A Talk with Kate and Anna McGarrigle - The Symphonies of Dvořák

Equipment Test Reports: ESS amt 1b Speaker System • Fisher MT-6225 Turntable
Pioneer RT-707 Open-reel Tape Deck • Stanton 881S Stereo Phono Cartridge
Mitsubishi DA-P10 Preamplifier and DA-A15 Power Amplifier

WHY THE FIRST HIGH POWERED RECEIVER IS STILL THE BEST HIGH POWERED RECEIVER.
When Pioneer first introduced the 160 watt SX1250 last year, it prompted our competitors to hastily introduce a bevy of high powered receivers. Unlike the others, however, the SX1250 wasn't a rush job. And the time and care that went into it can both be seen and heard.

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Unlike most high powered receivers, every critical section in the SX1250 is shielded. Enveloped in aluminum. So spurious signals from one section can't leak into another. And dirt and dust can't slowly build up to affect performance. So the receiver not only produces crisp, interference-free sound when it's new, but still sounds great as it grows old.

**A 22 POUND TRANSFORMER.**

In our power supply, instead of finding a conventional transformer, you'll find a heavier, more advanced toroidal-core transformer. It's less susceptible to voltage fluctuations. And less likely to leak noise. Which means you get cleaner, clearer sound. And instead of finding the usual two electrolytic capacitors in the power supply, you'll find four. Because we've found that the two extra capacitors help improve low frequency response. And protect against tone burst distortion.

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The average high powered (and low powered) receiver comes with a three, or four gang variable capacitor for FM tuning. Not the SX1250. It comes with a five gang zinc plated variable capacitor that cleans up FM reception much better. And helps to pull in stations that some three or four gang capacitors can't touch.

This same kind of thinking even went into things like our heat sinks. They're massive, and located around the outside of the 1250 to dissipate heat away from the innards, instead of into them. (In the Technics SA 5760, by comparison, the heat sinks are located right in the middle of the receiver.) And where many manufacturers choose to solve the heat problem with fans, we choose not to. Simply because electrical fans can cause noise and vibration. While our heat sinks can't.

**OTHER POWERFUL ARGUMENTS FOR THE SX1250.**

Our pre-amp circuit was designed with an unheard-of phono overload level of 500 millivolts. Which means that no magnetic cartridge in the world can make it distort. It was also designed to follow the RIAA curve (the recording standard of the record industry), to within 0.2 decibels. A figure that competes favorably with even the costliest separate pre-amps.

And where some high powered receivers give you two or three tone controls, the SX1250 gives you four. Two for regular treble and bass, and two for extended treble and bass. They're calibrated in 2 decibel click stops; which give you a total of 3,024 ways to make the most out of your music.

Given all this, it should come as no surprise that the SX1250 even weighs more than most of our competitors' high-powered offerings.

So before you run out and buy just any high powered receiver, consider all the time and engineering that went into the SX1250. And weigh your decision carefully.

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160 watts per channel minimum RMS continuous power output at 8 ohms, from 20 to 20,000 Hz, with no more than 0.1% total harmonic distortion.

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CIRCLE NO. 83 ON READER SERVICE CARD
PIONEER'S SX1250.
Here's a tip to make your records last longer.

No matter what system you own, a new Empire phono cartridge is certain to improve its performance, three ways.

One, your records will last longer. Unlike other magnetic cartridges, Empire's moving iron design allows our diamond stylus to float free of its magnets and coils. This imposes much less weight on the record surface and insures longer record life.

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The end result is great listening. Audition one for yourself or write for our free brochure, "How to Get the Most Out of Your Records".

CirclEno. 21 on Reader Service Card
COMMENTING in this column in December of 1971 on the opening of Washington's John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, I observed that the Center had already proved to be "the vehicle for bringing into the American daylight a problem central to our cultural life: the inevitable conflict between an elitist reality and an egalitarian ideal, the painful compromises attendant upon our apparent determination to bring high culture to the lowly." There will be more of this when the government (which is to say the people) at long last gets around to lending aid and sustenance to the arts.

Indeed. There are few hotter topics right now in Washington political circles, and therefore in the media (the New York Times, The Christian Science Monitor, Harper's, therefore in the media (the New York Times, the Washington Post, the Washington Post magazine, public television), than that of federal funding of the arts. Such questions as who will be replacing Nancy Hanks as chairperson of the National Endowment for the Arts or just what is the Carter administration's real attitude toward Giacomo Puccini can generate at least as much heat in some quarters as, say, whether we should pull the plug on the Panama Canal. And it is heat, not light, that we get from "The Cultural Tithe," a brief against federal funding filed by Washington probationer Tom Bethel in Harper's August issue.

Mr. Bethel is upset because all of official Washington, from Second Lady Joan Mondale on down, seems hell-bent on climbing aboard the cultural bandwagon--forgetting that such climbing is the exercise for which politicians are best suited. He is also disturbed that the National Endowment which cost us $5 million ten years ago now runs to about $170 million yearly--failing to compare those figures with other federal subsidies ($1.5 billion for the post office, for example) on its real attitude toward Giacomo Puccini can testify.

He cannot, however, publisher assumes no responsibility for the re- 

CULTURE SNOBS

Once an artist and an egalitarian ideal, the painful compromises attendant upon our apparent determination to bring high culture to the lowly, that is just one of the means comprehended under the national motto—"pluribus unum"—that can be found inscribed on the reverse of all this country's coinage. What we have is one culture, of many parts, and every one of them precious.
The importance of being earnest.

It's important to be earnest — about speakers, that is. Because we know that your speakers are the most important, and final link in your high fidelity component system. And we know that to make truly great speakers has long been the greatest challenge to audio engineers.

To meet the challenge, Rank has dedicated years of effort and hundreds of thousands of dollars, using highly sophisticated research techniques. Our success is demonstrable and audible. We have created an astoundingly accurate line of loudspeakers.

To develop the Leak 3000 Series, Leak engineers created a distortion-free listening system: free from harmonic and intermodulation distortion, free from time delay and Doppler distortion, and free from delayed resonance. Our engineers then electronically introduced varying degrees of each form of distortion, separately.

A large number of listeners, including many "golden ears," determined when distortion was audible and when it was objectionable. These results were fed into a computer which then generated the design parameters and engineering specifications of the lowest distortion and greatest accuracy speakers.

The Leak line has overcome the inherent problems of conventional speaker design. The Leak line reproduces sound with outstanding accuracy. It is now available in America.

Write to us for the name of your nearest Leak dealer and ask for full product and technical literature. Choose from the Leak 3080, 3050, 3030 and 3020 models. One is certain to suit both your budget and listening needs.
Introducing the Koss Theory of loudspeaker design and the three new Koss CM speaker systems that prove it.

When Koss invented the stereophone, music lovers and audio experts were amazed at the low distortion, broadband frequency response, and high efficiency achieved by the Koss drivers. Indeed, the resultant Sound of Koss created a revolution in the audio industry.

Today, the exciting new Koss Theory of loudspeaker design has created another revolution. By developing a complex series of audio engineering formulas and by utilizing the precise knowledge of modern computer science, Koss engineers have created a breakthrough in loudspeaker technology of such significance that it heralds the second major revolution in loudspeaker design technology.

For the first time, it's now possible to scientifically derive and produce the optimum system parameters for any loudspeaker. By computerizing the Koss Theory and by first selecting the number of bandpasses desired in the system, the desired efficiency, the low bass cutoff, and the desired cabinet size; Koss engineers are able to derive specific design parameters for every component in the total system. In fact, the Koss Theory is so sophisticated that even the structural design of the cabinet and the precise positioning of the components in the cabinet for optimum dispersion and phase coherency are specified.

Of course, what's really important is not the Koss Theory itself but the sound of the three new Koss speakers that prove it. Indeed, with current technology, there are no speakers available at similar prices that can match the Koss CM 1010 two bandpass loudspeaker, the Koss CM 1020 three bandpass loudspeaker or the Koss CM 1030 four bandpass loudspeaker in low distortion, high efficiency, and broadband frequency response.

But then, the incredible sound of these three new speakers isn't surprising when you consider some of the revolutionary new features they offer:

Take for example, the CM 1010's unique mass aligned 10-inch passive radiator that enhances the lower 2 octaves of the bass and allows for the use of a specially designed 8-inch woofer to reproduce the critical midrange up to 2.5 kHz. With the alignment mass in place, the CM 1010 reproduces a maximally flat response from an $f_s$ of 35 Hz outward. However, by removing the alignment mass, those who prefer more acoustic energy in the 50 to 80 Hz range can create an $f_s$ of 40 Hz and a low bass ripple of 1½ dB centering on 60 Hz.

Or take the CM 1020's dual port design that provides an optimal cross sectional port area for proper cabinet tuning. Or the unique parallel midrange design of the CM 1030. By utilizing two 4½-inch drivers operating in parallel, Koss engineers were able to decrease the excursion of each driver thus creating a dramatic decrease in potential driver distortion and an equally exciting increase in the overall brilliance and presence of the midrange response. Then again there's the Koss high bandpass 1-inch dome tweeter and unique acoustic transformer that creates an incredible 6 dB increase in headroom.

And, of course, there's also the patented quasi second-order crossover network that provides a smooth, acoustically invisible transition from bandpass to bandpass.

But those are just some of the revolutionary features offered by the new Koss CM loudspeakers. Why not prove the Koss Theory of loudspeaker design to yourself by asking your Audio Dealer to give you a full demonstration of the beautiful Sound of Koss. Or write to Fred Forbes, c/o the Koss Corporation, for our free, full color CM loudspeaker brochure. Once you've heard these revolutionary new loudspeakers, we think you'll agree: hearing is believing.

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KOSS CM SPEAKER SYSTEMS

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The SC-1 Stylus Cleaner from Discwasher is designed with a brush that is stiff enough to remove harmful accumulation, but gentle enough to avoid damaging delicate cartridge assemblies. Two drops of Discwasher’s D3 Fluid add extra cleaning action to the SC-1 without the side-effects of alcohol, which can harden rubber cantilever mountings.

After cleaning with SC-1 and D3 Fluid by Discwasher.

The retractable, walnut-handled SC-1 includes a magnifying mirror for convenient inspection of stylus/cartridge alignment and wiring. Get the clean truth from your records; get the SC-1.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

CSN & Simels

• I subscribe to STEREO REVIEW primarily for information on audio hardware, but I cannot resist a reply to Steve Simels’ September review of “CSN” by Crosby, Stills, and Nash. Using the city of Los Angeles as a time-delay detonator (most all of the album was recorded in studios in Miami, Florida), Simels blows up and out over the fact that CSN actually use session musicians, as if that were something akin to corporate callousness. He then faults a collective writing genius that has produced two gold records by comparing “Helplessly Hoping with See the Changes” to music for not meeting his expectations, thus dismissing hour upon hour of pure listening pleasure—and himself as a critic.

C. L. Morrison
Panama City, Fla.

• Like hell the songs on Crosby, Stills, and Nash’s new album are “hardly worth discussing,” as Steve Simels put it in his review in the September issue. “CSN” may not be one of the year’s best albums, but it is worth discussing. Sure they’ve lost what they once had, but their musicianship is topnotch and their harmonies are still very powerful. In an age when we have garbage-can bands such as Kiss and Aerosmith and guys like Peter Frampton, I find CSN very much worth discussing. Mr. Simels showed me just one thing: his poor taste.

S. L. DiFazio
Greenwood, Ind.

Gambling on Records

• Putting aside questions about disc quality, I think that records are hardly the bargain the president of Golden Crest Records claimed they are in the July “Letters.” All too often the record buyer wastes his money because there is rarely a chance to hear an entire LP (or sometimes any of it at all) before buying it. STEREO REVIEW helps some, but in the end it is up to the buyer alone to decide if he is pleased or displeased by his purchase. Unfortunately, if he is not pleased, there is little he can do to recoup the loss once the record has been taken home, opened, and played. Your local record store is thus a haven for legalized gambling.

Christopher Collins
Newport Beach, Calif.

Yes, and so is your local book store. Hardcover books these days mostly seem to cost in the $10 to $15 range—and they won’t even let you read them at the counter!

Upgrading Radio

• A lot of people have been talking about the coming of stereo AM and quad FM, but as I read William Anderson’s September “Editorially Speaking,” I couldn’t help but wonder if these will have any value beyond their snob appeal.

Having worked in radio broadcasting for many years, I can tell you that people just don’t sit with their ears fixed before the loudspeaker(s) of their radios the same way that they sit bug-eyed in front of their television sets. While the radio industry seems to have its heart set on introducing something that needs to be attentively listened to, radio broadcasters are increasingly presenting “background” programming. Automated “jukebox” stations seem to be spreading across the country like air pollution in a stiff breeze. The remaining semi-live, somewhat conversational stations—such as the 50,000-watt, clear-channel KFI in Los Angeles—are switching to a more mindless sound with “time n’ temp” DJ chatter spuriously sprinkled between the seemingly endless cycle of their thirty pulp pop songs.

If stereo AM and quad FM are to be valuable contributions to our society, programming is going to have to become more worthwhile and listeners are going to have to sit down, turn up the volume a little, and listen. It can be done, and it is being done already to a limited extent; especially noteworthy are the CBS radio network’s two regular drama pro-
grams and occasional specials and the excellent National Public Radio offerings. NPR's Earthday is an example of how stereo FM can bring another dimension to radio drama, and there have also been some experiments with live concerts and other types of "foreground" programming.

Stereo AM? Quad FM? Sooner or later they will find their way into our homes, but if we continue to listen as most people listen to radio now—at a level just below consciousness—it might as well be mono or the roar of a vacuum cleaner.

KEN SLAUGHTER
San Bernardino, Calif.

Cartoon Connoisseur

- Let me applaud your man with the unique sense of humor and way of expressing it: I'm speaking, of course, of the person who draws the cartoons appearing in Stereo Review each month, Charles Rodrigues. His irony and wit are truly amusing. I wish more space could be devoted to his work.

JOSEPH L. SCHERER
Washington, Mo.

Mr. Rodrigues' cartoon strip Casey is syndicated nationally. In the New York area it appears in the Daily News.

Emanuel Ax

- I want to thank Stereo Review for introducing me to the young pianist Emanuel Ax. I bought his first record (the Chopin recital) after reading Richard Fred's review of it in the October 1976 issue; Ax fully justifies the splendid review and it has become my favorite disc. Since then, I have made sure that my record store apprises me of each new recording Ax makes, and I am happy to say that I have them all, including the latest, with the Cleveland Quartet. Although my preference is for Ax as a soloist, the Dvořák quintet (reviewed in the September 1977 issue) is indeed a splendid performance. The recommendations of Stereo Review's classical music reviewers have been my guide since I became a subscriber and they have yet to disappoint me.

By the way, when I was in Britain recently I compared RCA's English pressing of Ax's first record with the one made in the U.S. The former is decidedly inferior.

R. V. ALLEN
Willowdale, Ontario

Music Editor James Goodfriend replies: Mr. Allen will probably be delighted to know that the Chopin recital he refers to was not Ax's first record but was preceded by another. That first disc included the Chopin B Minor Sonata, four Liszt transcriptions of Schubert songs, and two Liszt virtuoso pieces, and it was reviewed in the "Best of the Month" section in the October 1975 issue of Stereo Review.

Giving Credit

- The song Willin' by Little Feat does indeed appear on "Salin' Shoes," their second album, as Paulette Weiss said in her reply to a letter in the September issue. But that was not the original recording of it, as the group did an earlier version on their first album, for Warner Bros., which was simply titled "Little Feat." Also in the September issue, in his review of "Barry Manilow Live," Pete Reilly says Manilow wrote Mandy and A Weekend in New England. The former was written by Scott English and Richard Kerr (after which Clive Davis changed it around a little) and the latter by Randy Edelman.

BILLY MIIGICOVSKY
Montreal, Quebec

Dust Blower

- Recently I came up with a brilliant idea I thought I should write and tell you about. Two months ago I had just finished up a bottle of Pearl Drops tooth polish and was about to dispose of the container when the idea came to me. I proceeded to rinse the bottle out with water and put it on the counter for three days to dry it out. Now I am totally dependent on this bottle to squeeze air onto my phonograph stylus to clean it off and also to blow dust off my records. I saved $3, which is what an instrument specially designed for this purpose costs, and I also think my piece of equipment is far more efficient than any that can be bought.

ROBERT MATHIES
Mountain View, Calif.

Technical Director Larry Klein replies: Not a bad idea—with one caveat: there may be dirt adhering to a stylus (and certainly in record grooves) that a little puff of air won't remove, in which case one needs to resort to more elaborate (and non-homemade) remedies.

"Young Pianists"

- In "All the Young Pianists" (September), James Goodfriend states that he excluded those pianists he had "not heard sufficiently to make a judgment about." He then proceeds to evaluate Christian Zacharias and Krystian Zimmerman on the basis, in each case, of a single recording devoted to music of a single composer—hardly enough evidence on which to form any kind of verdict.

In addition, I would like to know how Mr. Goodfriend would defend his omission of Bruno-Leonardo Gelber and Victoria Postnikova, both of whom have performed a number of times in this country. Surely Gelber's Brahms recordings and Postnikova's stunning Schumann Kreisleriana and Scriabin Fifth Sonata (Russian Melodiya C 02621/2 and C 03983/4, respectively) rank with the efforts of the pianists who were included, and surpass many of them.

Finally, two corrections: Columbia has never issued a Nelson Freire recording of Schumann's Kinderszenen (perhaps Mr. Goodfriend meant the Carnaval once available on MS 73077), and the competition in which Robert Silverman was a winner is named after José Vianna da Mota, not "Viana da Mota" as in the article.

DONALD MANILD
St. Cloud, Minn.

Mr. Goodfriend replies: No matter how many times one reiterates (and I reiterated it plenty) that the opinions given are highly personal, as was the experience on which they are based, one is still accused of distortion, as if what was being dealt with was fact rather than" (Continued on page 12)
Sound of SAE

What you see here is the result of twelve years of devotion to the development and production of the most revolutionary and highest quality components in the audio industry. This is not the usual self-seeking statement by a biased manufacturer—to prove it, ask anyone who knows SAE.

But, it is not only uniqueness that sets SAE products so far apart from their competitors. It is a goal that SAE established long ago—a goal which states that it is manufacturing excellence as well as design that makes a product truly great.

The following points out the realization of this goal in our product.

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The complete line of SAE Stereo Power Amplifiers is the product of one heritage in both design and construction. The unique, fully complementary design system provides balanced amplification from input to output. This approach yields lower steady state and transient distortion as well as better overload recovery. To realize the full benefits of this unique design approach, every SAE amplifier is built with the same high quality materials throughout. The use of Mil-Spec parts, G-10 glass epoxy boards and hand selected critical components at every level ensures that the superior design results in superior products.

PREAMPLIFIERS

A bold research and development program by our engineering staff has resulted in the introduction of the first integrated circuit (IC) designed specifically for audio applications. Extremely low distortion, low noise characteristics and fast overload recovery have made it ideally suited for preamp applications. To realize the full benefits of this innovative IC, a completely new phono circuit has been developed. This new multi-stage phono circuit requires less gain from each individual stage and results in lower transient distortion, more accurate tracking of the RIAA curve, and also provides much lower interface interaction with the phono cartridge itself. Besides sonic excellence, careful attention has been paid to human engineering—our preamplifiers provide the optimum in signal flow flexibility to complement their sonic excellence.

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The parametric approach to tone modification stands as a revolutionary advancement in equalizers for consumer products. Our parametric equalizers control not only cut and boost, as in conventional systems, but also bandwidth and center frequency. This unique combination of controls provides for tonal modification never before thought possible.

ASSOCIATED COMPONENTS

These components complement our line of amplifiers, preamps and equalizers. They include a digital readout FM tuner with linear phase IF filters and phase-lock multiplex; an Electronic Crossover for bi- amplification, which will reduce distortion in even the best speaker system; an Impulse Noise Reduction System, the system that takes over where every other noise reduction system leaves off, by providing dramatic reduction of the impulse noises (clicks and pops) that occur in common playback of records; and our new Time Delay Ambience System, to recreate the live performance previously beyond reach in the home environment.

CONCLUSION

As you can see, the goal of advanced design and manufacturing excellence has created the finest audio products in the world. The goal is supported by an ongoing R & D program and by a large modern production facility using the latest techniques in circuit board and mechanical fabrication. With constant supervision of assembly and testing, SAE products offer performance, value and consistency—functional, state-of-the-art, and without question, Components for the Connoisseur.
opinion. Mr. Manildi to the contrary, it is relatively easy to make judgments on some pianists playing some repertoire on the basis of a single record—though one should add (as I did) the caution that the opinion has been based on just one record. On the other hand, it is sometimes very difficult to make judgments about other pianists on the basis even of several records. The difference lies in the repertoire—what opportunities it offers for judgment—and in the pianistic personality involved. Did anyone have to wait for additional evidence when Horowitz made his American debut in 1928? He played only one piece, but that was quite enough for most people to know what to think of him. I omitted Postnikova because I have never heard her and she has no records on domestic labels. I omitted Gelber because many of his records were made nearly a decade ago and, in any case, the totality of them did not provoke in me a judgment sure enough to put into print. Sorry, but it happens that way sometimes. There were other worthy and interesting pianists who were omitted for similar reasons, as I made clear in my introduction.

As for the factual matters, Mr. Manildi is right on the first point: it was the recording and concert performance of Carnaval I had in mind. On the second, authorities differ, but Grove's Dictionary gives it as "Viana da Mota" and that is the way I gave it.

* James Goodfriend’s character studies of the young pianists (September) are highly informative and provide a welcome insight into the future of pianism. However, Chopin, Liszt, and other musical giants of earlier times are the past of music. A piano teacher of mine once remarked that "good pianists are a dime a dozen." The future of music lies not in the hands of today’s pianists, but in the compositional art of the present. Perhaps Mr. Goodfriend should oblige the struggling young composers in some future issue of Stereo Review.

R. M. RITCHIE
Portsmouth, N.H.

Arf-less Annie

* In his August review of the original-cast recording of Annie, Peter Reilly states that Sandy, the dog, "... unfortunately, does make an appearance here vocally." I have played the album many times but have not heard so much as an "arf," growl, or whine. Exactly what track does Sandy appear on? Or does he appear only on certain pressings? Please answer; it will help me sleep better.

R. JAMES OST
Boonton, N.J.

Mr. Reilly informs us that his typewriter unnecessarily balked at inserting a "not" into that sentence, and that Mr. Ost is perfectly correct: not a word from Sandy, not even a single "arf," more's the pity. Pleasant dreams.

Kinks Still Kicking

* How dare you, Paulette Weiss! How could you possibly neglect the Kinks in your September column, "Everything Old Is New Again"? Mick Avory, John Dalton, and the Davies brothers are still making music in my neighborhood. I’m beginning to feel like the Great Lost Kinks Fan. God save the Kinks!

BARBRA BRADY
Winter Park, Fla.

Star Wars

* Let me congratulate Steve Simels for his enthusiastic, accurate, and exemplary review of the soundtrack to Star Wars in the September issue. Not often is the poor, jaded, underprivileged movie-going public treated to a film of this stature. How many directors have the courage, foresight, and genius to make a film based on forty years of worn-out clichés? Who would think that anybody would want to watch the Battle of Britain over again? Who would have imagined that a shoot-out in a western bar had any more dramatic impact left in it? What a treat it is again to see a film without recognizable people in it, where the thankfully stock characters are motivated only by necessities of the plot and not by any discernible logic or emotion. What a joy it is to watch one shoot-em-up after another with the bad guys falling left and right. George Lucas has given a starved movie public exactly what it wanted: a film one can sit through without once having to think.

Although Mr. Simels failed to mention it, I’m sure he was also gloriously astonished at how this film trumpets the triumphant return of a long-neglected literary genre, science fiction. Star Wars puts to rest that old bogey that this form of literature can deal with human (Continued on page 16)

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man emotions and problems in any significant and entertaining way; once again, it shows that science fiction is just cops and robbers, cowboys and indians, good guys and bad guys shooting it up in outer space. Well done! And, of course, the soundtrack is a perfect match for the rest of the film. It’s loud, filled with ancient clichés, slick, gloriously mindless—and by golly, it sure is fun. Why, I’d go around all day long humming parts of the score, if I could remember any of it.

PAUL J. HOMCHICK
Woodland Hills, Calif.

Obviously Mr. Simels was wrong when he said there are people out there with no sense of humor—but just a little lighter on the irony stop.

Allen Jones
Fort Arthur, Tex.

Bleak Prospects

Lester Bangs, like most of Stereo Review’s regular and irregular critics, has a definite way with words. But I do wish he’d do his homework before putting pen (or typewriter) to paper. In his August review of Peter Gabrieli’s LP he not only ludicrously compares Gabrieli’s former band, Genesis, with Yes and Queen by saying that they all play “loud, heavily ornamented rock” (perhaps in the same manner as Ravel, Varèse, and Stravinsky wrote “heavily ornamented” classical music—can one really compare apples, oranges, and grapes?), he also refers to Genesis’ “bleak prospects” after Gabrieli’s departure. If Bangs ever bothered to read Billboard or the like, he might have noticed that both of Genesis’ post-Gabriel LP’s, “Trick of the Tail” and “Wind and Wuthering,” sold much better than any of their earlier albums and that the group’s 1977 tour included stops at large, well-filled arenas they had never played before (such as L.A.’s Forum). Bangs also mentions “drummer” Jozef Chirowski as part of Bob Ezrin’s studio entourage. If he had bothered to read the liner notes on the Gabriel album, he would have seen that Chirowski plays keyboards; Allan Schwartzberg is the drummer.

Can I have Lester’s check this time around?

Lee Kuntz
Santa Monica, Calif.

Mr. Bangs informs us that the “bleak prospects” he was referring to were the artistic ones. Also, he’s sorry about the drums and has spent the check.

Technophobia?

I found two statements by Chris Albertson in the July issue disturbing. One was when he called the Dave Brubeck Quartet reunion album “a wonderful reminder of what jazz was before musicians became electronic engineers” and the other was when he said that “Water Babies” by Miles Davis “will be relevant long after [his] more recent efforts, the Headhunters, Weather Report, and Return to Forever all short-circuit.” Does he truly believe that advancement in musical technology will soil the image of jazz as he sees it or is his concern (like the orthodox Freudians who resisted the advance of scientific psychology) with keeping the study pure?

Louis Bernardi
Kent, Ohio

Mr. Albertson replies: I do not advocate the scrapping of synthesizers or wah-wahs any more than I suggest that writers return to the quill pen. But I am strongly opposed to synthesizer operators who seek to imitate acoustic instruments and to the use of electronic attachments that rob traditional instruments of their character and horn players of their distinguishing tone.

Disc Entropy

What an absolutely marvelous editorial in the August issue! Unfortunately, to the patient record buyer waxing cynical because of the decline in quality of today’s recordings, Haeckel’s aphorism (“The ontogeny recapitulates the phylogeny”) simply implies that the brave, new, expensive digital disc will rapidly devolve into something sonically resembling today’s analog dodo-discs.

John W. Cox
Columbia, S.C.
There's been a quiet revolution going on in the cassette world. Leading makers of quality cassette decks have adopted TDK SA as their reference standard tape for high (CrO₂) bias and equalization settings. Why TDK SA? Because TDK SA's advanced tape formulation and super precision cassette mechanism let them (and you) take full advantage of today's advanced cassette deck technology. In addition, a growing number of other companies are recommending SA for use with their machines. So for the ultimate in cassette sound and performance, load your deck with SA and switch to the "High" or "CrO₂" bias/EQ settings. You'll consistently get less noise, highest saturation and output levels, lowest distortion and the widest dynamic range to let you get the best performance from any quality machine. But you needn't believe all this just because we say so. All you have to do is check our references.

In Canada: Superior Electronics Industries, Ltd.
**New Products** latest audio equipment and accessories

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**Piezoelectric Element In New Stat-Brush**

- The Stat-Brush is a new antistatic record-cleaning device available from Le-Bo Products. It consists of a velvet cleaning head with an attached brush mounted on a handle. A piezoelectric element, activated by a switch on the handle, puts an electric charge on the velvet head, neutralizing the static charge on the record surface. The brush traps the dust loosened by the charged head. The Stat-Brush is first applied to a spinning record near the label and then slowly drawn toward the rim while the user presses and releases the switch several times. Price: about $25.

*Circle 115 on reader service card*

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**Disc-only Preamp From Accuphase**

- The Accuphase C-220 Stereo Disc Equalizer is essentially a precision RIAA preamplifier for disc program sources. It includes a "head" pre-amplifier for use with moving-coil cartridges, but it can also be used with other types of magnetic phonograph cartridges. The input impedance of the C-220 can be selected at 100, 30,000, 47,000, or 100,000 ohms when not using the head amp; with the head amp on, input impedance is fixed at 100 ohms. Two sets of phono inputs are provided; in addition, there are jacks that accept the input of the regular system preamplifier and feed it to the power amplifier. "Class-A" push-pull circuitry is used throughout the C-220. Controls include a row of pushbutton switches for power, disc 1 or disc 2, head amp on/off, and input impedance for discs 1 and 2 as well as rotary step-type balance and volume controls.

With the head amp on, the input sensitivity of the C-220 is 0.1 millivolt (mV); with it off, sensitivity is 2 mV. The head-amp input is designed for a maximum signal of 20 mV, and the maximum phono input without the head amp is 400 mV. The main output of the C-220 is rated to deliver 2 volts rms at maximum volume setting (output impedance is 200 ohms). Maximum output is 10 volts. The frequency response of the C-220 is ± 0.2 dB; total harmonic distortion is 0.01 per cent at rated output over this range of frequency. The signal-to-noise ratios (IHF A weighting) are 72 dB with the head amp and 85 dB without (at rated output). Approximate dimensions of the rack-mounting model of the C-220 (Type A) are 3 1/4 x 19 x 13 1/2 inches; the Type B (non-rack-mounting) measures 3 1/4 x 17 1/4 x 13 3/4 inches. Price: under $900.

*Circle 116 on reader service card*

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**Audio Buff for Dirty Dustcovers**

- For those of you with well-worn and soiled turntable dustcovers, Elpa Marketing Industries is introducing Audio Buff, a plastic cleaning and polishing kit. Audio Buff Cleaner is a nontoxic and antistatic formulation for cleaning and dusting clear plastic materials; the complementary Audio Buff Polish is intended to protect and restore maximum transparency to the surfaces. The cleaner and polish are sold together in 4-ounce bottles. Price for both: about $5.

*Circle 118 on reader service card*

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**Sound Concepts’ Time-delay Unit Has Reverb Function**

- The SD-550 from Sound Concepts is a time-delay system for ambience synthesis in audio systems. Utilizing analog shift-register integrated circuits (bucket brigades) for its delay action, the SD-550 can produce between 5 and 100 milliseconds of delay between front and rear speakers. A front-panel control permits the delayed rear-speaker signal to be mixed with the front-speaker signal if desired. In addition, between 0 and 90 per cent reverberation can be applied to the input signal. A high-frequency roll-off control is provided, and the rear-speaker level is adjustable. The delay circuitry incorporates a two-to-one compander to insure adequate signal-to-noise levels in the rear channels. Slide controls are provided for delay time, reverberation, high-frequency roll-off, front mix level, and rear-speaker level. The front-panel control complement is rounded out by four rocker switches which select delay range, rear-speaker output, front-speaker output, and input source. The SD-550 can be used with mono, stereo, or quadraphonic signal sources; rear-channel quad signals can be passed unadulterated or processed with delay and/or reverb. A rack-panel version of the SD-550 is available. Dimensions are 3 1/4 x 13 1/4 (19 for rack unit) x 9 inches. Price: $675 (standard or rack mount).

*Circle 117 on reader service card*

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**Sansui Turntable Has Fluid-damped Tone Arm**

- A new direct-drive turntable, the SR-838, is available from Sansui. The SR-838 has a twenty-pole brushless d.c. motor, the speed of which is servo-controlled by a phase-locked-loop circuit incorporating a quartz-crystal oscillator. The headshell of the "S"-shaped tone arm has gold-plated con-  

*(Continued on page 20)*
What's rare earth doing in a headphone?

Making the greatest sound in the slenderest headphones imaginable... that's what!

I hear you!

An important technological advance makes possible a headphone with superb listening characteristics and a particularly high degree of comfort. The innovation is the use of rare earth elements in the compound of the permanent magnet of each earpiece... besides having superior magnetic properties, these magnets are also of much smaller size (and lighter weight), while still achieving an improved response over conventional permanent magnets.

The foam cushioned headband is exceptionally comfortable, and the earpiece yokes incorporate a unique pivoting system that enables the earpiece to fit snugly against the ear.

This is Open Audio headphone design and engineering at its best!

For further information write to: Pickering & Co., Inc., Dept. 101 Sunnyside Blvd., Plainview, New York 11803
New Products
latest audio equipment and accessories

tacts for headshell connections, and the arm
shaft is filled with a damping resin. The arm
features a "mass-concentrated fulcrum" pi-
vot assembly in which substantial mass is
concentrated at the tone-arm fulcrum for im-
proved stability. Tracking force is adjusted
with a rotating counterweight calibrated in
tenths of a gram. All controls for the SR-838
are located on a panel at the front of the turn-
table base; these include pushbutton switches
for power, speed (33⅓ and 45 rpm), and en-
gagement of the quartz-servo circuit, as well
as a pitch control and a cueing lever. Pitch is
adjustable within ±2.5 per cent.

The SR-838 has less than 0.025 per cent
wow and flutter, and the speed deviation is
under 0.002 per cent. Rumble is more than 72
dB below the signal level. The SR-838 has a 2-
inch-thick solid base board finished with black
lacquer, and rubber feet are provided for
feedback insulation. The hinged dustcover is
removable. Approximate dimensions of the
SR-838 are 6⅝ x 19⅞ x 15⅜ inches, and weight
is about 28 pounds. Price: $390.

Circle 119 on reader service card

PSE Equipment Has
Individual Test Data

Kenwood’s Top-of-line
Integrated Amp

The AR-15, which has a nominal 8-ohm
impedance, will produce a sound-pressure
level of 86 dB at 1 meter on axis when driven
with 1 watt. The manufacturer recommends
that it be used with amplifiers delivering be-
tween 15 and 100 watts per channel continu-
ous power into 8 ohms (both channels driven). Sensitivity is 1.2 volts
for an output of 100 watts (8-ohm load). The
slew rate of the studio Two is over 100 volts
per microsecond, and the signal-to-noise ratio
at rated output is over 100 dB. The unit is the
same size as the Studio One except for an
added ½ inch of depth.

Each Studio One and Studio Two released
for sale is individually tested, and the test re-
sults are packed in the unit’s carton. Price of
the Studio One and Studio Two: $495 each.

Circle 120 on reader service card

New Low-cost Speaker
Systems from AR

Also new from PSE is the Studio Two pow-
er amplifier, a class-AB all-discrete device.
Rated to deliver 80 watts per channel continu-
ous power into 8 ohms from 20 to 20,000 Hz,
the Studio Two has less than 0.02 per cent to-
tal harmonic distortion over this band. The 4-
ohm power rating is 140 watts with 0.04 per
cent total harmonic distortion. The clipping
point is 100 watts per channel into 8 ohms
(both channels driven). Sensitivity is 1.2 volts
(both channels driven). Sensitivity is 1.2 volts
for an output of 100 watts (8-ohm load). The
slew rate of the Studio Two is over 100 volts
per microsecond, and the signal-to-noise ratio
at rated output is over 100 dB. The unit is the
same size as the Studio One except for an
added ½ inch of depth.

Each Studio One and Studio Two released
for sale is individually tested, and the test re-
sults are packed in the unit’s carton. Price of
the Studio One and Studio Two: $495 each.

Circle 121 on reader service card

(Continued on page 22)
Onkyo's exclusive Quartz-Locked
The closest thing to perfect tuning

Quartz-Locked, Onkyo's unique tuning circuit, provides near perfect FM tuning and stability. You need both for best FM reception, no matter how good the rest of your audio system may be.

Picture an electronic balance which detects and corrects off-frequency conditions as fast as they happen. So fast, in fact, you never even know it is happening. That's Quartz-Locked.

It's done with a reference oscillator controlled by precisely ground quartz crystal which—by natural laws—vibrates at a fixed frequency. The reference frequency is compared with the desired frequency. No matter what can cause tuning drift, continual compensation prevents it. FM reception, clarity and separation are superb.

Quartz-Locked is controlled by the Sentry Circuit which reacts to your touch on the tuning knob, unlocking Quartz-Locked so you can tune it; locking it when you release the knob. Nothing is more foolproof.

Independent audio labs agree that it's practically impossible to mis-tune a Quartz-Locked system. We'll send you the reports to prove it. But you won't find a specification for Quartz-Locked or the Sentry Circuit. That's the trouble with specs. Some things just can't be measured.

We suggest, then, you forget specifications and listen to Quartz-Locked FM at your Onkyo dealer. Onkyo has it in component tuners and receivers. After you hear Quartz-Locked, you won't care about specifications.

That's what Onkyo is all about. Listening. That's why only Onkyo has Quartz-Locked tuning. See your Onkyo dealer or write for information and test reports on the Quartz-Locked system.

If you trust your ears you won't need anything else.

Artistry in Sound

Onkyo

Eastern Office: 42-07 20th Avenue, Long Island City, NY 11106 (212) 464-4619
Western Office: 935 Seward Drive, Woodside, NY 11377 (312) 599-2570
West Coast Distribution Center: Doma Electronics, Inc. 70500 Northfield Street, Van Nuys, California 91401 (213) 996-1275
Canada: Sole Distributor: Tad's Associates Ltd., 105 Sparks Avenue, Willowdale, Ontario, Canada M2J 3S5 (416) 496-5044
Stereo Review

Face, has four lever switches for power, inter-

styled in black with a contrasting white dial

Sansui's TU 717 AM/FM stereo tuner, about 43 pounds. Price: $137 in vinyl, $156 in

4 ohms. Minimum continuous power input is

the impedance can be adjusted to nominal

values of 4 or 8 ohms (which affects the low-

bass amplitudes) and a two-position level con-

control is provided for controlling the high-

frequency response of the system.

The frequency response of the Evolution 1 in a nonreverberant field is 35 to 17,000 Hz

+1.5, -2 dB. It will produce a sound-pressure level of 88 dB at 1 meter with a 1-watt input at

4 ohms. Minimum continuous power input is 15 watts per channel into 4 ohms, and the sys-

tem can handle up to 150 watts of short-term music power. An amplifier delivering 50 watts

per channel continuous power is recommended. The Evolution 1 is available in walnut-veneer and vinyl finishes and has dimensions of 25 x 15½ x 9½ inches. Weight is about 43 pounds. Price: $137 in vinyl, $156 in walnut.

The TU-717 has a usable sensitivity of 10.1
dBr, 50-dB quieting sensitivity is 13 dBf in

mono and 37.2 dBf in stereo. The tuner fre-

quency response is 30 to 15,000 Hz +1, -2
dB, and distortion is 0.07 per cent in both

mono and stereo when the wide i.f. band-

width is used. Alternate-channel selectivity is

80 dB (narrow i.f. bandwidth), and the cap-

ture ratio is 1.2 dB. The stereo separation is

45 dB. The ultimate signal-to-noise ratio of

the TU-717 is 80 dB in mono and 77 dB in

stereo. A rack-mounting adapter with grab

handles is provided with the tuner (shown);

this hardware is user-installed. Dimensions are 6½ x 17 x 15¾ inches. With the rack-

mounting adapter, dimensions are about 6½ x


The Qa is a two-way air-suspension speaker system from Infinity utilizing their electro-
magnetic induction tweeter (EMIT). The
tweeter, with effective radiating dimensions of 1 x ½ inch, is said to provide exceptionally wide lateral dispersion. The 10-inch woofer has a lightweight cone coupled to an unusual-

ly heavy surround. The crossover frequency is 2,500 Hz.

The frequency response of the Qa is 42 to

32,000 Hz ±3 dB, and the nominal impedance

is 4 ohms. Amplifiers delivering between 15 and 150 watts per channel continuous power

are recommended for driving the Qa. Infinity suggests that the Qa be raised 12 inches above the floor for optimum performance, and optional pedestals are offered for this purpose. The cabinet measures 25 x 14½ x 12 inches. Price of the Qa is about $140. A pair of pedestals costs $40.

Library of Congress Offers Brief History Of Phonograph

To commemorate the centennial of the Edison phonograph, the Library of Congress is offering a forty-page booklet titled A Wonderful Invention: A Brief History of the Phonograph from Tinfoil to the LP. Written by James T. Smart and Jon W. Newsom of the Library, it includes a descriptive history and a listing of items shown at the Library of Congress exhibition on sound recording, which closed September 30. Brief discussions are devoted to such topics as the early inven-
tions of Edison, Bell, and Berliner, the develop-
ment of the recording industry (with all its accompanying legal battles), and the launch-

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

Recent fluctuations in the value of the dollar will have an effect on the price of merchandise imported into this country. Please be aware that the prices quoted in this issue may be subject to change.
IT ENDS THE HIT AND MISS METHOD OF FINDING SONGS ON TAPE.

The Sharp Eye is an electronic advance developed by Sharp Laboratories. It can automatically find each music selection on an audio tape and play it.

Technically called an Automatic Program Search System, the Sharp Eye is many times faster and easier than the manual, imprecise method you have to put up with on even the most expensive audio equipment.

How does it work? In simple terms, it electronically "reads" the short pause, or absence of sound, between songs on the tape.

So if you're in the middle of one song and want to go on to the next, just hit the Sharp Eye button. The machine automatically races Fast-Forward to the next pause and then automatically plays the next song.

If you want to hear any selection over again, it works the same way in reverse.

The Sharp Eye is an exclusive feature on all Sharp tape equipment including the RT 1155, shown. This superbly engineered stereo cassette deck with Dolby\textsuperscript{*} noise reduction features a narrow gap Permalloy head for extended high frequency response, servo controlled DC motor for absolute speed stability and low wow and flutter, and the most advanced circuitry available today.

See your Sharp dealer for an exciting demonstration. And while you're there, ask to see the whole Sharp audio line.

They all give you the finest high-fidelity sound you'll find in their price range. As for the Sharp Eye, you won't find that on any other equipment at any price.

CIRCLE NO. 66 ON READER SERVICE CARD

\textsuperscript{*}Dolby is a trademark of Dolby Laboratories, Inc.
The overwhelming majority of all fine stereo equipment is sold with the understanding that it will have a nice home. A house.

Audiovox, on the other hand, is sold with the understanding that home is in a car. In fact, in over 11 million cars on the road today.

So we can’t settle for just great sound. We have to produce the best sound, under the worst conditions. At super speeds on super highways. In deep, dense tunnels. Over the roughest terrain. Into potholes. And pitfalls... And through heaven only knows what else.

At Audiovox, that’s our turf. When others fall to the wayside, we play on.

Example. Our ID-700 cassette with AM/FM stereo radio. Its advanced circuitry design gives it the same interference-free sound at 100,000 miles as at 10,000 miles. Its specially soldered and shielded wires and transistors self-protect it against temperature and humidity changes. Its special locking screws make sure the vibrations come from the clarinets, and not the chassis. Its locking fast-forward and rewind switch lets you keep your hands on the steering wheel, instead of the stereo. And extra-strength adhesive on the tape head eliminates cross-talk by keeping the tape in line, even when you’re changing lanes.

And we don’t stop there. We make sure your ears hear just what the sound engineer heard when he laid it down. With our TRYVOX .20 three way speakers. Through a powerful woofer for full, distortion-free bass. A mid-range for total clarity in middle frequencies. And

The ID-700 in-dash cassette with push button AM/FM stereo radio

CIRCLE NO. 12 ON READER SERVICE CARD
A super-efficient tweeter for clean high frequencies. And, unlike the standard speakers some cars have, ours come with an oversized 20 oz. magnet to absolutely minimize distortion. And rubber-edged gaskets to provide damping and keep the mounting virtually jounce-proof.

And we not only bench test each one of these parts. We road test them. Under conditions mean enough to unhinge the car.

If you'd like to test-listen Audiovox, drive over to one of our dealers. He'll have a complete range of our car stereo equipment. And he'll be pleased to help you plan out a sound system that will be exactly right for your make of car.

(Incidentally, no one knows just how long an Audiovox will last. But from what we hear, owners normally junk their cars, before they junk our radios. And that's absolutely music to our ears.)

Audiovox

© 1977 Audiovox Corporation, Hauppauge, NY 11788

TRYVOX-20 three way speaker system
Inaudible Noise

Q. Considering the effect synthesizers have had on popular music as well as progressive jazz, I was curious about your opinion on a subject I have been working on. It has to do with the possibility of using "inaudible noise," refined in such a way that it would fall into the frequency range of human hearing, with conventional contemporary music. Your comments, personally or in your column, would be greatly appreciated.

MICHAEL S. EITLAND
Loring AFB, Me.

A. Maybe I've missed your point, but do you really mean that there isn't enough audible noise out there for you to play with? Really?

Hard-rock Tracking Force

Q. A recent "Audio Basics" column dealing with tracking force raised a question that I'd like an answer to. I'm a hard-rock fan, and I was wondering if there should be a difference tracking force for the "bumpy" rock discs than for "normal" or easy-listening discs. This may seem a silly question, but I've noticed a bit of distortion in the louder parts of hard rock, and slower music seems to come through distortion-free.

RAY AKERS
Elliston, Va.

A. The tracking force required in a given record-player is simply that which is necessary for the stylus to track the record groove accurately. This in turn is determined by other forces in the playing process that tend to drive the stylus out of the groove. To put it another way, the applied vertical-tracking force must at all times be greater than the various forces that cause the stylus to lose contact with (mistrack) the groove. It's the mistracking that produces the distortion you hear. The forces contributing to mistracking can be divided into those that affect tracking at low frequencies and those that affect it at high frequencies. The low-frequency problems are usually the unsubtle ones; the stylus "sticks" or jumps grooves, or it reproduces a variety of low-frequency thumps, bobbles, and wavers that aren't, as you'll find, readily on the record. These problems are almost always caused by record warps, too low a tracking force, improperly set antiskating force, a bad mismatch between the tone arm and phono cartridge, or a combination of these factors.

The high-frequency tracking problems result in very sibilant "sss" sounds and a sort of break-up quality on some loud, high-frequency passages. Loud high frequencies are embodied on a disc in the form of very rapid undulations in the record-groove walls. If the moving part of the phono stylus has too much mass—and hence too much inertia—to follow the rapid twists and turns of the groove, it will momentarily lose contact or bounce from peak to peak when things get rough—which is at the loudest and highest frequencies. Applying more vertical tracking force will push the stylus into the groove and may produce more reliable contact during hard-rock stress conditions. But keep in mind that any vertical-force increase must be kept within the range of the cartridge's rated tracking force. If the manufacturer rates the cartridge for 1 to 2 grams tracking force and the distortion is still heard at two grams, it may mean that your ear is better than your cartridge (and one or the other should be replaced), your tone arm needs help, or the record has been so overcut that no cartridge will play it cleanly. In any case, may the tracking force be with you.

Planned Obsolescence?

Q. I own an integrated amplifier that shortly will be ten years old, and I use my equipment at least five hours a day and more on weekends. How does age affect the performance of solid-state equipment, and how long will it be before "planned obsolescence" sets in? And which equipment is likely to become obsolete first?

GAYLE W. RARESHED
Sheffield Lake, Ohio

A. Judging from my more than twenty years experience with and within the audio industry, I would say that any equipment obsolescence you encounter will be totally unplanned. What you are really asking about is deterioration from wear and aging. Unlike the mechanical parts of an audio system, the electrical parts do not suffer from a wear process.
True, semiconductors and capacitors may develop leakage in time, electrolytic capacitors can dry out, resistors have been known to change value, and controls get noisy. However, these problems are seldom aggravated by severe use, but rather result from the normal aging process. When something does go wrong, the problem will be heard as noise, intermittent loss of signal, distortion, or simply silence.

It is true that for marketing reasons many manufacturers feel obliged to bring out a completely new line (or replace large parts of their existing line) every year or so. But I’ve observed that in addition to the styling changes, the manufacturers almost always provide at least some improvement or price reduction with each new model.

As far as “planned obsolescence” is concerned, I have never seen any radical changes in sound reproduction—for example, the shift from 78-rpm to 33⅓-rpm discs or from mono to stereo—that weren’t fully validated by the improvements in reproduction brought about by new technology. And even such radical changes almost always allowed the consumer to use much of the equipment from the previous “obsolete” technology.

One other aspect of the question should be mentioned. Not only has the equipment evolved over the years, but, despite inflation, today’s hi-fi equipment provides far better audible performance dollar for dollar than it did twenty years ago. Phonograph cartridges and tape machines have improved sonically most of all, followed by speakers, tuners, turntables, and amplifiers. I would say that “state-of-the-art” equipment of ten years ago (except for phono cartridges and tape machines) should not be much inferior to today’s best equipment. However, low- to middle-price components or heavily used mechanical equipment could probably be replaced with clearly audible benefits after ten years or so.

Stacking Separates

Q. I see that among top-quality stereo components on the market today are separates but matching components normally shown stacked on top of one another. I’m curious as to how they solved the problem of induced hum. I’ve tried to stack my stereo separates, but the hum proved to be too much.

A. Hum will usually be induced when a power transformer or motor radiating an electromagnetic-hum field is placed in close proximity to a very high-gain amplifying stage early in the audio chain. Such a stage might be a phono or tape-head preamplifier section (magnetic phono cartridges and tape heads themselves are also very sensitive to hum fields). As far as radiated-hum prevention is concerned, some types of transformers are specially wound or shielded to minimize their susceptibility to hum sources. And it is of course possible to minimize hum problems by careful physical engineering of the units to be stacked so that one component’s transformer is not too close to another’s high-gain stage.

As for your particular stacking problem, first make sure that the hum really is caused by transformer radiation. You can determine this by temporarily stacking your units with a piece of insulating cardboard between them. It could be that the first time you tried stacking them the two components were in electrical contact, which caused a hum-producing ground loop. If hum persists even though the two components are insulated, then you probably do have an electromagnetic-hum problem. If feasible, try reversing the order of the stack. If that doesn’t work, you could try constructing a simple hum shield. You’ll need a small, flat sheet of thin-gauge iron or steel such as would be provided by a cut-apart and flattened coffee can. (If you can’t afford coffee, any non-aluminum can of the same size will serve. Any material that a magnet will stick to is fine.) Simply move the shield around between the components while listening for the hum. Make sure that you don’t establish a new ground loop by causing the shield to touch both chassis. You can insulate the shield, if need be, with the cardboard sheet mentioned earlier. If you are lucky, you’ll find a spot for the shield that interferes with the radiated hum path between the components. But in any case, do be careful not to block off the air flow to and from the power amplifier’s heat sinks.

Hi-fi Counterfeits

Q. I was told that there are some counterfeit hi-fi products on the market. Exactly what does that mean and how can I avoid them?

A. Only three examples of bogus brand-name audio items have been brought to my attention, but I’m sure there are more out there. Two of the counterfeit cassettes were cassette tapes that were packaged to look like high-quality name brands. The same general art work, color, and type faces were used on the cassette boxes as on the brands they were imitating. A KDK brand cassette, if not examined closely, could be mistaken for a quality TDK, a “Maxelite” C 90 was deliberately made to look like the Maxell product, and there are a number of unbranded or “Schure” replacement styli out there available for purchase by unwise Shure cartridge owners.

In each instance, the resemblance is only skin deep: a shoddy, cheaply made product is masquerading—and is usually being sold for the same price—as a legitimately expensive, high-quality, precision-made product. The imitation not only does not work as well, but in addition could damage your tape player or, in the case of the counterfeit styli, your discs.

FIG. 1
A bogus “Maxelite” (top) and the genuine Maxell cassette. Note the copy-cat packaging.

FIG. 2
TDRWASHER presents
—A revolutionary tonearm damper

Disctraker is a precision damping device that improves the performance of tonearm/cartridge systems by adding a protective cushion between the record and the tracking stylus.

• reduces low frequency noise that colors the sound of even the best tonearm/cartridge systems on all records.
• reduces record-warps resistance—as witnessed by a dramatic reduction of wobble/fuzz.
• permits accurate tracking of even badly warped records.
• reduces record wear and stylus damage from warps.
• reduces distortion caused by high velocity groove overload, mistracking and intermodulation.
• adaptable to most tonearms.
V-Fets are the new generation of transistors.
And you know how hard it is to understand the new generation.

Remember the phrase "generation gap"? Well it’s not only true for generations of men, but generations of machines, too.

V-Fet devices are a major advancement, needing major explanation. And nobody is more equipped to offer it, than Sony.

Sony pioneered the first generation of transistors, some 25 years ago.

Today, Sony is predictably innovative again, being: the first to offer V-Fet equipment commercially. And the only ones to bedazzle you with a whole line of it.

So with these credentials behind us, we will begin our explanation of the new generation.

First came the Fets.

The new generation really began many generations ago. Fets—or field effect transistors—were first conceived in the 1920’s. But the concept was so far ahead of its time that nobody quite knew how to execute it.

Fet’s work quite differently than the bipolar transistor; the transistor you’re familiar with. The bipolar transistor works by conducting a small amount of current, which then induces a high level of current. With the Fet a small amount of voltage (rather than current) controls the high level of current.

This bestows a Fet with high speed reaction time. Regular transistors have a delay in reaction time, creating problems like notch distortion and TIM (transient intermodulation) distortion.

This high speed reaction means also that Fets are extremely efficient and accurate in the high frequency range. Therefore they allow more precise and stable negative feedback, and minimal distortion.

And, to heat up the argument, a Fet will never be afflicted by thermal runaway. High temperature does not induce the self-destructive current surge that you’ll find in the regular transistor.

V-Fets. Or, bye, bye, bipolar.

Wondering why Fets have not taken over, with the transistor becoming a part of history?

Well, for one reason, a Fet will not allow high currents to pass through it. And today’s loudspeakers demand high currents to drive them.

Enter the V-Fet. Vertical field effect transistor. In this structure, thousands of Fets are ordered in a parallel orientation. The current passes through the silicone chips vertically.

Thus, the ability of the V-Fet to handle a lot of current is many times greater than that of small signal Fets—like the kind found in FM tuners and pre-amps.

Sony made it possible for this complex network to be mass produced, by devising the "Selective Oxidation Process." A new technology originally developed for manufacturing large scale integrated circuits.

Sony’s V-Fets.
A full line, from A to V.

Sony makes both integrated amps and power amps with V-Fet circuitry. The TA-4650, TA-5650, TA-8650, TAN-5550 and TAN-8550.

But if you rest your purchase decision on specs alone, V-Fets will disappoint you.

For example, Sony makes two amps, one V-Fet, one not, with identical specs. Yet the V-Fet amp costs more than a spec more.

Obviously, the true measure of V-Fets can’t be measured by anything except the human ear.

Now that you’ve listened to us, really listen to us.

So go ahead and measure it! Bring your favorite record to your V-Fet dealer. Ask him to play it. You’ll find your favorite record will become even more of a favorite, as the sound opens up to you like never before.

And, if you want to open up a brochure on V-Fets, we’ll send you one. Write to SONY, 9 West 57th Street, New York, New York 10019.

We have one note to add. V-Fet equipment is not cheap. So if you’ve appreciated our explanation, you’ll find that a little knowledge can be an expensive thing.

SONY® V-FETS

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Audio Basics

By Ralph Hodges

GETTING THE ROOM RIGHT—II

Last month I proposed, only half humorously, that you might consider rebuilding your listening room to get it to sound better. Audiophiles have actually been known to do this, throwing up a substantial wall or partition to alter the dimensions of a troublesome room. Admittedly, however, the idea has very limited appeal. Are there any worthwhile alternatives?

First, let's keep in mind that what we are talking about is correcting a situation in which the wavelength of a particular low frequency relates mathematically to a room dimension (or dimensions) in such a way that the frequency is reinforced or exaggerated in strength in various areas of the room to the detriment of uniform frequency response. As I pointed out last month, if two or more of the room's dimensions are identical or very similar, this "standing-wave" problem will be worsened.

The offending reinforcement takes place only because the interior surfaces of the room reflect the sound and bounce it back into the room, where at certain frequencies it is in phase with and augments the strength of succeeding sound waves as they are emitted from the loudspeakers. This gives us a clue to a possible plan of attack. If we could somehow change what seems to be the troublesome reflecting room surface into an absorbing one that is particularly effective at the frequency in question (or perhaps even install a barrier), we would scotch the offending resonance rather well. An example of an acoustically absorbent room surface would be a diaphragmatic absorber—that is, any flimsy wall or wall panel that will flex at the problem frequency, soaking up some of the sound energy in doing the work of flexion. (In addition to this, there will be a general loss of low bass, since much of it will go straight through the wall or panel to adjacent rooms or the outside.) Properly designed diaphragmatic absorbers are occasionally found in recording studios, but if you suspect that they are not very practical in a home setting you are absolutely correct.

There are, of course, various porous or fibrous materials specially designed to absorb sound, and they can be applied to walls and ceilings. However, they are at their best at higher frequencies and usually must be used in heavy, bulky quantities and/or in such a way as to leave an appreciable air space between them and the reflective surface before they begin to become effective at frequencies as low as those of typical room-resonance modes. They are certainly worth considering for certain applications, but even a cursory discussion of these materials and their correct use would carry us well beyond this page and probably through the next as well.

What else? Well, these undesired resonances manifest themselves physically as standing waves in the room, and these waves can be prevented from forming if the path they take through the room is interrupted. However, we are talking of sound waves well over ten feet in length, and a rather bulky interfering object will therefore be needed if it is to do much good. A false wall is sometimes resorted to, and it almost always does the job provided its construction is sufficiently sturdy (brick, cinder block, or heavily braced ply-
wood or wallboard). But this solution is a little extreme. Another approach, not always as effective but much more convenient, is something like a large room divider packed solidly with books or, better yet, record albums. The more the divider extends into the room and the closer it approaches the ceiling, the more benefit you can expect from it.

Room dividers and similar barriers can serve two purposes: they help to prevent the formation of standing waves, and they act as low-frequency sound absorbers (the heavier and more porous they are, the more effective). Because of the nature of standing waves, room resonances are not equally audible in all locations in the room. As a rule, the standing waves most likely to be offensively audible to a typically situated listener are those that form between the wall along which the speakers are arrayed and the wall opposite. If this is your case, you have a clue as to where your planned obstruction might be located to best break up a standing wave. If a room divider is used, try to arrange your seating toward the middle of the room so that the divider can be set up as a sort of false wall far enough away from the real (reflecting) wall to do the most good.

A fairly simple mathematical analysis (unfortunately also beyond the scope of this column) can be very helpful in pinning down and curing a room resonance, and for this I direct your attention to How to Correct Your Room Acoustics, No. 1 in STEREO REVIEW's reprint series ($1 from Stereo Review Information Center, Consumer Service Division, 595 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10012). In it you will find useful construction information that goes beyond what can be covered here as well as a discussion of acoustic materials.

What you won't find in it are possible solutions to one of the worst acoustic problems of all: not what your room does to your sound, but what the sound coming from your room does to your neighbors. Apartment dwellers know very well what I mean, and they also know that often there simply is no practical remedy other than shutting down early every night. While turning the matter over in my mind some years ago, it occurred to me (a longtime apartment dweller) that my immediate neighbors tended to bother me with their puny TV speakers as much as I bothered them with my often stentorian audio system.

This made no sense at all until it popped into my head that these TV consoles are usually supported by spindly feet or legs exerting considerable pressure on the floor. The pressure made for a good physical coupling, transmitting the vibration from the TV speaker into the structure of the building (often an efficient medium of vibration transmission in itself) and thence into my apartment. It was hard to believe how much the insertion of an inexpensive set of rubber pads under the TV console's feet helped to solve the problem, and a bit of elaboration on this scheme for my own audio equipment made my neighbors equally happy.

It seems obvious that anything that distributes the weight of a speaker system over a larger floor area is probably going to make your speakers less audible to your neighbors, especially if it serves to cushion the speaker-floor interface as well. It's mind boggling to think how many tempers, how much sleep and good will have been lost because this simplest of home remedies was not employed.
A new Space Program by Sansui.

Designed to send every audiophile into orbit.

Sansui has conquered space — the space in your listening room. Our engineers have created a rack to hold all your high fidelity components in one place so they're easily accessible and easy to operate. And the Sansui GX-5 rack is so elegant you will be proud to display it in your home.

The Sansui GX-5 rack is about the only EIA 19" standard-width rack available with casters for moving your sound system easily from room to room. It is 37-1/2 inches tall and can hold every rack-mountable component. You can also adjust the height of each unit to meet your needs.

We have filled the rack with our choice of outstanding Sansui components. And there's still plenty of room for your records. Listen to them on the Sansui SR-838 Quartz-Servo direct-drive turntable, about the most elegant and stable precision turntable in the world. Even when set on top of so much power, the SR-838 will perform free from all noise and feedback.

When your mood changes, listen to your favorite FM station on the Sansui TU-717 tuner. Reception, even of the weakest stations, is outstanding, with selectivity so high there is never a problem with adjacent channel programming.

And, of course, if you want to preserve these treasured sounds for years — as clean and pure as they were the very first time you heard them — it's all possible with the SC-3110 cassette deck, our rack-mountable version of the SC-3100, already well-known for its superior performance and ultraconvenience including Sansui exclusive Direct-O-Matic loading.

To match these outstanding components, Sansui offers you the AU-717 amplifier with the widest frequency response (from main-in) of any available DC integrated amplifier at any price. With astonishingly low distortion and noise, and wide overall frequency response, the signal is an ultra-faithful replica of the original. The AU-717 delivers the brilliance and all the nuance that makes music so important in your life.

Listen through a pair of SP-L800 (or SP-L900 or 700) dual-woofer speaker systems.* They have been designed to give you the full enjoyment of the clean and pure sound that our advanced technology components provide.

Of course, you can select other components to meet your own listening needs. You may want slightly less power; so we offer you the AU-517 DC integrated amplifier, created with the very same expertise as its bigger brother, the AU-717. If you wish to spend a little less on your cassette, you can choose the SC-1110.

And for you recordists and musicians we have something almost out of this world. The AX-7 mixer/reverb unit is about the finest home recording console that you can find at such a reasonable price. Versatility is the key, with up to 6 inputs for microphones, line level, electrical instruments, discs, broadcasts or tapes. You get panpots and 20dB input level attenuators on the 4 main inputs. Reverb is included, as well as circuits for 4-channel, equalization and noise reduction. Record the sounds you create on up to 3 tape decks.

We're sure you'll want to visit your local franchised Sansui dealer for a complete demonstration of Sansui's new Space Program. Just think about it. It will send you into orbit.

* Walnut veneer finish

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Unfortunately, one of the most overlooked components in a fine sound system is the cartridge. And all too often, it can be the one place where you skimped on quality. (Out of sight, out of mind, as they say).

We sincerely believe that an investment in a Sonus cartridge will truly surprise you with the way it improves the quality of your record reproduction. The analytical quality of the Sonus brings out the inner beauty of the music and the coloration of its own.

But what we’re talking about is said even better by Sonus owners. “Excellent clarity,” “more fulfilling sound,” “open, airy 3-D sound,” “superb depth and definition,” “clean, accurate and transparent sound,” are typical of thousands of enthusiastic comments we have received from owners of Sonus cartridges.

Make sure your cartridge matches up to the rest of your system. Write us for further information and the name of the Sonus dealer nearest you.

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I Was Wondering If . . .

Q. You could recommend a reliable reel-to-reel service station?
A. Deeply as it hurts me (for many of the extenuating circumstances pleaded are genuine and heartrending), inquiries like this simply have to go into my “Don’t Answer” file. I’m flattered by the confidence so many readers have in my judgment of equipment, and I would be less than candid if I were to reply that because I haven’t personally tested everything in the field, I have no opinions on anything. My consulting business—which is wholly unconnected with Stereo Review—could hardly operate if that were true. However, inasmuch as reader inquiries reach me in my capacity as Contributing Editor to this magazine, I must consistently follow the magazine’s policy against making any recommendation of one product over another beyond what is contained in published test reports—actual testing is the only fair test.

Backcoating

Q. Why are some tapes backcoated? Is there any real advantage, or is it just an advertising gimmick?
A. Providing a tape with a backcoated layer (made up largely of carbon particles) offers at least three advantages. First, as the tape is squeezed between the puck roller and the rotating capstan shaft during normal playing, the slightly roughened backcoating gives the rubber roller a better grip. Second, during high-speed winding, the textured back surface allows air trapped between the layers to bleed out. This results in a smoother tape pack with less danger to exposed tape edges. Finally, by putting a conductive coating on the back of the tape, it becomes unnecessary to put so much-carbon into the oxide-plus-binder material that gets coated onto the front side. Static electric charges are drained off just as effectively with the carbon on the back, but there is now proportionately more room for oxide needles, making for potentially improved magnetic performance.

Eight-track Feedback

Q. In one of your columns you made some negative remarks about eight-track cartridges. Okay, I’m ready to switch to the cassette format as soon as you tell me where I can get four-channel (discrete) cassettes.
A. Fair enough. The reason there are no four-channel cassettes is not technological: there are plenty of four-channel cassette heads available (with 60-dB or better crosstalk rejection), which are used currently by duplicators who record both "sides" of a stereo cassette at a single pass.

Unhappily, Philips—which controls the licensing structure for all "compact cassettes"—will not permit their licensees to produce a four-channel home deck using these heads. Their reason is that such one-direction, four-channel cassettes could not be played compatibly on existing stereo and mono cassette decks, and it has been an abiding principle with Philips that full compatibility must be maintained within their proprietary format from pole (North) to pole (South). (They had to bend their rule a bit to permit chromium-dioxide and Dolbyized cassettes.)

It is theoretically possible to make a four-channel cassette that is compatible with the Philips standards, and one or two laboratory machines have been constructed that do so. This involves using eight recorded tracks (four in each direction) that are only approximately 0.008 inch wide, however. Mass-produced heads capable of handling four such tracks with the exacting alignment required are currently not in the cards. And even if they were, signal-to-noise ratio would suffer by about 10 dB—a degradation that today’s cassettes just can’t afford.

As far as matrixed four-channel cassettes...
are concerned (Ralph Hodges discussed them in his October 1976 report on the new Angel cassette releases), manufacturers have apparently decided not to pursue this development for the time being.

**Take-up Trouble**

Q. I have a three-motor cassette deck that is plagued with a problem often experienced with less expensive recorders. If I am near the end of the tape, the deck often will not fast-forward the tape to the end. And if I take the cassette out and turn it over, it won't rewind the remaining distance either. Is this because the deck is a front-loader, or does the solenoid control or the automatic shut-off have anything to do with it? Can it be fixed?

A. Your problem has nothing to do with front-loading, a solenoid control system, or the automatic shut-off. Without a service manual and the ailing deck itself, it's hard to make more than a guess at a diagnosis, but if your particular three-motor cassette transport operates on the principle used by many three-motor open-reel decks, the problem may arise from the following cause:

In fast-wind modes, full power is applied to whichever reel motor is winding, but some power is fed—via a resistor—to the other reel motor as well. The reason for this is to create a certain amount of "holdback" tension to ensure a smooth wind. The two reel motors tend to rotate in opposite directions when powered, and the reduced power fed to the trailing reel motor creates the tension by causing that motor to oppose the motion of the tape. The same resistor is often switched between motors (depending on which is pulling and which is holding back), so if slightly too much holdback tension is being supplied—by an out-of-tolerance resistor—it would show up in both directions and under precisely the conditions in which you are experiencing difficulty: a nearly full reel (whose large tape pack reduces the take-up torque) trying to pull a nearly empty reel (whose small diameter ensures maximum holdback torque).

Many cassette mechanisms do not employ such a voltage-controlled holdback tension, however, relying solely on the frictional forces built into cassettes and on a none-too-hefty take-up motor. In this latter case, I fear there's little you can do yourself, although the machine's manufacturer may be able to help.

**Adding a Volume Control**

Q. I have a stereo tape recorder that has no output-level controls. Is there anyone who makes an add-on playback control for decks like mine?

A. Yes. The Switchcraft #669P1 Stereo Volume Control, which currently lists for $8.45, is designed for precisely this kind of application. Since it consists simply of a twogang ("stereo") audio volume control, with input and output connectors, there are other companies that make a similar product. Note, however, that with this or any similar "passive" control you can turn the playback level down but not up.

**Len Feldman doesn't think that our 3140 stereo receiver is as good as we think it is. He thinks it's better!**

When Len Feldman* commented that our rated performance specifications for the Miida 3140 AM/FM receiver were conservative, we weren't surprised. Conservative ratings are a fact of life at Miida.

Take our power specifications. While we quote 43 watts per channel, minimum RMS into 8 ohms with less than 0.4% total harmonic distortion, Mr. Feldman, in his report, states, "Our sample did much better. Mid-frequency power reached 55 watts, while at the frequency extremes we obtained 53 watts at 20 Hz and 43 watts at the 20kHz extremes."

Mr. Feldman adds, "Connected to a pair of low-efficiency air suspension speakers...it was pretty obvious that power output has been conservatively rated.

We were able to attain 105 to 110 dB listening levels without clipping or amplifier overload." Other specs, writes Mr. Feldman, "were either equalled or exceeded in our measured sample."

Because more for less is a Miida tradition, the 3140 incorporates Phase Locked Loop for superior FM stereo separation, fully detented tone controls, inputs for tape monitoring and cross-dubbing, both FM signal strength and center-channel tuning meters, overload speaker and amplifier protection, and much more.

Visit your Miida dealer and see our complete line of receivers, turntables and speakers. For more information call (201) 933-9300; or write: Miida Electronics, Inc., 205 Chubb Avenue, Lyndhurst, N.J. 07071.

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*M. Feldman Report (FM GUIDE magazine, January 1977) and other reviews of Miida components are available without charge on request.

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**Miida...the stereo specialist.**

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CIRCLE NO. 49 ON READER SERVICE CARD
Introducing 3 new ways to get the truth out of your cassette deck.
The Master Series. A Scotch cassette for every switch position.

Three totally different tapes. Each developed to deliver the truest, clearest sound possible at each tape selector switch position.

Our Master I cassette is for normal bias recording. It features an excellent dynamic range, low distortion, uniform high frequency sensitivity and output that's 10 dB more than standard tapes.

Our new Master II replaces chrome cassettes and is designed for use in hi-fi stereo systems with chrome bias (70 microsecond equalization). It features some spectacular performance characteristics, including a special coating that gives it a 3 dB better signal-to-noise ratio at low and high frequencies than chrome cassettes, yet it's less abrasive.

Our new Master III is for the ferri-chrome setting. It's formulated with the most advanced technology available, giving a 3 dB output improvement at low frequencies and 2 dB at high frequency. And the unique dual layer construction increases both low and high frequency sensitivity over chromium dioxide and ferric oxides.

All this, plus unique inner workings you can actually see. Our new Master line has a special bonus feature. A precision molded clear shell that allows you to monitor the inner workings of the cassettes. You can actually see the recorder head penetration and the unique roller guides in action. Look closely at the transparent shell and you'll see the water wheels which were specially designed to move the tape evenly across the head, reducing friction and noise. And two radially creased shims insure smoother wind, improved mechanical reliability and reduced wow and flutter.

 Enough said. Now it's time for you to take the true test. Match up the right Master cassette with the bias you prefer. Then just listen.

You'll find that whichever switch position you use, a Scotch® Master is the way to get the most out of it.

Scotch® Recording Tape. The truth comes out.
Installation of the Month
By Richard Sarbin

To house his four-channel audio system, Fred H. Jansen of Berwyn, Illinois, designed and built a highly accessible, transportable fixture that suits both the modest dimensions of his living room and his need for high operational efficiency. Sixty-five inches tall, the wood cabinet is finished with simulated wood-grain vinyl and has a clean, uncluttered look in keeping with the style of the room.

Enclosed within the structure's carefully crafted compartments is a group of components consisting both of true quadraphonic equipment and of stereo units used in pairs for four-channel application. A Teac A-334S tape deck, which occupies a central position in the setup, is flanked on either side by BSR octave equalizers offering four channels of equalization. The turntables situated beneath these units are a Garrard Zero-100 (left) and a Harman-Kardon/Rabco ST-7 (right). Both have angled mirrors positioned above them to improve visibility. The phono cartridges are the Audio Technica AT12 and the Stanton 780/4DQ. The heart of the complex, placed between the turntables, is a Marantz 4300 receiver equipped with an optional Marantz SQA-2B full-logic decoder (installed in an under-chassis slot).

The lower portion of the console not only functions as a storage facility for tapes, records, and accessories but also houses additional program sources. Eight-track cartridges are handled by an Akai CR-80D-SS deck in this section's center compartment and by a Panasonic cartridge player located at the left of the Akai unit. Just to the right is a Marantz CD-400B demodulator for CD-4 recordings. The pair of white circular openings at the top of the center panel act as air ducts for ventilation of the equipment.

Mr. Jansen's installation is rounded out by a group of four speakers he designed himself. Each is a high-efficiency ported type using a twelve-inch woofer, a five-inch midrange, and a compression horn driver. The most impressive and original concept in the speaker system's design involves the installation of two LED digital indicators above each tweeter. These provide continuous, illuminated digital readout of the power delivered to each speaker.

To enhance the sense of composure he strives for when listening to music, Mr. Jansen has mounted a convenient control panel behind the living-room sofa so that he can select program sources without moving from his seat. Other inventive features worth noting include a series of five switches (positioned above the receiver) to control incandescent and fluorescent lighting for the entire complex, plus a set of three free-swinging glass doors that protect the open-reel tape deck and turntables from dust and moisture.

Mr. Jansen is employed in the General Motors electromotive division but hopes eventually to land a job in the stereo field. When he is not busy developing new modifications for his own system or designing housing for others' stereo setups, he finds time to make live recordings at clubs in the area. He expects to enjoy his collection of soft rock and classical music all the more with the purchase (still in the planning stage) of two super-power amplifiers and an elcaset deck.
Pure Pleasure.
The True Sound of Scott.

Scott speakers are designed and engineered for listeners who demand the ultimate in true sound reproduction. All Scott speakers are designed and individually tested for low distortion, flat frequency response and the highest possible efficiency. Their crossover networks are built with low loss capacitors, and coils with exceptionally close tolerances to give you the truest sound possible.

Unlike many other speakers, Scott speakers neither add nor subtract from the original sound. And unlike so many of today's "fad" speakers, they don't distort the original sound for special effect. Nor do they color the sound for an exaggerated response.

Scott speakers provide pure listening pleasure by accurately reproducing music with qualities equivalent to live performances, and with a degree of authenticity limited only by the quality of the record, tape or broadcast signal.

It is this uncommon ability to reproduce sound in a truly natural fashion that has earned Scott speakers their outstanding reputation and critical acclaim.

Listen for yourself. The true sound of Scott is pure pleasure. And true sound is built into every Scott speaker in every price range, from the Bookshelf Series to the distinguished PRO 100 shown here.

For specifications on our complete line of audio components, contact your nearest Scott dealer, or write H.H. Scott, Inc. Corporate Headquarters, 20 Commerce Way, Woburn, MA 01801. In Canada: Paco Electronics, Ltd., Quebec, Canada.

SCOTT Warranty Identification Card

Warranty Number: 24026
Model: PRO 100 Speakers (2)
Serial Number: 1001374/1001375
Expiration Date: January 1, 1983

Scott's unique, gold warranty card. Individualized with your warranty, model and serial numbers, and expiration date. Scott's fully transferable, five-year parts and labor-limited warranty is your assurance of lasting pleasure.

Unique Bi-Directional Midrange and Tweeter Arrangement.
Pairs of midrange and tweeter drivers in two planes, one horizontal and one vertical, offer the advantage of steering high-frequency distribution to most favorably complement speaker placement and individual listening taste. Unlike many other speaker systems, the Scott PRO 100 is not dependent on the reflecting surface of the listener's walls for its response, and provides a truly omnidirectional effect in any listening environment.

Upward-firing midrange and high-frequency drivers, as well as front-firing drivers, provide an omnidirectional effect that surrounds you with sound.

Individual Dispersion Control and Frequency Response Switches.
The PRO 100 provides a unique sound dispersion control that allows you to adjust the direction and amount of sound between the upward-firing and front-firing drivers. Two additional switches allow you to tailor the high end and midrange frequency response of the speaker to best match your room acoustics.

Three individual position switches allow you to tailor response to best match your own listening environment.
THE PITFALLS OF SUBJECTIVITY: Criticism, in general, tends to arouse strong emotio
tional responses. This is a natural byproduct of the process, of course, and I must admit that I enjoy receiving an occasional heated letter from a reader who takes issue with my perception (or, in my view, my lack of perception). Insofar as is possible, my evaluation of audio components is based on measurements as accurate and objective as I can make them, and I rarely go off the deep end, so to speak, into the world of purely subjective reactions. This may be because there is something in my nature that causes me to be singularly unimpressed with much of the "expert" criticism I have read in such diverse areas as music, drama, art, literature, food, wine—and, of course, hi-fi. There have been just enough published accounts of "experts" in all these fields who have been completely taken in by auditory perception. And it would also shatter one of my own long-held beliefs. In nearly thirty years of deep immersion in the hi-fi world, including the testing of literally hundreds of amplifiers, I have never found an audible difference between amplifiers that was not readily explainable by a measurable difference (or differences) if I really searched for it. I would, in fact, almost welcome the chance to be proved wrong, since it can be very lonely where I, Larry Klein, and some others stand, seemingly out of step with a large segment of the hi-fi design, manufacturing, and critical world.

On the other hand, if I hear no differences between these two amplifiers (assuming that I also found no measurable differences), I would be faced with two possible conclusions: (1) that my perception or listening approach was so flawed or inadequate that I could not hear qualities that were glaringly obvious to everyone else (what a blow to my ego!), or (2) that there was indeed no difference between the two amplifiers to be heard.

As the review showed, I found neither audible nor significant measurable differences between the Harman-Kardon 16 and 16A, leaving conclusion No. 2 as the only possible one for me. Of course, I expected some reaction, and I was not disappointed. A letter from Robert Greenberg, president of Harman-Kardon, presented a reasoned and rational challenge to my findings. Space does not permit extensive quoting from his letter, which had no quarrel with my measurements and other factual comments but did disagree with my listening judgment. Mr. Greenberg stated that Harman-Kardon uses double-blind listening tests, under carefully controlled conditions, designed to disclose whatever sonic differences exist between various versions of their own products and between their products and those of competitors.

Let me slightly paraphrase some of his comments. Like others in H-K's listening jury, Mr. Greenberg regularly heard differences between amplifiers in such tests. The Citation 16A is one response to those perceived differences. Mr. Greenberg goes on to acknowledge that not everybody at Harman-Kardon has the ability to make these distinctions, and that not everyone who hears the differences values them equally. Nevertheless, there is a growing audiophile audience that continues to hear and seek such improvements, and Harman-Kardon intends to build equipment for that audience. In addition, H-K is attempting to establish a scientific basis for what it admits is (at the moment) an unpredictable relationship between measurements and subjective judgments.

No reasonable person could take exception to the attitudes expressed by Mr. Greenberg. However, I have several questions about Harman-Kardon's approach. When the reproduction is "improved" by the improved amplifier, what does that mean? I assume that some listeners report hearing greater definition of transients and others hear greater clarity, greater depth, greater transparency, or other factors, none of which can be easily correlated with measurement. And these can be heard only with master tapes, played through certain special speakers, and even then only by some listeners.

Assuming that there is some objective factor in the sound that produces the subjective reactions (if there isn't then all bets are off), then there are several more questions to be resolved. If the reported differences objectively exist, do they represent an increase in fidelity or simply a special effect that is at times more pleasing to some ears? How valid are audibility tests that require special listening equipment and program material that is not available to the home listener? If the task is to determine the best-sounding amplifier when playing master tapes through specially designed speakers, whatever the jury decides may have some meaning. But if these special speakers and tape cartridges are marshaled in the cause of choosing the best-sounding amplifier to be used in the home with excellent but normal speakers and program material, has anything of value been determined?

And, as Mr. Greenberg says, not everyone values sonic differences identically. I confess I am startled by the over-reactions of those who describe minute differences in quality as "tremendous," or the sound of any product but the "best" (by their criteria) as "terrible" or "unlistenable." Surely a little moderation in describing such differences would help to clarify a very confusing situation.

To help resolve some of the outstanding questions about the "goldennesness" of the ears of those of us who don't regularly hear differences among amplifiers, we have arranged to be part of a listening test session at Harman-Kardon when their listening room presently undergoing modification is once more in shape. I'm sure that the procedures and results, conclusive or otherwise, will be of interest to all parties concerned.

(Continued on page 42)
"I go around with this group of people. They're into equipment. Turntable snobs I call them. They still believe what they learned years ago... that a manual turntable is the way to go.

So I thought they'd laugh when I started looking at a "bee-eye-see." (Actually Ramon did snicker when I told him.)

For some reason my friends insist on the pain and inconvenience of changing records themselves every few minutes.

Not me. I'm into the music. And preserving my record collection.

So all I want is a turntable that's perfectly quiet... trouble-free... handles one record like a manual turntable when I want... and more than one when the occasion arises.

My turntable snob friends? Slowly but surely they're coming around.

I wonder why they're still laughing at me?"
For anyone who has had difficulty choosing between an integrated amplifier and a separate preamplifier and power amplifier, it appears that it is now possible to have the best of both worlds. An ingenious mechanical and electrical design in Mitsubishi's de luxe line makes it possible either to join a preamplifier with one of two power amplifiers (100 or 150 watts per channel) to form a single integrated amplifier or to use them as "separates."

The DA-P10 preamplifier is actually what Mitsubishi calls a "Dual Monaural" unit. It consists of two distinct mono preamplifiers in a single cabinet with separate power supplies but a common power transformer. Since it is, after all, intended as a stereo control unit, the DA-P10 has a master volume control (ATTENUATOR) and input selector, with positions for two magnetic phono cartridges and two high-level sources (TUNER and AUX). Other switches affecting both channels are the power switch, MODE (stereo/mono), and tape monitor.

Each channel has its own subsonic filter, with a 12-dB-per-octave slope below 18 Hz controlled by a lever switch. The bass and treble tone controls, separate for the two channels, are eleven-position types with the center marked DEFEAT (the tone-control circuits are completely bypassed in that position). Finally, each channel has its own level control, which is normally used to set signal balance between channels.

The principal reason for the thorough separation of the two channels is Mitsubishi's conviction that crosstalk between channels, even at very low levels, can degrade listening quality. By separating all possible signal circuits as well as the power supplies, they achieve a claimed separation of 80 to 100 dB, depending on the frequency.

The same philosophy carries over into the DA-A15 power amplifier, which we tested together with the DA-P10. The two power-amplifier channels are completely separate from power transformer to output terminals, sharing only the chassis. A similar degree of interchannel audio-signal isolation is claimed for the DA-A15.

The Mitsubishi DA-A15 is rated to deliver 150 watts per channel to 8-ohm loads from 20 to 20,000 Hz with less than 0.1 per cent total harmonic or intermodulation distortion. A 1-volt input signal is required for full output (the sensitivity can be reduced by screwdriver adjustments next to the input jacks), and the nominal rated output of the DA-P10 preamplifier is also 1-volt (although it is capable of about 9 volts output before overload).

The speaker outputs of the power amplifier employ insulated binding posts that make a very positive contact. There are outputs for two pairs of speakers, only one of which can be driven at a time. A three-setting slide switch in the rear of the amplifier energizes either set of output terminals (through internal relays that also provide a turn-on time delay and protect the loads against amplifier failure), and the third setting silences all speaker outputs.

Both the DA-A15 amplifier and the DA-P10 preamplifier are finished in semi-gloss black, with functional block diagrams and specifications printed on their top surfaces. No dust cover hides the major components of the power amplifier, the two power transformers and large power-supply capacitors occupying the center of the chassis and the heat-sink fins being mounted along the chassis sides.

Handles are supplied with the power amplifier for optional installation convenience. To join the two units into a single integrated amplifier, the preamplifier is slipped over the power-amplifier handles and fastened in place with heavy screws. The signal outputs of the preamplifier are connected to the inputs of the power amplifier, the power-amplifier line cord is plugged into one of the switched outlets on the preamplifier, and (if desired) the remote-control sockets for the speaker selector are linked with a supplied cable. When this is done, a SPEAKERS switch on the panel of the preamplifier operates the output relays in the DA-A15. The various cables are folded along the sides of the power amplifier into channels that are styled to match the heat-sink fins above them.

The basically black amplifier units contrast (Continued on page 44)
Where is it written that direct drive has to cost an arm and a leg?

Nowhere.
Which is why the new Kenwood KD-2070, with the superior direct drive performance, sells for the reasonable price of $140.*

The KD-2070's specs are impressive. Wow and flutter is less than 0.04% (WRMS). Rumble is better than -65 dB (DIN weighted).

As for its features, we designed a new S-shaped low-friction tone arm to give you superb tonal quality, and built in a stroboscope with variable speed adjust.

As for its styling, you provide the adjectives.

The high-performance Kenwood KD-2070.

The direct drive turntable that won't cost you an arm and a leg.

Only an arm.

*Nationally advertised value. Actual prices are established by Kenwood dealers. Cartridge optional.

KENWOOD

For the Kenwood Dealer nearest you, see your yellow pages, or write Kenwood, 15777 S. Broadway, Gardena, CA 90248
with the satin gold panel of the preamplifier and its matching machined metal knobs. Externally, there is no indication that this is not a conventional integrated amplifier. Since the power-amplifier outputs are not routed through the preamplifier, the phone jack on the panel of the latter is driven from a separate amplifier stage in the DA-P10 that is designed to drive 8-ohm headphones. (It will not drive high-impedance dynamic phones or electrostatic phones to an adequate listening level.)

The signal-input and output jacks are recessed into the right side of the preamplifier, and four a.c. outlets (two of them switched) are in its left side. The front dimensions of the Mitsubishi units are 16 3/4 inches wide by 6 3/4 inches high. The preamplifier is 8 inches deep, and the power amplifier is 11 1/2 inches deep. When they are joined, the combined unit is 16 3/4 inches deep owing to overlap between the sections. The preamplifier weighs 13 pounds and the power amplifier weighs 40 pounds, so that the combination weighs a massive 53 pounds. Price: DA-P10 $290, DA-A15 $590.

**Laboratory Measurements.** The two units were measured separately but were joined for use tests. The preamplifier tone controls had good characteristics, with a maximum range of ±12 dB. The bass control took effect between 100 and 400 Hz as it was varied. The treble characteristic was hinged at about 2,000 Hz. The response in the center (defeat) position of the controls was ±0.5 dB from 20 to 20,000 Hz. The phono response, including the subsonic filter reduced the output by 2.3 dB at 20 Hz, and it did not change detectably when measured through the inductance of some typical phono cartridges. The subsonic filter reduced the output by 2.3 dB at 20 Hz and by 14 dB at 5 Hz.

To produce the rated 1-volt output, a high-level input of 0.145 volt or a low-level input of 1.95 millivolts was needed. The phono-overload capability was an excellent 310 millivolts. The unweighted noise output of the DA-P10 was too low to measure through its high-level inputs, being less than the 100-microvolt minimum indication of our meter (which is 80 dB below 1-volt). Through the phono inputs, the noise was a barely measurable -79.2 dB, one of the lowest phono noise levels we have encountered in such a unit.

The preamplifier output clipped at 10.3 volts. At any usable signal level, the distortion was well under 0.01 per cent except at 20 Hz, where it reached 0.05 per cent at 3 volts output (at 1 volt, the distortion was typically between 0.002 and 0.006 per cent).

The power amplifier was not fazed by the one-hour preconditioning period at one-third rated power. Its heat sinks have temperature sensors that change color from red to black at 140 degrees F (60 degrees C), but they did not change color during any of our tests. The outputs clipped at 178 watts per channel when driven at 1,000 Hz into 8-ohm loads. The 4-ohm and 16-ohm clipping levels were 267 and 112 watts.

The distortion of the DA-A15 was comparable to that of our test instruments (about 0.002 per cent) at most power levels and frequencies.

- **Comment.** In its basic electrical performance, the Mitsubishi amplifier (we will treat the two units as a single integrated amplifier, since that is the way we used them) is as near "state-of-the-art" performance as could be desired. Although a few other fine amplifiers rival it or marginally surpass it in selected individual characteristics, we have never seen one with the overall excellence exhibited by this superb combination.

It should surprise no one, therefore, to learn that we found no special audible qualities in the sound as reproduced through these components, since every other link in the audio chain, from microphone to speaker, is far below their quality level.

Certain features omitted from the DA-P10 preamplifier, such as loudness compensation and a high-cut audio filter, will hardly be missed. On the other hand, a control unit of this caliber should have made provision for the handling of at least two tape decks. And...
"All work and no Mustang sounds like a pretty dull life style."

Go Mustang

Choose from 5 different kinds of wheels, 7 different interiors, and 14 great exterior colors. So visit your Ford Dealer and go Mustang. It could make your life a lot more fun.

Ford Mustang II

FORD DIVISION

NOVEMBER 1977
The new Stanton 881S is now this company's finest phono cartridge, inheriting that distinction from the 681 series of cartridges, which will continue to be represented by the 681EEE. The new 881S, though it resembles the 681 cartridges in external appearance, is totally different in its internal design details. The 681 cartridges use the moving-iron principle, while the 881S is a moving-magnet cartridge. The effective stylus mass is kept low by the use of a 'rare-earth' magnetic material that is about ten times as powerful as other metallic magnet materials used in previous cartridge designs. The more powerful magnetic field has also made it possible to reduce the cartridge's coil inductance, there-fore minimizing its sensitivity to external hum fields and to load conditions presented by the preamplifier and connecting cables.

The stylus jewel of the 881S has Stanton's "Stereohedron" shape, a variant of the CD-4 stylus shape with a vertically elongated contact area said to improve high-frequency tracking ability and reduce record wear. In combination with the rare-earth magnetic material, the Stereohedron stylus is credited with making possible the very low tip mass of 0.2 milligram.

Like most other Stanton cartridges, the 881S has a hinged brush as part of its stylus assembly; this rides on the record surface and removes surface dust. The brush is easily detached if desired. The cartridge is designed to track at forces from 0.75 to 1.25 grams. (The additional gram applied to compensate for the brush does not become part of the stylus tracking force.) Each cartridge is supplied with individual calibration data, a box for storing extra styli, and a small screwdriver, as well as mounting hardware. Price: $150.

- **Laboratory Measurements.** To test the Stanton 881S, we installed it in the tone arm of a Fisher MT-6225 record player. The cartridge load was 47,000 ohms in parallel with 290 picofarads (the nominal rated load is 275 picofarads).

  From the 3.54-cm/sec (centimeters per second), 1,000-Hz bands of the CBS STR 100 test record, the 881S produced an output of 4.5 millivolts, the levels from the two channels matching within 0.8 dB. The measured vertical angle of the stylus was 22 degrees. The extraordinary tracking ability of the 881S was demonstrated by the fact that it played the 30-cm/sec, 1,000-Hz tones of one disc at a mere 0.5-gram tracking force, and the very high-level 32-Hz tones of another at 0.4 gram. The exceptionally demanding German Hi-Fi Institute record, with its progressively higher-amplitude 300-Hz tones, could be played to amplitude 300-Hz tones, could be played to the 80-micron level at 0.5 gram and to its maximum level of 100 microns at 0.75 gram (very few other cartridges can do as well at any tracking force). For our other tests, we used the nominal rated force of 1 gram.

  The frequency response, measured with the STR 100 record, was flat within ±1 dB over the 40- to 20,000-Hz range of the record. Reducing the load capacitance to 150 picofarads had a negligible effect, giving a slight rise in output above 15,000 Hz but the same overall variation. However, a very high capacitance of 520 picofarads (which is required by some other cartridges for flattest response) produced a slight peak at 10,000 Hz and a drop in output above that frequency.

  The measured channel separation was different on the two channels (a property of the test record) but averaged 20 to 35 dB over the entire 40- to 20,000-Hz range of the record. In the Fisher tone arm, whose mass of 18 grams is typical of many recent arms, the cartridge compliance resonated at 8 Hz with an amplitude of 10 dB. Its flat frequency response made it possible for the 881S to reproduce an excellent 1,000-Hz square wave from the CBS STR 112 record with only a slight overshoot.

  The intermodulation distortion, measured with the Shure TTR-102 record, increased smoothly from 2 per cent at 7 cm/sec to 5 per cent at 27 cm/sec. Even at the low 1-gram operating force, the cartridge never mistracked on this record, though its highest levels are often unplayable by other cartridges even at their maximum rated forces. High-frequency tracking was measured with the 10.8-kHz tone bursts of the Shure TTR-103 record. The repetition-rate distortion of the 881S was comparable to what we have observed on other fine cartridges.

- **Comment.** The subjective tracking test with the Shure "Audio Obstacle Course—Era III" record confirmed our measurements of the tracking ability of the Stanton 881S. At its 3/4-gram minimum rated force, the cartridge played the highest levels of all selections on this record except for the bass drum (which required 1 gram for its maximum level). In view of the enormous tracking difficulties imposed by this record, we would judge that the 881S can be used with complete success at 3/4 gram and that its tracking ability will be taxed by few, if any, records. Of course, operation at 3/4 gram requires a good tone arm, and many otherwise satisfactory arms become marginal in performance below 1 gram. It is also a good idea to check the correctness of the arm's tracking force and other adjustments by external means, since a slight inaccuracy in the arm's calibration could easily (Continued on page 48)
Here’s another Empire 698 Turntable dashing off the assembly line.

It takes 15½ hours to make an Empire turntable. Each one stands over 80 separate inspections before it reaches the end of the line. And after the assembly is done, we test it some more. Wow and flutter, rumble, and speed accuracy are electronically confirmed to meet specifications before final approval.

It’s not a fast way to finish a turntable, but it’s a great way to start one.

EMPIRE

Empire Scientific Corp., Garden City, New York 11530

CIRCLE NO. 99 ON READER SERVICE CARD
carry it outside the cartridge's narrow range of recommended tracking forces.

Incidentally, we found that the integral brush, though easily removed, is not so easily replaced. Rather than risk damage to the stylus, we left the brush off for most of our testing and listening (it has no detectable effect on the performance of the cartridge).

In general, the sound of the Stanton 881S is completely neutral. It injects no coloration, emphasis, or de-emphasis into any part of the frequency spectrum, and it has a notable freedom from audible tracking distortions of any kind. Since it is so easy to forget that there is a cartridge in the reproducing chain, this is the kind of cartridge we prefer to use when listening to records for musical enjoyment, rather than as a means to uncover flaws in cartridge performance.

The 881S is undeniably expensive and, as with any premium-price product, many of its performance refinements are of a subtle nature (the law of diminishing returns takes over rapidly when cartridge prices exceed about $70 or $80). Nevertheless, the special qualities of the Stanton 881S are real, and anyone who teams this cartridge with other components of comparable quality will be able to appreciate them as much as we did.

Circle 106 on the reader service card

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The Fisher MT-6225 "Studio Standard" turntable is a direct-drive record player driven by a novel 120-pole, three-phase motor. The 120-permanent-magnet poles are in a flexible strip of magnetic material cemented to an 8¼-inch ring on the underside of the cast platter. The stator is a 90-degree arc of closely spaced pole pieces on top of the motorboard and immediately adjacent to the rotor strip when the platter is placed on its spindle. Fisher describes this as a "linear drive" motor. Its very large number of poles (most direct-drive motors use eight to twenty poles) are intended to minimize flutter and rumble from the torque impulses exerted on each pole as the platter turns.

The nonferrous platter (together with its heavy rubber mat) weighs 2¾ pounds. It operates at 33⅓ or 45 rpm, with speeds selected by pushbuttons on the control panel to the right of the platter. The outer rim of the platter has four rings of stroboscope marks (for operation with 50- and 60-Hz current at both speeds) lit from below through a prism. There are separate vernier-adjustment knobs for the two speeds.

The Fisher MT-6225 is a semi-automatic turntable whose tone arm must be positioned manually (the motor turns on when the arm is lifted from its rest). At the end of a record, or whenever the reject button is pressed, the arm returns to its rest automatically and the motor shuts off.

The tone arm is an S-shaped tube on gimbal pivots. Its threaded counterweight has a tracking-force scale calibrated at 0.1-gram intervals from 0 to 3 grams. The cartridge shell, cut away to minimize its mass, uses the popular four-pin bayonet mount and has a well-designed finger lift. Next to the arm base is an antiskating dial, calibrated from 0 to 4 grams, and a cueing lift lever. The lift is undamped, but the descent is slow and damped.

The MT-6225 comes on a solid walnut-finish wooden base with softly sprung feet. The record player is 1'7⅛ inches wide, 14% inches deep, and 5% inches high. It weighs 17⅓ pounds. Suggested price: $200.

- **Laboratory Measurements.** We used the Fisher MT-6225 with several different cartridges, but most performance tests were made with a Stanton 881S installed. The cartridge installation itself was relatively easy, but the adjustment for minimum tracking error requires that the stylus overhang the turntable center by 19/32 inch. However, since no reference mark or gauge was supplied, we do not see how that setting could be made with acceptable accuracy by the average user. We used an external stylus protractor to set the stylus overhang. The tracking error was then very low—less than 0.2 degree per inch over most of the record and 0.5 degree per inch at a 6-inch radius.

When the arm had been balanced, we found that the section of the counterweight that carries the tracking-force scale had little or no friction to retain its position relative to the rest of the weight. As a result, great care was necessary in adjusting the force to be sure that the two sections did not shift relative to each other. Fisher explains that some of the earliest units, of which our test sample is one, do have this fault, which has since been corrected. By our estimate, the calibration of the scale was off by no more than 10 or 15 per cent when care was used in the setup. In any case, we would suggest that any force settings within 0.5 gram of the minimum recommended for a cartridge be made using an external gauge. At the 34-gram to 1-gram forces we used with the Stanton 881S, an error of 1/4 gram could have been serious in respect to adequacy of applied tracking force.

The unweighted turntable rumble was -35 dB, largely in the horizontal plane, and with ARRL weighting it was -59 dB. The rumble was mostly below 30 Hz, with no specific frequencies characteristic of the rumble visible on a spectrum analyzer. The wow and flutter were 0.07 and 0.04 percent, for a combined reading of 0.08 percent. Flutter components were found at 30, 50, and 70 Hz in addition to the major concentration at frequencies below about 10 Hz. The speed verniers had a range of +5.1 to -5.9 per cent at 45 rpm and from +1.5 to -4 per cent at 33⅓ rpm. The speed changed only 0.2 per cent as the a.c.-line voltage was shifted for test purposes from approximately 95 to 135 volts.

The tone arm, including the supplied low-capacitance signal cable, had a capacitance to ground of 86 picofarads per channel, which is compatible with CD-4 cartridges. The measured arm mass was 18.3 grams—fairly low for arms of this type. The antiskating calibration was quite good, since setting it to match the tracking force always gave acceptable antiskating correction. The cueing device lowered the pickup with only a slight outward drift that caused less than 2 seconds of the record to repeat.

The isolation against external base-conducted vibration was about average for direct-drive turntables. The major feedback sensitivity was at 90 Hz, with lesser transmission peaks at 35, 190, 260, and 450 Hz.

- **Comment.** Our criticisms, as should have been evident from the preceding comments, apply mostly to the inadequate setup procedures of the MT-6225. Overall, the MT-6225 is easy to handle, attractive to the eye, and in respect to its measured specifications delivers the kind of overall performance we would expect from a direct-drive record player in its price class.

Circle 107 on the reader service card

(Continued on page 50)
The best stereo system in the house isn’t always in the house.

You can take it with you.

The kind of superior sound you’re used to hearing at home is now available for your car.

With the Motorola® AutoSound System, the integrated component system designed specifically for cars.

Now you can buy a Motorola AutoSound System with the features, power and fidelity you thought you could only get at home.

Motorola offers a full line of in-dash and under-dash models. With AM, FM, stereo, cassette, 8-track and CB.

POW’R-BOOSTER™ amplifiers that will deliver up to 40 watts RMS of total system power with total harmonic distortion (THD) as low as 1% @ 1 KHZ at 30 watts. And frequency shaping controls for extended bass and treble response.

Plus coaxial and three-way POW’R-HANDLER™ speakers that are built to use that power. Specially designed not only for good looks, but also for acoustic quality. You get a rich, full sound you’d never expect to hear in your car.

You can buy a complete Motorola AutoSound System or upgrade your existing components with ours.

Whichever route you choose, stop by your Motorola dealer soon.

And pick up a great sound system for your home away from home.

Motorola® AutoSound Systems

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ESS amt 1b Speaker System

**Since its introduction a few years ago by ESS, the Heil "Air-Motion Transformer" (AMT) has undergone the inevitable improvement process that follows the appearance of any radically new device. The AMT is a tweeter of unconventional design with exceptional performance characteristics. Its "voice coil" is in the form of flat, conducting aluminum-foil strips bonded to a Teflon diaphragm. The diaphragm is pleated, accordion-like, and operates in a powerful magnetic field. The audio-current passing through the conductors causes the alternate sets of pleats to either draw closer together or move apart, thus "squeezing out" the air between them and generating a sound-pressure wave. In its most recent version (as used in the amt 1b system), the AMT diaphragm is bonded to a gauzelike nylon material which serves the dual purpose of preventing adjacent "turns" of the aluminum strips from shorting out under extreme drive conditions and of smoothing the frequency response in the upper-middle and high-frequency ranges. Simultaneously with the tweeter improvements, the woofer section of the amt 1b has also undergone a complete redesign. It now features a 12-inch cone made of Bextrene, a rubberized polystyrene material also used by a few British manufacturers for their woofer cones. Bextrene is said to provide superior damping of undesired cone-vibration modes, thus smoothing out the woofer response. (ESS manufactures all its own drivers, including the new woofer and the Heil AMT.)

In the amt 1b the woofer output is augmented at very low frequencies by a passive radiator of the same diameter located in the rear of the enclosure. The crossover network departs from current practice in having 18-dB-per-octave slopes at its crossover frequency of 1,000 Hz. The amt 1b, like its predecessors, is in the shape of a truncated pyramid containing the forward-facing woofer and the rearward-facing passive cone. The Heil driver is mounted on the top of the woofer enclosure together with two frequency-balance adjustments. (The "presence" control varies the output at all frequencies above 1,000 Hz with a shelved characteristic. The "brilliance" control affects only frequencies above 5,000 Hz, with slope changes of ±3 dB per octave above that frequency.) The upper portion of the cabinet contains the bass drivers and Heil tweeter, both concealed by a removable cloth-covered frame. The ESS amt 1b has a nominal 6-ohm impedance and is rated to handle up to 375 watts of clean program material (the "clean" qualifier is significant, since relatively low power levels of clipped program material can damage any speaker). The dimensions of the amt 1b are 16¼ inches square (maximum) by 33¼ inches high, and it weighs about 75 pounds. Price: $450. A bookshelf version of the amt 1b, with essentially the same specifications, is also available. Price: $398.

**Laboratory Measurements.** The ESS amt 1b was tested with its level controls set to the centers of their indicated "normal" ranges.

The smoothed frequency response in the reverberant field of our test room (10 to 15 feet from the speakers) was joined to a curve derived from closely miked measurements of the woofer and the passive cone to form a single composite frequency-response curve. Additional measurements were made to verify the effects of the level controls.

The bass distortion of the driven cone was measured with nominal inputs of 1 watt and 10 watts (into 8 ohms), and the output sound-pressure level was measured at a 1-meter distance with 1 watt of random noise in the octave centered at 1,000 Hz. The speaker's impedance and tone-burst response were measured over the full audio range.

The combined frequency response was flat through the mid-range, with a slight bass rise at 70 Hz and with the output strongly sustained down to 20 Hz. The output of the passive radiator was dominant below 50 Hz. The low-frequency response would, of course, be affected appreciably by the room characteristics and the placement of the speaker within the room. With our preferred settings, the AMT high-frequency driver response rose smoothly above 5,000 Hz to a maximum of +9 dB in the vicinity of 13,000 Hz. The response could have been considerably flattened with the speaker's controls, but we found that the best subjective balance was obtained with the "normal" control settings. The overall response in our live-room measurements was approximately ±5 dB from 30 to 15,000 Hz.

The ESS amt 1b was moderately efficient, delivering a sound-pressure level of 89.5 dB at 1 meter with a 1-watt input. The bass distortion at that level was very low, less than 1 per cent down to about 40 Hz and only 7 per cent at 25 Hz. When the power level was raised to 10 watts, the distortion increased only moderately above 40 Hz, to between 1.5 and 2.5 per cent, it rose much more rapidly at lower frequencies, to 14 per cent at 30 Hz. The system impedance was just under 5 ohms (which we take as the rated impedance) at its minimum point of 120 Hz, and about 16 ohms at the maximum, in the vicinity of 1,000 Hz. The tone-burst response was excellent at all frequencies, especially in the vicinity of the crossover, where many speakers exhibit severe ringing or other anomalies.

**Comment.** Recalling the difficulties experienced by some people (though not by us) with the original ESS amt 1, whose Heil driver could sometimes be blown out by overzealous application of a super-power amplifier, we deliberately drove the amt 1b, with pro-

(Continued on page 52)

The excellent tone-burst response of the ESS amt 1b speaker system is shown (left to right) at 100, 1,000, and 6,000 Hz. The input signal appears above the speaker's output in each case.
Most quality cassette decks look pretty much alike on the outside. So at first glance you might take the new JVC KD-35 for granted. But take a second look. You'll see something no other make of cassette deck has—five peak-reading LED indicators. With a faster response than VU meters, or even peak-indicating meters, they help you avoid under-recording and they eliminate tape saturation and distortion. It's as close as you can come to goof-proof recording.

Then there's JVC's exclusive Sen-Alloy head for record and playback. Designed to give you the best of two worlds, it combines the truly sensitive performance of permalloy with the ultra long life of ferrite.

Of course, the KD-35 has many other features like Dolby, bias and equalization switches, and automatic tape-end stop in all modes. It's also possible to go from one operating mode to another without going through Stop. What's more, you'll never have to miss taping a favorite broadcast because you're not there; just connect the KD-35 to a timer and switch to automatic record.

And yet, with all this built-in capability, the new JVC KD-35 is priced just above the least expensive model in JVC's new cassette deck lineup. Just imagine what our top model is like.

program material having strong high-frequency content, to levels of at least 400 watts per channel (as monitored on peak-level indicators). The sound was stupendous, as might be imagined—at times it was quite overpowering in our listening room—but we never heard distortion or strain and, perhaps needless to say, the speakers suffered no damage.

Just as the "proof of the pudding is in the eating," there is no substitute for listening when evaluating a speaker. The simulated "live-ss-recorded" test, which covers the frequency range above 200 Hz, confirmed the superior accuracy of the amt lb at those frequencies. The duplication of the "live" sound source, on a side-by-side basis, was essentially perfect.

Listening to a wider variety of program material, we noted two characteristics of the amt lb, both of which were consistent with our measured response curves. On some program material the bass seemed at times slightly heavy, though never muddy or overbearing. The top end was airy, open, and crisp. At first hearing, the speaker sometimes seemed slightly bright (but never strident). However, after listening to the amt lb for a time, almost any other speaker we switched to seemed to be slightly closed-in and dull. Since we did have a reasonably objective reference standard in our recorded "live" music source, we knew that our reactions were not totally subjective and that the amt lb was really a highly accurate reproducer.

Probably more significant than any of these reactions is that during the several months we had the amt lb for testing we found ourselves almost invariably choosing it to listen to in preference to some other very fine speakers we had on hand, perhaps because of its utter lack of harshness, coloration, or other unpleasant distortions. Without attempting to distribute the credit between the new Heil driver elements, the Bextrene cone of the woofer, and the 18-db-per-octave crossover network, we can say that the amt lb is obviously an excellent performer judged both by ear and by test, and one of the speakers we have most enjoyed using during the time we had it for testing.

Circle 108 on reader service card

Pioneer RT-707 Open-reel Tape Deck

Most of today's open-reel tape recorders are as notable for their large size, weight, and price as they are for their generally outstanding performance. This might lead one to conclude that there is little market potential for more modestly endowed open-reel machines costing from $500 to $1,000, since that is a price range where the buyer also can choose among a great many de luxe cassette and elcaset decks.

Evidently Pioneer feels otherwise, judging by the appearance of the Model RT-707 recorder in their new product line. The RT-707 is an open-reel, four-track stereo machine operating at 3½ and 7½ ips. It has the usual three-head format, plus a second playback head for use in the reverse direction of tape movement. It is equipped for automatic tape reversal, initiated by a piece of conducting-foil tape attached to the coated side of the magnetic tape, and it also can be reversed at any time by touching a button on the panel. It records only in the normal forward direction.

The Pioneer RT-707 has a three-motor tape transport with six-pole induction motors for each of the tape hubs and a direct-drive a.c. servomotor for the capstan. The use of a direct-drive capstan motor eliminates the belts and pulleys required to couple a high-speed motor to a slowly turning capstan, and with them go the periodic maintenance procedures and potential failures associated with such mechanical systems.

Most of the panel space of the RT-707 is devoted to the two 7-inch tape reels (a metal take-up reel is supplied with the recorder). Between them are two large illuminated level meters with vertically oriented scales. Between the meters, red and green LED's indicate when the machine is in the record or pause mode.

Above the meters are seven pushbutton switches. Two are rec mode selectors for the two channels which must be engaged in order to make a recording (they thus serve as a safety device to prevent accidental erasure of a recorded tape). Since it is possible to record on one channel while playing the other, special-effects recordings such as sound-with-sound can be made with external jumper connections between the recorder's input and output jacks.

There are separate recording bias and equalization (eq) buttons. Each has std (standard) and LH (low-noise/high-output) positions; a table in the instruction manual lists recommended settings for most popular tapes. The monitor button channels either the source signal or the tape playback program to the line outputs. The remaining buttons are the speed selector and the power switch.

Below the meters are the four-digit index counter, its reset button, a repeat button, and a pitch control knob. The repeat function allows a tape, or any portion of it, to be repeated indefinitely by switching from forward to reverse playback when the metal foil is contacted and from reverse to forward when the index counter has returned to its "0000" setting. The pitch knob is a speed vernier, operating only during playback, with a nominal ±6 per cent range. It is detented at its center, which establishes the correct playing speeds.

The head assembly is flanked by two rubber rollers and tension arms. When the tension arms are raised to their uppermost (locking) positions, the tape can be loaded in a straight line across the heads. The single capstan is to the right of the heads and nearest the take-up reel in the forward direction of tape motion. Screwdriver access holes in the head cover permit easy azimuth adjustment of the recording and playback heads if required.

At the lower left corner of the panel are the microphone jacks and the headphone jacks plus separate recording-level controls for the microphone and line sources, which can be mixed. Each control is a concentric pair coupled by a slip clutch for individual adjustment of channel-level control.

The tape-transport controls are grouped at the lower right of the panel. They are mechanical pushbuttons that actuate electrical solenoids. Although there is no remote-control facility in the RT-707, the controls can be preset so that unattended recording or playback can be initiated with an external timer switch in the a.c. power circuit. There are fast-speed buttons for both directions, a stop button, and the play and rec buttons that must be engaged simultaneously to make a recording. (By pressing them both while playing a tape, it is also possible to make a "flying start" recording.) Next to the pause button are small playback-direction selectors on which illuminated arrows show the direction of tape travel.

The line inputs and outputs are in the rear of the recorder, with separate playback-level controls for each channel. These are detented at their mid-points. There is also a single un-switched a.c. outlet.

The Pioneer RT-707 has a distinctive size and shape, considerably more compact than the typical open-reel recorder. Its satin-finish aluminum panel is 19 by 9 inches and is slotted for mounting in a standard EIA equipment rack. The recorder is 14 inches deep and

(Continued on page 54)

STEREO REVIEW
No other speaker has ever looked like this, no other speaker has ever been built like this. And we believe no other speaker, regardless of size or price, can recreate the impact and feel of live music like the Bose 901 Series III. It is a speaker unlike any other.

In one page we cannot begin to describe the 901 Series III and the technology behind it. So we've put together a comprehensive literature package that includes a detailed 16-page color brochure, a 20-page owner's manual, and a copy of Dr. Amar Bose's paper on "Sound Recording and Reproduction," reprinted from Technology Review. To receive this literature, send $1.00 to Bose, Dept. SR11, The Mountain, Framingham, Mass. 01701.

Patents issued and pending. Cabinets are walnut veneer.
weights about 43½ pounds. Price: $575 (the RT-701, identical except that it lacks the reverse-play feature, is $525).

**Laboratory Measurements.** Although the instruction manual lists Scotch 206 as the tape used for deriving the recorder’s performance specifications, our test sample had been adjusted for TDK Audua tape. Both of these, plus several other comparable tapes, were used in our tests. The differences between them were slight, with Memorex Quantum giving the widest frequency response and Scotch 206 the best signal-to-noise (S/N) measurements. Since the TDK tape fell between these two in all respects and none of the differences were audibly significant, the following test data are based on the use of TDK Audua with 1.5 kHz bias and equalization settings. (Maxell gave essentially the same fine results.)

The playback frequency response, measured with Ampex test tapes, was within ±1.5 dB from 50 to 7,500 Hz at 3¾ ips (the limits of the tape). At 7½ ips, it was slightly different in the two directions of tape movement. In the forward direction, the response was within ±0.5 dB from 50 to 5,000 Hz, rising to +2.5 dB at 15,000 Hz. In reverse, the response was ±0.5 dB from 50 to 15,000 Hz.

A line input of 35 millivolts (mV) or a microphone input of 0.18 mV produced a 0-dB recording level at maximum gain settings. The resulting playback level was 580 mV with the controls centered and 800 mV with the maximum playback level setting.

At 3¾ ips and a -20-dB recording level, the record-playback frequency response was down 4 dB at 30 and 14,000 Hz. At a 0-dB recording level, the high-frequency response was down 4 dB at 10,000 Hz due to tape saturation. At 7½ ips the response was ±2 dB from 20 to 24,500 Hz at a -20-dB level and from 20 to 18,000 Hz at a 0-dB level.

The playback distortion from a 0-dB recorded signal at 1,000 Hz was 0.23 per cent, and the level had to be increased to +12 dB (far off the meter scales) before the 3 per cent distortion-point reference was reached. The S/N referred to that level at 7½ ips was 63.3 dB in an unweighted rms measurement, 68.5 dB with IEC “A” weighting, and 65 dB with CCIR weighting. The S/N at 3¾ ips was about 3 dB worse, and the noise level increased by 8 dB through the microphone inputs at maximum gain. At more normal gain settings there was little added noise.

The wow was less than 0.01 per cent under all conditions. Unweighted rms flutter was 0.08 per cent at 3¾ ips and 0.065 per cent at 7½ ips in a combined record-playback measurement. With the Ampex flutter test tapes, we measured 0.09 per cent flutter at both speeds in the forward direction. In reverse play, which places the capstan between the supply reel and the heads, the flutter was 0.17 per cent at 3¾ ips and 0.12 per cent at 7½ ips.

The playback speed was exactly the same as the recording speed with the pitch control set to its detented position. The playback speed could be varied over a -9.2 to -7.6 per cent range. In the fast speeds, 1,800 feet of tape were moved forward in 89 seconds and rewound in 102 seconds. The 0-dB level of the meters corresponded to a 180-nW/m flux level, and the meters responded a little slower than a standard VU meter. Tone bursts of 0.3-second duration indicated about 10 per cent less than their steady-state levels. The headphone level is fixed and is adequate for general listening via 200-ohm phones.

**Comment.** The Pioneer RT-707 sounded every bit as good as its excellent measurements suggest, and it was also an easy-to-use, smooth-handling machine. At 7½ ips it appeared to be essentially the equivalent of many other high-quality (and far more expensive) open-reel tape recorders designed for home use. And as with most of them, its performance at 3¾ ips is more comparable to that of a medium-price cassette deck, so that its advantages over a cassette machine at the lower speed are principally those of tape-editing convenience rather than basic recording quality. Nonetheless, it is interesting that this combination of versatility and performance is now available at a price hardly more than that of a good cassette recorder and actually far less than the cost of one of the new top-of-the-line de luxe three-head cassette or elcaset decks.

In using the RT-707 with a number of tape formulations, we discovered that the recommended settings of the Bias and EQ switches were not always optimum. The Pioneer manual suggests that if one is dissatisfied with the sound, other settings should be tried. We found that recording interstation FM tuner hiss at about a -10-dB level and comparing the incoming and playback signals with the Monitor switch was the best way to establish the optimum tape bias and equalization. This should be done at 7½ ips, since there will always be a distinct dulling of the highs in such a comparison at 3¾ ips. At 7½ ips, the RT-707 is capable of virtually flawless reproduction of a random-noise signal—which is about as tough a test as can be made.

Since there is little difference in price or size among many good regular cassette decks, the lower-price elcaset decks, and the RT-707, the tape hobbyist is now free to make a choice of format solely on the basis of performance or convenience. Certainly one can no longer generally characterize open-reel recorders as large and expensive and cassette recorders as compact and inexpensive. We suspect that "low-profile" open-reel decks such as this one will become more popular in the future.
You're looking at what our competitors don't want you to see.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stereo Receivers</th>
<th>Sugg. Ret. Price*</th>
<th>Min. RMS Power Per Channel into 8 Ohms</th>
<th>Total Harmonic Distortion at Rated Power (Max.)</th>
<th>FM Sensitivity IHF '75</th>
<th>Stereo—50dBf</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SA-5770</td>
<td>$799.95</td>
<td>165 watts from 20Hz-20kHz</td>
<td>0.08%</td>
<td>1.8µV</td>
<td>35.7dBf</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SA-5570</td>
<td>499.95</td>
<td>85 watts from 20Hz-20kHz</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>1.8µV</td>
<td>36.2dBf</td>
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<tr>
<td>SA-5470</td>
<td>399.95</td>
<td>65 watts from 20Hz-20kHz</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>1.8µV</td>
<td>36.2dBf</td>
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<tr>
<td>SA-5370</td>
<td>329.95</td>
<td>48 watts from 20Hz-20kHz</td>
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<td>1.9µV</td>
<td>37.2dBf</td>
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<tr>
<td>SA-5270</td>
<td>279.95</td>
<td>35 watts from 20Hz-20kHz</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>1.9µV</td>
<td>37.2dBf</td>
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<tr>
<td>SA-5170</td>
<td>229.95</td>
<td>25 watts from 20Hz-20kHz</td>
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<td>1.9µV</td>
<td>37.2dBf</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SA-5070</td>
<td>179.95</td>
<td>15 watts from 40Hz-20kHz</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>2.0µV</td>
<td>37.3dBf</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Technics recommended price, but actual retail price will be set by dealers.

PPR. The price performance relationship of Technics new receiver line led by the SA-5770 (shown below). PPR is our way of telling you how much performance, technology and power you're getting for your money. And it may be the reason why so many people are buying and recommending Technics receivers.

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If you want to hear clear FM. From an overcrowded band or a marginal signal. You can. And with outstanding separation. Because every Technics receiver boasts Phase Locked Loop IC's, flat group delay filters and an FM linear dial scale.

What you won't hear is annoying distortion. Because it's so low, it's virtually inaudible, even in our economy model.

Technics new receivers. Judge them on performance. But buy them on PPR.

Technics by Panasonic
Going on Record

By James Goodfriend

RECORDS AT THE DOOR

Did you ever wonder why, when statistics tell us that more people in this country attend musical events than attend sporting events, so few classical records get sold? I've wondered. Lots of people I know have wondered. And the answer always seems to come up the same: the records aren't there to be bought.

The kicker in that statement—inflammatory as it might seem to some people—is just what do you mean by "there"? If "there" is the Schwann Catalog or the warehouses of the record companies, the records, by and large, are there. If "there" is a large, metropolitan center, the records are also, for the most part, around to be purchased. But if "there" is almost any place else, it's no cigar. I don't mean that you can't buy a classical record in Kansas City, but you may not be able to buy the one you want. And there are all too many places in this land where record stores do not stock classical music and many others where you can't even find a record store. Record companies tend to write off such places as no market, but that isn't necessarily true. According to the 1976 Target Group Index, a consumer research study prepared by Axiom Market Research Bureau, there are 9,344,000 adult listeners in the United States who, on the "average day," prefer to tune their radios to classical music over anything else. They don't all live in the hundred or so cities with classical record stores. They don't even all necessarily know where the nearest classical record store is.

Record clubs and mail-order companies in general have proved to be only a partial answer to the problem. Forgetting about the limited selection offered and the attendant problems of ordering, paying for, and receiving mail-order merchandise, the purchasing satisfaction is simply not the same. The greatest enticement to the purchase of a record is the physical presence of the record. The greatest satisfaction to the desire for a particular record is to be able to say it then and there.

When is then? Where is there? There are a number of different answers to those questions, but a very important answer to the first of them is "immediately after a concert." And an equally important answer to the second is "at the concert hall."

The pianist Tedd Joselson is an incredibly busy young man. He makes a large number of appearances each year with both major and minor orchestras. He records regularly for a major company (RCA). He also plays numerous solo recitals all around the United States and draws large audiences in areas where you might not think there was a large audience. He has achieved considerable success without compromising himself or his musically serious repertoire. But when he plays a Prokofiev sonata in, say, Wisconsin Rapids, Wisconsin, or Orange City, Iowa, he finds one question waiting for him, time and time again, from the people who come to greet him backstage afterwards: "Where can I buy your records?" That is an irritating question for an artist, particularly one who records for a major label.

Well, suppose they could buy them then and there, right out front in the concert hall. How many people do you suppose would? Joselson, busy as he is with other things, decided to find out. He played a recital in Atlantic City, New Jersey, a smallish affair with an audience of six hundred. He arranged for his records to be on sale at the concert hall, particularly the records of what he was playing that evening. Eighty discs were sold. He tried again in Huntington, Long Island, a far less successful location because of its proximity to New York City and the major discount stores.

An audience of three hundred purchased twenty-nine discs. Extraplation from those examples is all too easy. If we assume that Joselson plays for a hundred thousand people a year (and that's probably not out of line), his record sales should be somewhere between ten and fifteen thousand. What is even more important is that most of those sales would be in addition to sales made through normal distribution channels. Why? Because these are the people who ask, "Where can I buy your records?" and, hardly ever receiving an answer that permits of immediate, straightforward, and simple action, who do nothing further about the matter.

Selling records at concerts is, on the surface of it, an absurdly simple matter. But it becomes incredibly complex when the number of different artists or ensembles increases. With, say, one hundred different recording artists each playing, say, fifty concerts a year, one has five thousand events, or an average of almost fourteen per day, to, for, and at which records must be sent, selling arrangements made, money collected, books kept, sales tax computed and paid, and unsold merchandise returned. That is the kind of operation no record company is equipped to handle today, nor is it likely that many would care to equip themselves for it. And yet a reasonable estimate of the record sales that would accrue from it is about five million—which is enough to put an end to the "classical crisis" once and for all for any company benefiting from such additional sales.

That it would also benefit the artists goes without saying: extra income and extra exposure without playing a single additional recital or a single additional recording session. That is the kind of operation no record company is equipped to handle today, nor is it likely that many would care to equip themselves for it. And yet a reasonable estimate of the record sales that would accrue from it is about five million—which is enough to put an end to the "classical crisis" once and for all for any company benefiting from such additional sales.

A new company has been organized to set up this sort of record marketing. It is called Concert Discount Records and is run by a Mrs. Debora Low. (Requests for information sent to me—in care of Stereo Review, One Park Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10016—will be forwarded to her.) Mrs. Low plans to start on a small scale, but if the results achieved are anything like those logically projected, a lot of people who have never cared to put much effort into obtaining a classical record may find themselves serviced with exactly the record they have a great taste for. The fact that vast sums of money Americans spend today on leisure-time activities and associated expenses (cabs, dinner, parking, etc.) the cost of a classical record is small, and in terms of value received it is an almost unmatched bargain. If it can be made to be "there" when someone wants it, it should prove far more valuable than it has in the past.
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AWARD SEASON

Did you know that: (1) The Chipmunks, that group of recorded rodents with the tiny, high-pitched voices (created by Ross Bagdasarian, a.k.a. David Seville), have won more Grammys than Cole Porter, Dizzy Gillespie, Leopold Stokowski, or Peggy Lee? (2) The most Grammys ever (twenty) have been collected by Henry Mancini? The Beatles got only four. (3) The late Elvis Presley, the man who gave birth to rock with a roll of his pelvis, won just two Grammys, both for albums of religious music?

Such statistics must cause us to ponder the purpose and the significance of music-industry awards. Once the ground swell of opinion has crested and the presentations have been made, are they even comprehensible? Well, maybe. The Grammy (the award of the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences) may be the most visible of music-industry awards, but there are hundreds of others. They all begin making their presence known about this time of the year. Like the racket of insects at the end of a country day, the slap-slap of backs being patted fills media-land as the year draws to a close. Here are a few awards that you may not have heard of before.

Among the newest are the first annual North American Rock Radio Awards, to be presented by the DIR Broadcasting Company in a two-hour broadcast on November 24. DIR, which produces the King Biscuit Flower Hour and other rock-oriented FM radio programs, claims that rock's primary stage is radio, and that although a rock artist's success may be measured in sales of records and concert tickets, his stardom is launched on the airwaves and will remain firmest there. This seems plausible to me. Peter Frampton and eye-popping Heart may appear on the TV talk-show circuit till the cows come home, and they may even make a film (as Frampton has—Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club), but unless, like Sonny and Cher, they achieve a crossover to prime-time video they are stars chiefly on radio.

Working on this assumption, DIR will give FM fans a chance to vote for their 1977 favorites in eight categories: best group, singer/songwriter, male and female singer, debut album, album, song, and single record. The nominees will be selected by the program directors of the 250 DIR affiliate stations and will appear on ballots available only in People magazine, Rolling Stone, and DIR's newsletter Blast from the Biscuit. The first two publications seem odd choices if the awards are actually to represent the preferences of FM listeners; ballots made available through individual radio stations would seem more to the point. The premise, though, is that the purchase price of the magazine will curb ballot stuffing. Fine—but let's face it: no matter how it's done, this will be only one more rock popularity poll in the guise of a meaningful award, the results both predictable and redundant. Public-approval head counts are perhaps interesting, but they don't necessarily reflect the real merits of performers.

DIR is not the only newcomer to jump into the award business. Following Downbeat's well-established lead (with the Downbeat Jazz Poll, which really says what it is), Rolling Stone and scads of other music publications have created their own annual reader and/or staff polls and awards. Now Billboard, the music-trade magazine, and TV producer Burt Sugarman (of Midnight Special) are jointly planning a major new international pop-
awards extravaganza based on Billboard's sales charts. The show, like the Academy of Country Music presentations and Don Kirshner's Rock Awards, will be broadcast on TV.

The most common industry trophies are the gold and platinum discs (for album sales of 500,000 and 1,000,000, respectively) presented every hour on the hour (or so it seems lately) by the Recording Industry Association of America. The RIAA certifies these figures through an independent public accounting firm, so we can have complete faith in the accuracy of the count. But it's the dollars, not necessarily talent or artistic accomplishment, that win this award.

Record companies of course delight in these ceremonies honoring commercial success and often create new ones for their artists. And so CBS Records International has come up with its own Crystal Globe award for sales of five million records or more outside the U.S. Carlos Santana accepted the first last March, and Art Garfunkel accepted the second (for Paul Simon and himself) in August.

But these are all essentially popularity polls (as reflected by sales), often influenced as much (more?) by an artist's baby blues as by his musical chops. Perhaps only with magazine staff and critics awards do we begin to approach a real concern with musical excellence apart from sales and air exposure. From my own experience with Stereo Review's Record of the Year Awards (eleven years old this coming February), I can attest that the columnists and reviewers use their knowledge, experience, and ears to assess a musician's artistic achievements without bothering to check how the entry did on the charts.

The best known of all music accolades is still that old Grammy. Only active members of the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences vote for nominees in an eligibility year that runs from October to September. Despite the impressive credentials of NARAS members, the hoopla attending the televised presentation edges the Grammy awards suspicion close to the popularity polls in atmosphere, and there is no ignoring the grim competitiveness of the record companies jockeying for their share of the booty. Two other august bodies, ASCAP and BMI, frequently reward achievements in pop music, and several respected pop awards come from areas outside the industry proper (in the theater we have Tonys for show scores, in TV there are Emmys for television scores, and in film there are Oscars for movie scores).

For every man there's a woman (that got an award of some sort, didn't it?), and for every musical artist there seems to be some kind of award, but to take care of the few backs that might otherwise go unpatted after all those globes, statuettes, plaques, and cash sums have been laid on, I offer the following:

The Quote of the Year award. This year's chief contender is Lou Reed for "Money can't buy you love, but it can buy you a Cadillac so you can ride around and look for it."

The What the Clock? award. No contest here: it goes to the Henhouse Five Plus Two (actually Ray Stevens) for their moving rendition of Glenn Miller's In the Mood done entirely in chicken clucks.

The Terrific Tush award. It will probably be split this year between Barbra Streisand ("Superman") and Ellen Michaels, the sexy sul¬soul ("Nice 'n Nasty") lady.

Have we left anybody out?

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Back in 1973, E-V brought out the original Interface:A. It was the world's first vented speaker designed by computer, using the technology developed by the Australian scientist, A.N. Thiele.

This was the first vented speaker that combined the high efficiency of earlier bass reflex types with even greater bass output than the power-hungry acoustic suspension designs. And it was more accurate than either.

Now, four years later, E-V has come out with its highly refined second generation of Thiele-theory, computer designed speakers—while everyone else is bragging about their first generation.

The new Interface line—7 speakers strong—is at least four times as efficient as a typical acoustic suspension speaker. That gives your amplifier the equivalent of four times the power, whether you have 15 watts or 60. Now you can listen to music at truly realistic levels—without audible distortion.

And with greater accuracy than you have ever experienced. And when it comes to bass, Interface speakers set new standards. Our Interface:D system is only 3 dB down at 28 Hz! That's bass you can feel as well as hear.

Fact is, our new Interface speakers really are a generation ahead, and we think you'll agree when you hear them yourself. For the complete story, write for our free color brochure. Then you'll be four years ahead, too.

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Electro-Voice

a Guion company

600 Cecil St., Buchanan, Michigan 49107
UNDERSTANDING RECORD PLAYERS

Julian Hirsch tells you what you should know before you go out shopping
WHETHER they cost $15 or $1,500, all record players are designed to do the same thing, and by and large they do it in the same way: the turntable platter rotates at a specific speed while a tone arm holds a phono cartridge positioned over the record in such a way that its stylus can follow the inwardly spiraling record groove. That sounds simple enough, but what is the difference between doing this well and doing it badly, between a high-fidelity record player and, say, a $15 kiddie phonograph?

The platter of a true hi-fi record player provides a substantial, physically inert record-support surface that rotates without vibration at a true and constant speed; the cheap phonograph uses a small stamped or molded resonance-prone platter rotated by a drive system with inherent speed fluctuations (wow and flutter) and mechanical vibration (rumble).

A quality tone arm is designed to be non-resonant, to have both minimum mass and great structural rigidity, and to be as friction-free as possible. In addition, precise and stable adjustments are provided to optimize the stylus-to-groove relationship. This includes adjustments for antiskating force and vertical and lateral tracking angles. The cheap player has a stamped sheet-metal or plastic arm with little means of adjustment.

These are of course the extremes of the entire record-player spectrum, but even within that smaller group of machines referred to as high-fidelity instruments some significant differences may exist. The trick, therefore, is to learn to distinguish (1) those differences that might have some bearing on actual performance from (2) those that represent not more than a cosmetic variation or a different (but perhaps equally valid) design philosophy. Putting this insight together with a clear understanding of the various operating and convenience features will usually lead a buyer in the direction of the machine that will serve his system and his record-playing habits best.

Platters

Not too long ago, a turntable was likely to be evaluated mostly by the weight of its platter: the heavier the better. Today it is more widely understood that weight itself is not the key factor—the weight to drive-torque ratio is. A heavy platter is useful because its inertia resists being affected by motor-speed or drive irregularities. But as the motor becomes smaller in size and torque, the platter can be made lighter and still provide the equivalent stabilizing effect.

If all types of motors were equal in vibration and speed regularity, it might be possible to specify an optimum weight-to-torque ratio that would hold for almost any high-quality record player. Unfortunately, motors vary in these respects, some of them requiring larger "flywheels" to smooth their rotational roughness. As long as the designer takes this factor into account, it is possible to achieve a very high level of turntable performance with a motor that would at first seem too unsophisticated to bother with.

Quite recently some design attention has been focused on acoustic damping of the platter—that is, eliminating any tendency for its structure (usually formed of aluminum or magnesium alloy) to resonate mechanically, or at least isolating the record (and hence the cartridge) from any such resonance. Sony's PS-4750 has a large platter molded entirely out of a plastic material that is inherently well damped, and other manufacturers have used similar materials to fabricate turntable bases and other structures known to be vibration-prone. Record-supporting mats made of some rather exotic materials have also begun to appear. Although we at Hirsch-Houck Labs have not been able to measure the specific benefits of these materials, we are at least certain they don't do any harm.

Drive Systems

At one time the type of motor used in a given record player could be a strong selling point in its favor. The matter receives somewhat less attention today because motors have, in general, improved tremendously and because other factors are assuming greater relative importance. However, drive systems (the linkages that couple the motor's rotating element to the platter) continue to be an important consideration for buyers. Three systems are in general use: idler drive, belt drive, and direct drive. There is also an occasional combination system, such as belt/idler drive. In the idler system, a rubber or soft-plastic disc ("puck") presses against both the motor shaft and the inner rim of the platter, transferring the rotational force and gearing the motor speed down in the process. In belt drive, a continuous belt links the shaft and a circumference of the platter; the circumference can be the outer rim of the platter or, as it is more often, a ring or other circular protuberance on the platter's underside. For direct drive, the motor's shaft becomes, in effect, the platter's central spindle, and in some of the direct-drive machines the rotating part of the motor (the rotor) is an integral part of the platter. In others, the platter rests directly on the rotating element.

The type of drive system employed by a record player also has a bearing on how playing speed is changed. Idler drives almost invariably make use of a stepped motor shaft, the rubber-rimmed idler wheel itself being physically shifted from one shaft diameter to another to alter the drive ratio and hence the platter speed (sometimes each step is gently tapered so that the idler's position can be continuously varied across the taper to provide a vernier speed adjustment). Similarly, most belt-driven machines employ a stepped motor pulley; the belt is simply shifted from one pulley diameter to another. Often there is an external control that engages the belt and guides it to the new diameter, although in some few cases the platter must be removed and the belt shifted by hand—a simple yet inconvenient process. Some belt-drive machines—notably several B.I.C. and Thorens models—provide for an electronic speed change of the motor, while the Dual belt-drive units have motor pulleys that physically expand in diameter. Finally, direct-drive turntables must of course have variable-speed motors, since there is no drive linkage to provide a set of different drive ratios.

Tone Arms

Among the many factors that should be explored when considering tone arms is the "feel" and operating convenience of the arm. Unless you plan to buy a fully automatic turntable and use it only as such, you will have to handle the arm from time to time, and you'd like the experience to inspire confidence. With a cartridge installed and the correct tracking force applied, the arm should exhibit no tendency to float out of your grasp when you raise it by the finger lift. Also, the cueing mechanism, often provided to raise and lower the arm, should not cause it to bounce or to shift laterally more than a groove or two. And there is more to it than merely "inspiring confidence," of course. A tone arm that tends to "get
"In an effort to reduce mass, some audiophiles have gone so far as to take hacksaws to their tone arms..."

away" from your hand as you move it is as likely to try to "get away" from the record surface when encountering a warp. In other words, this kind of behavior is an indication of excessive mass in an arm—a fault that can have considerable effect on record-player performance.

The basic function of the tone arm is of course to serve as a support for the cartridge, maintaining proper record-playing geometry in the process. Otherwise, the tone arm should remain very much out of the act, so to speak, though that is not as easy as one might expect. No arm has absolutely frictionless bearings, and there is therefore always a slight (but essentially negligible) resistance to movement in the pivot structure. Conventional tone arms also exert an appreciable (and undesirable) sideways force on the stylus, and this is known as skating force. Finally, arms and arm-cartridge combinations have mechanical resonances—at least one major low-frequency resonance and possibly several lesser high-frequency ones. All these can have their effect on the reproduced sound, either directly or indirectly.

In the interest of correct playing geometry, the tone arm should keep the long axis of the cartridge (as viewed from above) in a condition of tangency to the arc formed by the record groove, and the top reference surface of the cartridge (as viewed from the side and in front) parallel to the record surface. Perfect tangency cannot be achieved with a conventionally pivoted tone arm at all points on a record side. But if the manufacturer pays correct attention to the geometry of his design (the angle of the bend or "offset" in the arm head that holds the cartridge and the distance from the arm pivot to the stylus tip and turntable spindle), an arm with a typical pivot-to-stylus length of about 8 or 9 inches can achieve perfect tangency where it counts most—and acceptable tangency elsewhere. In most cases the user will have to trust the manufacturer or published test reports on a product to determine whether the variables have been properly handled.

Parallelism of the cartridge's top and the record surface is relatively easy to attain in a single-play turntable and next to impossible in a record changer, because the record stack building up on the platter keeps changing the elevation—and hence the vertical angle—of the cartridge. Typically, the arm and cartridge achieve the ideal condition of horizontality midway through a stack of records. But a number of machines permit you to establish the proper geometry for a single record on the platter as well, either through a mechanical control that resets the front-to-back inclination of the cartridge in the headshell or a similar mechanism that lowers the height of the pillar supporting the arm's pivot assembly. Either system can work well enough to equal the alignment accuracy of a single-play turntable. In any case, it is the view of most authorities that minor errors in record-playing geometry are audibly inconsequential.

The pivot bearings of a good tone arm must have low friction and be very durable. Today, most are, and forces acting on the arm from pivot friction are likely to be trivial compared with grosser phenomena such as skating force. Skating force is in effect whenever the stylus is in contact with the rotating record surface; it acts inward, toward the center of the record, pulling the playing end of the tone arm in that direction. The cause of skating force is simply the record groove's drag on the stylus which, pulling against the pivot assembly through an inwardly bent arm, creates a component of force directed inward. The problems it creates are (1) lowered tracking force on the outer (right channel) groove wall, which can lead to stylus mistracking and distortion when that wall undulates vigorously, (2) a lateral displacement of the stylus of a highly compliant cartridge, which may (but does not always) have undesirable consequences, and (3) uneven stylus wear.

**Resonances**

We come at last to a great gray area in tone-arm performance: resonances. In the record-playing situation a tone arm can be looked upon as a freely pivoted mass supported at one end by a tiny spring, the compliant stylus assembly. Such a mass-spring system will inevitably have a preferred frequency of resonance—the frequency at which it prefers to vibrate or oscillate if disturbed. It is bad news if this resonance frequency happens to correspond to some frequency at which record warps tend to occur (around 4 Hz for a 12-inch, 33⅓-rpm record, for example), because the tone arm will then do a lot of bobbing and weaving—far more than the warp itself would cause. It is not much better to have a much higher resonance—25 Hz, perhaps—because this begins to enter the range of recorded material on the disc and will cause audible bass-response irregularities.

The best place for a combined arm-cartridge resonance is therefore about 10 Hz or a bit higher. This frequency range amounts to a sort of "neutral zone"; it is below the range of recorded music and above the range of the worst record warps. But how does one get the resonance to fall there? By "tuning" the arm-cartridge combination. An arm with high effective mass and/or a cartridge with a very compliant stylus assembly will lower the resonance frequency; a low-mass arm and/or a comparatively stiff stylus assembly will raise it. It is therefore possible to match the arm to the cartridge (or vice versa) to obtain the resonance frequency of your choice—within limits. In practice, modern cartridges offer such high compliance that it is an unusual arm that is light enough to yield a resonance frequency much above 8 Hz. But record-player and tone-arm manufacturers are at work on the problem.

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**A LOOK AT THE DRIVE SYSTEMS**

Right, simplified views of the three major turntable drive systems: (A) belt, (B) idler, (C) direct

- **IDLER DRIVE:** Simple and reliable, idler drive is capable of providing the extra torque needed to operate a record-changing mechanism. Until a few years ago, therefore, all record changers used idler drive, and this time-honored system became refined to the point that in the better models, any performance limitations are below audibility. However, except for the direct-drive system, it provides the least isolation between the motor and the turntable platter. This means that an imperfectly manufactured idler wheel (or one whose rubber has deteriorated with time) can result in appreciably higher and audible rumble and flutter levels.
Since mass at the extremities of the arm contributes more to effective mass than weight near the pivots, such mass additions as detachable cartridge shells are being eliminated (as in one version of the famous Shure/SME arm), or the bulky connector that permits such detachment is being moved closer to the pivot assembly (as in the new Thorens arm and the arm on the Harman-Kardon/Rabco ST-7 radial-tracking turntable).

A basic technique for coping with resonance is damping, and it is used in all electronic, electromechanical, and mechanical structures where resonances have to be controlled. In the tone arm, various materials and combinations of materials have been used to prevent or minimize higher-frequency resonances within the arm structure. To cope with the lower-frequency resonances, a few arms incorporate some type of viscous damping at or near the pivots. The counterweight at the tone arm's rear is usually isolated by a compliance, the purpose of which is to provide a deliberately resonant structure that is tuned to, but out of phase with, the basic tone arm/cartridge resonance.

The more expensive Dual models go a step further by using a double-compliance counterweight designed for staggered resonances. The practical result is a single broadly tuned, well-damped resonance that can effectively cancel a broad range of arm-cartridge resonances. This arrangement achieves many of the goals of viscous damping without its problems—fluid leakage and reduction of the arm's freedom of movement.

In an effort to reduce mass, some audiophiles have gone so far as to take hacksaws to their tone arms at the risk of awakening another resonance dragon: structural resonances. Almost any tone arm has inherent structural resonances, and the battering the cartridge stylus takes from the undulating record groove may be enough to excite them. The resonance may occur because of some tendency in the arm shaft to flex or twist in a complex way, or because of some structural looseness—an inadequately secured cartridge shell or cartridge, for example. No arm with serious structural resonances survives very long on the high-fidelity market, but minor resonances are frequently uncovered by laboratory tests and are also heard (as frequency aberrations) by audiophiles. As a rule they do not sound terribly objectionable, but we suspect that they are responsible, at least in part, for the growing conviction that tone arms can 'sound different.'

As an arm becomes less massy (and therefore more desirable for use with a high-compliance cartridge), it also becomes more subject to structural resonances unless its construction can be made very rigid. That is why the search is on for a material that is both light and structurally solid. Carbon fiber, a relatively new and exceptionally stiff substance, has been the choice of such manufacturers as ADC, Infinity, and Sony, the first two of which now offer unmounted arms with tapered carbon-fiber shafts of very low mass. The future will almost certainly bring even more developments in this area.

**Suspensions**

Just as it is usually desirable to isolate the platter from the motor vibration, it is also wise to isolate the entire record player from its environment, which may be a source of physical jolts and vibrations, perhaps even acoustically induced vibration from the loudspeakers. After all, the cartridge stylus cannot distinguish between vibrations imposed on it by the music in the record groove and those from the external source transmitted through the record. It will reproduce both with equal competence. If the source of the external vibration is the speakers, an acoustic-feedback situation can be set up. The speaker sound is picked up by the turntable, is fed to the cartridge, and

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![Diagram of Belt Drive](image)

**Belt Drive:** In belt drive, the flexible belt "soaks up" much of the motor's vibration and speed variations (flutter), so that a well-designed belt-driven turntable usually has lower rumble and flutter than one driven by an idler. There are, however, numerous exceptions, and a really good idler-driven record player is likely to be better than an inexpensive belt-driven model. Rather recently, designers have found ways of getting around the "loose" belt coupling, thereby assuring the availability of enough torque to make belt-driven changer mechanisms possible. Such manufacturers as ADC, B.I.C., Dual, Garrard, Miracord, Philips, and Realistic have all devised belt-driven machines that change records. Philips, however, uses a separate motor to operate the changer mechanism.

**Direct Drive:** The direct-drive system, in which the motor drives the platter directly, provides the least motor isolation of all. However, the low operating speeds of the direct-drive motors (which are the same as the record-playing speeds) insure that rumble will occur only at very low frequencies where it can be easily and effectively filtered out. On the other hand, design virtually mandates the use of electronic control circuits to ensure speed accuracy and stability. Motional-sensing feedback is therefore used in all direct-drive machines, with some type of sensor responding to the rotational rate of the platter. The sensor's output is fed to a control circuit that governs the drive signal being fed to the motor. Hence the direct-drive machines achieve mechanical simplicity (there is often only one moving part—the platter/rotor) at the expense of some electrical complexity, since the sensing, feedback, and drive circuits are likely to contain a considerable number of transistors (or integrated circuits) and passive components. Technics has introduced several models in which almost all the electronic control functions are taken care of by a single integrated circuit.
pass through the whole sound system again—where it is amplified, sent through the speakers once more, back to the turntable, and so on. In severe cases the whole thing "takes off" like a public-address system with a severe case of "howlback." More usually, the audible effects are rumbling, a blurring of the sound, and a sort of false reverberation—all of which are often blamed on the wrong cause.

While not guaranteed to prevent acoustic feedback and similar ills totally, a well-designed turntable suspension is likely to be of some help. Many manufacturers make use of damped springs, while others like B.I.C. use resilient, rubber-like mounts for their motorboards; Stanton has magnets, so that the platter is literally floated by the force of magnetic repulsion; Infinity's Air Table also has a floating platter, one supported by air forced by a small outboard compressor into the chamber where the platter bearing would ordinarily be.

Mostly because of their physical design, direct-drive turntables usually have the entire mechanism, base and all, supported on resilient feet. This makes use of a very solid, resonance-free base advisable. For machines using idler drive, the usual scheme is to float the entire motorboard on springs, so that it is isolated from the base. A few direct-drive machines also use this technique. Belt drive permits a number of approaches. A good one is an internal, spring-supported rigid sub-frame that in turn supports just the platter and the tone-arm base, isolating these two elements from the motor and motorboard and also making sure they do not move relative to one another. Whatever type of suspension a record player uses, considerable variation in its effectiveness is possible. Since this book is not easily judged by its cover, we try, in our record-player test procedure, to measure and describe the machine's sensitivity to acoustic feedback and external vibration.

Innovations

Taken all in all, the record player is really a simple electromechanical theme upon which a great many elaborations can be wrought. The changer, for example, began life as a justly maligned instrument of record torture, evolved into the gentle and sophisticated "automatic turntable" with indubitable high-fidelity credentials, and is now emerging as a marvel of automation. The most conspicuously automated changer to date is the ADC Accutrac +6, a machine that, under pushbutton control, can not only play any band of any record in its "stack" in any desired sequence and for any number of repetitions, but can also cycle its way both forward and back through the stack, making any record accessible at any time. And this unprecedented flexibility is available not only at the turntable itself (through a control console built into the machine's base) but from other locations in the room (by means of a remote-control unit resembling a pocket calculator).

The Accutrac +6 is a belt-driven changer. Technics by Panasonic now manufactures three direct-drive changers, so that there are not now many features of the best single-play turntables that cannot also be found in some record-changing turntables. As a bonus, most changers can also be operated as single-play machines.

Meanwhile, the popularity of true single-play or "manual" turntables is, if anything, growing, and they have evolved along several different lines. Some have acquired automatic features—anything from a simple tone-arm lift at the end of a record to tone arms with completely automatic cycling and platter speeds that shift from 33 1/3 to 45 rpm according to record diameter (as in the Philips GA 222). Others have made excursions into technical refinements such as the straight-line-tracking tone arm. In such an arm the pivot assembly does not remain stationary. Instead, it moves slowly along a track, keeping up with the cartridge as it moves in toward the record center. Straight-line-tracking arms are straight, having no offset bend like conventional tone arms, and, since they do not give rise to any skating force, antiskating mechanisms are unnecessary. They also have the potential of providing virtually perfect record-playing geometry. The Harman-Kardon ST-7 and Bang & Olufsen 4002 turntables have the only extant straight-line-tracking arms at present, but at least one more is scheduled for introduction in the foreseeable future. The arms are reasonably complex, requiring special servomechanisms and motors. The single-play B&O 4002 is also a highly automated turntable; playing speed is changed in response to record diameter by means of a sophisticated optical system, and the arm is designed never to be touched by human hands. The whole machine is so carefully integrated that only one cartridge can be used in the arm—B&O's own top-of-the-line MMC 6000.

A de luxe turntable today, whether changer or single-play, is likely to have the following features: a tone-arm-lifting mechanism to raise or lower the arm at the pull or push of a lever (which should be evaluated for smoothness and accuracy of operation); speeds of 33 1/3 and 45 rpm, and possibly a third speed; fine-tuning speed controls that can vary any of the speeds up or down by a few percentage points; and some sort of indicator to show when the proper speed is exactly "on." Stroboscopes are used most widely for this last feature, and they work well. Both JVC and Technics have digital speed indicators, so that the actual numbers "33.33," etc., are illuminated when the speed is correct. Pioneer's top turntable, the PLC-590, has a meter for speed indication.

Other turntable features and "nice" touches abound. For example, there is a minor trend getting underway (Setton and Visomik) to locate all controls on the front edge of the turntable base so the user needn't reach over the motorboard (or remove the dust cover, if it is
in the ease of installation and alignment of the cartridge. The variations are too many to list, but a well-thought-out cartridge-installation scheme is a boon, particularly to anyone intending to change cartridges frequently. Finally, although the vast majority of record players come with pre-installed arms, there is a definite rise in the number of top-of-the-line turntables having no arms—a chance for the user to install the tone arm of his choice.

With record-player performance as uniformly good as it is today, small features and conveniences are more than icing on the cake. In some cases they will be compelling factors in an intelligent choice between products, and as such they deserve close attention.

**Specifications**

A few notes about specifications are appropriate in conclusion. Specs are, alas, not always as helpful as they might be, because they are derived according to a variety of "weighting" systems that are not directly comparable. Sometimes (but not always) the weighting system used is identified on the specification sheet (DIN A, DIN B, NAB, etc.), and you can then make some sort of comparison with other products rated according to the same system. But comparisons involving different weighting systems are not possible with the information provided.

According to the weighting systems used by Hirsch-Houck Labs, short-term speed irregularities (wow and flutter) are usually under 0.15 per cent even in rather low-price record players ($100 or so). This amount of fluctuation will usually not disturb any but the most critical listeners. Above $150, most record players have less than 0.08 per cent flutter, a negligible amount. Within a given price range there are no clear distinctions between single- and multiple-play turntables in this respect.

Rumble is, of course, almost always higher in less expensive turntables. Hirsch-Houck Labs tests, based on the ARLL weighting curve, show that a rumble level of -50 dB or better is generally quite satisfactory if the loudspeakers used do not have an unusually powerful output below 50 Hz. Most turntables priced from $100 to $200 will have rumble levels of -54 to -56 dB when measured in this manner. If your speakers have extended bass response, look for a turntable with a -58 to -62 dB rumble level (ARLL weighting); it is unlikely to be audible with any speaker.

In general, direct-drive turntables have the lowest rumble (and lowest flutter), with levels of -60 to -62 dB being typical. However, there are several belt-driven units costing $200 to $300 that actually have lower rumble than all but a few of the best direct-drive machines. So it is dangerous to make sweeping generalizations. However, it is true that in turntables you get just about what you pay for, so do not expect a $100 record player to perform like one costing $300 or more. On the other hand, because many records have a certain amount of built-in low-frequency noise themselves, it is quite possible that much of the time you will not hear the difference between a $100 and $300 turntable. In any case, as is true with most audio components, you ultimately reach the point of diminishing audible returns as you approach the very-high-end equipment.

In modern tone arms, skating force is countered by an equal but oppositely directed force. A tiny weight hanging from a thread that passes over a shaft or pulley can apply a steady pull on the arm in the outward direction. So can a weighted lever gently opposing the arm's inward rotation, or a calibrated coil spring, or a magnetic repulsion system. All but a very few high-fidelity tone arms have some sort of "antiskating" mechanism, many of elaborate appearance, with adjustments calibrated for different stylus shapes and special playing conditions. But it must be admitted that the counterforce applied by any of the systems at any one moment is at best only approximately correct, because skating force varies constantly with, among other things, the "loudness" of the signal in the record grooves. In addition, some of the antiskating systems probably impose as much friction on a tone arm's lateral movement as would a very inferior set of pivot bearings (only in the rarest cases is the arm's freedom of vertical movement affected). But it is in a good cause, and most authorities now agree that some skating compensation, approximate though it may be, is usually better than none at all with today's cartridges.
THE CASE
OF THE
BELITTLED
BEATLES TAPES
IN WHICH THE SUBJECT OF THE CONTROVERSY
ITSELF BECOMES THE MOST PROVOCATIVE WITNESS

A TELEVISION producer, hitting pay dirt after numerous flops, once complained that failure brings the balm of anonymity while success brings lawsuits. Nowhere has this been more apparent than in rock music. Rock musicians have spent so much time in court lately that it's only a matter of time before albums like "Bruce Springsteen Alive and Well at District Appeals Court 263" top the charts.

Oddly enough, the Beatles, the most popular rock group ever, were somehow able to ward off the bulk of such lawsuits during the Sixties, even while they were leading the gravy train of profit. Since their break-up in 1969, however, they have joined the Seventies litany of suits and counter-suits; they sued each other, Allen Klein sued them, they sued Allen Klein, the U.S. Government tried to deport John and Yoko, George was accused of stealing "My Sweet Lord" from He's So Fine, John was accused of stealing "Come Together" from "You Can't Catch Me", an independent record producer was accused of stealing the tracks from John's "Rock 'n' Roll" album, and on and on. Unfortunately, most of these court cases, though involving sums up to $1 million, are usually steeped in extremely technical claims and counter-claims. Not very exciting to a fan of the legal process, weaned on reruns of Perry Mason.

One case with a better-than-average plot has been that of the Hamburg Beatles tapes.

These Hamburg tapes were made at the behest of Ted "King-size" Taylor, who was performing at Hamburg's Star Club in 1962 along with the Beatles. Taylor had a friend record a few nights' shows on a mono Grundig tape recorder with a low-fi mono handheld microphone. Along with Taylor's group, the Dominos, the tape featured the Beatles' performance. A few years later, when the Beatles were well on the way to topping Jesus Christ in the world's popularity poll, Taylor realized he was sitting on a possible windfall. While other equally crude recordings existed of live Beatles performances, Taylor's was one of the earliest, and, more important, was the only known recording of the group in a club as opposed to an outdoor concert. Beatles scripture tells of their club days as being the true molding era, when the staid Liverpool beat group was transformed into a hot, tight powerhouse band. A tape of such a performance would be an invaluable look at history in the making.

Taylor offered the tapes to Beatles manager Brian Epstein, who turned him down, feeling they were of no commercial value, and that was the end of it for years. By the early 1970's, when the group had split up, interest in the Beatles as history (not just a regular act) picked up noticeably, and the market was ready for a "documentary" package like the Hamburg tapes. Allan Williams, who had briefly managed the Beatles around the time of the Hamburg performances, became the main driving force urging issuance of the old tapes. Finally, in 1976, a deal was made with Lingasong records in London and the Double H Licensing Corporation in New York City to release them as a double LP. Months of painstaking work followed to bring the sound on the muddy tapes as close to "modern" quality as possible. Earlier this year, just before the scheduled release, lawyers for the Beatles filed a dramatic last-minute claim to halt the tapes' issuance, but the judge ruled that Lingasong clearly marked the tapes for what they were, old tapes, and the Beatles had months to complain before, and didn't. So, in April, "The Beatles Live! At the Star Club in Hamburg, Germany, 1962" finally made it to the eager hands of Beatles aficionados around the world.

It seems, however, as if a major error was made by the legal eagles of EMI/Parlophone. Now, if Perry Mason had been handling their case, no doubt he would have realized that the prime question was when the tapes were recorded, and he would have tried to claim that Lingasong had no right to issue the LP because the Beatles were under exclusive contract to EMI when they were made. Far be it from us, who haven't even applied to law school, to bring this up now, but the question of

By Harry Castleman & Wally Podrazik

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when the tapes were recorded has never, apparently, been answered. It seems everybody's assumed the Star Club tapes were made before the Beatles signed with EMI. The liner notes on the LP say as much, being quite vague as to an exact recording date. "Sometime" in 1962 is all one is led to assume. But since the Beatles signed with EMI in August of 1962, exactly when in 1962 is far from irrelevant.

A brief historical investigation (the sort of thing Perry Mason franchised out to his flunky, Paul Drake) would turn up an easily traceable pattern. The Star Club opened in April of 1962 (so the tapes obviously were recorded no earlier). Ringo Starr did not officially replace Pete Best as the Beatles' drummer earlier). Ringo Starr did not officially assume. But since the Beatles signed with EMI in August of 1962, exactly when in 1962 is far from irrelevant.

"Do you mean to say that the Beatles' stage act, like that of any bar band, was a sort of thing Perry Mason franchised out to his flunky, Paul Drake) would begin pounding away at these when in 1962 is far from irrelevant.

The Beatles made three visits to the Star Club during 1962. They played there from about April 23 to June 4, from November 1-14, and from December 18, 1962, to January 1, 1963. Since the Beatles' first EMI/Parlophone release (Love Me Do/P.S. I Love You) came out on October 4, 1962, Taylor obviously would have to have recorded the group sometime between April and June if the tapes were made before signing with EMI. Fine. Or is it?

Take a look at the songs played on the record. At the time, the Beatles did do some original numbers, but their stage act, like that of any bar band, was mostly made up of other people's hits (Chuck Berry's Sweet Little Sixteen, Little Richard's Long Tall Sally, etc.). The Beatles prided themselves on being able to pick up on the latest sounds that were big in the States, but if the Hamburg tape was made before June 4, John and Paul would have to have spent a lot of time memorizing a shortwave set. Three songs they performed on the LP (the Isley Brothers' Twist and Shout, Tommy Roe's Sheila, and Arthur Alexander's Where Have You Been All My Life?) were only released in May of 1962.

If this were Perry Mason, Perry would begin bounding away at these inconsistencies:

"Do you mean to say that the Beatles besieged record shops in Hamburg, asking for import singles, and then spent hours listening to discs on record players they didn't own? Learning to mimic them, when they barely had enough time, after playing for hours, to eat and sleep? No, that seems unlikely. It's equally doubtful that they were prescient enough to know exactly how Frank Ifield would adapt I Remember You (an old hit from the war film The Fleet's In), which he didn't release until June 20. The Beatles' version was a complete copy of Ifield's, even down to Lennon's exaggerating the harmonica riff perfectly!"

At this point in our Mason script it would now be five minutes before the hour. Perry would suddenly pull a copy of a Buddy Holly single from a bag delivered by Paul Drake moments earlier.

"No," Perry would say, "I doubt the Beatles were that farsighted. In fact. . . ."

Whereupon (there's only a minute or so left in the show) a record-company executive would jump up from the audience and yell:

"Yes, it's true. That's a copy of the Buddy Holly single Reminiscing—Cor- al Q 72455—which wasn't released un- til September 7, 1962. Since the Beatles were in England then, and didn't return to Hamburg until two months later, the Hamburg tapes couldn't have been recorded before November 1962, well after the Beatles were signed to EMI. In fact, after they released their first single! I admit it! Take me away!"

Here, Hamilton Burger would leap up, "But your honor, we are all familiar with Don McLean's American Pie. We all know Buddy Holly died in a plane crash in 1959. How could Reminiscing not have been released until 1962?"

Perry, with a slightly disappointing look, would respond: "Simple. Although Reminiscing was recorded in 1958, it was never released, while legal rights to it and other Buddy Holly songs were contested. In 1962, Norman Petty finally won the right to issue these songs. The first of the group, Reminiscing, was released in the United States on August 14, 1962, and in Britain three weeks later, on September 7. This was a full two months after the Beatles returned from Hamburg, almost on the very day they were in my client's studio, recording Love Me Do."

Judge bangs gavel, "Case closed."

Burger is seen sulking as scene fades to commercial.

Sixty seconds later, in the postscript back at the office, as Della brings in sandwiches, Paul asks:

"But Perry, how did you suspect Buddy Holly?"

Perry, ignoring the sandwiches while leafing through some Law Review digest, looks up and smiles.

"I didn't. I just listened to the album and heard two references to the Holly season and 'Christmas.' Obviously, it had to be in November or December."

Fade to credit roll and to black.

If only life could imitate art, even old Perry Mason art, then it would be much easier to be a lawyer, and news reports of these suits would be a lot more fun to read. Needless to say, EMI didn't use our proposed scenario with our very own "smoking gun." The Hamburg tapes were released on Lingasong. Perhaps EMI decided a lawsuit just wasn't worth it, what with their own "Hollywood Bowl!" live LP doing better in sales. Of course, there's still time. Some budding legal wizard at EMI could study our script, memorize his lines, and come bounding into court with a nice, retroactive lawsuit demanding lost royalties. Lawyers cringe from ever really closing the book on any case, and this one, which began a full fifteen years ago, is truly ripe for a new addendum. A lawsuit, like a case of poison ivy, festers long after you've forgotten where it came from.

Excerpted from the book The Beatles Again, by Harry Castleman and Wally Podrazik, to be published this month by Pierian Press, P. O. Box 1808, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106. $7.95. (Copyright 1977 by Walter J. Podrazik and Harry Castleman.)
Fisher introduces a major advance in audio technology: the linear motor 120 pole, direct drive turntable.

One of the problems in improving direct drive turntable performance is reducing wow & flutter due to cogging action of the motor. With its limited number of poles (usually 12) and its relatively slow operating speed, most conventional direct drive systems also have an inherent problem of low starting torque. To solve these problems, Fisher has engineered the linear motor, direct drive system. The new Fisher MT6225.

In effect, the platter becomes the turntable's motor. And Fisher's 120 pole design practically eliminates cogging action, and lowers wow & flutter to a totally inaudible 0.03%.

The linear motor direct drive system further reduces turntable rumble to an extremely low -70 dB, far below hearing level.

HOW IT WORKS

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CIRCLE NO. 34 ON READER SERVICE CARD
Along with the rest of the world, Antonín Dvořák was of the opinion that he had written fewer than nine symphonies, the number Czech musical research has authorized for the complete edition circulated within the last decade. That is borne out by the manuscript title page of his E Minor Symphony, which bears the words "Z nového světa" ("From the New World") and the figure "No. 8," later emended to read "No. 7." This is not because he had forgotten he had written a C Minor Symphony and a B-flat Major one (which now bear the numbers "1" and "2"), but because, by 1893, the year of the completion of the New World, he was quite sure that they had been successfully suppressed.

Dvořák's symphonic sequence, as it now stands, can be divided into the historic five published during his lifetime (Nos. 5 through 9) and the prehistoric four (Nos. 1 through 4). What, realistically, is the reason for including the earliest in the sequence? More a matter of supply than of demand, I would say. But the efforts of Czech musicologists to promote Dvořák to the ranks of the great nine-symphony composers (Beethoven, Schubert, Bruckner, Mahler) has had one positive outcome: it has re-located the early, charming F Major Symphony to its proper chronological fifth position rather than its old one following the D Major (now No. 5) and the D Minor (now No. 7). But it still retains the inappropriate designation "Op. 76," a bland deception initiated by the publisher Simrock and one to which Dvořák strenuously objected. It may be doubted that this small gain has been worth the large effort and expense incurred in causing all the world's supply of Dvořák scores, reference materials, and recordings to be renumbered if not replaced. Still, for better or for worse, the symphonies once numbered 1 through 5 are now, respectively, as follows: No. 1 is No. 6, No. 2 is No. 7, No. 3 is No. 5, No. 4 is No. 8, and No. 5 is No. 9. The numbers 1 through 4 have been properly taken over by the products of Dvořák's youth.

Symphonies 1-4

For those with a curious turn of mind, prying into the secrets the mature Dvořák thought safely buried, like family skeletons, does have its fascination. The first two symphonies show the composer in his twenties—a viola player in the orchestra of the Provisional Theater in Prague with a delightfully Schubertian quintet (Op. 1, Philips 839754) already to his credit—attempting to wing his way into the symphonic empyrean but failing, Icarus-like, to remain airborne. He was, as of 1865 (when Symphonies 1 and 2 were composed) what is known in Central Europe as a Musikant: a man with a natural flair for playing an instrument or composing, but possessed of neither broad formal training nor the sophistication that might come from long, practical experience.

There is, of course, no lack of aptitude. But through the first two symphonies we are audibly mired in structural complexities, a morass out of which the composer tries to pick his way, step by sticky step, never quite succeeding. Orchestrally, the strings are fighting the brass, the woodwinds try to act as peacemakers, and the overused percussion keeps putting in a disruptive voice as intense as it is inappropriate. For those bent on knowing Dvořák in this prehistoric period, London Records offers the whole sequence in performances by the London Symphony under István Kertész: Symphony No. 1, in C Minor, Op. 3, CS 6523; Symphony No. 2, in B-flat Major, Op. 4, CS 6524; Symphony No. 3, in E-flat Major, Op. 10, CS 6525 (with the Op. 67 Hussite Overture); and Symphony No. 4, in D Minor, Op. 13, CS 6526 (including the In Nature's Realm Overture, Op. 91).

As promising a prospect as this presents, the reality of it is less rewarding. My impression is that Kertész didn't know these obscure works well enough to teach them to an orchestra to which they were equally unfamiliar. Balances are uncertain, and the brass and percussion are more out of hand than in. There is, however, in each of these works, no lack of something to say; the abiding difficulty for Dvořák at this point in his career is "How?" In No. 3, for example, the gruppetto (turn) for which Wagner's Rienzi Overture is abidingly remembered is not, in this instance, a case of one good turn inspiring another. Symphony No. 4 comes closest to sounding whole, especially in its melodious minor-key andante sostenuto. Kertész has a better grip on the problems in this one, but Witold Rowicki's is even firmer: profiling from the LSO's earlier indoctrination into the work under Kertész and blessed with better engineering, he produces on Philips 6500 124 a more assured and brighter-sounding product (the disc is rounded out with a performance of the Othello Overture). (overleaf)
As of March 1874, when he finished (pending later revision) the D-Minor Symphony, No. 4, Dvořák the symphonist might have been characterized thus: “Eager, intense, crude. Shows a smiling melodic side now and then to balance the brooding dramatic one, which he appears to favor.” Six years later, when he produced his D Major Symphony (formerly known as No. 1), more than a subtle transformation had begun. Many of the earlier excesses had been curbed, and instrumentation was no longer a problem.

The composer was, to be sure, six years older, but he was much more than six years wiser. The reasons for this were both internal and external. These years were, as were nearly all years for Dvořák, a time of unremitting work—hard, purposeful, self-critical work. Between 1873 and 1879 he wrote a large number of chamber-music compositions in which he worked and re-worked his concepts of form and structure. In 1877 he wrote the fanciful, diverse, and above all—artfully orchestrated Symphonic Variations (of which there is a beautiful performance by Kertész and the London Symphony on London CS 6721). Those were the internal reasons.

Within this same span of years, Bedřich Smetana completed Vltava (Die Moldau) in 1874 and his great E Minor Quartet (Ausz Meinem Leben) in 1876. Here, for the first time, was high-level certification for the use of Czech folk material in instrumental music. Dvořák responded to the stimulus in 1878 with his first series of Slavonic Dances (Op. 46) which not only demonstrated who he was to all of Europe but also perhaps revealed the composer for the first time to himself. Also contributing to this self-revelation was the 1879 Czech Suite for orchestra (Op. 39), a work in which Charles Mackerras conducts the English Chamber Orchestra capably on Philips 6500 203.

Clearly, the F Major Symphony of 1875 (which was somewhat revised twelve years later prior to its publication) was an effort on Dvořák’s part to move away symphonically, from what he had been doing previously. More fortbrightly melodious, less portentously dramatic than its predecessors, and with a particularly good scherzo, it foreshadows a new balance of elements in the even more personal works to come. Kertész’s version with the London Symphony (London CS 6511, which also contains the overture My Home, Op. 62) is assured, understanding, and firmly controlled.

Harly less important in Dvořák’s move to higher symphonic ground, if not to greater knowledge of what to say, was a new solution to the ever-vexing question “How?” This helping hand was provided by the momentous appearance of Johannes Brahms’ first two symphonies: the C Minor (No. 1) in 1877, the D Major (No. 2) in 1878. Possibly Brahms had written as many prehistoric symphonies as Dvořák, but he was evidently more adept at suppressing them.

Of the two “instant” masterpieces now presented to him (and to the world) for study, Dvořák gravitated faith in him as a symphonist can be pinpointed almost to the measure: it is around number 310 in the first movement of this D Major. Instead of using his thematic material as building blocks in the old academic way, he weaves out of it a tapestry of idea and incident that qualifies as a true development, a satisfactory bridge between exposition and recapitulation. Add to this the first of his symphonic scherzos in a Czech dance rhythm (here it is a swift-moving furiant), and Dvořák’s orchestral personality jumps into clear focus.

A thus-far unmentioned contender for the favor of enthusiasts of recorded Dvořák makes his appearance with this symphony. Rafael Kubelik would have been mentioned several paragraphs earlier had Deutsche Grammophon maintained in circulation the performances of the first five symphonies he recorded with the Berlin Philharmonic (originally issued, together with the last four, as DG 2720 060 10). In addition to possessing sound musicianship, being an expert joust in the conductorial lists, and rejoicing in a reputation for symphonic marksmanship, Kubelik is something no previously mentioned personality in this survey can claim to be—a native of the same terrain as the composer. Kubelik’s reading of Dvořák’s Sixth (DG 2530 425) is, like his Mahler Sixth, energetic, hearty, and expansive. I find it a little more indulgent (in the slow movement, scherzo, and finale) of Dvořák’s love affair with the timpani than is my taste, but it is, on balance, the best available performance, a little more tightly held together than the Kertész/London Symphony version (London CS 6495) which includes the Carnival Overture as a bonus.

If there is a distinction to be made between the first six symphonies of Dvořák and the last three, it is that Nos. 1 to 6 remain the concern of conductors who have made a specialty of them while the final three are, in ever-increasing measure, being picked over by any conductor who can persuade a record company to put him, and them, on its production schedule. This is great for diversity, if not so great for suitability of interpreter to what is being interpreted. Symphony No. 7, for instance, is a work whose vocabulary requires a more than generalized sense of phraseology. In this score the difference in aspiration and temperament between Smetana, the originator of the Czech national school of music, and Dvořák, its leading doctoral candidate, begins to emerge. The much beloved
Smetana of The Bartered Bride, the tone poems, and the E Minor Quartet never undertook a symphony; Dvořák was determined to make that domain his own, and eventually he succeeded magnificently.

There is a homespun quality to Dvořák's music, skeins of Brahms and of his own Czech heritage contributing to the mixture. But if one adopts the warm, Mediterranean manner of Carlo Maria Giulini (London Philharmonic Orchestra, Angel S-37270), the nappy texture tends to turn more than a little silken. The textural trend turns, on the other hand, toward Harris tweed in Colin Davis' collaboration with the Amsterdam Concertgebouw Orchestra (Philips 9500 132). This isn't at all bad, though I find the Davis tread in this work a little elephantine, a little overweighty. Philips also has a version by Rowicki with the London Symphony (6500 287) which becomes hung up in the finale, after three good preceding movements, on the famous allusion to the Schubert C Major Symphony. For me, a hint is insufficient, and finger-pointing, musical or otherwise, is always in poor taste. Vaclav Neumann and the Czech Philharmonic are very much on familiar territory (Vanguard SU-7), but the orchestral reproduction is somewhat dull, a fault that also disbars Kertész and the London Symphony (London CS 6402) from competition on the highest level here.

I would cite the well-phrased performance of Leonard Bernstein (Columbia MS-6828) as a little rich in specific detail—inner voices highlighted, orchestral details overpolished, the scherzo heavy of foot for a dance movement. I have the highest regard for the marvelously shaped, beautifully sounding collaboration of George Szell with the Cleveland Orchestra, but it is presently purchasable only in Columbia D35-814, which locks the buyer into Szell/Cleveland performances of Symphonies Nos. 8 and 9 as well. Good as these performances are, not everyone will applaud the elimination of optional viewpoints. This brings the issue squarely to a choice between Kubelík and the Berlin Philharmonic (on DG 2530 127) or Zubin Mehta and the Israel Philharmonic (London CS 6607). For this work—where plasticity, honest sentiment, and warmth of feeling count—my body thermometer says "Mehta."

Symphony No. 8

Were I to be asked which, among all the nine symphonies of Dvořák, is my personal favorite, the answer would come quickly and decisively: the G Major, No. 4 or No. 8 in the old and new numbering systems, respectively. Note that I am not equating "favorite" with "greatest." In the instance of Schubert, for example, the C Major Symphony could readily be accorded both descriptives. But, though I would agree that the New World undertakes an expression on a larger canvas than the G Major and succeeds marvelously, I would also insist that anyone who doesn't know the G Major doesn't really know Dvořák well. It is a score that assays high on anybody's test for musical gold: a spirited first movement, full of thrust and flowing ideas; a narrative kind of slow movement; followed by a dance piece of irresistible lil and persuasion. And need I say more about the G Major, for those as yet unacquainted with it, than that, as fine as the preceding movements are, the fully fulfilled variations-finale in itself contains more music than those three combined?

The Eighth constitutes such a gourment collation of musical treats that there can be no argument except about who serves it up the best. At the outset there is Herbert von Karajan, who has chosen the Vienna Philharmonic (London CS 6443) to assist him in making the most of his musical discrimination, conductorial skills, and sonic sense. Alas, the effort is found wanting in the balance, the scales being tipped on the performance side by a lack of knowledge of the Dvořák idiom—this cannot be learned from the E Minor (New World) alone.

Kubelík's virtues and shortcomings in Dvořák are by now well defined, and they are evident here: energy, insight, and perception are lessened by a want of lightness of touch in the final variations (the Berlin Philharmonic is the orchestra, DG 139 181). Mehta and the Israel Philharmonic? The stakes are higher here than in No. 7, and this combination (on London CS 6979) doesn't have the face cards for a winning hand.

Why not, then, the Szell/Cleveland performance (Angel S-36043) with its accompanying Slavonic Dances (E Minor, Op. 72, No. 2, and A-flat Major, Op. 46, No. 3)? The appeal of this performance (dated April 28, 1970, and thus the last recorded by Szell, who died on July 30 of the same year) is mighty. Perhaps the only Dvořák symphony other than the New World to be recorded three times by the same conductor (the earliest Szell recording of the G Major, with the Concertgebouw of Amsterdam, is still to be found on Turnabout 3452SE), it here enjoys Szell's final thoughts on the subject. These are, to my taste, a little pedagogic—something of a sermon from the podium.

Which brings us in the end to the long shadow from the past cast by the mystic mastery of that old musical smoothie Bruno Walter. What I find distilled in his quietly irresistible effort with the Columbia Symphony (West Coast branch, Odyssey Y-33231) are the Walter feeling for Schubert, for Brahms, even for the Bohemian side of Mahler—the perfect combination for what Dvořák requires in the G Major Symphony. In short, Walter takes it.

Symphony No. 9

(From the New World)

Dvořák would very likely have written a fifth (or ninth) symphony in E Minor even if he hadn't visited America in 1892-1894, and it would possibly have shared some of the same colorations as the one he did in fact write. As a connoisseur of folk melodies, Dvořák expressed a high regard for the examples of Negro and Indian origin with which he became familiar not long after his arrival in America in 1892. But, as a prudish composer, he rejected the simplistic legend that the success of the New World derived from the power resident in such melodies as Swing Low, Sweet Chariot and Deep River. What he had done, with the skill of a consummate craftsman, was to convert...
such tunes into themes suitable for symphonic elaboration.

To wonder how his many interpreters deal with such considerations would be an idle speculation; most conductors are interested in results and not causes. One who did speak for the record is the late Leopold Stokowski, whose brief lecture of 1927 is reproduced in a package (RCA CRL2-0334) that combines his New Philharmonia recording of 1973 with the Philadelphia Orchestra version made fifty (!) years ago. He doesn't make a point of the difference between a tune and a theme (a tune is a self-contained entity; a theme is an unhatched egg full of possibilities), merely identifying one theme as "a wild but soothing Negro lullaby." No real illumination there. The two performances are clearly a product of the same intuitively theatrical personality, with some—but not all—of the eccentricities of 1927 perpetuated in the version of 1973 (the performance with the deep, non-Dvořákian tam-tam bong in the finale was made in the Fifties). The thrust, the linearity, and the glissandos of the 1927 performance are all, for better or for worse, part of the tonal manner that earned Stokowski his fame.

The great merits of the music are not exactly impervious to the way in which they are rendered, but the most modest of the performances, those by Kertész (London CS 6527, which also contains the Othello Overture) and Neumann (Vanguard SU-8) are savorous and, to a degree, wholesomely rewarding. Like many others, the Kubelik version (with the Berlin Philharmonic, DG 2530 415) takes the repeat in the first movement. Kubelik's largo is uncommonly deliberate, but the playing of the orchestra's fine solo personnel is superbly illustrative of the new, high level of artistry and elegance encumbered in Dvořák's instrumental texture.

Giulini makes his opening (Philharmonia Orchestra, Seraphim S-60045) a bit choppy, as though he were not quite firmly seated in the Western saddle. The internal movements contain a good deal of fine playing, but the dimensions of the finale as Giulini views them do not measure up to the vast territory with which Dvořák was dealing. Riccardo Muti with the New Philharmonia (Angel S-37230) comes on strong at the end, but one derives little sense of identity with the materials of the three preceding movements. And Rowicki with the London Symphony (Philips 802903) spoils an otherwise intelligent effort with a largo that is all but casual.

A step upward to an extraordinarily high level of orchestral execution is encountered in the versions by a half-dozen world-famous conductors of the Fifties, Sixties, and Seventies. All but Klemperer find the repeat in the first movement dispensable. My one-time preference for Arturo Toscanini and the NBC Symphony (RCA VICS 1249F, in electronic stereo and including Schumann's Manfred Overture) has now been backed down to admiration for the real sense of "performance" that emanates from this February 2, 1953, effort. Otherwise, the verdict is much too fast, insufficiently reflective.

The Fritz Reiner/Chicago Symphony version (RCA LSC-2214) is one of the best, for all that it is now nearly twenty years old, a resounding foreshadowing of the orchestra-to-be under Solti. Outstanding, in the finale, is a splendid example of a controlled accelerando which Reiner builds with a musical, though almost computerized, precision. Antal Dorati, with the New Philharmonia, doesn't quite pass this test without suggesting the parade ground in the finale (London Phase 4 SPC 21025). Ormandy performs a small miracle in producing the Philadelphia Orchestra sound with the London Symphony strings (Columbia MS 7089), but he doesn't quite achieve the larger miracle of breaking out of the four-square rhythmic frame that has surrounded much of his work in recent years.

Herbert von Karajan is no more successful (in a rich-sounding version with the Berlin Philharmonic, DG 138 922) in imparting a sense of the Dvořák idiom to Symphony No. 9 than he is in Symphony No. 8 with the Vienna Philharmonic. Klemperer, it should be mentioned, adds to his virtuous preference for the repetition in the first movement (with the Philharmonia on Angel S-36246) a prime suggestion of the symphony's American locale. As the four movements succeed each other in a continent-spanning stroll, they bring to mind nothing so much as "Ol' man river," who "jus' keeps rollin' along." The trip lasts a leisurely 44'39" with Klemperer as opposed to a brisk 39'12" with Giulini.

But there is still one more New World, one more premium orchestra, one more first-rank conductor to encounter. In his 1962 recording with the New York Philharmonic, Leonard Bernstein is almost too fervently incisive, but what he assembles, measure by measure, movement by movement, is a fantastically unified performance that poses many challenging questions and supplies the persuasive answers.

For example, why take the repeat in the first movement? Because Dvořák's "first ending" shows that he has plotted a return to the beginning as an inherent part of his musical scheme. Why restrain the largo to a level barely louder than a piano throughout? Because the context is not only reverential in spirit, but, when fully understood, sacramental. Why the dry, precise articulation of the dotted figure for strings in the scherzo? Because the note pattern otherwise lacks definition and hence character. Why the triumphant trilling of woodwinds at measure 6 after No. 11 in the finale? Because Dvořák has here converted his sophisticated forces into the likeliness of skirling pipes to celebrate his conquest of distances and dangers. Nobody else in all the versions I have sampled comes close to equaling this insight. Nobody else understands the specifically American element in this score as Bernstein and the Philharmonic of that time did together.

In the aftermath of the stupendous success of the New World at its world première in Carnegie Hall on December 16, 1893, under the direction of Anton Seidl, Dvořák cited to his publisher Simrock the only comparable ovation he could recall: "alla Mascagni in Wien." It was a reference to the overwhelming response of the Viennese when Cavalleria Rusticana was first performed in Italian under the composer's direction in September 1890. When the proofs of the score of the New World were ready they went to Brahms, who had generously agreed, in Dvořák's absence in America, to read them. When this information reached Dvořák, he wrote back, saying: "I can hardly believe there is in the world such a musician" (who would do for a colleague what Brahms did for him). It was, of course, after thirty years of undeviating effort, an undoubted tribute, the final accolade: one who had begun as a mere Musikant had become a Musiker worthy of the esteem of Brahms himself.
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In the crackerjack world of pop music, sometimes the box actually contains a valuable prize. If you're really lucky, the box contains two prizes like Kate and Anna McGarrigle. Performing alone, each would be great; together they are like bookends, supporting each other musically and emotionally. When they open their mouths to sing in public—which they don't do all that often—they are one of the hottest sister acts to hit the music industry since the Andrews trio. And although you might not actually have heard the McGarrigles, you must have heard their work. They are well-respected songwriters as well as singers, having written Linda Ronstadt's Heart Like a Wheel and Maria Muldaur's Work Song, among others. From critics they have received praise the likes of which record companies couldn't even buy in the good old days of payola.

"I don't understand it," says Anna, who probably doesn't. "I keep reading about us everywhere. What's it all about?" What it's all about is this: Anna and her younger sister Kate have been singing together practically since birth (or so it seems) in the most unlikely concert halls—bathtubs, swimming holes, around camp fires. Music is a second—no, third—language to them (they are Canadian and speak fluent French and English), and singing and writing songs are accomplishments as familiar to them as changing their socks.

About two years ago, they cautiously released their first LP, "Kate and Anna McGarrigle" (Warner Bros. 2862), a quiet little album filled with their own songs. With no big promotional push, the album got noticed—and more. It was hailed and huzzahed. It received rave reviews and not a few awards, one of them from Stereo Review (in the 1976 Record of the Year Awards). The sisters became the darlings of the music press and of other performers (Judy Collins and Phoebe Snow couldn't high-tail it backstage fast enough after the McGarrigles performed in New York this year). And no wonder. Kate and Anna are superb musicians and marvelous writers.
Their songs—hybrids of folk, Broadway, and rock—are a Canadian brew of American sounds with a Gallic flavoring. In today's fast-food music establishment, with its artificial ingredients and dangerous preservatives, the McGarrigles provide natural food for the ears, pure, nutritious, delicious.

"We're songwriters, we make records," Anna says. Hot on her heels, Kate adds: "Making records is like going home and weaving a rug. It's something we like to do, and it's kind of fun. I know how to knit, I know how to make jam. Recording is just another thing to do."

The analogy is apt. "When our producer came to town to start recording our second album," Kate recalls, "we were in the middle of making grape jelly. We were boiling the grapes down. I just had to finish the jelly before I could start the record."

Anna and Kate see each other all the time, and not just because they live two blocks from each other in Montreal. They like each other. "We have no sibling rivalry when it comes to music or singing because we're so different," Anna says. "If we ever do have a fight, it's because we spend too much time together."

Kate agrees with Anna, as she nearly always does. "If we're tired, we have little scream-out matches sometimes, but if our fights last an hour, that's long. I think the best musical combinations are family combinations because that kind of relationship helps you get a good vocal thing happening."

They certainly do get that: not since Donizetti wrote for Lucia and the flute have two beings chirped away so melodiously as the McGarrigles. Their music could be called coloratura pop, and their singing comes across sweetly and sensuously on their albums.

"The point is," says Anna, "that we're recording artists, not concert stars. We made a good first record, and when we got good press, we kind of expected it. We tried to do the second album the same way, not any better or different." That album, "Dancer with Bruised Knees" (Warner Bros. 3014), is a continuation of the first one, full of melodies that are both rich and stunningly simple.

The McGarrigles are serious about their albums, but a bit less so about their careers.

Kate: "You know, I think our mother is more serious about all this than we are."

Anna: "Yes, she knows who all the critics are and what the rock magazines are. She sends us pep letters. She had Kate's STEREO REVIEW award on her wall..."

Kate: "...but I took it down and put it on my wall."

Anna: "I never think about selling a million records."

Kate: "I'd buy a house."

Anna: "We have a few dollars, but we're not rich."

Kate: "I don't have a car or a maid, but I do have a grand piano."

Kate's instruments are important to her. She sends us pep letters. She had the point is that we're recording artists, not concert stars. People see or hear whatever they want to in our songs," Anna says.

"They're all wrong and at the same time they're all right in their descriptions of our music," Kate adds. "Maybe in a year's time, if we continue along in this vein, they'll find a classification for our music. We write from the intellect, but it starts off in the emotions."

Sometimes those emotions flare up, especially when the McGarrigles put themselves against some of the realities of today's record business. They object to the necessities of heavy promotion—the cross-country tours to assure across-the-counter sales in particular.

Anna: "You couldn't even find our first album in the stores. Tours and in-

Kate and Anna McGarrigle

"The point is that we're recording artists, not concert stars."

By Rick Mitzi
McGarrigles...

"I'm pregnant, but what's so strange about that? I'm thirty-two years old, and I think it's pretty unusual for a woman of thirty-two not to have any children."

they can tour, and then they complain in public and everyone hears about it. It doesn't make sense."

Kate and Anna are well known for saying whatever's on their minds in all areas—if you can get them to sit still long enough. You do practically have to tie them down to a hotel chair to accomplish that. Says Kate: "Anna has a tendency just not to show up for an interview or a photo session or whatever if she doesn't want to be there, no matter what the schedule is."

Anna: "The company just nags and nags and finally you say 'okay.' Then you just don't show up because you didn't want to do it in the first place."

One of the things both of the McGarrigles seem to do with some regularity is get pregnant. When they canceled a major tour last year, Warner Brothers announced that it was because Kate was pregnant.

"That's nonsense," says Kate. "The tour wasn't working out. We were playing in Boston, and I asked our lawyer how much we were getting paid, and it was $240 a week, which was fine. But then we found out that the record company was paying $4,000 a week to keep the tour going! We felt like little non-form students in the class! Isn't that strange?"

Anna takes over: "Then someone brought us a tape of one of our concerts and told us how fantastic we sounded. We listened and then looked at each other and went 'Oooooooh... this is what we've been working for?' We were horrible."

The last time around it was Anna who was pregnant, and reports dribbled out that this would get in the way of touring commitments. "Ridiculous," Anna announced during their tour last spring. "I'm pregnant, but what's so strange about that? I'm thirty-two years old, and I think it's pretty unusual for a woman of thirty-two not to have any children. It's crazy. I'm not a fashion model. Anyway, I've worked nine straight weeks pregnant and even longer making the album. I think that now it's just time to come home."

Anna has since had her baby, and the McGarrigles are back in the studio working on their third album. Considering the sisters' working habits, the scheduled January release date is by no means firm.

Speaking of coming home, though, Kitty Come Home is the title of a song Anna wrote for their "Dancer" album. "Oh, it's a lovely story," she says animately. "Kitty, of course, is Kate. In September of last year Kate was feeling a bit grim. She was in New York, married, and I was in Montreal. I knew she wasn't feeling terrific—you know, upstairs, mentally. But she sounded so brave on the phone. She was just getting ready to separate from Loudon then. Mother thought that Kate was depressed and she asked me to go to New York and cheer her up. So I went to New York and the two of us sat up and listened to the usual set of records—opera records, which always make us cry. And so we were crying and it was quite moving."

"Cathartic." Kate interrupts. "You see, I'm the kind of person who lets herself get pushed around. When I split up with Loudon, we had an apartment in New York and a house in the country. I kept thinking, 'Why didn't I get the house? Why don't I have the car? Why am I sitting in this dingy apartment in Spanish Harlem with two kids and without a car? What am I doing?' But I didn't want to live in the country either because Loudon had lived there all his life—it was his territory."

"Anyway," Anna says, continuing her story. "We decided that Kate should come home for a while to get her bearings. So my mother and I went to New York in a rented car and picked up Kate and the two kids—the crib and all the stuff."

But what about the song?

"Oh, yeah," Anna says, remembering. "When I went home, after seeing Kate all sad in New York, I wrote that song. I remember someone heard Kitty, Come Home and wanted to know why we were making all that fuss about a cat."

Kate laughs. "After a while, people were saying to me, 'Kitty, go home.'"

They laugh together—half-giggle, half-cackle. But they soon get serious again. "You know, I'm still surprised about all the wonderful things that have happened to us," Anna says. "But I don't know how much importance should be placed on this whole thing, just because we're newsworthy now."

"I don't consider myself newsworthy," Kate says, "although it's nice to have your work recognized."

"I think it's also nice that we waited. We wouldn't have been able to do this eight years ago. We have a lot behind us."

"We now know solidly who we are and what we are," Kate says.

Then she tells a story that very much parallels their career together in the music business.

"I've been swimming since the age of four. When I was a child, I learned to paddle around in ravines and waterholes. Then I went to college. I could swim fine, but I didn't know any of the regular strokes. So they made me take swimming lessons."

And did she learn the strokes?

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THE Danish Radio Symphony Orchestra's authoritative performances of all of Carl Nielsen's symphonies, concertos, and miscellaneous orchestral works under the direction of its Massachusetts-born Swedish conductor Herbert Blomstedt were issued by EMI in England two years ago as an eight-disc set at full price. It was a terrific production, and it was quite unexpected that collectors in this country would be offered the double advantage of having these recordings on the half-price Seraphim label and being able to buy them in smaller installments instead of having to pop for the whole series at once.

The symphonies were enthusiastically received when they appeared here several months ago in two three-disc sets (SIC-6097, SIC-6098) and the just-received concertos, a very convenient two-disc package, will be welcomed as well, for the performances, more consistently than those of the symphonies, assert a sweeping superiority over their respective predecessors. The soloists involved also happen to symbolize the pan-Scandinavian stature of Denmark's great composer.

The most striking performance, fortunately, is that of the most interesting concerto. The young Swede Kjell-Inge Stevensson, as he demonstrated so spectacularly in his solo recital on Bis LP-62 (reviewed here in July), is a master clarinetist, and he is superbly attuned to the fantastic imagery of the Clarinet Concerto. Frantz Lemsser, a native Dane who is the DRSO's own principal flutist and who was a pupil of Gilbert Jespersen—for whom Nielsen composed his Flute Concerto—gives an equally persuasive account of that work. The Norwegian violinist Arve Tellefsen, who has been heard in chamber music on Bis/HNH, bears a striking resemblance to the younger Yehudi Menuhin, and his impassioned performance of the large-scale, romantic Violin Concerto is very much in the same vein as the one Menuhin recorded with the same orchestra (under Mogens Wöldike) when he was about Tellefsen's present age. The orchestra, which of course established something like proprietary rights through its long history of performances and recordings of these works, is at the top of its form (with especially fine work from the winds everywhere) and is beautifully integrated with the respective soloists.

By way of a bonus, the second side of the Violin Concerto includes the intriguing Symphonic Rhapsody, which Nielsen composed in 1889 as the first movement of a symphony he took no further. It is not unreasonable to find in this piece (which remained unpublished...
until after Nielsen's death) a good deal of the individuality that was to stamp his later works: the First Symphony, after all, appeared only five years after this false start.

The sound on Seraphim is not quite as impressive as on the English pressings, but it is quite fine nonetheless, whether played back in four channels (SQ) or in two. The only cause for complaint is the misspelling of the composer's name on the spine of the record box; in every other respect this is a distinguished release, and one need by no means be an already confirmed Nielseniite to respond to it: indeed, the universality of this music's appeal has never been more clearly demonstrated. —Richard Freed

NIELSEN: Clarinet Concerto, Op. 57; Flute Concerto; Violin Concerto, Op. 33; Symphonic Rhapsody. Kjell-Inge Stevenson (clarinet); Frantz Lemmer (flute); Arve Tellefsen (violin); Danish Radio Symphony Orchestra, Herbert Blomstedt cond. SERAPHIM DSIB-6106 two discs $7.98.

Du Pré and Barenboim:
New Dimensions
For Edward Elgar's Cello Concerto

IN 1963 Jacqueline du Pré, then seventeen, made her disc debut with the Elgar Cello Concerto after having achieved a huge success with it at London's Royal Festival Hall. The Angel recording with Sir John Barbirolli is still listed in the catalog. Tragically, what seemed to be a career of limitless promise was cut short after barely a decade by the onset of multiple sclerosis. Fortunately for us, Du Pré was able in that time to record a good portion of the cello repertoire, much of it with her husband Daniel Barenboim as pianist or conductor.

The contrast between Jacqueline du Pré at age seventeen and at age twenty-five is nowhere more stunningly documented than in Columbia's just-issued live-performance recording of that same Elgar concerto taped on November 27 and 28, 1970, with Barenboim and the Philadelphia Orchestra. It is one of those "dare everything" readings where the artists take an all-out gamble on achieving a uniquely revelatory realization of a score—or else of losing out completely through not being able to hold things together. It's the sort of thing Furtwängler used to do—and, more often than not, get away with. In short, by phrasing the lyrical sections of the concerto over the maximum allowable span and making use of the utmost range of dynamics, Du Pré, Barenboim, and the Philadelphians have added new dimensions to a concerto normally thought of as relatively intimate and brooding. Granted that such a reading may not be to everyone's taste, I found it a thrilling achievement. Miss Du Pré's playing in the scurrying episodes of the scherzo is completely dazzling, and it is hard to imagine a more intense realization than hers of the introspective lyrical passages. Further, the Philadelphia Orchestra sound, superbly captured, wholly befits the musical conception of soloist and conductor.

Barenboim and the London Philharmonic offer a relatively restrained reading of the Enigma Variations on the reverse side, with an emphasis on tender sentiment and much care taken with fine detail—though not in an overly fussy way. My own preference among the currently available Enigma recordings remains Haitink on Philips, but I unhesitatingly urge you to get this disc for the sake of the surpassingly eloquent Cello Concerto. —David Hill


Tom Paxton:
The Kind of Album You'll Want to Play For Your Friends

TOM PAXTON'S back (from living in England for four years or so) with some witty-to-devastating things to say about what's been going on around here lately. He's got the subtle great taste of Steve Goodman's guitar behind...
Some editors may seem a little easy. They include Watergate, the Vietnam War aftermath, environment rapists, an economic situation that has poor people eating dog food—but Paxton has a way of writing more about the causes and background of a particular situation than a strict constructionist would expect. And he does it with great economy; witness the opening line of Born on the Fourth of July, keyed to a book of the same name by a bitter Vietnam vet: "As a schoolboy I played... with a plastic grenade." Take that, America! And in Bring Back the Chair (the electric chair, that is), he gets into the everything-is-entertainment decadence he sees in this country: "Slap a little make-up to 'em/As the juices sizzle through 'em/Howard Cosell could interview 'em.

The problem with this sort of thing, at least for hermits who play recordings only for themselves, is the same as that with an editorial cartoon or a comedy record: it doesn't take the receiver very many takes to assimilate it. Paxton wedges some more general songs in between the political ones to soften that effect, and the melodies and the fine acoustic backing help (although the recording makes the bass sound a little humpy in spots—and great in others). Anyway, it's the kind of album you would want to play for friends, preferably one at a time, until you run out of friends who haven't heard it. It's one of the best "You gotta hear this" albums to come my way in months, and I plan to start laying it on people this very day.

— Noël Coppage

Nancy Wilson's Furious Exasperation, Seasoning Wisdom, and Triumphant Vitality

The "secret" of long-lasting female beauty, according to one of the trashier supermarket newspapers I'm addicted to, is "great cheekbones." Greta Garbo, Faye Dunaway, Katherine Hepburn, and Catherine Deneuve all have them, according to this unimpeachable source. Nancy Wilson's newest Capitol release, "I've Never Been to Me," shows that she has them too—literally, as you can see in the cover photo, and musically, as you soon discover in listening to the album itself.

Wilson is now a woman "of a certain age," more beautiful than ever physically, and since the baby fat has dropped away from her performances she steps forth as an authentic musical beauty too. The trappings of tissue-paper-stuffed glamour have been put aside, no longer needed by a self-confident woman conscious of her true, natural appeal, just as the stridency and harshness have gone out of her performances, leaving the basic musical strengths intact. Wilson's sexy, show-biz delivery has been toned down, and her voice is now completely and securely her own instrument of communication, no longer merely the echo of some producer's advice. In short, Nancy Wilson has finally become herself, and the lady is simply dynamite.

Her stunning performance of the title song here is probably the best thing she's done yet. It's a tough, world-weary, and worldly wise song, a bit of advice to someone younger from a woman who's been around—once too often. Wilson sings it with an overriding tone of furious exasperation with herself and with all of life's unsatisfying surface pleasures—"I've been to paradise/But I've never been to me..." Mixed in with this is a seasoning wisdom that knows how to sort the good times from the bad, as well as a triumphant vitality that suggests she will find herself in the end. Yeah, she packs all that into one song—quite an accomplishment for a performer who can still, just by walking out on a club floor, knock 'em dead on looks and "personality" alone. She does some other very fine work here, particularly in the gentle and moving Patience My Child (which she co-wrote with Billy Page) and in a high-flying Love Is Alive.

Nancy Wilson has now joined that
select bevy of ladies with great musical cheekbones—Lena Horne, Peggy Lee, Ella Fitzgerald, Barbra Streisand, Carmen MacRae, and Mabel Mercer. I don't have to tell you how to celebrate, do I?

—Peter Reilly

NANCY WILSON: I've Never Been to Me.
Nancy Wilson (vocals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. Flying High; All By Myself; Love Is Alive; Car of Love; I've Never Been to Me; Changes; Patience My Child; Nobody; Here It Comes; Moments. Capitol ST-11659 $6.98, ® 8XT-11659 $7.98, © 4XT-11659 $7.98.

Jill Gomez:
An Elegant Recitalist,
A Cultivated Singer,
A Major Vocal Find

Two English-import recital discs on the Saga label introduce us to soprano Jill Gomez. She is a Covent Garden regular who has grown, in the last few years, to be a very successful concert and opera performer in the British Isles. She may be new to us, but she is a major vocal find: a cultivated, musically singer of telling dramatic gifts and of wide-ranging stylistic affinities as well.

Both recitals—one all Mozart, one of French songs—are eminently successful, and the compliments should begin with the choice of programs. The French disc offers two familiar Bizet songs along with two rarities, three songs from the Berlioz Op. 2 Irlande (French translations of Thomas Moore poems), and the Debussy songs to the composer's own texts. Miss Gomez's French pronunciation is exemplary, and her "cool," almost vibrato-less sound maintains a pure vocal line (with very gracefully executed ornaments) throughout. These are demanding songs in matters of tessitura, interval leaps, and dynamic subtleties, and the artist rises brilliantly to all their many challenges.

The flawless intonation Miss Gomez exhibits in the French repertoire serves her equally well in her Mozart recital. There is, of course, less variety here, but the arietta Ridente la Calma and the late (K. 619) Deutsche Kantate effectively break up the sequence of short pieces that are more like dramatic scenes than lieder in the manner of the yet-unborn Schubert. Miss Gomez makes the most of the dramatic qualities of these songs, an approach that contrasts interestingly with that of Edith Mathis (Deutsche Grammophon 2530 319), a warmer-toned and more spontaneous-sounding singer less concerned with fastidious detail. Fortunately, only about half of Miss Mathis' choices are duplicated here, for both discs are worth owning. (It should be noted that Miss Gomez's German and Italian pronunciation is not quite the equal of her French: in the Anglo-American manner, she is apt to slight doubled consonants, which are particularly important in Italian.)

In Debussy's Proses Lyriques, the piano may be said to be an equal partner with the voice; John Constable copes with this taxing assignment excellently—and with all the others too. Texts are provided with the French program, but not, unfortunately, with the Mozart. The recorded sound is good without being spectacular.

—George Jellinek

JILL GOMEZ: Mozart Songs. Als Luise die Briefe ihres Ungetreuen Liebhabers Verbrannte (K. 520); Das Veilchen (K. 476); Die Zufriedenheit (K. 473); An die Hoffnung (K. 390); An die Einsamkeit (K. 391); Sehnsucht nach dem Frühling (K. 596); Die Grossmutige Gelassenheit (K. 149); Die Kleine Spinnerin (K. 531); Ridente la Calma (K. 152); Das Lied der Trennung (K. 519); Der Zauberer (K. 472); Dans un Bois Solitaire (K. 308); Oiseaux, si Tous les Ans (K. 307); Abendempfindung (K. 523); Gesellenreise (K. 488); An die Freundschaft (K. 148); Eine Kleine Deutsche Kantate (Die ihr des unermesslichen Weltalls Schöpfer ehrt, K. 619). Jill Gomez (soprano); John Constable (piano). SAGA 5441 $6.98.

War’s Doggoned Good Two-record Set Of Platinum Whatever-it-is

WAR’s new album on the Blue Note label is called “Platinum Jazz.” The title puzzled me at first. While War, a powerhouse West Coast group, is quite capable of producing an album that might “go platinum” in the marketplace, jazz was not exactly what one would call the music they have been playing and singing throughout the years. So I set all my little categories aside and simply listened to the music contained on these four sides. Whatever it might be called, it is doggoned good.

Since its inception in 1969 under the aegis of Eric Burdon (who had similarly fronted the Animals), War has had a distinctive sound that has set it apart from the battalion of groups on the boards. First of all, its music is primarily instrumental, with occasional group chants rather than the usual up-front vocals complementing an instrumental base. The combination of instruments used is an interesting one: not only are keyboards, guitar, sax, bass, and the usual drum assembly present, but congas, timbales, and harmonica are also woven in. The harmonica, indeed, often serves as lead “vocalist,” lending rich blues tonalities to the overall texture. Then, too, members of this group have been hip enough to tap the deep reservoir of Caribbean rhythms, thus endowing their music with a more powerful thrust than the average rock beat permits.

All of these elements are used to fine advantage on this excellent album. Although the opening track (War Is Coming! War Is Coming!) is as repetitious as its title and tends to drag on far too long, there are no other dull moments. An outstanding feature throughout is the inspired harmonica work of Lee Oskar, particularly on the intimate I Got You and Four Cornered Room, which is nothing but the blues.

While many two-record sets leave one restless or bored after two and a half sides, I defy anyone to doze through this platinum whatever-it-is of War.

—Phyl Garland

WAR: Platinum Jazz. War (vocals and instrumentals). Slowly We Walk Together; Platinum Jazz; I Got You; L.A. Sunshine; River Niger; Smile Happy; Deliver the Word; Four Cornered Room; War Is Coming! War Is Coming!; Hy Overture; City, Country, City; Nappy Head. BLUE NOTE BNLA-690-J2 two discs $9.98.
THE GREGG ALLMAN BAND: Playin' Up a Storm. Gregg Allman (vocals, keyboards, guitar); Bill Stewart (drums); Neil Larsen (keyboards); Ricky Hirsch (guitar); Steve Beckman (guitar); John Hug (guitar); Willie Weeks (bass); other musicians. Come and Go Blues; Let This Be a Lesson to Ya; Brightest Smiles in Town; Bring It On Back; Cryin' Shame; and four others. CAPRICORN CP 0181 $6.98, ® M80181 $7.97, © M50181 $7.97.

Performance: Good
Recording: Good

Hyperbole is about average here; Gregg Allman and company don't play up a storm so much as they play up a lazy breeze, just enough to suggest they will be a dandy band if and when they find some tunes that interest them (or you, or me, or anyone else). The producers are listed as Lenny Waronker and Russ Titelman, and they're two of the best, but I suspect Allman did mostly what he wanted to do, as that's the only way to explain why the album starts with an inferior-grade rehash of Wasted Words, tries to outdo the Drifters. It is clear that everybody enjoyed making the album, sharing both respect and affection, and I enjoyed listening to it. J.V.

AMERICAN FLYER: Spirit of a Woman. American Flyer (vocals, instruments); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. Spirit of a Woman; Gamblin' Man; My Love Comes Alive; Victoria; Dear Carmen; Flyer; and three others. UNITED ARTISTS UA-LA720-G $6.98.

Performance: Excellent
Recording: Very good

American Flyer is from the same country-rock mold as Linda Ronstadt (who appears as a back-up singer here), the Ozark Mountain Daredevils, and the Eagles. The band is refreshing and sprightly, their material is above average (especially Gamblin' Man, The Good Years, and the title cut), and their vocal delivery is clean and appealing. Most enjoyable.

J.V.

AVERAGE WHITE BAND/BEN E. KING: Benny and Us. (vocals); Average White Band (instruments, vocal accompaniment). Get It Up for Love; Fool for You Anyway; A Star in the Ghetto; The Message; What Is Soul?; and three others. ATLANTIC SD 19105 $6.98, ® TP-19105 $7.98, © CS-19105 $7.98.

Performance: Very good
Recording: Very good

On the evidence of this record, the meeting of that grand soul balladeer Ben E. King and the recently successful Average White Band pleased both parties. If every one of the tracks turns into a hit, I for one will be overjoyed. Though the material is pallid and the production and arrangements are sometimes overdone or off-center, the group's delivery and execution are clean and smooth, and King has lost none of the agility and warmth that first made him famous as lead singer with the Drifters. It is clear that everybody enjoyed making the album, sharing both respect and affection, and I enjoyed listening to it. J.V.

JOAN BAEZ: Blowin' Away. Joan Baez (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. Sailing; Many a Mile to Freedom; Miracles; Yellow Coat; Time Rag; and five others. PORTRAIT 34697 $4.98.

Performance: Self-absorbed
Recording: Very good

Joan Baez, the folk singer with the wistful throb in her voice who turned vulnerability itself into a kind of profession, presents here a program of songs composed by herself and others that takes her out of the realm of politics and into the intimate area of autobiographical reminiscence. The "new" Joan Baez has a voice just as haunting as the old one, but it is not easy to swallow her persistent self-pity and self-absorption. Time Rag, for example, a song of revenge aimed at a Time reporter who distorted something she said in an interview, is a five-minute diatribe this listener would gladly have been spared. A Heartfelt Line or Two, a kind of melancholy letter-lyric to former friends and lovers, is an irritating blend of conceit and condescension. And so on. In all, I would gladly trade in the "new" Baez for the old one, whose tears were shed for Appalachian miners and California grape-pickers rather than for herself—a subject that turns out to be of less than universal interest. Revenge may be sweet, but it's also unattractive. P.K.

BAY CITY ROLLERS: It's a Game. Bay City Rollers (vocals and instruments); other musicians. It's a Game; You Made Me Believe in Magic; Sweet Virginia; Love Power; Don't Let the Music Die; and five others. ARISTA STEREO REVIEW
RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

BURNING SPEAR: Dry and Heavy. Winston Rodney (vocals and percussion); instrumental accompaniment. Any River; The Sun; Throw Down Your Arms; Wailing; Black Disciples; Shout It Out; and three others. MANGO MLPS 9431 $7.98, ® Y8M-9431 $7.98. CMC-9431 $7.98.

Performance Haunting Recording: Excellent

Of all the reggae artists to have records released in America, Winston Rodney (who calls himself "Burning Spear" after Kenya's Jomo Kenyatta) is the least compromised by the temptations of white pop commercialism. Although Rastafigarian reggae is essentially a music of religious war, the Marleys, Toshes, and Diamonds can't be written off for couching their broadsides in musical terms seductively familiar to listeners in a land they find at best hopelessly corrupt: their tactics are directed toward a kind of subversion from within. Rodney's comparative purism does not make his music automatically better or more "authentic." But it does make it a more unalloyed expression of the Jamaican soul, particularly of the people who live in the back country and have never seen cities or much else of what we take for granted as part of "civilization." The title song of "Dry and Heavy," for example, tells of endless backbreaking hours spent cutting firewood and lugging it back to the village — ending with a message to the children not to take advantage of their father's absence to stay away from school. That may sound boring and simplistic, but it isn't. It is, rather, an evocation of a life style so primitive that most of us can scarcely imagine what it is really like.

Rodney is a great artist: it requires a great art to take a form as redundant and didactic as reggae and create from it three albums as completely different from each other, in both music and lyrics, as "Marcus Garvey," "Man in the Hills," and "Dry and Heavy." And it takes integrity at least as great as that needed for resisting commercialism to forsake the apocalyptic Rastafarian diatribes of "Marcus Garvey" for the concentration on Jamaican family life of "Man in the Hills" and then the ornamented country-gospel yodel that was his alone. If You Love Me is going-through-the-motions country, as is He'll Have to Go. And Little Darlin' is a piece of period doo-wop (I'm beginning to believe it is possible to date a rock song merely on the basis of whether the song's love object is called "darlin'" or "baby"). The title song is a nicely crafted Elvis song in the late Las Vegas style, but perhaps the best track is the wholesomely energetic, tent-gospel-flavored Let Me Be There, splendidly backed (by J. D. Sumner and the Stamps, the Sweet Inspirations, and Kathy Westmoreland) and complete with a neat little applause-inspired reprise.

Elvis Presley: 1935-1977

Elvis Presley is dead, but market figures make it abundantly clear his music is not. His latest album, "Moody Blue," had sold well over 300,000 copies up to the time of his death in mid-August — and it moved to Platinum status (one million copies) in the week after. RCA has in work the soundtrack from the October "Elvis" special on CBS TV (no release date yet), and discussions were continuing at the time of this writing in the matter of a "memorial" album, no decision having been made as to whether it will be one disc or several or what it will contain, other than that it will attempt to be a retrospective of the whole career(s) and that there will be only one package designed for world-wide distribution. In addition, there are enough unreleased songs on tape from various recording sessions hither and yon to make up as many as four or five posthumous albums — once they have assembled the material and figured out just who owns the rights to it. In the meantime, Elvis fans new and old can turn to the couple of dozen catalog items still available (check Schwann-2) and to the new release at hand.

"Moody Blue" is pressed, appropriately enough, on transparent blue vinyl (clear as crystal — you can read through it), and it makes a strong enough visual impression to serve as a reminder that something like one billion equally colorful Elvis records have been pressed before it. Of its ten songs, six were recorded at Elvis' Graceland home and three on tour. It is not what I would call a great Elvis album, but of course that is not going to matter: for those who consider themselves fans of this almost invariably spellbinding performer it is quite simply a "must" keepsake item.

Unfortunately, Elvis was not in good voice throughout the greater part of the program. He sounds tired and drops too often into a "baby". The title song is a nicely crafted country song in the late Las Vegas style, but perhaps the best track is the wholesomely energetic, tent-gospel-flavored Let Me Be There, splendidly backed (by J. D. Sumner and the Stamps, the Sweet Inspirations, and Kathy Westmoreland) and complete with a neat little applause-inspired reprise.

Those who have just now gotten around to noticing the absence of Elvis from their record collections will want (in addition to "Moody Blue") the following: "Elvis Country," RCA LSP-4460, "From Memphis," RCA LSP-4155, and "Sun Sessions," RCA APS1-1675. If these three do not tell you why the better part of two generations of Americans went into mourning last August, then nothing will.

—William Anderson

ELVIS PRESLEY: Moody Blue. Elvis Presley (vocals); other musicians, Unchained Melody; If You Love Me (Let Me Know), Little Darlin'; He'll Have to Go; Let Me Be There; Way Down; Pledging My Love; Moody Blue; She Thinks I Still Care; It's Easy for You. RCA AFL-2428 $7.98, ® APS1-2428 $7.98. AFR-2428 $7.98.

"... Elvis — rock-and-roll — heralded major demographic changes that have deeply affected how this country lives and how it sees itself. It wasn't just that country-and-western and rhythm-and-blues flowed together; rural and urban populations have had their visions of themselves and each other radically altered, there is greater communication between them, less inappropriately, less tension and bigotry. If all that seems to be a bit too much to lay at the door of a popular music, just try to imagine those changes taking place without the pulsating undercurrent of that powerful music. And then try to imagine that music without Elvis."

—Asheley and Kerrin Griffith

STEREO REVIEW, July 1976
Recording of Special Merit

Burt Cummings: My Own Way to Rock. Burton Cummings (vocals and keyboards); Randy Bachman (guitars); Ian Gardiner (bass); Jeff Porcaro (drums); other musicians. Never Had a Lady Before; Come On By; Try to Find Another Man; Gotta Find Another Way; Timeless Love; and four others. Portrait PR 34698 $6.98, © PRA-34698 $6.98, © PRT-34698 $6.98

Performance: Superior jive

Recording: Excellent

Burton Cummings is a superb pianist with a variety of styles that run the gamut from Little Richard to Bill Evans. He is also a marvelously funny showman, a virtuoso vocalist, and a songwriter equally capable of infectious brilliance and pretentious bushwhah (though the latter is usually leavened with a healthy sense of the absurd). All of which makes him, by any standard you care to apply, the Thinking Man’s Elton John. If he was balding and wore glasses he’d probably be a superstar. “My Own Way to Rock,” his second solo effort, is notable for several reasons. First of all, it’s the only record Richard Perry has produced in recent memory in which Perry has not dominated the proceedings; it sounds like Cummings’ music, not Perry’s usual L.A. mush-rock. Second, it marks the end of one of the more entertaining rock scandals of the decade—the continuing public feud between Cummings and his former partner in the Guess Who, Randy Bachman. Bachman plays with surprising restraint and economy on several songs here, and there’s even a songwriting collaboration between the two. Third, it contains the best cover version anybody has yet done of a Bob Seger tune; Cummings makes an absolutely delightful cartoon out of the macho sentiments of Seger’s Come On By, which, incidentally, rocks ferociously in the bargain. Finally, it’s a very intelligent, well-crafted piece of pop, a commodity in short supply these days; it’s slick, silly, humorous, and occasionally (as in Timeless Love, one of the most appealing ballads to come down the pike in some time) even legitimately affecting. I’d say it’s the best thing he’s ever done, and coming from an old Guess Who fanatic like me, that’s saying something. Cummings may have gone Hollywood, but he still knows how to shake ‘em down.

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CIRCLE NO. 46 ON READER SERVICE CARD
The history of rock reunions is a pretty dismal one—for which proposition there is recorded evidence by the truckload overflowing with gargantuan bigness all over America. For example, we've had the disastrous “People Like Us” by the Mamas and the Papas, the snoozer by Quicksilver, Moby Grape’s mercifully forgotten “Twenty Granite Creek,” an ill-fated try by the Byrds (which I happen to dig), though that seemed to put me in a minority of one, and the recent abortions from Small Faces and Country Joe and the Fish. There have been a few more I can’t recall offhand, but you get the point.

A reason for these failures is not hard to find (and it has often been cited as a warning against what would be, of course, the ultimate reunion—that of John, Paul, George, and Ringo). Rock bands are like marriages: they work because of mysterious chemical interactions. When that chemistry goes awry and the various parts no longer love or respect one another, no amount of cajoling, compromise, or money can make it work again. Up until now, the only group that has had a successful reunion is the Blues Project, which got together again for a deliberately one-shot live-concert album. They made “Reunion” both for the fun of seeing if they could recapture what they once had and because they respected and were grateful to their fans. Since they never intended to take it further, it worked. But that’s been it.

Or that was it, for I take pleasure in reporting that the Original Animals’ new “Before We Were So Rudely Interrupted” on United Artists is a flat-out, thousand per cent, great piece of 1977 record making. Of course, when I say “contemporary,” I don’t mean to suggest that their basic musical approach (rock/blues in a vein closer to Ray Charles than Chuck Berry) has altered or that they’ve made any conscious attempt to pander to today’s trends. Good blues doesn’t date. But this is the first album the Animals have done that is technically well made. Great music as most of their old sides were musically, the Animals were routinely cursed with the shoddiest production of any group in that period. This time they’ve taken care of business themselves and gotten it right. What a joy it is finally to hear Hilton Valentine’s guitar up front where it’s supposed to be and the rhythm section behind him sounding hard as a rock.

Eric Burdon and Alan Price, the core of the band, have clearly grown in the intervening years, yet they haven’t lost a wit of their original youthful energy (which was considerable, the Animals having been among the brashest of the British Invasion outfits). Price remains the most interesting soloist of any rock pianist. He doesn’t play a note here that isn’t exquisite as well as logically thought out, and despite prodigious technique he never reverts to merely flash. For his part, Burdon is still the least predictable, and therefore the most exciting, blues stylist in England. Though a Rod Stewart, a Joe Cocker, or even a Mick Jagger can sing from the heart, you still know pretty much in advance how they’re going to phrase a line; they have developed styles that are clearly their own, albeit based on earlier models. Burdon, in contrast, while equally familiar with the gospel handed down by the great soul shouters of the past, never goes the easy route. He keeps taking the most ridiculous chances, keeps going for notes and phrasings he may not be able to master—which may not even make musical sense. When he misses, of course he often does, he sounds forced. But when he connects, which is more often the case—and it happens all over this new album, particularly in a version of Jimmy Cliff’s seemingly done-to-death Many Rivers to Cross—he is simply electrifying.

About the only criticism I can level at this album is that I’m not sure I hear a potential single anywhere in it. But I doubt the group was thinking much about that when this record was made (which was over a year ago, by the way, the release having been held up for contractual reasons). A follow-up is already in the can, and I suspect that the inevitable success of this one is going to make the band a little more ambitious. (Bassist Chas Chandler, after all, knows a great deal about hit singles, having masterminded scads of them as producer of Slade.) In the meantime, I can only tell you that the Animals have not compromised themselves or our memories of them in any way and that “Before We Were So Rudely Interrupted” is one of the major musical events of the year. It seems like ages ago that they did a deeply felt version of Sam Cooke’s Bring It On Home. Now, when there was really no reason to expect it, they’ve gone and done just that.

—Steve Simels

THE ORIGINAL ANIMALS: Before We Were So Rudely Interrupted. Eric Burdon (vocals); Hilton Valentine (guitar); Alan Price (keyboards); Chas Chandler (bass); John Steel (drums). Brother Bill (The Last Clean Shirt); It’s All Over Now, Baby Blue; Fire on the Sun; As the Crow Flies; Please Send Me Someone to Love; Many Rivers to Cross; Just a Little Bit; Riverside Country; Lonely Avenue; The Fool. UNITED ARTISTS JT-LA790-H $7.98, © JT-EA790-H $7.98, © JT-CA790-H $7.98.
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because quality you can hear should also be seen. A touch of gold to the face of Egg Cream are not identified, but one Andy Adams is credited with having written the songs and with taking the lead vocals. Adams is a clever and ingratiating lad, and he has turned in a notable first effort.

J.V.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

DAN FOGELBERG: Nether Lands. Dan Fogelberg (vocals, keyboards, acoustic and electric guitars); Norbert Putnam (bass); Kenny Buttrey, Russ Kunkel (drums); other musicians. Dancing Shoes; Loose Ends; Once Upon a Time; Love Gone By; Promises Made; Lessons Learned; and five others. Epic PE 34185 $6.98, © PEA-34185 $6.98, © PET-34185 $6.98.

Performance: Excellent
Recording: Excellent

This is a bouncy, sprightly, very well performed and produced pop album that is a treat to hear. Dead-ahead pop music, with no artistic pretensions and a goal of resolute commerciality, can sometimes get pretty close to being an art form. So it is here. The lyrics are colloquial, the plots of the songs are inconsequential, and the melodies are merely frames on which to hang Cheshire-cat arrangements. It is all dash and dazzle and hoopla, but it is also quite enjoyable.

Most of the members of Egg Cream are not identified, but one Andy Adams is credited with having written the songs and with taking the lead vocals. Adams is a clever and ingratiating lad, and he has turned in a notable first effort.

J.V.
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wide, open sound
**Virtuoso Jack Jones**

When Jack Jones opened a two-week run at the Palladium in London a few months ago, a reviewer for the Daily Mail, hearing him for the first time, wrote as follows: "Unlike millions of over 40s, I had no firm idea of who Jack Jones was until I went to his show. After going, I still have no idea of who he is." As one who has been following his work in personal appearances and on record, radio, and TV for a decade, I could understand the reviewer's quandary. Despite Jack Jones' very considerable success in the course of a career now covering twenty years, he seems somehow never to have achieved the definitive personal identity of a Bing Crosby, a Frank Sinatra, a Tony Bennett, a Dean Martin, or an Elvis Presley. But if I, too, am pretty much in the dark as to who he is, I know with utter certainty what he is. Jack Jones is one hell of a good singer. Purely as a vocalist, in his management of a career now covering twenty years, he seems somehow never to have achieved the definitive personal identity of a Bing Crosby, a Frank Sinatra, a Tony Bennett, a Dean Martin, or an Elvis Presley. But if I, too, am pretty much in the dark as to who he is, I know with utter certainty what he is. Jack Jones is one hell of a good singer.

Nor do voice and vocal virtuosity represent the sum of his assets. Native musicality is refined by cultivated musicianship. A buoyant sense of rhythm is graced by judicious rubato and by modest, but always tasteful and telling ornamentation—especially a gospel-derived slow trill. A perceptive ear guides him confidently through a wide variety of idioms and styles, ranging from the ballads and swingers of the Crosby and Sinatra eras to the tearful plaints and rollicking rockers of more recent vocal vintage. Add to all that his youthful and manly good looks and an engaging presence, and you come up, it would seem, with a singer who has everything.

And that, I think, is where the trouble begins. Timing has a lot to do with it. Al Jolson, Bing Crosby, Frank Sinatra, and Elvis Presley all came along at precisely the moment when popular taste among the young was geared to what each had to offer, personally and stylistically. Jack Jones did not. Born on January 14, 1938, he grew up listening to Frank Sinatra while others of his generation were already responding to the siren sounds of Hound Dog and Heartbreak Hotel. As one English critic has put it, "Jones is in that limbo-land of those who started out too early ever to be credible singing rock, yet too late to sing jazz."

He also had a problem at home, although its resolution proved a blessing. As a teenager in Hollywood, he modeled himself on Sinatra at a time when his father, Allan Jones, was contributing an opera-oriented tenor to Marx Brothers pictures and making musical history of a sort with The Donkey Serenade (recorded, so legend has it, the night Jack was born). Father Jones, as Jack tells it, had no time for "that namby-pamby kind of singing." But Jack persisted, and father and son finally made a deal. Jack could sing any way he wanted, but only on condition that he go to a classical teacher and learn to use his voice properly. Jack agreed, and he has been grateful to his father ever since—as, indeed, should all of us who relish his masterly vocalism today.

That problem was solved, but the repertoire problem remains, and it is reflected in his new RCA album, "With One More Look at You." Jack sings mostly contemporary songs, as he must if he is to appeal to the children and grandchildren of Sinatra's bobby-soxers. He has sung a lot of them, and he has sung them well. But tailoring them to his own superior technical and stylistic virtues, predilections, and schooling, he comes to them somewhat as a privileged trespasser. An assimilative ear, along with vocal and musical versatility and flexibility, enables him to sound at ease in anybody's backyard and, indeed, to beat the householders on their own ground. But the ground remains theirs.

On this album there are even echoes of Chuck Berry, in Dixie Chicken, and Ray Charles, in Cajun Song. These, by the way, along with The Jealous Kind, I Love You More Than You'll Ever Know, Are You Lonesome Tonight?, and The Best Things in Life, are the best tracks, and also the most original. They are jazz-rockers, essentially, with some fine playing from Tom Scott on sax, Jerry Hey on trumpet, and Willie Ornelas on drums, suggesting that here, at last, in jazz-rock (or something like it), Jack Jones may have found a home of his own. For the rest we have pretty, forgettable tunes with lovely singing in Jack's familiar and congenial sentimental and nostalgic vein, too often obscured by Rick Jarrard's overblown, string-drenched instrumental backings.

I may, come to think of it, be doing the songs an injustice. I'm not quite sure whether it's Jack Jones' fault or mine that, whatever he sings, it's the singing, not the song, that I admire and remember. I suspect that it's Jack's. He's just too damned good a singer!

—Henry Pisasatis

**JACK JONES: With One More Look at You.** Jack Jones (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. With One More Look at You; Goodbye Old Buddies; Traces of a Long Forgotten Tune; The Jealous Kind; Belonging; If I Only Had the Words; Dixie Chicken; Perfect Strangers; Cajun Song; Empty Hearts. RCA APL-2361 $7.98, APK-2361 $7.98.
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CIRCLE NO. 47 ON READER SERVICE CARD

CRISTAL GAYLE: We Must Believe in Magik. Crystal Gayle (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. River Road; Green Door; Funny; All I Wanna Do in Life; Going Down Slow; and five others. UNITED ARTISTS UA-LA771-G $6.98, ® UA-EA771-H $7.98, ® UA-CA771-H $7.98. Performance: Excellent Recording: Good

If Crystal Gayle ever decides to break the ties that bind (her c-&-w background, her interpretive inheritance from her sister Loretta Lynn, and a performing remoteness that connotes "style" in some Nashville quarters), she's going to be one of the best straight pop singers we've got. It's all there vocally—a bright, clear voice with a rich, amber emotional undertow and an easy, floating top— and, at least once on this album, it's all there dramatically too. The really smashing performance here is Cole Porter's It's All Right with Me, which Gayle delivers with all the aplomb, assurance, and bone-deep chic of Marissa Berenson writing a Dear John letter. Hedging all bets as usual, producer Allen Reynolds has thrown in what sounds like a jug band to accompany her, so you might have to strain a bit to hear just how well she does it—but it's more than worth the effort. The rest is pretty much the same semi-husked corn that is obligatory material for anyone as glued to the fence as she seems to be. Don't It Make My Brown Eyes Blue or All I Wanna Do in Life would make the going difficult even for a Streisand.

P.G.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

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- KV2101 $545
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- KV1921 $435
- KV1941R $525
- KV1751 $399
- KV1712 $399

### Andy Gibb: Flowing Rivers

Andy Gibb (vocals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. Words and Music; Starlight; In the End; Flowing Rivers; Let It Be Me; Too Many Looks in Your Eyes; and four others. RSO RS-1-3019 $6.98, © 8T-1-3019 $7.98, © CT-1-3019 $7.98.

**Performance:** Agreeable  
**Recording:** Good

Andy Gibb, youngest of the Brothers Gibb (better known as the Bee Gees) and fresh off the Stigwood Organization’s assembly line, is a bright enough young composer-singer with an agreeable performing manner. But he’s been programmed here in a pseudo-country style that doesn’t really fit him. When he drops the moonshine manner, as in such things as (Love Is) Thicker Than Water, he’s a very engaging fellow—easy, assured, and on-target all the way. Since he writes all his own material, it must be his choice to opt for the grits-with-everything performances. If so, it is also his mistake.

### The Grateful Dead: Terrapin Station

Grateful Dead (vocals and instrumental); instrumental accompaniment. Estimated Prophet; Samson and Delilah; Passenger; Terrapin (1-7); and two others. ARISTA AL 7001 $7.98, © 8031-7001(H) $7.95, © 5301-7001(H) $7.95.

**Performance:** Languid  
**Recording:** Fine

Back in 1970, Lenny Kaye, now lead guitarist with the Patti Smith Group, reviewed a Grateful Dead album and called it “a place where rock is likely to be in about five years.” I bring this up only to show just how out of hand the Seventies have gotten, especially if you consider the place rock actually went to in the next few years (for instance, the music of the Patti Smith Group). At any rate, Kaye’s remarks notwithstanding, the Dead’s appeal has always been something of a mystery to me. They can’t sing (didn’t you ever long to hear their lovely Uncle John’s Band tackled by real voices—the Hollies, for example?), and their attempts at straight country or rock-and-roll are ludicrous. Even the most fervent admirers of their longer, spaced-out improvisatory epics like Dark Star admit that the band has as many bad nights as good ones.

### Eddie Holman: A Night to Remember

Eddie Holman (vocals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. You Make My Life Complete; This Will Be A Night to Remember; I’ve Been Singing Love Songs; It’s Over; Somehow You Make Me Feel; and three others. SALSOUL SZS 5511 $6.98, © SRZ 5511 $7.98, © SZA 5511 $7.98.

**Performance:** Sleek  
**Recording:** Very good

This album hits its peak on the first track, You Make My Life Complete, a lushly arranged pop record, about as improvisatory as a Swiss watch, and utterly indistinguishable from all the other California pop albums that dominate the charts. There are, to be fair, some attractive moments—Bob Weir’s Estimated Prophet is as cute as a bug’s ear and gives new evidence for the theory that the boy has been a closet rocker all these years—and it certainly goes down easily enough to accompany your housework. But it’s doubtful that it will yield a hit single and rejuvenate the band in the manner of the Starship’s somewhat similar “Red Octopus.” I can already hear the Dead-heads out there yelling “sellout!” As far as I’m concerned, it couldn’t have happened to a nicer band.

Holman is a singer of considerable talent, possessing what many others lack: a vocal quality that is distinctly his own, marked by a

(Continued on page 105)

### Eddie Holman: a startlingly high tenor that makes Smokey Robinson sound like a baritone

Bringing things up to date, though, the sounds emanating from “Terrapin Station,” their debut on Arista, seem to indicate that the Dead have entered a new chapter in their ongoing saga, a break with their past as radical and as likely to be upsetting to hard-core fans as “Workingman’s Dead” was back in 1970. Produced by Keith Olsen, featuring string arrangements by Paul Buckmaster and Donna Godchaux’s vocals firmly up front and double-tracked for the first time, the whole thing sounds like “Elton Garcia and his Fleetwood Dead.” In other words, it’s a California pop record, about as improvisatory as a Swiss watch, and utterly indistinguishable from all the other California pop albums that dominate the charts. There are, to be fair, some attractive moments—Bob Weir’s Estimated Prophet is as cute as a bug’s ear and gives new evidence for the theory that the boy has been a closet rocker all these years—and it certainly goes down easily enough to accompany your housework. But it’s doubtful that it will yield a hit single and rejuvenate the band in the manner of the Starship’s somewhat similar “Red Octopus.” I can already hear the Dead-heads out there yelling “sellout!” As far as I’m concerned, it couldn’t have happened to a nicer band.

### Eddie Holman: a startlingly high tenor that makes Smokey Robinson sound like a baritone

This album hits its peak on the first track, You Make My Life Complete, a lushly arranged ballad with an appealing, undulating melody. Holman sings it in a startlingly high tenor that makes Smokey Robinson sound like a baritone in comparison. But it’s all downhill from there. The songs slip into such a predictable whumpety-bump pattern that one wonders where the magic went.

Holman is a singer of considerable talent, possessing what many others lack: a vocal quality that is distinctly his own, marked by a
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PHYLIS HYMAN. Phyllis Hyman (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *Loving You—Losing You; I Don't Want to Lose You; Was Yesterday Such a Long Time Ago*; and six others. BUDDAH BDS 5681 $6.98.

Performance: Hemmed in
Recording: Good

Phyllis Hyman, a statuesque beauty from Pittsburgh, became a legend in certain New York bistro circles before she had recorded a note. The excitement she generated among a star-fracked following was comparable to the underground furor Roberta Flack created during her long incubation in Washington, D.C. Here, at last, was a female vocalist who could handle everything from cool jazz to heavy soul with consistent excellence. Ms. Hyman's rendition of the ballad *Betcha by Golly Wow* on Norman Connors' album "You Are My Starship" fanned the flame of anticipation, for it displayed a honeyed sweetness of voice, deft phrasing, and deep expressiveness.

Now she has recorded an album in her own right, but it is bound to inspire sighs of disappointment. Her producers have wrought a miracle in reverse by managing to make her sound like just about everybody else. In an obvious attempt to "popularize" her sound in order to sell her to a broader pop-soul audience, her enormous talent has been shaven down to fit some clunky songs with banal lyrics and repetitious arrangements.

Though she stooped to the occasion, Ms. Hyman did not completely camouflage her artistry. There are moments here when her exceptional vocal control and interpretive skill come through, particularly in the introspective *Was Yesterday Such a Long Time Ago*, which she sings with such fluidity and rare sensitivity as to evoke shivers. There are traces of the young Nancy Wilson on this number, though Ms. Hyman possesses a better voice than her idol.

So I'm still waiting for the real Phyllis Hyman to step forward on disc. She's worth waiting for, though.

---

SONNY JAMES: *In Prison, In Person.* Sonny James (vocals, guitar); Tennessee State Prison Band (vocals and instrumentals). *In the Jailhouse Now; Don’t Let Me Die on Prison Land; Abilene; Heartaches by the Number; Jaihousenow; Don’t Let Me Die on Prison*; and five others. COLUMBIA KC-34708 $6.98, © CA-34708 $6.98.

Performance: Funky
Recording: Very good

Here's something novel and not that bad, and you can enjoy it on two or three levels at once. You can wonder about the meaning of Sonny James' enigmatic success: has his always been a soft-core country act, and yet for years only the hard-country audience has seemed to appreciate him (and he has calmly sold a ton of practically everything he's released) or was his single of Young Love went up against that of Tab Hunter [1 years ago]. Then there's a sign of change from the "Southern gentleman" image: James is growing a beard and he's doing off-beat stuff like

for Nilsson goes on to outline practically a whole new style of orchestration. Sometimes Harry does a measure of acting as he sings, and sometimes the arrangement is like movie mood music building to a climax behind him. The latter happens in *Sweet Surrender*, in which the problem that the listener, sooner or later, discovers that the words don't go with that sort of thing, don't go at all, in fact. But there are times when one thing's leading to another in the listener's mind doesn't turn out so badly. You're well into *I Never Thought I'd Get This Lonely* and Harry's goofing along with the lyrics and when you start to wonder if he's bored with them; then you realize that what he's really doing is shilling for the arrangement, especially the syncopated percussion, which makes good use of the stereo image. Something similar happens with *The Laughing Man*, whose say-nothing lyric Harry takes to some kind of zenith—or pitch, as the case may be. In any case, the old Nilsson studio magic is what's really going on in "Knilssonson."
this live recording made in the Tennessee State Prison in which he is backed by inmate musicians he discovered when he played there earlier. As musicians, the inmates range from a little scruffy to excellent, which suggests still another level: James is a bona fide musician, and this album has a spontaneity hard to come by in Nashville studios. He has a distinctive and pleasant voice without much range, but he's mature enough to work around that. He's also a distinguished acoustic guitar player, and he and an inmate picker trade flawless runs in Wildwood Flower.

What hurts the album is including automatic "standards" like Heartaches by the Number and straining too hard to get in some prison songs. But it also has Pistol Packin' Mama, a deftstroke indeed (that was either from a little scruffy to excellent, which suggests still another level: James is an interesting fellow, and a beard isn't the only thing about him that's growing.

**RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT**

**GREG KIHN: Again.** Greg Kihn (vocals, guitar); Dave Carpenter (vocals, guitar); Larry Lynch (drums, vocals); Steve Wright (bass, vocals). Love's a Fool of You; Island; Politics; Hurt So Bad; and six others. CIRCLE NO. 58 ON READER SERVICE CARD

Performance: Intriguing  
Recording: Good

Greg Kihn isn't quite the oddball his label-mate Jonathan Richman is, but then he isn't exactly a Barry Manilow either. He has the soul of an early Sixties folkie such as, say, Tom Rush, which means that his music is basically acoustic, monochromatic, and unambitious. But he seems to have awfully catholic ears, which means that his influences are strangely varied. On different tracks on his new album one can hear echoes of CS&N, Lou Reed (3), Creedence Clearwater, and even commercial folk-rockers like F. Simon or the Grassroots (!?). But this isn't one of those pop revival efforts; Kihn seems to reflect these influences unselfconsciously, which is refreshing.

I was never big on early Sixties folkies, and there are times here when Kihn's insistence on unadorned simplicity gets a little wearing. By and large, however, this is a highly listenable record by a performer who clearly has a lot on the ball. Anybody audacious enough to cover songs by Buddy Holly and Bruce Springsteen in the same album is okay in my book. S.S.

**KISS: Love Gun.** Kiss (vocals and instrumentals). Love Gun; Got Love for Sale; Christeen Sixteen; Plaster Caster; Shock Me; and four others. CASABLANCA CHR 1131 $6.98.

Performance: Not much fun  
Recording: Quite nice, actually

I first realized that the Kiss phenomenon had probably peaked when they played Madison Square Garden last spring. It was the first time I had seen them since the dawn of their career—when, as they applied whiteface in their dressing room, they waved their fists at each other and blustered, "Let's take Detroit!" And take it they did: the Michigan Palace audience clapped on beat with such fierce momentum, jaws slack in awe, that I thought I was losing my mind on a sea of shouted responses. But after a mere three years later, they pulpitly failed to take the Garden. They had their biggest set ever—all the smokebombs, firebreathing, and bloodspilling in the world—but the one thing they didn't have was much enthusiasm for their music, and that kind of non-excitement is distinctly contagious.

Probably 1976 was when Kiss got as close as they are ever going to get to international superstardom comparable to that of Led Zeppelin or Bad Company. I actually like Kiss better than either of those groups, because I think that if you're going to be tasteless you may as well go all the way, but so far the teen fans of England and the rest of Europe have proved noticeably resistant to having this scam shoved down their throats. And it's not going to get any better, for Kiss at least, since they have one problem that is a lot more serious than those faced by their peers in the heavy-metal league: namely, it's much harder to come up with new faces than with new riffs. What do you do next when your lizard-bat costumes start to provoke yawns and your nuclear smokebombs are greeted as so much flaming flatulence?

It's really too bad, because—and you may not believe this—Kiss is actually a decent band. True, they have a propensity for sounding like the MC5 played backwards and slowed down, but that still leaves them with more energy than their plodding competitors. Sure, their lyrics are all sexist macho bluster and Gene Simmons offensively brags in print about his sexual exploits. Kiss, Aerosmith, Bad Company, Ted Nugent, and the like are all offensive on certain levels to normally sen-

(Continued on page 108)
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sitive human beings. But Kiss was never supposed to be a collection of human beings anyway. What distinguished them from the slimy narcissism of Aerosmith or the grim beefcake-flexing of Bad Company was that their act was fun. However, with "Love Gun" I am beginning to wonder if they are going the Grand Funk route of boring competence. What's absolutely certain is that neither Kiss nor their fans will ever again have as much fun as when they were the aural equivalent of a barnyard full of mutated livestock.

Lester Bangs

MELISSA MANCHESTER: "Singin'." Melissa Manchester (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. Sad Eyes; Stand; You Make It Easy; Time; My Love Is All I Know; The Warmth of the Sun; and four others. ARISTA 4136 $6.98, © 8301-4136(6) $7.95, © 5301-4136(H) $7.95

Performance: Old hat
Recording: Good

Melissa Manchester and the pop sisterhood she springs from (Melanie, Laura Nyro, Carole King, and so on) are beginning to sound and look as quaint as those "free women" of the Twenties that Fannie Hurst, Vina del Mar, and Adela Rogers St. John used to write about for the ladies' magazines and the silver screen. Manchester's latest album is as costumey as an old Joan Crawford movie, and just about as in touch with the realities of the Seventies. On the cover she's prancing about in the rain, on what looks like a studio-constructed street. à la Gene Kelly in the film Singin' in the Rain. She wears a dress made especially for the occasion (the designer gets liner credit), but what's inside the album is mostly the same old Sixties-type hash, such as Sad Eyes and the clammy I Wanna Be Where You Are. Things get a little more contemporary with James Taylor's You Make It Easy, but then it's right back to the pits with her own No One's Ever Seen This Side of Me.

In one of her books, Nancy Mitford drew a very funny, very sad portrait of a stereotypical-Twenties female free spirit, complete with wisecracks, spit-curls, and beach pajamas, uncomfortably stranded in the realities of wartime England. I'm afraid that's what Manchester reminds me of.

P.R.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

JOHN MARTYN: So Far So Good. John Martyn (vocals, guitar); instrumental accompaniment. May You Never; Bless the Weather; Head and Heart; Over the Hill; Spencer the Rover; Glistening Glyndebourne; and three others. ISLAND ILPS-9484 $6.98, © Y81-9484 $7.98.

Performance: Spaced-out
Recording: Mostly very good

Categorically, John Martyn is the English type of enigma we Americans have in Tim Hardin and used to have in Tim Buckley—the jazz-folkie. Martyn started out as a folkie only, or so people thought, but he lost the purists by doing such things as using a revolving Leslie speaker for his guitar on old Gaelic airs. His singing style had evolved into a jazzy montage of slurrings and bendings by the time he recorded the albums from which these selections are reissued, "Bless the Weather," "Solid Air," and "Sunday's Child." You couldn't call this a greatest hits album, at least not in America—where in most parts of the country it would take a private detective to find one of Martyn's earlier releases—but it will do nicely as a retrospective. And, lo and behold, May You Never and Over the Hill, this time around, are getting some deserved air play, at least in the area of New England where I live. These two are simpler and more tuneful than the "typical" jazz-period Martyn song, of which Solid Air is a good example: a blues progression stretched to sixteen measures and gussied up beyond recognition, where the trick is to listen to the voice as an instrument and to syllables rather than words. "So Far So Good" darts back and forth between the experimental and the recognizable, as Martyn himself has been doing, but its values are musical and its standards are high. If you relax and go where it goes, you'll find the trip invigorating.

N.C.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

THE METERS: New Directions. The Meters (vocals and instrumentals); instrumental accompaniment. No More Okey Doke; I'm Gone; Be My Lady; My Name Up in Lights; Funkify Your Life; and three others. WARNER BROS. BS 3042 $6.98.

Performance: Strong
Recording: Very good

The Metters are a delightful quintet from New Orleans who worked as studio men and freelancers for a number of years until they hit it on their own in the late Sixties with a string of (Continued on page 110)

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popular instruments. They were discovered by Allan Toussaint and Marshall Sehorn, main movers in New Orleans, and have released a few albums since the beginning of this decade that are certifiably swell but not too commercial.

"New Directions," an impressive plunge into the mainstream pop market, is the first Meters album not under the control of Sehorn and Toussaint. The Meters' vocals have become much more forceful and bold, but they have lost none of their admirable musicianship. All the material is their own, with three exceptions: Toussaint's "I'm Gone," Peter Tosh's "Stop That Train," and Give It What You Got," a rollicking, syncopated tune by Steve Cropper, Carl Marsch, and Jimmy Tarbut. The Meters are long overdue for popular success. If enough people hear this album, the score may yet be put right.

WILLIE NELSON: To Lefty from Willie. Willie Nelson (vocals, guitar); Bobbie Nelson (piano); Paul English (drums); Dee Spears (bass); Mickey Raphael (harmonica); other musicians, "Mom and Dad's Waltz." Lefty Frizzell's Thoughts Will Die, Love You a Thousand Ways; She's Gone, Gone, Gone; A Little Unfair; Railroad Lady; and four others. Columbia KC 34695 $6.98. CA 34695 $6.98. CT-34695 $6.98.

Performance: Not quite the point

Recording: Good

You remember how, last summer, when they hit a fly ball toward Lou Piniella it became an adventure? Well, that's how songwriting was in the hands of the late Lefty Frizzell. The tune might go spiraling dizzyly down the scale like a W.W.I Spad with its rudder shot away, or it might snake back and forth like a buggy whip. The words were sincere to the point of making you grind your teeth, and Lefty was given to putting them in junk-food-jingle rhymes and stretching them into odd confections to fit his vocal style: "Always la-a-a-vate with your kisses. . . ." The thing about Lefty that everyone respected was his singing, of course (one of my favorite albums is still the one of him singing Jimmy Rodgers songs), and so this Willie Nelson tribute to Lefty, involving songs identified with Lefty—and, alas, many written by him—doesn't quite work. It's interesting enough when Willie's singing something that isn't arch, say Harlan Howard's She's Gone, Gone, Gone, but considerably inferior to a typical Willie Nelson album of typical Willie Nelson songs. The way to remember Lefty, I think, is to reissue his album not under the control of Sehorn and the late Lefty singing, if possible something less bizarre than his own stuff. Willie does a good enough job on most of these, but the only person who ever could put such monstrocities across with a straight face was Lefty. Some projects, though undertaken with the best intentions, are best aborted.

OLIVIA NEWTON-JOHN: Making a Good Thing Better. Olivia Newton-John (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. Slow Dancing; Ring of Fire; Coolin' Down; If Love Is Real; Sad Songs; I Think I'll Say Goodbye; and five others. MCA-2280 $7.98. CT-2280 $7.98.

Performance: One fascinating track

Recording: Excellent

Everyone's favorite little sunshine girl, Olivia Newton-John, is back in another album that (Continued on page 112)

STEREO REVIEW
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CIRCLE NO. 53 ON READER SERVICE CARD
From the late Forties through the early Sixties, Savoy Records was a white-owned, medium-size label recording and selling black music to a black audience. Although most of the horn men were led or dominated by tenor-saxophone soloists, many dates of this type had the servile fervor in its artist roster is now represented on a two-disc archive reissue called “The Roots of Rock ’n’ Roll”.

Side one is devoted to various combos, all led or dominated by tenor-saxophone soloists. Although most of the horn men were bony semi-pros playing with Saturday night fervor in a crude honk-and-screach fashion, many dates of this type had the services of real jazzmen—who were told by the recording directors: “Don’t play good. This is for the kids. Make it raw.” Heywood Henry, a veteran of the great Erskine Hawkins swing band of the Thirties and Forties, appeared on many such sessions, once switching horns with a tenor man (Henry played baritone and soprano sax) just for the bell of it. After Henry and his confrere had faked their way through the session, the recording director said, “Great! Just what I wanted, nice and raw.” So the liner notes’ claim that the sax selections represent a “people’s art form” is romantic fantasy at best.

Several vocalists—all of them fine—are featured on the remaining three sides of the album. They include Mel Walker and Little Esther, whose duet in Cupid’s Boogie has lost none of its original charm and sass. Huey “Piano” Smith, who later recorded Rockin’ Pneumonia and the Boogie Woogie Flu for the Ace label in New Orleans, had his first two sides issued by Savoy (which was headquartered in New York but picked up out-of-town masters for release). They are included here, and both You Made Me Cry and You’re Down with Me are bluesy items, with Smith playing very much in the style of Professor Longhair and Fats Domino. Particularly well represented on the album—nine tracks backing a number of different vocalists—is the prolific recording artist Johnny Otis, a singer, drummer, and songwriter who was the Savoy house arranger and bandleader. One of the first of the great black vocal groups, the Ravens, is also prominent here. Out of the Ink Spots mold (as most black vocal groups of that era were), the Ravens featured the warm bass of Jimmy Ricks. Their three tracks—Old Man River, Count Every Star, and Marie—are all excellent examples of smooth soul.

But the prize nuggets of the whole collection are three cuts by the little-remembered singer Aristra Newton-John. Her first album, King of Sway, is a cavalcade of searing vocal power and swelling, bawdy sentimentality. She was practically the only black female vocalist of the era who did not try to sound like Bette Holiday or Dinah Washington. An anecdote related in the liner notes by a former vice president of Savoy tells how Maybelle opened one night for Holiday and worked the crowd up to such a pitch that Lady Day refused to go on. I can believe it, for though Maybelle could burrow into a tune and exploit the text in a precise and sophisticated manner, she would more often blaze away in performance, biting and snarling through the most delicate sentiments. It is remarkable to hear the Twenties tune Mean to Me—the lyrics of which reveal the character’s vulnerability, heartache, wounded pride, and shy hopes for the future—as sung by Maybelle. Her bravura performance is like a shotgun blast. Ring Dang Dilly is a period rhythm song that she bumbs through easily, but her masterpiece is Candy, which has to be heard to be believed. The sound comes through her throat, all right, but it seems to have been summoned from the tips of her toes, passing through her entrails and skidding against her heart on the way to her mouth. Aristar Records, which owns the Savoy archives and distributes this set under the Savoy name, would be doing the planet a favor if it reissued a two-record set of Big Maybelle alone.

THE ROOTS OF ROCK ’N ROLL. The Blue Notes, Luther Bond and His Emeralds, Nappy Brown, Varetta Dillard, Little Esther, Big Maybelle, Big Jay McNeely, Wild Bill Moore, Johnny Otis, Clarence Palmer and the Jive Bombers, Sam Price, the Ravens, the Robins, Hal Singer, Huey “Piano” Smith, Mel Walker, Paul Williams (vocals and instrumentalists), We’re Gonna Rock, We’re Gonna Roll; Bubbles; 35–30; The Huckleback; Cornbread; Deacon’s Hop; Hot Rod; Rib Joint; Head Hunter; Helpless; Cupid’s Boogie; Don’t Be Angry; Piddly Patter; Deedle I Love You; You Made Me Cry; You’re Down with Me; Misery; Lover’s Lane Boogie; Lost in a Dream; Mercy Mr. Percy; Promise Mr. Thomas; Candy; Ring Dang Dilly; Mean to Me; Old Man River; Count Every Star; Marie; Double Crossing Blues; If I Didn’t Love You So; Our Romance Is Gone; It’s Written in the Stars; Bad Boy. Savoy &/2221 $7.98, SJA 2221 $9.98.

Performance: Bland

Recording: Bland

1. Reviewer, quote from the liner notes to this album: “I Robot . . . the story of the rise of the machine and the decline of man, which paradoxically coincided with his discovery of the wheel . . . and a warning that his brief dominance of this planet will probably end, because man tried to create robot in his own image.” Pity. There’s nothing like a fresh idea, is there?

Alan Parsons is a producer and engineer who occasionally makes a “concept” album—that is, one in which all the songs are connected, however loosely, to a central character or dramatic theme. “Sgt. Pepper” was the first rock concept album, but most attempts in the genre have not been memorable. At its best, the concept album might have been a kind of phonographic parallel to musical theater, but the form never jelled, and concept albums have generally been more an excuse for ego-speak than anything else. This latest Parsons example is a pseudo-intellectual enterprise in which what was supposed to be the plot is neither supported nor advanced by the performances. It is not really either music or drama. It is not, in fact, much of anything at all.

J. V.

TOM PAXTON: New Songs from the Briar Patch (see Best of the Month, page 82)

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

JERRY REED: Rides Again. Jerry Reed (vocals, guitar); instrumental accompaniment. The Bully of the Town; It’s My Time; We’ve Called It Everything Else; Somethin’ Bout (Continued on page 114)

STEREO REVIEW
How to prove Dolby FM to yourself.

Remember the first cassette recorders with the Dolby system, back in the early 70's? The advantages were easy to prove to yourself. You flipped the Dolby NR switch. Now you heard it, now you didn't. You were impressed.

A few years later and along comes Dolby FM, which you'd like to be just as convinced about. The same 10 dB's are still there. But, unfortunately for demonstration purposes, they are used in a more subtle way. Let's face it, the effect is hard to hear most of the time (that's compatibility for you).

To make a convincing test is tough; you can't get your hands on the controls of the local FM station the way you'd like to (Dolby FM is an encode-decode process).

Well, here's how to overcome these problems and make a quick test that will enable you to hear one of the main effects of Dolby FM. The demo is artificial, but technically valid.

1. Using a receiver with full Dolby FM capability, defeat the inter-station muting switch.
2. Tune to a vacant place on the dial to get pure high-level hiss as a test signal (the extreme ends of the dial are usually good for this).
3. Switch back and forth between Dolby FM and conventional FM.
4. Listen to the increased high-frequency content in the Dolby FM mode. The difference should be very obvious.

In the Dolby FM position the test signal will have a wide-range, open quality. The conventional FM hiss will be muffled. This is the high-frequency, high-level capability difference between Dolby FM and conventional FM. All the highs on the record at the station can actually get through. This allows the rest of the receiver to do its job properly; the other specs on the unit become more meaningful.

Low-level noise reduction, the other half of Dolby FM, is harder to demonstrate at will. Needless to say, most stations transmit silence as rarely as possible. In any event, you have heard low-level noise reduction before; Dolby FM gives 5 dB worth.

This should help you get a better handle on Dolby FM. Not only a theoretical improvement, but one you can prove to yourself.

Technical Note

The use of wideband noise is becoming increasingly popular in testing audio equipment and acoustical characteristics. Interstation noise is equivalent to an FM carrier which is modulated with high-level white noise. This is a suitable signal for checking the high-level, high-frequency capability difference between Dolby FM and conventional FM. Relating the test result to actual listening, the difference shows how conventional FM muffles loud musical signals containing significant amounts of steady-state or transient high-frequency energy (for example, the steep waveforms of percussion and brasses).

August 1977 Dolby FM statistics: In U.S.A., FM stations in 10 metropolitan areas plus 101 other cities with Dolby FM encoders; 14 in Canada; 17 in other countries. 24 manufacturers with 62 different tuner and receiver models incorporating Dolby FM decoder circuits.

Write us for technical details, lists of products and Dolby FM stations.
The Pro's sing instead of act, as he loves laughter from (his version of Bully of the Town, for example, is a corker), and can sing better than he realizes. It's been a problem getting him to act. One of the things that keeps him from the audience so much, but this is a bona fide musical record, and he may show you a thing or two on the low notes. The song selection is quirky to bizarre, about normal for Reed, and it works. The backing is a little slick, but in a quiet way it's also technically dazzling, reminiscent of the way Chet Atkins, co-producer with Reed here, plays a guitar. At times, when Reed's guitar is driving it, it really cooks in spite of its attempted manners. Manners is one thing Reed himself never attempts. He's a caution, all right, and so's most of this album.

JOHNNY TILLOTSON. Johnny Tillotson (vocals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. A Thousand Miles from Home; Toy Hearts; Sunshine in My Morning; Freckles; What's a Little Dirt; Fingerprints; and four others. United Artists UA-LA758-G $6.98, © UA-EA758-H $7.95.

Performance: So-so
Recording: Good

Johnny Tillotson has been around longer than I have and isn't much more famous. God help him. He's been vaguely rock and vaguely country, and this time he's more distinctly country with a sort of stationwagon-down-town cast to the arrangements. He well, he emotes in song like an old pro, only you can tell he's emoting. What bothers me more is the way he sings with a smile in his voice so much of the time. It reminds me of an obnoxious radio singer who was on when I was a kid, Smilin' Jack Smith (Dinah Shore and Margaret Whiting were also on that show, in turn, I think). And I don't care much for the bulk of this material, either, as it's mostly froth and bubble. If you want to know the truth, I think this album ought to be beaten into a Frisbee. It would make honest vinyl of it.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

JERRY JEFF WALKER: A Man Must Carry On. Jerry Jeff Walker (vocals, guitar); Lost Gonzo Band (instruments). Stereo Chicken; Don't It Make You Wanna Dance; Roll On Down the Road; Song for the Life; Leavin' Texas; Mr. Bojangles; Honky Tonk Songs; Derby Day; Long Afternoons; Rockin' Chair; Luckenbach Moon; and thirteen others. MCA 2-6003 two discs $9.98, © MCA 2-6003 $9.98, © MCA 2-6003 $9.98.

Performance: Very good
Recording: Very good

This is a bit erratic, but a fair amount of it, if not a fair percentage, is worth spending time with. It's another double album that probably should have been edited down to one disc. It has some nice Texas hillbilly poems read at some length, but I came to it for music, and there is some other stuff that should have been jettisoned too. That doesn't include the live versions of L.A. Freeway and Mr. Bojangles, though—the former especially swelling, adding something to the definition of the song. Jerry Jeff Walker is a distant but respectable third behind Waylon and Willie in the small so-called "progressive" country field. One of the things that keeps him from narrowing the distance is the gap between the quality of their bands and the quality of his. This album suggests that the closer it comes to rock, the better the Lost Gonzo Band can hack it. The country slant on the fills that comes so naturally to Waylon's and Willie's bands just plain evades the Gonzos much of the time. But the good news here is that the band is getting tighter with rifting and figure-cutting and is getting so it can really propel something it has an affinity for, such as L.A. Freeway. And the better news is that Walker, often a lazy singer in the past, is pretty with-it here. He repeatedly goes for the more difficult note the better to shade his interpretations, working harder at being precise. He is an engaging singer, grinning-rascal image and all, and presents some varied and engaging songs. One of the most impressive is Rodney Crowell's Song for the Life, which of course Walker identifies with to a tee. Padded through the album is, I think it is Walker's best since "Viva Terlingua."
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CIRCLE NO. 3 ON READER SERVICE CARD
WAR: Platinum Jazz (see Best of the Month, page 85)

DOTTIE WEST: When It's Just You and Me. Dottie West (vocals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. Every Fool I Write; Tiny Fingers; Till I Get It Right; All Night Long; Save a Little for the Morning; The Lovin' Kind; and five others. UNITED ARTISTS UA-LA740-G $6.98, © UA-EA740-H $7.98.

Performance: C- & W chatter
Recording: Good

Dottie West looks like Sylvia Miles and, in her more dramatic moments, sounds like Gene Autry. She's got a permanent catch in her throat as she prates on and on about one "hawthrunxlyke" after another. Her accompaniment includes a vocal group that just possibly might be the original Sons of the Pioneers. She reaches an apogee of sorts in Save a Little for the Morning, a plea to her lover that is delivered in a voice so throbbing with emotion that she sounds as if she recorded it while lying in one of those "magic fingers" beds. You move.

P.R.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

THE WHISPERS: Open Up Your Love. The Whispers (vocals); Wah Wah Watson, Lee Ritenour (guitars); Wilton Felder, Alphonso Johnson (bass); Sonny Burke, Paulinho Da Costa (percussion); other musicians. Make It with You; Chocolate Girl; You Are Number One; Open Up Your Love; and four others. SOULTRAIN BVL-12270 $6.98, © BVS-12270 $7.95. © BVKL-12270 $7.95.

Performance: Flawless
Recording: Excellent

This is one of the best balanced and assembled group albums I've heard in quite some time. It's a winner on three counts.

The prime factor is superb singing by the Whispers, highlighted by lead vocalists Walter and Wallace Scott. Though not yet stars, the Whispers have developed the smoothest ensemble sound since the Main Ingredient was at its peak. Each note clearly shines through, and the spirited interplay between the soloists and the rest of the group is based on razor-sharp timing. Of equally high quality are the instrumental backings. From start to finish, the musicians avoid clichés, supplying truly imaginative licks on keyboards, guitar, horns, and percussion. Rather than overwhelming the singers, they blend with them perfectly, and the blend is enhanced by excellent recording techniques.

Finally, there are the songs, a choice mixture. There are irresistibly danceable up-beat numbers such as I Fell in Love Last Night (At the Disco) and Make It with You, the get-down, gut-level entreaties of Open Up Your Love, and melodically attractive ballads such as Love Is a Dream and You Are Number One. And solid jazz rhythms and arrangements lend an arresting flavor to You Never Miss Your Water ("Til Your Well Runs Dry). The clever cover is a bonus. Inside and out, this is an album bound to satisfy. P.G.

NANCY WILSON: I've Never Been to Me (see Best of the Month, page 85)

STEVE WINWOOD. Steve Winwood (vocals and instruments); other musicians. Hold (Continued on page 118)
The speaker landscape is dotted with esoteric designs that produce marginal improvements at, unfortunately, very high cost.

We refer here to the not-uncommon practice of being elaborately different without being basically advanced.

At B·I·C, we believe that the finer art is being way ahead without being way out.

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Each represented a fundamental advancement in speaker design, not reserved for the affluent few.

This year, the addition of new Formula 3 and Formula 6 models underscores that approach. Now there are seven B·I·C VENTURI Formulas, from a 2-way bookshelf to 4-way, monitor-equipped tower.

We offer them as the best examples of the art.
ATLANTIC's original-cast recording of the current Broadway smash I Love My Wife arrives doing with praise and awards for the stage production (two Tonys and two Drama DeskS) and sounding cozily brilliant. What is cozy is the plot, which concerns two couples in Trenton, New Jersey, who decide to give the New Morality a spin by staging a Christmas Eve orgy, but at the last moment decide that swinging isn't really their style. What is brilliant is Cy Coleman's score, the best and most eclectic one he's done yet, and Michael Stewart's lyrics, which have all the kicky spit-and-polish of a kinky, latter-day Lorenz Hart.

Coleman's prior credits include the musicals Sweet Charity and Seesaw as well as several pop classics. Michael Stewart was responsible for the book of Hello, Dolly, but instead of being content with dropping postcards from Monte Carlo or St. Moritz for the rest of his richly royalized life he kept trying his luck on Broadway, though without much success—until now.

I think that for several years hence Coleman's and Stewart's major credits will be their contributions to I Love My Wife. One reason for their success here must be their decision to wander, musically and lyrically, and to hell with themes, motifs, and "plot integration." This breaks with a long-standing Broadway tradition. Ever since Oscar Hammerstein II and Richard Rodgers integrated their score for Oklahoma, making each song responsible for developing the plot or establishing a character, no serious Broadway composer would admit to throwing in a number just because he'd always wanted to write that kind of song or to satisfy a wait 'till they see this kind of song. They were content with dropping postcards from Monte Carlo or St. Moritz for the rest of their career—although they were celebrated to excess for a later FM hit called The Low Spark of High-Heeled Boys. Just how desperate semi-defunct superbands and product-hungry record companies can get was illustrated when Island resorted to rereleasing a still-available one-record live Traffic album as a two-record set—with the only addition an extended, forty-five-minute version of Low Spark of High-Heeled Boys.

The current release is now being touted as Steve Winwood's comeback album. Unfortunately, it is one of the most colorless, energyless, soulless, and good taste LP's in recent memory. The songs plod along aimlessly, the lyrics might be about something, and Winwood's once thrillingly rich voice is weak enough here to qualify him as a finalist in a George Harrison sound-alike contest. I know this is the guy who once wrote the song Sometimes I Feel So Uninspired, which was an insult in itself, but if this new album shows how uninspired he's been in the nearly half a decade since Traffic made anything of note, it might be a good idea for him to reevaluate his choice of a career. One advantage of starting out as a boy genius is that if you find yourself completely burnt out at twenty-nine there's always dental school to fall back on.

Lester Bangs
Not many tonearms can pass this simple but very revealing test.

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A good place to make this test is at your high-fidelity dealer. You can try it on any turntable you may be considering. We believe you’ll be surprised how few—even very high-priced ones—can pass this simple test.

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While making this test, you might examine tonearms in other ways. For example, are they straight (good) or curved (not so good)? Curving the tonearm adds more mass and makes the arm prone to lateral imbalance.

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CIRCLE NO. 59 ON READER SERVICE CARD
shops, which is what Tammy did when she was poor. The hard core of her audience is working-class, mostly female, and her manager seems to be betting that it's conservative as well, an audience you can't pull radical image changes on. I have my doubts about that assessment; hers is a heavily-into-TV audience that is probably quite sophisticated, in a non-verbal way, about "images." Anyway, Tammy sounds believable again here as she skates around on top of the slick arrangements, and the songs don't have any gaffes in them. (It might come to think of it, improve things to have some spots of weirdness here and there.) It's just so . . . pretested, guaranteed. But how many times can essentially the same album be guaranteed? How about once in a blue moon taking a chance? N.C.

YES: Going for the One. Yes (vocals and instrumentals). Going for the One; Turn of the Century; Parallels; and two others. Atlantic SD 19106 $6.98, © TP-19106 $7.98. © CS-19106 $7.98.

Performance: Flash
Recording: Excellent
Yes has claimed to be the best musical conglomerate in the world, which is okay by me though it might miff the New York Philharmonic, the Swan Silvertones, the Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Big Band, the Juilliard String Quartet, and the Who, to name just a few. If you're a Yes fan, you probably agree with the group's high opinion of itself. I'm not a fan, but I can see—up to a point—why one might be. They're meticulous craftsmen, gifted and even individualistic instrumentalists (Steve Howe and Chris Squire in particular), and they've managed to shatter, for better or worse, the rigid structures of the music from which their own material derives. Where fans I do enjoy is on the "for better or worse" part. Yes strikes me as having achieved its freedom at the expense of compositional logic and discernible emotional content, but Yes fans think the music has Olympic grandeur.

With all that up front, let me simply report that "Going for the One" has a certain boozy brashness that has been absent from the band's last few albums, and it confirms that the Yes-men do have a sense of humor after all (which was suggested by reports of their performing I'm Down as a concert encore). Nevertheless, the material here is mostly more of the usual sterility masquerading as "serious" music. If you like Yes, of course, you don't have to take my opinion any more seriously than I take the band. S.S.

CAROL DOUGLAS: Full Bloom. Carol Douglas (vocals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. Light My Fire; Dancing Queen; We Do It; I Got You on My Mind; and six others. Midsong BKLI-2222 $6.98, © BKSI-2222 $7.95, © BKK1-2222 $7.95.

Performance: Standard
Recording: Standard
Carol Douglas tries valiantly to get in on the action here, but the arranging and conducting of John Davis and the production by Ed O'Loughlin keep her so tightly wrapped in the standard disco groove that she never becomes more than an adjunct to the total sound. It's a very listenable—and danceable—album, but poor Carol's been placed so far out in left field that you'd need binoculars to find her. P.R.

RECOMMENDED DISCO HITS

• ROSE ROYCE: In Full Bloom. Whitfield 3074 $6.98, © M83074 $7.98, © M53074 $7.98.

• FIRST CHOICE: Delusions. Gold Mind GZS 7501 $6.98.

• EL COCO: Cocomotion. American Variety International AVL 6012 $6.98.

• BELLE EPOQUE: Miss Broadway. Shady Brook 5016 $6.98, © 8314-33009 (H) $7.98, © 5314-33009 (H) $7.98.

• UNIVERSAL ROBOT BAND: Dance and Shake Your Tambourine. Red Greg RG 1001 $6.98.

(List compiled by David Mancuso, owner of the Loft, one of New York City's top discos.)
THE BAKER'S WIFE (Stephen Schwartz). Original-cast recording. Paul Sorvino, Teri Ralston, Patti LuPone, Kurt Peterson (vocals); orchestra, Robert Bilbog cond. TAKE HOME TUNES THT 772 $8.95 (from Take Home Tunes, P.O. Box 496, Georgetown, Conn. 06879).

Performance: Charming
Recording: Very good

The Baker's Wife is one of those musicals you read about in theatrical columns which somehow never get around to opening. What went wrong? Usually you never find out, but in this case the producers were enterprising enough to record the score with the original cast before the curtain went up on opening night—which it never did. Judging from the songs by Stephen Schwartz and the way they're performed here, that's a shame. The story itself is a natural for a musical. It is based on that marvelous vintage French movie, with Raimu, about the baker in the little town of Concorde whose wife leaves him for a handsome young villager and who cannot admit that he has really been cuckolded. Taking advantage of the locale of this fable and matching his melodies to the characters with a stunning aptness, Schwartz has supplied both lyrics and tunes for a rather distinguished series of set pieces in an appropriately old-fashioned idiom. They are sung here with skill and fervor, and a thirty-three-piece orchestra performs sparkling arrangements by Thomas Pierson and Don Walker, with the composer himself at the piano. As Genevieve, Patti LuPone, a real singer, is quite moving in the opening Chanson. Whatever the reasons that The Baker's Wife never came to Broadway, it certainly makes a charming record album. A complete text of the lyrics is supplied. P.K.

THE BELLE OF AMHERST (William Luce). Julie Harris, monologue. CREDO 5 two discs $12.96.

Performance: Piquant
Recording: Excellent

One-man shows about the lives of famous authors have provided a succession of players with the opportunity to put on a bravura, tour-de-force performance. A number of these have been recorded—Emlyn Williams impersonating Charles Dickens, Hal Holbrook as Mark Twain, Margaret Webster in a brilliant program about the Bronte sisters, Dorothy Stickney presenting a vivid dramatization of the poems and letters of Edna St. Vincent Millay. With little to look at and much to hear, these are the sort of performances that make good records, and The Belle of Amherst is no exception.

The Belle of Amherst places Emily Dickinson, who wrote some of the most superb lyric poetry this country has produced, in her own reclusive setting, mingling passages from her poems with glimpses of her life. The form, with its recurring themes, is almost musical. Emily offers her recipe for "black cake," tells of quiet days spent with her conventional sister Lavinia, holds conversations with her adored brother Austin and her sister-in-law Sue. She weeps over the remembered deaths of her father and mother and a nephew, the apple of her eye, who died quite young. Suddenly she is speaking the lines of one of her poems—those succinct, impertinent, probing comments on "Life, Love, Nature, Time and Eternity," of which only seven were published ("by stealth") in her lifetime. A box of nine hundred more, written on the backs of envelopes, recipes, and paper bags, was discovered later by her sister.

Julie Harris, who won the Tony award as best actress this year for her performance in (Continued on page 124)
A lot of good old boys aren't so simple when you get to know them, but Bobby Bare—to good three axe-handle slugs, is the most enigmatic one I've come across in the music business. There's Tom T. Hall, who sometimes seems an odd cross between an Eastern liberal intellectual and a half-drunk redneck, and you could say that's enigmatic, but you'd only see that contradiction in half a dozen songs, and it might be quite obvious in half a dozen more. There's Merle Haggard doing a put-on and being sincere at the same time in "Okie from Muskogee," where the porcelain pot of grass is so clearly a contradiction in half a dozen songs, and it might be quite obvious in half a dozen more. There's Bob McDill and his...
but they are not the kind of thing to record in wholesale batches. Some time earlier, Bare did the song, "Me and McDill," with various members of his family, which demonstrated considerable warmth, but which, again, was too public a record of a thing best done in private. The cowboy album, "Cowboys and Daddys," has all the taste of a three-day drunk, maconding ultimately to the subject of a cowboy-cow sexual relationship (he will get your attention, though).

"Hard Time Hungrys" has some jokes in it too, but it's a fairly balanced treatment of its subject and reinforces the feeling I have from growing up among them that the good old boys' native equipment includes a streak of populism, usually dormant. I'm not sure what made it dormant, but I suspect, like the late Harold Ross, that little old lady schoolteachers' more or less constant (though unconscious) use of brainwashing techniques had something to do with it.

"Me and McDill" contains all McDill songs. They're rough and ready, some of them beyond this or that bound of propriety, but they serve Bare better in an album than do Silverstein's cartoons. A few McDill tunes are bent, too. Don't Turn Out the Light, with an irresistible beat, would seem to have the stuff to be a huge hit in both pop and country if it gets the exposure; it's a solid commercial tune, but it's also a little bent. Wilma Lou ("Wilma Lou, Wilma Lou, don't let that boy put his hands on you . . .") shows McDill and Bare conveying compassion for the very same poor sucker they're laughing at. And so on. It is a rough, uneven album, and a couple of the songs in it are outright duds. But it isn't boring.

Ellis Nassour, in the liner notes for one of Bare's recordings, came up with a good quote (he can't remember where he got it, apparently) about Bare: "He has never been a singer who played hide-and-seek with reality. His songs are about the crossroads and decisions of life. . . . To the degree that they are (and they often are), they represent a consciousness I find almost always interesting and sometimes fascinating. "Ain't he the awfullest thing?" the womenfolk—delighted Southern womenfolk—would have said twenty years ago. In other parts of the country they'd call him a card or a caution. I just call him that there country-music enigma. —Noel Coppedge
The Belle of Amherst, an old band with Dickinson. Some years ago she made a stunning record for Caedmon of Poems and Letters of Emily Dickinson (TC 1119), and later an expanded, two-disc version, Emily Dickinson—A Self Portrait (TC 2026). On this new set from Credo she grasps the opportunity to deepen and round out that portrait. (Credo is the new adult label from the company in Cambridge that has released all those charming Pathways of Sound records for children.) So perfectly does she capture the puritan yet mischievous and quietly subversive spirit of her subject that the transitions from prose to verse are almost imperceptible. The Harris voice is a supple instrument that can fade to a broken whisper or swell in an ecstatic diapason at some remembered hope or modest joy.

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Performance: Excellent

The Credibility Gap was a Los Angeles-based comedy troupe responsible for one of the funniest records ever made, "A Great Gift Idea," which featured devastating parodies of Sly Stone and Rod McKuen and an unbelievably fifteen-minute rape of the Tonight Show. (Continued on page 126)

THE CREDIBILITY GAP: The Bronze Age of Radio. The Credibility Gap (comedians). Who's On First; Tricia's Honeymoon; The L.B.J. Tape; Spots (Tribute to Fred May); The Last "Big Picture"; and six others. WATERHOUSE 1 $6.98.

Performance: Spotty

Recording: Decent mono

The Credibility Gap was a Los Angeles-based comedy troupe responsible for one of the funniest records ever made, "A Great Gift Idea," which featured devastating parodies of Sly Stone and Rod McKuen and an unbelievably fifteen-minute rape of the Tonight Show. (Continued on page 126)
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Some members of the troupe have gone on to more lucrative work in TV, and apparently the group no longer appears as a unit. Their "new" album is the comedic equivalent of out-takes, consisting of material they worked up for a daily radio show a few years ago. It's not particularly amusing, especially compared to, say, Bob and Ray. There is, however, one absolute gem, a reworking of Abbott and Costello's old "Who's on first?" routine—this time with a concert promoter who's booked the Who, the Guess Who, and Yes—that is by itself worth the price of the whole album.

THE WASHINGTON HILLBILLIES. Jeff Altman, Ronnie Claire, George Memmoli, Nellie Bellflower, Michael Mislove, Shep Menken, Kurt Taylor, Steve Spears, Stuart Dillon, Sharon Obeck, Dave Anderson, Bill Sheridan, Billy Minkin (comedians). Phonomate #1; Fireside Chat; TV Offer; Stud Beer; Planning a Vacation; Kentucky Fried Carter; King Pong; Getting Off; Bobby and the Prez; Bedtime Story; and eight others. CASABLANCA NBLP 7052 $6.98.

Performance: Bland but amiable
Recording: Very good

The comedians caught up with the Carter administration some time ago, and I guess we can all look forward to three more years of spoofs on the current occupants of the White House. If none of them are any worse than this entry called "The Washington Hillbillies," we should be able to survive the whole thing rather nicely. Jeff Altman, whose impersonation of Jimmy Carter is realistic enough to evoke visual images, is heard in cozy conversation with European heads of state, dropping a few drawled French phrases for Giscard d'Estaing and telling Helmut Schmidt "Ich bin das President." But he can't reach anyone in England because "the country's closed." For a neighborhood picnic, he orders "forty-five buckets of chicken wings, seventy-four Cokes, and a beer." The beer, of course, is for Billy, who is described as a man "who plays softball to win" and can be heard delivering a commercial for a product called "Stud Beer."

In one bright episode, the President plays the harmonica for Bob Dylan and talks to him in rhymes stolen from Dylan's own songs. In another, Miss Lillian tucks Amy in for the night and tells her a favorite bedtime story about Jimmy the Giant Killer, who climbs a peanut tree to a white house where he does in a dangerous giant named Ford. Of course, the President denies that he's appointing Henny Youngman ambassador to Israel, as well as a Sunday school skit, a talk with Brezhnev, and a plug for a product called "Peanutol." In all, it's fairly predictable yet funny stuff, a little blunt-edged as political satire goes but moving along at the amiable pace of its subject and well performed by Mr. Altman and a conscientious supporting cast.

P.K.

JAZZ

CARLA BLEY: Dinner Music. Carla Bley (tenor saxophone, piano, organ, vocal); Michael Mantler (trumpet); Roswell Rudd (trombone); Carlos Ward (flute, alto and tenor saxophones); Richard Tee (keyboards); Bob Stewart (tuba); Eric Gale, Cornell Dupree (guitars); Gordon Edwards (bass guitar); Steve Gadd (drums). Dining Alone; Ad Infinitum; Ida Lupino; Song Sung Long; and four others. WATT 6 $6.98 (from J.C.O.A., 6 West 95th Street, New York, N.Y. 10025).

Performance: High-calorie
Recording: Excellent

"Dinner Music" is the sixth serving Carla Bley and her husband, Michael Mantler, have given us on their Watt label, and it is a delicious, slightly naughty dessert. For one thing, it counts among its ingredients Messrs. Tee, Gale, Dupree, Edwards, and Gadd (put them all together and you have the Warner Bros. recording group Stuff), a commercial mixture most cooks would not think of blending with Ms. Bley and her more art-minded colleagues Roswell Rudd, Carlos Ward, and Michael Mantler. The blend works, though. Who says accessible music can't also be music of considerable artistic value?

Carla Bley's vocal on Dining Alone might (Continued on page 128)
The Powered Advent Loudspeaker.

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help explain why she has to, but worse things have hit the charts, and there’s so much good stuff (pardon here) that I’m willing to overlook a slight indiscretion. Song Sung Long features wonderful work by trombonist Roswell Rudd, who gives the opening a slightly Ellingtonian flavor, and Ms. Bley handles the tenor saxophone admirably on Ida Lupino (though she never really takes off on it), which also contains nice solo work by Eric Gale. The very talented Ms. Bley is full of musical surprises, and her creativity never lingers in any one area too long. I wouldn’t be surprised if Watt serving number seven turned out to be Senegalese circumcision-ceremony music transcribed—and, of course, specially arranged—for eighteenth-century pipe organ, Lebanese children’s choir, seven tambourines, and piano. I wouldn’t be surprised, but that’s not what I’m hoping for.

C.A.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

OLIVE BROWN: Olive Brown Sings! Olive Brown (vocals); Don Ewell, Mike Montgomery (piano); Gardner Hitchcock, George Bruns (drums); other musicians. Goodie Goodie; Someday You’ll Be Sorry; Nobody Knows You When You’re Down and Out; Beale Street Blues; Everyday I Have the Blues; I Want to Be Somebody’s Baby Doll; and four others. GHB GHBS-86 $6.98.

Performance: Frisky
Recording: Good

I was not previously acquainted with Olive Brown but the lady does indeed sing—with experience, flair, and grace. This recording was made in 1972 during a night-club date in Memphis. On the first side she is backed by pianist Don Ewell, who’s been active since the Thirties and who played for many years with the sublime Jack Teagarden. Ewell dotes on the ‘‘stride’’ piano style of James P. Johnson and Fats Waller, and his solo on Beale Street Blues is delightfully brash. On the second side Miss Brown is accompanied by the Boll Weevil's Jazz Band, an energetic and skillful group sending out solid traditional jazz to an appreciative audience. The album is a spree for the performers, and their obvious delight in what they are doing is infectious. They are so good-natured and enthusiastic that they manage to take a program of worn-out tunes and give them the tang of fresh mint. From the recorded evidence, I’d say that everybody had a good time, and you most likely will too when you hear it.

J.V.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

BILL EVANS: Quintessence. Bill Evans (piano); Harold Land (tenor saxophone); Kenny Burrell (guitar); Ray Brown (bass); Philly Joe Jones (drums). Bass Face; Sweet Dalcina; Second Time Around; and two others. FANTASY F-9529 $6.98.

Performance: Evansesque excellence
Recording: Very good

The release of a new Bill Evans album is always something to look forward to, especially these days when he is playing better than ever. And just look who’s with him this time! This is a wonderfully relaxed set of no-nonsense, no-gimmicks jazz played by men who have few peers on their respective instruments. Everyone involved in this session gives a stellar performance, and it is a delight to hear the magnificent Bill Evans in this context. Producer Helen Keane can take pride in this one, and I hope she explores further Bill Evans small-band dates.

C.A.

ART FARMER: Crawl Space. Art Farmer (trumpet, flugelhorn); Jeremy Steig (flute); David Brusin (keyboards); Eric Gale (guitar); Will Lee, George Mraz (bass); Steve Gadd (drums). Chanson; Petite Belle, and two others. CTI CTI-7073 $7.98, © CT8 7073 $7.98, © CTC 7073 $7.98.

Performance: Good Farmer, bad crop
Recording: Very good

If you were into jazz in the late Fifties to early Sixties, you don’t need to be told who Art Farmer is, for he was quite prominent during that period as co-leader, with Benny Golson, of the Jazztet. In recent years Farmer has mostly been active in Europe, living in Vienna where the government-sponsored house band of the Austrian Broadcasting System has had the pleasure of his company on a regular basis. Farmer is an imaginative, forceful trumpeter of bop persuasions but with very firm and deep roots in the soil from which jazz grew.

Unlike most CTI productions, this album does not feature half of New York’s session men, but it is a shame that it features any at all. Except for the playing of Jeremy Steig and Farmer himself, it sounds very tired. I would be the last to deny that Eric Gale and
620 Although the 620 Power Amplifier is distinguished by an unusual exterior, the real story is its impeccable performance, the result of Nakamichi's unique "complete-mirror" push-pull circuitry, which eliminates distortion without the use of high idling current or high negative feedback. A massive toroidal core transformer and two 40,000pf filter capacitors assure ample power reserve. The 620 handles all types of loads in stride, and its low operating temperature assures long-term reliability far surpassing conventional designs. Power output is 100 Watts per channel, minimum rms at 8 ohms, 5-20,000 Hz with less than 0.01% THD.

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Steve Gadd are men of considerable talent, but they do so many sessions that I guess it has all become just a matter of routine—at least that is how it sounds. Pianist Dave Gru- sin, who arranged Crawl Space and Chanson, has had considerable success writing for singer Jon Lucien and for television, but he participates here with a minimum of imagination and a total lack of zeal. Too bad, because we don't get much of a chance to hear Art Farm- er these days, and even in this lethargic setting he proves that he's still got it. C.A.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

JAN GARBAREK: Dis. Jan Garbarek (wood flute, soprano and tenor saxophones); Ralph Towner (twelve-string and classical guitars); Norwegian Brass Sextet; wind harp. Van- dreere; Yr; Skygger; and three others. ECM ECM-1-1093 $7.98, © 8T-1-1093 $7.98.

Performance: Beautiful
Recording: Superb

In the summer of 1945, I had the experience of sailing down along the Norwegian coast, moving slowly (there was still a mine hazard) in still waters, dwarfed by the overwhelming-beautiful, mountainous coastline with its gaping fjords and hundreds of islets. It was Midsummer Night, and, in keeping with a tradition the war had curtailed for five years, huge bonfires were lit on mainland and islets as far up and down the coast as the eye could see. I was only fourteen at that time, and the experience has always remained in the back of my memory. Hearing this breathtakingly beautiful album by Jan Garbarek, who had not even been born then, brought it all back to me with astonishing vividness.

Garbarek's plaintive flute and sax sound and the sensitive acoustic-guitar playing of Ralph Towner go hand in hand, subtly enriched on one selection, Skygger (Shadows), by the funereal voices of the Norwegian Brass Sextet and on three others by a wind-harp (or Aeolian harp), the music of which comes from the wind setting its strings in motion. The harp used for these recordings was taped separately on the southern coast of Norway, with the wind sweeping in from the North Sea—the effect is appropriately chilling, especially on Dis (Mist), where its ethereal sound is combined with Garbarek's wood flute. It's all very Norwegian, but there's a bit of Coltrane in it as well. I like it. C.A.

KEITH JARRETT: Staircase. Keith Jarrett (piano). Staircase; Hourglass; Sundial; Sand. ECM ECM-2-1090 two discs $11.98, © 8T-2-1090 $11.98, © CT-2-1090 $11.98.

Performance: Still climbing
Recording: Excellent

Some five years have passed since Keith Jarrett first faced the microphones alone for ECM's venturesome producer Manfred Eichner, and it has been four years since the release of the extraordinary, highly acclaimed three-record set of his Bremen/Lausanne solo concerts. Since then, Jarrett has made numerous outstanding albums and gained a relatively large-world-wide following. I say "relatively" large, but Jarrett's enormous popularity, which is by no means restricted to a jazz following, is really awesome when one considers that he has remained true to his art. Though such crossover pianists as Herbie Hancock and Chick Corea probably sell more records at the moment, the quality and honesty of Jarrett's output will surely give him the edge eventually.

Actually, it is wrong to label Jarrett a jazz pianist, though jazz is part of what he does. His solo performances are best described as contemporary concert music, to be regarded with the seriousness we afford so-called classical music. Jarrett's music attains the lyricism of Chopin and frequently erupts into
Introducing Egberto Gismonti

In this year's February issue I reviewed a record by Paul Horn ("Altura Do Sol," Epic PE 34231) on which he teamed up with Egberto Gismonti. Since Gismonti was not a name familiar to me and since I rather suspected that his musical input had a great deal to do with that album's more prepossessing qualities, I tried to find out who he was and what instrument(s) he played. The album jacket gave no clue, and, as it turned out, no one at Columbia/Epic seemed to have one either. Anyway, I concluded my review by stating that I was now ready to wear an Egberto Gismonti button.

After hearing his new album, "Danca das Cabeças," however, I've decided that a mere button will not suffice—I am ready for a whole outfit. What a fantastic artist this man is! I must have played this album about twenty times since I received it, with a few extra plays for side one, which hasn't ceased to dazzle me. Gismonti, who is classically trained (he has written for and conducted the Orquestra Sinfonica de Rio de Janeiro), plays guitar, piano, and flute, has a fine voice, and would look quite at home on the set of a nineteenth-century Italian opera. Now thirty-two, he was born and grew up in Brazil, has worked with Arito Moreira (whose tour touched base at New York's Bottom Line last year), and is about to begin his first recording sessions under a new Warner Bros. contract.

This background has shaped him into a powerful, eloquent artist whose fingers handle the eight-string guitar with a surgeon's precision and who can extract from it a kaleidoscopic range of emotions. Side one consists of six pieces that form a whole totaling over twenty-five minutes; except for a brief introduction and closing—Quarto Mundo No. 1 and Quarto Mundo No. 2, respectively—in which he plays wood flutes, Gismonti employs the guitar throughout, with simply sensational results.

Side two is his piano side, slightly Corean (Chick, that is), but only slightly. There are four pieces here, and, again, they run together so smoothly that banding the record would have made little sense. This side is also highly interesting, but it is fragmented; although it enjoys an excellence of its own, it does not fully measure up to side one. Percussionist Nana Vasconcelos is a kindred spirit who must share credit for the success of this album of indefinable, timeless music. He steps briefly to the foreground on his own composition, Fe Cega Faca Amolada, and I hope we hear from him again when Egberto Gismonti returns. That ought to be soon.

—Chris Albertson

EGBERTO GISMONTI: Danca das Cabeças. Egberto Gismonti (eight-string guitar, piano, wood flutes, vocals); Nana Vasconcelos (percussion, beatinba, corpo, vocals). Quarto Mundo No. 1; Porta Encantada; Tango; Bambuzal; Dança das Cabeças; Celebracao de Npcias; Quarto Mundo No. 2; Aguas Luminosas; Fe Cega Faca Amolada; Dansa Solidaria. ECM 1089 $7.98. © ST-1-1089 $7.98.

Lisztian flamboyance; also woven into his brilliant patterns are flashes of Coltrane and Bud Powell. But in the end it all bears his own highly individual stamp, and to see him during one of his performances—rising from his seat, undulating to his emotions, his diminutive figure pouring all that sensitivity onto the keyboard—is a memorable experience.

I submit that "Staircase" is a few steps above the three-record "Solo Concerts" set, which I called "the finest new album of jazz piano I have heard in twenty years." If you will allow me a correction, let's make that "improved" piano.

C.A.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

KEN McINTYRE: Home. Ken McIntyre (alto saxophone, flute, bassoon, bass clarinet, oboe); Jaki Byard (piano); Reggie Workman (bass); Andrei Strobert (drums). Undulation: Jamaican Sunset; Charlotte; Amy; Cousin Elma; Sea Train; and four others. INNER CITY IC 2039 $6.98.

Performance: Excellent Recording: Good

Ken McIntyre's notes to this album are a rambling dissertation on nomenclature: three long, confusing columns on the implications of the term "jazz" might have. Fortunately, however, there is nothing awkward about McIntyre's music, which draws its inspiration from far and wide and reflects his keen interest in and knowledge of rhythmic roots. This album was recorded in the summer of 1975, and so far as I can determine it is the only Ken McIntyre album in the American record catalogs. It shouldn't be, for he is an excellent musician equally at home on all his instruments, and he is a composer of admirable originality. The presence of pianist Jaki Byard and bassist Reggie Workman is icing on this cake, and drummer Andrei Strobert—a new name to me—makes it all the sweeter. McIntyre, who spends most of his time teaching, ought to visit a studio more often.

C.A.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

DON MENZA: First Flight. Don Menza (flute, soprano and tenor saxophones); Frank Rosolino (trombone); Alan Broadbent (keyboards); other musicians. Samba de Rollins; April's Fool; Collage; Groove Blues; and three others. CATALYST CAT-7617 $6.98.

Performance: Exhilarating Recording: Very good

It is entirely possible that you have never heard of Don Menza (though you are likely to have heard him), but don't be fooled by the title of this album: the man has recorded on his own before, and he has appeared on numerous recordings. "First Flight" pays alldus to the fact that this is Menza's debut on the Catalyst label, and a good debut it is.

Menza's main inspiration comes from Sonny Rollins—to whom he pays tribute here with a composition called Samba de Rollins— but he is no imitator, and his playing is actually more rewarding to listen to than Rollins' own output of late. Capable of enormous swing (you may have heard him with Maynard Ferguson's band), Menza is probably in his prime right now (he's forty-one), and what he does on such numbers as the aforementioned Rollins tribute and Collage is simply breathtaking. He is equally impressive in a more re...
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STEREO REVIEW

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laxed tempo, as in Magnolia Rose, which also features an interesting solo by trombonist Frank Rosolino and some very lyrical work by pianist Alan Broadway. More Menza, please.

C.A.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

CECIL TAYLOR: Indent. Cecil Taylor (piano). Indent: First Layer; Second Layer (Parts One and Two); Third Layer. ARISTA FREEDOM AL 1026 $6.98.

Performance: Excellent Recording: Good remote
cel Taylor recorded this album four and a half years ago at Antioch College in Yellow Springs, Ohio, where he was teaching there. It was previously released on Taylor's own Unit Core label, but, as is so often the case with privately issued recordings, it received very limited distribution and no promotion.

There are no chord changes or lilting melodies in this intellectual, sometimes fierce outpouring. Thought is severely rhythmic. Cecil Taylor's music will not set your body in motion. It is accessible the way Keith Jarrett's music is, but, while Jarrett often touches a romantic nerve, Taylor is more apt to bombard his listeners with cascades of notes spewed out in patterns that are both imaginative and dazzlingly logical. Critics and the public continue to associate him with jazz, but Taylor has taken his music far beyond its borders, so far that most club owners and concert producers don't think there's a market for it. Taylor should be able to make a living from his music, however. He should be regarded as the major American artist he is, he should not have to produce and release his own albums, and he should not have to share the stage of Carnegie Hall with anyone. Critical acclaim is wonderful, and Taylor has had a lifetime of it, but you cannot get critical acclaim any more than you can force the public to accept an art form it does not fully understand. The solution for an uncompromising artist like Taylor is, I suppose, subsidy, but . . . . Well, we can all go out and buy this album. It's certainly worth it.

C.A.

RANDY WESTON: Berkshire Blues, Randy Weston (piano); Bill Wood (bass); Lennie McBrowne (drums). Three Blind Mice; Lago; Perilado; Sweat Meat; and three others. ARISTA/FREEDOM AL 1026 $6.98.

Performance: Richly rewarding Recording: Very good

Randy Weston is now fifty-one. He began playing professionally in 1949, made his Newport debut as one of the "New Faces" in 1958, and established himself firmly on the U.S. jazz scene before going to Africa in 1967. For the next few years, he spent most of his time in Africa exploring his musical roots and running a popular jazz haunt in Tangier. We saw him back home from time to time (but all too infrequently) during those years, and we noted the change in his music as it began to reflect his North African experiences, splendidly blending the influences of Thelonious Monk and Tangier.

Duke Ellington and his sister Ruth produced this album in 1965 for release on a new Ellington-owned label. But the label never saw light and the tapes have remained on the shelf until now. Though Weston had made a short trip to Nigeria in 1961, his African experience hadn't really begun when he record-
ed these trio and solo selections, so what we hear is Randy Weston's Monkish, Ellingtonian rag-bop (to coin a descriptive term), a delightful amalgam that is dated only because Weston himself has moved ahead. Side one, the trio side, is my favorite, especially the very unorthodox, humor-filled version of Three Blind Mice, but the solo tracks are not to be ignored. A fine release.

C.A.

COLLECTIONS


Performance: Very good Recording: Variable

Here is as complete a package of the principal songs and performers that made up the New Orleans pop and soul sound of the late Fifties and early Sixties as one is likely to find. These live performances were recorded in the spring of 1976 during the rhythm-and-blues showcase portion of the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival, which explores the diversified and always fascinating musical culture of that remarkable city.

The shaping personality of the album is Allen Toussaint, not only for his own performances but because he wrote most of the songs that many of the other artists sing. He also produced, with his teammate Marshall Sehorn, the original hit recordings, which are scattered in the catalogs of half a dozen small labels. His stamp is on the work of the great Lee Dorsey, Ernie K-Doe, and Irma Thomas, all present here.

The exceptions to Toussaint's influence are Earl King, Professor Longhair, and Lightnin' Hopkins. Earl King's material is his own, and it is didactic, sly, and funny, notably on Trick Bag. Lightnin' Hopkins is from Texas; he is practically the last of the major Delta blues singers in the classic tradition. His vocals are as crusty and forceful as ever, but I miss his distinctive acoustic guitar playing (he uses an electric model here). Roy Byrd, a/k/a Professor Longhair, was one of the prime vocal influences in the city before Toussaint's time. Fats Domino owes chunks of his piano style to Byrd—who, in turn, owes some of his, especially the arpeggios, to the Chicago boogie player Jimmy Yancey. Byrd's Mardi Gras in New Orleans, a local anthem, is always exciting to hear.

Toussaint's own set includes the charming, joshing Play Something Sweet (Brickyard Blues) and the moving Freedom for the Stallion. Though Toussaint hasn't won wide popular acceptance as a singer, he is delicate and subtle in his phrasing, and altogether an appealing performer.

The sound quality on this album varies, but these discs are an indispensable showcase and summary of a rewarding and innovative period in American popular music.

J.V.
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BEETHOVEN: Octet in E-flat, Op. 103; March in B-flat (WoO 29); Rondino in E-flat (WoO 25); Sextet in E-flat, Op. 71; Quintet in E-flat. Alexander Zellner, who extrapolated from the materials at hand the missing portion of the first movement. The scoring is for the odd combination of oboe, three horns, and bassoon, though the autograph score does contain an indication—but no music—for clarinet. Even so, the story of these movements is an interesting one. The sextet was written for the manuscript of Beethoven's Opus 71, but the opus was never published. The sextet was then lost until it was found in a drawer, ranging from a song setting with piano accompaniment of Goethe's Der Fischer (in French) to a full-scale choral-orchestral Fantasy on Shakespeare's Tempest. The key to the beginning and end of the idea’s fixe motif of the Beloved from the Symphonie Fantastique is the narrative and commentary between and during the musical numbers. The end result is a business intended by Berlioz to be a stage presentation, not a concert item.

BERLIOZ: Lélia, or the Return to Life, Op. 14b. Nicolai Gedda (tenor), Lélia; Charles Burles (tenor), Horatio; Jean van Gorp (baritone), Brigand Captain; Jean Topard (narrator). French National Orchestra and Chorus, Jean Martinon cond. ANGEL © SQ-37139 $7.98.

Performance: Good
Recording: Excellent

As a not inconsiderable pendant to a distinguished and wholly authentic realization of Berlioz’s Symphonie Fantastique, the late Jean Martinon has also left us a recording of the amazing concoction Berlioz dreamt up and flung together as a sequel to it. In this vocal and instrumental work, the young artist is depicted as awakening from his nightmarish narcotic slumber and treating us not only to a lengthy spoken confession but also to a kind of variety concert of works from his desk drawer, ranging from a song setting with piano accompaniment of Goethe’s Der Fischer (in French) to a full-scale choral-orchestral Fantasy on Shakespeare’s Tempest. The key to the beginning and end of the idea’s fixe motif of the Beloved from the Symphonie Fantastique and the narrative and commentary between and during the musical numbers hold the whole business together—a business intended by Berlioz to be a stage presentation, not a concert item.

In 1969 Pierre Boulez—with John Mitchell, John Shirley-Quirk, Jean-Louis Barrault—made a recording of Lélia, or the Return to Life, Op. 14b, with Jean van Gorp as the Brigand Captain and Jean Topard as the narrator. This recording was made in 1969 and released by Angel Records as SQ-37139. It has since been reissued by the same label.

In this recording, the performance is praised for its clarity and emotional depth, with the singers and orchestra coming together to create a cohesive whole. The recording itself is noted for its sound quality, with a warm and rich tone that captures the essence of the score. Overall, this is a highly recommended recording for fans of Berlioz and lovers of great classical music.
as narrator, and the London Symphony Orchestra and Chorus—gave us the first stereo recording of Lélio. I was disturbed then by a sharp contrast between the dead studio ambiance accorded Baaull's narration and the spacious acoustics of the musical numbers. In the initial entrance of the chorus and orchestra, however, the change in ambiance makes an enormous dramatic effect. This effect is not realized in the Martinon recording, but the overall contrast between narrator and performing musicians is less disturbing.

As narrator, Baaull is an older and perhaps somewhat embittered protagonist, whereas Jean Topard is very much the young post-composer, hopelessly enamored of his beloved and of his music. Martinon's tenors, Gedda and Burles, are both superior to the narrator's, with Stéphane Sénart, being even more disappointing at times. In the last scene Sénart seems deliberately to create a somewhat more poetic atmosphere than Boulez.

Personally, I'd be very happy to have the Tempest Fantasy as a separate piece and to chuck the rest of Lélio. It's a fascinating and important period piece, but not one to live with unless you are a Berlioz "freak" who has to have everything.

D.H.

BRAHMS: Alto Rhapsody, Op. 53 (see WAGNER)


Performance: Big and bluff
Recording: Close-up

In my review of Van Cliburn's very appealing recording of the Handel Variations (RCA ARL1-2280) last October, I mentioned that "the final fugue might have done with a bit more robustness, as in Asiggins Aniev's" highly competitive version (Saraphim S-60649). "Well, robustness seems the dominant factor in Garrick Ohlsson's performance: he takes a broad-scaled, rather earthy view of the work and builds to greater and greater climax. I wonder if the end of the final variation, just before the fugue, ought to be quite so shattering. I wonder too if Ohlsson really meant Variation IX to be quite so stolid; here both Cliburn and Aniev's let the music take wing, and in the very first variation both of them (Aniev's especially) provide a sense of lift and exhilaration that Ohlsson seems deliberately to eschew, as he does in some of the later variations in which wit is indicated—as if to insist that this is Brahms and so ought not to show any trace of the elfin character we associate with Mendelssohn. Little is left in reserve by the time we get to the fugue, which comes off as rather matter of fact, with the counter-melody in its opening bars all but inaudible. The same big and bluff quality characterizes the overide performance of the Paganini Variations, and the close-up recording gives it further gratuitous emphasis. Actually, there is much to enjoy on both sides (in a live recital either of these performances would surely bring the audience to its feet), but there is little of the poetry Ohlsson has shown in his emphasis on Chopin and Liszt—except, curiously, in Book II of the Paganini Variations, in which his playing demonstrates exactly what one has missed in the preceding side and a half. Aniev's similar coupling remains for me the most satisfying such package listed in Schwann, and at the Seraphim price it is a genuine bargain.

R. F.
met's London disc lacks only the innocuous Habanera and has by and large the most polished (but not necessarily the most vital) performances and the richest sound. Pierre Deremi's London disc lacks only the innocuous and the ambient four-channel sound is most rowdy syncopations of the Joyeuse Marche, all the hair-trigger precision demanded by the Paris Opera players perform well, if not with middle as far as performance goes. Mari's is the best combination of spirit and sonics. Paul Paray's Detroit recordings for Mercury includes all but the Habanera and have the best combination of spirit and sonics. This new release falls somewhere in the middle as far as performance goes. Mari's Paris Opera players perform well, if not with all the hair-trigger precision demanded by the rowdy syncopations of the Joyeuse Marche, and the ambient four-channel sound is most agreeable. I would not be without the Deremi disc, simply because of the Fête Polonaise, and I prefer Paray's Suite Pastorale over all the others, but for the other works I lean toward the Mari versions. D.H.

**DIAMOND: Quintet for Clarinet, Two Violas, and Two Cellos (see HARRIS)**

**DUCHAMP: The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors, Even (Erratum Musical). CAGE: 27.10.554, for a Percussionist. Donald Knaack (percussion). FINNADAR SR 9017 $6.98.**

Performance: Clever
Recording: Excellent

Although it is not very well known, it seems that Marcel Duchamp invented aleatory or chance music—in 1913! Ironically, only now, years after John Cage (perhaps partly under the influence of Duchamp) reintroduced the notion, has anyone attempted to realize Duchamp's scheme. Scheme is the right word: little numbered balls representing pitches or tone colors are sent down a funnel into little wagons, which stand for intervals of time. From these operations a score is constructed that is meant to be realized on a player piano, mechanical organ, or some new mechanical instrument. Donald Knaack, the talented young percussionist on this release, did not really follow Duchamp's requirement for a mechanical instrument—which Duchamp wanted in order to "suppress the virtuoso intermediary"—but he did come up with new ones. He constructed twenty-four glass instruments, mostly of indefinite pitch, out of which he coaxes various pleasing sounds.

The Cage work—the title is of course its length—was conceived in 1956, the "classical" period of chance music. Cage specifies four categories of percussion instruments: metal, wood, skin, and anything else—as well as generous dollops of silence. Once again Knaack has more or less invented his own instruments. The "anything else" is skillfully blended electronic percussion sounds, and the silences are some very quiet disc surfaces. Since Cage's silences are intended to provoke awareness of the outside world, I'm happy to report that in my listening his silences were filled by the very lovely sound of a gentle summer rain.

E.S.

**ELGAR: Cello Concerto in E Minor, Op. 85; Enigma Variations, Op. 36 (see Best of the Month, page 82)**


Performance: Conscientious
Recording: Good


Performance: Brilliant
Recording: Soviet Fifties mono

Of all the unlikely piano repertoire to turn up at the same time, the Glazounov piano sonatas stand pretty much at the top of my list! Both date from 1901 and show the once-brilliant prodigy well into the epigonic Liszt-Schumann musical language of his later years. The craftsmanship is brilliant and unfailingly fluent, but the music offers genuine substance only in fits and starts, as in the slow movement of the First Sonata and in the first movement and final pages of the Second (which strikes me as the better of the two). The Theme and Variations is more Slavic in tone than the sonatas but, like them, offers highly effective keyboard writing. The variation treatment, however, is either decorative-melodic or of the genre type (the waltz in No. 8 and the lullaby in No. 9).

West-Coast pianist Richard Tetley-Kardos works his way through the variations and the First Sonata in conscientious if not always technically impeccable fashion, and the recording is respectable enough. However, a far more persuasive case for the music is made by the Viennese-born Canadian virtuoso An-... (Continued on page 138)
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COLUMBIA

DIAMOND: Quintet for Piano, Clarinet, and String Quartet. DIAMOND: Quintet for Clarinet, Two Violas, and Two Cellos. Lawrence Solol (clarinet); Peter Basquin (piano), Carol Webb, Ira Weller (violins); Louise Schulman, Linda Moss (violas); Timothy Eddy, Fred Sherry (cellos). GRENADILLA GS 1007 $6.95 (from GRENADILLA Records, Inc., P.O. Box 289, New York, N.Y. 10010).

Performance: Splendid Recording: Very fine
Roy Harris, like the young Brahms, came into serious composing with a fully formed musical language, one that has become more refined and sometimes more elaborate through the years, but which really has not changed appreciably over the span of half a century. Like that of Brahms, the work of Roy Harris cannot be mistaken for anyone else’s. The same devices encountered in the later Harris pieces are found in the four movements of the concerto: contrast between song and dance elements woven into an often modal harmonic texture, considerable use of fugal and variation technique, and a continual searching out of long melodic lines. There are elements of clumsiness and sprawl in this music by the twenty-nine-year-old Harris, who was then still studying with Nadia Boulanger, but there are also undeniable rhythmic power and expressive content pressing much of what was to come in later years, most notably in his Third and Fifth Symphonies. David Diamond also had a spell of postgraduate study with Boulanger, and, like Harris, he has been an extremely prolific composer. In his forty years of composing, Diamond has worked in a variety of styles, from the open diatonic manner of the deservedly popular Ronds for String Orchestra (regrettably not currently available on records) to the dense post-Bartókian language of the Fourth String Quartet (once available on Epic). After a long hiatus, Diamond’s work again seems to be finding its way onto discs.

The quintet on this new release was put to paper just before the Fourth String Quartet and clearly shows, in its use of such devices as snap-pizzicato and pizzicato-glissando, the influence of the Bartók quartets Diamond had been restudying at the time. As Diamond points out in the sleeve notes, scoring for violas and cellos instead of the usual string quartet was intended to darken the string texture—and in consequence, I might add, throw the clarinet into higher relief. While the end movements are fairly dense in texture and need repeated listening for full assimilation, (Continued on page 141)

STEREIO REVIEW
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The strongest performance in the set is that of the greatest of the seven works, the Pathétique (the vehicle, incidentally, for Rostropovich’s U.S. conducting debut). It is obviously deeply felt and enormously forceful, but also astonishingly refined, with the musical values never subverted for the sake of drama. Tempos are virtually ideal, phrasing is firm and unflussy, and episodes come together to form an archlike sequence. The march, all too often set forth with ceremonial deliberate- ness, is fleet and flaming, almost frightening in its sweep, charged with spontaneity but never slapdash, perhaps the closest rival yet to what Karajan achieved in his old Viennese recording on Columbia. In the finale Rostropovich gets every drop of real pathos without distorting the line or stretching the rhythm: there is dignity here as well as intensity and great conviction.

At the other end of the spectrum in terms of persuasiveness is Rostropovich’s account of the Fifth, which is off-putting in the extreme because of the maddeningly slow tempos in the first two movements and in the introduction and coda of the finale. “I interpret the music in this way,” Rostropovich says, “because it is the interpretation I choose—not because I am ignorant.” One would never suggest ignorance on the part of so obviously accomplished a musician, but his view of the Fifth is one that I suspect will not go down well with most listeners, for all the beautiful playing and attention to detail. (It must be said that throughout the set the London Philharmonic sounds every bit the virtuoso ensemble it was under Beecham in the 1930’s, and the sound is the most gorgeous Angel has given us since the label began pressing in this country—equally impressive, I think, in two channels and in four.)

Between these two extremes are brilliant, powerful, and poetic realizations of the Fourth Symphony and Manfred, both perhaps on the same level as the fine realization of the Pathétique, and accounts of the three early symphonies which, if less than ideal, reflect respect for not inconsiderable substance of these works as well as art and the fairy-tale quality that links them with Tchaikovsky’s great ballet scores. Of the early works, the First comes off most successfully, the Second is fi-

Rostropovich Conducts the Tchaikovsky Symphonies

MSTISLAV ROSTROPOVICH, one of the world’s most admired cellists for nearly three decades, was virtually unknown as a conductor until 1970, when Angel released his recording of Tchaikovsky’s opera Eugene Onegin (SRC-4115). After making his American conducting debut in an all-Tchaikovsky program with the National Symphony Orchestra in Washington on March 5, 1975, he was invited to succeed Antal Dori as music director of that orchestra, and he has now begun his first season in that position. His conductorship has so far included only Ros- troy entries in addition to Onegin: an Angel disc on which he is both soloist and conductor in a pair of Haydn concertos with the Acade- my of St. Martin-in-the-Fields (S-37193), a smooth but not especially distinguished recording of Rimsky-Korsakov’s Scheherazade with the Orchestre de Paris (Angel S-37061), an unfortunate version of Puccini’s Tosca (Deutsche Grammophon 2707 087), and an im- passionate, downright magnificent one of Shostakovich’s Symphony No. 14 (Co- lumbia/Melodiya M 34507). Now Angel has brought out a seven-disc set of all the Tchai- kovsky symphonies (Nos. 1-6 plus Manfred) played by the London Philharmonic under Rostropovich, and on these fourteen sides all the elements alluded to above are present—passion, polish, idiosyncratic indulgences, and also magnificence. The proportions in this mixture will seem different to different listen- ers, but anyone with ears will find the set intriguing, and parts of it are a good deal more than that.

In comments printed in the annotative booklet with the set, Rostropovich tells us that it is Tchaikovsky whose music he loves best (always an unfashionable notion, but one that will endear him to those of us lucky enough to be on the same level as the fine realization of the Pathétique, and accounts of the three early symphonies which, if less than ideal, reflect respect for not inconsiderable substance of these works as well as art and the fairy-tale quality that links them with Tchaikovsky’s great ballet scores. Of the early works, the First comes off most successfully, the only disappointment being Rostropovich’s failure to delineate the melody of the big waltz in the third movement sharply enough (the tempo itself is perfect). The reading is very much like Bernstein’s, but even more affectionate and much more sumptuously re- corded. Very much like Bernstein’s, too, is Rostropovich’s handling of the Third, in which an unconvincingly slow tempo for the second movement mars an otherwise most at- tractive presentation.

In the Little Russian, surely the finest of the early symphonies, there is no problem with tempo—they are exceptionally well judged in all that demands of form and flow. There is a lot of effusion with dynamics, and I miss the impish- ness and sizzle various other conductors have brought out in the finale. If the ideal perform- ance of this adorable work seems elusive, the one recorded by Igor Markevitch and the London Symphony Orchestra was surely nothing less than that; whatever possessed Philips to delete it (835.390LY) I can’t imagine, but I would urge anyone who wants to en- joy the work to the fullest to scour the cutout bins for a copy.

Markevitch, in fact, is the one conductor whose complete Tchaikovsky cycle has struck me as not only attractive but indis- pensable. His aristocratic Fifth (Philips 802.703LY) and Sixth (835.126AY) are still listed in Schwann, but I understand they may be hard to find. His Little Russian was the performance of a lifetime, his First and Third hardly less, and all of his Tchaikovsky ought to be made available again. Among alter- natives to the Rostropovich set, Dorati’s recently reissued set of Nos. 1, 2, and 3 with the London Symphony Orchestra (Mercury SRI 3-77009) lacks the sonic brilliance of some later productions, and his tempo for the waltz in No. 3 is curiously slow; but the healthy solidity, elegant good humor, and all- round professionalism of his performances make one happy to return to them. Of the last three symphonies, of course, there are rec- ordings to every conceivable taste, and more than a few now of Manfred. When Angel gets around to making the Rostropovich discs available singly, I would recommend his Manfred as at least the equal of any other available now, his Pathétique for consideration beside those of Markevitch, Abbado, and Karajan, and Nos. 1 and 4 as also worthy of considera- tion in fields by no means small. Taken as a whole, the Angel set offers more rewards than disappointments (anyone who buys it, though, would probably want an additional version of No. 5), and it serves to validate Rostropovich’s credentials as a conductor of seriousness and skill as well as making as a case for an exceptionally intense, personal ap- proach. His first American recording, sched- uled for taping in Washington in mid-Novem- ber, is more Tchaikovsky—the Violin Con- certo with Isaac Stern for Columbia. But it will be interesting to hear later what he and the orchestra Dorati built can accomplish together in a broader repertoire.

—Richard Freed

the bitter-sweet scherzo and eloquent adagio speak very well for themselves on the first hearing.

With this first in a series of discs by musicians of the Long Island Chamber Ensemble of New York, Grenadilla Records has made a most auspicious start, not only in the choice of repertoire, but also in the performance and recording. This is just what unfamiliar music needs to become familiar. D.H.

**RECORDINGS OF SPECIAL MERIT**


Performance: Grand
Recording: Very good

Cziffra's discography now includes a good deal of Liszt, but in none of his other recordings does the combination of composer and interpreter seem so nearly ideal as in this grand realization of Liszt's epic travelogue in its entirety. In both style and technique the performance is consistently fascinating and convincing throughout the six sides. At every point the poetry, the fantasy, the flair and vastness of Liszt's inspiration are fully projected, making what is surely the strongest case for this cycle in recorded form to date, and for most of the individual numbers as well. The expansive Vallée d'Obermann, in the first book, may not boast the last degree of aristocratic understatement brought to that piece by Claudio Arrau (Philips 802.906LY), but it hangs together beautifully, reaching its dramatic crest with a convincingly natural momentum. Comparisons with Cziffra's own Philips recordings of the Sonetto 123 del Petrarca (from the second book) and Tarantella (from Venezia e Napoli) illustrate the progress he has made in terms of subtlety and refinement in the new complete recording of the Années; while both pieces are actually played a little faster and are more tightly controlled in the new versions, the overall effect is of greater freedom and fluidity. By adjusting the twelve frequency levels you can actually shape your sound to fit the shape of the room, and compensate for spaces and textures that interfere with sound. You can even tinker with the sound just for the fun of it: bring up a singer, lose a violin, actually re-mix your recording.

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**RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT**


Performance: Impressive
Recording: Good old sound

Why do the covers of historical recordings so generally lack the information we really need to become familiar. 

R.F.
were almost exact contemporaries (Sauer, born in 1862, was a year older than Weingartner; both died in 1942). Instead of the standard Grove's Dictionary liner-note stuff, I would like to know why this Teutonic twosome was in Paris recording the Liszt concertos with the Paris Conservatoire Orchestra in December 1938—almost on the eve of Hitler’s invasion of France!

Whatever the circumstances, this is an impressive pair of recordings. Liszt’s expansive orchestrations are a little cramped sonically, but, even so, the orchestra has plenty of presence. Anyway, the piano sound and the piano playing are what carry the day. Sauer was one of those big-time Lisztian pianists of the old school, and the scope of his playing comes through magnificently without any phony or phonographic rhetoric.

E.S.

MAHLER: Symphony No. 2, in C Minor (“Resurrection”). Marilyn Horne (mezzo-soprano); Carol Neblett (soprano); Chicago Symphony Chorus; Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Claudio Abbado cond. Deutsche Grammophon 2707 094 two discs $15.96.

Performance: Fiery
Recording: Resplendent

But for two considerations, this album would have rated a “Special Merit” tag. First, the playing surfaces of my review pressings were afflicted with an ungodly amount of grit and swish. Second, the off-stage band in the final movement is distant to the point of virtual inaudibility. These complaints aside, however, this is yet another remarkable recorded performance of Mahler’s Resurrection Symphony. The opening movement is imbued with a Toscanini fierceness and a taut discipline in performance that matches Solti’s yet doesn’t sound quite so up tight—there is just a shade more air between the notes. The Ländler is exquisitely detailed in its realization, with a fine flexibility of phrasing. Great care is taken in the phrasing of the scherzo and in the minutest details of contrapuntal interplay that separate the full orchestral outbursts. Marilyn Horne may not achieve quite the rapt quality of Janet Baker in Urlicht, but she comes very close in the nuanced delicacy of feeling that she displays. Abbado has the great sprawling finale under superb control from beginning to end (except for the apparent miscalculation with placement of the off-stage band), but it is the vocal portion of the rendition that is truly outstanding. Not only does Carol Neblett perform beautifully in the soprano part—but Margaret Hillis’ Chicago Symphony Chorus does itself proud from the hushed opening to the great male-choir summons, “Bereite dich . . .”

I trust that the final production pressings of this recording are better than what I received, for otherwise this set ranks with the finest. Prospective purchasers are going to have a very hard time choosing even the best two recorded performances of this score, let alone the best one.

D.H.

MARTINŮ: Trio for Flute, Cello, and Piano. Ingrid Dingfelder (flute); Jerome Carrington (cello); Anita Gordon (piano). ROREM: Book of Hours. Ingrid Dingfelder (flute); Martine Geliot (harp). CRI SD 362 $6.95.

Performance: First-rate
Recording: Very good

Bohuslav Martinů’s warmhearted trio, one of his most ingratiating works, has not been available on records for nearly a decade; it is especially welcome in this first-rate performance by Dingfelder, Carrington, and Gordon, who sound as if they have been playing it together all their lives and long ago fell completely in love with it. Dingfelder and Geliot have been playing Rorem’s Book of Hours all

(Continued on page 144)
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of its life: they commissioned the work, introduced it in New York in February 1976, and recorded it three days after the premiere. The title, as the headings of the eight subdivisions indicate ("Matins" through "Compline"), alludes to the canonical hours of Catholic worship. Rorem refers to the work as "songs without-words about memories of the Roman Church which, having been taboo to my Protestant childhood, always vaguely gave off a sense of sin." This performance must be regarded as uniquely authoritative and is unquestionably committed. Both sides benefit from fine sound.

Performance: First-rate
Recording: Troublesome

These are first-rate performances; the soloist's contributions are as good as the best, and the orchestral playing is especially refined. The sound quality of my copies was disappointing, however, with a suggestion of background waver and uncomfortable highs. As it happens, RCA has released two similar packages recently in which the performances yield even deeper pleasure and the sound is down-right sumptuous: one by Jean-Pierre Rampal (whose cadenzas Zukerman plays) with Theodor Guschlbauer conducting (FRL-1-5330) and the other by James Galway with Rudolf Baumgartner (ARL-1-2159).

MOZART: Concerto No. 10, in E-flat, for Two Pianos (K. 365); Piano Concerto No. 20, in D Minor (K. 466). André Previn (piano); Radu Lupu (piano, in K. 365); London Symphony Orchestra, André Previn cond. ANGEL □ SQ-37791 $7.98

Performance: Two pianos better
Recording: Excellent

Among the nine current recorded versions of Mozart's lightweight but altogether enchanting Two-Piano Concerto, this one ranks with the best. Radu Lupu is one of the best young Mozartists at the keyboard today, and Previn is a first-rate craftsman both at the piano and conducting. The composer's own cadenzas are used in the end movements.

In the great D Minor Concerto, Previn as soloist is fine in the end movements but a bit heavy-handed in the central Romance. (He uses the Beethoven cadenza for the first movement and his own somewhat more elaborate one for the finale.) Either Seikin/Szell on Columbia MS-6534 or Rubinstein/Wallenstein on RCA LSC-2635 offer both a lighter hand and more just pacing. Angel's recording job is excellent throughout, especially in the two-piano work.

D.H.
performance is a good one considering the difficulties involved in performing on old instruments, especially those harbored in museums where the performers scarcely have time to become familiar with them before they begin recording.

S.L.

MOZART: Songs (see JILL GOMEZ, Best of the Month, page 84)

NIELSEN: Clarinet Concerto, Op. 57; Flute Concerto; Violin Concerto, Op. 33; Symphonic Rhapsody (see Best of the Month, page 81)

OFFENBACH: La Grande Duchesse de Gérolstein. Régine Crespin (soprano), Grand Duchess; Alain Vanzo (tenor); Fritz; Charles Burles (tenor), Prince Paul; Claude Meloni (baritone), Baron Puck; Robert Massard (baritone), General Boum; François Loup (bass), Baron Greg; Mady Mesplé (soprano), Wanda; Tibert Raffali (tenor), Nepomuc; others. L'Orchestre et Choeurs de Toulouse. Michel Plasson cond. COLUMBIA M2 34576 two discs $13.98.

Performance: Lively and idiomatic
Recording: Good

La Grande Duchesse de Gérolstein is prime Offenbach, and an up-to-date version idiomatically performed by an expert cast is, of course, most welcome. This is a good performance, but I have some reservations. Régine Crespin would have been ideal in the title role ten to fifteen years ago. Her characterization of the eternally flirtatious Grand Duchess, who delivers outrageous lines with childlike innocence, is virtually perfect. Her spoken delivery is, in fact, a triumph of insinuating Gallic sexiness. Vocally, alas, much of her singing is labor and unsure in intonation, and it sometimes borders on Wagnerian heaviness.

The supporting roles are in excellent hands, and with artists of the caliber of Mady Mesplé and Charles Burles in relatively minor roles the casting is almost luxurious. Robert Massard imparts a dashing profile to General Boum, whom I have always regarded as a buffo character. The results are questionable dramatically but unexceptionable vocally.

Michel Plasson obviously has the skill to serve up Offenbach with spirit and style, but he does not yet have the flair to make the music sparkle with irresistible zest. Nor is this performance a model of choral and orchestral precision, though the offenses are never too damaging. The album comes with full text, translation, and unusually informative annotations by Richard Traubner.

G.J.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

PALESTRINA: Missa Aeterna Christi Munera; Oratio Jeremiae Prophetae; Sicut Cervus Deserat; Super Flumina Babylonis; O Bone Jesu. Pro Cantione Antiqua, London, Bruno Turner cond. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON ARCHIV 2533 322 $7.98, © 3310 322 $7.98. Performance: Unworldly
Recording: Beautiful

This is one of the most beautiful performances of Palestrina ever to reach records. It is sober and somber in its evenly paced tempos yet at the same time reveals an inner glow through phrasing and word expression. The Mass Aeterna Christi Munera, one of Palestrina's finest, is sung by only nine singers. The (Continued on page 148)
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**Quintessence:** a Rich Lode of Reissues

Until about five years ago the Pickwick label served as a vehicle for reissues from the Capitol catalog. But now Pickwick International has come up with a new assortment of recordings from various sources, and R. Peter Muñves (formerly marketing director for Columbia Masterworks, more recently head of RCA’s Red Seal) has created a new label for them—Quintessence—with a list price of $3.98 per disc. Of the twenty-two discs in the initial Quintessence release, half come from RCA and almost as many are drawn from the intriguing series RCA produced for Reader’s Digest between 1962 and 1968. A collection of music by Julius Fučík (1872-1916) comes from Supraphon by way of Telefunken, and a Beecham overture package is an EMI production that Pickwick circulated earlier (as SPC-4035) after its deletion as Capitol SG-7251. A few of the RCA items are of pre-stereo vintage, but among those as well as the later recordings there are some exceptional performances, and the loving care that has gone into their preservation becomes more stunningly evident as one proceeds from one disc to another.

Especially welcome is Monteux’s Debussy, and no matter that La Mer is not genuine stereo; it is too good a performance to be lost. The Nocturnes, in a most successful early stereo recording, are also outstanding. The third of Barbirolli’s three recordings of the Sibelius Second is not only his best, but by all odds one of the finest versions of that much-recorded work ever committed to tape. All of the Horenstein material is worthwhile. The Dvořák at last supersedes Horenstein’s memorable 1952 version for Vox; the straightforward, patrician Brahms and the brilliant Rachmaninoff with Earl Wild are among the best at any price, and the Tchaikovsky Fifth is gratifyingly sensible and dramatic. Neumann’s performance of Fučík’s The Entry of the Gladiators can only be compared with Toscannini’s of The Stars and Stripes Forever. The tuneful Marinarella Overture and Donausagen Waltz and the humorous piece called The Old Bear with a Sore Head are delightful discoveries on this disc. Fiedler’s Johann Strauss assortment, originally called “Mr. Strauss Comes to Boston,” is notable for the otherwise unrecorded Jubilee Waltz, which ends with a citation of The Star-Spangled Banner. Stokowski’s Swan Lake is rather faded now, but his Enesco/Liszt package is sensationally attractive, and Sir Thomas Beecham’s overtures collection commands a place of honor on any list.

It may seem odd that RCA has ceded the Digest material to Pickwick instead of issuing it on its own Gold Seal label as it did in Britain (the Brahms Fourth under Fritz Reiner issued here on AGL-1-1961 is from this source), and even more curious that some of the items on Quintessence continue to be available elsewhere—Boult’s Marche Slave on Odyssey 32 16-0238, Beecham’s Guzzi Lady and Corsaire overtures on Seraphim S-60134 and S-60084, respectively—but such things need not trouble us. What may annoy some shoppers is the misleading nature of some of the puffery on the jackets. “As happy a record as you will ever find,” reads the streamer on Boult’s Tchaikovsky ballets, but the November 1975 Gramophone, listed as the source of.
that line, contains no mention of this recording. A closer reading reveals that the quotation is from a review of a different Boult recording of a different Tchaikovsky work.

There is also a generous sprinkling of misspelled names and titles, and for some curious reason the Brahms First and the Berlioz and Mendelssohn overtures are the only works identified by opus number. The annotation for the Hungarian Rhapsodies implies that the one listed as "No. 2" is indeed the orchestral No. 2 ("that is, No. 12 in the keyboard edition"), but it is in fact the one that is really "the most celebrated of all," properly orchestral No. 4 but invariably designated by its original position as No. 2 in the enumeration of the piano series.

These documentary lapses are probably no worse than what happens on most labels these days, and in the more important matter of what is in the grooves this is an extremely worthwhile series. Whoever did the remastering deserves congratulations for a superb job.

Martinson's excellent L'Arlesienne (now minus the first three movements of Suite No. 2) sounds much smoother than in its previous incarnations on RCA, and the aforementioned Berlioz and Rossini under Beecham show an even more dramatic improvement over the still-current Seraphim editions. The surfaces, too, are for the most part exceptionally silent. No timings are printed, but dates are given for many of the recordings.

By the time these words appear in print there will have been subsequent Quintessence releases; if the high standards of these first discs are maintained, the label should be a safe bet for good listening.

—Richard Freed

QUINTESSENCE: INITIAL RELEASE

[All recordings are true stereo except for Monteux's La Mer and the recordings conducted by Stokowski (with members of the NBC Symphony) and by Fiedler, which are in artificial stereo. Each disc is $3.98.]


DEBUSSY: La Mer; Nocturnes. Boston Symphony, Pierre Monteux cond. PMC 7027.

FUCÍK: Marches, Waltzes, etc. Czech Philharmonic, Václav Neumann cond. PMC 7038.


RACHMANINOFF: Piano Concerto No. 2, in C Minor, Op. 18; Rhapsody on a Theme by Paganini, Op. 43. Earl Wild (piano); Royal Philharmonic, Jascha Horenstein cond. PMC 7006.


SIBELIUS: Finlandia; The Swan of Tuonela; Valse Triste; Pohjola's Daughter; Lemmin-

kainen's Return. Orchestra, Morton Gould cond. PMC 7022.


CLAIRE DE LUNE AND OTHER CLASSICS IN A ROMANTIC MOOD. Orchestra, Morton Gould cond. PMC 7025.

JALOUSIE AND OTHER CLASSICS IN A LATIN MOOD. Boston Pops, Arthur Fiedler cond.; orchestra, Morton Gould cond. PMC 7018.

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RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

REVUeltas: Janitzio; Caminos; Redes; Sensenaya; Itinerarios. New Philharmonia Orchestra, Eduardo Mata cond. RCA AR1-2320 $7.98.

Performance: Good to excellent
Recording: Not enough presence

Not since the demise of the MGM classical series has it been possible to obtain on a single disc a decently representative selection of the music of the gifted Mexican composer Silvestre Revueltas (1899-1940). If you can imagine Chabrier and Bartok combined, musically speaking, into a single colorful Mexican personage, you will have a rough idea of what Revueltas' music is all about. The Chabrier aspect comes out in the brilliant, garish picture-postcard pieces like Janitzio and Caminos (a first recording here). The Bartokian side comes through in the great Homenage a Garcia Lorca (not currently available on records) and the "geometric dance" Planos (once recorded on MGM). Having worked in theaters in the U.S., Revueltas well understood the requirements of the film and wrote a fine score for Paul Strand's The Wave, depicting life among impoverished Baja California fishermen, from which Redes (Nets) was extracted. The incantatory Sensenaya (Song to Kill a Snake) and the darkly brooding Itinerarios (Routes) display yet another facet of this remarkable musical creator. I would go so far as to guess that Aaron Copland, who spent much time in Mexico during the early 1930's, would not have written certain things into his Short Symphony or El Salon Mexico without some exposure to the work of Revueltas.

The performances here are well-received and vital, but they lack impact because of a microphone placement that deprivates Revueltas' ferocious rhythms and rowdy dissonances of the necessary cutting edge. Janitzio and Caminos suffer most, Redes and Itinerarios fare best. But don't let my reservations deter you. Revueltas' music is fascinating, and this disc is a good starting point.

D.H.

KOREM: Book of Hours (see MARTINU)

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT


Performance: Very good
Recording: Excellent

Here is an excellent group of nine middle-Baroque sonatas that are more akin to the patchwork canzonas of Frescobaldi than to the comparatively clear-cut church and chamber sonatas of Corelli. Made up of dramatically contrasted little sections, they are the very devil to hold together. Perhaps the most fascinating feature of these works is the marvelous sonorities they call for. The sonatas range from orchestrally conceived pieces contrasting three different choirs of instruments to soloistic works that approach the late-Baroque trio sonata.

Using original instruments, the Vienna Concentus Musicus produces a wide range of unusual and arresting timbres. There is not only a wonderful blend of pithy Baroque sounds, but also a wide variety of solo playing by Alice Harnoncourt on the violin, Don Smithers on the zink, and Otto Fleischmann on the dulzian. Despite some problems of intonation on the part of the brass, the historical style of playing of the Concentus Musicus is perfect for this music. One feels, in fact, that there is some kind of spiritual kinship between this Viennese group and this early Viennese composer.

S.L.

SCHMIDT: Piano Quintet in G Major; Variations on a Theme by Josef Labor. Vienna Philharmonia Quintet. LONDON STS 15401 $3.98.

Performance: Comfortable
Recording: Very good

The Vienna Philharmonia Quintet would appear to be as flexible in its make-up as the Vienna Octet: Eduard Mrazek is the pianist in both works here, but in the Labor Variations second violinist Alfred Staar is replaced by clarinetist Alfred Prinz, the other strings being Wolfgang Poduschka (violin), Josef Staar (viola), and Wolfgang Herzer (cello). Poduschka, in his annotation, gives a very clear background for the music: Schmidt had not written much chamber music for the piano until he was prevailed upon by his friend Paul Wittgenstein, the famous one-armed pianist for whom Ravel, Strauss, Prokofiev, and others composed various works. Schmidt decided that the restrictions implicit in one-handed playing gave the strings a better chance of balancing against the piano and he turned out some lovely works, including this piano quintet and two other quintets with clarinet instead of second violin, one of the latter being the source of the variations recorded here. After the Nazi takeover Wittgenstein could no longer perform in Austria, and Friedrich Wührer arranged these works for two-handed performance; Wührer's arrangements are followed in the performances recorded here. While neither work is especially remarkable, both are quietly and intimately attractive. "Agreeable" is probably the most fitting adjective for the quintet; the variations come across as a somewhat stronger work, but no less endearing, with reminders of Schubert and Brahms in the ingratiating theme itself, in the expansive nature of the five variations, and in the gorgeous writing for the clarinet.

Both works receive comfortable, affectionate performances and benefit further from an exceptionally rich sonority.

R.F.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

SCHUMANN: Album for the Young; Kinderszenen. Alexis Weissenberg (piano). CON-

STEGE REVIEW
As David Hall points out in his copious notes for this album, there are two types of children’s music: the kind that is meant to remind us of children and perhaps also to afford pleasure to young listeners, and the kind composed specifically for children to perform. Both are to be found here. First come the thirteen pieces known as the Kinderszenen. These familiar melodic treasures, with their tonal pictures of hobby-horses, flickering firelight, games of hide-and-seek, and the popular Träumerie, were written to evoke the special moments and moods of childhood. The Album for the Young, on the other hand—at least the first eighteen of the forty-three miniatures in the series—was written specifically for seven-year-old Marie Schumann, one of the composer’s three children, to encourage her to practice. But you don’t have to be seven years old to enjoy listening to the Album for the Young. It abounds in small-scale delights: marches for toy soldiers, humming songs, spring songs, harvest songs, a sprightly number called Echoes from the Theater, a tender affection and an alertness to shifting moods, making the long program seem less long than it is. Every once in a while, too, when the opportunity arises, he comes out with one of those bursts of pianistic power that have made his reputation. Best of all, he insists of six adagios, is a stark, death-obsessed work. This is grim stuff: no ray of light, no redemption, no affirmation of the spirit. How ironic that the greatest Soviet composer could be fatal to the pristine beauty of these musical moments.

P.K.

The Delights of Gerald Finzi

From the British Lyrita catalog HNH Records has secured a lovely collection of concerted works by Gerald Finzi (1901-1956), herefore known chiefly for his songs and the exquisite cantata Dies Natalis. Combine the English folk quality of the George Butterworth orchestral rhapsodies with the arisocric lyricism of early Baroque music and you will have some idea of the tonal language of the music on this disc. The Eclogue, dating from the Twenties, is a beautifully executed neo-Bach essay. The Grand Fantasia and Toccata begins with an extended piano solo—a kind of take-off on the Bach Chromatic Fantasy—and then launches into a contest of free contrapuntal fun and games with the orchestra. The 1949 Clarinet Concerto is sheerest delight from beginning to end, with a contrast of assertive and idyllic elements in the first movement, intense lyricism in the second, and quiet exuberance in the finale. The performances are the last word in elegance and the recording is faultless, as are the playing surfaces (mirabile dictu).

—David Hall

FINZI: Concerto for Clarinet and String Orchestra, Op. 31; Grand Fantasia and Toccata for Piano and Orchestra, Op. 38; Eclogue for Piano and String Orchestra, Op. 10. John Denman (clarinet); Peter Katin (piano); New Philharmonia Orchestra, Vernon Handley cond. HNH 4031 $7.98 (from HNH Distributors, Ltd., P.O. Box 222, Evanston, Ill. 60204).


Performance: Russian
Recording: Excellent

Lazar Berman captures splendidly the nervousness and violent mood contrasts in Schumann’s fast movements. His interpretations are in the high-Romantic manner, without going overboard into mere mannerism. Perhaps the recording is to blame, but I would have liked a bit more warmth of tone in the slow movements; certainly there is no lack of warmth in his phrasing, either in the charming aria of Op. 11 or in the “song without words” andantino of Op. 22. Berman does a marvelously mercurial job with the scherzo of Op. 22, by the way. I am not myself a passionate enthusiast of the Schumann piano sonatas, finding the terse Op. 22 by and large the most successful of the three, but it should be noted that this is the only currently available single disc that pairs Op. 11 and Op. 22, certainly a logical coupling.

D.H.


Performance: High Romantic
Recording: Good

The Delights of Gerald Finzi

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DEAN DIXON (1915-1976): expansive, ingratiating Weber symphonies


Performance: Wagner, Brahms best
Recording: Very good

Wagner's lush, lovely settings of five poems by Mathilde Wesendonk, with their Tristanesque overtones, have not gone begging for distinguished recorded performances, whether with the original piano accomplishments or with Felix Mottl's expert orchestrations. Dame Janet Baker's rendition belongs right up there with the best, which is to say with the likes of Flagstad and Tiana Lemnitz. Brahms' deeply affecting Goethe setting has likewise had memorable recorded performances from Marian Anderson and Kathleen Ferrier, and more recently from Aafje Heynys and Christa Ludwig. Dame Janet's comparably fine interpretation has been available since 1971 as a filler on the Adrian Boult disc of the Brahms Second Symphony. Heard against the Heynys and Ludwig recordings, hers emerges as the most effective in emphasizing dramatic detail, as in the stress she puts on "Menschenhass" (the key word in the second verse of Goethe's text and one which the two other singers throw away). In all the Richard Strauss songs but the Liebesabend, however, Dame Janet finds herself in direct competition with Elisabeth Schwarzkopf (Angel S-36347, S-36643), and her more heavy-bodied voice is no match for Schwarzkopf's in the expressive flexibility and mercurial agility this music calls for.

Sir Adrian Boult is, as always, the ideal artistic collaborator, and the recorded sound is altogether superb.

D.H.

RECORDINGS OF SPECIAL MERIT
WEBER: Symphony No. 1, in C Major, Op. 19 (J. 50); Symphony No. 2, in C Major (J. 51). Prague Chamber Orchestra, Dean Dixon cond. SUPRAPHON 1 10 1635 $7.98.

Performance: Expansive
Recording: Warm
WEBER: Symphony No. 1, in C Major, Op. 19 (J. 50); Symphony No. 2, in C Major (J. 51);
(Continued on page 160)
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Serafim's "The Art of Lotte Lehmann" is the most generous collection ever assembled—in the U.S., at least—of, well, the art of Lotte Lehmann (1888-1977). It is still far from being truly representative, with its emphasis heavily slanted toward opera, but for a singer of Lehmann's exceptional versatility and abundant recorded legacy, anything on a broader scale would require several volumes.

The recordings included here cover the period from 1916, when Lehmann joined the Vienna Opera after six successful seasons at Hamburg, to 1933, the year before her Metropolitan debut. These were certainly among her peak years vocally, and these recordings already display the cherished earmarks of her interpretive style as well.

Perhaps the first quality that emerges from hearing the entire sequence is Lehmann's unerring command of style: her Mozart was as distinctively right as was her Wagner or Massenet. That virtually all the selections are rendered in German does not seem to matter—Lehmann's way of singing was not particularly Germanic; rather, it was—if such a word may be applied—humanistic. A classic legato was its underlying strength, assuring a smooth and undiminished art but fading vocal resources. What will make a difference, in terms of swaying a decision to buy, is the additional material in the specially priced RCA set. The overture and march from Weber's incidental music for Schiller's Turandot are both built on the theme Hindemith used in his Metamorphosis, and Weber's own use of it proves to be no less enchanting. And there is the Frager disc of the concertos.

Malcolm Frager is one of the very few pianists active now, and probably the only one of his stature, to include the Weber concertos in his repertoire. He has been playing them for years (the tasteful cadenza in No. 2 is his own) and has shown himself a spirited and affectionate advocate. Here he enjoys first-rate collaboration from the North German Radio Orchestra under Marc Andreaka, and the recording itself, originated by SEON, is richly performed.

Besides the unique warmth and humanity that shine through these brief characterizations of Agathe, Eva, Sieglinde, Mignon, Charlotte, and other long-admired roles in her repertoire, we rediscover Lehmann's special brand of femininity and her total involvement in the characters she portrayed. Her "Adieu, notre petite table" from Manon is delivered through audible tears that can no longer be fought back at the final phrase. Remarkable, too, is the "Dahin, dahin möcht' ich" passage in Mignon's "Kennst du das Land," in which a childlike character seems to awaken to maturity womanhood. It should be added that those who cherish memories only of Lehmann's final performing years, when she sang with undiminished art but fading vocal resources, may be surprised at the tonal freedom and security of the younger Lehmann—the high tessitura of Eva's "O Sachs, mein Freund" is only one example.

There are a few duplications here of earlier LP releases (Serafim 60060 and Angel COLO 112, deleted), but also several LP firsts. Neither "Du bist der Lenz" ("Die Walküre") nor the two Marschallin monologues (Der Rosenkavalier) come from the respective complete recordings, but were made several years earlier. Two rare duets are also included. The one from Die Meistersinger's second act, dimly recorded in 1916, combines Lehmann's coquettish Eva with the wise and jovial Sachs of the colorful and at times impeccable Michael Bohnen. The duet from Tosca's third act (recorded in 1927) is perhaps the weakest entry in the lot: Lehmann's contribution is merely routine, and Jan Kiepura's Cavaradossi is opulent but undiscerned.

The vocal richness noticeable in the operatic recordings is apparent in the songs too. Unfortunately, following the quaint preferences of the period, these are accompanied by a trio (piano and strings) or a string ensemble—very discreet, to be sure, but still objectionable. The recorded sound is acceptable; I doubt the fairly primitive masters could have yielded anything better. John Coveney has supplied affectionate recollections of Lehmann in the notes, and the listings, for once, include the recording dates. A fine tribute indeed.

—George Jellinek

THE ART OF LOTTE LEHMANN. Arias from The Marriage of Figaro (Mozart); Der Freischütz (Weber); Tannhäuser, Lohengrin, Die Walküre, Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg (Wagner); Mignon (Thomas); Faust (Gounod); The Tales of Hoffmann (Offenbach); Andrea Chénier (Giordano); Jocelyn (Godard); The Tote Stadt (Korngold); Die Fledermaus (Johann Strauss); Manon, Werther (Massenet); Manon. Lescaut, La Bohème, Tosca, Madame Butterfly, Turandot (Puccini); Der Rosenkavalier, Arabella (Richard Strauss). Songs by Richard Strauss, Brahms, Schumann, and Schubert. Lotte Lehmann (soprano); various orchestras, ensembles, and conductors. SERAPHIM IB-6105 two discs $7.96.


Performance: Crisp and affectionate

Recording: Very good

The late Dean Dixon left us few recordings, and none other as rewarding as this lovely valedictory disc. "Ingratiating" would seem to be the operative term here, for Dixon's expansive approach stresses the Schubertian qualities in the music—such as when Weber himself was only twenty), and it is aptly complemented by the Czech engineers' warm, if not particularly bright, sonority frame. Like Victor Desarzens and Wilfred Boettcher before him, Dixon paces the andante of the First Symphony more like an adagio, and the broader tempo seems to suit the texture of the piece more effectively than Schonzheler's true andante—which, curiously, makes for heaviness. Both conductors are abetted by fine playing from their respective associates.

Dixon's expansiveness serves the Second Symphony less well; except for the slow movement, Schonzheler's greater drive and crispness are more fetching. In the menuetto Dixon is simply too slow, as if perhaps he felt the proportions of that tiny movement had to be enlarged. Schonzheler, using his own edition of the score (Eulenburg, 1970), takes a different tack, performing the menuetto very briskly and proceeding to the finale without pause. He gives his reasons for the attacca and they make sense, though I can't see that it makes a great deal of difference one way or the other. What will make a difference in terms of swaying a decision to buy, is the additional material in the specially priced RCA set. The overture and march from Weber's incidental music for Schiller's Turandot are both built on the theme Hindemith used in his Metamorphosis, and Weber's own use of it proves to be no less enchanting. And there is the Frager disc of the concertos.

Malcolm Frager is one of the very few pianists active now, and probably the only one of his stature, to include the Weber concertos in his repertoire. He has been playing them for years (the tasteful cadenza in No. 2 is his own) and has shown himself a spirited and affectionate advocate. Here he enjoys first-rate collaboration from the North German Radio Orchestra under Marc Andreaka, and the recording itself, originated by SEON, is richer than the bright but hard sound RCA provides for Schonzheler's less ornamented. I would not want to be without Dixon's warm-hearted realization of the First Symphony, but Frager's concertos and the Turandot items make the RCA set quite irresistible.

R.F.
Performance: Fast but felicitous
Recording: Excellent

The weary old argument about whether the works of Johann Sebastian Bach should be transcribed for the modern orchestra or played only on the instruments indicated by the composer would seem to be outmoded by now. You can have your Bach on records these days however you prefer him, and for those of us who relish those supposedly inappropriate transcriptions by Stokowski and others this album of “Symphonic Bach” is bound to be enjoyable. Actually, Stokowski was more faithful than most arrangers when it comes to respecting the effects Bach wanted, as in his famous version of the Toccata and Fugue in D Minor, originally for organ. Holst’s string treatment of the Fugue à la Gigue, in contrast, lends the music a distinctly English accent, while Lucien Cailliet’s setting of the Little Fugue in D Minor sounds rather Gallic in style. Sigismund Bachrich clothes passages of works for violin strives to evoke the period without really succeeding, and Walton’s arrangement of Sheep May Safely Graze, drawn from his ballet score The Wise Virgins, speaks in Walton’s own idiom with little of the Baroque texture. No matter. Bach’s perfectly proportioned inventions sound good wearing almost anything, and the Boston Pops is at its brisk—perhaps too brisk—best in these lively performances under Arthur Fiedler, whose hallmark, as usual, is the vital sheen he manages to cast over all the music. Not for purists, certainly, but a pleasant program from start to finish.

P.K.


Performance: Delightful
Recording: Clarion clear

Despite the misleading album title (for “Elizabethan” read “English” and extend “contemporary” to include a span from Dowland to Vaughan Williams), this is a delightful collection of original music and arrangements for recorders, alone and supported by piano, lute, or harpsichord. Perhaps the most attractive feature is the solo recorder playing of the late David Munrow, which is characterized by an utter purity of sound, precision of pitch and rhythm, appropriate ornamentation, and subtle expressive nuance. His style was simple and straightforward, rigorously avoiding the “cute” frills so often applied to this instrument and its repertoire. The miracle is that Munrow was able to instill this style in his colleagues, so that his spirit is always present in their playing.

Munrow sounds best here accompanied by harpsichord or lute. Particularly enjoyable are the rare and charming sonatas by William Williams and James Paisible, both fine composers who bridged the gap between Purcell and Handel’s arrival in England. When Munrow is playing over the thick modern piano writing of Ralph Vaughan Williams and Edmund

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Great Sopranos of the Century


Performance: Irresistible
Recording: Varied

This collection is a worthy counterpart to Seraphim's "Great Tenors of the Century" (60206), though the selections are less imagina- tively chosen. In fact, they are all drawn from various Angel discs once available in the "Great Artists of the Century" series. No matter. Every one of these singers qualifies as "great," though not all of them are sopranos-Conchita Superva was a mezzo. Characteristic samples of the art of the legen- dary divas Luisa Tetrazzini and Nellie Mel- ba illustrate the exuberance and glittering technique of the former and the somewhat mechanical perfection of the latter. Neither was noted for faultless musicality, but theirs was a tolerant age in such matters. I would_...
WHERE HOME IS: Life in Nineteenth-Century Cincinnati, Crossroads of the East and West: Root: Where Home Is. Root/Granits: The Old Canoe. Morris/Russell: A Life in the West. Peters (attrib. or arr.): Old Rosin the Reddy bore becomes, thanks to agile teamwork, and the program, with Ne-wind family, and the program, with Neville Marriner drawing exquisite sounds from his Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields, works in his favor. What might have been a reedy bore becomes, thanks to agile teamwork, a real musical experience. P.K.

SТОКОВСКИЙ'S Wagner

Stokowski's Wagner! What a thrill! The late maestro's programs and recordings of excerpts from the music dramas introduced a whole generation of Americans to the German master's fire and poetry. I remember a 78 of the Tristan music that enthralled me long before I could or would have been able to get into an opera house. Stokowski was often criticized for his musical infidelities, his emphasis on lush sound, his romanticism. But Wagner was, of course, the man who introduced that kind of music-making; he is said to have been the first to conduct rubatos (and in Beethoven, no less). There never was any question in my mind about the rightness of Stokowski's kind of Wagnerism.

Well, Stokowski was still at it right up to the end, and I am happy to report that it sounds as right as ever. Time, taste, and, no doubt, RCA did not permit him to indulge himself in one of his old "symphonic syntheses"; except for the Meistersinger sections, which are interwoven, these are straight-up excerpts—and choice ones they are. Working with top English musicians, Stokowski is here as good as Tristanesque as he is in the cornball thriller music of Rienzi. Best of all is the Act III Prelude from Die Meistersinger, music associated with Sachs' world-weary resignation. It is exquisitely rendered here with all of Stoky's magic. This is orchestral sound and phrase in the service of a very humanistic socio-historical note.


Performance: Splendid Recording: Excellent

What was life like in nineteenth-century Cincinnati, Ohio? Maybe you’d rather not know, but you may enjoy this album of period songs gleaned from the musical past of that city anyway. If you really care, it comes with profuse socio-historical notes by Kathryn Kish Sklar, a history professor at UCLA, and a long essay on the music itself by Jon Newsom of the Library of Congress. Neither makes for light reading. If the accompanying prose makes for heavy going, though, the music on the record is easy enough to take. In those days music was something the whole family took part in, gathering around the family piano. A good tune was highly prized, and most of these are good.

Cincinnati was considered a part of the West, yet the works of its songwriters reflect a yearning for further frontiers and some of the songs its citizens sang, such as A Life in the West and Ho! For Kansas, glorify wide-open spaces and the life of the soil as compared with that of the claustrophobic city. But home—which meant home with your family where you belonged—is strongly celebrated in the ballads Where Home Is and Sweet Home (both variations on Home, Sweet Home). The hardened modem listener is liable to feel stifled just thinking about it, but, again, these are good tunes. Other ballads concern the pleasures of paddling canoes, tilling the soil, abiding with Jesus, and staying away from strong drink. The key item in the collection is Rowland Howard’s You Never Miss the Water Till the Well Runs Dry. Holman: Wake Up Jake. Bliss: Sounds of the Singing School. Fillmore: Ohio; The Blessed Bible; Henry; Firmament. Oves: Ives: Murray: Gallop; Who’ll Buy (Temperance). Anon.: Sweet Home; The Jovial Farmer Boy. Clifford Jackson (baritone); John Aler (tenor); Peter Basquin (piano, harmonium); Harmoniele Singers. John Miner cond. New World NW 251 $6.98.

Performance: Splendid Recording: Excellent
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