums and is superb in this one. The only thing I don’t like about it is the septet. The Fallen Woman. Recitations always sound to me like exploitations of an audience’s presumed mawkish naiveté; I expect a preacher to pull a cheap trick like that, but not a singer: That still leaves six or seven more decent cuts than your album money normally buys.

N.C.

ISAAC HAYES: Chocolate Chip. Isaac Hayes (arrangements and vocals); orchestra. Loving Feeling: Body Language: Chocolate Chip; Come Live With Me; and three others. ABC ABCD 874 $6.98, © 8022-874 H $7.98, © 5022-874H $7.98.

Performance: Very slick and very good
Recording: Excellent

Here is more opulent folderol by a masterly musician who uses his gorgeous technique for arranging in the service of his own not very inspired compositions. He’s written everything here with the exception of That Loving Feeling (by Tony Joe White), and I doubt that anything would ever have seen the light of recording on intrinsic merit. But oh-me-oh-my, the changes he can put material through with his arranging and producing talent! He seems to think so highly of Chocolate Chip, for instance, that he runs it through twice, once as an instrumental (very fine indeed) and then again in a vocal version (this voice is serviceable but hardly galvanizing). Hayes’ lyrics have a highly glossed, rather artificial sexuality, and his performing manner is super-hip, super-knowing. Basically, he is the master of a particular kind of mood-back-ground music that is inventive far beyond the usual examples of its genre, but it is also music that never escapes that same genre. P.R.

RUPERT HOLMES. Rupert Holmes (vocals and instruments); orchestra. Brass Knuckles; Deco Lady; Rifles and Rum; Studio Musician; and six others. Epic KE 3343 $5.98.

Performance: The bark is more effective than the bite
Recording: Good

Rupert Holmes would make a terrific blurb writer. In fact he is a terrific blurb writer. His description of Brass Knuckles: “Raymond Chandler, Dashiell Hammett, the underbelly of California, great falls from high places, the jaded shamus seeking a kind of truth while drowning in a rain of right crosses to the head.” Hmm. . . . How then is it that the song itself, once waded through, turns out to be deplorably worse than even a bad script for one of those TV police shows? I Don’t Want to Hold Your Hand is about the decade it took Rupert to become disenchanted with the Beatles. Everything Gets Better When You’re Drunk is another intellectual high point, and a dangerous assumption where his own work is concerned. Holmes’ voice is, well, serviceable, in much the same sense that a motorcycle is a convenient means of transportation. P.R.

NICKY HOPKINS: No More Changes. Nicky Hopkins (vocals and piano); orchestra. Sea Cruise, The Ridiculous Trip: Hanna; No Time, Refugee Blues; and five others. Mercury SRM-1-1028 $6.98.

Performance: Good piano, fair vocals
Recording: Good

Nicky Hopkins has a highly personal, idiomatic style at the piano. His extended instrumental work in Lady Sleeps is vivid and stylistic, with a flashy ease that puts one in mind of the very best. His voice, however, can best be described as musically—that is, he knows what it is supposed to be doing even though it isn’t capable of doing it. If you can take this rather offhand approach to things and if you like good keyboard work, then there is some entertainment to be found here. P.R.

LENA HORN & MICHEL LEGRAND: Lena & Michel (see Best of the Month, page 73)


Performance: Strong
Recording: Very good

I am a great fan of the Isleys, and I have raved before in these pages about the artistry of lead singer Ronald Isley. The brothers have had great success in recent years, for which I rejoice. But their recordings are best when they contain a mixture of original Isley material and carefully selected songs by others around which the Isleys can work their magic—especially ballads, in which Ronald excels.

It is all Isley material this time out, all energetically and expertly performed. But it lacks spark. The Isleys have had a habit, through their long career, of writing and performing a few dynamite songs of their own (Shout, Twist and Shout, It’s Your Thing; Who’s There), running themselves into the ground as their imagination dries up, floundering for a while, and then hitching their stars to another wagon (Love the One You’re With, by Stephen Stills; It’s Too Late, by Carole King). This revitalizes them and they start turning out original material that is worthwhile. Then they get confident, a little cocky, and disdain doing other people’s songs.

The Isley cycle has come around to the point where they are beginning to run dry again, though they can probably get away with it longer this time, given the general bland public taste and the melting together of black and white music into something approaching milk chocolate. J.V.

WAYLON JENNINGS: Dreaming My Dreams (see Best of the Month, page 74)

HERBIE MANN: Discotheque. Herbie Mann (flute); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. Hi-Jack; Pick Up the Pieces; Lady Marmalade; Bird of Beauty, High Above the Anxieties; I Can’t Turn You Loose; and three others. Atlantic SD 1670 $6.98, © TP 1670 $7.98, © CS 1670 $7.98.

Performance: Fake
Recording: Good

As they used to say on American Bandstand.
(Continued on page 80)
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you can dance to it, which is why this record was made. The (cough) tunes are done in "discotheque hit" style. A discotheque record is made with the bass line and the drums beefed up through the studio control board, and it usually features some nonentity singing about what fun it is to do a new step. It may be that one day several discotheque hits will be placed in a time capsule to give future generations here a better idea of what level some tastes once sank to.

Herbie Mann has made dozens—and dozens and dozens—of albums during his long career. They are almost all formula pieces in which his band lays down rhythms and riffs and everybody does his best to sound busy and trendy. Mr. Mann then plays the same flute solo on all tunes. It is evident that Mann is a capable flautist, but since he has spent so much of his time doing catchpenny versions of current pops, it is also possible that he is a hack. To his credit, he sounds here as bored performing as it is boring to listen to this ersatz music.

JON MARK: Songs for a Friend. Jon Mark (vocals, guitar); orchestra. Kirby Johnson cond. Signal Hill; The Bay; Liars of Love; Old People’s Homes; and five others. COLUMBIA PC 33339 $6.98, ® PCA 33339 $7.98, © PCT 33339 $7.98.

Performance: Sweet nothings
Recording: Very good

I didn’t care for Jon Mark’s vocals with the Mark-Almond Band, but I found some compensation in the music. There is no such compensation here; listening to him whisper his way through this album against a background of soft guitars and strings is a dreary experience. As a songwriter—he wrote all the material in this set—Mark is no Leonard Cohen or Bob Dylan. His lyrics are innocuous and the music is bland. This is not an offensive album, however. Just shallow.

C.A.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

ROGER MCGUINN AND BAND. Roger McGuinn and Band (vocals and instrumentalists). LISA: So Long; Lover of the Bayou; Circle Song; Bull Dog; and five others. COLUMBIA PC 33541 $6.98, ® PCA 33541 $7.98.

Performance: Sure-handed
Recording: Excellent

The "and Band" part (Steve Love, Richard Bowden, Greg Attaway, and David Love-lace) might as well be called Some More Byrds, but then that wouldn’t likely be bad, would it? As the Byrds used to, Roger McGuinn has picked up a familiar Bob Dylan song, Knockin’ on Heaven’s Door, and he has given it a better, more satisfying interpretation than Dylan did. Perhaps that came out so well it inspired and brightened the whole project; anyway, there’s a scattering of pretty good songs here, recorded and performed with the old style and flair. It is difficult to say exactly what McGuinn (or any of his bands) ever did that was out of the ordinary, but the results have been; more often than not and there’s not much in this album as anemic as "ordinary" Seventies rock. A clarity and an authority get footings right away, which didn’t happen in the last "solo" McGuinn album I heard. And this one is beautifully engineered; the opening notes of steel-band music in Lisa are almost a shock. The solid feel and the perfect tempo of The Circle Song (there’s a certain speed at which any given song sounds best, although we don’t talk about that much and plenty of musicians don’t seem to give it much thought) make it my favorite while it is playing, but Lover of the Bayou is the one I remember later. That good old Byrd-like acoustic treatment of Easy Does It wears well, too. The only one that sounds messy and disorganized, once you’ve gotten the hang of how loosely McGuinn likes to hold the reins, is So Long, which is also monotonous. Elsewhere, though, the thing is alive with extended vocal harmonies and cutting guitar breaks and other things that most other bands just can’t seem to do with this kind of easy understanding.

N.C.

MCKENDREE SPRING: Get Me to the Country. McKendree Spring (vocals and instrumentalists). Hold On: Meeting in Paris; The Hustler, Get Me to the Country; and six others. PYE 12108 $6.98.

Performance: Pleasant
Recording: Very good

From their past work you might expect McKendree Spring to perform well; the surprise is that they are able to stay as fresh as they do. They do their customary careful, well-thought-out job on such things as So Long Daddy-O and the title song. The only rub is The Hustler, a mushy political satire that they succeed in making even more simple-minded with their craftsmanship approach. Otherwise, the album makes unremarkable but very nice listening.

P.R.
Nati Mistral accepting an award for her "Trascendencia Universal . . ." album from STEREO REVIEW's William Livingstone.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

NATI MISTRAL. Nati Mistral (vocals): Los Gemelos (vocals, guitars): Tata Dios: Guitarra Dimelo Ti; La Flor de la Canela; Envidia; Amarraditos; Yo Vi Llorar a Dios: Fina Estampa; and five others. ALHAMBRA CS 8055 $5.98, © CS 8055 $6.98 (from Alhambra Records, 2214 West 8th Court, Hialeah, Fla. 33010).

Performance: Excellent
Recording: Very good

Was it the Emperor Charles V who said that he spoke English to his banker, French to his mistress, and Spanish to God? That statement came to mind as I listened to this album because Nati Mistral's Spanish diction is one of the wonders of the Hispanic world—she really makes the language sound divine. Formerly available as an import from Spanish Columbia and now released domestically by Alhambra, the album is a capsule concert by the Spanish star. As in her concerts, she includes here a couple of brief spoken items—"Granada," an excerpt from Federico Garcia Lorca's play Doña Ravita la Solterita, and "Que doloroso es amar" ("How painful it is to love") from Joaquin Dicenta's Leonor de Aquitania. These will mean little to non-speakers of Spanish, but I have recently seen Miss Mistral move Cuban audiences in Miami to standing ovations with these same recitations, and anyone who knows even a little high-school Spanish should enjoy hearing the language so beautifully spoken. Just as her diction distinguishes her reading of poetry, it distinguishes everything she sings, and to my mind she is one of the world's greatest singers of popular music. The songs on this album are standards from Miss Mistral's extensive repertoire, two from Spain and eight from various Latin American countries. All of them show off the beauty of her voice and the skill and intelligence with which she uses it. She injects humor into the flirtatious Fina Estampa and Amarraditos and deeper emotion into Envidia ("I envy your shadow, the streets you walk through . . ."). Her musical taste can even manage to remove the curse of oversentimentality from Yo Vi Llorar a Dios (I Saw God Cry). The singing twin guitarists Los Gemelos

(Continued on page 84)
Paul and Linda: Alright Tonight

Let’s face it; Will and Ariel Durant they ain’t. Turning your wife into one of your employees is not always a wise decision, especially if you happen to be an artist. So why this current deplorable trend of making your mate a full-fledged aesthetic and business partner? James and Carly Simon/Taylor may be excused from contention forever because they both had talent in the beginning, even though in amalgamating they have rendered each other inert. And Jimmy Reed knew how to put his wife to work; she sat behind him, handing him his whiskey bottle and whispering lyrics in his ear when he forgot them. But what of John and Yoko? She taught him how to pull invisible butterflies out of boxes and rain them on the heads of the audience, and he taught her to think she was musician enough that she could yowl on vinyl with a clear conscience. Which is obviously no fair deal for anybody.

It seems just as obvious that Paul McCartney made his wife, who was a perfectly adequate “rock photographer” when she was merely Linda Eastman, a co-star in direct contrast to John’s exhibitionistic excesses with Yoko. Look at us by contrast, they seemed to be saying; a decent, respectable, tidy, talented suburban couple. Not content to celebrate simple marital joys in a series of songs each more deeply mired in vacuity than the last (Eat at Home, The Lovely Linda, and My Love), Paul actually made Linda a member of his band, and by the time of the “Wild-life” album she was wanting Love Is Strange—well off-key, but in the center spotlight nonetheless.

Anyone who has heard that album, seen their 1973 television special, or witnessed Linda ineptly playing organ on stage with a perfect punk panache might well wish that Paul had contented himself instead with having her pose nude on his album covers. But, at the same time, any reasonable man who examines the current lyrical output of the other ex-Beatles must conclude that, gibber empty though they may be, Paul’s celebrations of his union with Linda are certainly an acceptable verbal product—relatively speaking, at least: between George Harrison’s Krishna, John’s Yoko, and Paul’s Linda, I’ll take Linda any day.

There is more of this cloying connoisseur narcissism on their latest outing, “Venus and Mars Are Alright Tonight,” and astute observers will note that Paul’s even thrown in an astrological hook this time, a little late in the day to be sure, but still it shows that Paul is thinking. And, as usual, he is thinking more about music and production than about lyrics. “Venus and Mars” is basically an addendum to “Band on the Run,” and it consolidates Wings’ position as the most proficient and diverting bland-out on the boards. Pre-\n
visous to the last record, McCartney had been in danger of becoming so pallid musically ("Red Rose Speedway" comes to mind easily, though its contents are forgotten) as to fade away altogether. But with "Band" he achieved a perfect synthesis of the catchy—classic pop throw-away. And so since no one should now rightfully expect McCartney to "matter" in the Dylan-Joni Mitchell sense, there is absolutely no excuse for slugging poor "Venus and Mars" just because it has all the same melodic ingredients that have endeared him to the relevancy-swamped twit that lives in all of us. The title track is winsome and wistful: Rock Show is gutsy in a Band on the Run vein; Magneto and Titanium Man is one of those loose, loping, half-stalked and half-sung progressions (check "Ram"'s Smile Away); and the hit single, Listen to What the Man Said, is really magnificent beauty-parlor music.

So what if You Gave Me the Answer is Paul’s most cloying quasi-Twenties megaphone-fey trifle yet, if Medicine Jar is perhaps the most ineffectual anti-drug sermon in rock history, or if he actually continues to come up with such lines as “My you’re so fine/When love is mine/I can’t go wrong” (Love Song)? Can’t all you rude infidels and ruffians out there see the point and true meaning of these little ditties, that everything is, indeed, fine?

It is also a credit to McCartney that he manages to render guest artists Allen Toussaint, Tom Scott, and Dave Mason as slick and faceless as the rest of Wings has always been. And the reader must bear in mind that none of this is meant as depreciation; on the contrary, facelessness is the business of Wings, and their recent success at it has been nothing short of dazzling.

This critic has read not a few recent reviews in these pages in which the root complaint was that the album under examination was just a piece of “product” put out by an artist indifferent or half-dead but propped up by slick production and session musicians. How refreshing, then, to note that Paul McCartney is not indifferent, that he is very much alive—and shrewd enough to turn himself into a glossy kingpin among session men. You may find a little dust in the grooves of Wings’ product, but never in its soul: it’s a clean machine—with Linda, of course, lending to the figure of the radiator cap on the radiator the radiant sarcasm of her smile. —Leser Bangs

WINGS: Venus and Mars Are Alright Tonight. Paul McCartney, Linda McCartney, Jimmy McCulloch, Joe English, Denny Laine, and Geoff Britton (vocals and instrumental); other musicians. Venus and Mars; Rock Show; Love in Song; You Gave Me the Answer; Magneto and Titanium Man; Letting Go; Venus and Mars (Reprise); Spirits of Ancient Egypt; Medicine Jar; Call Me Back Again; Listen to What the Man Said; Treat Her Gently—Lonely Old People. CAPITOL SMAS-11419 $6.98, ® 8XT 11419 $7.98, ® 4XT 11419 $7.98.
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The album opens with a challenge to anyone that has any kind of interest in Latin music at all, this one should whet your appetite for more. And if you live in New York, I advise you not to miss Nati Mistral’s concert in that city in October.

ORIGINAL PIANO TRIO: Nostalgia. Edgar Fairchild, George Dilworth, and Adam Carroll (pianos). I’ll Build a Stairway to Paradise; Chicago; Teasin’; Do It Again; The Sneak; Hot Lips; Yankee Doodle Blues; and seven others. KLAVER KS-128 $6.98.

Performance: Too little, too late
Recording: Good

The Original Piano Trio started attracting attention on Broadway in the early Twenties with three-piano arrangements of popular melodies of the day. The Trio comprised Edgar Fairchild, George Dilworth, and Herbert Clair, and their style lay somewhere between the ragtime that was on its way out and the foxtrot that was on its way in. They appeared in big Broadway revues to tremendous acclaim. By 1925, Adam Carroll had replaced Mr. Clair. Carroll, Fairchild, and Dilworth went on to play their arrangements of popular songs and “novelty” numbers right into the Thirties, when they introduced a style of the team. Their numbers are long and tend to lag, and the “cute” touches, as in Dear Old Southland, are a bit cloying. As history come to life, this exercise in deep recall is interesting, but as music it wears out its welcome long before it’s over. I found Peter Mintons thoroughly researched notes rather more entertaining than the music.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

ELVIS PRESLEY: Today. Elvis Presley (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. T.R.O.U.B.L.E; And I Love You So; Susan When She Tried; Woman Without Love; Shake a Hand; and five others. RCA APL1-1039 $6.98, ® APS1-1039 $7.98, © APK1-1039 $7.98.

Performance: Outstanding
Recording: Excellent

Hats off to the King, folks. He’s in superb voice, his performances are models of power, detail, and discretion, occasionally relieved by a wall of joyful release, and he graces any song (and there are some unsold fish amongst the material here) with his long experience, master craftsmanship, and unique will to thrill. The techniques and disciplines of making a studio recording—which Presley understands—make a good case for putting a tiger in a cage; it brings out more of the tiger. His live albums are disappointing.

What makes “Today” especially exciting is the sense of camaraderie. Presley is obviously enjoying himself, and the musicians supporting him give that extra oomph that is possible only at a happy session. At several moments it seems that Presley is summing up his whole career, demonstrating what he has learned and referring to his early days. Throughout the proceedings he displays his natural, infallible sense of what was considered shocking when his career began but is better understood today—that great music (or a great musician) is basically sensual. The sensuality may be tempered, disciplined, buried, or wildly misplaced, but it is the root. Presley always understood his roots.

PURE PRAIRIE LEAGUE: Two Lane Highway. Pure Prairie League (vocals and instrumentals): orchestra. Kentucky Moonshine; Runner; Memories; Harvest; Give Us a Rise; and six others. RCA APL1-0933 $6.98, ® APS1-0933 $7.98, © APK1-0933 $7.98.

Performance: Mild
Recording: Good

This is Western guff by a bunch of tenderfeet who can’t seem to decide whether or not the music tape...
whole thing is a put-on or a "fond re-creation." The most talent here is displayed by Chet Atkins, who makes a guest solo-guitar appearance in Kentucky Moonshine. The rest ranges from mild to mildewed, none of it up to the level of the cover art.

MINNIE RIPERTON: Adventures in Paradise. Minnie Riperton (vocals); orchestra. Inside My Love: Simple Things; Alone in Brewster Bay; Love and Its Glory; and six others. Epic PE 33454 $6.98. © PEA 33454 $7.98. © PET 33454 $7.98. © EAQ 33454 $8.98.

Performance: Engaging
Recording: Good

Minnie Riperton is a good-time girl, and her new album provides a good time. None other to linger over "deep meaning" in lyric or to ponder musically, she sells through this collection of her own material with the absent-minded but expert charm of the prettiest woman at a party. She's really at her best in such weighty songs as Minnie's Lament or Alone in Brewster Bay, which tend to make her serious-up for a while. Not that there's anything wrong with the idyll of When It Comes Down to It or Feelin' That Your Feelin's Right, only that she tends to toss them off so casually and assuredly that the label "professional charmer" seems ready and waiting to be pinned on her.

P.R.

DAVID SANCIOUS: Forest of Feelings. David Sancious (keyboards, guitar, percussion); Gerald Carboy (bass); Ernest Carter (drums). Joyce #8; Dixie; Suite Cassandra; East India; and five others. Epic KE 33441 $5.98.

Performance: Interesting
Recording: Excellent

David Sancious used to play keyboards in the E-Street Band, which backed singer Bruce Springsteen. Now he has his own group, Tone, and this is their first album, produced by drummer Billy Cobham, who joins in on the timpani here and there.

Sancious is only twenty-one, and we are told that he has been playing keyboards since the age of six; judging by what he does here, that is probably true. None of it will take your breath away, but Crystal Image, which he performs on the acoustic piano, indicates a combination of technique and improvisational talent to be reckoned with as a future breath remover. Sancious' version of Dixie is the least exhibitionistic track in this set. It is a brilliant, sinister mockery of the racist redneck chauvinism that song has come to symbolize. With delightful originality, Sancious gives the old Rebel anthem a new identity, conjuring up images of slaves escaping to freedom.

Although Sancious himself is most prominent here, credit should also go to his colleagues, who obviously are on his wavelength and make the album as much a group as a solo effort. The music is not really jazz, nor is it rock in any strict sense, though there are certainly strong elements of both in evidence. Let's just call it music and hope for more. David Sancious has just begun to speak for himself—and he ain't just whistlin' Dixie.

SPIRIT: Spirit of '76. Spirit (vocals and instruments); Victim of Society; Lady of the Lakes: What Do I Have; Sunrise; When?; Happy; and nineteen others. Mercury SRM-3-804 two discs $9.96. © MCT8-2-804 $10.96. © MCT7-2-804 $10.96.

Performance: Nauseating
Recording: Good

Spirit was around for a while in the Sixties, when they put out a few albums. They disappeared and might have stayed away forever, only (1 gather) someone convinced someone else that all those lotus-eating California groups that never made it should be given another chance. Here are two discs full, all white sheep and baah-baah. The album is a
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JAMES TAYLOR: Gorilla. James Taylor (vocals, guitar, ukulele); Andy Newmark (drums); Willie Weeks (bass); other musicians. Mexico: Music; How Sweet It Is; Wandering; Gorilla; You Make It Easy; and five others. WARNER BROS. BS 2866 $6.98, © M8 2866 $7.98, ® M 2866 $7.98.

**Performance:** Meandering  
**Recording:** Excellent

More musician than entertainer, James Taylor will build a chord progression that is surprising, perhaps inspired in a mild way, and over this fine framework he will stretch a melody thin as recycled gauze, and onto it he will toss an offhand assortment of lyrics that tend to be disjointed when they are about something— and (more often the case lately) trite when they are not about anything. "Gorilla" is both aimless and pointless. Taylor sometimes conveys with his singing that a lot of things are pointless—and yet he is skillful at promising and teasing and keeping people hanging on for better things. The last album before this was his best-sustained piece of work in some time, but that may be merely part of the tease—try doing "Mud Slide Slim" too many times and everyone will leave. Now I'm back to sitting on my hands and waiting for him. Part of it, of course, is the understanding between Taylor and his audience that the real show's going on inside his and their heads. This is the kind of game a performer and his cult can play a long time, so he may put off for years having to actually articulate that profundity his dark, romantic soul is supposed to be working on back in there. He does keep up his musical standards, once you allow for the flatness of the tune he's settled on—David Grisman's mandolins even put some tantalizing moments into the title song—but he's gone through another whole album without getting much of anything said. N.C.

RICHARD & LINDA THOMPSON: Hokey Pokey. Richard Thompson (vocals, guitar, mandolin, electric dulcimer [!], hammered dulcimer, piano); Linda Thompson (vocals); other musicians. Hokey Pokey: I'll Regret It All in the Morning; Smiffy's Glass Eye; The Egypt Room; Never Again; and five others.

**Performance:** Very good  
**Recording:** Good

Richard Thompson used to be with Fairport Convention and is one of the more capable guitar players in British pop-land. Linda is his wife, but this isn't like one of those Paul-and-Linda deals. *This* Linda has a lovely voice in the tradition of Jacqui McShee and Sandy Denny, and this album is measured against a previous solo attempt by Richard, is quite well, quite well. Done well, too, although it isn't the kind of super thing you could live without another day or two. *Never Again* is one example of the kind of singing Linda can do, the kind a British pop lady has to be able to do, and *Georgia on a Speck and Mole in a Hole* indicate she doesn't have to stick to pretty little tunes. Richard continues to sound like most other British folk-rock boy singers up from the working class, nasal as hell and in over his head with about half the lyrics, but he plays more acoustic guitar here than usual (and the electric dulcimer turns out not to be a
rampaging horror), and he can pick. The songs are reasonably good, and the back-up, which includes Aly Bain on fiddle sometimes, is lean and clean.

N.C.

TANYA TUCKER. Tanya Tucker (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. Lizzie and the Rainman; Love of a Rolling Stone; I'm Not Lisa; Traveling Salesman; and five others.

Lisa; Traveling Salesman; and five others. Rainman; Love of a Rolling Stone; I'm Not instrumental accompaniment. Lizzie and the

TANYA TUCKER. Tanya Tucker (vocals); specialized way, both having proved they can

attract new teenage fans to Johnny Rodriguez, vital to country music in a

N.C.

The biggest problem with this album, though, is that it just isn't country. Linda Ronstadt's version of When Will I Be Loved, in addition to being richer, is closer to being country than Tucker's is. Tucker's is more believable as an interpreter than you might expect, and she doesn't seem to be afraid of work. I expect she'll grow up to be a rich lady.

N.C.

RICK WAKEMAN: The Myths and Legends of King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table. Rick Wakeman (keyboards); Ashley Holt, Gary P. Hopkins (vocals); Jeffrey Crampton (guitar); Roger Newell (bass); Barney James (drums); John Hodson (percussion); English Chamber Choir; orchestra. Arthur; Lady of the Lake; Guinevere; Sir Lancelot and the Black Knight; and three others. A & M SP-4515 $6.98. ® 8T-4515 $7.98. © CS-4515 $7.98.

Performance: Ye gads Recording: Good

The legend of King Arthur has turned to schlock before our eyes before and will again. Even Mark Twain lost his perspective in trying to exploit this particular motif, although his business about the bicycles—at least if you could get it in the old "classics illustrated" comic-book version—was easier to take than Richard Burton's singing and Robert Goulet's acting in Camelot and everything but Maria Schell in The Hanging Tree. Small wonder, though, that Rick Wakeman, the Ken Russell of sound, should get around to this. Just think of all the costumes; not even The Six Wives of Henry VIII could match it there, being stuck indoors so much. This time Wakeman has written lyrics—well, words—and got some orchestral and choral help to back his keyboard evocations of How It Must Have Been. His ideas concerning How It Must Have Been, as usual, to be based on the feeling that it included a lot of sound-effects blipping from one side of the room (or the greensward or whatever it was) to the other. If he were demonstrating how the old ping-pong days of early stereo must have been, it would make a little more sense. There's also a little lyrical piano here and there, and the kind of moon-June lyrics the subject of Camelot always seems to inspire. I could hardly wait for the Norman Conquest.

N.C.

BARRY WHITE: Just Another Way to Say I Love You. Barry White (vocals); orchestra. All Because of You; Let Me Live My Life Lovin' You Babe; Love Serenade; and three others. 20TH CENTURY T-466 $6.98. ® 8466 $7.98. ® C466 $7.98.

Performance: Good Recording: Good

There's something of an anomaly here: Barry White writes and performs, with sweaty gusto, very good rhythm-and-blues songs; but then, as arranger and producer, he sets them in suavely ornate commercial arrangements. The result? A lot better than you might think. Best is his two-part Love Serenade, tracks that alternately quake and purr and that demonstrate White's real abilities to entertain. "Easy listening" may sound a bit weird as a description of the album, but it's about as apt as I'm able to get. Highly enjoyable.

P. R.

PETER YARROW: Hard Times. Peter Yarrow (vocals and guitar); orchestra. Carry Me; Wanderin'; Wrong Rainbow; Sitting in Lim-
This is a sensitively done collection of songs from both the Depression of the Thirties and the current one of the Seventies. Some of the Thirties material, such as Beale, Bacon and Gravy and Winshiro Cotton Mill Blues, has been updated with new words and music by Yarrow. He's done a carefully researched and respectful job on them, and he performs them well, keeping a loose style that fits what were, in the originals, basically ad-lib songs sung by people forced out onto the road. One classic that he has wisely left alone is Jay Gorney and Yip Harburg's 'Buddy, Can You Spare a Dime?' a song that remains as powerful and as mordantly true as anything that Bertolt Brecht ever wrote. The newer songs, such as Michael Bacon's 'Wrong Rainbow' and Yarrow's own 'Break the Polished Glass,' are good enough, but they are no match for the gallantry, the knocked-about-but-still-on-one's-feet poise, that permeates the earlier work. But that's probably the difference between the two Depressions: today the ultimate cry of desperation is, "I'll have to go on welfare!" Hey, how about all the people who had (or have) no welfare to count on? Small wonder that the older songs still burn and cauterize with such an acid sharpness.

COLLECTIONS


Performance: Good jam, but it has pits in it
Recording: Homemade

Southern California isn't exactly a breeding ground for blues performers, but, as this album shows, there is some blues activity in San Diego. This is a collection of recordings made in the Folk Arts Music Store there, presumably a couple of years ago. Much of it is rather ordinary, catching, as it does, bluesmen in the dusk of their careers, but there is also some good stuff here, most notably the singing of Tom Courtney backed by guitarist Henry Ford Thompson—an entire album devoted to them would not be out of order. Louis Major—at forty-one the youngest in the crowd—might also be given more exposure: he is only a fair singer, but his guitar playing is quite impressive. Bonnie Jefferson is downright awful. Thomas Shaw and Sam Chatman—a veteran of the Mississippi Sheiks (his name is misspelled on the album)—show only traces of what they once had to offer. and Bob Jefferey plays piano like an old guitarist. Technically, the recording is on a par with home movies: lots of pops on most of the vocals, but fairly good presence.

(Continued on page 92)
The innovation that started an industry.

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"...her voice was something of a dumb...

Judy Garland: On the Tube On Disc

JUDY GARLAND'S voice was a natural phenomenon which will continue cascading over us from records for years to come. After her death she fell from grace somewhat, and some of her albums have gone out of print, but all the books about her out this year may set trend bells ringing and record-business accountants salivating. Of course publishers are notorious overreactors, producing five or ten books on a subject when one would do. Perhaps there is no Judy Garland revival. Perhaps there is left only a forlorn rear guard of die-hard fans, a Lost Patrol manning the last outpost of Nostalgia.

Yet, as her death in 1969 of an "incautious overdose" of barbiturates receded into the past, the more grotesque aspects of her worship by the Day of the Locust people and the faghaguerie will also be effaced by time. Then perhaps we can savor the distillate of her life and talent in purer form, see her not as our Crazy Lady of the Sorrows but as the infectious, ebullient entertainer she was at her best.

Whether by calculation or happenstance, there is a new Judy Garland album out this year. It has been cobbled up from her television shows, titled "Judy Garland Concert," and is, I am told, being hawked on television, presumably in that increasingly ubiquitous genre of commercials offering things like "The All-Time Hits of Horace Heidt and His Musical Knights," "Love Songs of World War III," and "The Best Jewish Wedding Music of the Last 4,000 Years" as played by Freddy Marmelstein and His Magic Accordion. The album is available in Woolworth/Woolco stores, and although you wouldn't call it a million-dollar baby in a five-and-ten-cent store, it is surprisingly good, mainstream Judy Garland.

Judy's first television appearance, a ninety-minute special for CBS in 1955, was well received. Behind the scenes, however, it was a characteristic Garland teeter on the brink of disaster. As Gerold Frank recounts the story in his book Judy, the show almost didn't come off because Judy, unable to sleep, had swallowed a mess of her favorite Seconals just before early wake-up call on the day of the show, which was to be broadcast live. Benzedrine, iced tea, and Chinese food were forced down her and she walked through the special dress rehearsal like a zombie, mouthing her songs because her voice was totally gone. But, come show time, she was sufficiently detoxified to do her numbers.

A typical Judy Garland story, then, but it outlines an image. Frank fills it in: after she had sung the finale—Over the Rainbow, of
course—she ran backstage to embrace her then husband, Sid Luft. When Luft withdrew from the embrace, he discovered blood on his shirt. In straining to reach the final high notes of "Swanee," she had dug her fingers so hard into her palms that she drew blood. So we can't say Judy Garland never bled for us; those were singer's stigmata, emblematic of her professionalism and the inner, driving need for approval that kept hurling her against the footlights like a bruised moth.

Whether the version of Over the Rainbow in this album is that particular one or whether it occurred during the series of shows she did on CBS in 1963 can't be determined. "Judy Garland Concert" contains a nice spread of pictures of her, plus a text reciting the highlights of her career, but almost nothing about when the songs were done or, indeed, about the television shows they are drawn from. The producers of the record might have solicited some notes from Mel Tormé, who wrote special musical material for the 1963-1964 series and later set down the entire horrendous experience in a book called The Other Side of the Rainbow.

The television series, which could have solved Judy's chronic, debilitating financial problems if it had caught on, was not a success. It was on Sunday night opposite Bonanza, the nation's most popular show at the time, but there was also the problem of the immiscibility of Judy and television. As the New York Times television critic Cyclops recently observed, Judy may have been too "hot" a personality, in the McLuhan sense, for the "cool" medium—she was such a welter of emotions, turbulent, always clinging to her guests.

Furthermore, the network production geniuses never figured out what to do with her, other than let her sing, and she couldn't do that for a solid hour. Nor could she ever develop the cornpone bonhomie of Dinah Shore or the narcoleptic, sweatered casualness of Perry Como, to name two singers who did make it on the box. My God—she was a star who was magnified under the camera's cold eye. She was not a strong friend she could always call on. While Luft withdrew, she had dug her fingers so hard into her palms that she drew blood.

For the greater part, however, the voice here is whole: it was one which seemed to embrace three or four voices—Dorothy's wistfulness (that was almost gone), the ingenious cheerleader peppiness of Babes in Arms, the vibrant young womanhood of Esther in Meet Me in St. Louis, the throaty maturity of Vicki in A Star Is Born. Though she would occasionally bemoan the fate that had gifted her with that blind force of nature within (because it retarded her development as an actress), her voice was something of a dumb, strong friend she could call on to stun into docility that potentially dangerous, potentially nurturing beast, the audience. And when it was slow to answer her call she would have to clenched her fists till the blood came. For the buzzsaw of time was grinding again, poor Pauline was at the eleventh hour, and only her voice could save her—certainly she could not save herself. Eventually the eleventh hour came—and went. Midnight tolled for Judy Garland.

JUDY GARLAND CONCERT. Judy Garland (vocals); unidentified orchestral accompaniment, Liza. After You've Gone; San Francisco, From This Moment On; Alexander's Ragtime Band; Moon River; Be a Clown; Smile; You've Got That Thing That I Like Being in Love; Over the Rainbow; and twelve others. TROPHY TR 7-2145 two discs $7.95. © TR 7-2145-8 $8.95.
STEREO REVIEW

SPOKEN WORD

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

Performance: Inspired
Recording: Clean
This will probably be the first Python LP to reach a mass audience in the United States. Two others, "Another Monty Python Record" and "Monty Python's Previous Record," were released here about three years ago with little promotion, but this one will certainly benefit from the success of the group's very popular television show.

"Matching Tie and Handkerchief" is billed as the first "three-sided" album. Bear with me now, because this gets a little confusing. Both faces of the record are deliberately listed as "Side 2." The actual second side has the serial number AL-4039-SB. By a mysterious mechanical process, they have managed to include two separate, full-length recordings by putting recording A into one series of grooves and recording B into the alternate, parallel series of grooves. So don't be surprised if you decide to play the second side again to enjoy a favorite sketch and come up with, as the Pythons are wont to say, something completely different.

The humor is quick-fire, literate, demonic, and cheerfully faced with English sadism, and the Pythons are all excellent actors. It's not possible to describe their routines in detail without spoiling them; but there are several choice ones here: the Church police investigating the death of a halibut; a discussion of medieval open-field farming supposedly sung by reggae star Jimmy Cliff and rocker Gary Glitter; an interview with a surgeon who's aroused controversy by "grafting a pederast onto an Anglican bishop"; and a particularly treasurable and lunatic sketch about a man in a record shop listening to something called "World War One Noises." There are some weak moments in the album, as there are in all Python outings, but the best of the material and performances here are better than any former favorite of their LP skits (on "Another...Record"), a concert by the Royal Philharmonic topped off with Pablo Casals taking a solo while jumping four hundred feet into a jar of hot fat. Noble Python, for this relief, many thanks.

J.V.

JAZZ

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT
RON CARTER: Spanish Blue. Ron Carter (bass); Hubert Laws (flute); Billy Cobham (drums). others. Sabado Sombreo; El Noche Sol; So What; Arkansas. CTI CTI-6051 S1 $6.98, © CT8-6051 $6.95, © CTC-6051 $6.95.

Performance: Creed Taylor-made
Recording: Excellent
This is another album by members of the CTI repertory players. Ron Carter is the leader, but the set could just as well have been issued under Hubert Laws' or Billy Cobham's name, or, for that matter, under Hubert Laws' funky flute soars fancifully through the mechanical process, they have managed to include two separate, full-length recordings by putting recording A into one series of grooves and recording B into the alternate, parallel series of grooves. So don't be surprised if you decide to play the second side again to enjoy a favorite sketch and come up with, as the Pythons are wont to say, something completely different.

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J.V.
II'nd only to the III.

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Precision-wound toroid inductors, wound in our own factory, are common in all SAE equalizers. These carefully constructed inductors are used to assure quiet, distortion-free tonal alterations.


Performance: The sound of innocence

Recording: Respectfully dubbed

The lore that has grown up around the "Jazz Era" of the Twenties and the "Swing Era" of the Thirties has proliferated to the point where it takes longer to read the album notes accompanying one of these exercises in nostalgia than to listen to the disc. Shamelessly admiring essay for this two-record set that makes up the first volume of RCA's "The Complete Goodman" drawn from the once-popular bargain Bluebird label, Mort Goody not only tells all about how Mr. Goodman ushered in the Swing Era in 1935—the year all the items on these discs were recorded—but even supplies headlines of the period from the New York Times to cue us in on world history. Half-blind from reading the close-printed type and impatient with the doggedly researched documentation, I turned with some relief to the mild, easy music it's all about: songs like Hunkadola and The Dixieland Band and The Japanese Sandman, all in an idiom this listener grew up with when the sound of Benny Goodman's clarinet, and the sound of swing, seemed a part of the natural landscape. Goodman, we were told even then, was out there on the ramparts, making musical history, getting guts back into the sound of jazz, reviving the essential element of improvisation, setting the whole world on its ear to the sound of swing.

Well, it all sounds fairly innocuous now—items like Restless, The Devil and the Deep Blue Sea, and Blue Skies never quite shed their banality no matter how expert and ingenious the clarinet embellishments, how energetic Gene Krupa's drums. Still, it was important then for Goodman to try to take the swing out of popular music, to de-sentimentalize it, to get it going. In his treatment of Jelly Roll Morton's King Porter Stomp and Madhouse you can hear how he did it, and the sound holds up. Much of the time, though, he was far less a swinger than a smoothie. Mr. Goodman, at least in 1935, was further behind the barricades than we thought. P.K.

BUNK JOHNSON: The Last Testament of a Great New Orleans Jazzman. Bunk Johnson (trumpet): Alphonso Steele (drums); Ed Cuffee (trombone); Don Kirkpatrick (piano); Danny Barker (guitar); Wellman Braud (bass). Chloe: The Entertainer; The Minstrel Man; You're Driving Me Crazy; Some Day; Till We Meet Again; and six others. COLUMBIA SPECIAL PRODUCTS JCL 829 $5.98.

Performance: Appealing

Recording: Fair

Bunk Johnson was a New Orleans cornetist during the days when jazz was developing out of marching-band tunes, field hollers, blues, and ragtime. He was second cornet in the band led by Buddy Bolden. He was additionally honored (on the testimony of his contemporaries) as the first great jazz cornet. Johnson also claimed to have inspired young Louis Armstrong (which Armstrong denied). The first part of Johnson's career lasted until 1931, when the Depression, the loss of most of his teeth, and the smashing of his horn in a brawl put him out of action. He took whatever kind of work he could find as a laborer. During the late Thirties the authors of Jazzmen, one of the most important histories of the music at that time, contacted Johnson, who supplied valuable information on the early New Orleans period, as well as noting that he was sure he could play again if he had a new horn and new teeth. The grateful authors and researchers supplied him with both. By late 1945 he had assembled a band (including, if memory serves, George Lewis on clarinet and Jimmy Archey on trombone) and was playing in New York. He was successful, popular, and lionized. He still had the beauty of tone and delicate phrasing he had been applauded for in his youth. Shortly after coming to New York he made his first commercial recordings.

Two years later he organized a new band along lines more to his liking. He was fed up with endless requests to play such warhorses as When the Saints Go Marching In. He wanted a band that played primarily for dancing, with musicians capable of reading, so as to take advantage of the whole repertoire of popular music from four decades, whether it was New Orleans-spawned or not. But his backers decided that recordings might help popularize the band, so twelve brief sides were cut on three interviews, setting the whole world on its ear to the sound of swing.

The sound of innocence. The sound of swing. Bunk Johnson, we were told even then, was out there on the ramparts, making musical history, getting guts back into the sound of jazz, reviving the essential element of improvisation, setting the whole world on its ear to the sound of swing. Bunk Johnson's clarinet, and the sound of swing, seemed a part of the natural landscape. Goodman, we were told even then, was out there on the ramparts, making musical history, getting guts back into the sound of jazz, reviving the essential element of improvisation, setting the whole world on its ear to the sound of swing.
George Russell, and, more recently, Keith Tristano, Oscar Pettiford, Al Cohn and Zoot Wallington, and it includes work with Lennie years to the time he was with pianist George professional career goes back more than twenty first album as a leader. But Motian's profes- of forty-five, and to my knowledge this is his jazz people, but I am applying them positively inevitable had to lead, but there are surpris- 

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT 
HUBERT LAWS: The Chicago Theme. Hubert Laws (flute); Randy Brecker (trumpet); Bob James (keyboards); George Benson. Eric Gale (guitar); Ron Carter, Stanley Clarke (bass); Steve Gadd, Ralph McDonald (percussion); other musicians. Going Home; Midnight at the Oasis; Inflation Chaser; and three others. CTI CTI-6058 $7.95, ® CTC-6058 $7.95. 

Performance: Tiffany 
Recording: Excellent 

Hubert Laws' latest album is slick and com- mercial. Now, these adjectives usually horrify jazz people, but I am applying them positively to this album, which blends highly marketable glossiness with outstanding artistry. Hubert Laws fronts a group of elite CTI regulars, and you wouldn't expect less than good results; this set, however, is more than excellent. 

Going Home, the old spiritual Antonin Dvořák used in his New World Symphony, is replete with train effects, but it moves appropiately, and The Chicago Theme—a composition by Bob James, who wrote all but two arrangements for this set—is a catchy number made to order for the FM soul set. Laws' own I Had a Dream and Inflation Chaser, on which the strings bow out, flirt less with the cash register and should appeal to those who like their improvisations without designed accouterments. 

You Make Me Feel Brand New, a hit in the hands of the Stylistics, is played rather straight and is less interesting than the rest of the album, but Midnight at the Oasis, the only track featuring guitarist George Benson, more than makes up for that minor weakness. The interplay between Laws and Benson, top men on their respective instruments, provides an exciting highlight to an album crammed with rich, rhythmic sounds. C.A. 

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT 
PAUL MOTIAN: Tribute. Paul Motian (percussion); Carlos Ward (alto saxophone); Sam Brown, Paul Metzke (guitar); Charlie Haden (bass). War Orphans; Tuesday Ends Saturday; Song for Che; and two others. ECM 1048 $6.98. 

Performance: First-rate 
Recording: Excellent 

Drummer Paul Motian is approaching the age of forty-five, and to my knowledge this is his first album as a leader. But Motian's professional career goes back more than twenty years to the time he was with pianist George Wallington, and it includes work with Lennie Tristano, Oscar Pettiford, Al Cohn and Zoot Sims, Herbie Mann, Paul Bley, Bill Evans, George Russell, and, more recently, Keith Jarrett. In part, "Tribute" embraces the free form to which Motian's background almost inevitably had to lead, but there are surpris- 

ABOUT OUR STEREO IMAGE 

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CIRCLE NO. 40 ON READER SERVICE CARD

OCTOBER 1975
ingly traditional passages here, dominated by the two Spanish-tinged guitars, and it all bears the mark of excellence we have come to expect from producer Manfred Eicher. Besides some exquisite playing by guitarists Sam Brown and Paul Metzge, there are effective performances from saxophonist Carlos Ward on two selections, *Victoria* and *Sod House.* Motion's percussion work is, of course, an active ingredient throughout, but he is never obtrusive (as drummers usually tend to get when they are calling the shots).

The Polydor pressing of this U.S. release is unusually good, but I must say that I had no idea how good the ECM sound really was until I recently received a batch of the label's German pressings.

RAUL DE SOUZA: *Colors.* Raul de Souza (trombone); Richard Davis (bass); Jack DeJohnette (drums); others. *Nana; Crystal Silence; Canto de Ossanha* and *Chants to Burn.* With such outstanding talent on hand, producer Arito Moreira—himself an impressive performer—has seemingly accomplished a remarkable feat of de-inspiration.

MARY LOU WILLIAMS: *Mary Lou's Mass.* Mary Lou Williams (piano); David Amram; Julius Watkins (French horn); Roger Glenn (flute); Chris White (bass); Al Hearwood; Ralph McDonald (percussion); Milton Grayson, Carl Hall, Christine Spencer (vocals); others: chorus, Howard Roberts cond. *Mary M 102 $5.98* (from Mary Records, P.O. Box 32, Hamilton Grange, New York, N.Y. 10031).

Performance: Well-intentioned
Recording: Good

**RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT**

MARY LOU WILLIAMS: *Zoning.* Mary Lou Williams, Zita Carno (piano); Bob Cranshaw; Milton Suggs (bass); Mickey Roker (drums); Tony Waters (conga); Play It Woman; Holy Ghost; Olinga; Praise the Lord; and seven others; *Mary M 103 $5.98* (from Mary Records, P.O. Box 32, Hamilton Grange, New York, N.Y. 10031).

Performance: Sublime
Recording: Excellent

Numerous jazz artists have survived the changing eras of jazz, but pianist/composer/arranger Mary Lou Williams not only survived them, she changed with them and often pointed the way to new developments. She was arranging for the Andy Kirk orchestra as far back as 1929 and playing boogie-woogie in the best Kansas City tradition; in the late Thirties she wrote arrangements for Benny Goodman's band; in the early Forties she contributed to the charts of the Ellington band; in 1945 her *Zodiac Suite* was premiered at New York's Town Hall, and the following year it was performed by the New York Philharmonic; she helmed *te* early hours and welcomed it with her open mind; when free-form jazz became the idiom’s avant-garde, Ms. Williams was not left behind, for her musical thinking had always been avant-garde.

Religious activities took Mary Lou Williams away from her music for a few years during the mid-Fifties, and when she returned she combined her two devotions—jazz and Roman Catholicism. "Mary Lou Williams" (Mary Records FS-32843), released in 1964, marked Ms. Williams' return to recording after a ten-year absence. The album—now out of print—contained a mixture of spiritual and secular music, the former giving a hint of things to come. An unnumbered album entitled "Music for Peace" was released in 1970; it is this album—with some deletions and the addition of five 1972 tracks—that now reappears as "Mary Lou's Mass." Although I find the new version an improvement over the old, the overall effect is rather fragmentary. The segments range in time from fifty-two seconds to nearly four and a half minutes, and the album counts among its attributes the flute play-

(Continued on page 98)
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THEATER/FILMS

HOORAY FOR HOLLYWOOD. Original-soundtrack recordings. Dick Powell, Ruby Keeler, Joan Blondell, Una Merkel, and others in selections from Hollywood Hotel; Gold Diggers of 1933; 42nd Street; In Caliente; Gold Diggers of 1937; Wonder Bar; Fashions of 1934; and And She Learned About Dames. UNITED ARTISTS M UA-LA 361-H-I $7.98. © EA361-H-I $7.98.

Performance For God and Warner Bros. Recording Hoarse, relentless

This "companion volume" to the earlier United Artists release of "The Golden Age of Hollywood" doesn't come complete with a pop-up of a Busby Berkeley production number the way the first one did, but little else has been overlooked. The disc is surrounded by pictures and blurbs and a sixteen-page booklet to stare at while you listen. Even the label is decorated with a flower-arrangement of chorus girls. But the record itself has to be heard to be believed. This time, we are treated not only to the excruciating Vitaphone sound of original songs from the musicals, soaking in their sudsy settings, but also to snatches of dialogue already immortal in the annals of cinema. I mean, here is Warner Baxter himself exhorting the cast of Pretty Lady on their opening night in 42nd Street to go out there and knock 'em dead, in the show biz pep talk to end them all. Here is Bebe Daniels, with a sprained ankle, limping into the dressing room of Ruby Keeler, her replacement, and telling her, "Now go out there and be so swell that you'll stagger Mr. Bagley who is responsible. Not all the lesser-known music of, among others, Por ser, Coward, Gershwin, L. O. Styne, Rodgers and Hart—not to mention De Sylva, Brown, and Henderson. Now he is devoting his energies to re-releasing these same restorations on his own Painted Smiles label for those who were not quick-witted enough to get the original. As such, for example, was issued by Columbia about a decade ago and disappeared from the shelves all too fast. Now it is back with one new singer—George Reinholt, adored as daytime TV's top-rated star until he quit NBC's Another World recently—singing an amazing four Kern songs to swell the program to a total of thirteen. And swell the program is, as those of us who have been enjoying it all these years have been trying to tell our friends.

Mr. Kern's annotator reminds us, "was married to the same wife for forty years" tried "this love is reflected in his music—a sweet, trusting sort of emotion which may never come back." I dare say that if it does it will be Mr. Bagley who is responsible. Not all the items on this "revisited" list are top-drawer hits, nor would they intend to be presented as such. Songs like I Have the Room Above, Blue Danube Blues, and Some Sort of Somebody have a certain goofy period charm just because they didn't have it in them to be hits. But the record also offers Bobby Short's sly tribute to Barbra Cook, Mr. Kern's winsome treatment of the composer's favorite, In the Heart of the Dark, and Never Gonna Dance, long since immortalized by Miss Daniels herself. Mr. Reinholt has a strong, clear baritone and "puts over" his share of these old-fashioned songs in a surprisingly old-fashioned way for such a young man, but none of them are remarkable enough to make me urge you to go all the way and acquire this re-release if you already own the Columbia version.

P.K.

HOORAY FOR HOLLYWOOD. Original-soundtrack recordings. Dick Powell, Ruby Keeler, Joan Blondell, Una Merkel, and others in selections from Hollywood Hotel; Gold Diggers of 1933; 42nd Street; In Caliente; Gold Diggers of 1937; Wonder Bar; Fashions of 1934; and And She Learned About Dames. UNITED ARTISTS M UA-LA 361-H-I $7.98. © EA361-H-I $7.98.

Performance For God and Warner Bros. Recording Hoarse, relentless

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**Two Harbingers of Health**

While I was still congratulating myself for having rediscovered Broadway during the 1974-1975 season—hugely enjoying such very different shows as The Ritz, Equus, Sherlock Holmes, and Bette Midler's Clams on the Half-Shell Revue—I learned with a certain chagrin that this has been the largest-grossing season in American theater history and that I was not especially clever in going back to Broadway, but was just one of thousands, part of a trend.

Theorists among my showfolk friends tell me that during bad financial periods audiences flock to the theater—perhaps escaping from unpleasant reality—and the theater responds by trotting out its whole bag of time-worn tricks. To me the healthiest sign at this moment in the life of Broadway theater, known for years as the Fabulous Invalid, is the resurgence of interest in American musical comedy. The Wiz and Goodtime Charley may not have made history, but there were two big musical hits at the end of the season that probably will. They are Chicago and A Chorus Line, and their original-cast albums are now available for you to sample.

So much talent was concentrated in Chicago—music by John Kander, lyrics by Fred Ebb, direction by Bob Fosse, and performances by Gwen Verdon, Chita Rivera, Jerry Orbach, and Mary McCarty—that I couldn't wait for it to open officially. I went to a preview and came out of the theater beaming and proud to be an American, for this is really an area in which the American composer and lyricist have no peer. The craft, professionalism, and virtuosity displayed in this show are nothing short of staggering.

It's set in Chicago during the Twenties, which gives it a short-skirted, black-stocking, sinful tone—"men everywhere, jazz everywhere, booze everywhere." It's the story of two cheap floozies, Roxie Hart and Velma Kelly, who meet in prison (each has murdered her lover), and of their efforts to win acquittal and capitalize on the publicity generated by their crimes.

In content Chicago is a cynical, rather Brechtian piece about American justice and the role played in it by newspaper publicity and public sympathy for sexy, low-class murderers. There's just nobody to like among the characters, but the show is so much fun it doesn't matter. It's billed as a musical vaudeville (Brechtian structure), and the story is told in a series of entertaining show-biz routines. An expert chorus and fine scenery and costumes contribute to the flashiness, and I loved the show most for its blatant, unabashed theatricality.

The Chicago recording (on the new Arista label) is rare among show albums in that it is complete in itself whether you've seen the show on stage or not. You can follow the story quite well on the record, and you get all the material. Music by John Kander, lyrics by Fred Ebb, direction by Bob Fosse, and performances by Gwen Verdon, Chita Rivera, Jerry Orbach, and Mary McCarty—each is superior so highly, have been far too slow to discover its superb way of projecting lyrics (just listen to him in All I Care About and Razzle Dazzle). Barney Martin, Rosic's infertile husband, has a very good song in Mr. Cellophane.

The sound is excellent, and the whole thing hangs together so well that I looked 'way down into the fine print to see who had produced it. The new Arista Philadelphia production is by Phil Ramone. Chicago is the kind of show that made the American musical famous: the original-cast recording is the kind that got a lot of show-album collectors started. If you're already a collector, it's a must. If you'd like to be, it's the place to start.

A more widely discussed show is A Chorus Line, produced off-Broadway by the New York Shakespeare Festival and later moved uptown to a larger theater. It won the New York drama critics' award as the best musical of the year. As the title implies, it is a show about dancing, specifically about Broadway show dancers, who are known in theater circles as gypsies.

In the men's room of a bar in the theater district (where I once collected the graffiti "Latin is sic, sic, sic!") I recently saw pencil writing on the wall: "A Chorus Line will do for gypsies what Fiddler did for the Jews." Well, I don't know precisely what Fiddler on the Roof did for Jewish Americans, but I don't think anyone who sees A Chorus Line will ever again take for granted the contribution of chorus dancers to Broadway.

The show does not glorify backstage life. It takes a hard look at the dancer's short, strenuous career (in the various shows in which they have appeared the cast members of A Chorus Line have sustained thirty back, twenty-four knee, and thirty-six ankle injuries realistic, very graphically constructed book for the show (by James Kirkwood and Nicholas Dante) is based on the lives of ac-
tual dancers, including some connected with this production.

A Chorus Line makes its effects quite differently from Chicago. Lacking fancy sets and costumes, it takes place on a rehearsal stage where a director is auditioning dancers for the Broadway show he is casting. After the first elimination, seventeen candidates remain from whom the director must choose eight. Since the dancers he picks for the projected show will have some lines in it, the director needs to hear them talk, and he has each of them telling something about his background. (Gypsy friends tell me it never happens this way at real auditions, but it's an inspired device, and it works very well in the theater.)

At the beginning the dancers are a rather unprepossessing crew dressed in motley practice clothes, but as the show unfolds and they reveal themselves one by one, you realize that they are quite individual and a thoroughly likable, even lovable, bunch. You grow to loathe the director, Zach (Robert LuPone), and you get very much involved with the dancers, for there are humor and pathos in their rather prosaic life stories.

Some of what you learn about them comes from the musical numbers that make up the show. In At the Ballet, for example, Sheila (Carole Bishop), Bebe (Nancy Lane), and Maggie (Kay Cole) explain that they began studying dance because their home lives were drab and "everything was beautiful at the ballet." In Dance: Ten: Looks: Three, Val (Pamela Blair) tells how her career was hampered until she had her flat chest pumped up with silicone ("Tits and ass can change your life/They sure changed mine."). The most moving scenes, confrontations between the director and Cassie (Donna McKechnie) and Paul (Sammy Williams), are spoken.

By the end of the show, when the director chooses the eight dancers he wants to hire and dismisses the others, you are so engrossed in the situation that you are stunned. Then, in a big finale, all the dancers return in shiny satin and sequins for a reprise of One, the number used for the auditions. To see those kids all smiling, singing, and gallantly dancing their hearts out to give life to that banal number can tear you apart. I saw the show off-Broadway and again after it moved uptown (I think it is a little less than that.

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The things that make A Chorus Line such a marvelous and touching show—most of the funny lines, the dramatic tension, the big spoken scenes, and of course the company's fine dancing to Michael Bennett's choreography— are, I am sorry to report, absent from Columbia's original-cast album. The disc presents a condensed version of the music from the show, but few songs are, I think, a little less than that.

The heart of A Chorus Line is simply not on this disc. I listen to the album and wonder how I enjoyed the show so much. The show deserved its award as best musical, but ironically not for the music. I'd go back to see A Chorus Line tomorrow, but I don't expect to play the album many times.

A Chorus Line contains one song (What I Did for Love), well sung on the album by Priscilla Lopez) that just might make it as a pop hit on the order of The Way We Were. It's vague enough to give a strong interpreter some leeway in interpretation, and its lyrics have that Hallmark-card quality that always appeals to the mass audience ("Gone, love is never gone/As we travel on ."). Jack Jones has already recorded it for RCA and Johnny Mathis' version is due soon from Columbia. I'd like to hear it sung by, say, Shirley Bassey or, even better, Vikki Carr.

The strength of the score for Chicago is demonstrated by the way top-pop singers, always hungry for good material, have pounced on its songs. Before the show opened, Dinah Shore, Bernadette Peters, Kate Smith, and Tom Smothers were singing excerpts from Chicago on television. Within a week after release of the original-cast album, there was a big-band jazz recording of Chicago songs by Lee Konitz on Groove Merchant. The same label issued a single of Roxie by Cathy and the Richettes, and Ella Fitzgerald recorded that song and My Own Best Friend for Pablo. Recorded but unreleased at the time of writing are Roxie by Fred Astaire, Me and My Baby by Teresa Brewer and George Segal, All That Jazz and My Own Best Friend by Liza Minnelli, and Razzle Dazzle by Bing Crosby.

There will be lots more because these are the kind of songs—good songs—they used to play back in the old days.

I shall chart the progress of What I Did for Love and the songs from Chicago with great interest. If Chicago and A Chorus Line prove not to be isolated incidents and the Broadway musical is coming to life again, it could be very healthy for popular music. The theater's pulse, blood pressure, and other vital signs are good enough to make me think the Fabulous Invalid may yet get up out of her bed, put on her dancing shoes, and paint the town red again. I can hardly wait for the 1975-1976 season.

—William Livingstone
CHOOSING SIDES
By IRVING KOLODIN

THE BUDAPEST GODFATHER

The reissue on the Odyssey label of a choice cross-section of Budapest Quartet performances from that group’s prime period in the Fifties (Haydn’s Op. 76 on Y3-33324; Beethoven’s Op. 59, Op. 74, and Op. 95 on Y3-33316; Schubert’s Op. 29, Op. 161, and Death and the Maiden on Y3-33320) is much more than an event welcome in itself, for it also provides a recorded link in the chain of chamber-music appreciation in this country, connecting the prior phase of it, represented by RCA’s reissue of Flonzaley quartets, with the ongoing phase, represented by the latest Schwann listings of today’s fine American quartets.

The Flonzaley heritage was unique (even for its time) in being the product of an eccentric—meaning that it was supported by a man of means who was also a devotee of chamber music. The Budapest accession, a decade later, to the position of prominence relinquished by the Flonzaleys in 1927 exemplified a totally different economic approach as well as a wholly individual aesthetic one. History tells us that a Budapest Quartet toured briefly in America in 1930, but it was not until 1937, when Alexander Schneider (second violin) and Boris Kroyt (viola) joined Joseph Raisman (first violin) and Mischa Schneider (cello), that America began to hear the Budapest Quartet.

Against the still-echoing background of such elite groups as the Flonzaleys (with its Franco-Italian conditioning), the Lener (authentically Hungarian, and the first to have a complete cycle of Beethoven quartet recordings issued in this country), the unforgettable London (with its refinement and warmth of temperament), the Roth (peerless in Mozart), and the Pro Arte (Franco-Belgian at its best), the Budapest, as newly constituted, had its detractors. It was held by some to verge on vulgarities in its fervent pursuit of musical meaning; to stretch quartet sound to excess in its stress on equality of execution; to court vulgarity in making vibrato a strong, steady part of a warm ensemble sound rather than a color to be touched in with care. And as for welcoming a reigning jazz musician (Benny Goodman) to join in the recording of the Mozart Clarinet Quintet, wasn’t that pushing lack of pomposity just a bit too far?

But it is precisely the fervor, evenness of execution, warmth of sound, and lack of pomposity that make these performances as vital...
painting and, standing back and apart from it, appreciating new values and subtleties. During its playing days, the Budapest membership made much of its democratic rehearsal procedures, of not having a "leader" in the old Joachim, Kneisel, Rosé, Lener sense (a musical "dictator" to whom the others deferred). Perhaps so, but when it comes to articulating the personality of a quartet, of responding to an eighteenth-century work the way an eighteenth-century composer wrote it, only one man can assume the responsibility. Call him the "leader" or simply the first violinist, the unassuming Roisman assumed that leadership with the right amount of authority and all the strength of purpose needed to give Haydn's musical profile its distinctive, quirky conformation. In Op. 76, No. 1, it is the solo in the trio of the Menuet to which he imparts just the properly roguish touch. much as, in the Piu presto of the finale of No. 4, he gives a delightfully imitated of a man trying to oblige the composer by playing almost (but not quite) faster than he can. But he is also capable of a supernal sobriety, as in the hymnal slow movement of No. 3, the Emperor: I cannot recall ever having heard a performance more perfectly proportioned.

For those to whom these remarks may be merely affirmations of their own high regard for records already on their shelves, the overall release nevertheless holds an interest. That is a disc (Y3-33315) coupling previously unreleased performances (the forerunners of others to come, I am told) of the Franck Quintet (recorded in 1956) and the Fauré Piano Quartet No. 1 (recorded in 1957). Like the others, these are Library of Congress performances with all the acoustical benefits that implies. And they were recorded "live." I doubt the Clifford Curzon would play a more resonant, forceful Franck today, or that Jesus Maria Sanroma, now living in Puerto Rico, would be in any finer form for the Fauré. The second violinist in these performances (which are undoubtedly more intensely Slavic than a Francophile would prefer) is Alexander Schneider, whose presence returns the quartet to its first, and to its last, form (save that Leslie Parnas replaced the ailing Mischa Schneider in its final three concerts). As individuals, its members brought a rare combination of unity and diversity to their work: all were Jews, all were Russian-born (Roisman and Kroyt in Odessa, the Schneiders in Vilnius), all pursued their higher musical education in Germany. As a group they had a powerful effect on the playing of chamber music the world around.

The direct products of the quartet are the naturally emotional, highly disciplined, intensely intellectual music-making of these totally typical and thoroughly remarkable discs. The by-products are no less remarkable, for they are nothing less than the whole breed of today's supremely strong American string quartets. During a long period (1939-1949) in which foreign travel was all but ruled out, the Budapest Quartet was domiciled here, as active on the West coast as it was on the East. If the Juilliard Quartet (founded in 1945) can be said to be the father image to such groups as the Guarneri, Cleveland, Fine Arts, La Salle, and Tokyo, the spiritual godfather that set the standard they aspire to was surely the Budapest, the ensemble that was begun by Hungarians and ended up comprising four Russian-born, German-speaking American citizens.

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BARTÓK: Sonata No. 1 for Violin and Piano; Rhapsody No. 1 for Violin and Piano; Two Roumanian Dances. Denes Zsigmondy (violin); Anneliese Nissen (piano). KLAVER KS-535 $6.98.

BARTOK: Sonata for Unaccompanied Violin; Sonata No. 2 for Violin and Piano. Denes Zsigmondy (violin); Anneliese Nissen (piano). KLAVER KS-542 $6.98.

Performance: Absorbing
Recording: Very good

The two violin/piano sonatas of Béla Bartók were considered barely listenable for many critics during the years following their composition (1921-1922). Their unconventional, frankly experimental effects—barbaric-sounding chords, swooping glissandos, strangely placed pizzicatos—no longer sound terrifying, but these sonatas are still a long way from being ingratiating in the conventional sense. The solo sonata (1944), a late work written by an older, mellower, but not much more compromising Bartók, is more accessible; its slow third movement is almost a Romantic gesture in its winding chromaticism, and its final Presto has a moto perpetuo layout.

All three are highly individual and intensely colorful pieces, and they reward concentrated listening. Bartók, a virtuoso pianist, underlined the violin but struggled against its harmonic limitations. Nonetheless, he seldom allows the piano, a naturally harmonic instrument, to assume the commanding role in the violin/piano sonatas; the rich chordal writing of the violin carries the principal burden. The two instruments, incidentally, rarely complement each other—this is a partnership contrapuntally pursuing independent lines.

The performances are exceptionally good. Hungarian-born Denes Zsigmondy (pupil of Carl Frohlich and now Professor of Music at the University of Washington) plays this music with an elegance that bespeaks complete mastery of its difficulties. With all its rhythmic intricacies and strange sound combinations, it is obviously “mainstream” music for him. In the solo sonata, incidentally, he comes remarkably close to the timings indicated by Bartók (a notoriously fast timer of his own works) without compromising accuracy, articulation, or intonation. The pianist (Mrs. Zsigmondy) collaborates with him in a manner justifying the record liner’s high praise of this team of fine musicians.

There are some printing inaccuracies on both the jackets and the labels, but the music and the recording are of a very high caliber.

BEETHOVEN: String Quartets, Opp. 59, 74, and 95 (see Choosing Sides, page 102)

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

BEETHOVEN: Symphony No. 9, in D Minor, Op. 125 (“Choral”), Marita Napier (soprano); Anna Reynolds (contralto); Helge Brüll (tenor); Karl Röderbusch (bass); Ambrosian Singers; New Philharmonia Orchestra, Seiji Ozawa cond. PHILIPS 6747 119 two discs $15.96.

Performance: Radiant
Recording: Realistic

Just fifteen months ago Karl Böhm’s Deutsche Grammophon recording of Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony was welcomed in these pages for the “faultless sense of proportion” with which the veteran conductor “emphasizes the work’s straightforward humanity”; it has headed my list of recorded Niths since then, and I would not have imagined so strong a rival would appear in so short a time. Seiji Ozawa’s new Ninth on Philips is not faultless; it is an imperfect performance of what we are constantly reminded is an imperfect work; but it is also an extraordinarily moving one, generating more of the unforced radiance and spiritual “lift” one used to hope for from this music than any other recording of it known to me.

The solid integrity of Böhm’s Ninth is in no way diminished by Ozawa’s achievement, and the two approaches in fact have more than a few points in common. Both eschew the ceremonial and monumental connotations frequently attached to the work; neither sees the Ninth as a solemn rite, nor as an outpouring of bacchanalian abandon. Ozawa’s tempos, like

(Continued on page 106)
With three new albums from Vanguard, issued in both quadraphonic and stereo formats, Maurice Abravanel becomes the fifth conductor to complete the Gustav Mahler symphony cycle on records. Though the Utah Symphony is not the equal of Solti's Chicago Symphony, Haitink's Concertgebouw, or Bernstein's New York Philharmonic, the general level of performance Abravanel achieves is remarkably high, and for the most part the performances are enhanced by the acoustic excellence of the Mormon Tabernacle and the intelligent engineering work of the Vanguard recording staff. Moreover, Vanguard's Cardinal and Everyman stereo discs are only $3.98 each, making Abravanel's the only Mahler symphony cycle available at a budget price. (The Vanguard quadraphonic discs are $7.98 each.) Abravanel's view of Mahler is not one of impassioned neurasthenia à la Bernstein, nor does he unleash the ardor Horenstein does in his readings of No. 1 and No. 3 on Nonesuch (or, preferably, on Advent cassettes). Rather, Abravanel's reading of the First Symphony rates high marks in terms of carefully gauged tempo relationships and textural transparency. It all seems a little cool and distant, though—a situation aggravated by the fact that the bass line and the low percussion (in the finale, chiefly) simply do not come through with enough impact relative to the rest of the music's vertical component. Direct comparison of Abravanel's First with James Levine's rather similar "cool" and transparent reading for RCA tends to confirm my impression on this point. I suspect that the longish reverberation period of the Mormon Tabernacle forced the Vanguard engineers to compromise between maximum clarity and percussive impact. Definitely the most successful of the new Abravanel readings, in my opinion, is the Fifth Symphony, whose contrapuntal complexities become very neatly unraveled in this conductor's predominantly light-handed approach. There is some tendency toward overprominence of the trumpet line in the lamentation episode of the opening funeral march, and I would have liked a shade quieter overall dynamic in the famous Adagietto, but these are minor flaws in a reading of generally high quality that reaches a peak in the immensely difficult fugal-texture finale.

In the great opening Adagio movement from the Tenth Symphony (left unfinished by Mahler), the Abravanel reading is cool, clear, and beautifully recorded, but the cumulative effect of the whole, particularly in those climactic episodes of eerie dissonance that point the way toward Alban Berg and beyond, lacks the power and tensile strength of the 1959 Columbia recording by George Szell and the Cleveland Orchestra. And, with the best will in the world, Abravanel and his players are no match for Leonard Bernstein and the New York Philharmonic in the Sixth Symphony. Abravanel's temperament and the makeup of his orchestra simply will not accommodate the shattering urgency Bernstein brings to this symphony, the finest achievement in his Mahler symphony cycle. The Abravanel reading is a good, conscientious job—at its best in the heart-wrenchingly poignant slow movement—but no more. The emphasis on achieving clarity of texture occasionally mars the musical result, as in the first movement and the slow movement; the cowbells, which should sound disembodied as though heard floating up from distant valleys to the heights of the Austrian Alps, sound all too close at hand.

Vanguard's quadraphonic sound in these recordings is no match, in terms of semi-surround effect, for the same company's remarkable series of recordings done in London with Charles Mackerras and Johannes Somary. The root of the problem probably lies in the difficulties of controlling and altering basic acoustic ambiance—a lot easier to do, apparently, in the English locale with its shorter reverberation period, than in the almost cavernous Mormon Tabernacle. In short, I don't think the degree of quadraphonic enhancement achieved in the Abravanel recordings is worth the $4 extra per disc. Still, in stereo these Mahler symphonies are a good buy, especially Symphony No. 5 from this group of releases and No. 8 from the earlier Cardinal series.

—David Hall


Bohm's, are for the most part unhurried but steadily propulsive; his dynamic range is broader and involves some risks, most of them successful. His reading from beginning to end is spectacularly controlled, but very confident of his progress toward the joy-filled contemplation. All three of the wholly instrumental movements do serve more obviously as preludes here, leading on, not impatiently, but with a grand and serene sense of momentum. Both the scherzo and the slow movement, though, come about as close to the ideal as I ever expect to hear: in the latter, particularly, Ozawa seems to have found the more effective balance between contemplation and thrust. Along the way, one may note that the drumbeats in the scherzo, while superbly executed, are not recorded with the sharp definition they are given in the Bohm set and that the marvelous horn solo in the slow movement also suffers from a rather mushy acoustic focus; otherwise, the recorded sound is stunningly realistic, and there is little else to complain about.

The women soloists may be less striking than their counterparts in certain other recordings, but they are a good deal more than adequate vocally, and their voices mesh well with Ozawa's concept. The two men are never less than first-rate. Hillerbusch is possibly even more admirable here than he is in the Bohm recording; Brilloth is ideally suited to the demands of this work, and the brisk pacing of his solo section leads most effectively into the ensuing fugato. The "Seid umschlungen" which follows is very majestic, taken about as slowly as possible without allowing the momentum to falter, and the end is credibly exuberant. Balances throughout the long movement are unfailingly excellent, both between the choral and instrumental forces and within each respective ensemble.

But no amount of verbal description can convey the impact of this wonderfully realized Ninth. There is not a bar anywhere that is superficial, bland, or vulgar; the performance has both dignity and exhalation in abundance, and the balance is achieved not through compromise but through the apparently instinctive response of a great interpreter to a great creator. At a list price of $15.96 and with no other work on the two discs, Ozawa's Ninth is the most expensive version around; it is also, without question, the most inspiring.

In addition to providing generally superb sound (with the two lapses noted), Philips has at last abandoned the oversize box heretofore used for its two-disc sets in favor of a more convenient gatefold container, and even the annotation is exceptional: Bernard Jacobson's thoughtful and provocative observations on the work itself instead of the thrice-told tale of the 1824 première.

R.F.

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**STEREO REVIEW**

*RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT*

**BRAHMS: Piano Quartets (complete). Beaux Arts Trio; Walter Trampler (viola). PHILIPS 6747 068 three discs $22.94.**

**Performance:** **Superb**

**Recording:** **Perfect**

Brahms wrote three quartets for piano and strings. Two of them, Op. 25 and 26, were written in 1859. The third, the least known of the three, appeared in 1875 as his Op. 60 but is actually a reworked version of an earlier work. It is not without interest, but it pales beside the first two quartets, perhaps the greatest masterpieces for this rather special medium.

The Beaux Arts Trio and violist Walter Trampler—American chamber musicians of the highest achievement, here recording in Europe—are the perfect interpreters of this music. Their playing is warm, full of poetry and strength and utterly Brahmsian. The only thing missing is Brahms' other great work in this genre: the F Minor Quintet. Next time.

E.S.

**CAGE: Winter Music (see FLYNN)**

**CHOPIN: Piano Sonata No. 2, in E-flat Minor, Op. 35 (see LISZT)**

**CHOPIN: Piano Sonata No. 3, in B Minor, Op. 58 (see Best of the Month, page 72)**

**FAURÉ: Piano Quartet No. 1 (see Choosing Sides, page 102)**

**RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT**

**FLYNN: Wound. CAGE: Winter Music.**
George Flynn (piano). FINNADAR □ QD 9006 $6.98.

Performances: Overwhelming
Recording: Excellent

George Flynn's *Wound* is one of those artistic documents of passion and involvement that is simply overwhelming in its impact. There have been a number of attempts to create the pianistic *ne plus ultra* in recent years. This may be it, but not because Flynn set out with such an aim. On the contrary, it is because the piece so clearly grows out of his own impulse to say something; the pianistic tour de force is the result, not the cause.

Finnad’s “Winter Music,” written in 1957 and dedicated to Robert Rauschenberg and Jasper Johns, is a fine, impassioned piece, quite comparable to his slightly later and better works.

**RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT**

**FRANCK: Quintet for Piano and Strings**

Samson François (piano); Bernede Quartet. CONNOISSEUR SOCIETY CS 2077 $6.98.

Performances: Excellent
Recording: Very good

This is an important recording of a major piece of chamber music. César Franck's piano quintet, one of the earlier works of his maturity, is a fine, impassioned piece, quite comparable to his slightly later and better works. This recording, originating with Pathé-Marconi and the last ever made by the late Samson François, catches the music's special passion and its romantic sensibility very well indeed.

E.S.

**FRANCK: Quintet for Piano and Strings**

The pianistic tour de force on the “Temptation of St. Anthony” is also a bit slower than usual, and some listeners may feel the tension is too slack; my own feeling is that the tempo was naturally determined by the weight and breadth of Horenstein’s concept, and that it works beautifully.

The London Symphony Orchestra is in great form in both works, giving Horenstein everything he asked for, and Robert Ludwig’s mastering for Nonesuch strikes me as at least the equal of what I heard on the Unicorn recording.

**RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT**

**IVES: String Quartets Nos. 1 and 2**

Concord String Quartet. NONESUCH H-71306 $3.98.

Performance: Really into it
Recording: Excellent

Charles Ives’ string quartets are a perplexing, but equally effective in number, in any number of possible arrangements and interpretations by one to twenty pianists (why not more?). For this recording, Flynn made four separate realizations which are heard here simultaneously, one track per channel in quadraphonic playback, two per channel in stereo. The “divine emptiness” of these random clusters of piano sound is a long way from *Wound* but equally effective in Flynn’s realization.

The CD-4 recorded sound is excellent, and Finnadar has had the courage to cut all the music close to the outer edge of the record rather than spreading the grooves to make a deceptive full-looking side. The result is a considerable improvement in inner-groove sound, especially in quadraphonic playback.

(Special on page 109)
Call it nostalgia if you must, or history if you will. Whatever the association, after listening to the Nonesuch album “19th Century American Ballroom Music,” I cannot think of any other recording of early American music that combines so much authenticity with so much charm—and by that I mean sheer musical delight. My favorite dictionary defines nostalgia as “a longing for things, persons, or situations that are not present.” The almost miraculous beauty of music is that it actually makes present, physically, tangibly, something that comes from the past. True, this happens in a way with the visual and the tactile arts. But the kinetic impulse of rhythm, the temporal continuity of melody, and the physical projection of sound—its direct impact on the human organism—make music the assuager of nostalgia per excellence. A friend of mine told me that when he listened to this recording he could hardly resist the impulsion to skip across the floor—even though at the time he was hobbling around on a rather painful fractured foot! This music is indeed an invitation to be footloose and fancy-free.

The invitation is there, to begin with, in the delightful front-cover illustration of a ballroom scene from 1845, with its high vaulted ceiling, its elegant draperies, its ornate chandeliers, its band of eight musicians atop a neo-classical balcony, and its obviously happy couples stepping out for a polka. To what sort of music were they dancing? It is not enough to answer by saying that of a polka, a waltz, a dance La Cachucha, popularized by the famous opera singer Henriette Sonntag. In the Voice Quadrille by the highly popular black composer and band leader Francis Johnson (1792-1844), the instruments are adopted for arrangements of songs. The piano version of this piece represents the larger type of brass ensemble for such occasions. It consists of two soprano saxhorns, two cornets, two alto and two tenor saxhorns, baritone and contrabass saxhorn.

The influential band leader, arranger, composer, and instructor Allen Dodsworth (1817-1896), author of Dodsworth’s Brass Band School (1853), favored replacing trumpets, horns, and trombones with cornets, keyed bugles, and saxhorns. He also objected to trombones as being too loud. He proposed that if required for a Manhattan concert, “the trombones should be placed in Brooklyn.” The influential band leader, arranger, composer, and instructor Allen Dodsworth (1817-1896), author of Dodsworth’s Brass Band School (1853), favored replacing trumpets, horns, and trombones with cornets, keyed bugles, and saxhorns. He also objected to trombones as being too loud. He proposed that if required for a Manhattan concert, “the trombones should be placed in Brooklyn.”

The last selection is an arrangement by Dodsworth of Henry Bishop’s Sweet Home, which traditionally signaled the end of the ball. And I see that I’ve overlooked Stephen Foster’s striking French Quadrille, for flute, two violins, and cello. But the varied contents of this unique recording are meant to be heard, not written about. All I wish to say is: don’t miss it.

—Gilbert Chase

19TH-CENTURY AMERICAN BALLROOM MUSIC. Waltzes, marches, polkas, and other dances by various composers. Star Spangled Banner; Sontag Polka; Charming Waltz; Masonic March; Money Musk Reel; Military Parade Schottische; Wood Up Quickstep; Voice Quadrille; Post Horn Duetto; National Schottische; Gift Polka; French Quadrille; Polonaise; La Traviata Waltz; Medley Quickstep; Last Rose of Summer; La Cuchucha; Schomberg Galop; Sweet Home. Camerata Chorus of Washington; Smithsonian Social Orchestra and Quadrille Band, James Weaver cond. NONESUCH H-71313 $3.96.
tious performers. The Concord, a gifted young ensemble with a reasonably liberated attitude about music-making, is the perfect group to get into this music. And get into it they have, even to the extent of studying the original manuscripts and working with John Kirkpatrick, Ives' editor and executor.

The First Quartet, a product of Ives' Yale days and studies with Horatio Parker, is hymn-tune music in the manner of the early symphonies. The Second is one of Ives' first-class eccentricities: "String Quartet for 4 men—who converse, discuss, argue (in re 'politeck'), fight, shake hands, shut up—then walk up the mountain-side to view the firmament." And that is exactly what happens in the music: a conservative second violinist named Rollo plays Andante emasculata, Largo sweetota, and Alla rubato Elman while the others slug it out with Dixie and Columbia the Gem of the Ocean until the classic Ives transcendental finale gets 'em all. The Concord musicians go all out on this stuff and somehow make it work with the fullest Ivesian vigor. It takes a new breed.

E.S.

KABALEVSKY: Overture Pathétique in B Minor, Op. 64; Spring, Op. 65; Songs of Morning, Spring and Peace, Op. 57; School Years; The Unit of Young Pioneers; Good Night. Chorus of the Central House for Railwaymen's Children; V. Mamontova, L. Komarrova (vocal soloists). Symphony Orchestra of the Moscow State Philharmonic. Dmitri Kabalevsky cond. WESTMINSTER GOLD WGC-83038 $3.49.

Performance: Cheerful
Recording: Very good

Dmitri Kabalevsky has been writing music of such broad, old-fashioned appeal for so many years (he is now seventy-one) that he was practically the only prominent Soviet composer not reprimanded by the regime in 1948. He has always been willing to write his opera and ballet scores on themes acceptable to the establishment, with plenty of folk material and only a little dissonance here and there to spice things up. No wonder he is editor of the official Soviet journal Soviet Music, head of the music department of the Soviet Radio Committee, and secretary of the Union of Soviet Composers! Yet, as you know if your pulse has ever tingled to the sound of the Colas Breugnon overture or The Comedians, Kabalevsky can write music of such scintillating vitality that it is easy to forgive the traditionalism of his style. Here he conducts two of his relatively recent works, an Overture Pathétique—more reminiscent in its vigor of Colas Breugnon than of anything tragic or pathetic except that it's written in a minor key—and his symphonic poem Spring, which is a kind of Debussy Printemps with a Russian accent. Both of these pieces were composed in 1960, and they were new when this record was made in the Soviet Union a year later (it has waited fifteen years for release here), but they blazed no trails then, and they certainly don't do so now, even on their own terms. What makes the record worth acquiring is the series of songs for children on the second side. The Songs of Morning, Spring and Peace glow with musical sunlight and good cheer, and are performed with much freshness and skill by a group of kids who can be counted on to brighten the darkest day. Two more pretty songs round out the program.

P.K.

(Continued overleaf)

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KAY: Six Dances for String Orchestra (see STILL)


Performance: Very good
Recording: Very good

The interest in Erich Wolfgang Korngold aroused by the RCA recordings of his film music continues to have interesting consequences. Within the last year and a half, we have had recordings of Korngold concert works on RCA, Angel, and Orion, and the New York City Opera has produced Die Toten Städte; now we have a first recording of his earliest piano compositions (a First Sonata, presumably, was discarded by the composer). Both written in 1910, the year in which Korngold, at age thirteen (not eleven, as stated in the notes with the disc), became a celebrity with the Vienna Opera production of his pantomime Der Schneemann. Evidently Korngold wrote nothing more for solo piano for a fifteen years, and then very little; his thinking, apparently, was not really pianistic. Glenn Gould, who produced this recording for Genesis and ornamented it with a characteristically provocative essay on "Korngold and the Crisis of the Piano Sonata," describes the Second Sonata, an astonishingly mature work, as "the blueprint for what might well have made one of the better symphonic essays of its time."

It may be recognized as a blueprint for much else, besides, for the very shape of its themes is fully characteristic of those Korngold was to create for Hollywood more than a quarter-century later. The cyclical reappearance of the big, expressive first-movement theme—altered in the inner movements, back to its original form in the finale’s coda—is a further prophecy of his film style, and so, for that matter, is the dramatic, almost pictorial nature of the sonata as a whole. The Marchenbilder (Fairy Pictures) suite comprises brief evocations of six familiar fairy tales and a fairly elaborate epilogue, more or less à la Schumann but with echoes of Strauss as well; Glenn Gould refers to it as "an eclectic circus," which is, he says, "because of its less ambitious design, relatively more successful, instrumentally," than the sonata. Both works are rich, however, in a late-Romantic sort of inventiveness and high-level craftsmanship, and Antonin Kubalek performs them very persuasively.

The very thoughtfully produced and well recorded release includes, in addition to the Gould essay, a biographical sketch of Korngold by Tony Thomas (comprehensive and entertaining, despite a minor slip or two), a chronological list of all his published works, several photographs, and a cartoon from a Viennese newspaper showing Korngold as a barding and bespectacled infant seated at the piano in a highchair and surrounded by Siegfried Wagner (benevolently holding the artist's pacifier), Reger, Nikisch, Strauss, and Eugène d’Albert.

It would be an exaggeration to say that these performances surpass the best of what has been documented heretofore on discs. But it is reasonable. I think, to say that they are remarkable in substance and brilliance for a pianist of any age. What's more, I have the feeling that they will wear well with repeated hearings. They have so far.

D.H.

MOZART: Clarinet Concerto in A Major, K. 622 (see NIELSEN)

MOZART: Clarinet Quintet in A Major, K. 581 (see The Basic Repertoire, page 46)

Antonín Kubalek
Persuasive Korngold sonata

Tedd Joselson (piano). RCA ARL1-1010 $6.98. ® ARS1-1010 $7.98.

Performance: Accent on the lyrical
Recording: Excellent

There may be some who will question throwing a brilliantly gifted pianist in his twenties to the lions, so to speak, by having him record the two major Romantic sonatas that have already been recorded by most of the major virtuosos of the world. It should be noted, though, that this is the only currently available disc that pairs these two quintessentially Romantic masterpieces. What's more, his age notwithstanding, young Tedd Joselson contributes distinctly illuminating interpretative insights in his readings of both sonatas.

Never mind technique: it's all there, so that this pianist can and does concentrate on the business of the music and its essential substance and structure. And, thank goodness, Mr. Joselson's musical intelligence is not only in his head, but in his heart as well. Thus, his reading of the Liszt sonata has real coherence, both in its argument—the blend, contrast, and metamorphosis of its basic thematic elements—and in its architectural grandeur: the dazzling fugal episode, the grand reprise of the main theme, and the hushed epilogue, the last eliciting the finest music-making on the entire record.

The much-abused Chopin B-flat Minor Sonata also gets a treatment different from the hell-for-leather one so often encountered. Joselson brings lyrical elements into proper balance with the purely rhetorical, and he develops a cumulative concept that reaches its peak in the reprise of the Funeral March, the intensity continuing unabated till the very last chord that concludes the terrifying presto finale.
TOTTI: Clarinet Concerto in A Major (K. 622).
Orchestra, Raymond Leppard cond. UNI
ART: Clarinet Concerto in A Major (K. 622).
1973 British Unicorn disc offers a more mod-
ern instrumentation, keeping clarinet and snare drum in
detection, making it work better, but this reading seems
reasonable. The reproduction, how-
ever, is not entirely complete. Set against the familiar lyric virtu-
osty of No. 3, the Fifth Concerto appears to be
eccentric, yet it has wit and appeal. I
would imagine another kind of performance
making it work better, but this reading seems
reasonably apposite. The reproduction, how-
ever, has a slightly artificial-sounding spaci-
ness that is not much to my taste.

PROKOFIEV: The Story of a Real Man. Ev-
geni Kirakosian (baritone), Alexei: Gliada
Dmitidova (soprano), Olga: Georgi Shulpin
(tenor), Grandfather Mikhailo: Georgi Pan-
kov (bass). Andrei: Mark Reshetin (bass).
Vasili Vasilevich: Artur Eizen (bass). Com-
poser: A. Leonidoff. Kladia: Alexei Matlennikov (tenor),
Kuskov: others. U.S.S.R. Bolshoi Theatre
Chorus and Orchestra, Mark Ermier cond.
WESTMINSTER GOLD WGSO 8317-2 two
discs $6.98.
Performance: Good
Recording: Good
The Story of a Real Man. Prokofiev's last
work, is based on the true story of a Soviet
war hero, pilot Alexei Mareshesv. Shot down
by the Nazis, Mareshesv was severely wound-
(Continued on page 114)

CLESTINE CARTER
In music, credentials command attention; performances, respect.

The Mozart Solo Sonatas: Two Integral Sets

No pianists active today have been so long and so closely identified with the music of Mozart, especially through recordings, as have (1) Artur Balsam, whose new recordings of all the solo sonatas have just been released in an eight-disc set by the Musical Heritage Society, and (2) Lili Kraus, whose similar project, initiated on the Epic label in the late Sixties, has now been completed and issued in two three-disc Odyssey albums.

Balsam's 1950-ish Concert Hall recordings of some of the early concertos are still cherished by collectors, his 1963 set of the piano sonatas is still circulating on L'Oiseau-Lyre (as is a collection of the violin sonatas he made with William Kross), and MHS has also recorded him in virtually all of Mozart's other piano works. Kraus, who has published her own edition of the sonatas, also made an earlier recording of the entire cycle (for Discophiles Françaises in 1954, issued in this country by the Haydn Society together with the violin sonatas and piano trios, in which her associates were violinists Willi Boskovsky and cellist Nikolaus Hübner). Earlier still she made a celebrated set of the violin sonatas and concertos for EMI and cellist Nikolaus Hubner). Earlier still she made a celebrated set of the violin sonatas and concertos for EMI and cellist Nikolaus Hubner). Earlier still she made a celebrated set of the violin sonatas and concertos for EMI and cellist Nikolaus Hubner).

Balsam's part and a more cautious time limit have been reversed, too, evidently in the interest of chronological order. But these gratuitous relabelings of familiar works, like those tried by the Boston Symphony Orchestra in its listings of the Mozart piano concertos a few years ago, can only create confusion.) The additional discs in the beautifully recorded MHS presentation are not accounted for by this one difference in the order of the sonatas have recorded on a period instrument. Both Kraus and Balsam, of course, play modern concert grands, but Kraus shows more respect for the "slender" character dictated by the nature of the Hammerklavier Mozart himself played—again, it is not a matter of mere briskness, but of an almost mystically enlivening "aura"—a visionary approach without self-consciousness on Kraus' part. She takes some risks to achieve something like the improvisatory spirit we associate with Mozart as performer. Her performances are characterized by subtle inflection, one is aware of a controlled undercurrent of nervous animation, and there are most effective dynamic contrasts—but always within reasonable approximation of the dynamic range of the late-eighteenth-century instruments.

It is curious that none of the Mozart specialists who have made "integral" recordings of the sonatas have recorded on a period instrument. Both Kraus and Balsam, of course, play modern concert grands, but Kraus shows more respect for the "slender" character dictated by the nature of the Hammerklavier Mozart himself played—again, it is not a matter of mere briskness, but of an almost mystically enlivening "aura"—a visionary approach without self-consciousness on Kraus' part. She takes some risks to achieve something like the improvisatory spirit we associate with Mozart as performer. Her performances are characterized by subtle inflection, one is aware of a controlled undercurrent of nervous animation, and there are most effective dynamic contrasts—but always within reasonable approximation of the dynamic range of the late-eighteenth-century instruments.

As for the suggestion that Kraus' way with Mozart is too aggressive, I can only wonder if that attitude doesn't represent some sort of lingering sexual prejudice. Walter Susskind remarked, in a recent memoir, that Artur Schnabel "played with great understanding, and more and more variety, both...
three-disc albums (Vox SVBX-5428 and SVBX-5429). Klien is a bit less adventurous than Kraus, but his integrity and inspiriting sense of style are unfailingly satisfying—and his Volume II has the advantage of including the K. 533/494 Sonata, though his performance of this piece happens to be less persuasive than Balsam's. (The Vox recording is more than a dozen years old, and less bright than either Kraus' Odyssey or the fine sound provided for Balsam by MHS, but it is unmarred by the excessive pre-echo that obtrudes in the latter set.) I would urge anyone interested in an integral set of the Mozart sonatas to try to hear at least parts of both the Kraus and the Klien—and also to decide how important it is for K. 533/494 to be included. From the way Daniel Nimetz's annotations are laid out in the MHS booklet, I would expect those discs to be made available individually before long, and Balsam's K. 533/494, paired with K. 333, would make a handy supplement to the Kraus series.

It is not absolutely necessary to acquire the sonatas in an integral set, of course, but it is the most convenient and economical way, and most of the Kraus and Klien performances are fully competitive with any available individually. Moreover, both the Odyssey and Vox prices are so low that one need not feel extravagant in duplicating a work occasionally, when so outstanding a release as Vladimir Ashkenazy's magnificently large-scaled K. 310 (London CS-6659) or Glenn Gould's agreeably exciting K. 284 (Columbia MS 7274) comes along.

—Richard Freed

MOZART: Piano Sonatas: No. 1, in C Major (K. 279); No. 2, in F Major (K. 280); No. 3, in B-flat Major (K. 281); No. 4, in E-flat Major (K. 282); No. 5, in G Major (K. 283); No. 6, in D Major (K. 284); No. 7, in C Major (K. 309); No. 8, in D Major (K. 311); No. 9, in A Minor (K. 310); No. 10, in C Major (K. 330); No. 11, in A Major (K. 331); No. 12, in F Major (K. 332); No. 13, in B-flat Major (K. 333); No. 14, in C Minor (K. 457); No. 15, in F Major (K. 533, with Rondo, K. 494); No. 16, in C Major (K. 545); No. 17, in B-flat Major (K. 570); No. 18, in D Major (K. 576). Fantasy in C Minor (K. 475). Artur Balsam (piano). MUSICAL HERITAGE SOCIETY MHS 3056/3063 eight discs $28.00 (plus 75¢ handling charge from the Musical Heritage Society, Inc., 1991 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10023).

MOZART: Piano Sonatas: No. 1, in C Major (K. 279); No. 2, in F Major (K. 280); No. 3, in B-flat Major (K. 281); No. 4, in E-flat Major (K. 282); No. 5, in G Major (K. 283); No. 6, in D Major (K. 284); No. 7, in C Major (K. 309); No. 8, in A Minor (K. 310); No. 9, in D Major (K. 311); No. 10, in C Major (K. 330). Lili Kraus (piano). ODYSSEY Y 33220 three discs $11.98.

MOZART: Piano Sonatas: No. 11, in A Major (K. 331); No. 12, in F Major (K. 332); No. 13, in B-flat Major (K. 333); No. 14, in C Minor (K. 457); No. 15, in C Major (K. 545); No. 16, in B-flat Major (K. 570); No. 17, in D Major (K. 576). Fantasy in D Minor (K. 397); Fantasy in C Minor (K. 475); Rondo in D Major (K. 485). Lili Kraus (piano). ODYSSEY Y 33224 three discs $11.98.
ed and near death from hunger and frostbite when he was found by some villagers. The amputation of one leg threw him into severe depression, but, after an agonizing period of physical and psychological readjustment, he eventually found his way back to usefulness, self-esteem, and even happiness.

In a sense, this is an experimental work. After his successful stints as a composer for motion pictures, Prokofiev wanted his new “Soviet opera” to benefit from cinematic techniques: short episodes that are disconnected in space and time, with fadeouts, are at times linked by brief symphonic interludes. The experiment worked somewhat unevenly, as did the infusion into the musical fabric of such elements of popular music as a waltz and a rhumba, but the opera as a whole is decided-

ly not without interest. The musical style employed is Prokofiev at his most conservative. There are some commonplace pages of love music, and rather obvious patriotic choruses (many based on folk elements), but there are also passages of great descriptive and evocative power.

The Story of a Real Man was given a single hearing at Leningrad’s Kirov Opera on December 3, 1948, and then withdrawn for reasons known only to Soviet authorities. Prokofiev was subsequently attacked in Izvestia, and to the end of his days (1953) received nothing but abuse for this ardently patriotic work. Posthumous sanction came in 1960, when the Bolshoi Theatre gave the opera’s official premiere, with the real-life “Real Man” Maresyev in attendance.

This recording, made a year later, features most of the members of that Bolshoi cast headed by Evgeni Kibkalo, who performs the title role, but not with great conviction and vocal authority. The cast is large, and the singers, as usual in Russian productions, are noteworthy more for vivid character projection than for show-stopping vocal splendor. Outstanding among them is basso Artur Eizen and the old commissar whose heroic example inspires Alexei to regain his own wish to live. Tenors Maslennikov and Shlipin also contribute memorable cameo characterizations.

The choral and orchestral work is creditable, and the recorded sound is far superior to the mono pressings of the same performance which circulated here (on Ultraphone 147-149) around 1966.

G.J.


Performance: Fair
Recording: Very good

Aleko, written by Rachmaninoff when he was nineteen, is not a perfect opera, but it is a highly effective one. Tchaikovsky’s influence is evident, but so is the precocious genius of the composer. With a cast of Bolshoi front-liners, Aleko could easily hold the stage today. This Bulgarian production offers only an adequate performance, though, and the harsh, tremolo-ridden Zemfira is even somewhat below that level. The strong characterization of Gyuselev (spelled Ghuiselev when the artist sings away from Bulgaria), who projects the passion and revenge of Aleko vividly, suffers from the excessive effort demanded by the high tessitura. Dimiter Petkov brings a powerfully resonant dark bass to the role of the Old Gypsy, but his tones are unsteady, and tenor Kourshoumov forces his attractive light tenor unmercifully. The orchestral background is quite good, and the chorus reveals strength in the male voices (and some unsteadiness in the female ones), but side two, containing the gypsy dances and relatively little solo singing, is the most effective part of the set.

Technically, the recording is entirely satisfactory. The package includes a synopsis and the English translation of four extended vocal excerpts. The two sides of the inner fold are devoted to the complete libretto in Russian—a gesture I am sure will endear Monitor to all Cyrillic scholars.

G.J.


Performance: Strong
Recording: Very good

In 1891, when Sergei Rachmaninoff was eighteen, he turned to a ballad by Tolstoy to write a “poem for orchestra” called Prince Rostislav. It seems there was this prince who was killed in battle and wound up at the bottom of the Dnieper River, where he was comforted by some water nymphs who kept combing his hair. On this dubious theme the young pupil of... (Continued on page 117)
Arensky wrote a piece of music that not only evokes the eerie underwater mood of its setting in yearning melody and rich orchestral sound, but foreshadows the great tone poems to come, especially the hypnotic Isle of the Dead of 1907. Yet the work is tentative and realized. But The Rock, written only two years after Prince Rostislav, is as solid as its title. Rachmaninoff never cleared up the program of The Rock; it is about a little cloud spending the night on the crest of a giant mountain, as in Lermontov’s poem of the same title, or does it have to do with a fragile girl (the golden cloud) who spends a night at an inn listening to the life story of a gruff, middle-aged man (the rock) as in a certain tale by Chekhov? Either way, the music is moving and persuasive in the idiom the composer had already made his own. To round out the program there’s an extended arrangement of the haunting Vocalise originally written for voice but usually dressed nowadays in orchestral garb. The performances are strong—although Rozhdestvensky’s treatment of The Rock in an earlier recording on the same label is even more colorful.

**P. K.**

**RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT**

**ROSSINI: The Barber of Seville.** Nicolai Gedda (tenor), Almaviva; Beverly Sills (soprano), Rosina; Sherrill Milnes (baritone), Figaro; Renato Capacechi (baritone). Don Bartolo; Ruggero Raimondi (bass), Don Basilio; Joseph Galiano (tenor), Fiorello; Michael Rippon (baritone), Ambrogio; Fedora Barbieri (mezzo-soprano), Berta. John Alldis Choir; London Symphony Orchestra. James Levine conductor. Angel SXLX 3761 three discs $20.94.

Performance: Sparkling
Recording: Very good

There are many good things about Angel’s new Barber. It is, above all, a bubbly and exuberant performance and a truly Italian-sounding one: the “international” stars blend with their Italian colleagues delightfully. This means that the dialogues are delivered with the same idiomatic care as the arias and ensembles. Conductor Levine must take credit for much of this, and particularly for sustaining a lively, youthful spirit throughout. He rushes a few allegros and sacrifices a certain degree of refinement and ensemble precision to keep the action moving at an ebullient clip, but the totality is laudable: most of his tempos are well judged, all the important arias are exemplary in presentation, and in the delightful intermezzo of “La Tempesta” he whips up quite a storm.

Sherrill Milnes is a youthful-sounding and exuberant Barber, far more idiomatic and more natural than Hermann Prey in the recent and disappointing DG set. As Rosina, Beverly Sills is full of charm and temperament. She knows how to enliven her dialogues with subtle touches, and her singing here is on the level of her current best. I don’t think she should treat Rossini’s music with quite so much freedom; surely the composer’s own florid layout of Rosina’s part in the “Dunque io son” duet is good enough and ornate enough without requiring additional embellishments, but at least Miss Sills has the technique to bring off whatever she attempts. I am somewhat less enthusiastic about Nicolai Gedda’s Almaviva. At some moments he is far above all other recorded interpreters, for he offers tonal substance to go with the requisite elegant phrasing, but his still sensuous voice is not as steady as it once was, nor is it always pure in intonation. As for the florid requirements, Mr. Gedda bravely sings the part as written, but some fearsome passagework gets delivered with only reasonable accuracy.

Ruggero Raimondi’s Don Basilio could use a little more weight and pomposity, but in terms of sheer singing it is superb, and Renato

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**Sherrill Milnes, Nicolai Gedda**

An exuberant, truly Italian-sounding Barber

**Recording: Very good**
This is a very complete Barber. All the dialogues are here, uncut, and so is Almaviva’s difficult scene in Act II, culminating in the aria “Cessa per sempre il suono.” There is even an interpolated soprano aria from the earlier (1815) Sigismondo. (It is stylistically right and gets a de luxe treatment from Miss Sills.) While all this “completeness” is impressive, the opera runs some two hours and fifty minutes in this edition. This being the approximate length of Aliju and La Giovanda, I submit that we are perhaps being offered too much of a good thing.

There are some unusually informative annotations by Charles Osborne with the set. The sound is fine, though some balances are odd as, for example, Gedda’s distant placement vis-à-vis Miss Sills in the Lesson Scene. In sum, I would not judge this set clearly superior to London 1381, RCA 6143, or Angel 3638, but it is in the same high class.

R. STRAUSS: Death and Transfiguration, Op. 24 (see HINDEMITH)

TCHAIKOVSKY: Piano Concerto No. 2, in G Major, Op. 44. Sylvia Kersenbaum (piano); Orchestre National de la ORTF. Jean Martinon cond. CONNOISSEUR SOCIETY CSQ 2076 $6.98.

Performance: Mostly urgent and impassioned
Recording: Loud and clear

Until now the nearly most complete stereo version of the Tchaikovsky G Major Concerto has been that of piano virtuoso Sylvia Kersenbaum and conductor Jean Martinon offer us Tchaikovsky’s Op. 44 absolutely completely. Their new Connoisseur Society version includes the slow movement and its important solo violin and cello parts as written by Tchaikovsky himself—as opposed to the Siloti edition, drastically cut and rewritten, that is too often used in performance and recording. Indeed, it is the extended slow movement—a virtual chamber concerto—that comes off best here. Miss Kersenbaum has speed and strength to burn, and she plays the concerto with great gusto and with M. Martinon’s enthusiastic cooperation. Aside from the fact that I do agree, to some extent, with those who insist that the level of Tchaikovsky’s musical invention is not sufficient to sustain the length of the work, my one criticism of this performance has to do with pacing:

I would have liked a more stately “Ballet Imperial” treatment of the opening pages and more...
verve in the finale. The sonics are clear and bright, almost aggressively so, and quadruphonic (SQ) playback pleasingly enhances the overall ambiance.

**COLLECTIONS**

**RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT**


Performance: **Virtuoso**
Recording: **Close up**

Since the nineteenth century, the primary instruments of musical virtuosity have been the piano and the violin, and between them they have so preoccupied connoisseurs of musical high-wire acrobatics that the virtuoso traditions of other instruments have been largely overlooked. The flute is among those suffering unjust neglect, and here to set the record straight is a perfectly lucid new recording of Romantic-era flute music by a lusciously looking flutist named Paula Robison. The music not only dazzles the ear but offers, as some virtuoso exercises do not, some genuine nourishment besides.

The most ambitious item in this carefully assembled concert is a twenty-minute sonata for flute and piano by Johann Nepomuk Hummel, who didn’t play the flute himself but certainly knew how to write for it. Hummel moved through the musical world of the eighteenth century in a flurry of associations with the celebrities of his time. Among his champions were Mozart, Haydn, and Beethoven—with whom he had a falling out but whose early music Hummel’s tends to resemble. The Sonata in D Major is a fully realized work of his maturity, a solidly structured piece that challenges the gifts not only of the flute player who performs it but of the pianist as well. It opens with an Allegro con brio in conventional sonata form but with unconventional harmonic forays in its development. A serene, quite Beethoven-like Andante follows, leading into a swift yet pastoral Rondo. The performance is at once utterly subtle and totally exciting.

For years I thought the only piece Benjamín Luis Paul Godard had written was the Berceuse from Jocelyn they used to play for us in music-appreciation class, but it seems this nineteenth-century Frenchman was far more prolific than that. His Suite de Trois Morceaux is one of hundreds of his compositions—operas, violin concertos, a symphony, more than a hundred songs, and some delightful chamber pieces like this one, which was originally scored for flute and orchestra. Miss Robison makes the most of her opportunities in the opening Allegretto to take off in bird-song arabesques, then charms us for several breathtaking minutes in an ensuing Idyll, and is not unconscious of the wit in the closing Waltz, with its sly quote from Waldteufel’s Les Patineurs.

The rest of the concert is relatively lightweight but equally beguiling, though it is, of course, quite flashy, coming as it does from the pens of composers who were flute virtuosos themselves. There’s a spectacular series of variations on "Nel Cor Più," by Theobald Boehm, who in the early nineteenth century helped to develop the modern flute on which Hummel himself wrote. Genin’s setting of "Carnival of Venice" theme, replete with pyrotechnics. A pair of short pieces by Philippe Gaubert (1879-1941) brings the program to a colorful close.

The heroine of the album, who studied under Julius Baker and recently became a resident artist with the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, more than lives up to her growing reputation on this delightful disc, and the support she receives from pianist Samuel Sanders shouldn’t do his reputation any harm either. But what has happened to Vanguard’s once-lovely surfaces?

**P.K.**

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CIRCLE NO. 55 ON READER SERVICE CARD


Performance: Spellbinding

Recording: Excellent

Intimate is surely the word for the guitar of Segovia, which insinuates its way into the blood stream almost as if the sounds of his subtle strumming had bypassed the ears. But Segovia has recorded so much, and we are so well acquainted with his special musical accent by this time, that a new album seems almost, at first glance, a superfluity. Still, there are two reasons to keep adding to one's Segovia collection: first, the exceptionally good recording he is getting from RCA these days—it is as though several thicknesses of veil had been lifted from the sounds since the old Decca attempts; and second, the unexpected nooks and crannies the maestro explores to add to his repertoire. For example, take the compositions of Sylvius Leopold Weiss, regarded as the greatest lutenist of the eighteenth century: the Bourrée introduced here has exceptional charm. The winsome sonatinas of Georg Benda were written as accompaniments for the spoken word, but, with Segovia on hand, words are not only unnecessary, they would come as an impertinence. As the program proceeds from Segovia's transcription of three movements from a Bach cello suite to a couple of Scarlatti sonatas, a miniature suite by Sor, a gloss on the fifth word ("I thirst") of Christ on the cross by Vicente Asencio, and a delicate Prelude in E by Manuel Ponce, the spell woven by the world's greatest living guitarist is ever more binding. Fortunately it is for us that, at eighty-two, he is still recording. We thought we knew him; he proved once again to be even better than we thought.

P.K.

ROBERT SYLVESTER: Cello Recital. Ysaye:
Sonata for Unaccompanied Cello, Op. 28.
Hindemith: Sonatina, Op. 28, No. 3.

Performance: Excellent

Recording: Very good

Robert Sylvester has performed in a number of chamber-music recordings, but I believe this is his first solo venture. It is an impressive one, not only as a demonstration of his performing skill but in terms of the imaginative repertoire. George Crumb's tight-knit, surprisingly expressive sonata was composed in 1955, the other three works in the Twenties: all are decidedly worth hearing—and hearing again. Egon Wellesz's 1921 sonata (the longest of the four works presented here, though the only one cast in a single movement) is especially rich in display opportunities, the Ysaye of 1928 an intriguing corollary to that composer's set of sonatas for violin solo. Sylvester's liner notes tell us little about any of the works, but the performances leave little unsaid. Handsome, lifelike sound.

R.F.

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Before offering, in issues to come, a series of capsule biographies and autobiographies designed to satisfy that expressed need and at the same time to circumvent some of the hazards of mere speculation.

And so I dropped in on Stereo Review, to become (after an apprenticeship of one year) simultaneously its first female editor and youngest staff member. Adjustments to the situation were soon made by all. I proudly claim responsibility for introducing denim and comfort to my vartorially benighted colleagues, and for bringing them a tiny breeze of the winds of Women's Lib raging outside. In its turn, SR grabbed me by my puppy collar, civilized me, and made me grow. I was taught editing techniques and through the "Installation of the Month" feature was given a first opportunity to write for a national publication. Encouraged by this, I undertook freelance writing assignments, mostly about stereo equipment, for Rock and other four-letter magazines. More prosaic pursuits are the essential responsibilities of this production editor's in-house routine, including traffic control of material going to and coming from the printer, design and editing of selected page layouts, picture research, and occasional proofreading.

In 1973 I built my own integrated amplifier, became a Certified Audio Consultant, and now can toy with equipment innards and electrocute myself with the best of 'em. Which is why WNYC radio invited me to be a guest on its half-hour "Men of Hi-Fi" talk show (must change that title) in February of this year.

I have lived in every borough of New York except Staten Island, but my interests consume so much time that I have rarely been found at home wherever it has been. To ameliorate this situation, my cats have been taught to come to me courteously and take messages in my absence. Always a good swimmer, I have dunked the bod in many seas of the world. Tennis serves to limber the biceps, bicycling and ice-skating the gluteus maximus, and disco dancing covers the rest. I dabble in gourmet cooking, but eat out often. My goal in life musically is complete mastery of Hindemith's Mathis der Maler transcribed for kazoo.

— Paulette Weiss

Production Editor

Paulette Weiss

Wide-eyed and puppy-ignorant of the ways of the world upon graduation from Brooklyn College in 1970 with a B.A., cum laude, in English literature, I found my talents unappreciated—may, ignored—by employment agencies. Refusing merely to type for my supper, I crisscrossed city streets for several months and grew even more hungry. Had it not been for SR Managing Editor Bill Livingstone's understanding nature, I might today have timetags on the fingers of my right hand. Biochemical research had been my first career choice, but lack of deep commitment to the field caused my withdrawal from a two-year major, also at Brooklyn. The catalyst of this decision was a white laboratory mouse named Johnny Weismuller, whose required death and dissection were thwarted by his mysterious disappearance from my lab table and subsequent reappearance, safe and happy, at my home. The fascination with living things has remained, however, and my upper West Side apartment is filled with a variety of plants, some ugly fish, and a pair of boisterous, charming tabbies named The Pink and The Black, who persistently try to devour the former two edibles. I, in turn, consume biological texts with gusto, and am often found helplessly following Konrad Lorenz books about...
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- Vanishes into virtual inaudibility all hum, noise and hiss inherent in most tapes, records, and FM broadcasts.
- Lets your music (at last) reach a life-like level where cymbals sound like cymbals, kettle drums like kettle drums.

Since its introduction follows the Phase Linear 700B and 400 power amps, the 4000 pre-amp had to be good. Consider these features:

### The Peak Unlimiter
To prevent overload in recording equipment, studios today "peak limit" high-level explosive transients of the source material. Incorporated in the Phase Linear 4000 is a highly-advanced circuit that reads peak limiting, immediately routes the signal through a lead network, and restores dynamics lost in recording to closely approximate the original.

### The Downward Expander
Gain riding, a recording technique used to improve low level signal to noise on phonograph discs, unfortunately compresses dynamic range that would otherwise be available. The 4000 senses when gain riding has been used and immediately expands the dynamics reciprocally downward to precisely the intended level.

### The AutoCorrelator
The advanced Autocorrelation Noise Reduction System in the 4000 makes record/tape hiss and FM broadcast noise virtually vanish ... without effecting musical content of the source material. Over-all noise reduction is -10 dB from 20 Hz to 20 kHz. Your music comes from a background that is silent.

### PHASE LINEAR 4000 SPECIFICATIONS
- Total Distortion: Less than .25%. Typically .02%.
- Tone Controls: Bass: Monotonically increasing and decreasing, dual hinge points, ± 8 dB @ 20 Hz. Hinge points switch selectable beginning at 40 Hz or 150 Hz. Treble: Monotonically increasing and decreasing, dual hinge points, ± 8 dB @ 20 kHz. Hinge points switch selectable beginning at 2 kHz and 8 kHz.
- Active Equalizer: 6 dB/octave boost below 50 Hz.
- Peak Unlimiter: (Nominal peak unlimited rate attack threshold, front panel variable) 5 dB/micro second for + 6 dB peak unlimited operation.
- Downward Expander: Downward expansion commences at -35 dB. Ultimate limit is -41 dB. Unlimiter window is 35 dB wide, upper and lower thresholds are simultaneously variable.
- Auto Correlator (Noise Reduction Systems): High frequency noise reduction commences at 2 kHz and is 3 dB, reaching 10 CB from 4 kHz to 20 kHz. Weighted overall noise reduction is -13 dB from 20 Hz to 20 kHz.
- Size: 19" x 7" x 10" — Weight: 18 lbs.
- Warranty: Three years, parts and labor.

*$SQ$ is a trademark of CBS Labs, Inc.
"You know, I've always thought of music as a universal language. In fact, that's probably the reason my daughter Nancy and I get along so well together. So when it's time for some easy listening, we get it on together with Koss Stereophones. Because nothing brings back the excitement of a live performance like the Sound of Koss.

This year the engineers at Koss have made that sound better than ever, with an all new DeciLite™ driver assembly. It's the first High Velocity driver element to deliver all 10 audible octaves, and it's featured in the new HV/1a and the HV/1LC Stereophones. Take it from old 'Doc', the new Koss High Velocity Stereophones deliver a fidelity and wide range frequency response unmatched by any other lightweight stereophone.

"So if you'd like to hear some lightweight, hear-through Stereophones that'll curl your toes, slip into the new HV/1a or the HV/1LC with volume-balance controls at your Audio Specialist. Or write for the free Koss full-color catalog, c/o 'Doc and Nancy'. With a pair of the new Koss High Velocity Stereophones and any of the Koss Listening Stations, you can really get it on together."

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